

Cultivating Mindfulness in Teachers & Students to Reduce Barriers to Learning:

CA School-Based Health Alliance Conference May 1, 2015

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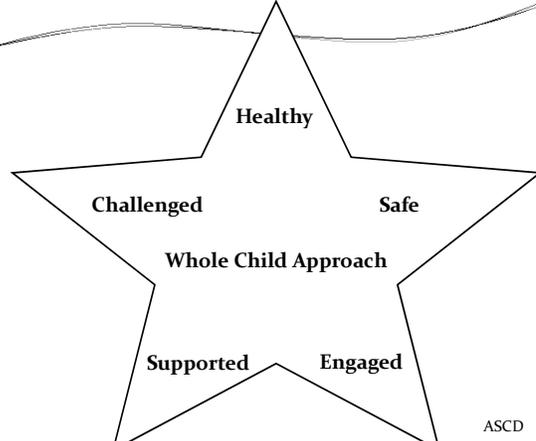


Session Focus

- Rationale for addressing resilience and stress management among teachers and their students
- Impact of chronic stress on health and learning
- Resilient Mindful Learner: goals & program elements
- A mindfulness-based stress-reduction practice
- Evaluation outcomes and lessons learned
- Next steps

K-12 Student Mental Health Initiative

California Mental Health Services Authority
through the California County Superintendents
Educational Services Assn.



ASCD

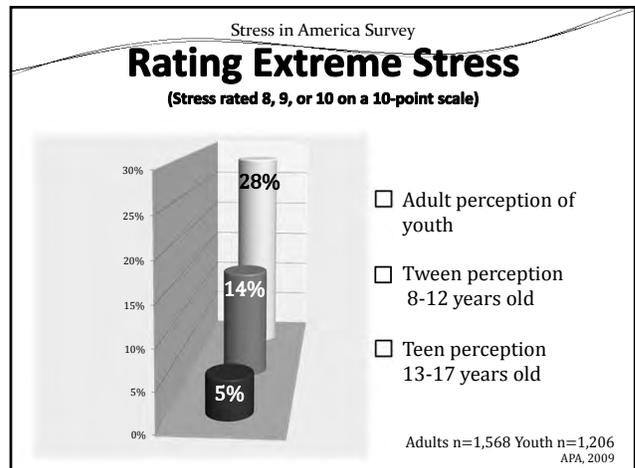
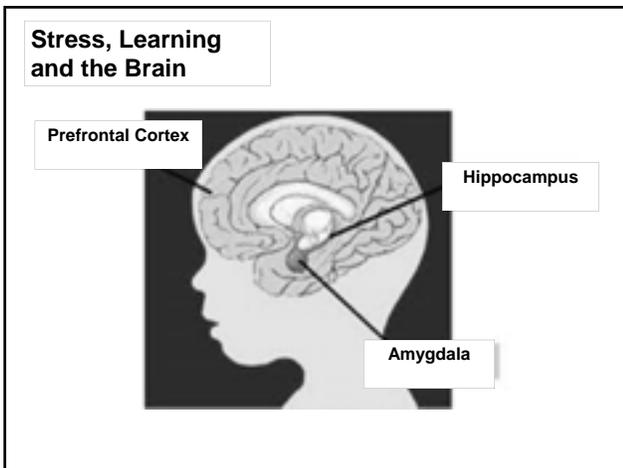
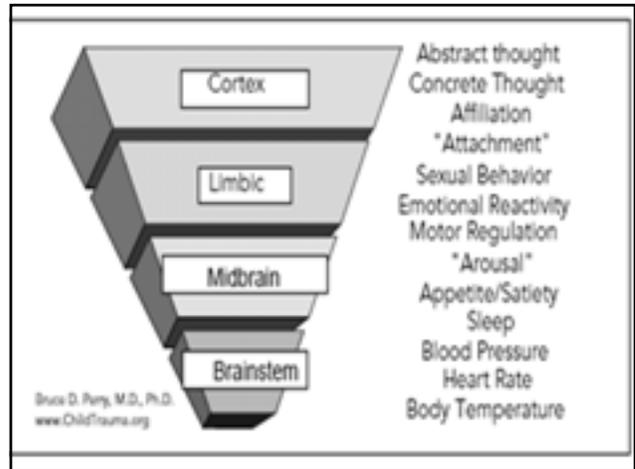


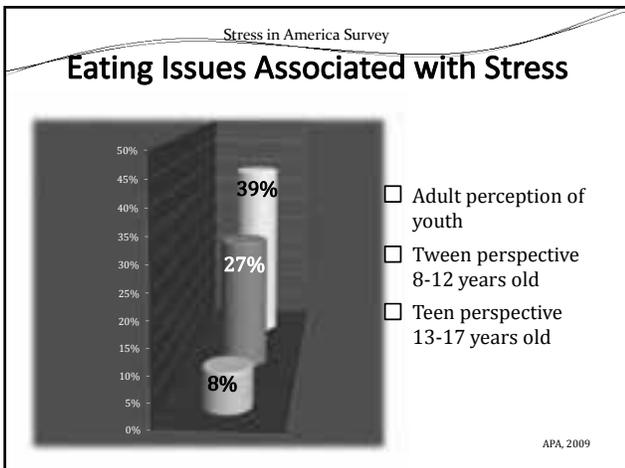
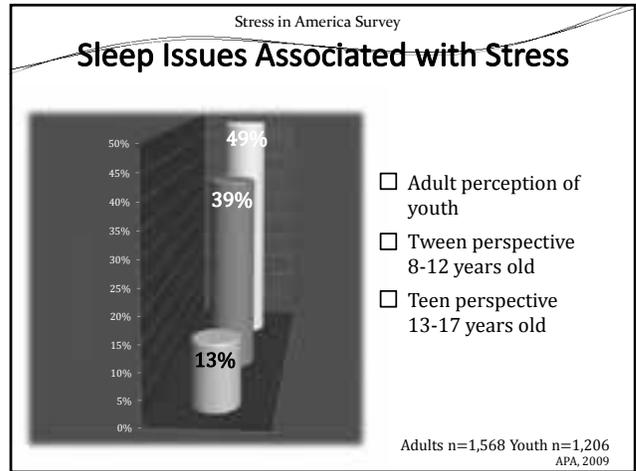
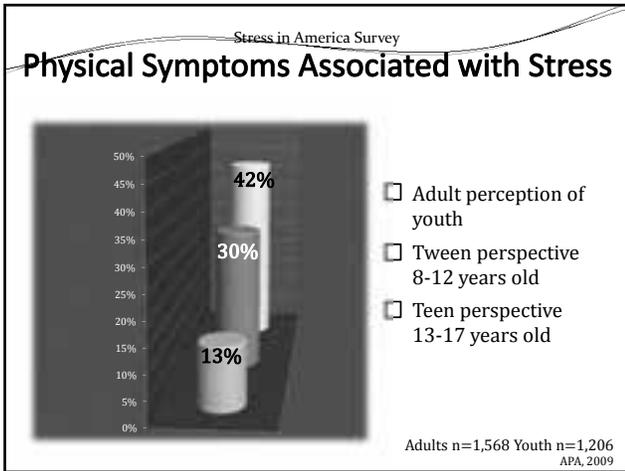
Stress

Internal or external influences that disrupt an individual's normal state of well-being.

These influences can effect health by causing emotional distress and lead to a variety of physiological changes including increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and dramatic rise in hormone levels.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Injury Prevention & Control





School-related stress is the most prevalent, untreated cause of academic failure in our schools. It may afflict 6-10 million children a year.

Barker 1987

Distress is linked to more than 50% of all absences and the cause in 17%.

Johnston-Brooks, et al. 1998



Stress may be silently sabotaging success in school. Its effects are especially potent for children in poverty.

Clancy Blair, New York University and NIH, 2012, p.64.



- Psychological stress affects young children and can substantially shape their course of their cognitive, social and emotional development.
- Stresses that accompany low income directly impair specific learning abilities in children, potentially setting them back in many domains in life.

Clancy Blair, New York University and NIH, 2012, p.64.



Children from more affluent background can also encounter stressful situations that weaken their capacity to learn.

Reducing stress in young people could improve the well-being and cognitive performance of large numbers of schoolchildren.

Clancy Blair, New York University and NIH, 2012, p.64.

Chronic Stress

- **Impairs working memory**
- **Impairs social skills**
- **Impairs habit changes**
- **Impairs decision making**

Jensen, 2011; Galvan, 2011



SEL Programs Seek to Foster Cognitive, Affective & Behavioral Competencies

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision making

Executive Function Processes

- Planning
- Organizing
- Prioritizing
- Shifting
- Memorizing
- Checking

http://www.srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/spr_264_final_2.pdf
Durlak et al., 2011

Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning

Good Science Links SEL to the Following Student Gains:

- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 11 percentile-point gain on standardized achievement tests

And Reduced Risks for Failure

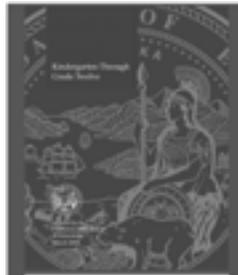
- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (in press). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*.

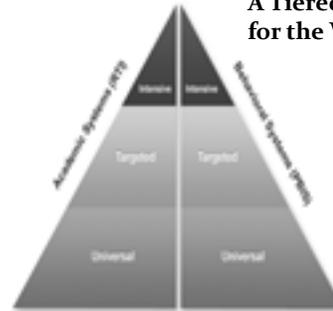
One important aspect of self-management is the ability to healthfully handle life stress.

Stress Management Is Included in the California Health Content Standards

- K-12 Links To Stress Management
- Nutrition & Physical Activity
- Mental, Emotional and Social Health
- Personal & Community Health
- Growth, Development & Sexual Health



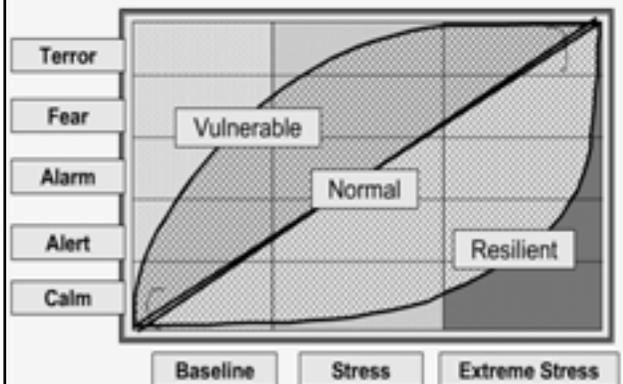
A Tiered System of Supports for the Whole Child



Targeted Groups:
Social-Emotional Learning & Stress Management

ALL: Social-Emotional Learning & Stress Management

Differential "State" Reactivity



Resilience



Being resilient is adapting and being flexible in the face of difficulty, trauma, and major sources of stress. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Resilience

	Beliefs		Survivor
	Process		Support
	Capacity		Growth & Change

Unhealthy Coping Can Result in a Range of Problems



- Poor academic performance
- Conduct problems
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicide
- Eating disorders
- Violence

(Kovacs, 1997; Matheny et al., 1993)

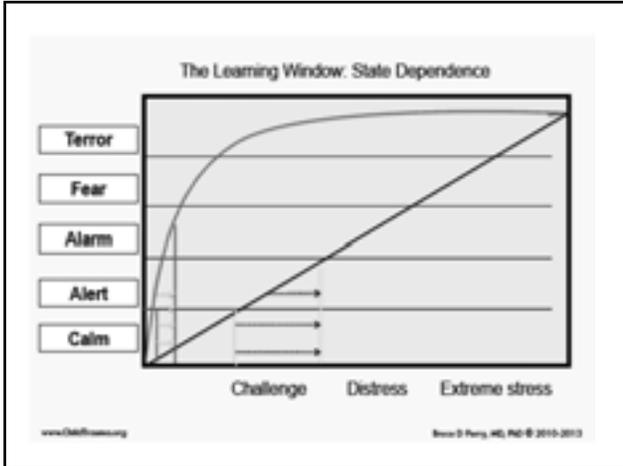


Handling stress effectively can reduce risk of a mental health disorder.

Educators Guide to Children's Mental Health Minnesota Assn. for Children's Mental Health

Chronic stress is the enemy of learning. The best mental state for learning is relaxed alertness.





Although we receive formal training in writing and math, learning how to manage stress is left entirely to chance.

Epstein, 2011

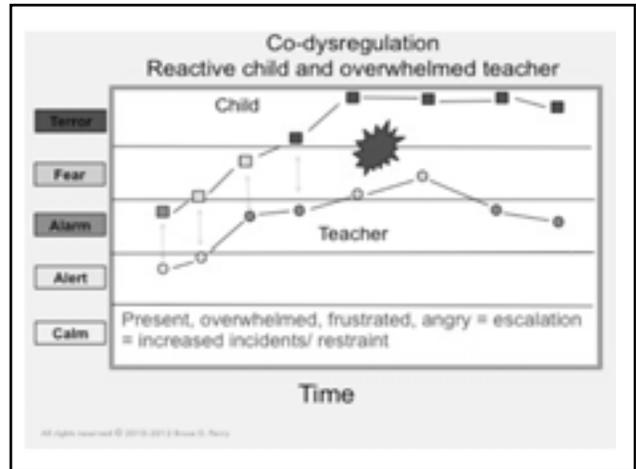
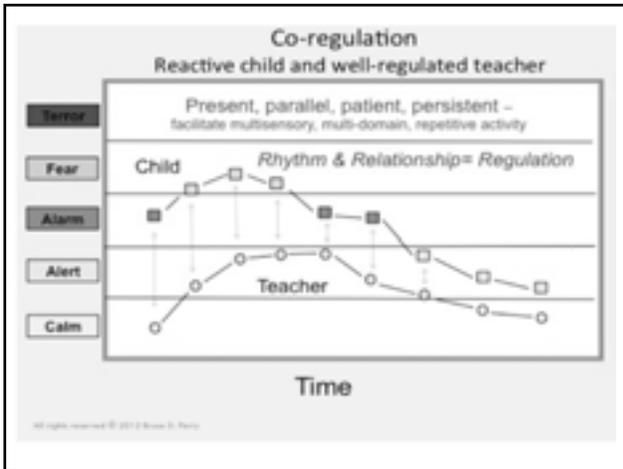
Resilient Mindful Learner Goals

Teachers ...

- learn to manage personal and professional stress and enhance their resilience
- learn to promote student resiliency, and teach students self-management skills and mindful awareness
- form a community of learners for collegial support and sharing professional practices
- serve as a “demonstration” teachers for their school site to introduce and promote practices to colleagues.

Adult-Student Interaction

- **Impacted by Teacher’s Resilience, Emotional Regulation & Mindful Awareness**
- **Role Model**
- **Brain based-Mirror Neurons**

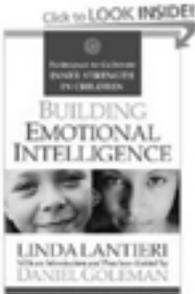


- ### Curriculum
- Resilience
 - Stress physiology, neuroscience of stress, types of stress, impacts on mind, body, learning and performance
 - Relaxation response, benefits, healthy coping skills, variety of relaxation practices (breathing, stretching, body scan, imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, chime, mindful walking)
 - Mindfulness as stress reduction
 - Emotional management, self-regulation, and impulse control
 - Stress management for students-three step approach
 - Calm & supportive classroom environment
 - Test anxiety
 - Teaching stress management to youth

- ### Program Elements
- 12 Monthly after-school meetings (March 2013-March 2014)
 - An all-day Saturday mindfulness retreat
 - 33.5 hours of interactive training
 - Classroom visits by program facilitators
 - Teacher partners observed each other
 - Teachers demonstrate lessons at their school
 - Toolkit of stress-reduction & mindful awareness practices
 - Implementation logs

**Building Emotional Intelligence:
Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength in Children**
by Linda Lantieri and Daniel Goleman

- Guiding principles
- Age appropriate practices
- Relaxation and mindfulness activities aimed at helping calm and focus students' minds
- Book and CD with scripts



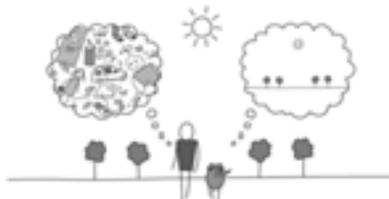
Original Pilot Demographics

- 6 Orange County School Districts
- 6 Title I Elementary Schools
- 1 Private K-8 School
- 14 Teachers
- 360 Students (Gr 2-8)
- General Education, Special Education, Resource Specialist Program, Gifted & Talented Education

Mindfulness

Mindfulness practice is the intent to remain present in moment-to-moment experiences in a nonjudgmental way (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Such practice includes reflective activities or simply walking, eating, and listening with intent.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWak2ml_rZw&list=PL10htT3ga6wEzfkUWnSy-iMqX32HalwE



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindfulness

Emerging Research on Teachers

- Reductions in teacher psychological symptoms and burnout; classroom organization and self-compassion (Flook et al., 2013)
- Teacher stress management, the creation and sustenance of supportive relationships in the classroom, and a positive classroom climate (Roeser et al., 2012; Jennings et al., 2009)
- Reductions in teacher stress and improvement in teacher performance (Jennings et al., 2011A; Jennings et al., 2011B; Solaway, 2011A; Solaway, 2011B; Gold et al., 2010; Poulin, 2009)
- Reductions in teacher stress and anxiety and increased self-compassion and emotional balance of educators of children with special needs (Benn et al., 2012)

Resilient Mindful Learner Pilot Project
 K-8 Teachers learn to integrate stress management, self-management, and mindful attention strategies for students within their classroom day.

We start with building teacher resilience & stress reduction skills.

I had an unexpectedly stressful situation pop up today. After feeling myself starting to get very tense, I practiced deep breathing and found I was able to calm down and let my body relax. :)

-Mrs. Garcia

For project info go to:
www.ocde.us/healthyminds

A Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Practice

Mindfulness

Emerging Research on Student Well-Being

- Impacts stress, well-being, and behavior in elementary school children
- Impacts well-being, agreeableness, and emotional stability in adolescent boys in a classroom setting.
- Increases in optimism in pre- and early adolescent students in the 4th to 7th grades .
- Decreased negative affect and increased feelings of calmness, relaxation, and self-acceptance in adolescent girls

(Van de Weijer-Bergsma et al., 2012; Huppert & Johnson, 2010; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Broderick & Metz, 2009)

I have been using some deep breathing techniques each day in my small group (very below grade level) reading group. The first day they were not able to sit and be still for more than 30 seconds. I am amazed at how they have progressed in their ability to get to a calm place. They are so much more attentive and alert after our breathing exercises.

-Mrs. Atkinson



Diaphragmatic Breathing Practice

Mindfulness

Emerging Research on Student Well-Being

- Inhibitory control in fourth and fifth graders; self-regulation in early childhood & executive function in third graders
- Reductions in attention, behavioral, and anxiety symptoms in 9-13 year old children & attention in first, second, and third grade students
- Reductions in anxiety, enhanced social skills, and improved academic performance in adolescents diagnosed with a learning disability
- An increased state of restful alertness and greater capacity for self-reflection, self-control, and flexibility as well as improved academic performance in 7th grade students
- Increased academic achievement, attention capacities, academic engagement, social relatedness, and decreased behavior problems in 2nd and 3rd graders

(Oberle et al., 2012; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012; Flook et al., 2010; Semple et al., 2010); Napoli, Krech, & Holley, 2005; Beauchemin, Hutchins, & Patterson (2008; Rosaen & Benn, 2006; Biegel and Brown, n.d.)

Many (students) say, "I'm so relaxed", which is not typical speaking language from my ELL students. They LOVE it and ask me everyday if they can do it.

-Ms. Porterfield



Hand over Your Heart Practice

I alerted students that they were going to take their science quiz. Many students asked if they could please breathe. Others were more specific and wanted to do the exercise, "Getting relaxed". That's their favorite. More and more students are engaging in the exercises. It's great to see!

-Ms. Nielsen



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Evaluation Outcomes

1. Promoting teachers' resilience; manage and prevent teachers' own stress
2. Supporting students' well-being and social emotional growth
3. Integration of stress management, self-management, and mindful attention strategies in the classroom
4. Develop teachers' capacity to introduce and promote stress management, self-management, and mindfulness strategies to colleagues

Outcome Assessments

Teacher Measures

- Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)
- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Teacher Stress Inventory
- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)
- Center for Epidemiology Study - Depression Scale
- Focus group
- Implementation logs

Student Measures (Grades 4-8)

- Child & Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM)
- Stress and Anxiety Measure
- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
- Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)

Evaluation Research

- Feasibility and impact
- Value of intervention
- Appropriate outcome measures
- No control group
- Self-report and student observation
- Small sample size
- Qualitative and quantitative measures
- Short student intervention window

Student Survey Results Grades 4-8

<i>N</i> =199	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	Sig. (Y/N)
Child & Adolescent Mindfulness Measure	25.08	24.03	Y
Stress & Anxiety	15.04	15.48	N
Positive Affect	31.35	21.22	Y
Negative Affect	21.51	12.05	Y

Teacher Survey Results **p*<.05

	<i>N</i>	Range	Pre-Mean	Mid-Mean	Post-Mean
Mindful Attention Awareness Scale	13	1-6	4.62	4.13	4.33
Maslach Burnout Inventory					
Emotional Exhaustion Frequency	13	0-6	2.90	2.28	2.26
Emotional Exhaustion Intensity	13	0-7	3.37	2.74	3.00
Personal Accomplishment Frequency	13	0-6	4.51	4.93*	4.80
Personal Accomplishment Intensity	13	0-7	5.05	4.97*	4.82
Depersonalization Frequency	13	0-6	1.21	0.78*	0.80*
Depersonalization Intensity	13	0-7	2.25	1.62	2.05
Perceived Stress Scale	13	0-40	17.77	11.77*	17.00
Teacher Stress Inventory					
Personal/Professional Stressors Frequency	13	0-6	3.63	3.47*	3.37
Personal/Professional Stressors Intensity	13	0-5	3.22	3.12	2.89
Professional Distress Frequency	13	0-6	1.91	1.83	2.18
Professional Distress Intensity	13	0-5	2.21	2.08	1.93
Discipline and Motivation Frequency	13	0-6	3.43	2.37*	2.43*
Discipline and Motivation Intensity	13	0-5	3.38	2.72*	2.32*
Emotional Manifestation Frequency	13	0-6	1.64	1.20*	1.68
Emotional Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	2.14	1.82	1.71
Behavioral Manifestation Frequency	13	0-6	0.92	0.87	0.89
Behavioral Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	1.87	1.25	1.19
Physical-Fatigue Manifestation Frequency	13	0-6	1.21	0.90	1.33
Physical-Fatigue Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	1.56	1.32	1.47
CES-D Scale (Depression)	13	0-60	11.57	5.46*	10.85

Professional Impacts

- *“I have a few students that have untreated ADHD and emotional disturbances and ...the mindfulness has just kept my relationship with this particular student positive and productive and it has allowed me to breathe instead of react to him and his needs and his behaviors.”*
- *“I feel like I am way more mindful in my choice of words in correcting or discipline. I definitely will hesitate, and think about what mood is this going to create ...I am more mindful with my words...”*
- *“There are less problems it seems like. The kids just come in in a calmer state and the class is running calmer and I’m reacting calmer.”*

Personal Teacher Impacts

- *“And another thing it has helped me with is just sleep. (everyone agrees). To fall asleep.”*
- *“I had a particularly stressful school year and I can’t tell you how many times I got into my car and started breathing. And it made a huge difference for me to be able to do that.”*
- *“It’s that mindfulness where you’re aware and the reflective part also allow you to put things in perspective.”*
- *“For me I just started being really remindful about my eating and I’ve lost 55 lbs.”*

What Worked Well

- Teacher partners
- Teacher resilience first
- Teachers demonstrated strategies for their partners & school colleagues
- Link to universal & tier 2 supports
- Voluntary participation
- Teachers selects practices for their students

What We Learned

- Toolkit vs program challenge for evaluating fidelity & measuring student outcomes
- Minimize evaluation and implementation documentation burden on teachers
- A range of frequency of use of the practices
- Students liked doing the practices
- Integrating short practices into classroom routines is feasible

Next Steps





Cultivating Mindfulness in Teachers & Students to Reduce Barriers to Learning:

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