AGENDA

- What is mindfulness?
- Context for mindfulness practice
- Use your mind to change your brain
- Fundamentals of a mindfulness practice
- Mindfulness in education
- Increase your presence with others

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- This logo is a mindfulness symbol.
- The spiral represents all of our circuitous, habitual patterns that we all get stuck in. It is where we get caught up, triggered and reactive. The line coming out of it represents mindfulness that takes us out of those unconscious patterns and into a more intentional, aware way of being.
MINDFULNESS IS...

- Living your life with greater awareness, attention and intention.
- Developing a deep connection with your breath.
- Being in the present moment, rather than ruminating over the past or fearing the future.
- Breaking unskillful, habitual patterns.
- Learning to respond and not react.
- Allowing whatever is arising in the moment to exist, without judgment.
- Living your life in alignment of your mind, body and soul.

CONTEXT FOR MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

- Rooted in Buddhist meditation practice
- 2500 year-old contemplative tool to aid relief of suffering
- Ways to relieve suffering is to “Be Here Now.”
- “Buddha” means “The Awakened One”
MODERN SECULARIZATION

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, University of Massachusetts, 1979
- Development of MBSR: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
- Mindfulness programs developed in:
  - Health care industry
  - Military
  - Educational settings
  - Workplace
- Backed by Western science

USE YOUR MIND TO CHANGE YOUR BRAIN

- Neuroplasticity
- Velcro to the negative; Teflon to the positive; evolutionary bias
- Neurons that wire together fire together
- Amygdala and hippocampus
- Rewire your brain towards happiness
- Energy flows where intent goes

MIND/BODY CONNECTION

- Get out of your head and into your body
- Mindfulness as a spiritual practice
- Within the body lies your natural intuition, your truth and your present moment experience
- Bring mind and body into alignment

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FUNDAMENTALS OF MINDFULNESS

When you try to control everything you enjoy nothing. Sometimes you just need to relax, breathe, let go, and just live in the moment.

FORMAL VS. INFORMAL PRACTICE

Formal Practice:
- Sitting meditation
- Walking meditation

Informal Practice:
- Eating
- Chores
- Driving
- Communicating
- Working
- Personal Grooming
- Exercise
- Parenting
- Socializing
- Shopping
- Texting
- Emails
- Standing in line

MEDITATION VS. MINDFULNESS

- The difference between meditation and mindfulness
- What is the intention of meditation?
- Can I practice mindfulness without meditating?
- How long do I need to “practice” every day?
MENTAL SHIFTS WHEN ADOPTING A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

- Allowing
- Acceptance
- Non-judgmental
- Gratitude
- Compassion
- Self-compassion
- Trust
- Patience

MINDFUL TOOLS

- Breath
- Body-awareness
- Sensory experiences
- Gratitude, compassion and loving-kindness
- Mindfulness of thoughts and emotions
- Communication with others

BREATH

- Why is the breath so important?
- Mindful breathing (not meditation)
- Breath as anchor to here and now
- Breathing in/breathing out or counting
- Your breaths

"As long as you are breathing, there is more right with you than wrong with you."

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn
BODY AWARENESS

- Use your mind to change your brain and your body
- Body scan
- Pain as sensation; breathe into the spaces in between
- Body movement as a form of mindfulness practice
- Awareness of intuition – your sixth sense – listening to messages your body is telling you

SENSORY EXPERIENCE

- Sounds, sights, sensations and smells as reminders for being in present moment
- Listen on a deeper level
- See with beginner’s eyes
- Mindful eating: eat when hungry, stop
- When full, pay attention to what body is actually craving
- Sensory awareness of food: look, smell, touch, hear before taste

GRATITUDE

- Attitude of gratitude
- Brain can’t stay angry and focus on gratitude at same time; choose gratitude
- Gratitude as antidote to almost anything negative
- Cultivate daily practice; write down at least 3 things each day that you are grateful for
COMPASSION AND LOVING-KINDNESS
- Difference between sympathy, empathy and compassion
- Self-compassion: Why is it important?
- Developing compassion for others
- Awareness of challenges to practicing compassion
- Metta practice: Sending yourself messages of loving-kindness

MINDFULNESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS
- Allow what is arising in the moment to exist, without judgment. Create space.
- Train of thoughts
- Your thoughts are not your reality.
- STOP...
  - Slow down
  - Take a breath
  - Observe
  - Proceed

MINDFULNESS OF YOUR EMOTIONS
- Allow what is arising in the moment to exist, without judgment.
- "This is interesting information..."
- Equanimity: Evenness of mind. Viewing emotions as neither good nor bad, just allowing them to exist.
- 1st dart, 2nd dart
- Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional.
MINDFUL COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS

- Utilize mindfulness skills to create and maintain intentional and conscious relationships.
- Understand how to use wise speech.
- Listen beyond the words.
- Know when to be silent and when to speak.
- Pay attention to the messages your body is sending you when in relation to other people.

MINDFULNESS IN EDUCATION

- Giving kids the tools to cultivate social and emotional wellness; how to be aware, present and compassionate

MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Mindful breathing
- It’s a choice to be still
- Moody jars
- Mindful listening
- Mindful bodies
- Mindful seeing
- Mindful movement
**BENEFITS OF A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE**

- Increase in emotional regulation and social skills
- Decrease in hyperactivity
- Focuses attention
- Decrease in anxiety and depression
- Increases self-esteem, empathy and compassion
- Decrease in bullying and playground frustrations
- Improves executive functioning and test-taking abilities

*“It doesn’t matter what you are teaching kids if they don’t know how to pay attention.”* - Dan Siegel

**WAYS TO CREATE A MINDFUL ENVIRONMENT**

- Encourage students to walk and move mindfully, with awareness.
- Transition with a minute of mindful breathing.
- Remind students to take at least 3 mindful breaths when coming in from recess, when they are upset or frustrated, or before taking a test.
- Use a bell or other gentle reminder for when it is time to calm down or be quiet.
- Remind students that their “brain is just doing what their brain does.”
- Role-model language used; compassion

**INCREASE YOUR PRESENCE WITH OTHERS**

- Establish your own practice in order to guide others in cultivating their own mindfulness practice.
- Authenticity
- Mindfulness is not another “lesson” to be taught.
- Notice where your mind’s attention is resting and gently invite it back to the here and now.

*“I would like to present you with this present of my presence.”*
MINDFULNESS IS A PRACTICE OF EMBODIMENT
- Mindfulness is not something to add to your “to-do list; it is what is on your “to-be” list.
- Role-model the behaviors you wish to see.
- Don’t focus on negative behaviors; remove ego and acknowledge the emotions driving the behaviors.
- Recognize each moment is yet another opportunity to embody presence.
- Take a minute and just breathe.

ALLOW FOR WHAT IS ARISING IN THE MOMENT
- Between stimulus and response lies a space; within that space lies our freedom to choose our response.
- Acceptance doesn’t mean you have to like it; fighting what is only makes it worse (brain science).
- Increase your ability to tolerate difficult emotions and distracting thoughts.
- This, just this.
- Non-attachment to the outcome
- The only thing you can control is your breath.

PUTTING MINDFULNESS INTO DAILY PRACTICE
- Look for natural gifts of time to embody presence.
- Use sounds as reminders to stop and take a breath.
- Observe what is arising – it is simply information.
- Recognize when you are caught in the spiral of reactive patterns.
- Be aware of the “mindful moment.”
EXAMPLES OF MINDFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

- Mindful eating
- Mindful test-taking
- Responding and not reacting
- Looking for the joy amidst the chaos
- Acknowledge and validate the experience of others.
- Let go of attachments to how you thought life should be and accept what is.

SUGGESTED READING

- Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness
  By Deborah Schoeberlein
- The Mindful Child
  By Susan Kaiser Greenland
- Moody Cow Meditates
  By Kerry Lee MacLean
- Wherever You Go, There You Are
  By Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Everyday Blessings
  By Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Mindful Nation
  By Tim Ryan
- Mindsight
  By Daniel Siegel
- Brainstorm
  By Daniel Siegel
- Buddha’s Brain
  By Rick Hanson
- Hardwiring Happiness
  By Rick Hanson

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Check www.dev-resources.com for information.