

## Mindfulness, Stress, Anxiety

NAWD Presentation

December 6, 2019

### Chime listening

#### Opening activities

- Raccoon circles
- Walk, Stop, Wiggle, Sit - [\*Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom\*](#)

#### Why?

- Think about a stressed student you know - they are often a high achieving student, who is probably rewarded for their achievements. They may also face competitive college admissions process, intense academic coursework, perhaps perfectionism, abundant extracurricular activities, and high parental expectations.
  - [NYU study](#) - “High levels of chronic stress impede students’ abilities to succeed academically, compromise their mental health functioning, and foster risk taking behaviors. Furthermore, the chronic stress appears to persist into the college years, and researchers warn it may contribute to academic disengagement and mental health problems among adults.”
    - 75% of students reported feeling stress on a daily basis; nearly half reported feeling a great deal of stress. Grades, homework, and preparing for college were the greatest sources of stress.
- Connect to [CASEL model](#), which is already implemented in many schools.
  - M&M activities support both the “self-awareness” and “self-management” competencies.
  - A meta-analysis of 270,000+ students showed children participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. Students’ academic performance increased by 11 percentile points.

#### How does it work?

- SEL & Self-Awareness - ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior
  - Sit in a tall seat - feet flat, scoot up, sit tall, put hand on chest, and breathe.
  - Stop - notice what is happening.
  - Self-awareness must be first, than self-regulation, aka balancing emotions.
  - **Try it** - Tense and Let Go - *Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom*
- SEL & Self-Regulation - ability to effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motive oneself.

- Breath and the brain
  - Protective brain (reptilian, limbic): Fight or flight - Our bodies have not gotten a software update.
    - After a violent outburst - “What were they thinking?” They weren’t thinking. They were reactionary - their bodies made choices without thought.
    - Engage, don’t enrage - [Dr. Dan Siegel The Whole Brain Child](#) - Downstairs & upstairs brain - We’re born with a downstairs brain, but the upstairs is under construction. Stress, anxiety can cut off the stairs.
  - Thoughtful brain: Engaging prefrontal cortex, which is where emotional regulation happens.
  - How to engage thoughtful brain? Take a breath.
- Anatomy of a breath
  - **Try it** - Balloon Breathing - ***Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom***
  - Balloon lungs model
- Mindfulness = paying attention to your life, here and now, with kindness and curiosity. ([Amy Saltzman - A Still Quiet Place](#)).
  - **Try it** - Single Point Focus with glitter jars - ***Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom*** - Divide into small groups.

### When can we teach and implement these strategies?

- In the glitter jar small groups - Discuss when these practices could be introduced and built into student routines. Three post-its per group to record three ideas.
  - Place three “when” ideas in category labeled around the room - during the school day (academic class time or other), activities, out of school
  - Walk around the room to get ideas
- How can we best support students with special needs?

### Elevator speeches - Why bring mindfulness practices to students?

- When introducing something new, it’s important to have an answer to “Why” questions.
- Model an elevator speech (2-3 sentences about why mindfulness is beneficial).
- Work time for participants to write their own.
- Concentric circles to practice and hear other ideas.

### Resources & planning time

- Distribute links and allow time to explore resources.
- Make an implementation plan - Tri-fold a half sheet of paper - Something to try this week, this month, this semester.

**Try it** - Countdown to Calm - ***Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom***  
 Caring Feelings Meditation - ***Mindfulness & Movement Cards for the K-12 Classroom***