

# The Wise Mind School



Teacher's Manual 2015

# Introduction

## **The Wise Mind School**

The Wise Mind School is a collaboration between health professionals from Yale University and La Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá Colombia, that aims to divulge information and educational materials for students and teachers around the world targeting the fostering and improvement of various interpersonal and interpersonal skills in young adolescents in a way that is free and widely accessible.

## **Vision**

Various research studies have shown that targeting specific interpersonal and interpersonal skills in children and adolescents can foster their resilience or capacity to withstand adversity and reduce the likelihood of developing psychiatric illnesses in the future. The aim of the Wise Mind School is to help improve and foster interpersonal and interpersonal skills in young adolescents as a primary prevention strategy to enhance their resilience and reduce future psychopathology.

## **How to use this manual?**

This manual is intended to be used together with the webpage [www.wisemindschool.com](http://www.wisemindschool.com). Each page of the manual describes the rational, aim, suggested class schedule and suggested homework for each of the topics. Each topic in turn references different freely available materials that can be found online or in the accompanying Material's Booklet.

# Table of Contents

## Thought guru

1. The errors in our thinking.....4
2. Common thinking errors.....5
3. Delayed gratification.....6
4. Positive thinking.....6

## Feeling owner

1. Identifying our feelings.....8
2. Mastering our feelings.....9
3. Mindfulness.....10
4. Self esteem.....11

## Buddy keeper

1. Being a good listener.....12
2. Being assertive.....13
3. Drugs and the body.....15
4. Staying connected.....16

## Section 1: Thinking guru

## I. The errors in our thinking

**Rational:** Automatic thoughts are thoughts that come into our mind spontaneously in certain situations and have the power to affect our feelings and actions. Many automatic thoughts are biased or wrong and can affect our feelings and actions in a negative way. For example the thoughts “I’ll never be able to do this” or “People will probably think the question I want to ask is stupid” may make us feel bad or act in unhelpful ways.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students identify wrong automatic thoughts they have, which make them feel bad or act in unhelpful ways and learn how to challenge them.

**Ages:** 13 and up

### Suggested activities:

Activity	Description	Time
Introductory video	Show introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Automatic thought identification worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>Automatic thought identification worksheet</i> and ask them to fill it in with examples of automatic thoughts they have had themselves which made them feel bad or behave in an unhelpful way	10 min
Thought trial worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>Thought trial worksheet</i> and ask them to pick one of the thoughts they wrote in the first worksheet (the one they think is most important) and fill in the <i>Thought trial worksheet</i> thinking of evidence for and against the thought to come up with a more realistic alternative	20 min
Summary	Summarize the main topics discussed in the session	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to record five automatic thoughts they have throughout the week and pick one to “put it to trial” using the *Thought trial worksheet*

## 2. Common thinking errors

**Rational:** Thinking errors are specific biases in our thinking that distorts the evidence in different ways (like ignoring some of the evidence or generalizing) and thus prevent us from seeing the situation in a realistic manner. Learning about common thinking errors is important in order to identify them in our own thoughts and correct them in time.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students learn about common thinking errors and how to identify them in their own thinking.

**Ages:** 13 and up

### Suggested activities:

Activity	Description	Time
Automatic thoughts homework discussion	Collect the Automatic Thoughts homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Common thinking errors Video	Show common thinking errors introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Common thinking errors worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>common thinking errors worksheet</i> and go through it with them asking them for an example for each one.	20 min
Thinking errors identification worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>thinking error identification</i> and ask them to write down one example of a thinking error they have made in the past in the filling the first row of the table.	10 min
Summary	Summarize the main topics discussed in the session	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to fill in the first five rows of the thinking errors identification worksheet throughout the week with thinking errors they identify in themselves.

### 3. Delayed gratification

**Rational:** It has been demonstrated that individuals who can make the choice to delay gratification in the present in order to get gratification in the future tend to be more successful. An example of delaying present gratification for future gratification include avoiding overeating or eating unhealthy snacks, knowing this will ultimately benefit your health in the long run. Another example of delayed gratification includes avoiding drinking or using drugs in order to focus on your education knowing this can help you have a better life in the future.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students learn about the concept of delayed gratification and why it is important to think about the future and practice this skill in their day to day lives.

**Ages:** 13 and up

**Suggested activities:**

Activity	Description	Time
Common thinking errors homework discussion	Collect the Common Thinking Errors homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Delayed gratification Video	Show the delayed gratification introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Future Plans worksheet	Give each student the Future Map worksheet and ask them to fill it in and keep it.	15 min
Goal ladder worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>goal ladder worksheet</i> and ask them to write down one of their most important future goals at the top and fill in the steps stating what specific things they need to do in order to accomplish this goal.	15 min
Summary	Summarize the main topics discussed in the session	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to write a paragraph about an experience they had over the week in which they consciously decided to avoid present gratification knowing this would ultimately benefit them in the future.

## 4. Positive thinking

**Rational: Rational:** Most situations are not bad or good but instead this depends on how we look at them. It has been demonstrated that positive thinking is linked to a longer life span, less stress, lower rates of depression, lower risk of cardiovascular disease and increased physical well-being. Positive thinking can be trained and practiced.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students learn about the power of positive thinking and how our attitude can shape our lives and relationships.

**Ages:** 13 and up

### Suggested activities:

Activity	Description	Time
Delayed gratification errors homework discussion	Collect the delayed gratification homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Delayed gratification Video	Show the positive thinking introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Turning our thoughts around	Give each student the turning our thoughts around worksheet and ask them to fill it in, writing in the right sided column one or more good things about that situation or turn the negative thought around as in the example. Then ask them to come up with 3 upsetting situations they have experienced and do the same filling all the columns	20 min
Goal ladder worksheet	Give each student a copy of the <i>gratefulness worksheet</i> and ask them to fill it in writing down 10 things they are grateful for in their lives.	15 min
Summary	Summarize the main topics discussed in the session	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to write down 3 things they are grateful for at the end of each day throughout the week and to bring it in next week.

## Section 2: Feeling Master

## I. Identifying our feelings

**Rational:** The first step towards controlling our feelings is being able to recognize and identify them in ourselves.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help students name and recognize various emotions in themselves and others

**Ages:** 13 and up

### **Suggested activities:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Positive thinking homework discussion	Collect the positive thinking homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Identifying our feelings video	Show the identifying our feelings introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Role playing	Ask the students to divide themselves in groups of three and give each group a copy of the 3 identifying our feelings cases. One of the people in each group should pick one case and tell another in the group about the situation as if they were telling a friend. The third person in the group should watch and later discuss what they think the first person was feeling. After each case the students should change roles so that each plays person 1, person 2 and the observer.	30 min
Role playing discussion	Discuss the role playing exercise with all of the class and ask for their thoughts and experiences	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Give each student a feeling wheel. Ask the students to use the feeling identification worksheet to write about 5 situations over the week when they had a strong feeling

## 2. Dealing with our feelings

**Rational:** There are several techniques that have been used to help individuals control and manage strong emotions. In this session, the techniques of checking the facts, opposite action and problem solving based on Dialectical behavioral therapy are discussed and explained.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to teach students different strategies to cope with intense feelings. ,

### **Suggested activities:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Identifying our feelings homework discussion	Collect the identifying our feelings homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Identifying our feelings video	Show the identifying our feelings introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Opposite action worksheet	Give each student a copy of the opposite action worksheet and ask them to complete the three empty rows with real life situations they can think of as in the first two examples	10 min
Opposite action discussion	Ask the students for some of their answers and thoughts regarding the opposite action worksheet	5 min
Problem solving worksheet	Give each student a copy of the problem solving worksheet asking them to fill in the empty column specifying what the best way to solve this problem would be	10 min
Problem solving discussion	Ask the students for some of their answers and thoughts regarding the problem solving worksheet	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to write down one or more situations in the week when they they used the checking the facts, opposite action or problem solving strategies to deal with a problem and how this worked out.

### 3. Mindfulness

**Rational:** Mindfulness is the art of staying in and accepting the present moment without judgement. It has been a part of eastern philosophy for many years and has more recently been integrated into several therapeutic strategies including dialectical behavioral therapy, showing benefit in helping individuals tolerate their distressing feelings and realities. There are several ways of practicing mindfulness but all have in common the effort of being and focusing the mind on the present moment and not the future, present, thoughts or worries.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to introduce the concept and practice of mindfulness to the students as well as its potential benefits.

**Suggested activities:**

Activity	Description	Time
Dealing with our feelings homework discussion	Collect the dealing with our feelings homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Mindfulness Video	Show the mindfulness introductory video	10 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Color picking	Ask the students to pick a color	5 min
Mindful breathing exercise	Ask the students to close their eyes, concentrate on their color and pay attention to their breathing in and out for one minute. Ask them to accept any thought that comes into their mind without judgement and to try to let it go, making an effort to concentrate on their color staying in the present moment.	5 min
Mindful breathing exercise discussion	Discuss how this felt, any difficulties the students experienced and how they handled them	5 min
Mindful eating exercise	Give, or ask the students to take out something small to eat and ask them to eat it slowly in class paying special attention and concentrating on how it looks, how it feels in their hands, how it smells, how it tastes and the sound it makes as they chew	10 min
Mindful eating discussion	Ask the students how they felt with the mindful eating exercise and ask them to try this out when they're eating.	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask students to practice mindfulness in one part of their daily routing (brushing their teeth, showering, walking home) throughout the week by focusing on looking, listening and feeling, staying in the present, and write a paragraph about what they chose, how it made them feel and the challenges experienced (if any)

### 3. Self love

**Rational:** Self-esteem reflects a person's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem allows people to face life with more confidence, benevolence and optimism, and thus easily reach their goals and self-actualize.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to teach students the importance of self esteem and ways to foster it.

**Ages:** 13 and up

#### **Suggested activities:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Mindfulness homework discussion	Collect the mindfulness homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Self love Video	Show the self-love introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Cool things about me worksheet	Ask the students to fill in the cool things about me worksheet	10 min
Complement session	Ask the students to divide themselves into pairs and tell the other 5 good things about them, then switch	20 min
Summary	Summarize the main topics discussed in the session	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to write down 3 good things about themselves or things they did which are good and they are proud of each day and bring it back for discussion

## Section 3: Buddy keeper

## I. Being a Good Listener

**Rational:** Being a good listener is an essential life skill that has the potential to improve various areas of our lives including our academic and professional achievement and social relationships.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students learn about three specific techniques that characterize good listening and can make them better listeners. Then they should practice these techniques.

**Ages:** 13 and up

### **Suggested activities:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
Review self esteem homework	Collect the self esteem homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Being a good listener Video	Show the Being a good listener introductory video	10 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Listening couples	Give each student a copy of the good listener reminder scheme worksheet. Divide the students into couples and ask them to tell the other about their families for 5 minutes. Have the listener practice the three essential skills of listening and after the 5 minutes the speaker will give the listener feedback on his or her listening skills and how he felt. Then they should switch with the speaker becoming the listener and the listener the speaker.	20 min
Listening couples discussion	Ask the students how they felt during this exercise and what they learned about the importance of being a good listener and how this could affect their lives and personal relationships.	10 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to write a paragraph about a conversation they had with someone in the week when they didn't feel like the other person was doing a good job at listening to them. Ask them to write what specific things they felt like the other person could have done better in terms of attending, following and reflecting and how they would have done it differently.

## 2. Being Assertive

**Rational:** Learning how to communicate our opinions, needs and desires in a way that is effective but not offensive or aggressive is an important life skills.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to help the students learn about three specific techniques they can use to express their unpleasant feelings and thoughts in a way that is effective but polite.

**Ages:** 13 and up

**Suggested activities:**

Activity	Description	Time
Review Being a good listener homework	Collect the Being a good listener homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Being assertive Video	Show the Being assertive introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
3-step worksheet	Ask the students to think of a behavior of another person who has annoyed them in the past and fill in the 3-step worksheet to write down how they would use these three steps to communicate their thoughts and feelings about it. Remind the students to remember to be specific about the behavior and describe only one behavior at a time.	15 min
Role Playing trios	Divide the students into trios and give each trio a number from 1-3. Give each trio the scenario corresponding to their number described on the Assertive Communication Trio worksheet. One student in the trio will be the person doing the problematic behavior, another will communicate this assertively and the third will evaluate this communication and give feedback to the communicator. The students will then switch roles and each student should have each role once.	20 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** Ask the students to use the 3-step worksheet to write down two real life examples throughout the week of situations that made them feel uncomfortable, writing down in the worksheet how they would communicate this assertively.

### 3. Staying connected

**Rational:** Human beings are social animals. Staying connected to others, making and keeping friends and knowing when and how to ask for help are essential life skills.

**Aim:** The aim of this session is to teach students the importance of staying connected to others and some strategies to treating others well and keeping them close.

**Ages:** 13 and up

**Suggested activities:**

Activity	Description	Time
Review Being Assertive homework	Collect the Being Assertive homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Staying connected Video	Show the Staying connected introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Validation trios	Ask their students to divide into groups of three and give each group a validation worksheet. Ask one of the person in each trio to read the first scenario in the worksheet, one of the others should validate their situation and feelings. The third person should comment on this validation. Then they should switch roles so each person in the trio performs each role.	15 min
Looking for similarities	Divide the group in groups of 5 and ask them to find 5 things they all have in common. Then ask each of the groups to share their experiences.	15 min
Summary	Summarize some of the main topics and ideas learned and discussed	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** During the next week write down a small paragraph about a situation when you validated somebody's feelings and experience.

## 4. Drugs and the Body

**Rational:** Exposing the body to alcohol and drugs from an early age carries significant risk accentuates the risk of becoming addicted and suffering physical and psychological consequences.

**Aim:** The aim of this lesson is to expose and clarify some of the major risks associated with alcohol and drug use.

**Ages:** 13 and up

**Suggested activities:**

Activity	Description	Time
Review Mindfulness homework	Collect the Mindfulness homework and ask students for their experiences, thoughts and difficulties with this homework assignment	5 min
Drugs and the Body Video	Show the Drugs and the Body introductory video	5 min
Video discussion	Ask the students for their thoughts about the video and what they understood	5 min
Addiction story writing	Ask the students to write a page about the story of someone they know who is addicted to drugs or alcohol and the negative consequences this has brought to that person's life.	15 min
Addiction story sharing	Ask 2 or 3 of the students to share their stories	15 min
Summary	Summarize some of the main topics and ideas learned and discussed	5 min
Total time		50 min

**Suggested homework:** No homework