Social and Emotional Learning: Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Strategies

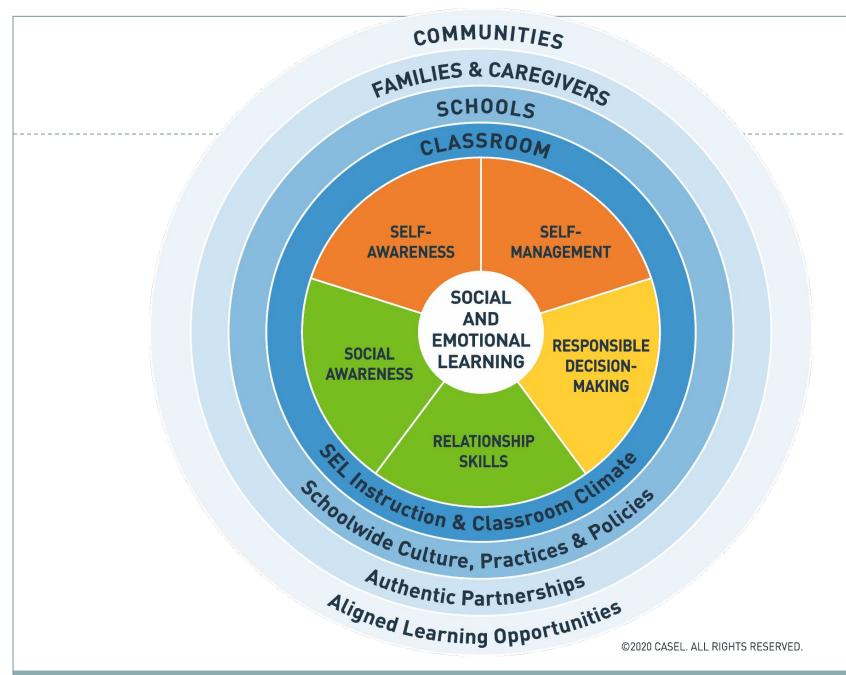
REBECCA K. SCHULMAN, PSY.D., BCBA-D LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, NJ #5860 BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYST - DOCTORAL

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> > Behavior Therapy Associates, P.A. 35 Clyde Road, Suite 101 Somerset, NJ 08873 www.behaviortherapyassociates.com

Rschulman@behaviortherapyassociates.com





What is Social and Emotional Learning?

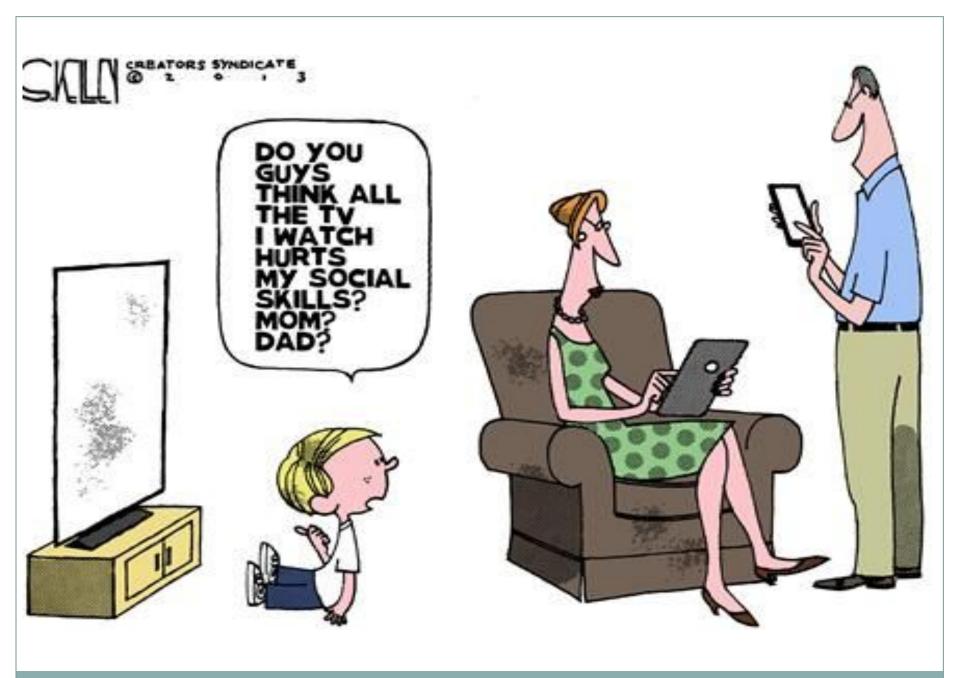
- *Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults:
 - acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions
 - o set and achieve positive goals
 - o feel and show empathy for others
 - o establish and maintain positive relationships
 - o and make responsible decisions.

^{*}http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/

Why Focus on SEL?

- These are the skills people need to effectively:
 - Recognize and manage emotions
 - Follow directions
 - Work well with others
 - Plan and achieve goals
 - Make responsible short- and long-term life choices
- SEL also targets
 - Cultural understanding
 - Community-building
 - Collaborative problem-solving
- Additional benefits of SEL
 - Shift home and school climate
 - Enhance effective communication
 - Reduce racial and socioeconomic learning inequities

(AEI/ Brookings Workgroup on Poverty and Opportunity, 2015; Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Borowski, 2018)



Importance of Relationships

"Social relationships, or the relative lack thereof, constitute a <u>major risk factor for</u>
<u>health--rivaling the effect of well established</u>
health risk factors such as cigarette smoking,
blood pressure, blood, lipids, obesity and
physical activity."

(House, Landis, and Umberson; Science 1988)

Social and Emotional Learning Outcomes

- A study reported in the <u>American Journal of Public Health</u> followed 750 youngsters in 4 diverse U.S. communities from 1991, when they were in kindergarten, until they were 25 years old.
 - They found "statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health."

Damon E. Jones, Mark Greenberg, and Max Crowley. (2015). Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness. American Journal of Public Health.

Read More: http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

Social and Emotional Learning Outcomes

- Durlak, Weissberg et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis of 213 rigorous studies of SEL in schools indicates that students receiving quality SEL instruction demonstrated:
 - o better academic performance: achievement scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction;
 - o **improved attitudes and behaviors**: greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior;
 - o **fewer negative behaviors**: decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals; and
 - **reduced emotional distress**: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.

Functional SEL Skills

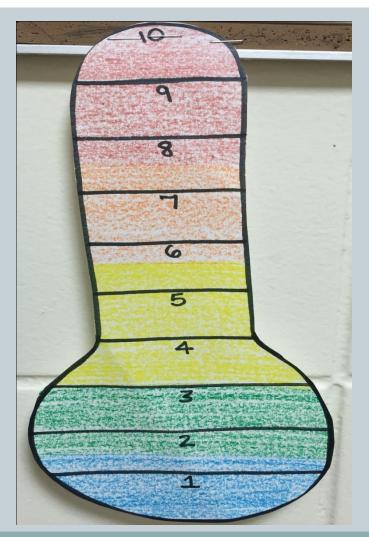
Feelings Identification

- Feelings vocabulary
- Matching feelings vocabulary to facial expressions and pictured situations
- Recognizing and labeling one's own feelings
- Recognizing and labeling someone else's feelings (empathy, perspective-taking)

Example Activity

- Gauging the Emotional Temperature in the Home
 - Begin the day with each child completing a developmentally appropriate worksheet or having a conversation
 - Identify how you are feeling (Observe and measure feelings 1-10)
 - Link experiences to feelings
 - Identify if additional support is needed for them to modulate their emotions and behaviors

Feelings Thermometers

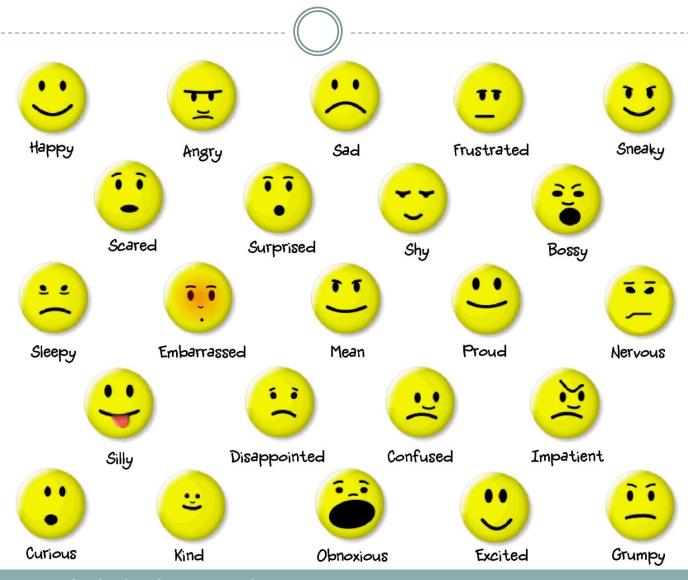




LEARNING MY FEELINGS LOG

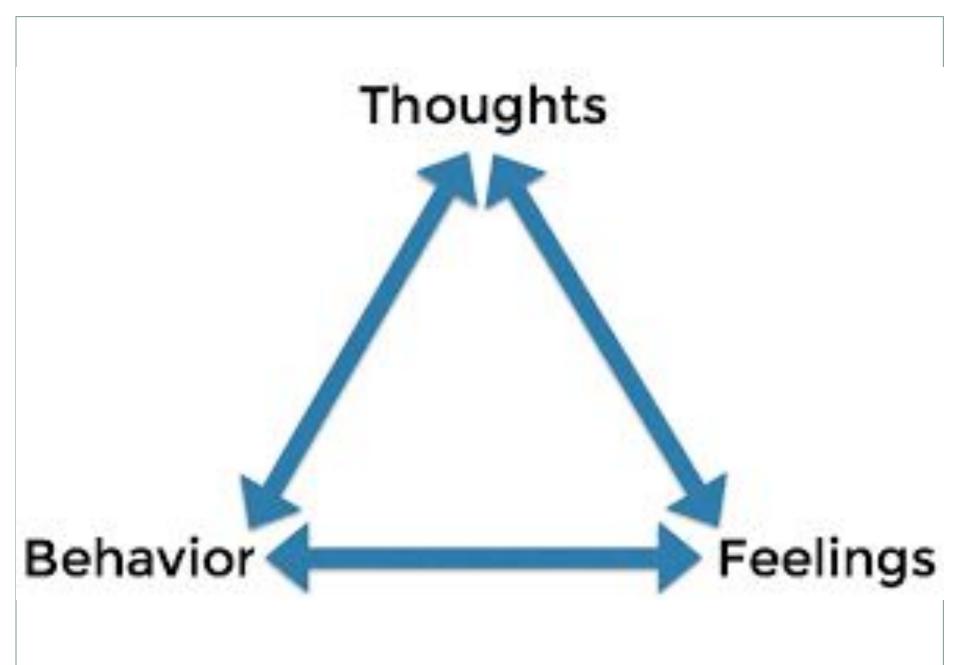
CHILD:
ADULT HELPING TO COMPLETE FORM:
WHAT HAPPENED? Somebody teased me Somebody took something of mine Somebody told me to do something Somebody was doing something I didn't like Somebody started fighting with me Other: Other: WHO WAS THAT SOMEBODY? Another child Teacher Parent Another adult Sister/brother Other:
WHERE WERE YOU? Classroom Lunchroom Playground Street Hallway Bathroom House Other:
HOW DID YOU FEEL? Sad Scared Embarrassed Mad HOW STRONG WERE YOUR FEELINGS? (circle best choice) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Weak Medium Strong
WHAT DID YOU DO? (check all that apply) Hit back Told adult
Screamed Walked away Ran away Talked it out calmly Cried Told another child Threw something Ignored Broke something Other:
HOW DID YOU HANDLE YOURSELF? Very people Not so well Observe Good Great
Very poorly Not so well Okay Good Great WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT TIME? (Role Play this with child now). My plan is to:

What are Feelings?



What are Thoughts?

- Positive
 - o "I am really excited to go bowling later."
- Negative
 - o "Today is the worst day."
- Neutral □ Noticing our Surroundings
 - o "There is a red ball."



Same Situation, Different Outcome



Functional SEL Skills

Functional Communication

- Making wants & needs met appropriately (asking for preferred item, refusing nonpreferred item, asking for a break)
- Conversation skills
 - commenting, asking and answering questions, eye contact, body language

Functional SEL Skills

- Impulse Control and Staying Calm (Anger Management)
 - Maintain personal space
 - Calm hands and body
 - Accepting no
 - Waiting
 - o Inside/soft voice
 - Noticing when there is a problem
 - Asking for help
 - Accepting help



Everyday Gestures that Can Help a Child Heal

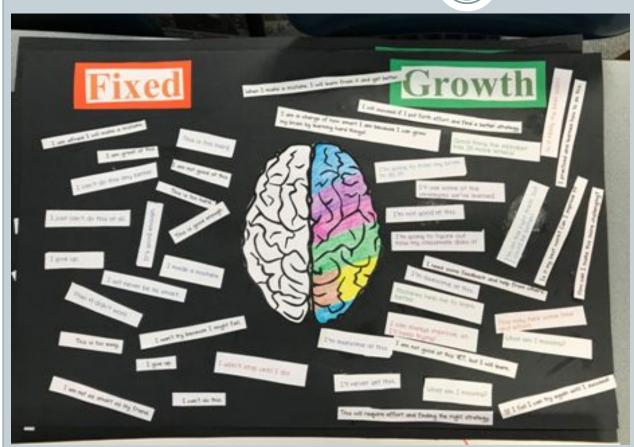
- Celebrate them
 - o Use "put-ups" not "put downs"
- Comfort them
 - Stay calm and patient
- Listen to them
 - Show an interest in their passions
 - Validate their feelings
- Collaborate with them
 - Ask for their opinions
- Inspire them
 - Expose them to new ideas

Everyday Gestures that Can Help a Child Heal: Examples in the Classroom

Celebrate them

- Build Confidence
 - Acknowledge their talents and strengths
 - Publicly recognize and praise successes, while privately and calmly re-directing behavior (think about how corrective feedback is provided)
 - Open-ended activities or play
- Provide Recognition
 - Greetings –in the morning, after school
 - Validate feelings
 - Tell your children why you think they are special
- Encourage Positive Thinking
 - Fixed mindset vs. Growth mindset

Examples



Growth Mindset Videos:
https://www.youtube.com/w
atch?v=2zrtHt3bBmQ and
https://www.youtube.com/w
atch?v=-_oqghnxBmY&list=
PLQxYezaiNuOwgNhyxFs6q
sfQJHZyuBKc3&index=3

Everyday Gestures that Can Help a Child Heal

Comfort

- Identify Triggers
 - □ Ask: "What's happening here?" rather than, "What's wrong with this child?"
 - Help children develop proactive strategies to manage emotions in the face of triggers
 - Respond in a calm, compassionate manner
- Engage Them
 - Create predictable routines and transitions for children so they know what to expect
 - Engage children in activities and assignments to help them develop emotion regulation, social awareness, self-awareness, relationship skills, and anger management
 - <u>Examples</u>: Mindfulness, yoga, breathing games, team building activities

Show Empathy through Problem-Solving

• Help Your Child:

- Notice/recognize there is a problem
- Put the problem into words
- Communicate how they are feeling and how strong or weak their feelings are
- o Figure out their goal in the situation
- Discuss potential solutions
- Choose the best solution and try it out
- Review the plan to see how it work
- Reinforce

Problem-Solving

- Need to teach the student these problem-solving steps
- Teach Problem-Solving through a 3-D Approach (Asher & Gordon, 1998)
 - Discussion of social skills to develop
 - Demonstration of skill and specific steps
 - O **Doing** (practice, role play, rehearsal, behavior specific feedback)

What is Mindfulness?

- It is...
 - Activating your senses
 - Sharpening awareness
 - Being in the moment
 - Consciousness
 - Being effective

- It is not...
 - More Thinking
 - Zoning Out
 - Emptying the Mind
 - Dulling the mind
 - Hippy-Dippy



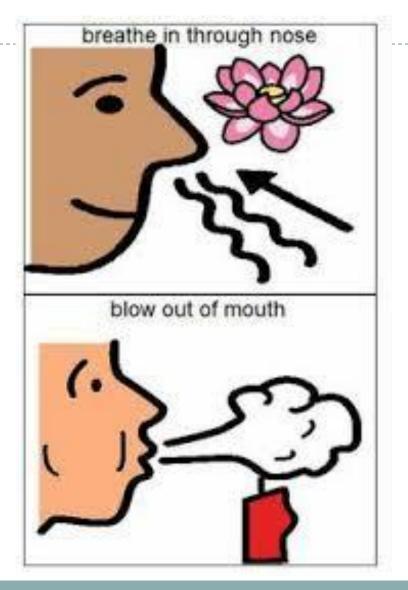
What is Mindfulness?

- Different forms of the practice have different goals
 - o Present moment self-awareness (e.g., self-monitoring)
 - Relaxation (e.g., reducing emotional state)
 - Grounding and Visualization (e.g., establishing safety)
 - Slowing Rumination (e.g., managing thoughts)
 - o Contact with Pleasure (e.g., enjoying)
 - Managing Pain (e.g., altering experience of physical and/or emotional pain)
 - Proprioception (e.g., awareness of body in space through yoga related exercises)

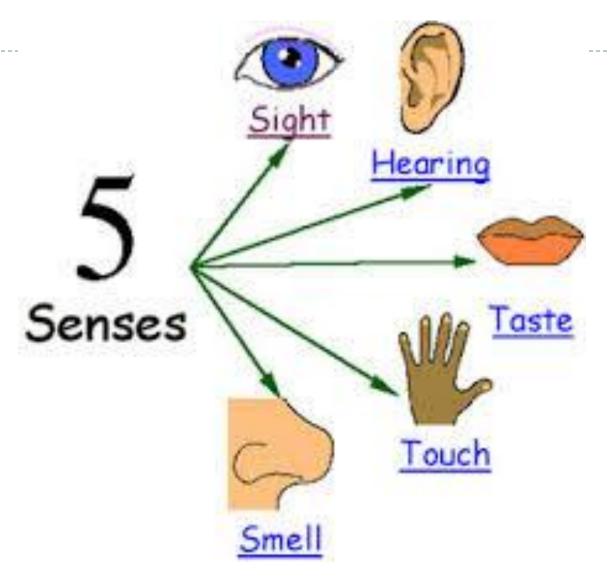
How Our Skills Help Us

- **Clear Picture**: Helps you notice what is happening inside and outside of you <u>right now</u>. You see the situation as it is.
 - 1. Notice your Breath
 - 2. Check your Surroundings
 - 3. Body Check
 - 4. Label and Rate your Feelings
 - 5. Notice Your Thoughts
 - 6. Notice Your Urges

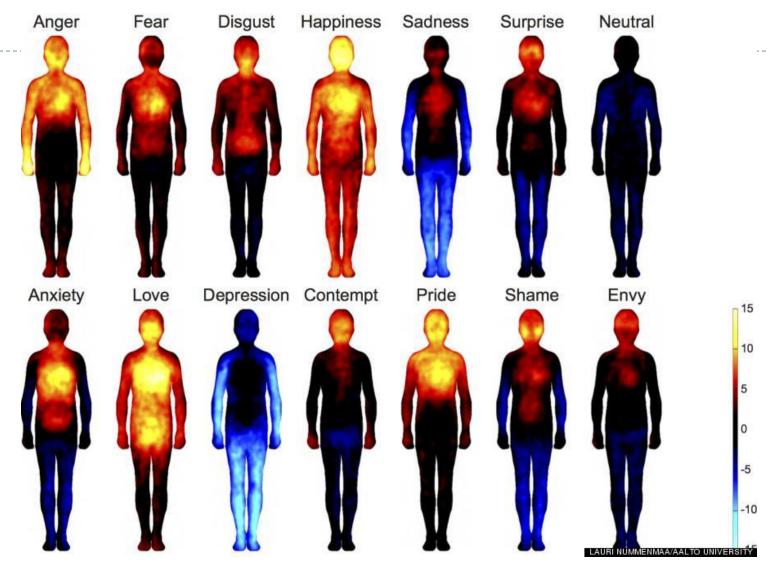
Breathing Exercise



Notice Surroundings



Body Check



Ways to Relax Our Bodies

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo



Imagery



Noticing My Thoughts

- What to do when I'm having negative thoughts (and you can help your child do the following):
 - 1. Notice the thoughts and let them float away
 - 2. Distract your thoughts
 - Remember events from your past that were pleasant, fun or exciting.
 - Observe your surroundings
 - Distract yourself with tasks and chores
 - Distract yourself by counting
 - Distract yourself by leaving and taking a break
 - 3. Change your negative thoughts to positive thoughts

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Mindful Eating

- Pick anything, preferable to have more than one flavor profile, encourage exploration of the food with as many senses as possible – Can do this through active discussion (e.g., take a moment to notice how it feels, then discuss) OR through a journaling type exercise
 - How does it/the wrapper/skin <u>feel</u> to the touch (bumpy, smooth, soft, hard)
 - Smells? Skin or wrapper vs. food item itself
 - <u>Visually</u> inspect as many details as possible (name colors, shapes, consistency)
 - Tastes (can remind students of the basic tastes we can experience)
 - □ What does it <u>sound</u> like as you move it in your hand or mouth?
 - O Add-on: Narrative can be that the child has never seen anything like this before because they are from an alien planet. Move it between your fingers, examine where the light shines and where there are folds or shadows, and if thoughts come up (why are we doing this, this is weird), just try and call your attention back to the object. Notice your mouth water as you bring it closer, notice how it feels in your mouth before you bite, take a slow conscious bite, notice the saliva in your mouth, notice the impulse to swallow or chew quickly

FIVE SENSES SNACK	Outside (the peel or package)	Inside (after opening, cutting, or peeling)
What do you SEE? color(s)	(the peer or package)	(arter opening, cutting, or peening)
shape		
What do you FEEL? with your fingers on your tongue inside your body		
What do you HEAR? as you open, cut, or peel as you take a bite as you chew		
What do you SMELL? before you open, cut, or peel as you open, cut, or peel after you open, cut, or peel		
What do you TASTE? Is it bitter? Sweet? Salty? Sour? Does the taste change as you bite, chew and swallow?		

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Rainbow Calm Down Bottles / Glitter Bottles

- Any bottle, glitter, liquid, food coloring
 - The process of making the bottle can involve mindfulness
 - And once complete, the bottle itself can serve as something visually stimulating and able to be manipulated/shaken (get out some of that pent up emotion)
 - Can have children describe what they see in detail or work on focusing solely on the bottle and letting thoughts and feelings pass
 - Can use scripts to help children imagine the glitter as thoughts when they are stressed, mad, or upset. "see how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That's why it is so easy to make silly decisions when upset because you're not thinking clearly. Don't worry this is normal and happens to all of us (grown-ups too). Now, watch what happens when you're still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears. Your mind works the same way. When you're calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer."

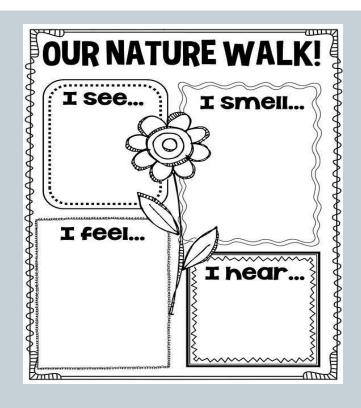
Glitter Jar Video



Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Nature Walk

- Take a few steps outside and have your kids record what calls to their senses
- OR do it right within the home to help kids be more aware of their surroundings and possibly change their perspective on some everyday things they experience





Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Superhero Poses

Poses

- An easy way to get kids acquainted with mindfulness. Can tell children that poses can help them to feel strong, brave and happy. Pick a familiar, safe place, try a Superman or Wonder Woman pose
 - Stand with feet just wider than hips, fists clenched, arms reach out, stretching the body as long as possible (think superman flying)
 - Stand tall with legs slightly wider than hips and hands or fists placed at the hips (think of standing proud)

Senses / Spidey Senses

 Can turn on their Spidey-Senses by being super-focused on smell, sight, hearing, tastes and touch. Encourages them to pause and focus on the present



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Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: My Safe Place

- Draw or find an image of a quiet, peaceful, safe place
 - Then have children imagine that they are in that place
 - Focus on their breathing
 - Look to your left, what do you see, breathe, look to your right, what do you see? Breathe in, Breathe out, if your mind wanders, bring it back to your quiet place, now we are going to return from our quiet place, breathe in and slowly open your eyes

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Mystery Objects

- Place a variety of different textured objects in a bag and have your child reach in and touch an object, then describe what they feel. Make sure the objects remain in
- <u>Variation</u>: Can turn this into a guessing game where kids have to guess the object in the bag via the descriptions (might be that you use a category, like "cooking" to help facilitate the guessing).
- Another variation: Use calming smells of lotions and hand sanitizers

a bag.

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Body Scan

- Can use Progressive Muscle Relaxation to call attention to a process of relaxation
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaTDNYjk-Gw (13 mins)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xp2UzG7UYY (5 mins)
- OR can use scripts/videos to promote body awareness
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsmfIAyiois (5 mins)
 - https://www.mindful.org/body-scan-kids/ (audio only; 10 mins)

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Physical Exercise

Heartbeat

- Have kids jump up and down/jumping jacks
 - Bring attention to the kids' breath and bodies as they jump
- When finished, have students sit and put their hand over their heart. Suggest that they close their eyes and pay attention to their heartbeat.



Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Observer Mindset

- What are the thoughts that go through your mind? Can you notice them and allow them to pass by without reacting?
 - Add-on: Visualization picture them like leaves on a stream, clouds in the sky
- What are the sensations in your body? Can you notice them and allow them to pass by without reacting?
 - Add-on: Systematic body scan can use image of outline of human body or big paper and outline student's body – then, guide their attention to each part of their body and have them write down any sensations.
 - Add-on: Can explore how those sensations differ at times by making this part of a routine check-in, identifying emotions, and color coding sensations felt in each part of the body for each emotion/on each day

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Observer Mindset Example

LEAVES ON A STREAM

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes or rest them gently on a fixed spot in the room. Visualize yourself sitting beside a flowing stream with leaves floating along the surface of the water. *PAUSE 10 SECONDS* For a moment I would like you to think about yourself and your current situation. Think about your experience and about what that has been like. Now, for the next few minutes, take each thought you have about your situation and place it on a leaf... let it float by. Do this with each thought you have-pleasurable, painful, positive, or negative; place them on a leaf and let the float by. If your thoughts stop, just watch the stream. Sooner or later your thoughts will start up again. *PAUSE FOR 20 SECONDS* Allow the stream to flow at its own pace. Don't try to speed or rush your thoughts. You are not trying to rush the leaves along or to get rid of the thoughts you may be having. If your mind rush the leaves along or to get rid of the thoughts you may be having. If your mind says "this is dumb" or "I'm not doing this right" then place those on a leaf and let those pass as well. *PAUSE FOR 20 SECONDS* If a leaf gets stuck, allow it to hang around until it floats by. If it comes up again, watch it float by again.*PAUSE FOR 20 SECONDS* If you notice a difficult or painful feeling arise, simply acknowledge it. Say to yourself, "I notice myself having a feeling of boredom or frustration." Place those thoughts on a leaf and let them pass. From time to time you may notice your thoughts distract you. This is normal. When it happens and when you notice you have been sidetracked, gently bring your attention back to the stream.

Mindfulness Activities and Exercises: Additional Examples for Young Children

- Breathing
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvF9AEe-ozc
- Intro to Meditating from Zafu (Zafu's Quest)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CdPQ7X1MzU
- Mindful Minute for Kids Use of the Bell
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMEoJKiweL4
- Blowing bubbles (focus on taking deep, slow breath and exhaling steadily)
- Pinwheels
 - o Combines coloring mindfulness, breathing, and visualization
 - <u>Template</u>: https://www.teachstarter.com/teaching-resource/mindfulnesscolouring-pinwheel-template/

Everyday Gestures that Can Help a Child Heal: Examples

Listen

- The difference between hearing and listening
 - Allow them to share their story without interruptions
 - Let them express themselves before offering advice or help
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Re-state what you heard them say
- Physically get on your children's level
- Create a positive family climate □ Respectful listening among all members
- Create activities that provide opportunities for kids to share and be heard
- Remain curious and ask supportive questions
 - Example: Ask, "Which part of getting your homework done is hard?" and "Why is that part hard?" instead of, "Why didn't you do your homework?"

Everyday Gestures that Can Help a Child Heal: Examples

Inspire

- Help students identify their natural talents and use them in the home
 - <u>Example</u>: Create a song (writers, directors, performers)
- Leadership roles within the home
- Connect students with after-school programs
 - Examples: Theater, dance, sports, community services clubs
- Friend networks
 - Ask about their friend networks and try to help them identify friends / peers that make them feel happy and confident



Respond with compassion

- Ask neutral questions
 - "What did you do?" vs. "What happened?"
- Respect emotions
 - All emotions are valid, even when all behaviors are not acceptable
- Maintain high behavioral expectations
 - Communicate to children that they can do what is being asked of them, and that you are there for support and assistance when needed.

WHEN LITTLE PEOPLE ARE
OVERWHELMED BY BIG
EMOTIONS, IT'S OUR JOB
TO SHARE OUR CALM. NOT
JOIN THEIR CHAOS.
~ L. R. KNOST

- Resolving Conflict: Create "Confrontation Time Rules"
 - Take turns speaking (speaker power)
 - Listen to each person
 - Try to understand one another's perspective ("It sounds like you are feeling / saying...")
 - Use soft "inside" voice
 - Write out feelings if screaming occurs
 - Find a good time to discuss feelings
 - o Use "I feel" statements rather than blaming "You" statements
 - Problem-solve together possible solutions, then evaluate each based on whether it is safe, fair, how each person would feel, and whether it would work

- Notice and reward appropriate social skills and interactions
 - E.g., Siblings talking, working together, problem-solving,
 appropriate expression of feelings, non-aggressive interactions)
 - o Give behavior specific praise "Great job asking your friends to play!"
- Teach alternative responses and behaviors
 - What to do instead
- Help the child to understand the impact of one's behavior on another person
 - o Role play is helpful
- Help improve child's self-esteem and confidence

- Improve Students' Emotion Regulation Skills
 - Build emotion vocabulary (Teach common language)
 - Model labeling of feelings ("Today it was tough for me to wake up. I'm feeling really _____.")
 - Teach children that feelings can range from really weak (1) to really strong (10)
 - Teach children that feelings can change throughout the day
 - Provide time and space for regulating emotions (e.g., fidgets, movement and breathing exercises, creativity breaks)
 - Engage in calming strategies together (e.g., mindfulness activities)
 - Model emotion regulation (e.g., share and demonstrate strategies that you use)
 - Identify triggers and modify situations as needed (e.g., quiet spaces)
 - Provide students with options when their feelings change

- Increase predictability in the home
 - Use of orderly transitions and clear routines and expectations
 - Offer assistance with organizing tasks and materials

Action Plan

Implementation			Evaluation	
What?	By when?	With what?	What is success?	What evidence is needed?

Resources

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