

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT COMMUNITY: BUILDING MINDFULNESS SKILLS

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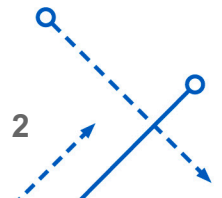


University at Buffalo

Graduate School of Education

Agenda

1. Emotional Regulation/SEL/Mindfulness & Schools
2. Biology, Brain Functioning, Neurodevelopment, & Emotional Regulation
3. Getting to Know Your Mindful Me: Mindfulness Skills!



Interpreting Behavior: The Role of the Lens We Use to See

Dr. Ross Greene

"No one thinks punishment will teach a kid math or to read," and "why we put behavior in a different category of developmental delays is beyond me."



*If they could do well,
they would do well.*

- ROSS GREENE -

ALL BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION.

A few minutes of listening, observing and understanding, can save hours of miscommunication, frustration and conflict.

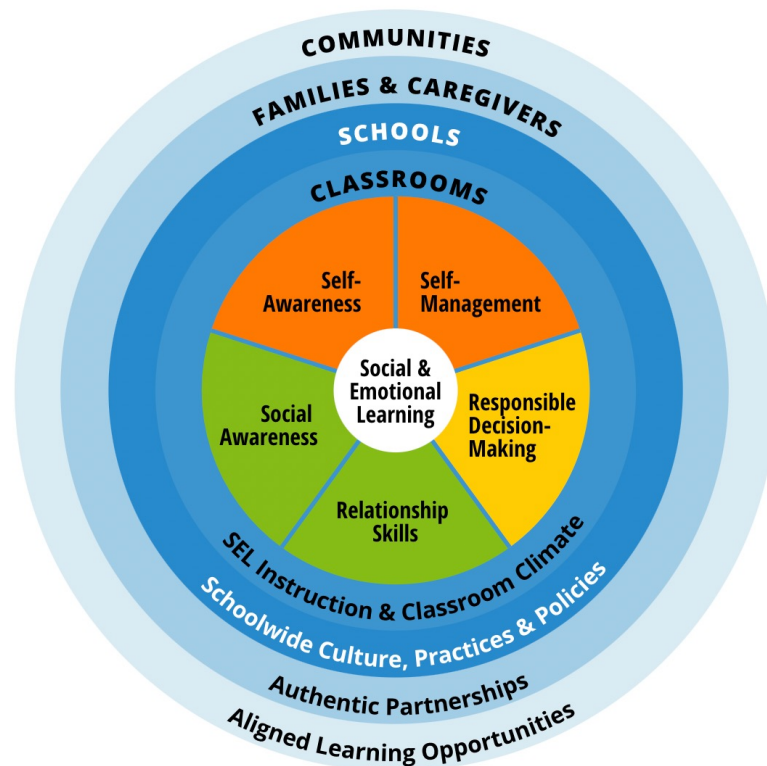
A NEED MET is a PROBLEM SOLVED.



STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT COMMUNITY: The Role of SEL & Emotional Regulation

SEL/Emotional Regulation & School: The CASEL Framework & 5 Components of

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.



SEL/Emotional Regulation & School: Culturally Responsive Practices



Welcoming/Inclusion Activities

Welcoming Inclusion Activities are brief, interactive experiences that bring the voice of every participant into the room, making a connection to one another and/or to the work ahead, with each perspective-laden, culturally-rich voice being heard, respected and learned from. The more we fully share ourselves and are fully

CASEL District Resource Center: <https://drc.casel.org/resources-by-topic/page/4/?topic=culturally-responsive>

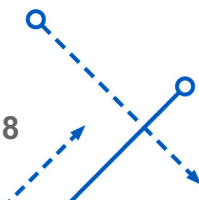
CASEL Resources: <https://casel.org/state-resource-center/culturally-and-linguistically-responsive-practices/>

SEL/Emotional Regulation & School: Culturally Responsive Practices More Resources

- More Resources Available at:
 - IES: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/northwest/Ask-A-REL/60075>
 - Center for Responsive Schools:
<https://www.crslearn.org/publication/two-sides-of-the-same-coin/culturally-responsive-teaching-social-emotional-learning-instilling-the-will-to-make-both-essential-workers/>

SEL/Emotional Regulation & School: The Role of SEL in Learning

- School-based SEL supports have been linked to positive outcomes in longitudinal studies, shown to increase social and academic competencies, reduce emotional distress and concerns related to behavior and conduct (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullotta, 2015; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, Ben, & Gravesteyn, 2012)
- A meta-analysis conducted by Taylor et al (2017) demonstrate that positive benefits from SEL programs outcomes persisted on average, from 56-195 weeks (3.5 years!) post intervention
- Benefits of SEL programs were found to both improve skills, prosocial behaviors and academic performance, but ALSO served as protective against future difficulties.
 - “SEL can have both promotion and preventive impact (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2009).”
- These have been demonstrated across race, SES, and school location

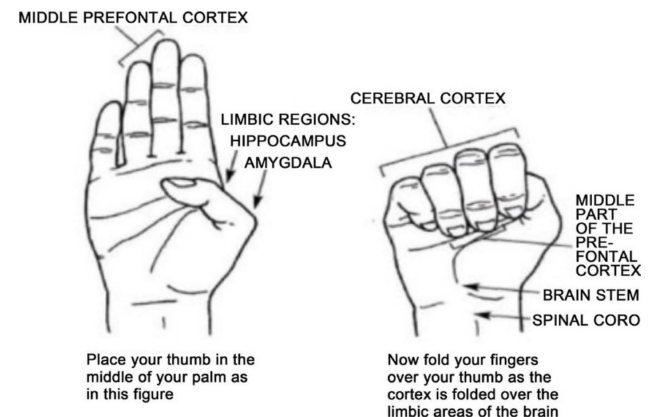




STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT COMMUNITY: The Role of Biology in Emotional Regulation

Biology & The Brain

- Hand Brain Model allows us to “see” our brain structures
- Video Description of the Hand Brain Model
 - <https://drdansiegel.com/hand-model-of-the-brain/>



The hand model of the brain (Siegel, 2010).

“The Downstairs Brain”: The Brainstem, Lower Brain & Automatic Functions

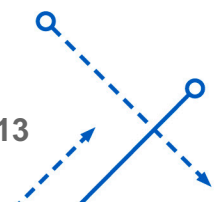
- Takes in information
- It connects your brain to the spinal cord
- Regulates the basic & automatic critical functions of our bodies:
 - Breathing
 - Balance
 - Blood Pressure
 - Heart Rate
 - Digestion
 - Important set of regions that create the fight, flight, freeze or faint response

“The Middle Brain”: The Limbic Areas

- Responsible for:
 - Emotions (Amygdala)
 - Motivation
 - Memory (Hippocampus)
 - Appraisal of experiences/sensations & detection of danger/threat
 - Which, has a role in activating instinctive survival reactions
 - Attachment Experiences
 - Which play an important role in how we form safe, trusting relationships with others

“The Upstairs Brain”: The Prefrontal Cortex & Executive Function

- Primarily located in the prefrontal cortex are EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS
 - A group of higher level cognitive (i.e., skills that require more active involvement of the brain) skills.
- These skills work together to act as the “MANAGEMENT CENTER” and help us to:
 - Perform execute tasks, manage impulses, override immediate gratification in favor of longer-term goals, organize & plan, monitor work progress to promote efficiency, sustain attention, persist through task completion, adapt to change, manage & regulate emotions, and manage & control attention



Executive Function Skills: A Closer Look

- Although up to 33 executive function skills have been identified, 11 critical skills have been identified that are more closely associated with the ability to navigate school more successfully
- These include:
 1. **Response Inhibition:** The ability to evaluate the situation before engaging in action
 2. **Working Memory**
 3. **Emotional Control:** The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior
 4. **Flexibility:** The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, & mistakes.
 5. **Sustained Attention**
 6. **Task Initiation**
 7. **Planning/Prioritization**
 8. **Organization**
 9. **Time Management**
 10. **Goal-Directed Persistence**
 11. **Metacognition:** The ability to stand back & take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation, to observe how to problem solve. Includes self monitoring, and self evaluative skills (i.e., asking “How am I doing? How did I do?”)

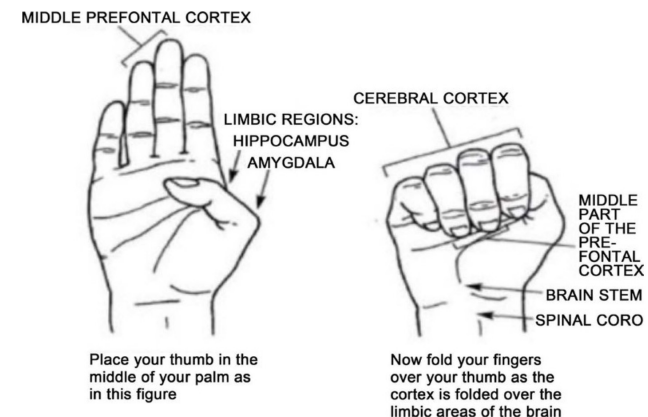
Biology & The Brain: Development

- Regions of the brain tend to develop back to front
- The prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until age 25 – 30



Biology & The Brain: “Flipping Our Lid”

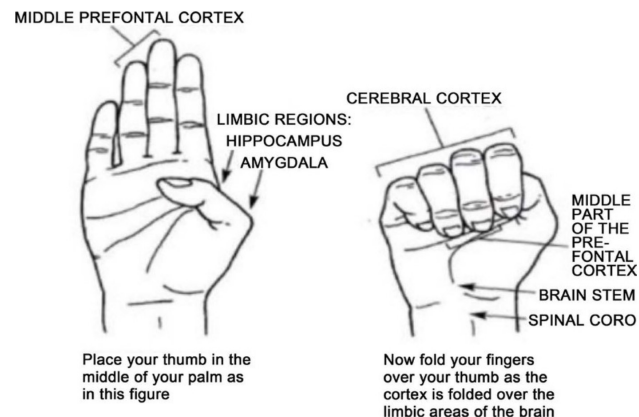
- Middle brain senses danger/threat → the downstairs part of the brain takes over
- This is BIOLOGICALLY ADAPTIVE AND PROTECTIVE
 - “Survival Mode”
- Integration is lost
- If that danger/threat is not “real” → the upstairs region needs to be activated to help regulate emotions



The hand model of the brain (Siegel, 2010).

Biology & The Brain: “Flipping Our Lid”

- Higher levels of interconnection between the areas of the brain is associated with well-being
 - Mindfulness practices



The hand model of the brain (Siegel, 2010).

Seigel, 2021

Biology & The Brain: “Flipping Our Lid”

- The development of the integration of the brain systems relies on BOTH:
- (1) biology
- (2) experience
- Challenging experiences, persistent stress & trauma can impact this growth and development



“a young person’s repeated experiences in school have the opportunity to be a powerful influence for the re-wiring of neural pathways that is necessary for habits to be built and sustained. Creating and sustaining consistent practices helps create the climate and culture that’s vital for optimal learning and working conditions.” CASEL 2019

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT COMMUNITY: BUILDING MINDFULNESS SKILLS

Supporting Integration: Getting to Know Your Mindful Me



<https://www.newharbinger.com/9781684031313/>

Cook-Cottone & Vujanovic, 2001

Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Getting to Know Your Mindful Me

1. Understanding Body Cues
2. Learning About Worry, Knowing Worry Triggers & Planning Ahead
3. Breathing & Present Moment Awareness
4. Grounding & Present Moment Awareness
5. Understanding the Roller Coaster of Emotions (or the wave)
6. Finding Support
7. Practicing Gratitude

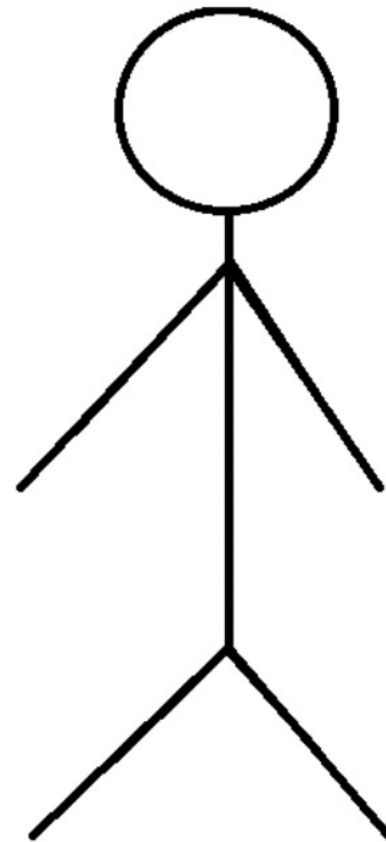


Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Understanding Body Cues: What Do Stress & Anxiety Feel Like in My Body?

Here is a list of ways our bodies can feel when we are worried or anxious. Circle the way you feel when you are worried or anxious. If you're not sure how you feel, it helps to tune into your body. Put one hand on your belly and one hand over your heart, and try to notice what's going on there.

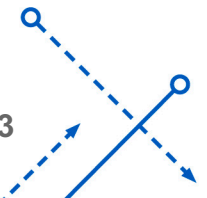
Belly	Chest	Arms and Legs	Other Body Parts
Upset	Fast heartbeat	Hands and feet feel cold	Headaches
Achy	Tight muscles	Hands feel sweaty	Trouble swallowing
Feeling like your stomach isn't working to digest food	Breathing fast	Hands feel shaky	Feeling dizzy
Gassy	Short breaths	Legs feel shaky	Sweaty
Going to the bathroom too often or not often enough	Feeling like you can't breathe	Leg and arm muscles are tight	Shaky
	Shoulders turned forward		Trembly
			Tired
			Body feels strange
			Rashy

Now, use your grounding and calming breaths to calm your body. If you'd like, share your list with a grown-up. It's a good idea to get support when you are feeling big feelings.

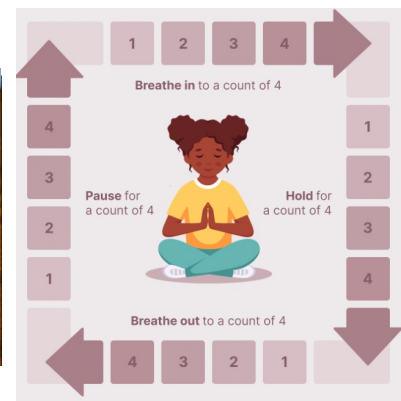


Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: What Are My Worries? What Are My Worry Triggers? And Planning Ahead

- When we know **why** we are worried, we are more likely to learn how to manage worry more **effectively**
- Worries often have what we call triggers. These are the things that get our worries going
 - Triggers can happen on the outside, like hearing something, seeing something, or even smelling something
- It can be useful to plan ahead, role play and practice for the next time when things might be challenging
- And while cognitive strategies (i.e., reframing, rationalizing, challenging) can be helpful, these strategies do not always encourage integration and connection
 - Example: Fire Drills



Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Breath & Present Moment Awareness

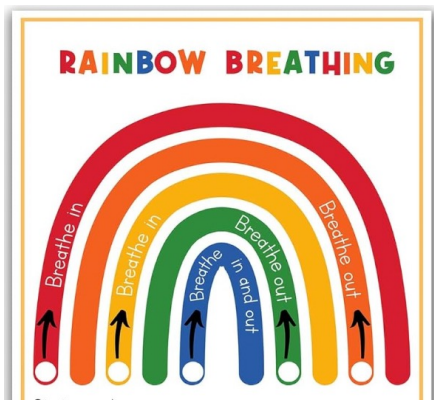


- ★ Sit or stand comfortably with your back straight.
- ★ Open the palm of one hand as wide as you can.



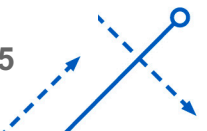
- ★ Now with the pointer finger of the opposite hand, slowly trace your fingers while breathing.
- ★ Breathe in and trace up one side of your thumb, 1, 2, 3. Breathe out and trace down the other side of your thumb, 1, 2, 3.
- ★ Repeat for all five fingers

<https://childhood101.com/fun-breathing-exercises-for-kids/>



Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Grounding & Present Moment Awareness

1. Stand still and close your eyes. Notice how your body feels.
2. Press your feet into the floor. Notice your feet, your socks, your shoes as you press into the floor. Imagine that you are a tall tree with deep roots. You are strong and also soft and relaxed, so that you can bend in the wind if it blows, and you can also be still. You are doing grounding.
3. Now focus on your breath. Breathe in slowly, saying to yourself, "I am breathing in for one count ... one." Breathe out, saying to yourself, "I am breathing out for two counts ... one ... two." Make sure you breathe out twice as long as you breathe in. Do this four times: Breathe in one; breathe out one, two. You are doing calming breaths.
4. Take a minute to notice your body now. Your heartbeat may feel slower. Your body may feel softer and more relaxed. Your thinking may be clearer. What do you notice?



Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Riding the Roller Coaster of Emotions (or Wave)

- Feelings & emotions can feel big or REALLY HUGE!
- But knowing that feelings move in waves (i.e., they do not stay BIG/HUGE forever) can help
- We can learn to “ride” the roller coaster

If the strong feeling you just wrote about were actually a roller coaster, what would it look like? What's the part that's like going up the hill? What's the part that's like going over the top, or racing down, or speeding through a sharp turn? Draw the roller coaster here, and write in what each part is like:



Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Finding Support

First, remember that it is always okay to ask for help!

Next, ask yourself these questions:

Do I know what to do?

Do I know how to do it?

Should I do it by myself?

If you answer no to any of those questions, it's time to ask for help. Think about who you could ask. Then, choose a person you trust and who will know how to help you. Ask the person for help by saying:

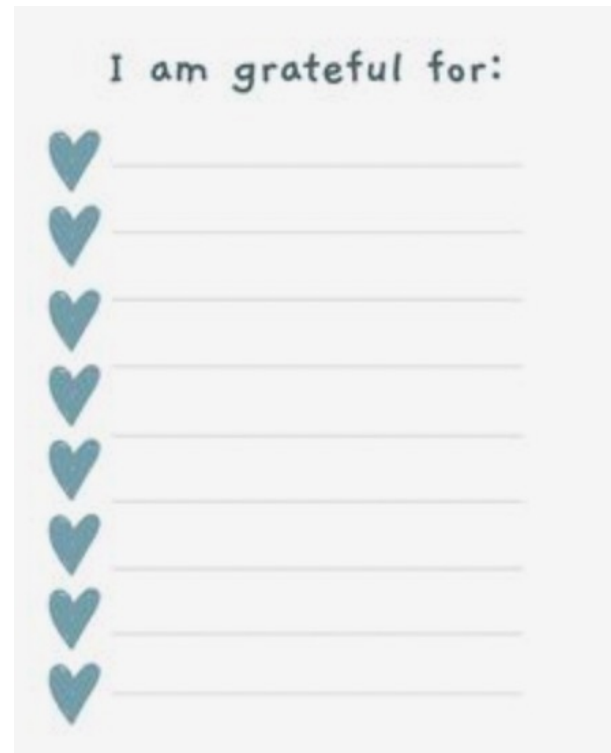
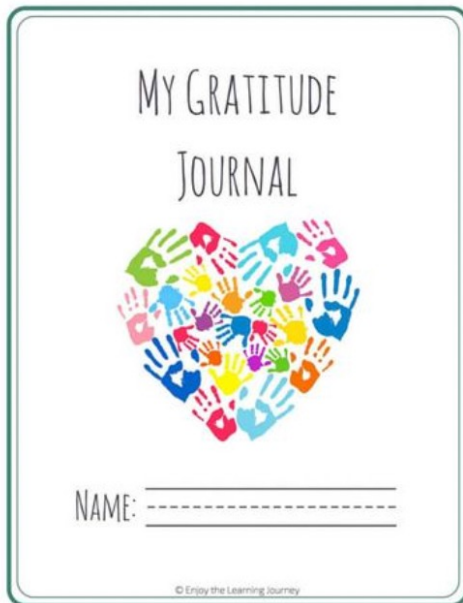
Can you help me? I don't know what to do about _____.

Can you help me? I don't know how to _____.

Can you help me? I don't think I should do _____ by myself.

If none of these questions feel quite right, you can say, "I need to talk. I think I might need help with something." Your person can help you figure that out too.

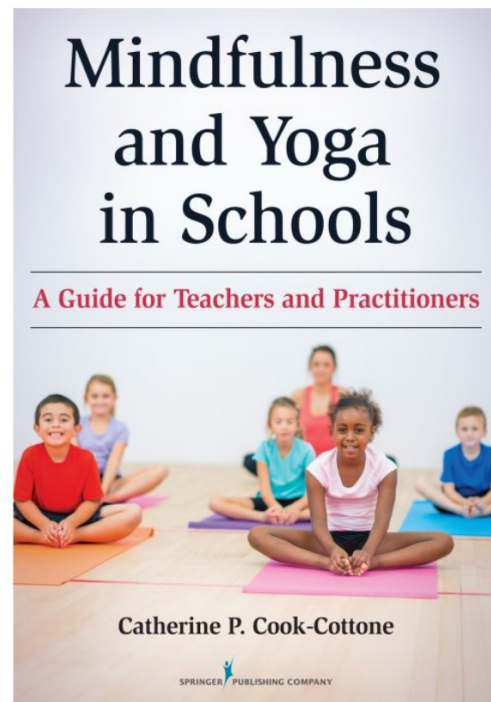
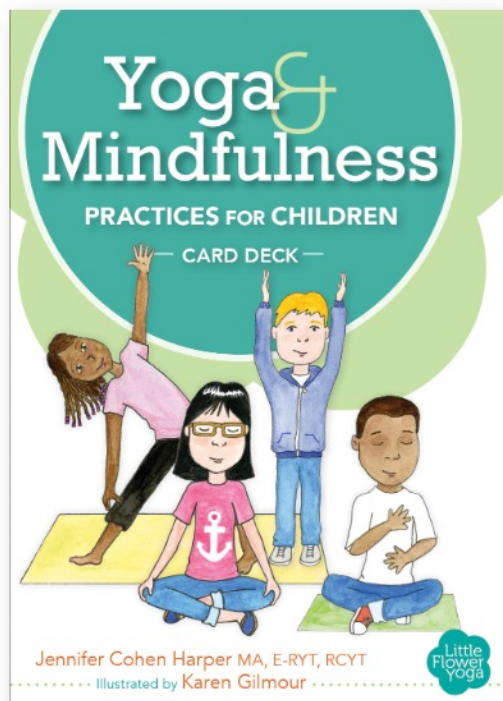
Supporting Integration Through Mindfulness: Practicing Gratitude



Pinterest & Teachers Pay Teachers for Free Gratitude Journal Pages

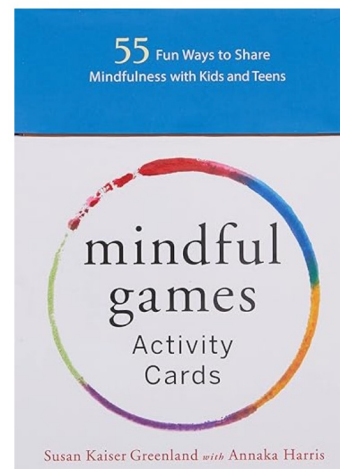
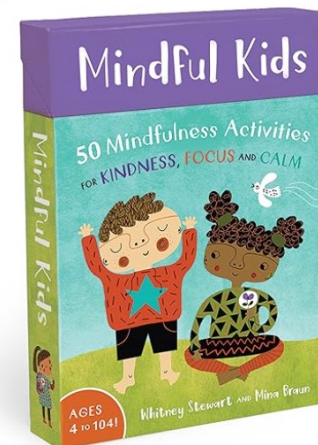
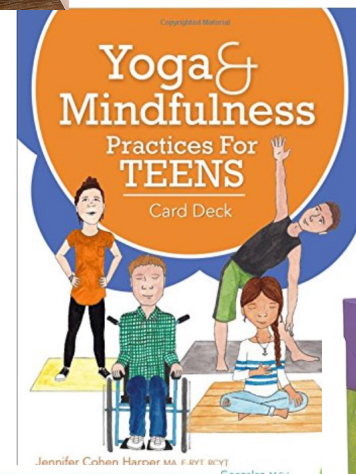
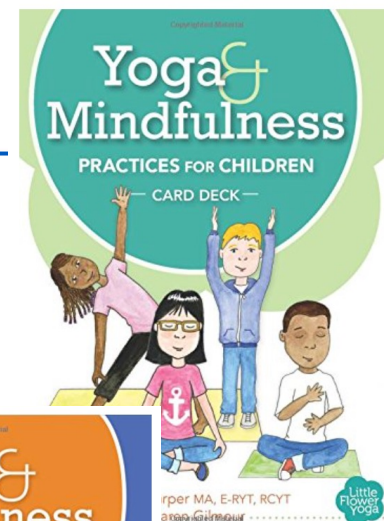
Resources to Support Mindfulness Practices in Schools

- <https://casel.org/>
- Mindfulness & Yoga in Schools: <https://www.springerpub.com/mindfulness-and-yoga-in-schools-9780826131720.html>
- Little Flower Yoga/Jennifer Cohen Harper: <https://www.jennifercohenharper.org/books/best-practices-for-yoga-in-schools/>



Resources to Support Mindfulness Practices in Schools: 5-10 Min Activities for Use with Individual Students & Classrooms

- https://www.amazon.com/Yoga-Mindfulness-Practices-Children-Card/dp/1683730186/ref=sr_1_4?crid=QIB191P8X013&keywords=mindfulness+and+yoga+cards&qid=1695910113&sprifix=mindfulness+and+yoga+cards+%2Caps%2C75&sr=8-4
- https://www.amazon.com/Yoga-Mindfulness-Practices-Teens-Card/dp/1683730909/ref=sr_1_9?crid=QIB191P8X013&keywords=mindfulness+and+yoga+cards&qid=1695910139&sprifix=mindfulness+and+yoga+cards+%2Caps%2C75&sr=8-9
- https://www.amazon.com/Mindful-Kids-Activities-Focus-Peace/dp/1782853278/ref=sr_1_5?crid=12871EYBHDQTT&keywords=mindfulness+kids+cards&qid=1695910165&sprifix=mindfulness+kids+cards%2Caps%2C79&sr=8-5
- https://www.amazon.com/Mindful-Games-Activity-Cards-Mindfulness/dp/1611804094/ref=sr_1_26?crid=12871EYBHDQTT&keywords=mindfulness+kids+cards&qid=1695910180&sprifix=mindfulness+kids+cards%2Caps%2C79&sr=8-26
- https://www.amazon.com/Breathing-Exercise-Cards-Kids-Children/dp/B087F6568X/ref=sr_1_7?crid=12871EYBHDQTT&keywords=mindfulness+kids+cards&qid=1695910180&sprifix=mindfulness+kids+cards%2Caps%2C79&sr=8-7



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