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Weaving Visualization and Mindfulness Into Your Practice.
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Learning Objectives

After this course, participants will be able to:
- Determine and evaluate which strategies are best applied individually or in a group setting.
- Experience techniques of mindfulness and visualization to better appreciate how to apply them to practice.
- Review research that is current in relationship to school use of this initiative.
Let's consider your everyday schedule:

- The 21st century places many demands on adults as well as children. If adults are anxious, stressed, and overloaded, it may affect the child, overflowing onto their world. Today, I'd like to plant the seed of mindfulness and visualization for therapists who work with kids.
As therapists we often know how to connect to the child, no matter the age. We can use those moments of connection to empower the child. I believe this is why the concept of mindfulness appeals so much to me.
Do these faces look familiar!

They do to me!

What is Mindfulness and how is it relevant to education?

Mindfulness is a way of unravelling all the different threads of thought by taking time to be in the moment. When we experience this ourselves and pass it along to our students, we may find reduced agitation, anxiety and attitude. Habituating to attuning our minds to be present, we may find calmer approaches towards our students as well as a student that is more open to engaging.
Here is a study done on Mindfulness in the classroom, linking to executive function.

- “A school-based program of mindful awareness practices (MAPs) was evaluated in a randomized control study of 64 second- and third-grade children ages 7–9 years. The program was delivered for 30 minutes, twice per week, for 8 weeks. Children in the MAPs group who were less well regulated showed greater improvement in executive function (EF) compared with controls. Specifically, those children starting out with poor EF who went through the MAPs training showed gains in behavioral regulation, metacognition, and overall global executive control.”


This study is related to parent/child training. The results were positive but as expected with a ADHD diagnosis, the skills did not generalize in the classroom. These kids need point of performance experiences!

- “This study evaluated the effectiveness of 8-week mindfulness training for children aged 8–12 with ADHD and parallel mindful parenting training for their parents. There was a significant reduction of parent-rated ADHD behavior of themselves and their child from pre-to post test and from pre-to follow-up test. Further, there was a significant increase of mindful awareness from pre-to post test and a significant reduction of parental stress and over reactivity from pre-to follow-up test. Teacher-ratings showed non-significant effects, however.”

Here is another that included sensory motor activities as part of a mindful approach.

- “This article presents results of a formative evaluation of whether participation in a mindfulness training program affected first, second, and third grade students' outcomes on measures of attention. The training was designed and intended to help students learn to focus and pay attention. The 24-week training employed a series of exercises including breath work, body scan, movement, and sensory-motor awareness activities. Results from three attentional measures administered to the students show significant differences between those who did and did not participate in mindfulness practice training. “


More from John Medina, Author of Brain Rules...empowering students to be self aware.

- Triggering emotions which have to be relevant will help with attention and focus. “emotional arousal helps the brain learn”

- “The brain’s attentional spotlight can focus on only one thing at a time: no multitasking.”
Have you ever had a zigger zagger day?

As we know... the classroom needs multiple tiers of support. We are often consulted on self regulation...this may be a piece added to our tool kit!
Some of you may already be rolling your eyes and saying...expand my role? I can’t even handle all the roles I have now.

Hopefully this short lecture will convince you that some of these techniques weave together nicely with other self-regulation strategies you are already teaching the students, either from a sensory based intervention or a executive skill intervention for better emotional control. *they also may help you not feel so rushed and help you cope better!*

Plus you don’t want this to occur your first day back!
So lets get started!

Today we will start this conference experiencing Mindfulness and Visualization in different ways!

Let’s untie some knots first! This exercise is from Yogakids International (I’ve added a tweak to it!) Stand and close your eyes...

¿Where is your tension?

This is Mindful Sensation and movement
What is Mindfulness?

• “Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and non judgmental” Jon Kabatt Zin

This kiddo is attending but his mind may be overwhelmed with the implications of the academic teaching moment or other things in his life!

Students are not the only ones that can implode
Associations that can come up:
- Meditation
- Religion
- Visualization
- Chanting/Mantras

- Sensory awareness
- Daily tasks of life
- Training attention and awareness
- Self regulation
- Focus/consciousness
- Decreasing emotional dysregulation and impulsiveness

Mindfulness training is not about...

- About being calm
- About discipline
- Absence of thoughts
- About religion
- A recipe to fix someone
There is Neuroscience research that backs up this practice

- Mindfulschools.org suggests the benefits of this practice actually helps executive functioning.
- Activation of the pre-frontal cortex which creates a balance between the brakes and accelerator for the nervous system. Too much braking can display behaviors such as under arousal, rigidity, lethargy etc. Over arousal results in agitation, chaos, aggression etc.

So...in terms of practice...

- We can use it with an over aroused student who may be demonstrating aggressive, combative, oppositional behaviors prior to flight, fright or freeze responses.
- Or we can use it with an under aroused student who seems lethargic, unable to initiate or foc
- Let’s look at the settings handout.
When and where to use it...

- At transition times
- Energy shift need
- Prior to, in the middle of or after extended sit down work
- Beginning of and close of day
- When the body sensations are clearly speaking

We have all felt like this in our work and our lives! Workloads growing! More paperwork, spreading ourselves thin!

- Too much happening at once, busy, busy, busy
- Scattered
- A to-do list that never ends
- Stressed
- Over stimulation in all realms such as environment, socially and internally
- Frustration that occurs both verbally and physically

continued
Like this or would it feel better like this?

- You be the judge!

Dan Harris wrote the book, *10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works--A True Story*

- “I’m Talking about an internal narrator, the most intimate part of our lives. The voice comes braying in as soon as we open our eyes in the morning, and it heckles us all day with an air horn”.

continued
Let’s have some fun with Ergonomics of the mind! Mindful body!

Future Fleeing at it’s best

https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTDy4jXSmsl3TfVwaLuAYw1dUJf66V0mvKR1nE6hvnPixlb9wa2rQ
Let’s look at two types of Mindfulness Practice

1. With focused attention such as...
   - Focusing on a visual object, bodily sensations or sounds
   - Focusing on the breathe and the body parts that activate with inhalation and exhalation
   - Softening of body
   - Mindful walking with focus on walking, feet, weight shift or Mindful eating...
   - Karate, yoga, brain gym and other martial arts

The second is...

- “Open spacious and unfocused awareness”
- The main aspect of this practice is we just simply notice or attend to the physical sensations, feelings and thoughts and let them go. Don’t get caught in the cloud, seeing the broader picture of the sky. We can use anchor words to stay in mindfulness such as thinking, sound, sensation.
- When something shows up we can decide on action or letting it go resulting in becoming more flexible and less rigid or habitual in our reactions.
Let's have a taste of Mindfulness

- Mindful listening
- Mindful seeing
- Mindful breathing

Anchor words
Present moment
sensations

It is often just about noticing... from taking that time to notice...

- The person can make more mindful choices, versus knee-jerk reactions
- It takes time to integrate mindfulness into daily life, however using tools like reflection and a commitment to practice, we can see changes in ourselves.
Let's now integrate some visualization practices...

- This is a visualization from a book... Ready, Set R.E.L.A.X.
- These are one minute vignettes that I use with students to help with self regulation. Remember your delivery... quiet the body, avert or close eyes and low voice tones.

Mindfulness has a partner...
Planting a seed in your heart...

- Gratitude, gratefulness, heartfeltness!

Let's finish with a Drive Thru of Go Play in Your Mind with a focus on gratitude!
In conclusion... Please consider some of these strategies for you and your practice.

- Don’t just look, witness, detect, notice, see
- Don’t just give, receive, be grateful, smile, be thankful, enjoy, take pleasure
- Don’t just taste, delight, savor, indulge
- Don’t just hear, listen, attend, perceive, take note
- Don’t just feel, touch, sense, palpate

Questions?

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