

Practical Approaches to Working with Young People with Concentration Difficulties

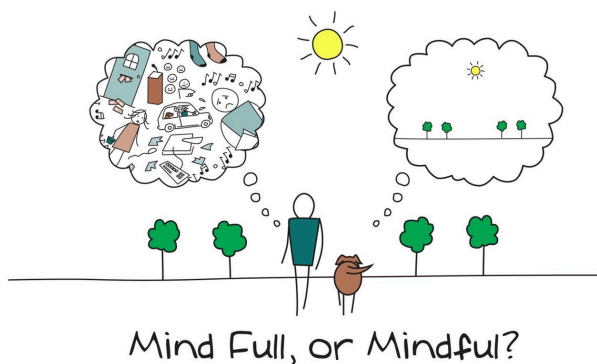
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Swili 5 Project

- 24 weeks
- 48 hours of swim training (two one-hour sessions per week): breaststroke, backstroke, crawl
- 12 hours of mindfulness practice (30 min/week, before swimming): mindfulness of surroundings, breathing, body scan, stretching
- 3 one-hour time management workshops

What is Mindfulness?

- Focusing on inner and outer experiences in an unbiased way, moment to moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)
- Awareness of physiological, mental, and environmental events without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994)
- Involves body sensations, emotions, thoughts, perceptions, and self-awareness (Smrdu, 2018)



Mindfulness Exercises

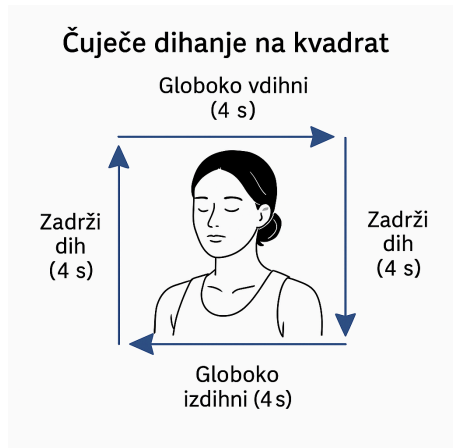
- Focus on breathing, body sensations, surroundings, walking, and stretching

Examples:

- Observing environment/objects
- Breathing
- Body scan
- Walking around the room*
- Stretching exercises*

Breathing Exercises

- Box breathing
- Counting from 1 to 10
- Lower abdominal breathing



Body Scan (Mindful Body Awareness)

- Focus on specific body parts and observe sensations without judgment
- Lying down with closed eyes and calm breathing
- Goal: awareness, relaxation, recognizing stress/tension
- Shift focus from head to toes (or vice versa)



Time Management

- Effective/productive use of time
- Stress-reducing skills

Example: "I have 10 days to read a 120-page book. I need to read 12 pages per day."

How Can We Help?

Habits and routines:

- Structured planning (daily, weekly, monthly)



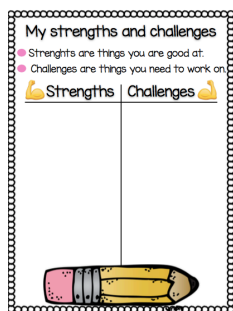
- Clear priorities and reminders

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION MATRIX



Reframing difficulties:

- Recognize strengths and challenges
- Understand learning styles
- Set smaller daily goals and self-evaluate



Symptom reduction strategies:

- Schedule breaks
- Activity changes
- Maintain low-stress environment

Swimming Training Approaches

1. Short, specific instructions (1–2 sentences). Show behaviors, not abstract goals. Use visual cues.
2. One technical focus at a time.
3. Small groups (≤ 5) for reduced distractions and more individual work.
4. Structured, repeatable class flow (e.g., warm-up → technique → game → technique → wrap-up).
5. Immediate, descriptive praise.
6. Reduce distractions (quiet environment, avoid chaotic groups).
7. Active drills + short breaks.
8. Combine with mindfulness or breathing (e.g., floating, deep breaths).

What Else Can We Do?

- Set clear behavioral expectations
- Early intervention for time management difficulties
- Provide support
- Proper nutrition and sleep improve attention and executive functions (Walker, 2017; Gómez-Pinilla, 2008)

Research Results

- Improved psychological capital ($p = 0.002$): increased self-efficacy, hope, optimism, stress resilience
- Improved mindfulness experience ($p = 0.029$): present awareness, better acceptance
- Notable reduction in ADHD symptoms
- Improved social skills