

CHI CURRICULUM OUTLINE



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Curriculum Outline

About us

The CHI Institute is committed to empowering students to discover and develop their innate talents by fostering strong character traits rooted in compassion, self-regulation, and curiosity through mindfulness-based practices. The curriculum integrates Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP) with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and applied compassion, systematically cultivating emotional intelligence. This approach equips students with essential skills to navigate challenges, achieve their goals, and unlock their full potential—promoting academic success and long-term wellbeing, while also guiding them to seek their life purpose, passion, and cultivate deeper spiritual connections through mindfulness practice..

Meet the team behind the curriculum:



Dr. Yundi Chi is the founder and president at CHI Institute. She holds an MA in Psychology in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and certifications in Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP) from the VIA Institute on Character, Applied Compassion Training (ACT) from Stanford School of Medicine, and is a certified coach from Brown University. With over 20 years of experience as an advocate for whole-person education and a college application consultant, she is dedicated to inspiring students to harness their inner strength through mindfulness practices, enabling them to reach their maximum potential.



Ms. Rachael Barillari is the director of school relationships at CHI Institute, and the chief editor of the CHI programs. She holds an MS in Education from Johns Hopkins University and an MA in Psychology in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Rachael has served as a professor for the Global Leadership Cohort at JHU, a prominent speaker at conferences on SEL and Spirituality in Education, and a curriculum specialist for various school districts. As a Teach for America cohort member and public school educator, she spent seven years as a middle school English teacher in the Baltimore City Schools district and has led numerous writing programs focused on storytelling and character development.



Mr. Boran Qu is the director of the peer-mentor & coaching program, and the chief instructor of the online course & workshop at CHI Institute. He holds a BA in Marketing from Rutgers Business School and has earned a certification in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He's also a music producer.

How to use this document

This curriculum is designed for in-class facilitation, however, we also offer a self-paced online version (also called “ **CHI online course**” or “ **CHI online workshop**”) with the same content. This guide helps facilitators manage extra materials and lead class discussions effectively.

The content for all versions of this course is standardized. We include educational videos and a story-based workbook (also called “ **CHI workbook**” or “ **CHI storybook**”) with related readings, lessons, practices, and assignments. Each class features CHI-designed activities (for in-class use only), mindful practices from MBSP & ACT, and assignments for students.

The 8-week program is flexible and can be adapted to suit various schedules. It can be extended to cover a full semester or condensed into a shorter format of fewer than eight weeks. The online course is structured around an 8-week timeline, with students engaging three days per week. Each week's material is divided into three sections, typically scheduled for days 1, 3, and 5.

For in-class courses, we recommend delivering the content over an 8-week period.

Each class incorporates the following elements, applicable to both the CHI online workshop/course and the CHI workbook/storybook:

1. Course objectives
2. Facilitator’s background knowledge
3. Lesson plan

Rationale

A.E.A.M. Model

The CHI program is guided by VIA's A.E.A.M. model, which includes the following stages:

Aware:

The first step involves becoming aware of one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and the strengths and values that influence them. Mindfulness exercises help individuals recognize how their strengths are at play and how they shape different areas of their lives.

Explore:

Participants then explore how their strengths show up in various contexts, both in positive situations and during challenges. They reflect on patterns of overusing or underusing strengths and consider how mindfulness can help them adjust their responses to different situations.

Apply:

In this stage, participants intentionally apply their strengths in everyday life, using mindfulness to guide how they balance and express them. Whether in relationships, work, or personal goals, this phase emphasizes putting strengths into action in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

Maintain (to Grow):

The final phase focuses on sustaining the mindful use of strengths over time. Participants develop strategies to integrate mindfulness and strengths into their personal development journey, fostering long-term growth and commitment to strengths-based living.

Adapted from Niemiec, 2024.

Class design

1. Week 1: Mindfulness

- Introduction to mindfulness and the concept of "autopilot mode."
- Developing awareness of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors through mindful practices such as body scans, sensation awareness, and reflections.
- Fostering emotional regulation and self-awareness through mindful observation of internal experiences.

2. Week 2: Character Strengths

- Exploration of VIA Character Strengths and their alignment with core identity.
- Increasing recognition and application of personal strengths in both personal and social contexts.
- Understanding strengths overuse and underuse and their impact on well-being and relationships.
- Introducing the science of compassion

3. Week 3: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities

- Applying mindfulness and character strengths to reframe challenges and obstacles.
- Cultivating a growth-oriented mindset that enhances personal resilience.
- Using mindfulness to shift perspective and strategically apply strengths when faced with adversity.
- Exploring compassionate triggers.

4. Week 4: Mindfulness in Everyday Life

- Integrating mindfulness into routine activities to enhance presence, reduce stress, and create positive experiences.
- Supporting emotional and mental well-being through habitual mindful behaviors.
- SEL introduction.
- Applying compassion to strengths based practices.

5. Week 5: Your Relationship with Yourself and Others

- Enhancing interpersonal relationships through the application of mindfulness and strengths-based communication.

- Developing awareness of emotional triggers (hot buttons) and improving conflict resolution skills through mindful listening and speaking.
- Strengthening social interactions by recognizing and affirming strengths in oneself and others.
- Creating new perspectives through compassionate writing.

6. **Week 6: Mindfulness and the Golden Mean**

- Understanding the balance between strengths underuse and overuse to ensure appropriate strengths expression in varying contexts.
- Using reframing techniques to optimize the use of strengths in different situations and social dynamics.
- Promoting self-regulation and responsible decision-making through mindful strengths optimization.
- Understanding burnout through compassionate thinking.

7. **Week 7: Authenticity and Goodness**

- Aligning strengths and mindfulness practices to foster authenticity, purpose, and meaningful engagement in life.
- Setting mindful goals that reflect core values and foster sustained personal and professional growth.
- Finding forgiveness in oneself.

8. **Week 8: Engagement with Life and Final Reflection and Application**

- Creating a lifestyle that will create fulfillment and engagement.
- Encouraging deep engagement with life by integrating self-awareness, mindfulness, and strengths into daily routines and decision-making.
- Creating a compassionate heart.
- Completing a final project that synthesizes mindfulness, strengths, and compassion into a long-term vision for well-being and life engagement.

Main Curriculum

WEEK 1: Mindfulness and Autopilot

1.1 Week 1 Objective

By the end of this first week class, students will have a solid understanding of mindfulness and its importance. They will begin to recognize how autopilot mode and inner dialogues affect their daily lives and gain an understanding of the meaning and value of compassion. This class lays the foundational concepts for the entire program

1.2 Facilitator Background Knowledge

Teacher's Note: Encourage students to take their own notes during this class, either by writing them down or using voice notes on their phone.

Please click [Class 1](#) to read through the background information for this class, such as the definition of mindfulness, the present moment what is MBSP, and what is compassion,

1.3 Week 1 Lesson Plan

Concepts covered :

- Mindfulness
- Autopilot Mode
- Inner Dialogue
- Compassion

Week 1 Day 1: Introduction to Mindfulness

Objective: By the end of the day, students will understand the concept of mindfulness, experience mindful practices, explore their inner dialogue, and reflect on their personal experiences with autopilot behavior.

Materials:

- [Week 1 Facilitator Check-In Guide](#)
- Workbook (p. 12, click [Session 1](#))
- Whiteboard/Smartboard (optional)

Activities: (45 Minutes Total)

1. Mindfulness Pre-Class Reflection (5 minutes):

- Reference: [Week 1 Facilitator Check-In Guide](#)

2. Mindfulness Introduction (10 minutes):

Teacher's Note: Use the videos to explain the concepts.
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- Show video: “[Mindfulness Intro](#)” in online course section 1.1
 - i. Video description: Define mindfulness: “paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment.”
- Show Video: “[The Cycle of Mindfulness](#)” in online course section 1.1
 - i. Video description: Explain the Mindful Cycle (mind-wandering and returning focus) and how returning to mindfulness is more important than staying mindful.
- Show Video: “[Garden Metaphor](#)” in online course section 1.1
 - i. Video description: Use the garden metaphor to visualize mindfulness as cultivating awareness.
- Show Video: “[Benefits of being mindful](#)” in online course section 1.1
 - i. Video description: Benefits of Mindfulness Discuss how mindfulness reduces reactivity, increases awareness, and leads to more intentional actions.
- Discuss: Share examples where mindfulness could be useful, like staying calm during a test. Ask students to share some of their examples.

3. Beginner’s Mind Activity (20 minutes):

- **Facilitate the following activities.** Use the Facilitator's Guide found here for step by step instructions: [1.4.6 BEGINNER'S MIND](#)
- **Show Video:** “[Beginner's Mind](#)” in online course section 1.1
- **Have students choose** a familiar object (e.g., a pen, book) and observe it with a beginner’s mindset, as if they’ve never seen it before. Be as curious about the object as you can.
- Encourage them to **write down** every detail they notice in the workbook.
- **Pair students** and have them “sell” their object with exaggerated curiosity, gaining points for details and enthusiasm.
- **Discuss** how adopting a beginner’s mind can make even familiar tasks more engaging.

4. Check out (5 minutes)

- Introduce assignment(s) for next class/throughout week
 - i. Body Scan
 - ii. Beginner’s Mind
- [Leave the learning space](#)

Assignments:

- Practice the body scan
- Adopt a beginner’s mind while performing an activity that you usually go into autopilot mode during.