



Mindful Moments in the Classroom: Leveraging Empathy and Understanding in Education

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Our Goal for Today



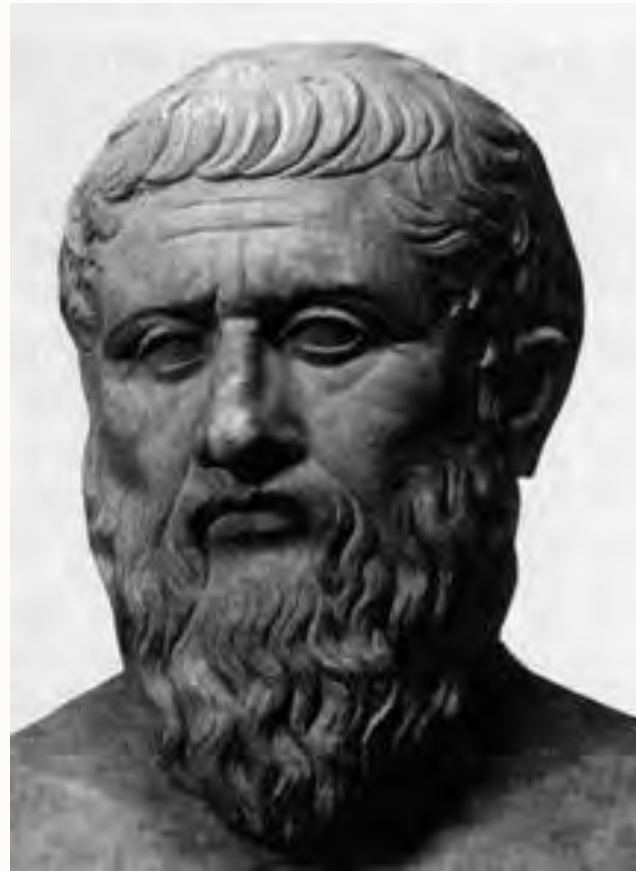
- ❖ Explore the research around social emotional learning and its impact on classroom behaviors and outcomes
- ❖ Understand the practice of mindfulness and its benefits through discussion and video demonstrations as it relates to children as well as to teachers
- ❖ Practice some simple mindful techniques
- ❖ Discover ways in which educators can lower their stress and improve children's experiences in their classrooms

The Realities of Teaching Today

- ❖ Reports of teacher stress and burnout are at an all time high
- ❖ 17% of new teachers are leaving the field of education within the first five years
- ❖ Students are experiencing increased traumatic and adverse situations



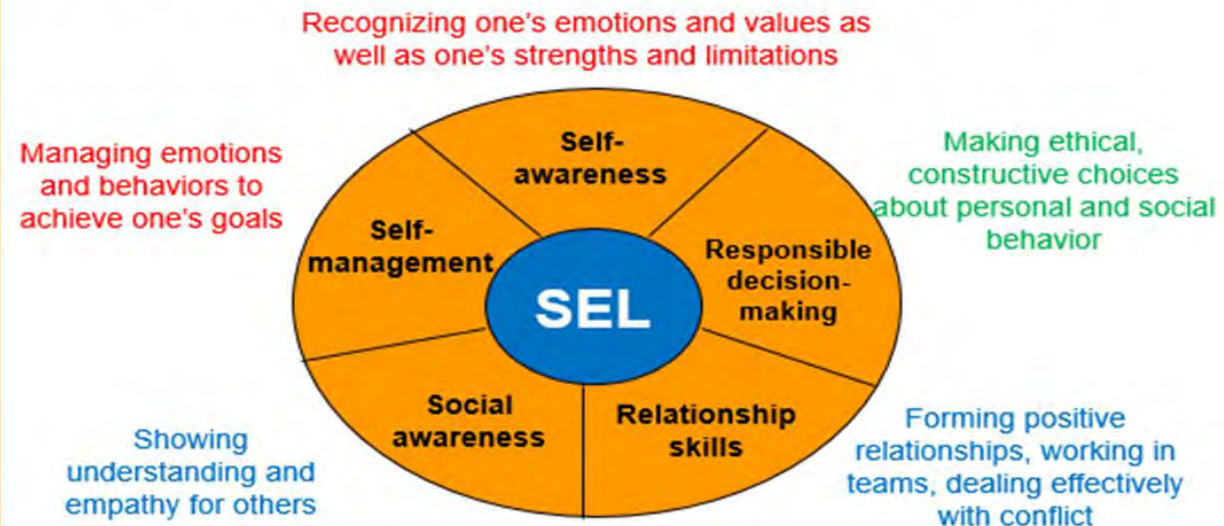
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)- The Back Story



Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL is the process whereby children and adults develop essential social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes related to:





WARNING

**ASSUMPTIONS
AHEAD**

A.C.E.S.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Poverty, abuse, domestic violence and more – is on the rise.
- Dr. Robert Block, former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, feels that ACES “are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.”



*Michelle Kinder, January 25, 2017, *Why Mindfulness Belongs in the Classroom*, Mindful.

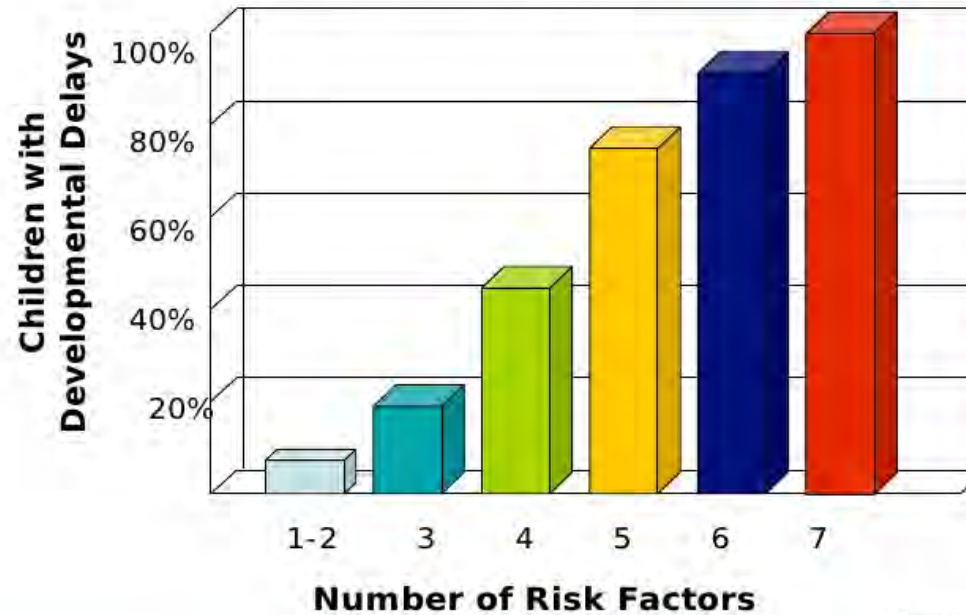
What Makes an Experience Traumatic?

- Overwhelming, very painful, very scary
- Fight or Flight incapacitated
- Threat to physical or psychological safety
- Loss of control
- Unable to regulate emotions

Trauma is the response to the event, not the event itself.

Adversity Impairs Development in the First Three Years

Significant Adversity Impairs Development in the First Three Years

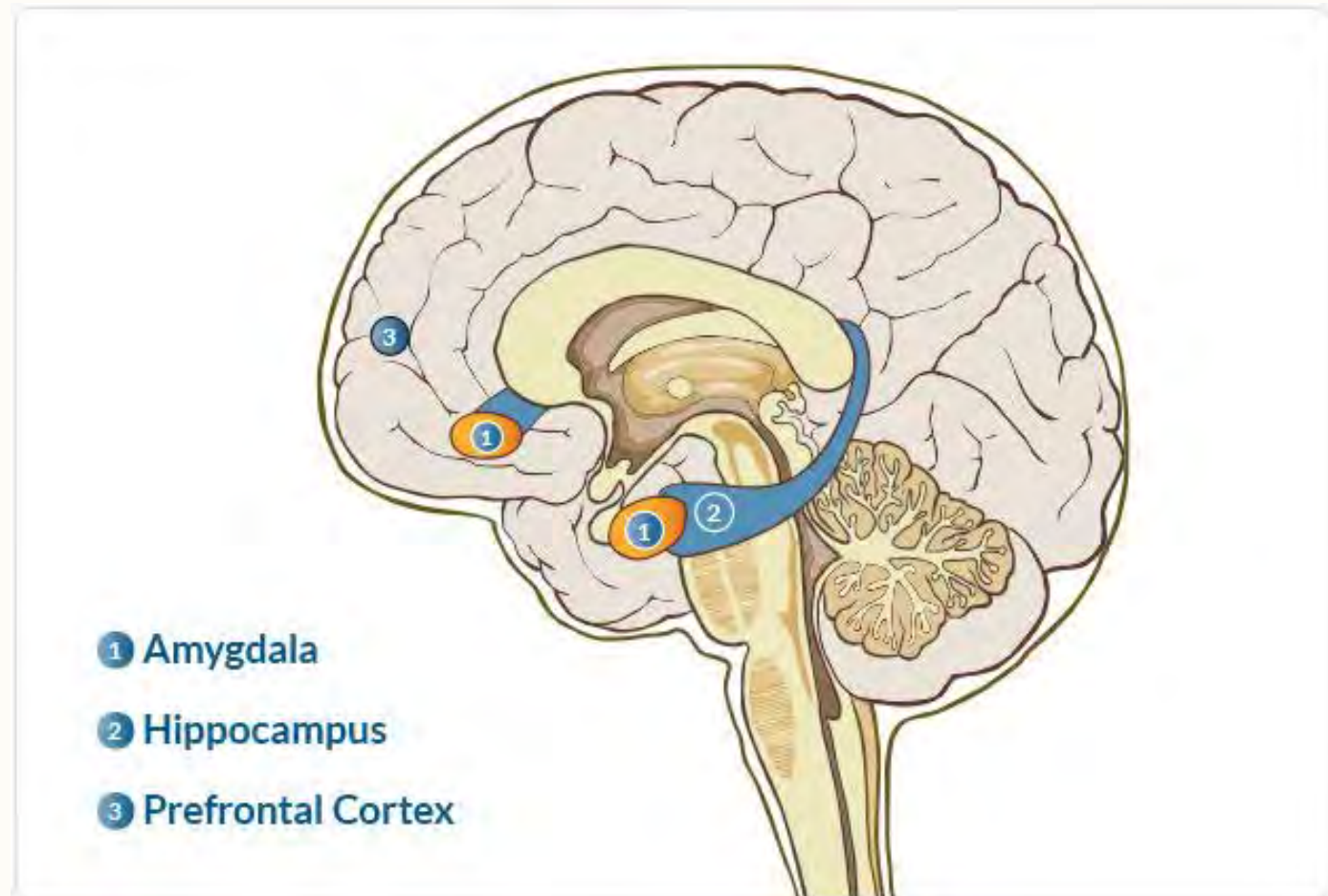


Source: Barth, et al. (2008)

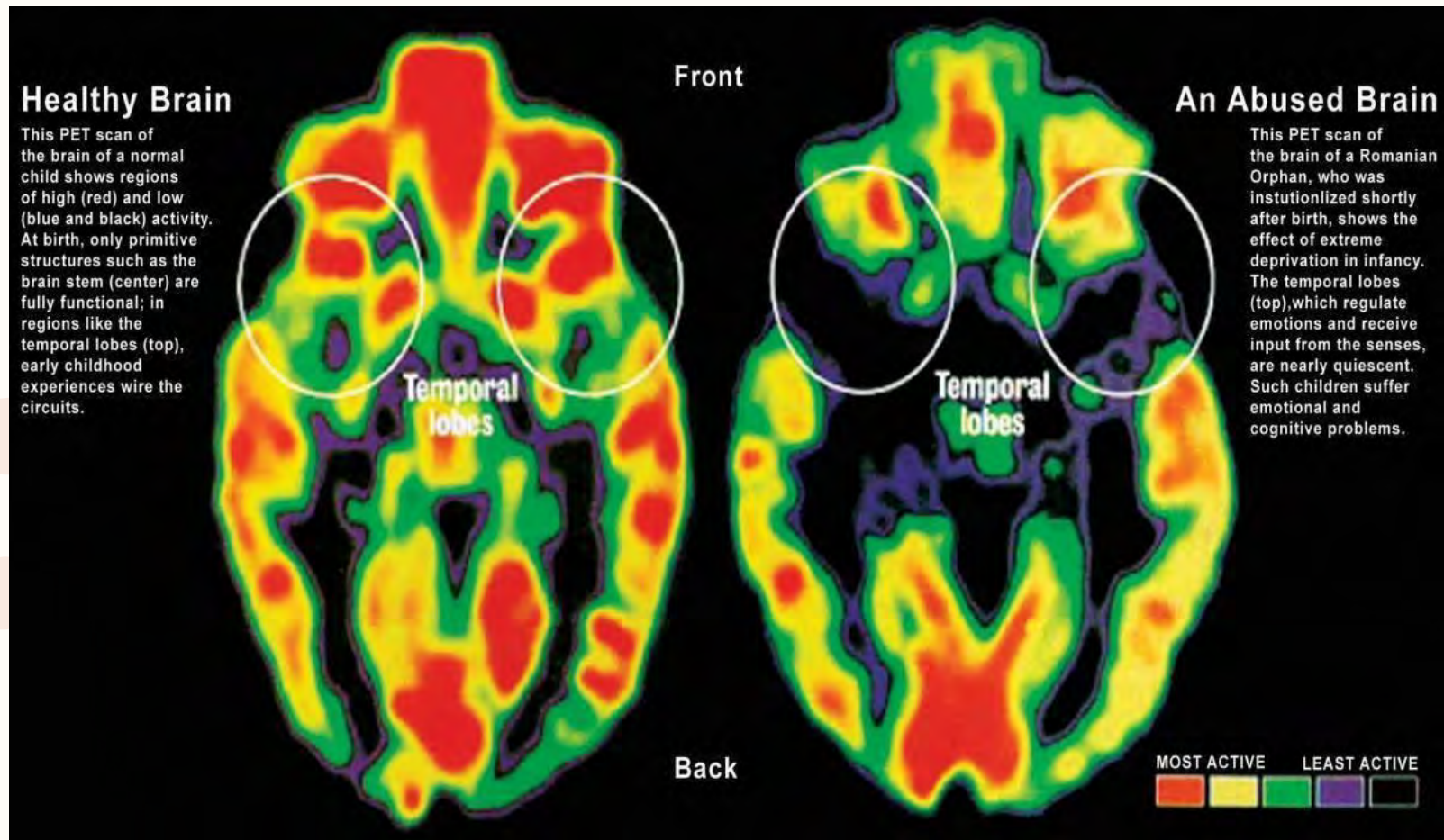
Trauma's Impact on Brain Development

- **Attachment:** Trouble with relationships, boundaries, empathy, and social isolation
- **Physical Health:** Impaired sensorimotor development, coordination problems, increased medical problems, and somatic symptoms
- **Emotional Regulation:** Difficulty identifying or labeling feelings and communicating needs
- **Dissociation:** Altered states of consciousness, amnesia, impaired memory
- **Cognitive Ability:** Problems with focus, learning, processing new information, language development, planning and orientation to time and space
- **Self-Concept:** Lack of consistent sense of self, body image issues, low self-esteem, shame and guilt
- **Behavioral Control:** Difficulty controlling impulses, oppositional behavior, aggression, disrupted sleep and eating patterns, trauma re-enactment

The Brain Connection



Physical Effects of Trauma on the Brain

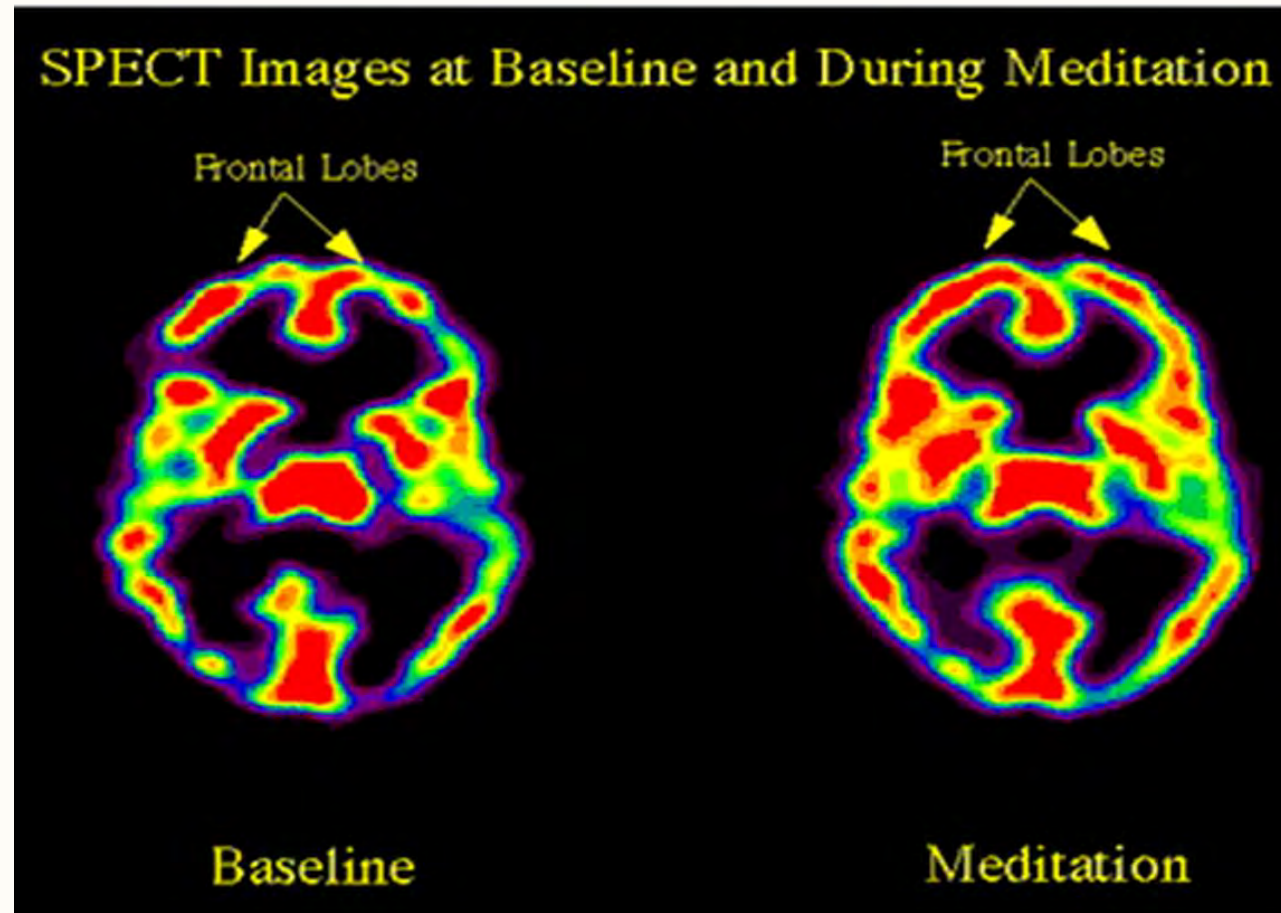


Managing the Internal World

- From Toxic to Tolerable
- Regulating the nervous system



Mindfulness Changes the Brain



mind · ful · ness

/mīn(d)f(ə)lnəs/

Maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment without judgement.



Outcomes/Benefits

Attention- Numerous studies show improved attention₁, including better performance on objective tasks that measure attention₂

Compassion- People randomly assigned to mindfulness training are more likely to help someone in need₆ and have greater self-compassion₇

Emotion Regulation- Mindfulness is associated with emotion regulation across a number of studies₃. Mindfulness creates changes in the brain that correspond to less reactivity₄, and better ability to engage in tasks even when emotions are activated₅

Calming- Studies find that mindfulness reduces feelings of stress₈ and improves anxiety and distress when placed in a stressful social situation₉

*Nine Studies cited in notes

What Does That Look Like?

Mindful Children

- Better able to focus
- Experience increased calm
- Experience increased impulse control
- Find skillful ways to respond to difficult emotions

Mindful Teachers

- Are responsive to children's needs
- Maintain emotional balance
- Thrive professionally and personally
- Have healthy relationships at work and at home

Creating Healthy Habits of Mind

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Eight Principles of Teaching Mindfulness Meditation to Adolescents

1. Clear goals
2. Non-attachment to logistics
3. Effective Techniques
4. Time
5. Facilitator's role
6. Metaphors
7. Process the experience
8. Self-disclosure

*These principles are adapted from A Mindfulness-Based Approach to Working with High-Risk Adolescents by Sam Himmelstein.

Take Care of Yourself First, Then Assist Others



Goals of Mindfulness for Teachers

- Manage all of the demands of teaching
- Avoid burn-out
- Enhance self-efficacy
- Enhance positive relationships between teachers and students

How We Accomplish Those Goals

- 1) Build knowledge and skill through practice
- 2) Develop an awareness of our inner and outer experiences
- 3) Learn how to **Respond** rather than **React**
- 4) Care for ourselves by becoming more aware of our thoughts and feelings
- 5) Building resilience through practice

The Evidence is Out There

When Teachers learn mindfulness, they not only reap personal benefits such as reduced stress and burnout but their schools do as well.

Studies find that Youth benefit from learning mindfulness in terms of improved cognitive outcomes, social-emotional skills, and well being. In turn, such benefits may lead to long-term improvements in life.

*Five Citations in notes

How Do You Spend Your Time?

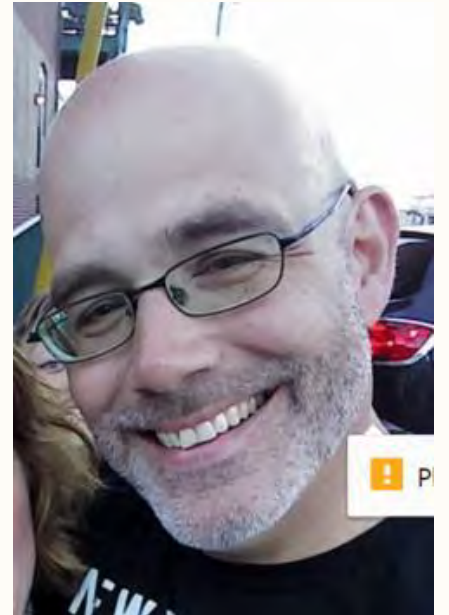


Practice Makes Peaceful



Stories from the Field

Mr. Sean Hogan
School District of Lancaster
8th Grade ELA Teacher
Dabbler in Mindfulness



Getting Started

- Why did I decide to try it?
- How did I introduce it?



Buy-In

- How I gained the trust/buy-in from students
- What I do when I don't don't get it



Obstacles

- Administration
- Professional Development
- Resources



Where Are We Now

- How is it going?
- Examples of successful lessons and strategies

Where Are We Now?



Just Breathe

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Mindful Appreciation

thankful
→ & →
grateful



find your intention

Purpose: Setting an intention supports the changes we want to make in our lives by helping us be more mindful during our day. We can check in regularly and ask ourselves if our actions are in alignment with our intention and if they are not, we can get back on track.

Application: Setting an intention every day provides an opportunity to give meaning to our work. It reminds us why we are teachers, the value and importance of teaching to the lives of our students and to society in general.

Mindful Listening Exercise



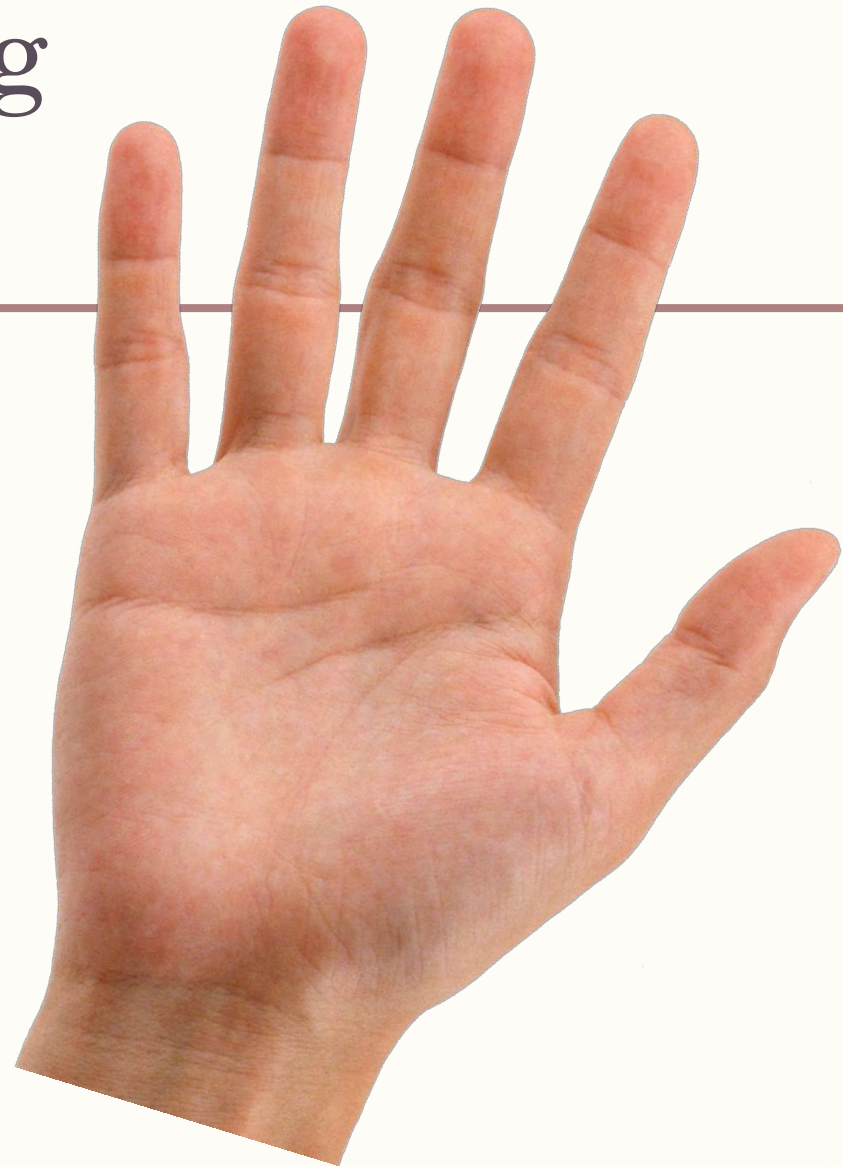
GoNoodle



Mindful Walking



Hand Tracing




Mindful Schools

Mindful Schools

Engaging children. Supporting educators.
Transforming schools.



Mindful Teachers

 Mindful
teachers



Living, Learning, & Teaching with Mindful Awareness

Hands On Solutions



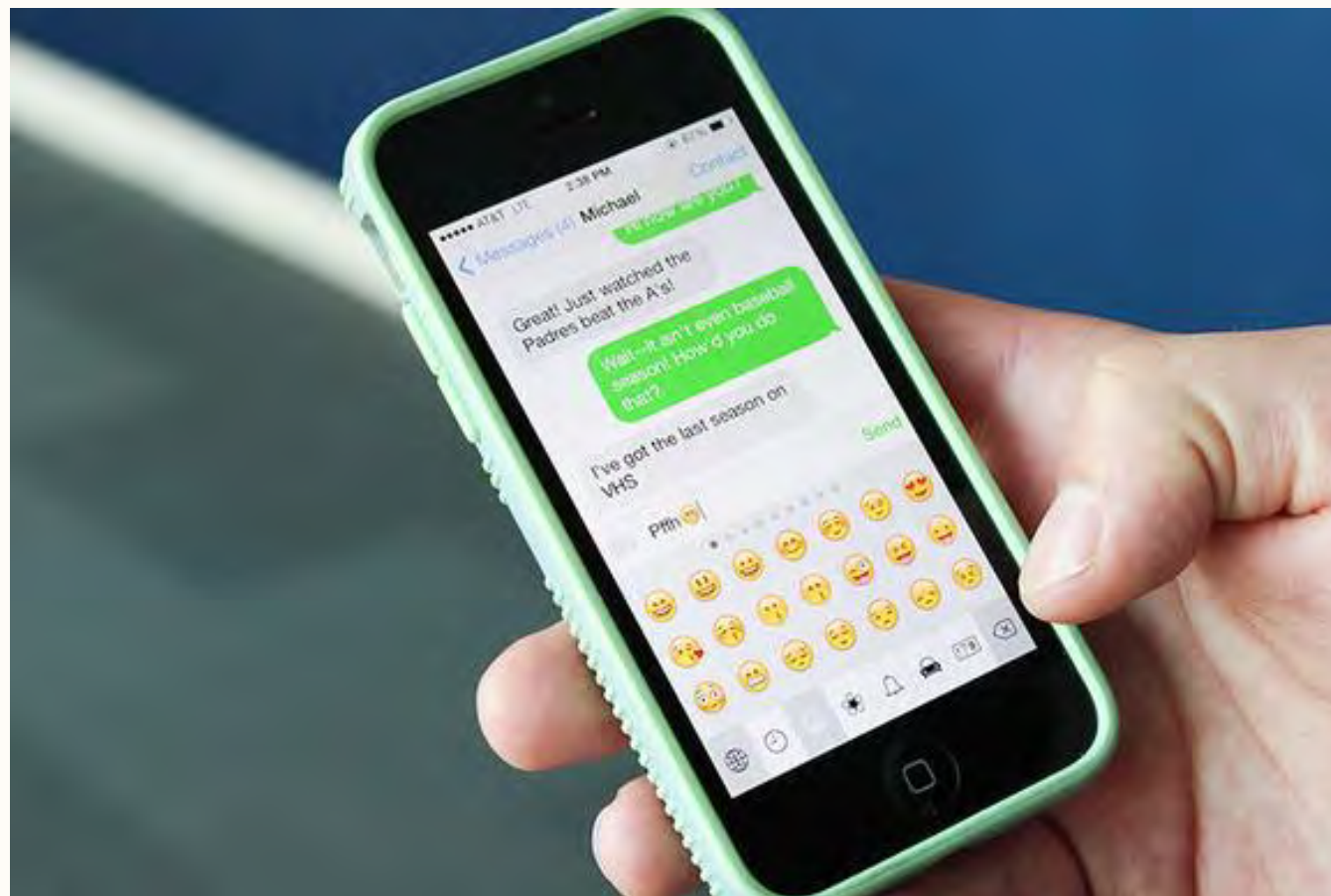
- Breathing Sticks Game
- Levels
- Glitter Jar
- Clouds Disappearing

Mindfulness Bells



Willard, C. (2010). *Child's mind: Mindfulness practices to help our children be more focused, calm and relaxed*. Berkley, CA.

.b



RESOURCES



❖ Book List (Handout)


❖ Mindful Bells Suggestions (Handout)

❖ List of Apps (Handout)

❖ Center for Investigating Healthy Minds:

<http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/cihmProjEducation.html#kindness>

❖ Mindful Schools: <http://www.mindfulschools.org/>



I AM
grateful

Apps for Guided Mindfulness Practice

- ❖ Mindfulness
- ❖ Sleep Easily
- ❖ Savasana
- ❖ Headspace
- ❖ Breathe
- ❖ Calm
- ❖ OMG Meditate
- ❖ Buddify
- ❖ Stop Breathe and Think

Additionally, Mindful Schools (www.mindfulschools.org) has wonderful teacher resources for mindful practice in the classroom



Common Metaphors to Describe Mindfulness to Children

- ❖ watching a spring or fountain bubble up with thoughts that trickle away
- ❖ Thoughts and events carried past on a conveyer belt
- ❖ Thoughts marked on signs carried by marchers in a parade
- ❖ Thoughts as autumn leaves landing softly on an empty and accepting blanket
- ❖ Thoughts as clouds, forming, dissolving, and reforming in the sky, then blowing away
- ❖ Sitting on a train looking out the window (rather than climbing out every time you see something interesting)

You can also use a white board to write a child's thought and then have them wipe it away

Mindful Appreciation



Activity: All you have to do is notice 5 things in your day that usually go unappreciated. These things can be objects or people – it's up to you. Use the list to list 5.

For example: electricity powers your teapot, the mail carrier delivers your mail, your clothes provide you warmth, your nose lets you smell the flowers in the park, your ears let you hear the birds in the tree by the bus stop, but...

My List:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Do you know how these things/processes came to exist, or how they really work?
- Have you ever properly acknowledged how these things benefit your life and the lives of others?
- Have you ever thought about what life might be like without these things?
- Have you ever stopped to notice their finer, more intricate details?
- Have you ever sat down and thought about the relationships between these things and how together they play an interconnected role in the functioning of the earth?

The point of this exercise is to simply give thanks and appreciate the seemingly insignificant things in life; the things that support our existence but rarely get a second thought amidst our desire for bigger and better things.

Once you have identified your 5 things, make it your duty to find out everything you can about their creation and purpose to truly appreciate the way in which they support your life.

Mindfulness Bells

(These do not need to be actual bells, but anything that happens- sounds or events- throughout or days)

- ❖ Red lights or stop signs
- ❖ Waiting for your computer to boot up
- ❖ The ringing of a telephone
- ❖ A staircase
- ❖ A doorknob
- ❖ Waiting for a pot to boil or coffee to brew
- ❖ A subway train pulling into a station
- ❖ Picking up an object (toothbrush, coffee mug)
- ❖ Standing in line
- ❖ Waiting for your bread to toast or your food to heat up
- ❖ Turning on the faucet
- ❖ Waiting a few breaths before checking your text messages or email



Mindfulness Book List

Marnie Aylesworth-Hogan

Teacher Books

- ❖ Mindfulness Skills for Kids & Teens by Debra Burdick (2014)
- ❖ Mindfulness Workbook for Dummies by Shamash Alidina and Joelle Marshall (2013)
- ❖ The Mind-Up Curriculum Grades Pre-K to 2 by Scholastic (2011)
- ❖ Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food by Jan Chozen Bays (2009)
- ❖ Mindful Discipline: A loving Approach to Setting Limits & Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child by Shauna Shapiro and Chris White (2014)
- ❖ Breathe, Chill: A Handy Book of Games and Techniques Introducing Breathing, Meditation and Relaxation to Kids and Teens by Lisa Roberts (2014)
- ❖ Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything By Deborah Schoeberlein David (2009)
- ❖ Teach Breathe Learn: Mindfulness In and Out of the Classroom by Meena Srinivasan (2014)
- ❖ Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom by Patricia A Jennings (2015)
- ❖ Child's Mind: Mindfulness Practices to Help Our Children Be More Focused, Calm and Relaxed by Christopher Willard (2010)
- ❖ The Art of Mindfulness for Children by Alisa Reddy (2014)

- ❖ Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community (2011)
- ❖ Mindful Movements: Ten Exercises for Well-Being by Thich Nhat Hanh (2008)

Children's Books

- ❖ The Lemonade Hurricane: A Story of Mindfulness and Medication By Licia Morelli (2015)
- ❖ The Tail of Max the Mindless Dog: A Children's Book on Mindfulness by Florenza Denise Lee and Michelle Wynn (2015)
- ❖ Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress by Laurie Grossman and Mr. Musumeci's 5th Grade Class (2016)