

## Mindfulness

Last week, Staples school psychologists and Westport Positive Youth Development presented to parents on the importance of mindfulness. Practicing mindfulness has been scientifically proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, help with focus and concentration, promote healthy sleep patterns, and improve academic results and athletic performance. From a counseling perspective, we find that technology and social media—as useful and engrossing as they can be—contribute to the generalized anxiety that many teenagers experience. Our students are bombarded with information to the point of distraction, yet they won't shut it down, out of fear that they will miss out on something happening with their peers.

In an attempt to meet them where they are, the Staples Resilience Project and physical education teachers began introducing all freshmen to “[Stop, Breathe & Think](#),” a free app and website, three years ago. What we especially like about this app is that it was created with teenagers in mind. It allows users to check in with how they are feeling (mentally, physically, and emotionally) and then offers suggestions for guided mindfulness exercises ranging from 3-20 minutes in length.

You may remember hearing about Stop, Breathe & Think in previous [Resilience Project emails](#). This week, teachers and students are revisiting Stop, Breathe & Think as a communication time activity, and talking about the benefits of Mindfulness. You might be interested to read Sarah Rudell Beach's article, “[Teaching Mindfulness to Teenagers: 5 Ways to Get Started](#).” Other mindfulness apps/web sites, can be found on the Staples Resilience Project's [Resources page](#).

*The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples High School Guidance Department. We welcome your feedback at [shs-resilience-project@westport.k12.ct.us](mailto:shs-resilience-project@westport.k12.ct.us)*