

## #ARUmindful budget request proposal

The ARUmindful project aims to support student mental health by providing tools to evoke mindfulness and enable student wellbeing by creating an ARUmindful tool kit that will be placed in your SU spaces and the SU advice and counselling and wellbeing waiting rooms. This project is part of the wider team campaign called "Break-the-Cycle taking action to support student mental health.

### What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing your mind on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique [1].

We understand that it's easy to lose focus on what is going on in the world around us and that it is easy to lose touch with the way our body is feeling. Which, means we end up working and studying 24/7 and may lose track of how our lifestyles impact on our emotions and importantly impact our mental health [1].

### And how does mindfulness support mental wellbeing?

Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful.

It is important for us to step back and take time out from studying and working commitments for personal self-care. By using mindfulness tools and techniques allow us to stand back from our thoughts and start to see their patterns as well as notice signs of stress or anxiety earlier and helps us deal with them better [2].

### How does the ARUmindful box assist with mindfulness

The ARUmindful box will contain a variety of sensory items, stress and anxiety releasing items and mindfulness materials for students to use as an aid to support their mental health. The tools provided within this box can support a student to recognise their own 'body awareness' (known as proprioception) the feedback our brains receive from our bodies which enables those to gain a sense of what we feel in the moment and how our body reacts to different situations [3].

High amounts of stress can negatively impact learning, memory, behaviour, and in both our physical and mental health [4] and following this, we know that students can experience stress, anxiety and high amounts of pressure while studying at university [3]. Mindfulness-based practices have been promoted as a promising way to reduce stress and anxiety in students and improve their academic and behavioural outcomes.

Current studies suggest that students that use mindfulness tools show improvements in cognitive skills and in social and emotional behaviours that are positively related to academic achievement [5]. Further research shows that by applying these techniques can foster self-control, or the ability to plan, control, direct, and sustain one's attention, emotions, and behaviour. Self-control enables students to regulate their behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and attentional resources so that they can accomplish a learning goal by facilitating persistent focus, reduced stress, decreased aggressive behaviour, improved cognitive performance, and enhanced resilience. [5]

We as a student's union we believe that students should feel supported throughout their studies the mindfulness boxes provide a calm space where students can connect how they are feeling emotionally and mentally and understand how their body acts in response to that.

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*Pronoun: She/her*

**ARU Students' Union**

## List of References

- [1] <https://www.dictionary.com/>
- [2] <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>
- [3] <https://www.educationalplaycare.com/blog/sensory-play-important-development/>
- [4] <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-in-education/>
- [5] <https://www.transformingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019-BCRC-Mindfulness-Brief.pdf>