

# Mindfulness for Students with Disabilities

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# Welcome!

By the end of the session, you will be able to:

- link principles of mindfulness and self-regulation
- gain exposure to classroom strategies which foster mindfulness
- map mindfulness strategies onto a classroom PBS matrix



# Can you think of a student like this?

**Kyle loves playing soccer at recess.**

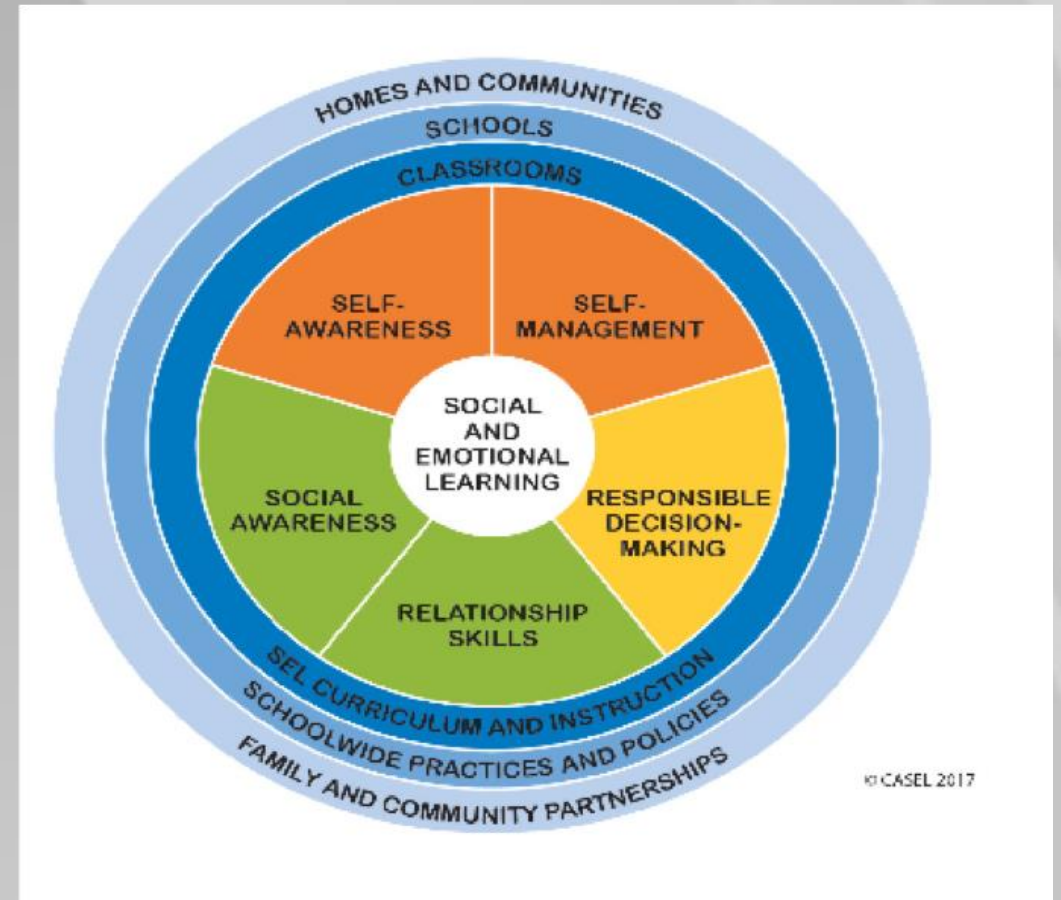
One day, he races out onto the playground with his friends and notices the soccer goals have been moved. No soccer today. Kyle runs to the teacher and begs her to call for the soccer goals. The teacher reminds him that there are other choices but he continues to escalate and begins to cry. He takes most of the recess period to calm down before choosing an alternate activity.





# SEL Skills to Self Regulate

- Self awareness to identify emotions
- Self management for impulse control
- Social awareness for perspective taking
- Relationship skills for communication
- Decision making to solve problems





# A Child with Self Regulation Skills Can

- Stop playing that video game and come to dinner
- Pick up their toys when asked
- Turn their attention to an adult when asked
- Withhold the impulse to
  - Grab another's toy
  - Hit another child
  - Scream when they don't get their way
- Maintain attention to a particular task even in the context of distractions

-Biglan, 2018



# Mindfulness Defined

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally (Jon Kabat-Zinn)."

"The process of noticing new things and drawing novel distinctions which keeps us situated in the present (Ellen Langer)."

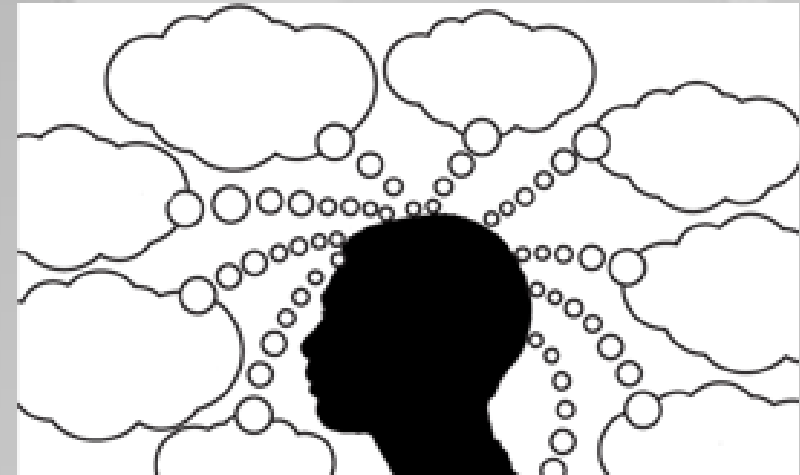
# Attention

The ability to purposefully attend to thoughts, feelings and sensations while ignoring others.

Helps a student to:

- NOTICE their thoughts, feelings and sensations
- Attention prevents us from escalating difficult emotions

-Felver et al., 2013





Helps a student:

- Think about their experiences in new ways,
- Slow down to control impulses
- Notice things for what they are (neither + or -)
- Understand that events are not inherently good or bad: it is *thinking* them that makes them so.



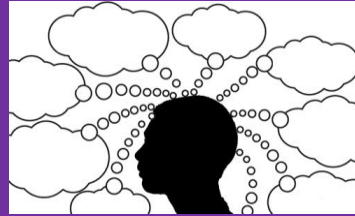




# What is Mindfulness?



Stimulus



Attention



Flexible  
Thinking

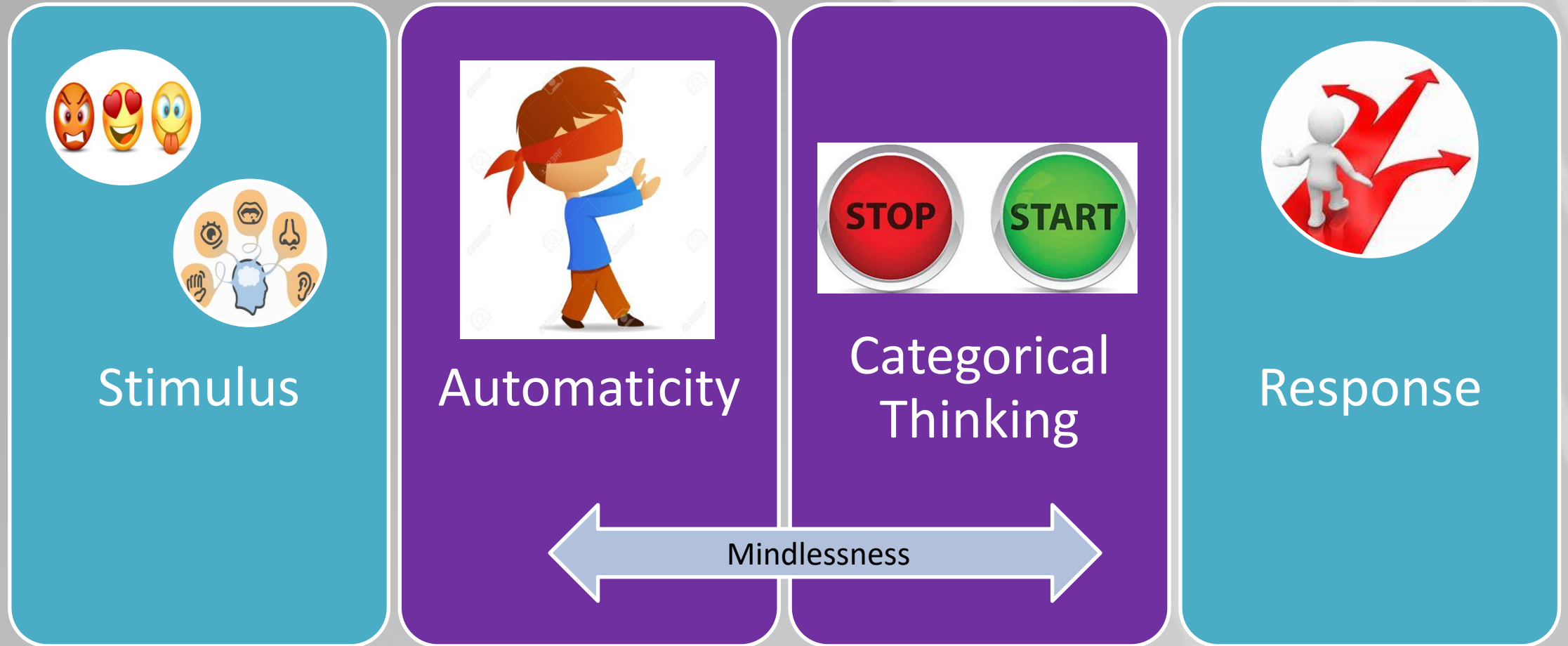


Response



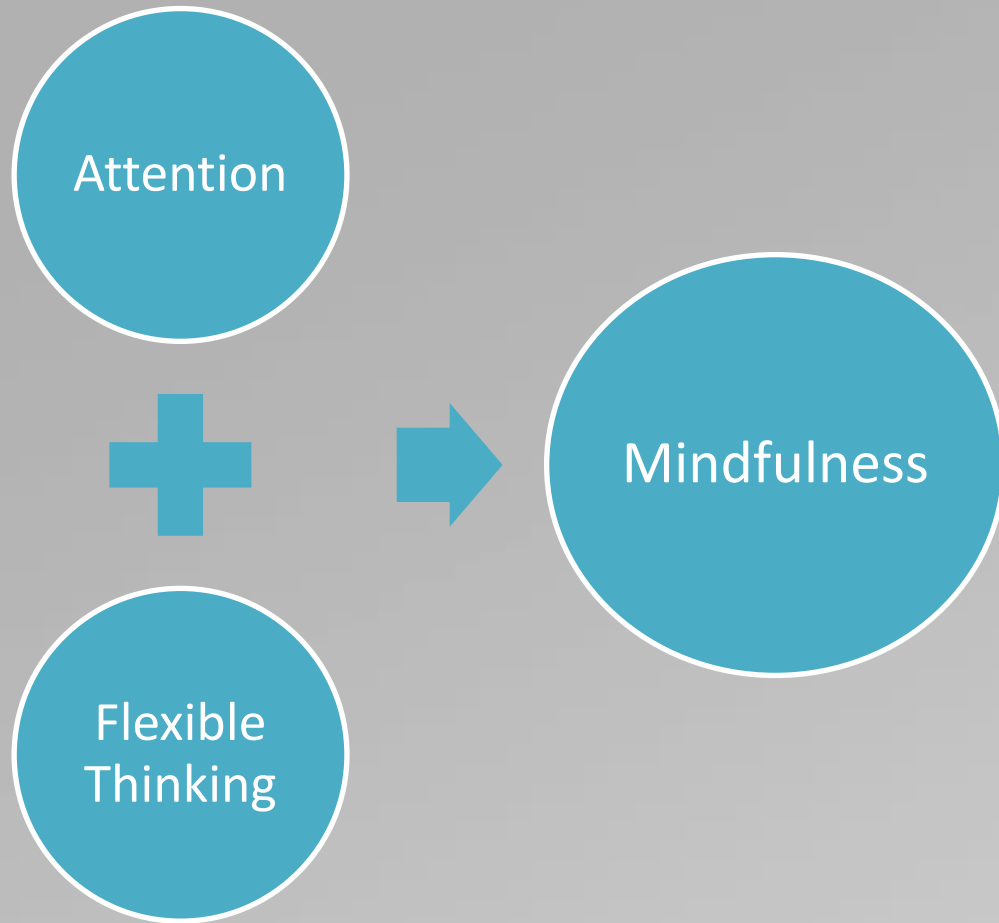


# What is Mindlessness?





# Let's put it all together...





1. Seek out, create, and notice new things.
2. Realize how behavior can be understood differently in different contexts.
3. Reframe mistakes into successes.
4. Be aware that stress (and all emotions) are the result of our views about events.
5. Be authentic.



# Self Regulation skills at Work...



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX\\_oy9614HQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ)

What self regulation strategies did the children use to avoid eating the marshmallow?

How might mindfulness enhance the self regulation skills of the children who did not wait to eat the marshmallow?



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# Mindfulness Tools for Students





# Research about MBI with youth

- Small to moderate effect sizes
- Typical outcomes measures include: cognitive performance, emotional problems, stress/coping, resilience and third party ratings (e.g. parent and teacher questionnaires related to aggression, social skills, wellbeing, or attention)
- Results were strongest in relation to cognitive performance and resilience to stress
- Results suggest MBI have the greatest impact with at risk youth

Zenner, Hermleben-Kurz & Walach, 2014

Zoogman et. al., 2014





# Common Elements of MBIs

- **Breath awareness,**
- working with thoughts and emotions,
- **psycho-education,**
- awareness of the senses and practices of daily life,
- **group discussion,**
- body-scan,
- kindness practices,
- home practice,
- body-practices (like yoga)

Zenner, Hermleben-Kurz & Walach, 2014).



# Breathing and Mindfulness

- Breathing is always with us, so paying attention to it requires nothing extra
- We breathe 20,000 times a day (15 per minute)
- When we feel panicky, there is a decrease of carbon dioxide in the blood
- Diaphragmatic breathing is a method of balancing the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood. It only takes 4 minutes to re-regulate the system via diaphragmatic breathing



# 4x4 Breathing

- Focus on breathing for 4 minutes, counting to 4 (one count per second) on inhales and 4 on exhales
- The breathing is diaphragmatic
- Later increase to 8 seconds on the exhale
- 4x4 breathing cuts your rate of breath in half, and at 4x8 then breathing is only 5 breathes per minute.
- Focusing on the long exhale slows the heart rate down/stops the fight or flight response



Belly Breathing, Alternate Nostril Breathing, Count to Ten,  
good in/bad out, bumble bee breath



*Long slow breaths  
activate the  
parasympathetic  
nervous system which  
controls the  
relaxation response*

2 to 1 Breath, Lion Breath, Bunny Breath, Conductor Breath

# Breath Awareness

*Quick breaths activate the  
sympathetic nervous system  
which controls the arousal  
response*





# Working with Thoughts/Emotions

- Movie directors: constantly playing scripts and clips in our minds. Often leads to an emotional experience.
- We often react and respond to the script in our minds, not what is actually occurring in the present.
- Automatic pilot
- 80-90% of our thinking is repetitive
- Our thinking minds should be tools; pick it up when we need it, then set them down (at times we make connections and predictions)



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# Social Stories





# Automatic Thoughts

Helpful Self Talk	Unhelpful Self Talk
I can do this	This is too hard
I'm awesome at this	I'm not good at this
I can keep trying	I give up
I can always keep trying OR I can ask for help	I can't make this any better
Plan A didn't work	Good thing there are 25 more letters of the alphabet



Rate Yourself on a Scale on how much you believe the thoughts about yourself 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely)

1. Nothing works out for me
2. People don't understand me
3. I make too many mistakes
4. I am not good enough

When we feel good, we have a harder time believing these things about ourselves and the thoughts don't come up. But when we are stressed, these thoughts pop up more frequently. **Our mood affects our thinking and our thinking affects our mood.**





# Working with Thoughts and Emotions

## WHAT ZONE ARE YOU IN?



The **Green Zone**, a calmer place, where we feel focused, alert, in control of our emotions, and ready to learn!



**HAPPY**



The **Blue Zone**, a low state of alertness, too low to get much work done.



**TIRED**



The **Yellow Zone**, where emotions are not as intense, at least not as yet, and we still have some control.



**FRUSTRATED**



The **Red Zone**, where emotions are so intense that we feel out of control!



**ANGRY**



<https://www.transformingeducation.org/rubber-bracelets-birthdays-and-wonder/>



# Size of the Problem

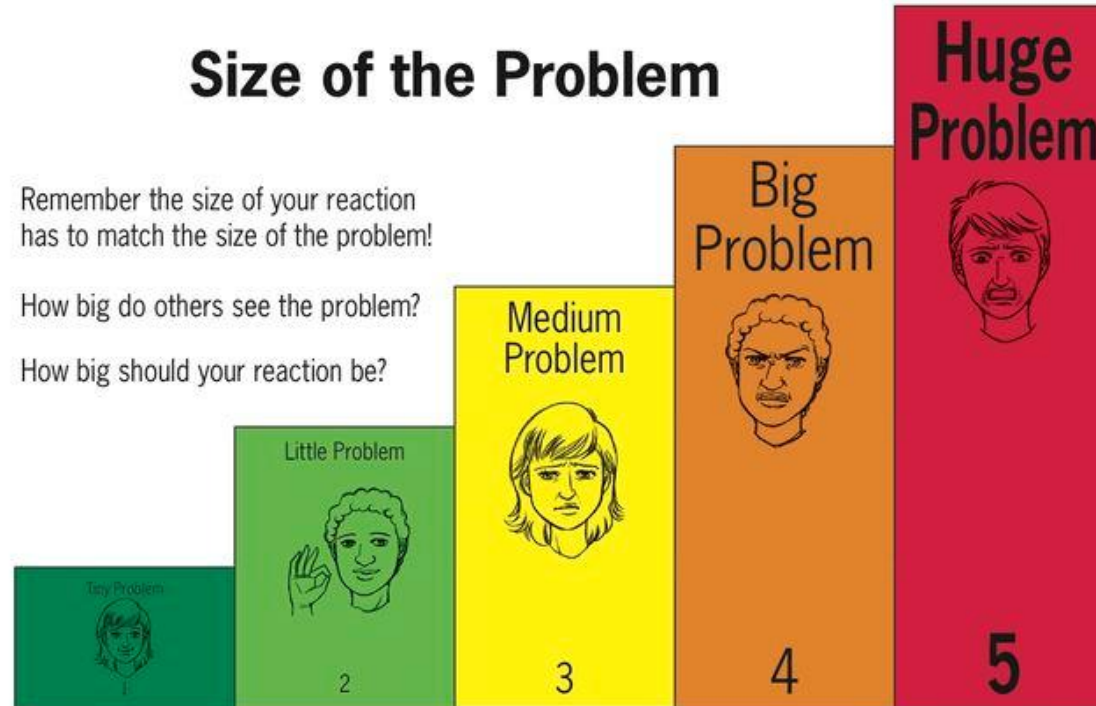
The **ZONES** of Regulation® Reproducible W

## Size of the Problem

Remember the size of your reaction  
has to match the size of the problem!

How big do others see the problem?

How big should your reaction be?



Visual adapted by Leah Kuypers, Donna Brittain and Jill Kuzma for The Zones of Regulation® from the original work of Winner's Think Social! (2005), pages 44-45, [www.socialthinking.com](http://www.socialthinking.com), and Buron and Curtis' The Incredible 5-Point Scale (2003), [www.5pointscale.com](http://www.5pointscale.com)

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**Remember: stress (and all emotions) are the result of our thoughts about events.**



# Awareness of the Senses

Outside/in Meditation



Intuition Game



Mindful Eating

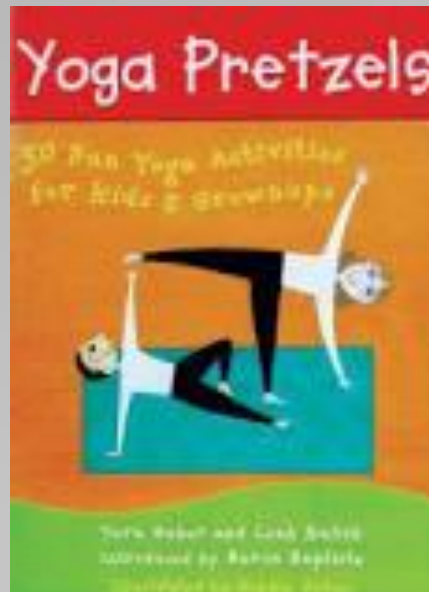


Chime Listening



# Body Practices

- Musical poses,
- Pose of the day,
- What am I?
- Strike a pose







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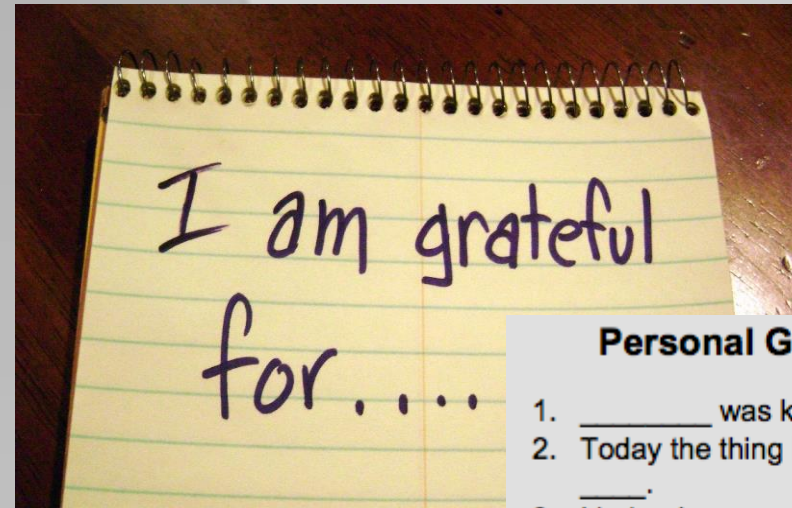
# The Body Scan Meditation





# Kindness Practices

- Define Kindness as a universal classroom expectation
- Link kindness to brain research: mirror neurons
- Use a job list that includes rotating roles for everyone in the class (or a list of acts of kindness that students can sign up for periodically)
- Practice giving and receiving complements
- Gratitude exercises



## Personal Gratitude List

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was kind to me today.
2. Today the thing I enjoyed most was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I helped \_\_\_\_\_ today.
4. Today I learned \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In mistakes I made today, I learned that \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This person made me feel important today. \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Something I couldn't do last week that I can do today is \_\_\_\_\_.
8. One simple thing that made my day good was \_\_\_\_\_.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ made me smile today.
10. Today my favorite taste, touch, smell, sight or sound was \_\_\_\_\_.



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# Kindness Practices



Loving Kindness  
Meditation





# Group Sharing

## Mindfulness Discussion Expectations:

1. Listen all the way to the end of the question before answering.
2. Listen with your whole body without reacting until others finish speaking.
3. Pay such close attention to what someone else is saying that you could repeat or explain in to someone else.
4. Listen for ideas that are different than your own and ask questions if you don't understand.
5. When you notice you are tuned out, try a mindfulness trick to re-join the conversation.

## The Girls' Book of Wisdom



EMPOWERING, INSPIRATIONAL  
QUOTES FROM OVER 400  
FABULOUS FEMALES

Edited by Catherine Dee

## Can Do



A collection of inspirational quotes for  
teens and young adults

By ID Offokansi



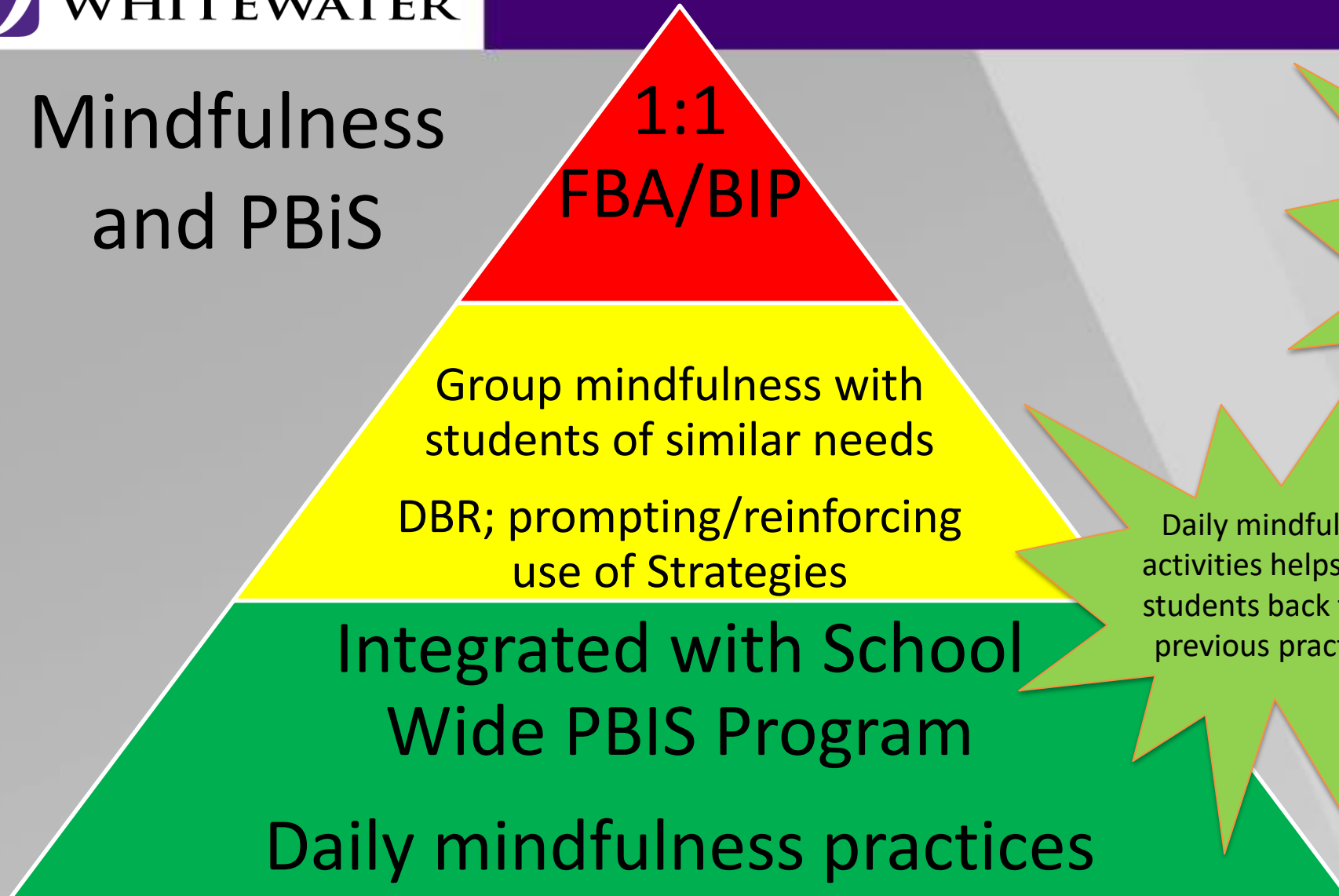
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# Group Games





# Mindfulness and PBiS



Mindfulness research  
has shown greater  
improvements in  
outcome measures at  
follow up.

Daily mindfulness  
activities helps bring  
students back to the  
previous practices.

Expectation	Mindfulness Skill
Be Safe	I use 4x4 breathing when I sense strong emotions
	I label the size of the problem before I act
Be Respectful	I listen to others before I react or respond
	I find multiple ways to solve a problem
	I look for ways to demonstrate kindness
	I care about how others feel and think
Be Responsible	I observe my thoughts and emotions when I am learning
	I learn from my mistakes
	I use my tools to stay tuned-in during class



School-wide Expectations	Classroom Rules	Classroom Routines/Procedures, Socio Emotional Skills			
		Entering Classroom	Resolving Conflict	Making Friends	Cooperative Learning Groups
	<b>Attention Signal : 4 fingers = 4x4 breathing</b>				
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use kind words &amp; actions</li><li>• Use appropriate voice level</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter/exit classroom prepared</li><li>• Use inside voice</li></ul>	Think of multiple ways to solve the problem		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to others</li><li>• Accept differences</li><li>• Encourage others</li><li>• Wait your turn to speak</li></ul>
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow adult directions</li><li>• Take care of materials/equipment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place materials in correct area</li><li>• Begin warm-up promptly</li></ul>	<div>Give an "I" Statement</div> <div>Think about how others feel</div>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Time Wisely</li><li>• Contribute</li><li>• Complete your part</li></ul>
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep hands, feet &amp; objects to self</li><li>• Use all equipment materials appropriately</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walk</li></ul>	<div>Use 4x4 breathing in a safe space</div> <div>Label the size of the problem before acting</div>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Materials Carefully</li><li>• Stay in your designated area</li></ul>

SEL Skill

Specific Behaviors





Matrix can be a working document...  
You can add skills to it as they are taught.





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# Questions?

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# Resources

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