



Calm the Mind, Calm the Class

The DeStress Monday at School Program

Teaching is a Work of the Heart

To students, teachers are like superheroes. And it's not hard to imagine why. Every day, teachers come to school with an inspiring energy that electrifies their classrooms and stimulates a desire to learn. But teachers are people, too, and they need time at the beginning of the week to recharge and prepare themselves for the challenges ahead.

The DeStress Monday at School program is designed to support teachers and educators by helping them carve out moments of self-care every Monday. Through a series of practices created by Johns Hopkins University and The Monday Campaigns, the DeStress Monday at School program helps teachers and their students start every week with a new tool for managing stress. Although these practices do not serve as a remedy for mental health issues, like trauma or depression, they can be used to bring more energy, focus, and stability to life at home and in the classroom.

By providing practices applicable to both teachers and students, the DeStress Monday at School program can foster a calm environment to support improved attention and learning.

Why DeStress on Monday?

Research shows that chronic stress may contribute to serious health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. DeStress Monday offers easy-to-apply tools every Monday to help individuals manage stress, improve focus, and maintain a positive mindset throughout the week.

TAKE A RAINBOW WALK

While walking outside, take a moment to look around you and see if you can spot every color of the rainbow.



#DeStressMonday

DeStressMonday.org

DESTRESS
MONDAY

Show Yourself Some Love

This Monday, ease stress and doubt with self-compassion and kindness.

1. Find a quiet place to reflect.
2. Breathe deeply then bring your positive qualities to mind.
3. Give yourself love. Let go of any negative thoughts.
4. Conclude by recognizing your positive qualities.



#DeStressMonday

DeStressMonday.org

DESTRESS
MONDAY

Case Study: Baltimore City Public Schools

The Monday Campaigns collaborated with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to develop the DeStress Monday at School Program, a special curriculum designed to help teachers and their students stay positive, focused, and calm throughout the week. The program was created with special input from a focus group of teachers, who identified areas to address their particular needs and interests.

Setting the Stage

Fifty teachers from three under-resourced, Baltimore City Public Schools participated in the initial pilot program. The goal was to evaluate the benefits and impact of a stress-reduction program that could be utilized by both teachers and their students, as well as gather feedback and determine the effectiveness of a digital delivery system.

Program Design

The curriculum was delivered over the course of nine weeks and was divided into five key areas: Starting the Day, Boosting Energy, Improving Focus, Calming the Mind, and Connecting with Others. Each of the five areas included four different practices for both teachers and students, and these practices were emailed to instructors Sunday night for Monday preparation. Each week's email contained links to 2-3 practices, as well as videos and audio meditations (when applicable).

Tools for Teachers

Resources included videos, audio recordings, informational articles, and graphics overlaid with instructive language all related to different aspects of mindfulness such as meditation techniques, yoga positions, and deep breathing practices. Teachers were also directed to the Destress Monday curriculum webpage to access additional videos, tips, and practices.

Real World Results

Official results from the pilot will be published in 2021-22. We are happy to share that early findings were promising. After participants had completed the program, study staff held six focus groups within the participating schools using semi-structured guides to facilitate discussion. Questions explored benefits and challenges related to program content and delivery, in addition to suggestions for improving the website.

A large majority of participants reported using the practices at least once throughout the program and at least once in the classroom.

**MORE THAN
HALF**

the participants described the practices as helpful or very helpful.

Participants also cited significant improvements in a number of important outcomes: work-related stress, perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and a number of sleep characteristics – duration, quality, less disordered sleep, and less sleep medication use.

What Is Included in the DeStress Monday at School Program?

The DeStress Monday at School program includes 20 stress management practices for teachers to try at home and introduce in the classroom at their discretion. The 20 practices fall into one of five categories: Starting the Day, Boosting Energy, Improving Focus, Calming the Mind, and Connecting with Others. Practices are supported with audio, video, and/or graphic aids, and instructive content, and they can be delivered in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid school setting. The program was originally designed for delivery during a 9-week progression (see Baltimore City Schools case study) but the duration can be adapted to best align with a school's needs and schedule. The "For the Classroom" practices are designed for grades K-5, and it is recommended that the "For the Teacher" practices be adapted or modified to fit the needs of older students.

Evaluation

We encourage schools to evaluate the program. We suggest conducting a survey with program participants both before and after the program, to measure engagement, continuation of practices, and data such as improved sleep quality or reduced stress. We've developed a sample pre- and post-program survey for you to use — to help assess whether the program helped support the needs of your school. These surveys are built into the automated program newsletter. A school may also choose to create its own surveys from the model provided.



Five Steps to Implementing a DeStress Monday at School Program

1

Elicit buy-in from school and/or district leadership. Build support by highlighting its evidenced-based approach and data from the Baltimore City Public Schools case study.

2

Shape program delivery to fit the participants' needs.

- a. Assess your school's interests and desired duration. Determine the desired length and number of practices that are best for your audience.
- b. Accommodate for different levels of accessibility to ensure materials are available for all participants. Find the preferred balance between digital and in-person delivery methods.

3

Determine preferred channels of communication.

- These can include email, text message, website links, fliers and handouts, or social media platforms.
- a. Identify technical resources and confirm responsible parties needed for delivery.

4

Build participant support by highlighting the benefits of an easy-to-use, weekly stress management program.

5

Select launch date. Consider planning a kick-off event for visibility.



Get the Program Delivered to Your Inbox Weekly

Looking for a hands-off approach? It's easy to enroll yourself or your participants in our 10-week automated program delivery via newsletter. Visit our program enrollment page, [here](#).

5 Modules



Starting the Day

Morning activities designed to calm and rejuvenate. Simple yoga poses and breathing exercises to prepare you for the day ahead.



Boosting Energy

Find the motivation to drive forward. Stay energized with short bursts of movement and low-intensity stretches and poses.



Calming the Mind

Quiet stressful thoughts by keeping the mind clear. Find inspiration from your surrounding environment.



Connecting with Others

Learn to use positivity to spread kindness through yourself to others. Self-care, empathy, and compassion make your immediate world more joyful.



Improving Focus

A set of mindfulness practices to improve focus and concentration. Use drawing, walking, hearing, and eating to cut out the clutter.

How It Works

The full DeStress Monday at School curriculum is available on The Monday Campaigns website. When you visit, you'll see each of the activities organized for teachers to do for themselves as well as with students. All include a graphic and instructive text, and some include videos or audio content, too.



For Teachers

Start your day with an expert-guided meditation.

For Teachers

These instructive practices are designed for teachers to do alone at home or in school before class begins.

Graphic

Every practice includes a fun visual aid or graphic designed to reinforce the lesson and help teachers communicate the information to their class.



Monday morning is a wonderful time to set an intention for your week. Setting an intention means allowing yourself to identify a goal or hope within yourself that you would like to focus on this week, such as being open to new experiences, developing or deepening connections with other people, or practicing self care. You can also practice setting an intention at other times – for instance, at the start of a class you are about to teach or at the start of a family gathering. You can also “check in” with yourself to reflect on your intention throughout the week.

This seven minute meditation led by Joe Loizzo will help you relax your mind and set healthy intentions for the week ahead. Dr. Loizzo is founder and director of the Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science. He is a Harvard-trained psychiatrist and Columbia-trained Buddhist scholar with over thirty years’ experience studying the beneficial effects of meditation on healing and learning. Currently, he is Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry in Integrative Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.





For the Classroom

Teach your students about setting intentions with the help of a brief recorded intention-setting practice.

For the Classroom

These instructive practices are dual purpose, designed for both teachers and students to do together in the classroom.

Audio

Some practices include supplementary audio recording of guided meditations and mindfulness techniques.

For the Classroom

Students of all ages can practice setting an intention – for the week, for the day, or for the next hour. For younger children, it is probably best to focus on shorter time periods, whereas older children can focus on a longer time period, such as a full week. Here is a suggested introduction and brief recorded intention-setting practice that you can use with your class:



Monday morning is a fresh start. It's a great time to decide how you would like to feel and be this week, this day, this class period. That's called **setting an intention**. Maybe you would like to feel relaxed and deal with stressful things in a calm way. Maybe you would like to be curious and try new things. Maybe you would like to be friendly and spend time with new friends. When we think about how we want to be, it sometimes helps us to be that way. This brief recording can help you practice setting an intention.



For Teachers/For the Classroom

Try this practice on your own and then teach it to your students with the help of the instructive video below.

For Teachers/For the Classroom

These practices are dual-purpose. Teachers can try them on their own and then introduce them into the classroom.

Technical Issues?

If experiencing any technical issues, such as problems downloading assets or accessing videos, please send an email to info@mondaycampaigns.org

Video

Some practices may include video to help the participants follow along.



If you prefer to lead your class in doing the sun breath without the video, here is a simple description of the poses:

- Stand tall with your hands together at your chest. Take a breath. Notice how you feel.
- Inhale, lift your arms above head, relax your shoulders, & ground your feet on the floor.
- Exhale & fold your chest over your legs, keeping knees slightly bent. Its OK if your fingertips don't touch the floor.
- Inhale and bring your torso parallel to the floor and press out through the top of your head; exhale and fold your chest forward again over your knees.
- Inhale and sweep your arms out to the sides, bringing them back over your head.
- Exhale and bring your hands back in front of the chest and then back to the sides of the body as you return to the original position.

After you finish several repetitions of the poses, you can say: Now take another breath. Notice how you feel.

Instructive Content

Every practice contains instructions for how to do the practice.

Suggested Program Rollout

Our [automated program newsletters](#) follow the suggested 10-week rollout, below.

Should you opt to implement the program on your own rollout schedule, the suggested program order can be modified to fit a school's specific needs or requirements. The duration of the program can be made longer or shorter by changing the number of practices introduced each week. You will need to coordinate the launch and weekly delivery of practices to teachers. In order to provide ample preparation time, it is recommended that teachers be provided with program materials on Friday, with the intention of having the practice ready for a Monday implementation.

Regardless of rollout schedule or methodology, it's important to note that classroom implementation is encouraged, but optional, as the program is primarily designed to be used by teachers and educators.

Sample Program Rollout - 10 weeks

Pre-Program

[Intro to DeStress at School Video](#)
[\(Optional\) Healthy Monday Refresh](#)

Starting the Day

Week 1

[Setting Healthy Intentions](#)
[Tree Pose](#)

Week 2

[Mindful Morning](#)
[Sun Salutation](#)

Boosting Energy

Week 3

[Warrior Pose](#)
[Dance Break](#)

Week 4

[Chair Yoga/Sound Ball](#)
[Mindful Walking](#)

Improving Focus

Week 5

[Eating Mindfully](#)
[Mindful Moments/Rainbow Walk](#)

Week 6

[Listening Mindfully](#)
[Drawing Mindfully](#)

Calming the Mind

Week 7

[Settling the Mind](#)
[Challenging Emotions](#)

Week 8

[Deep Breathing/](#)
[Listening to the Rain](#)
[Mindful Coloring](#)

Connecting with Others

Week 9

[Be Kind to Yourself](#)
[Kindness Garden](#)

Week 10

[Empathy Muscle](#)
[Wish Others Well](#)

This program was designed by experts at Johns Hopkins University in collaboration with The Monday Campaigns.



Tamar Mendelson

PhD, Bloomberg Professor of American Health
Director for the Center for Adolescent Health
Professor (Full bio [here](#))



Erica Sibinga

M.D., M.H.S., Director of Ambulatory Pediatrics at
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Associate
Professor of Pediatrics (Full bio [here](#))

Share It with Others

DeStress Monday at School materials and practices are easy to share with others, and they are applicable to settings beyond the classroom. Encourage other colleagues, schools, or organizations to adopt a De-Stress Monday program as part of a healthier lifestyle.

Learn More About DeStress Monday

If you'd like to access more practices for stress management, visit our website: www.mondaycampaigns.org/destress-monday. You can find simple options to help reduce stress, download different weekly series, or find other activities you can use to build your own program.

Contact information

To develop additional programming related to stress-relief, physical activity, and healthy eating, contact us at info@mondaycampaigns.org or go to www.mondaycampaigns.org/start-a-program