Mindfulness & Social Emotional Learning

Mindful Education can enhance Social Emotional Learning through a deeper awareness of self, a greater capacity to regulate our emotions, a heightened experience of our lived human connection with others and an expanded range of choices at our disposal that may lead to successful solutions to personal and social challenges.
“ANYTHING THAT’S HUMAN IS MENTIONABLE, AND ANYTHING THAT IS MENTIONABLE CAN BE MORE MANAGEABLE. WHEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS, THEY BECOME LESS OVERWHELMING, LESS UPSETTING, AND LESS SCARY. THE PEOPLE WE TRUST WITH THAT IMPORTANT TALK CAN HELP US KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE.”

― FRED ROGERS

Self-awareness deepens when enhanced by the mindfulness practices of focusing attention and self-compassion.

SELF AWARENESS
• Identifying emotions
• Accurate self-perception
• Recognizing strengths
• Self-confidence
• Self-efficacy
What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.

Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment.

...paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Noticing what is happening now, inside and outside your body and mind, with kindness and curiosity.

MINDFUL EATING

What did you notice about your piece of chocolate?

What flavors, textures, sensations were you aware of?

Mindfulness helps to create space and replace impulsive reactions with thoughtful responses.

Without Mindfulness

Stimulus ➔ Reaction

With Mindfulness

Stimulus ➔ Mindfulness ➔ Response
1. Pause when you hear the warning bell.
2. Take 3 long, slow in-breaths when you hear the bell and then exhale slowly.

**SELF-MANAGEMENT**
- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal setting
- Organizational skills

Mindfulness increases students' emotional regulation skills, which enhances their ability to resolve conflict more creatively or to say how they're feeling in an emotionally balanced way.
PAIR & SHARE
What activities or lessons do you currently use that help foster Self-awareness & Self-Management?

1. Hold your mug in front of your face.
2. Breathe in through your nose to smell the delicious aromas of your imaginary hot chocolate.
3. Breathe out (blow) through your mouth to cool it off before you take a sip!
4. Repeat.

Gratitude Journal
Step 1: Log in to your Google Account
Step 2: Click “Make A Copy” with this link and it will automatically save in your Google Slides Drive
https://goo.gl/VWZhsr
Step 3: Complete it daily.
From the Source: Teens talk about benefits of Mindfulness

"Release" by Julie Bayer Salzman (Wavecrest Films)

Grounded in Neuroscience (Hand/Brain Model)

SPINAL CORD (WRIST)
- A collection of cells and neurons that send signals from body to brain.

BRAINSTEM (OPEN PALM)
- Reptilian brain: fight, flight, freeze, collapse. First part of the brain to develop in utero, reflexive behaviors, muscle control, balance, breathing, heartbeat, feeding/digestion, and reproduction.

LIMBIC AREA: THUMB (Mammalian brain)
- Center of emotion and learning. Works with the brainstem to create emotions and various memories.

Includes:
- Amygdala: (guard dog) emotional center, fight, flight, freeze. Filters information or open flood gates.
- Hippocampus: (memory) Learning, experiences, and emotional responses are stored here.
Cortex (Fingers)
Prefrontal Cortex (Fingernails)

- Cortex: largest part of the brain.
  Shaped by experiences, think, reflect, manage emotions.
- Prefrontal Cortex: (Wise Owl)
  Thinking, planning, problem solving, reflection and integration.
  Controls impulses, self awareness and intuition.

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MRI scans have shown that after an 8-week mindfulness course there is a reduction in the size of the amygdala which is associated with the initiation of the body’s stress response.

While the amygdala shrinks the prefrontal cortex becomes thicker.

Inhale as you trace up your thumb, exhale as you come back into your hand. Repeat with your fingers.

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“Stress is what arises when something you care about is at stake.”

SOCIAL AWARENESS
- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others
Mindfulness increases students' empathy by helping them to regulate their emotions rather than get emotionally overwhelmed when faced with a difficult situation. As a result, their capacity to notice another person's suffering and respond to it increases.

**Beginning Anew Letter**

**to**

**from**

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1. Look around you and notice 5 things you have not noticed before.
2. 4 things you can feel
3. 3 things you can hear
4. 2 things you can smell
5. 1 thing you can taste

Mindfulness increases compassion. Thus, when students practice SEL skills such as creating a win-win solution with someone who challenges them, they are doing so with more compassionate understanding.
1. Long, slow inhale. On your exhale, smile.
2. Focus your attention on your smile as you inhale and exhale.

10-5-2 Rule

Within 10 feet of someone, acknowledge them with a smile, head nod, eye contact.

Within 5 feet of someone, make a verbal connection - say hello, howdy, good morning, how are you, what’s up.

Within 2 feet of someone, make physical contact - high five, fist bump, hug, handshake.
RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving Problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical Responsibility

Mindfulness increases cognitive flexibility and creativity, which gives students a wider range of responses to challenging situations.

1. Look for colors of the rainbow around the room. Start with red, once you find something red in the room, take a long, slow in breath and exhale.
2. Then move on to orange and do the same.
3. Follow the same steps for the rest of the colors in the rainbow.
Benefits for Educators

- Demonstrated reduced stress and burnout
- Reported greater efficacy in doing their jobs
- Had more emotionally supportive and better organized classrooms (based on independent observations)
- More responsive to student needs (less emotionally reactive)

PRACTICES FOR YOU

- Meditation (Calm, Insight Timer, Headspace)
- Walking into school/drive: Set intentions
- Bell of Mindfulness - 15 min
- Listening to Music - Calm and upbeat
- Connecting to nature (Mindful Walk/Hike)
- Self-Compassion
**Benefits for Students**

- Improved attention and executive function
- Greater social and emotional skills, including emotion regulation, behavior in school, and empathy
- Enhanced well-being, including lower test anxiety, stress, post-traumatic symptoms and depression
- Students who meditate before an exam perform better than those who do not
- Skilful responses to difficult situations

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**How to Build Staff Well-Being**

*Well-being is “a state in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community.”* (WHO, 2004)

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**MINDFUL SIT/ANCHOR BREATH**

Let your breath be your anchor.
Teacher Stress & Burnout

How can we support our teachers and create opportunities to build well-being?

How can we help them to FLOURISH?

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The 5 Elements of Well-Being

Schools can use PERMA to build teacher well-being as a way to support schools to flourish

1. **Positive Emotions** (P)
   - Feeling good, positive emotions, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment

2. **Engagement** (E)
   - Fulfilling work, interesting hobbies, "flow"

3. **Relationships** (R)
   - Authentic social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction

4. **Meaning** (M)
   - Having a purpose, finding meaning in life

5. **Accomplishments** (A)
   - Ambition, realistic goals, important achievements, pride in yourself

The 5 Elements of Well-Being

Schools can use PERMA to build teacher well-being as a way to support schools to flourish

1. **Positive Emotions** (P)
   - Improving your performance and resilience at work by dialing up more heartfelt positivity and dialing down heart-straining negativity
   - WHAT: Track the Good Stuff
   - HOW:
     - Establish a “What Went Well” board in the staffroom
     - Keep a gratitude diary, app or jar nearby
     - Encourage savoring of positive events
     - Supporting autonomy to design/shape their classrooms and learning spaces

   **PAIR & SHARE:**
   - How does your district support/prioritize the positive emotions of your staff?
2. ENGAGEMENT

Boost your confidence, engagement and energy at work by developing your strengths - those things you're good at and enjoy doing.

**WHAT:** Identify character strengths

**How:**
- Take the VIA survey to identify strengths
- Create a strengths tree in the staffroom
- Encourage goal setting that relates to passion, values & interests

**CHARACTER STRENGTHS**

**WAY IMPORTANT?**
- Our brain is wired for the wrong (negativity bias)
- Less than 20% of people are flourishing
- Character Strengths are the pathways to well-being
- Application of character strengths support living a thriving life and offer support for handling tough times

**HOW TO USE THEM & REAP BENEFITS?**
- Connect to our goals
- Make it personal
- Interventions
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

TAKE SURVEY
https://www.viacharacter.org

3. RELATIONSHIPS
Lower your levels of stress, improve your concentration and focus and advance your career by creating genuine connections with others.

WHAT: Share, Collaborate, Support

HOW:
• Encourage random acts of kindness
• Incorporate thank you cards into staff meetings
• Establish mentoring, coaching programs, PD
• Provide opportunities for positive feedback

When and how are we providing opportunities for staff to collaborate and celebrate what they are creating in their classrooms?
4. MEANING

Heighten your motivation, commitment and sense of satisfaction at work by understanding how what you do positively impacts others.

WHAT: Reflect on meaning and purpose

HOW:
• Redefine your job description. What is your real role?
• Put pictures, messages, vision board on your desk to highlight what is important to you.
• Practice moments of mindfulness to be present without judgement.

WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?

- I am inspired by...
- I am proud of...
- I get excited to...
- I am happy when
  - doing...
  - being...
  - having...

I LOVE ME WHEN

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
Keep going... make a long list.
A PEAK EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE WAS...

PASSION & PURPOSE
what do you desire?

POSITIVITY LIST:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am inspired by</th>
<th>I love me when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

MY PURPOSE IS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO</th>
<th>BY</th>
<th>SO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>others can discover their best version of self and flourish in &amp; out of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MY LIFE PURPOSE

To: inspire, teach, lead & empower

For: school communities

By: creating programs & workshops

So: others can discover their best version of self and flourish in & out of the classroom.
WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE

• PURPOSE AS AN ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
  • WHAT DO WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN?
  • WHAT DOES OUR DISTRICT TEACH?

• WHAT IS OUR MISSION (HOW DO WE FULFILL THIS PURPOSE)
  • AS AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BUILDING
  • AS AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

5. ACCOMPLISHMENT
Move beyond your present limitations and hone up your true potential by challenging your limits, igniting hope and cultivating grit.

WHAT: Set Authentic Goals

HOW:
• Encourage SMART goal setting (specific, measurable, authentic, relevant, set a time)
• Give opportunities to celebrate achievements

BRAINSTORM:
How do we currently help our staff set goals and celebrate success?
How could we increase these opportunities?

PAIR & SHARE
Name one takeaway from today and how you can incorporate it into your school community!
**Adult Resources**

- Teach, Breathe, Learn: Mindfulness in and out of the Classroom - Meesa Srinivasan
- Mindful Parenting: Simple and Powerful Solutions for Raising Creative, Engaged, Happy Kids in Today’s Hectic World - Kristen Race
- Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom - Patricia Jennings
- How to Train a Wild Elephant: And Other Adventures in Mindfulness - Jan Chozen Bays
- Mindfulness In Plain English - Bhante Henepola Gunaratana
- Take Time for You: Self-Care Action Plans for Educators - Tina Boogren

**Adolescent Resources**

- How to Train a Wild Elephant: And Other Adventures in Mindfulness - Jan Chozen Bays
- Mindfulness In Plain English - Bhante Henepola Gunaratana
- Wide Awake: A Buddhist Guide for Teens - Diana Winston
- Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life - Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Mindfulness for Teen Anxiety - Christopher Willard
- A Still Quiet Place for Teens - Amy Saltzman
- The Mindful Teen - Dzung X. Vo

**Children's Resources**

- Zach Gets Frustrated - William Mulcahy
- Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents) - Eline Snel
- Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda - Lauren Alderfer
- Charlotte and the Quiet Place - Deborah Sosin
- King Calm - Susan D. Sweet PhD, Brenda S. Miles PhD
- Breathe Like A Bear - Kira Willey
- I Am Peace: A Book Of Mindfulness