
Mindfulness for Music Educators: Prevent Teacher Burnout and Create a Mindful Classroom

February 1, 2020

AMEA Annual Conference

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Agenda

60 minute session

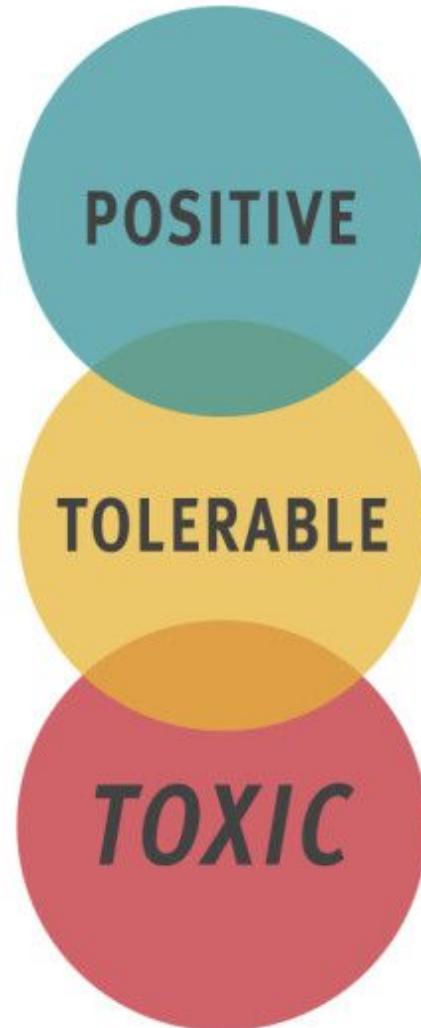
1. Chronic Stress & Compassion Fatigue - A Recipe for Burnout
2. What is Mindfulness?
3. How to start your own practice
4. Bringing mindfulness into your classroom



Mindful Moment: Being Present

Chronic Stress & Compassion Fatigue: A Recipe for Burnout

Stress



Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

Prolonged activation of stress
response systems in the absence
of protective relationships.

Chronic Stress

Long-term effects of the body never receiving a clear signal to return to normal functioning.

1. Anger, frustration, withdrawal, cynicism, exhaustion
2. Can affect immune, cardiovascular, digestive, and sleep systems
3. Over time, may contribute to heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, mental health issues

National Institute of Mental Health

Secondary Trauma

Experiencing others' trauma as our own, *empathetic distress*. Emotional strain of exposure to working with those suffering from consequences of traumatic events.

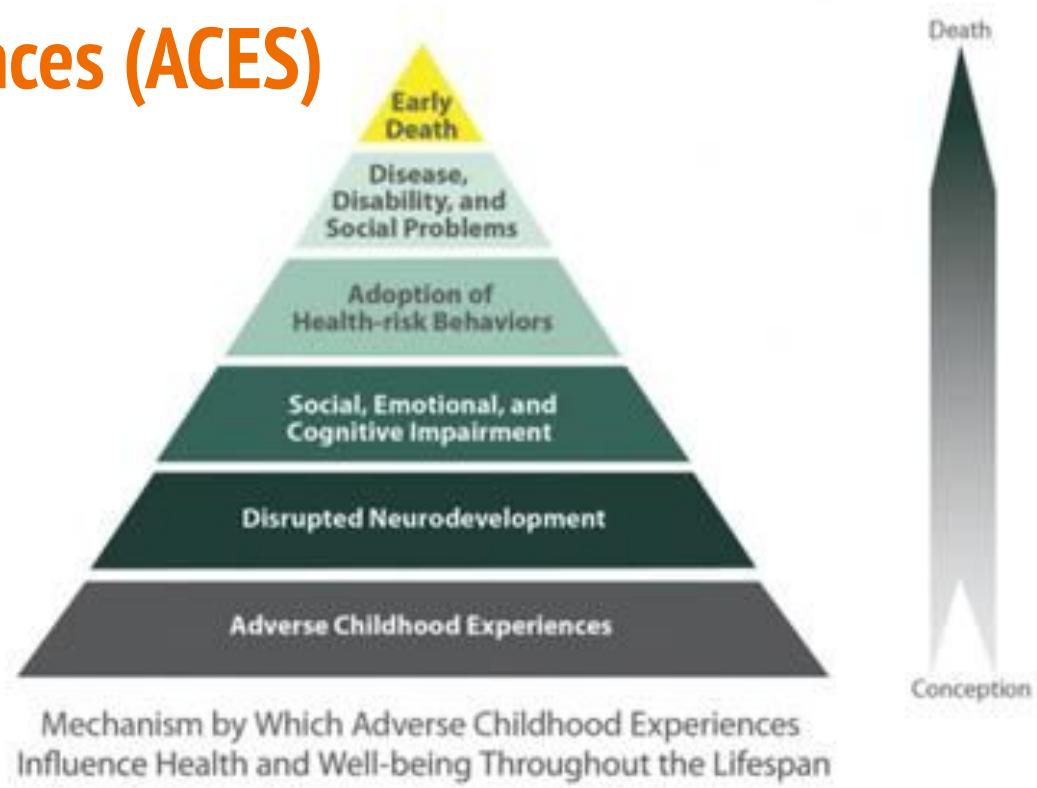
1. Hypervigilance
2. Hopelessness
3. Anger or Fear
4. Sleeplessness
5. Exhaustion
6. Physical ailments



National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Contact sexual abuse
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone in the household who was depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother who was treated violently
- One or no parent
- Emotional or physical neglect



Courtesy photo by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

3 out of 10 children in Arizona have 1 ACE

3 out of 10 children in Arizona have 2 or more ACEs

Burnout vs. Compassion Fatigue

- Specifically in occupational context
- Enthusiasm → Stagnation → Frustration → Apathy
- **Emerges over time**

Symptoms:

- Exhaustion and fatigue
- Apathy
- Distancing self from job
- Cynicism or negativism
- Reduced efficacy
- Loss of self-worth

- Resulting from secondary trauma or vicarious traumatization.
- Less motivated and able to alleviate suffering
- **Rapid onset and faster recovery**

Symptoms:

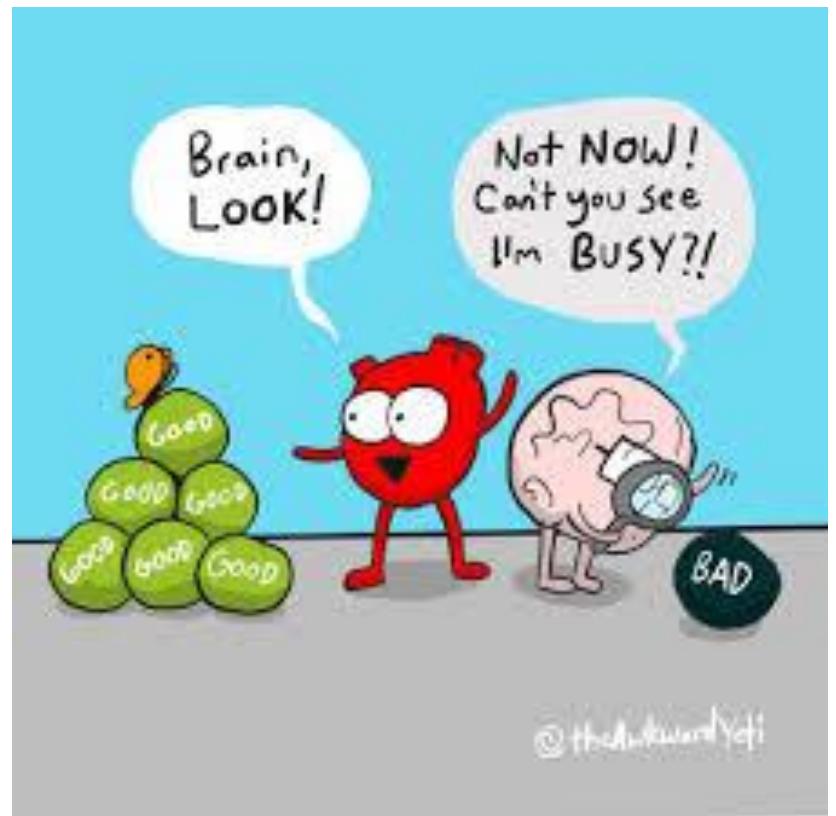
- Exhaustion (emotional, physical, mental)
- Depersonalization
- Isolation
- Emotional intensity increases
- Loss of self-worth
- Anger, Hopelessness

American Institute of Stress

Negativity Bias

Our brains perceive negative stimuli faster and more intensely than positive stimuli (Onward 2018).

- **.1 second** to store **negative** thoughts to memory
- **12 seconds** to store **positive** thoughts to memory
- Survival mechanism for our ancestors
- Exacerbated by fatigue and poor self-care





Our Thought Habits

- 60,000-80,000 thoughts per day
- 80% of our thoughts are negative
- 95% are repetitive

How are your thoughts impacting your day?

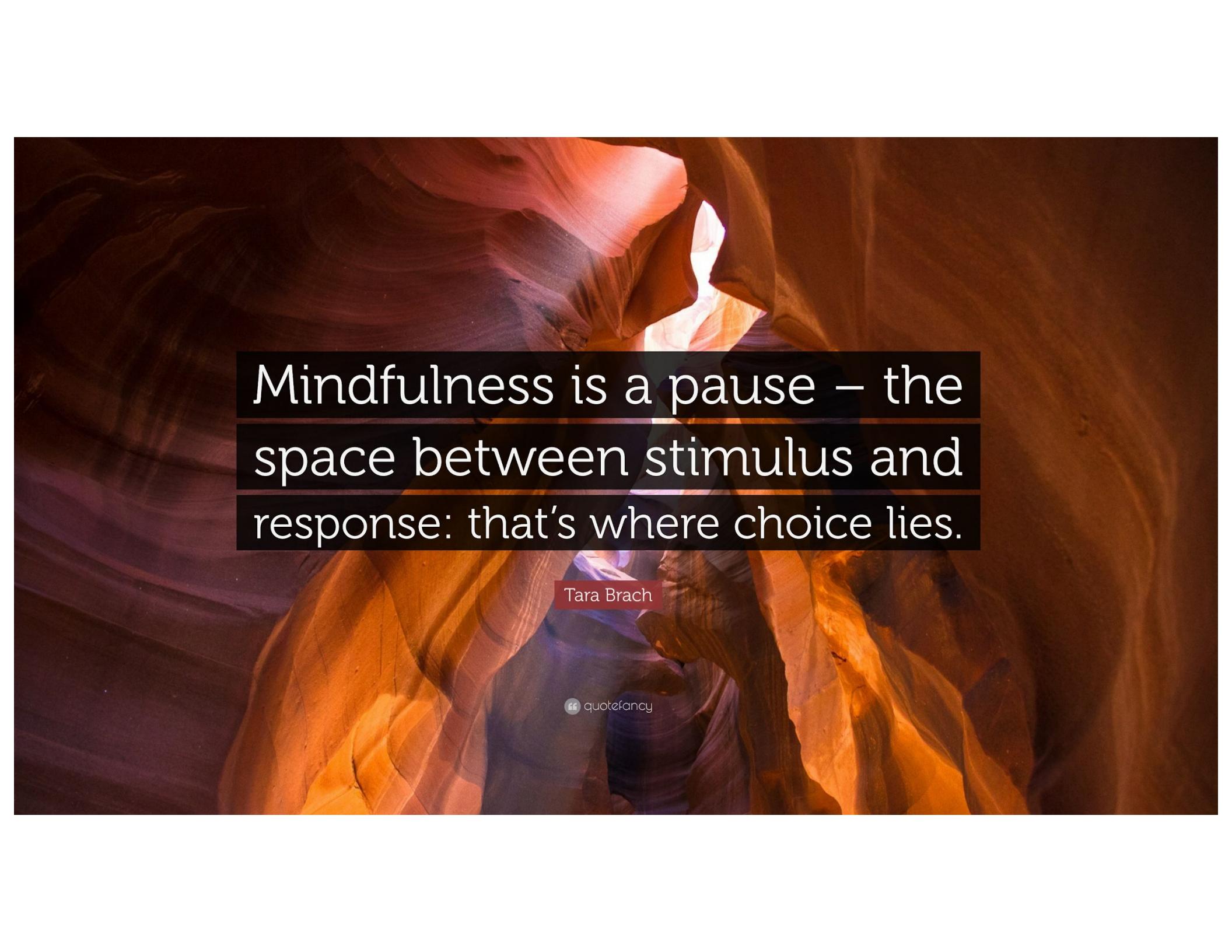


Mindful Moment: Thought Labeling

What is Mindfulness?

Hit the pause button!





Mindfulness is a pause – the
space between stimulus and
response: that's where choice lies.

Tara Brach

“ quotefancy

Mindfulness Overview

*Without
Mindfulness*

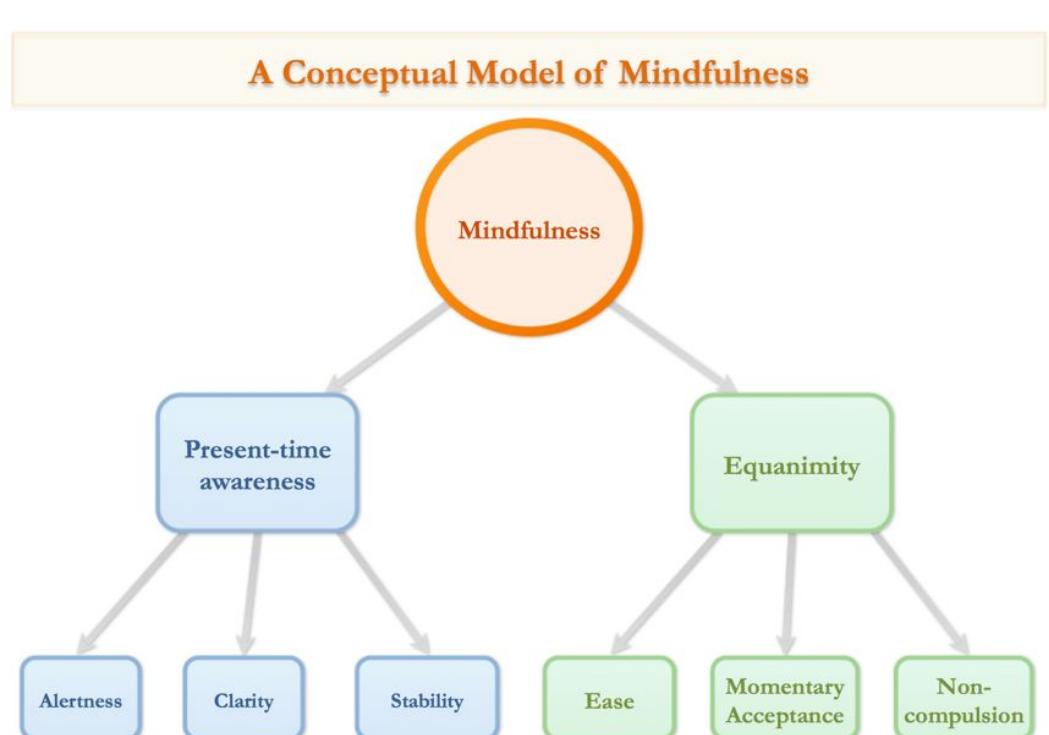


*With
Mindfulness*



Mindfulness Overview

- Mindfulness is a state, a trait, a practice
- Particular way of paying attention, being present with intention
- Present-time awareness & Equanimity
- **Benefits include:**
 - Increased attention, compassion, emotional regulation, calming, adaptability, and resilience



Present-Time Awareness & Equanimity

Present-Time Awareness:

A stable, clear and alert awareness of momentary experience.

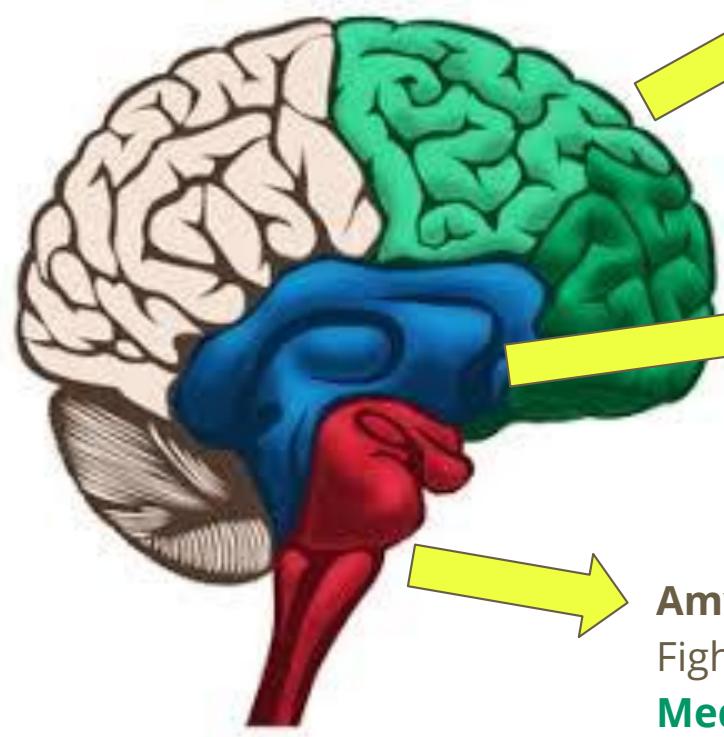
Present-time awareness is thus a kind of meta-awareness, where we have rich contact with sensory experience and we know it's sensory experience arising in the field of awareness.

Equanimity:

Equanimity can be defined as a sense of cognitive-emotional balance where there is no compulsion to act out our preferences.

Equanimity is the balance point between suppression of experience on the one hand, and entanglement with experience on the other.

Mindfulness Overview



Prefrontal Cortex: regulates emotions, makes decisions.

Meditation/Mindfulness activates this part of the brain.

Hippocampus: learning and memory, regulates amygdala.

Meditation/Mindfulness activates this part of the brain.

Amygdala: responds to danger and activates with fear, Fight/Flight/Freeze response. Often overreacts.

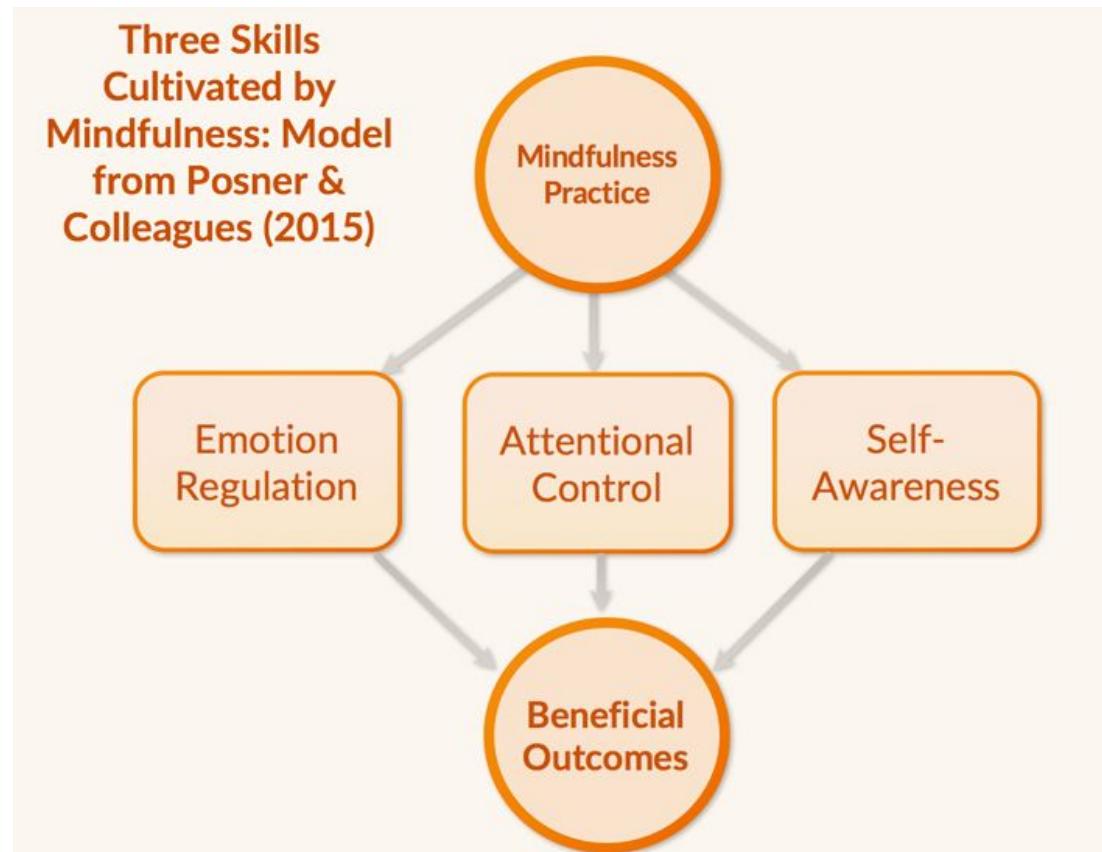
Meditation/Mindfulness make this part of your brain less active.

Mindfulness Overview

- Goal is not to get rid of thoughts
- Practicing kindness towards ourselves, observing but not judging
- Our minds are supposed to wander

Thoughts are not us, Thoughts are not the world - Thoughts are Thoughts

mindfulschools.org



Resilience

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant stress.

1. Personal feeling of autonomy
2. Sense of control over environment
3. Quality of reactions to environment (self-regulate)



Compassion

The process of recognizing suffering and the motivation to relieve suffering.

1. Sensitivity
2. Sympathy
3. Empathy
4. Motivation/Caring
5. Distress Tolerance
6. Nonjudgement

The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom, Jennings



Mindful Moment: Gratitude

How to Start Your Own Practice

Self-Care First



You must regulate yourself first before you try to regulate someone else or change their behavior.

Practice Tips

- Make it a routine, 5-10 minutes daily
- Set an alarm/reminder
- Start simple and grow from there
- Keep a journal for accountability
- Find a friend who will start their own practice so you can relate
- Sign up for an online course or in-person workshop
- Foster compassion and forgiveness for yourself if you falter

Find what works for you!

7 Things Mindful People Do Differently

1

Approach everyday things with curiosity
—and savor them

Forgive their
mistakes—
big or small

2

Show gratitude for
good moments—and
grace for bad ones

Practice
compassion and
nurture connections

4

Make peace with
imperfection—
inside and out

Embrace vulnerability
by trusting others—
and themselves

6

Accept—and
appreciate—that
things come and go

List created by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., psychologist, author of *The Now Effect*

Practice Ideas

1. **Counting Breaths** (using anchor words)
2. **Thought Labeling**
3. **Body Scan**
4. **Mindful Walks or Eating**
5. **Gratitude Journal** (science around gratitude and happiness)
6. **Heartfulness** (sending kind thoughts)

- Find an **App** that works for you
 - Meditation Studio
 - Headspace - *Free for teachers*
 - Stop, Breathe, & Think - *Free for teachers*
 - Smiling Mind
 - Simple Habit
 - Calm
- **Mindfulness books** (with guided practices)
 - Happy Teachers Change the World
 - Mindfulness for Teachers
 - Onward
 - Wherever You Go There You Are
 - 10% Happier
 - The Power of Now
- **Online Courses**
 - Mindful Schools
 - Mindful.org



Mindful Moment: Heartfulness

Bringing Mindfulness Into Your Classroom

“In The Moment” Self-Regulation Recipe

Mindfulness Practice supports “Calming Techniques” and “Thinking Strategies.” Focus on breathing and repeating a mantra or positive thought.

“Sensory Supports” include something you can touch, smell, hear, or taste. Have a stress ball, essential oils, calm music, or dark chocolate nearby.

Emotions are contagious. What are you spreading?

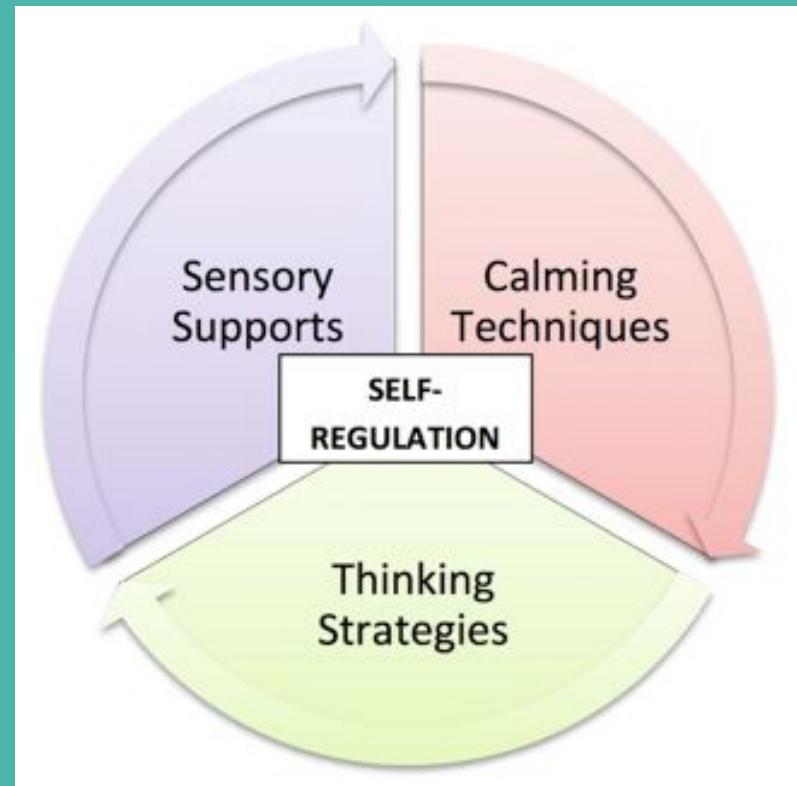


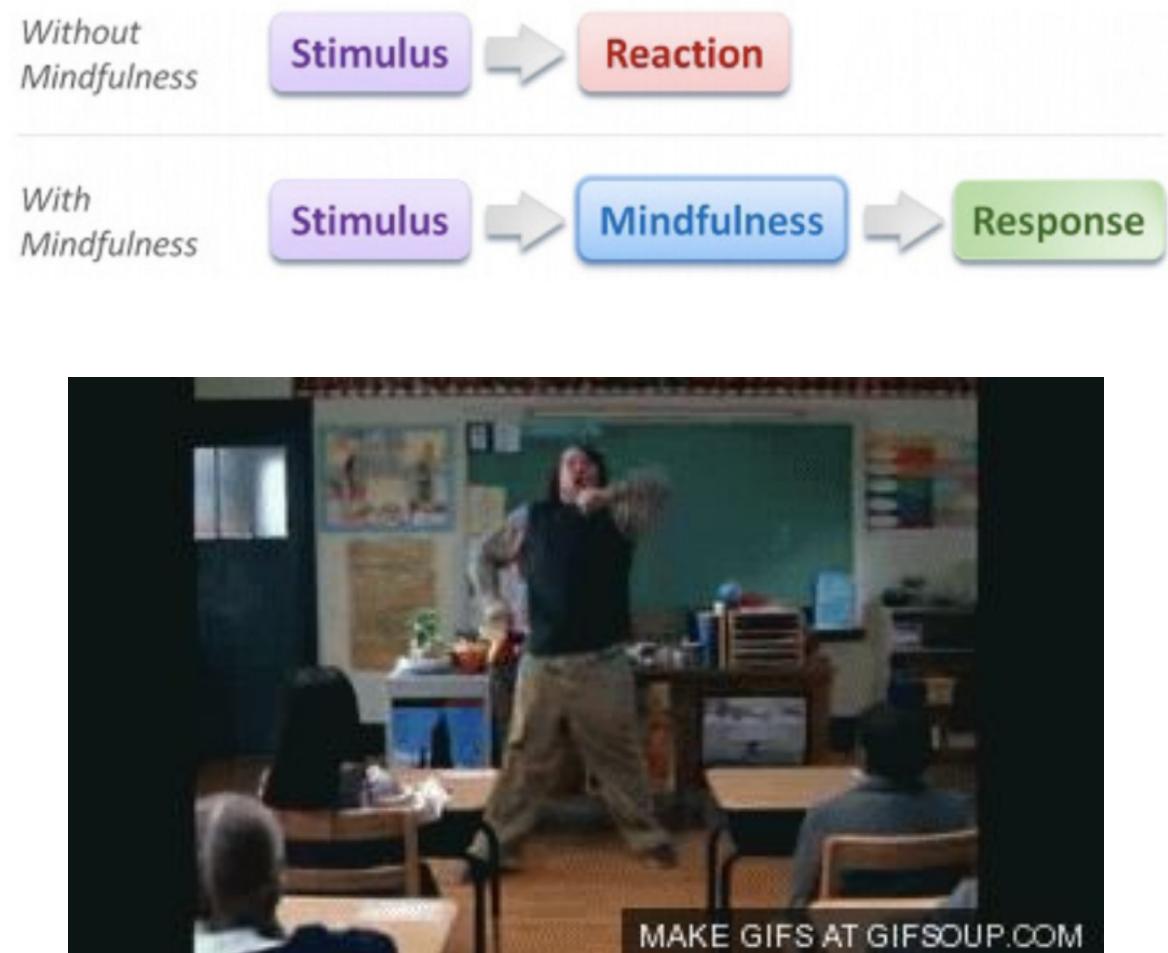
Image from Parkland Players

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Self-Regulation Depletion is real!

Benefits for Teachers

- Experience lower levels of stress and burnout
- Greater efficacy (less “monkey mind”)
- More emotionally supportive classrooms
- More organized classrooms

(Onward 2018)



Activities for Students:

- Body Scan
- Mindful Minute
- Nature Walk
- Mindful Eating
- Worry Bubbles
- Happy Place
- Breathing Buddies
- Glitter Jar
- Box Breathing
- Mindful Coloring

Videos & Resources for Students:

- GoNoodle Flow, Think About It, Empower
- Cosmic Kids Yoga (Yoga and Mindfulness)
- Go Zen Online
- Mindful Kids Activity Cards (Amazon)



Mindfulness for Music Classrooms

- **Breathing during transitions** for going into rehearsal, changing songs, leaving rehearsal, etc.
- **Body scan for instrument postures** to become aware of any tension
- **Box Breathing using music stand or sheet music** to help ensemble calm down or refocus
- **Mindful coloring or drawing** while listening to music
- Blowing and releasing **worry bubbles** for difficult rehearsals or if students are anxious before a concert
- **Mindful listening** with certain instruments and sounds to train their ears and focus

Tips for Mindfulness in the Classroom:

Megan Cowan, co-founder, and co-director at the Mindful Schools:

1. **Keep the purpose of mindfulness practice in mind.** Be sure to engage in mindful practice with children in **positive** situations, and never use it as a disciplinary tool.
2. **Make sure you practice mindfulness yourself!** In this case, the old adage “those who cannot do, teach” definitely does not apply.
3. Set a **daily routine** for practicing mindfulness to make sure you always get around to it.
4. **Prepare the environment for successful practice;** move the furniture around or have everyone switch positions.
5. **Involve students in the process;** perhaps designate a different child each day to alert the class when it’s time to practice mindfulness or help set up any tools or props.
6. **Share your own experiences with the kids;** this will help them understand how mindfulness is applied and practiced in everyday life.
7. **Encourage the children to share their experiences as well,** whether they were good experiences with mindfulness or experiences in which they got distracted.
8. **Practice every day;** the more you embed mindfulness into the daily routine, the easier it is to engage.

Questions about
mindfulness?

Thank you for attending!

YouTube videos, links to websites and apps, PDFs of worksheets, and more resources are available at:

www.amyswietlik.com/crt-mindfulness-resources