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Using a Mindfulness and Gratitude Practice to Improve Student Wellness

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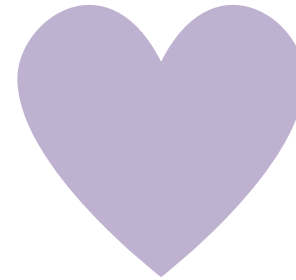
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Experimentations in Student Wellness



Mindfulness Minutes



Gratitude Journals



Mindfulness Minute

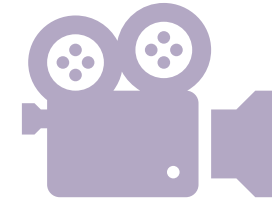
Arrival “Mindfulness Minute”



Inspired by Katherine Brem and Lauren Simpson at the University of Houston Law Center



“Wellness Wednesdays” (or any day of the week!)



Video demonstration:
https://youtu.be/u3jBjSs_cpk

Why Mindfulness?

Law school is stressful!

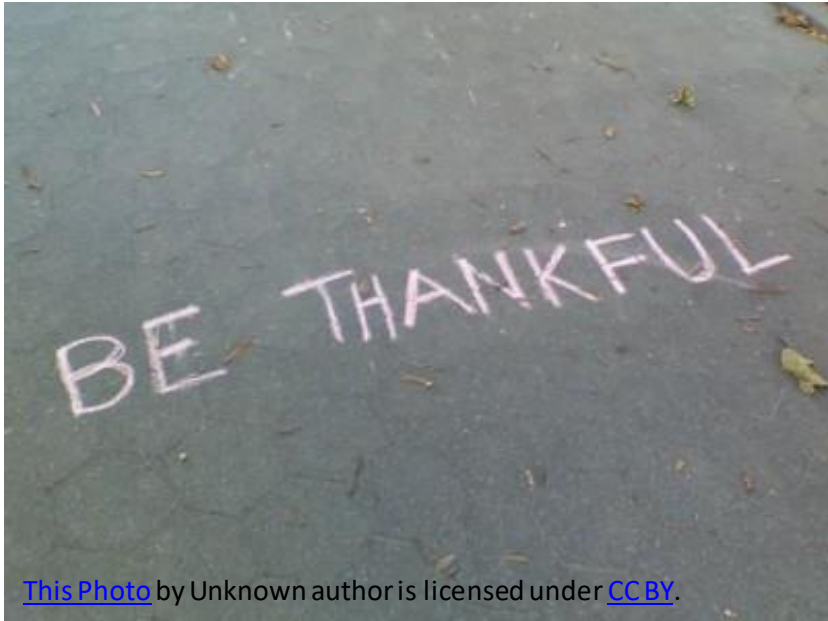
Mindfulness can:

- Increase positive feelings, brain functioning, the capacity for self-awareness and ethical behavior
- Improve attention and learning in the classroom
- Help law students be more emotionally intelligent
- Reduce anxiety



See Brostoff, Teresa, Meditation for Law Students: Mindfulness Practice as Experiential Learning (September 9, 2016). Law and Psychology Review, Vol. 41, p. 157, 2017, U. of Pittsburgh Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2016-26, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2836923>

Gratitude Practice Specifically



Based on research by Robert Emmons, PhD,
professor of psychology at the University of
California, Davis
[https://emmons.faculty.ucdavis.edu/gratitude-
and-well-being/](https://emmons.faculty.ucdavis.edu/gratitude-and-well-being/)

- Keeping a weekly gratitude journal makes you more likely to feel better about your life as a whole and be more optimistic about the coming week.
- People who keep gratitude lists are more likely to make progress toward important person goals.
- Daily gratitude practice can help young adults have higher alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy.

“Gratitude Friday”

- In Class Activity:
 - Write one thing you are grateful for this week
 - Use the same notebook or word document each week
- Potential Addition:
 - Watch [An Introduction to Gratitude - The Center for Child and Family Well-Being \(uw.edu\)](#)



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End of Semester Gratitude Reflection

This semester, we wrote down something we were grateful for every Friday. Read this short article on the benefits of keeping a gratitude journal: [Gratitude Journaling Is Good For Your Mental Health And Maybe Physical Health To : Shots - Health News : NPR](#). Then, find your list of gratitudes and reflect on it. What kinds of things were you grateful for this semester? Did you enjoy keeping a weekly list of gratitudes? Would you consider extending this practice into next semester or beyond? Why or why not?

Overall, what do students think?

- “I really enjoyed our Mindfulness Minute in the class each Wednesday. It was a great way to center myself on what was my busiest day of the week.”
- “[Professor Stephen] introduced a ‘mindfulness minute’ once a week, and I found that time to be useful because it helped me to calm myself and focus during the lecture.”
- “I loved doing Mindful Wednesday and Gratitude Friday. They were so helpful in getting my mind right.”
- “I loved the gratitude journals and the mindfulness minute[;] it meant a lot for the teacher to assert that we are still people with human needs.”

Questions?

Contact me at akmaus@uw.edu