

Mindfulness for Preschoolers: A Mind Body Connection Approach for Building Resiliency

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AIMH HI Training Norms

Be where your feet are

Please keep cameras on as much as possible

Avoid distractions- this is important time for you

Here, learning and teaching is one process—*a‘o aku, a‘o mai.*

Feel free to use chat box at any time

Release yourselves and us from perfection

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Participants will identify at least one mindfulness strategy to support a child with regulating their emotions during a time of stress or overwhelm
- Participants will develop an understanding of how mindfulness can be effective for children in building resiliency
- Participants will practice using a mindfulness technique and identify how this may support children in regulating after a stressor



Let's Get Grounded

Pre-Mindfulness

Questions to ask ourselves:

- How does my body feel right now, is anything tight, sore, or calling my attention?
- How does my mind feel right now, what three feelings would describe my current mood?

Body

Scan



Post-Mindfulness

Questions to ask ourselves:

- How does my body feel right now, is anything tight, sore, or calling my attention?
- How does my mind feel right now, what three feelings would describe my current state?
- Do I feel any significant difference after doing the body scan?

What is Mindfulness

“Being mindful means having your mind on what you are doing. It's the *opposite* of rushing or doing too many things at once. To be mindful, you slow down to take your time. You do one thing at a time. You focus on what you're doing in a calm way.”

-kidshealth.org

“Mindfulness is awareness of one's internal states and surroundings. Mindfulness can help people avoid destructive or automatic habits and responses by learning to observe their thoughts, emotions, and other present-moment experiences without judging or reacting to them.”

-American Psychological Association

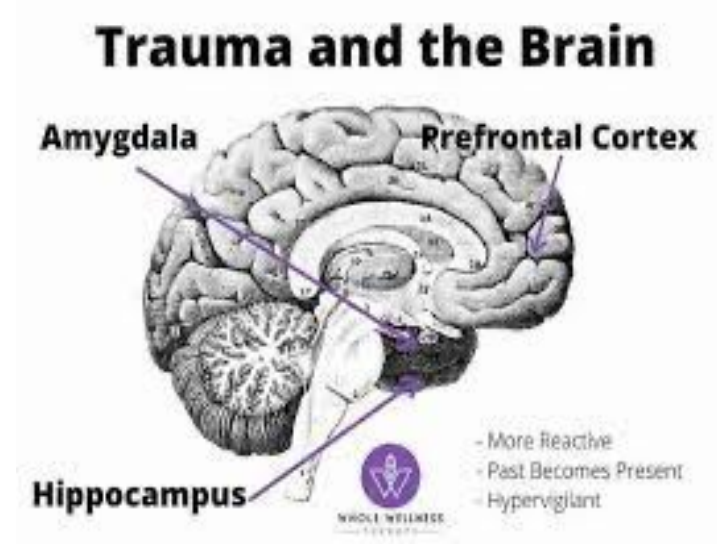
Our Keiki Need Support

“Students need help calming their anxious nervous systems and accessing supportive relationships, nurturing experiences, and positive learning environments. Teachers are ideal for providing this support, but are often not positioned or resourced to do so.”

-Mindful School

Trauma and the Brain

1. See, hear or sense danger
2. Information is taken in to the amygdala
3. A distress signal is sent to the hypothalamus
4. Sympathetic nervous system is activated
5. Initial surge of adrenaline subsides
6. The threat has passed and cortisol levels fall

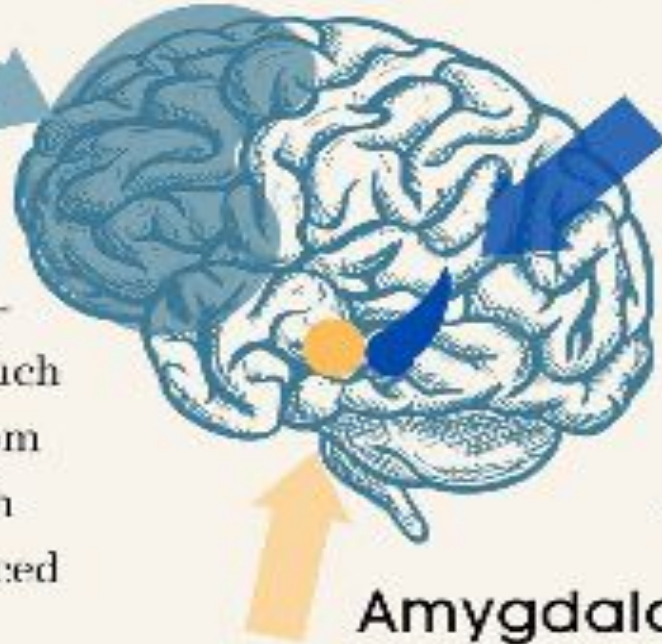


Triggers and the Trauma Response in Children

- The trigger presents itself and the reaction/response is initiated
- Changes in behavior and overall function
 - Fearful of separation
 - Crying and screaming
 - Lack of desire to eat
 - Nightmares

Prefrontal Cortex

Rational thinking - regulates emotions such as fear responses from the amygdala - with PTSD this has a reduced volume



Hippocampus

Responsible for memory and differentiating between past and present - works to remember and make sense of the trauma. With consistent exposure to trauma, it shrinks.

Amygdala

Wired for survival, when active it is hard to think rationally. The more hyperactive the amygdala is, the more signs of PTSD are present.

(Whole Wellness Therapy, 2018)

Mindfulness as the Coping Tool

- Music
- Belly Breathing
- Blow bubbles
- Five senses exercise
- Count the breaths
- Calm down area
- Mindful eating

Kids Explain Mindfulness



Mindful Activities for the Classroom

Co-regulation: Using your body to help calm their body, sitting with them, counting breaths

Music: dance party to get the wiggles out or classical movement to slow things down

Movement: taking a walk with a child, yoga poses, rocking chair, balloon volleyball

Breathing: blowing bubbles, box breathing, bubble volcano

Tactile: putty, water beads, slime (creating and playing with)

Improved Attention

Numerous studies show improved attention,¹⁰ including better performance on objective tasks that require an extensive concentration span.¹¹

Emotional Regulation

Mindfulness creates changes in the brain that correspond to less reactivity,¹⁴ and better ability to engage in tasks even when emotions are activated.¹⁵

Mindfulness
Equals
Results

Greater Compassion

People randomly assigned to mindfulness training are more likely to help someone in need¹² and have greater self-compassion.¹³

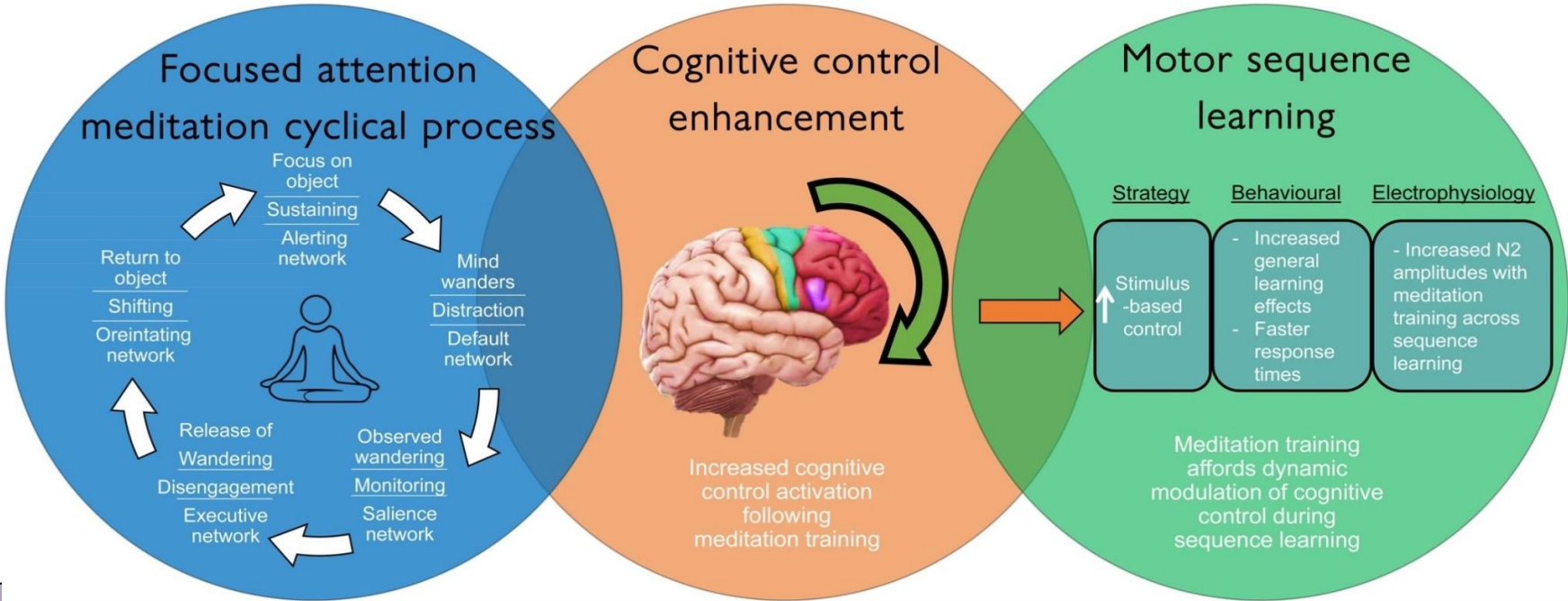
Reduced Stress & Anxiety

Mindfulness reduces feelings of stress¹⁶ and improves anxiety and distress when placed in a stressful social situation.¹⁷

Dr. Burke Harris-Trauma Researcher and Pediatrician

“Educators can deliver the daily doses of healing interactions that truly are the antidote to toxic stress. And just as the science shows that it’s the cumulative dose of early adversity that’s most harmful, it also shows that the cumulative dose of healing nurturing interactions is most healing.”

Meditation Can Change the Brain



Building Resiliency



Add in how Mindfulness is a prevention tool and needs to be first taught when children are regulated and then can be used when disregulated

Review

- We identified at least one mindfulness strategy to support a child with regulating their emotions during a time of stress or overwhelm
- We developed an understanding of how mindfulness can be effective for children in building resiliency
- We practiced using a mindfulness technique and identified how this may support children in regulating after a stressor

References

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Mahalo!

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**Please reach out with any questions or
for more resources.**