

# Yoga and Mindfulness

The Cheat Lake Elementary School Counseling program is really focusing this year on yoga, breathing, thoughts causing feelings, filling our own buckets by ourselves, and learning how to slow down/take breaks.

There are four main techniques that can help you feel better which are meditation, mindfulness, yoga, and motivation

- Meditation helps you quiet your mind.
- Mindfulness helps you become more aware of your body, thoughts, and surrounding environment.
- Yoga move your body to let go of tension, breathe, relax, to be more connected, and get more energy.
- Motivation is using positive thoughts to feel happier and to help you achieve your goals.

Many students and children, even at a very young age, experience stress and anxiety. **Anxiety** is brought on by fears or worries. When a person feels stressed, they experience many processes, like trouble breathing, faster heart rate, sweating, tension, and the mind gets foggy.

**Yoga** is a way for a person to connect to their body, their mind, and their breath. Yoga helps the body get rid of stress by releasing toxins, by stretching, by getting more flexible and stronger, and by building up the good hormones in your body that can make you happier and healthier (serotonin).

- Yoga can help a person slow down their thoughts, which allows a person to not get carried away by their worries or fear.

A **major component of the school counseling program** at Cheat Lake Elementary School is that “Our Thoughts Cause Our Feelings.” If we are having racing thoughts that include the words “**what if**” then we will feel increasingly **anxious** or **worried**.

Some simple tips and tricks for students who may feel anxious, sad/depressed, or have low self-esteem are:

- Make a small to-do list - sometimes our thoughts swirl inside our heads and cause increased worry. Making a small list of things we want to achieve throughout the day can help set small goals, decrease anxiety, and promote good self-esteem by feeling productive when we complete these tasks
- Say or do something nice for yourself every day. This process helps students learn and practice filling their bucket on their own by themselves
- Be prepared and plan. For students who have anxiety, from mild to severe, can benefit from knowing a plan and being prepared - for as much as they possibly can be. A good

resiliency strategy is learning how to cope and think of different options when we are faced with a situation that was unplanned, sudden, or spontaneous

- Make your bed - making your bed in the morning prepares you for a refreshed, organized, day. This is one small step that everyone can do every morning to start their day off accomplished.
- Practice using words with your child to promote mental health

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_

Next Time \_\_\_\_\_

- Listen to calming music
- Decrease “screen time” and get outside
- Eat vegetables and drink water
- Sleep more
- Practice being **focused** with our breathing
  - The counselor at CLES teaches the students to feel their belly go up and down while breathing, focus on the air hitting the end of our nose and traveling up to our brain, and feel our bodies get heavier and looser when we breathe out.
- Put a “drop” in your bucket of something you do well or like about yourself

## Resources:

- Just Breath – Mallika Chopra
- How to be Calm – Anna Barnes
- How to be Mindful – Anna Barnes
- Wilma Jean the Worry Machine – Julia Cook
- Don't Be Afraid to Drop – Julia Cook