

## Mindfulness Week 12

As students learn new ways to cultivate a positive mind-set, they prime their brain for learning and for building healthy relationships

### **Appreciating Happy Experiences**

#### **What Does It Mean to Appreciate Happy Experiences?**

We can make ourselves laugh over the memory of a hilarious situation shared with friends or flood ourselves with feeling of warmth by recalling the hug of a beloved grandparent. To remember a happy experience full and mindfully is to savor, or appreciate, it and reap the physical, emotional, and cognitive benefits.

#### **Why Appreciate Happy Experiences?**

Remembering a happy memory releases in our brain the same “feel good” chemicals that flooded it all the time of the actual experience. We can practice mindfully recalling favourite memories as a strategy to achieve a variety of goals, including

- Cultivating optimism
- Alleviating negativity (boredom, sadness, worry)
- Priming our brain for learning new material
- Generating ideas from past experiences
- Boosting our physical health

Students can learn to appreciate happy memories to help overcome specific negative feelings, such as sadness or insecurity. You can also integrate the concept into your teaching by creating learning experiences that are engaging and involve positive interactions and laughter, when possible. Those memories will be easy for students to recall and use as background support for classroom experiences.

This week your child will visualize and describe their thoughts, feelings and physical sensations during a pleasurable experience. They will also use recalling a pleasurable experience as a way to build optimism.

#### **Linking to Brain Research**

Higher levels of dopamine in our brain result in feelings of hope, tolerance, motivation and a can-do-attitude – optimism. Dopamine release is triggered when we engage in pleasurable experiences like play-filled activities, laughing, physical exercise, acts of kindness and positive social interactions.