

# SEL Webinar

Understanding Mindfulness



*Date: 04/27/2020*

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*School Counselor, Benavidez Elementary*

# Mindfulness?

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## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the ability to be present without-

- Overreacting
- Judgement
- Overanalyzing

## How can I practice mindfulness?

- Yoga
- Deep breathing
- Meditation

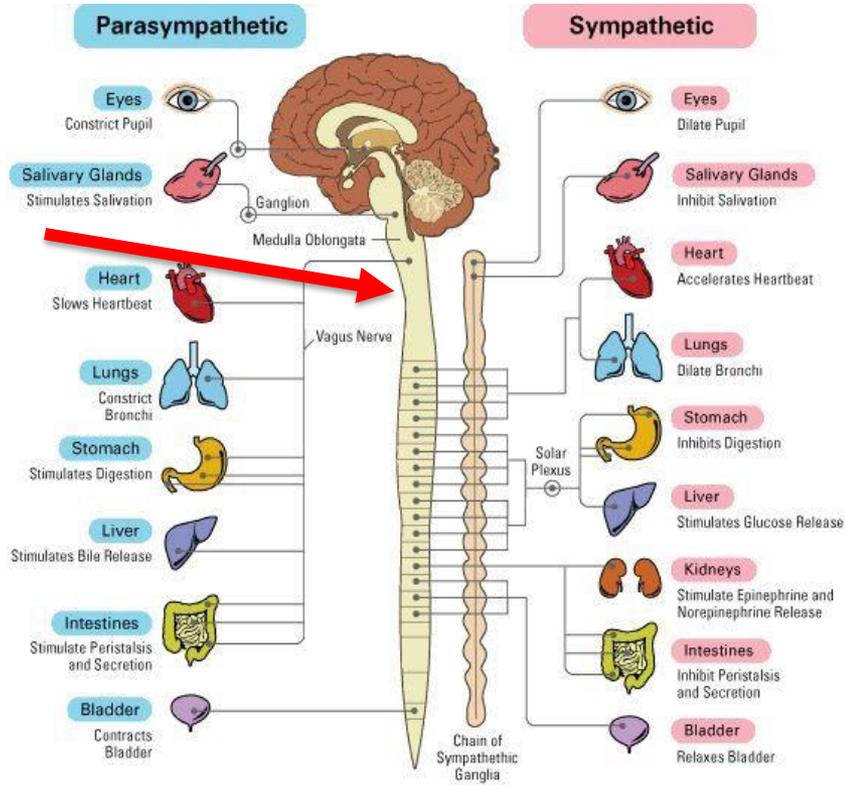
## Misconceptions regarding mindfulness

Only people that are/have(insert adjective) practice....

- Religious
- Time, this takes too long to master
- Flexible
- Certain body types
- Have more resources/are “fit”



# Vagus Nerve



- Largest cranial nerve
- Referred to as the body's information superhighway
- Deep breathing activates neurons that detect blood pressure. These neurons send signals to the vagus nerve that blood pressure is becoming too high, and the vagus nerve in turn responds by lowering your heart rate.

Dr. Stephen W. Porges' Polyvagal Theory

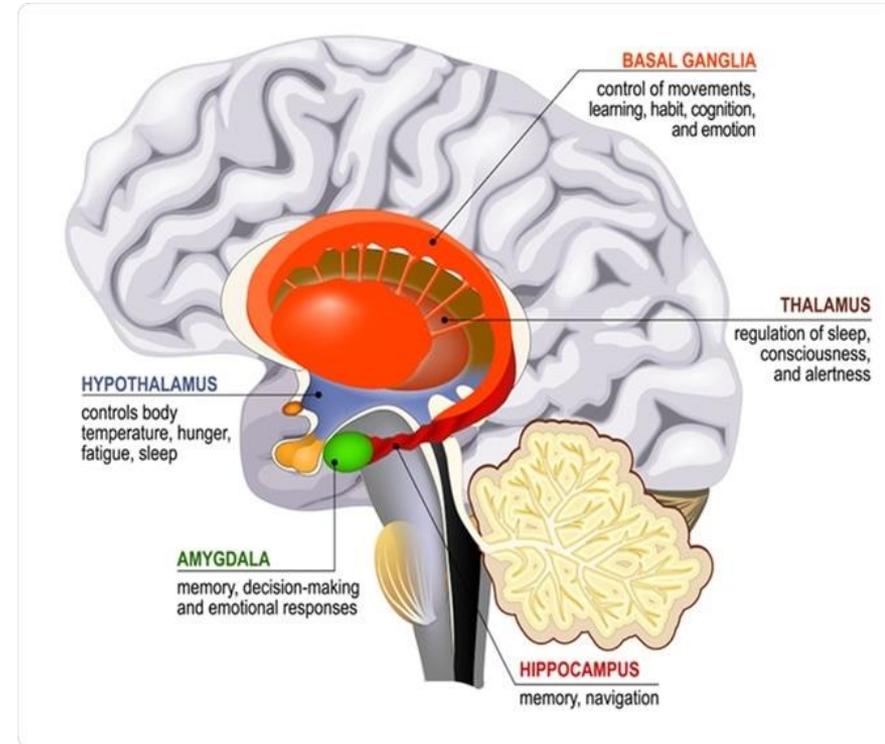
# What are the benefits?

Mindfulness has been found\* to change brain structure and function in the areas of the-

- Prefrontal cortex: self-regulation, planning, decision making, long term goals
- Amygdala: detects fear/danger, memory, emotions
- Hippocampus: regulates motivation, learning, memory

These areas are of prime importance for a child's growth and well-being cognitively, socially and emotionally.

\*<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19776221>



# Introducing mindfulness

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- 1. Begin without expectations and an open mind. Any new routines takes time and patience, especially right now. If they don't want to participate in the beginning, don't stress! There will be another day where the opportunity will present itself.**
- 2. Our children are the best judges. They will know if you are really interested/dedicated to this new routines. Kids can tell if this is something "important" or something being done for their benefit.**
- 3. Accept and embrace this will not be a flawless or seamless process. Focus on this being a shared experience with your child; what's important is connection not control.**
- 4. Pay attention to your child's reaction, that may lead frequency or length of practice.**

# Strategies

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- “Sometimes it feels really good to stop and pay attention to what’s around me.”
- “Sometimes I like to press pause and check in with my body to see how it’s feeling.”
- “I wonder if you’d like to learn about a new trick I learned that helps to clear your head so you can think clearly and feel good.”

# Mindfulness Strategies

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## How can you practice?

- Have a ‘mindful’ snack by describing the smell, texture and taste of the food
- Explore textures in nature, take a walk to collect several different objects and observe/describe how each feels
- Find shapes in the sky by laying down together and choosing different objects to search for in the clouds
- Practice mindfulness with art. Choose several different utensils and describe how they all feel different on the paper
- Take a mindful walk pointing out sights and sounds along the way
- Have your child give you the ‘weather report’ on how they’re feeling, “I’m dark and cloudy”



# Mindful Emotions

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You are also able to have mindful check ins when your child is having very strong emotions. This may look like-

1. Let's take a moment to take some deep breaths
  - To help regulate your child
2. Try to name the emotion and acknowledge it
  - Acknowledging your child's emotions
3. What does it feel/look like?
  - Answer may depend on your child's age/maturity level
4. Where is this emotion in your body?
  - OK, let's send some deep breaths there

We model being present with our emotions, that feeling our feelings is valid/important and we end by using breath as a way to help regulate our emotions

# Yoga Practice

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## Warrior Pose



*If you are interested in  
implementing a  
mindfulness/yoga practice, you  
may practice with Ms. Batiste*

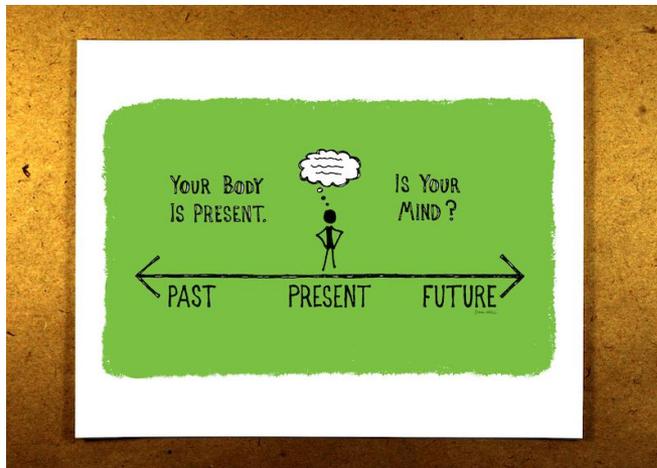


# Guided meditation

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## What is it?

Practice of relaxed concentration invoked and led by another party either in person or via a written text, sound recording, video, or audiovisual media comprising music or verbal instruction, or a combination of both.



## The benefits may be-

- Help manage chronic pain
- Decreased stress.
- Helps you to remain calm.
- Strengthens sustained attention.
- Slows the heart rate.
- Lowers blood pressure.
- Helps to recognize and acknowledge emotions



# Which one are you?

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Mind Full, or Mindful?

# Thank you!

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