Trauma-Informed Dynamic Mindfulness for Student Social and Emotional Health

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Why Mindfulness?

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.... An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.

- William James, The Principles of Psychology, Harvard University Press, 1890
Why Mindfulness?

- I practice mindfulness at home when I’m doing my school work, to relax and refocus. – Laneiyah
- I have ADHD. I need mindfulness to focus. – Mirron
- I practice mindfulness with my little brother at home. – Luis
- I practice mindfulness with the lights in the locker room down low, to prepare for a football game. – Aaron
- Students come in with attitude during peer mediations and walk talks. Paying attention to breath sensations is what keeps me calm and cool during mediations. – Michael, Peer Leader and Culture Keeper (CK)
Why Mindfulness?

- After getting exposed to the practices in the classrooms and weekly sessions with the CKs, I’ve been practicing mindfulness daily in my office for 5 minutes. – David Luongo, former Principal, El Cerrito High School, Richmond, CA

- In just three months of Dynamic Mindfulness at our school, we have seen a substantial drop in referrals and suspensions compared to the year before. And as I have been practicing regularly for a few minutes a day, I am finding that I am more mellow and even-keeled, and my relationships with family and coworkers is so much better. I am able to weave mindfulness into everything I do, and now the practice won’t let me go! – John Jimno, Principal, Park Middle School, Antioch, CA
Chronic Stress and Education Equity

- Children and youth in urban schools, and their families, are often disproportionately affected by the results of economic, political and social inequities.
- This results in disproportionately higher chronic stress, traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress.
Chronic Stress and Education Equity

- Educators serving more vulnerable children imbibe this stress vicariously/secondarily, impacting their own health and well-being and personal sustainability, as well as optimal professional performance.
Stress and the Brain

Impacts:

• Attention Control
• Emotion Regulation
• Coping Strategies
• Empathy
How to Heal Stress and Trauma?

- Neuroscience Research
- Trauma Research
- Somatic Psychology

Mindfulness
Movement
Integration

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The Essence of Emotion Regulation

Mindful Action, Breathing, Centering (A, B, C’s)

Vertical Integration

niroga.org
Universal classroom-based program designed to reduce stress and increase youth adaptive coping skills through instruction in centering meditation, breath awareness and yoga.

Three core practices are referred to as the ABC’s
  - Action-Breathing-Centering

Four Units: Stress Management, Body and Emotional Awareness, Self Regulation, and Building Healthy Relationships.
Transformative Life Skills (TLS)

- **Scope**: Universal School-Based Yoga Program
- **Duration**: Typical 18-week semester-long program
- **Scope & Sequence**: Total of 4 Thematic Units (Stress Resilience, Self-Awareness, Emotion Regulation, Healthy Relationships). Each unit includes 12 manualized lessons that can be delivered in 15, 30, or 60 minute segments.
- **Manualized Instructor Lesson Plans**
- **Fidelity of Implementation & Engagement Checklists**
DM/ TLS Curriculum is a scripted method for enabling Social & Emotional Learning in a cognitive and experiential way.
Instruction occurs in-class or in other classroom settings
Research Study #1: At-Risk

- Goal: to investigate the **effectiveness** of TLS on indicators of mental health and well-being among a population of high-risk youth attending an alternative school setting.

- Sample 49 students in grades 9-11 in a diverse alternative school in California
  - 54% female
  - 33% African American, 33.3% Hispanic, 4.2% Native American, 6.2% Asian, 2.1% Caucasian, 20.8% Mixed Race
Results: Magnitude of Significant Effects

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<td>Hostility</td>
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Goal: to investigate whether exposure to TLS has a significant impact on school engagement and social-emotional well-being of youth in urban high school setting.

Sample N = 159 students in grades 6 and 9 in a diverse charter school.

Classrooms randomly assigned to treatment or wait-list control conditions.
Results: Magnitude of Significant Effects

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CULTURE KEEPERS
A Youth Leadership Initiative
THANK YOU!

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