

RE-MIND:

Mindfulness + SEL Practices for School and Home

Amy M. Starkey, COTA/L, CTP, E-RYT200

Founder of YOGA-2-GO, LLC



YOGA-2-GO, LLC: Who We Are

- ▶ Children's + Teen's Yoga/SEL/Mindfulness organization based out of Greenville, SC
- ▶ Pediatric therapist owned & operated since 2007
- ▶ Trauma-informed/SEL-focused/evidence-based
- ▶ Inclusive: Special Needs, Underserved Populations
- ▶ In-school & Out-of-School time enrichment programming



What We Offer

- ▶ *C.A.L.M SCHOOL*: Virtual + On-site Yoga/SEL/Mindfulness programs for Schools (K-12)
- ▶ *C.A.L.M HOME*: Virtual Yoga Therapy Services for Children & Families
- ▶ Family & Educator Therapeutic Consultation Services
- ▶ Professional Development Trainings for Educators & Therapists
- ▶ Provide customized yoga/mindfulness videos for K-12 classrooms
- ▶ RE-MIND© Children's Educational Product Line for K-5 students



Impact of the Pandemic on Child & Adolescent Mental Health

- ▶ The global psychological impact of the COVID-19 crisis on adults, adolescents & children has been enormous, classifying it as a mass traumatic event.
- ▶ Increased rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicide, domestic violence, worsening mental/physical health conditions, poverty, substance abuse & family separation
- ▶ Minorities, disadvantaged & marginalized populations put at greatest risk
- ▶ Disruptions in routine and social isolation can be associated with anxiety and depression and can affect mental health later in life.
- ▶ Parents with young children reported in October and November of 2020 that their children showed elevated symptoms of depression, anxiety & psychological stress, with 22% experiencing an overall worsening of mental or emotional health. (1)
- ▶ Recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) find children's emergency department visits increased during the pandemic for mental health-related emergencies and suspected suicide attempts by children ages 12 to 17.

How Do We “Re-New, Re-Boot, Re-Engage”?

- ▶ 1. Family & Community Support

Implement strategies specifically designed to build connection, improve health & foster resiliency among educators, students & families

- ▶ 2. Stress Management for Home & School

Learn therapeutic, evidence-based coping tools that can be performed both at home & in the classroom to facilitate self-regulation

What is Self-Regulation?

SELF-REGULATION: The ability to effectively manage & control one's emotional & behavioral responses across various situations and demands

DYSREGULATION: Difficulty/inability to manage emotional & behavioral responses within a typically acceptable normal range, often including high emotional reactivity, emotional outbursts ('meltdowns') & marked fluctuations in mood.

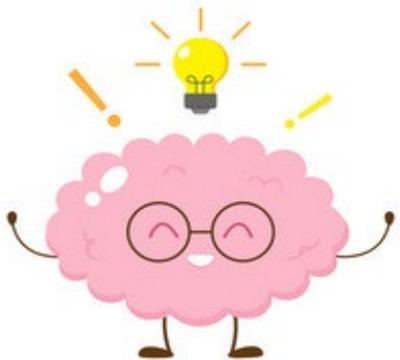
- ▶ Activation of the 'fight-or-flight/danger response in the brain (Sympathetic NS function)
- ▶ Commonly experienced with chronic stress, trauma, developmental disabilities (ADHD, SPD) & mood disorders
- ▶ Can significantly impact one's ability to achieve social & academic success

Comparison: Self-Regulation vs/ Dysregulation

Self-Regulation

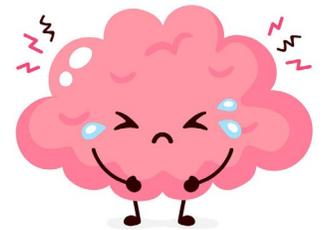
“C.A.L.M”

- ▶ Control (behavior & emotions)
- ▶ Alert/Attentive
- ▶ Listening/Learning
- ▶ Mindful



Dysregulation

- ▶ Hyperactivity/excessive movement
- ▶ Emotional outbursts/meltdowns/highly reactive
- ▶ Behavioral challenges/“acting out” behaviors
- ▶ Impulsivity
- ▶ Defiant
- ▶ Seeking excessive movement or input
- ▶ Not retaining information
- ▶ Easily distracted
- ▶ Anxious/stressed/worried
- ▶ Aggressive/combatative/violent
- ▶ Shut down/disengaged/under responsive



How Do We Achieve Self-Regulation?

- ▶ Mindful Movement/Mindfulness practices
- ▶ Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills
- ▶ Improving mental/emotional/physical health
- ▶ Building resiliency to navigate stress & trauma
- ▶ Mind/body-based strategies for stress management

- ▶ Experts recommend movement breaks:
 - ages 3-9: every 15 mins
 - ages 10+: every 45 mins

***Mindful Movement breaks offer *POSITIVE* opportunities for children to meet their need for self-regulation.



Not just any movement...Mindful Movement

“Mindful Movement” = any exercise (ie. Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong) that uses **Purposeful Movements + Slow, Intentional Breathing + Mental Focus** for the purpose of achieving self-regulation.

- ▶ Calming the nervous system
- ▶ Organizing the brain (Pre-frontal cortex activity)
- ▶ Decreasing anxiousness & hyperactivity
- ▶ Managing stress & difficult emotions
- ▶ Improving attention & focus & body awareness
- ▶ Building mental/emotional/physical resiliency



Evidence to Support Mindful Movement for Children/Teens

- ▶ A study conducted in April 2021 revealed significant improvement in prosocial behaviors demonstrated among K-2 students after completing an 8-week school mindfulness program. (2)
- ▶ Findings from a 2021 controlled trial conducted with 3rd graders who screened positive for symptoms of anxiety concluded a significant improvement in emotional and psychosocial quality of life, suggesting that yoga/mindfulness interventions may improve symptoms of anxiety among students and may serve as a complement to social and emotional learning activities. (3)
- ▶ A 2020 study conducted with forty-eight 9th grade students provided evidence that implementing mindfulness in the daily school routine promises to support self-regulatory processes and strengthen the resilience of children and adolescents. (4)
- ▶ In a 2019 trial, 113 students performed a 1-week at-home mindfulness practice. Participants reported that improved coping results were not only maintained but increased in the two weeks after the trial, supporting the assertion that mindfulness increases the ability to monitor and modify coping strategies during times of stress. (5)
- ▶ A 2015 study conducted to test the impact of mindfulness practices at home concluded improvements in parent-youth relationship quality, youth behavior management, and parent well-being. (6)

Benefits of Mindful Movement in the Classroom

- ▶ Simple but effective stretches, breathing and mindfulness techniques can facilitate optimal behavior, attention & learning
- ▶ Easily implemented into the classroom setting (no mat, props, excess time, etc)
- ▶ Non-competitive physical exercise that builds confidence
- ▶ Encourages social-emotional learning skills among peers
- ▶ Can be done individually or as a class/family group session
- ▶ Inclusive...can be modified for students with special needs
- ▶ School-Friendly (secular terminology)
- ▶ Adaptable: easy to teach in a virtual format = greater reach, recorded sessions

How Can We Implement Mindfulness into Classrooms & Homes in a Way that is Educational, Meaningful & Fun?

The RE-MIND '3 Steps to Mindfulness' Method:

- ▶ An effective 3-step process that combines fun & engaging mindfulness activities for building better focus, self-regulation, self-awareness & resiliency.
- ▶ Can be used 1:1 as a therapeutic/behavioral intervention strategy or in a group
- ▶ Can be easily implemented at home or in the classroom
- ▶ Used by all ages (K-5, teens, adults) & ability levels
- ▶ Therapist-developed/trauma-informed

The RE-MIND '3 Steps to Mindfulness' Method TM

Step 1. Check-In:

Intention: Improve self-awareness & interoception skills

“Notice” - Brain-Breath-Body-Energy-Emotions

Step 2. Un-wind/Re-mind:

Intention: Utilize Unwind & Remind ‘tools’: exercises to release stress, calm emotions and focus the mind for optimal learning/behavior

Step 3. Re-Check:

Intention: Noticing any differences or improvements in how you feel, any bodily sensations or any changes to your energy level and emotional state

Before RE-MIND: Dysregulated

Educators/Students



Families



After RE-MIND: Self-Regulated

Educators/Students



Families



Parents/Educators/Clinicians: Self-Regulation Starts with Us

- ▶ WE must self-regulate **before** we can help our children to do so (“co-regulation”)
- ▶ Research shows that parental stress can negatively affect children’s emotional and mental health, harm the parent-child bond and have long-term behavioral implications; however, mindfulness exercise can increase emotional & cognitive capacities for the whole family. (7)
- ▶ Self-Regulated Adult = Self-Regulated Child

*Acronym “S.I.S”:

Remember to Start in Self-Regulation first, before working with child/student.



The Importance of Trauma-Informed Language for Creating Safety & Connection

- ▶ According to the CDC, 1 in 7 children have experienced abuse or neglect in the last year; with several racial/ethnic minority groups at greater risk for having experienced 4+ types of ACEs. ⁽⁸⁾
- ▶ Almost half of American children, or 34 million younger than 18 years, have faced at least one potentially traumatic early childhood experience. More than 1 in 7 adults report exposure during childhood to 4 or more adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, or other household adversity, including intimate partner violence or parental incarceration. Certain populations are at higher risk for trauma exposure, both physical and emotional. ⁽⁹⁾
- ▶ Best Practice includes the use of trauma-informed language=non-threatening, non-triggering, invites vs/ demands.

Examples of Invitational Language:

- ▶ *“You’re welcome to join me in this activity.”*
- ▶ *“I invite you to try this exercise.”*
- ▶ *“Maybe you’d like to try....”*
- ▶ *“Feel free to stop if anything is uncomfortable to you”*



RE-MIND

Mindful Movement Practices for Home + School

***Please prepare for mindful movement exercises to be done in standing now

RE-MIND Adult Practice #1: Release Stress

Step 1: Check-In

Brain- distracted or focused?

Breath- fast or slow?

Body- wiggly or relaxed?

Notice: Emotions? Energy level?

Step 2: Unwind/Remind Tools

Unwinder Tool: Stress Shake Off

Reminder Tool: Release & Regulate

Step 3: Re-Check

Brain/Breath/Body- “Notice”

Do you need more time/tools? Are you ready?



RE-MIND Adult Practice #2: Calm & Focus

Step 1: Check-In

Brain- distracted or focused?

Breath- fast or slow?

Body- wiggly or relaxed?

Notice: Emotions? Energy level?

Step 2: Unwind/Remind Tools

Unwinder Tool: Pebble on a Pond

Reminder Tool: Centering Breath

Step 3: Re-Check

Brain/Breath/Body- “Notice”

Do you need more time/tools? Are you ready?



RE-MIND Children's Practice #1: Release Stress

Step 1: Check-In

Brain- distracted or focused?

Breath- fast or slow?

Body- wiggly or relaxed?

Notice: Emotions? Energy level?

Step 2: Unwind/Remind Tools

Unwinder Tool: Dragon Breath x 3 reps

Reminder Tool: Balloon Arms

Step 3: Re-Check

Brain/Breath/Body - "Notice"

Do you need more time/tools? Are you ready?



RE-MIND Children's Practice #2: Calm & Focus

Step 1: Check-In

Brain- distracted or focused?

Breath- fast or slow?

Body- wiggly or relaxed?

Notice- Emotions? Energy level?

Step 2: Unwind/Remind Tools

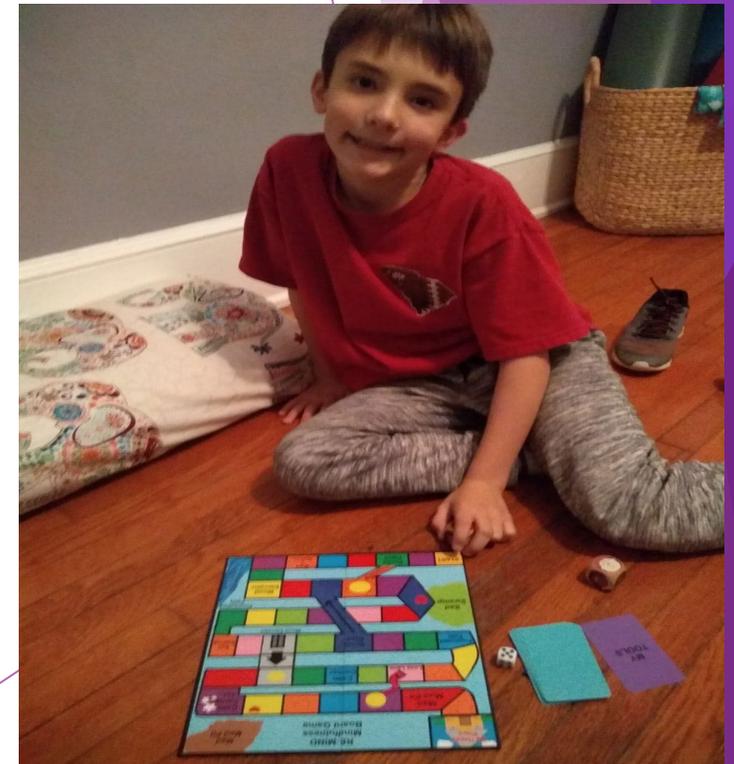
Unwinder Tool: Squeeze-Freeze-Drop

Reminder Tool: Sunrise/Sunset

Step 3: Re-Check

Brain/Breath/Body – “Notice”

Do you need more time/tools? Are you ready?



RE-MIND Adult/Child Practice to Do Together:

Step 1: Check-In

Brain- distracted or focused?

Breath- fast or slow?

Body- wiggly or relaxed?

“Notice/Share”- Emotions? Energy level?

Step 2: Unwind/Remind Tools

Unwinder Tool: Elevator Up/Elevator Down

Reminder Tool: Heartbeat Breath

Step 3: Re-Check

Brain/Breath/Body- “Notice”

Do you need more time/tools? Are you ready?



mindful minis™

'one minute to mindful'

- ▶ Brain Buttons (CV 20 + CV24.5) + Calming Sounds ('safe', 'peace', 'calm', 'shh')
- ▶ Braindrops
- ▶ Brain Hug
- ▶ Body Hug (*options: "I Love Me!"; Proud Pat on the Back)
- ▶ Peace Points (L1, GV17, Perfect Peace point)



References/Resources

1. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/back-to-school-amidst-the-new-normal-ongoing-effects-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-on-childrens-health-and-well-being/>
2. Bazzano AN, Anderson CE, Hylton C, Gustat J. Effect of mindfulness and yoga on quality of life for elementary school students and teachers: results of a randomized controlled school-based study. *Psychol Res Behav Manag*. 2018 Apr 10;11:81-89. doi: 10.2147/PRBM.S157503. PMID: 29695937; PMCID: PMC5903833.
3. Frenkel MO, Georg A, Plessner H. Achtsamkeit zur Förderung der Selbstregulation bei Jugendlichen in der Schule [Promoting Self-Regulation of Adolescents in School Through Mindfulness]. *Prax Kinderpsychol Kinderpsychiatr*. 2020 Jul;69(4):321-338. German. doi: 10.13109/prkk.2020.69.4.321. PMID: 32615895.
4. Jones DR, Lehman BJ, Noriega A, Dinnel DL. The effects of a short-term mindfulness meditation intervention on coping flexibility. *Anxiety Stress Coping*. 2019 Jul;32(4):347-361. doi: 10.1080/10615806.2019.1596672. Epub 2019 Mar 30. PMID: 30929458; PMCID: PMC6900869.
5. Coatsworth JD, Duncan LG, Nix RL, Greenberg MT, Gayles JG, Bamberger KT, Berrena E, Demi MA. Integrating mindfulness with parent training: effects of the Mindfulness-Enhanced Strengthening Families Program. *Dev Psychol*. 2015 Jan;51(1):26-35. doi: 10.1037/a0038212. Epub 2014 Nov 3. PMID: 25365122; PMCID: PMC4485922.
6. E, Demi MA. Integrating mindfulness with parent training: effects of the Mindfulness-Enhanced Strengthening Families Program. *Dev Psychol*. 2015 Jan;51(1):26-35. doi: 10.1037/a0038212. Epub 2014 Nov 3. PMID: 25365122; PMCID: PMC4485922.
7. 1. Liu CH, Doan SN. Psychosocial Stress Contagion in Children and Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Clinical Pediatrics*. 2020;59(9-10):853-855. doi:10.1177/0009922820927044
8. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>
9. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/148/2/e2021052579>

RESOURCES:

- ▶ <https://yourkidstable.com/movement-break-ideas/>
- ▶ <https://www.edutopia.org/article/research-tested-benefits-breaks>

Contact Info

YOGA-2-GO, LLC information

- ▶ Website + Webstore: www.missamysyoga2go.com
(information on K-12 programs, professional development trainings & the webstore)
- ▶ Phone: 864-300-2152
- ▶ Email: missamysyoga2go@gmail.com
- ▶ “Yoga Chat on the Mat” Online Community for Parents & Educators:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/910685163125323>
- ▶ Wednesday Night Workshops (virtual) “Time-In Toolkits” -4 weeks series
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/170191708983>

