

## Supporting Adolescent Health And Well-Being (Sdg 3) Through Mindfulness And Social Emotional Learning: A Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT Adolescent mental health challenges have increased significantly in recent years, highlighting the need for effective school-based interventions that support emotional well-being. In alignment with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, this systematic literature review aims to examine the implementation and outcomes of mindfulness and social emotional learning (SEL) interventions for adolescents. The study employed the PRISMA framework and a PICOS model to identify and analyze relevant peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025. Searches were conducted through Google Scholar using keywords related to mindfulness, SEL, adolescent mental health, and well-being. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, six studies were reviewed in-depth. Findings indicate that mindfulness practices—such as mindful breathing and reflective journaling—and SEL approaches focusing on self-awareness, emotion regulation, and social skills have positive effects on adolescents' mental health, including reduced anxiety, stress, and mild depression. Improvements were also observed in emotional regulation, resilience, and overall well-being. However, challenges in implementation persist, including limited teacher training, insufficient time within formal curricula, and cultural resistance in certain contexts. This review supports the integration of mindfulness and SEL programs into educational settings to enhance adolescent health and well-being.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, SEL, adolescent mental health, well-being, systematic review, SDG 3

## 118 Introduction

Adolescence brings a variety of difficulties, including physical, biological, psychological challenges, and social transformations. Education specialists have identified a growing need for skills related to emotional understanding, decision-making, social engagement, and conflict management in society<sup>1</sup>. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 emphasizes the importance of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages, including adolescents who are considered a vulnerable group facing various physical and mental health challenges. In this context, education serves as a strategic pathway to sustainably achieve the targets of SDG 3. Through education, values related to health and well-being can be instilled from an early age and further developed through integrated programs within the school environment. Therefore, schools play a vital role not only as centers for academic learning but also as supportive spaces that foster healthy behaviors and psychosocial well-being among adolescents.

One effective strategy to mitigate the impact of prolonged stress is to equip adolescence with specific skills that enhance their social and emotional abilities, allowing them to manage stress in a healthy manner. In recent years, classroom-based social and emotional learning

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(SEL) and mindfulness programs have been recognized as a successful method for supporting adolescence's overall well-being and development<sup>2</sup>. Social-emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process of cultivating abilities such as setting goals, regulating emotions, making thoughtful and responsible choices, and building as well as sustaining healthy interpersonal relationships (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)<sup>3</sup>. Mindfulness is defined as the practice of attending to the present moment with complete awareness and acceptance to cultivate reflexivity, inner peace, and equanimity. Studies have also shown the benefits of mindfulness on mental health and wellbeing for elementary and middle-aged school children and high school-aged adolescents.

Until now, there has been a lack of up-to-date systematic reviews that specifically explore the combined application of Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in enhancing adolescent health and well-being. This absence underscores the urgency for a thorough evaluation of existing literature to guide practical implementation. Evidence-based knowledge is essential for educators and policymakers in designing effective curricula and intervention strategies that are responsive to the unique developmental needs of adolescents. Therefore, this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) seeks to address this research gap by offering a scientific basis for the formulation of informed, school-based initiatives aimed at promoting adolescent well-being.

## 119 Research Methods

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify and analyze relevant research on the integration of Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in promoting adolescent health and well-being. The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar as the primary database, utilizing a combination of keywords such as "Mindfulness", "Social Emotional Learning", "adolescent well-being", and "school-based intervention". After a comprehensive screening process based on relevance, duplication, and eligibility, six articles were selected for in-depth analysis. The research question for this studies are RQ1: What mindfulness and social emotional learning (SEL) approaches have been implemented to support adolescent health and well-being?, RQ2: How do mindfulness and SEL interventions impact adolescent mental health and well-being indicators aligned with SDG 3 targets?, RQ3: What challenges and opportunities arise in implementing mindfulness and SEL programs for adolescents across different educational and cultural contexts?

## 120 Result and Discussion

**Mindfulness and SEL Implementation** Based on the selected articles, the mindfulness and SEL approaches implemented in educational settings can be identified as follows.

**The Impact of Mindfulness and SEL for Adolescent Health** The integration of Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in educational contexts is increasingly recognized as a promising approach to support students' overall development. Both approaches emphasize the cultivation of inner awareness, emotional balance, and interpersonal skills that are essential for navigating the challenges of adolescence.

**Mindfulness and SEL Together**, these approaches not only enhance students' mental health and well-being but also promote better academic performance, classroom engagement, and social interactions. The combined implementation of Mindfulness and SEL thus represents a holistic strategy to support adolescent development in schools.

**Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Mindfulness and SEL** The implementation of Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in school settings presents both challenges and opportunities. The table below summarizes some common challenges and corre-

Table 11: Mindfulness and SEL Implementation

No.	Author	Implementation
1	Matsuba <i>et al.</i> , 2020	MindUp is a pre-K to 8th grade mindfulness-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program that consists of fifteen 45-minute lessons taught once a week.
2	Waldemar <i>et al.</i> , 2016	M-SEL follows the general orientation of CASEL so each experimental group received up to 12 interventions of 1 hour each addressing the five basic CASEL skills. The interventions started and finished with exercises of mindfulness of breath.
3	Halwani & Geha, 2022	The Mind-Up program was delivered to the experimental groups weekly as a 50-minute session given by the researcher.
4	Leod & Boyes, 2021	The SEL and study skills strategies along with the HF breathing technique were integrated into a psychology option course (offered in a 50-minute class, twice per week).

Table 12: The Impact of Mindfulness and SEL

No.	Author	Implementation
1	Matsuba <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Significant decreases in anger, hostility, and rejection; were reported by their teachers to be higher in positive affect and empathic behaviors; and showed greater increases in academic grades.
2	Waldemar <i>et al.</i> , 2016	Significantly improved in most mental health domains (emotional, conduct, relationship, and prosocial behavior) and in QoL scores. No changes occurred for attention deficit and hyperactivity symptoms.
3	Halwani & Geha, 2022	Improvement in the wellbeing of students in the experimental group from pre to post-tests intervention compared to those in the control group.
4	Leod & Boyes, 2021	Significant increases in self-efficacy for preparation and test-taking, increased academic achievement, decreased worry about future social stress, and increased positive affect.

sponding opportunities identified in the context of implementing Mindfulness and SEL programs in schools.

## 121 Conclusion

This systematic review highlights the significant role that mindfulness and social emotional learning interventions play in supporting adolescent health and well-being. Evidence from diverse studies indicates that these approaches effectively enhance emotional regulation, reduce stress, promote mental resilience, and improve social relationships among adolescents. Future research should focus on culturally responsive practices, scalability, and long-term impact to ensure these interventions are inclusive and sustainable across different contexts.

Table 13: Challenges and Opportunities

No.	Challenges	Opportunities
1	Lack of trained teachers or facilitators	Professional development and training programs for educators.
2	Limited time in the academic schedule	Integrating mindfulness and SEL into existing subjects or daily routines.
3	Minimal funding or resources	Collaborations with external organizations.
4	Inconsistent implementation across classrooms or schools	Developing clear guidelines and standardized frameworks for integration.

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