

Mindfulness techniques/exercises I have used successfully with teens:

- glitter ball – for helping explain to a teen the value of Mindfulness, how it may help calm their reactive minds. Going along, something happens, stirred up. If don't fuel or add story, calms in 90 secs, how many of us go hours, days, weeks and still are stirred up? Point out it doesn't make problem go away, just lets it settle so you can choose whether or not to pick it up later, maybe when you have more resource to deal with it.
- Work with the breath:
 - Both of you just connect for a moment with your breath, model it, describe it, i.e. help them tune in to physical sensation of breath in body, i.e. diaphragm, ribs, chest, nostrils, etc
 - Cue them: invite you to take three easy, relaxed breaths – note the word choices
 - Encourage them to do this regularly – i.e. set alarm on phone, to take breathing breaks
 - Mindfulness breathing with ½ smile –close your eyes if you feel comfortable with that, turn a ½ smile upward on your face, and take a few breaths. The ½ smile relaxes the tension in the face and lightens the mood. Consider it a smile to yourself, not smiling at someone.
- STOP cards –
 - S= Stop
 - T= take a breath – brings you to present moment
 - O= observe your body, feelings, emotions, and mind – without judgment – important component (and another of the Mindfulness qualities)
 - P= proceed with what is most important in this moment. Option to proceed without reactive and habitual patterns.Make up cards to hand out to students
- Body scan – guided Mindfulness meditation helping teen note present moment sensation of the body – can go systematically from toes to head, using body sensations to help ground in the present moment.
OR
 - Can do more abbreviated version – if student is upset or stressed – ask them to take a moment and notice where in their body they feel the tension or stress. Bring interest, curiosity to the body sensations. And then can maybe direct the breath to that area. Notice that the sensations rise and fall, change, nothing permanent. As sensations change, they realize they can sit thru the waves of anxiety without needing to react.
- Mindful movement practices – i.e. gentle yoga, qigong – esp. useful for kinesthetic teens or those who can't sit still or find their minds very busy.
 - Also, walking meditation can be useful for this group – pick area, about 10' long, slowly walk back and forth, this time focus is on physical sensation of the feet, lifting, moving and placing them on the floor/ground.
- Mindfulness in daily activities – encourage them to choose an activity that they do daily, that is relatively short in time duration, and simple to do – i.e. brush teeth, brush hair, wash face, maybe a short walk to the bus stop. Encourage them to do this with present moment Mindfulness –aware of the physical sensations of the water on their hands, face, the brushing of the toothbrush on their teeth, the simple act of turning on/off the faucet. Can pull your attention back to the present moment, away from ruminating over the past or worrying about the future.
- Grounding in the present moment – as simple as experiencing present moment body sensations, feet on ground, sit bones on chair.
- Mindfulness recordings downloaded onto their iPod, etc. Free ones available thro iTunes store: search Mindfulness or meditation