



This Amazing
COUNSELOR
is loved and appreciated

FRANK AND BILLY
YEAGER CENTER



**SCHOOL COUNSELOR
LEADERSHIP NETWORK**
RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Welcome BACK
to SCHOOL
MORENO MUSTANGS

SCHOOL COUNSELORS:
BUILDING
BETTER
HUMANS

COUNSELORS CAN DO
VIRTUALLY
anything.

BE
FEARLESS
IN THE PURSUIT
OF WHAT SETS
YOUR SOUL ON
FIRE

Welcome!
your
counselors

**SCHOOL COUNSELORS
RESILIENT AND RELENTLESSLY
LEADING CHANGE**

Happy Counselors Change the World

Sarah Kirk, MS, NCC


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Hi, I am Sarah Kirk!

- School Counselor Specialist at the Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Elementary School Counselor for 8 years
 - Received RAMP designation in 2019
 - Trauma-Informed
 - PBIS
 - Responsive Classroom
 - Conscious Discipline
 - Restorative Practices
 - ChildLight Yoga and Mindfulness for Children
- ASCA Board of Directors
- PhD Student in Counselor Education and Supervision
- Advocate for School Counseling
- I love to connect with school counselors!
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A Quick Reminder



We will not go back to normal. Normal never was.
Our pre-corona existence was never normal other
than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion,
depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion,
rage, hoarding, hate, and lack.

We should not long to return, my friends.

We are being given the opportunity to stitch
a new garment.

One that fits all of humanity and nature.

Sonya Renee Taylor

Today's Objectives

After attending this session you should be able to:

1. Define mindfulness and how it can be used in the educational setting.
2. Learn about the steps of creating a personal mindfulness practice.
3. Learn about research-based supports that work to increase mindfulness in the educational setting. These supports can be used as individual student support, in small group lessons, in classroom instruction, school-wide or as tiered systems of support.
4. Implement supports and interventions to create a happier, more mindful self-- and school staff and students-- right away.

Today's Agenda

- Introduction: What is Mindfulness? Why Mindfulness?
- Cultivating a Personal Mindfulness Practice: Techniques and Teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh and Katherine Weare's "Happy Teachers Change the World"
- Cultivating a Personal Mindfulness Practice: Techniques and Teachings of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
- Cultivating a More Mindful School Environment: Supports and Interventions to Increase Mindfulness in Schools
- Additional Mindful Interventions: For Self, Staff, and Students

Selah.

This word is often used to direct readers to stop. Be still. Soak in what was just read.

It is also used in music to direct the music director to silence the choir. Be still. Soak in the music.

Throughout this presentation, I will use this to allow us a moment to stop. Be still. Soak in what was just presented.

What is *Mindfulness*?

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Mindfulness Defined

“Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” -Jon Kabat-Zinn

Paying attention to our thoughts, non-judgmentally.

It is not the absence of thought.

Dr. Kristin Neff adds the importance of not suppressing or denying the thoughts.

“The soul becomes dyed with the color of its thoughts.”

-Marcus Aurelius

Focusing on What Matters

There is a story of a man on all fours under a street lamp, searching for something. A passerby asked what he was doing. "Looking for my car keys," replied the man, who appeared slightly drunk. "Did you drop them here?" inquired the passerby. "No," answered the man, "I dropped them in the alley." Seeing the passerby's baffled expression, the man hastened to explain, "But the light is much better here."

Mindfulness Defined

“Taking a balanced approach to negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. Mindfulness requires that we not ‘over-identify’ with thoughts and feelings, so that we are not caught up and swept away by negativity.” -Dr. Kristin Neff

[Self-compassion](#) which Dr. Neff described as having three elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness.

What Mindfulness is NOT

If you can sit quietly after difficult news, if in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm, if you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy, if you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate, and fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill,...
if you can always find contentment just where you are,
you are probably a dog.

Jack Kornfield

Meditation Defined

Mindfulness and Meditation are not synonyms.

Meditation is a way of being, not a technique.

Meditation is not relaxation spelled differently.

Meditation is really a way of being appropriate to the circumstances one finds oneself in, in any and every moment.

Meditation is not about trying to get anywhere else. It is about allowing yourself to be exactly where you are and as you are, and for the world to be exactly as it is in this moment as well.

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

Selah.

Why Mindfulness for Educators?

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Why Mindfulness

- Building connections
- When our students have difficulties, they want to know they are not alone
- Humanizes adults
- Allows us to present a “strong back and soft front” to our students
- When adults are mandated to teach SEL and do not cultivate their own practice, students’ SEL worsens
- Modeling Self-Regulation
- Preventative vs Reactive
- Adding a tool to the tool belt
- Increases job satisfaction, decreases burnout
- Changes in brain structure

Cultivating a Personal Mindfulness Practice

Techniques and Teachings of
Thich Nhat Hanh and Katherine Weare's
"Happy Teachers Change the World"

Core Practices

1. The breath
2. The bell of mindfulness
3. Sitting
4. Walking
5. The body
6. Eating
7. Taking care of our emotions
8. Being together

Core Practices

1. Getting in Touch with Our Breath

Our breath is our friend

Always there for us

Can be as short or as long as we are comfortable

Core Practices

2. Inviting and Listening to the Bell

Allow the bell to “bring you back home”

Core Practices

3. Mindful Sitting

Strengthening our ability to settle, calm, and relax the mind and body

Feeling the floor below you

Core Practices

4. Mindful Walking

Enjoy the slow down

Awareness and appreciation of body

Awareness of the link between breath, feelings, and movement

Come back to self and pay attention to the wonders in life

Core Practices

5. Awareness of the Body and the Breath

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in.
Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.

As the in-breath grows deep,
The out-breath grows slow.

Breathing in makes me calm;
Breathing out brings me ease.

With the in-breath I smile;
With the out-breath I release all tension.

Breathing in I know I am alive;
Breathing out, in this present moment.

Breathing in, there is only this present moment.
Breathing out, it is a wonderful moment.

Core Practices

6. Mindful Eating

Increasing our appreciation for food

Develop a deeper awareness around food, eating,
and consumption

Core Practices

7. Taking Care of Our Emotions

Recognize the emotion, *accept* the emotion, *embrace* the emotion, *look deeply* into the emotion, and gain the *insight* that we are more than just an emotion.

Core Practices

8. Being Together

Being more present for others by sharing our thoughts and feelings openly, deep listening, loving speech, and reconciling conflicts with kindness, empathy, understanding and compassion

Cultivating a Personal Mindfulness Practice

Techniques and Teachings of

[Palouse Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction](#)

STOP Technique

S – Stop and take Stock

- Checking in to Head/Heart/Body Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately asking:
 - What is my experience right now?
 - Thoughts... (what are you saying to yourself, what images are coming to mind.)
 - Feelings... (enjoying, neutral, upset, excited, sad, mad, etc.)
 - Sensations... (physical sensations, tightness, holding, lightness, etc.)
 - Acknowledge and register your experience, even if it is uncomfortable.

T – “Take” a Breath

- Directing awareness to Breathing
 - Gently direct full attention to breathing, to each inbreath and to each outbreath as they follow, one after the other.
 - Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.

O – Open and Observe

- Expanding awareness outward
 - Expand the field of your awareness around and beyond your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression, then further outward to what is happening around you: sights, sounds, smells, etc. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next moments...

P – Proceed / new Possibilities

- Continuing without expectation
 - Let your attention now move into the world around you, sensing how things are right now. Rather than react habitually/mechanically, be curious/open, responding naturally and with kindness. You may be surprised by what happens next after having created this pause...

STOP Technique

Resources:

- [STOP Document](#)
- [STOP Video](#)
- [STOP Discussion](#)

Magic Quarter Second

By catching our thoughts in the magic quarter second, we're able to act from a wiser place, interrupting the circling of compulsive thinking that fuels anxiety and other painful emotions.

For instance, if our child asks us to play a game and we automatically think "I'm too busy," we might pause and choose to spend some time with her. If we've been caught up in composing an angry e-mail, we might pause and decide not to press the send button.

[-Tara Brach](#)

Practicing Patience

Patience in pleasantness and pain

Patience with the fact that you're human and that you make these mistakes

The Five Reflections

The Vinaya, the book of the monks' rules, lists five "Reflections before Admonishing:"

- Is now a good time to speak?
- Am I telling the whole truth?
- Is my voice gentle, not harsh?
- Am I motivated by kindness?
- Am I motivated by a desire to be helpful?

Being Aware of the Disengagement Divide

“We can’t give people what we don’t have.”

--Brene Brown in Daring Greatly

- Practiced values (what we are doing, thinking, and feeling)
- Aspirational values (what we want to do, think, and feel)
- The space between equals the disengagement divide-- this is where we lose people

Selah.

How can you use one technique or teaching that we discussed in your personal life to increase mindfulness?

Cultivating a *More Mindful School Environment:*
Supports and Interventions to Increase
Mindfulness in Schools

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Where to begin

- Start small
- Model
- Share ideas
- Be invitational and intentional
 - Small group
 - Partner with the community

Cultivate Staff Self-Awareness

- Cultivate self-awareness to identify preconceived notions or judgments that may stand in the way of treating students equitably
- Results in treating students with respect, fairness, and non-judgment

Cultivate Staff Stress Management

- Educators recognize triggers of their own stress and emotional reactions, and primary or secondary traumatic stressors
- Practice pausing and taking several deep breaths whenever a strong emotional or physiological reaction is triggered, as a means to cultivate self-awareness and self-regulation instead of reactivity

Conflict Management Through a Mindful Lens

Conflict Styles

- Which are you?
- Does it depend on who the conflict is with?
- How can you work towards “blending”?
- We have been programmed for tribal thinking (humans have been around 1000 times longer in tribes than not)
- Tribal conditioning teaches that every conflict involves an us vs. them

Non-Violent Communication

1. State the concrete actions we observe that affect our well-being
2. State how we feel in relation to what we observe
3. State the needs, values, desires, etc. that create our feelings
4. State the concrete actions we request in order to enrich our lives
 - This is what we teach our students-- Affective “I” Statements!

Selah.

Understanding Our Emotions

We can't control everything, particularly our thoughts and emotions, and to attempt that impossible feat is to set yourself up for failure and anxiety.

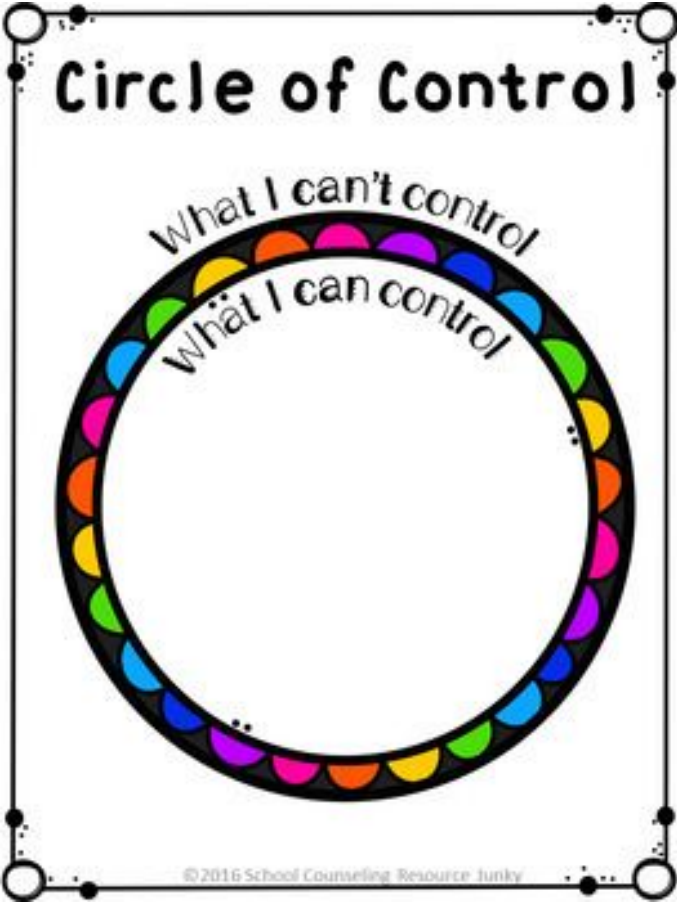
Many of us have been taught from a young age that some emotions are good and others are bad. Perhaps your parents told you that "we don't do anger in this house" or instructed you to "come back when you have a smile on your face."

The message to master your feelings comes with some insidious subtext: *You should feel bad for feeling bad.* This inclination is neither healthy nor productive.

Don't waste time beating yourself over your emotions. **Your feelings are neither good nor bad. They just are.** Don't attempt to force them into submission. Rather, identify and consider them.

-Dr. Susan David

Cultivating Our Circle of Control



How can you use one support or intervention that we discussed in your school to increase mindfulness of students?

Additional Mindful Interventions... for Self, Staff, and Students



Mindfulness Techniques

- Guided Meditations
 - [Guided mindful meditations that are between 3-19 minutes](#)
- Mindful Breathing
 - [4-7-8 Breathing](#)
- Mindful Writing
 - Journaling
 - Crush the Can'ts
 - Brain Dump
 - Positive Self-Talk Writing (I am...I can...)
 - Worry Journals
 - Daily quotes
 - Circle of Control
- Mindful Movement
 - Desk Yoga
 - Chair Yoga
 - Yoga Card Decks
 - Rainbow Walk
 - Five Senses Walk

Optimistic Closure: LovingKindness Meditation

References

- [Palouse Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction \(MBSR\) Course](#)
- [Mindfulness in Education](#)
- [Happy Teachers Change the World](#) by Thich Nhat Hanh and Katherine Weare
- [Panorama's Comprehensive Guide to Adult SEL](#)
- [Cassandra Speaks](#) by Elizabeth Lesser

Other Resources I Love

- [Why Mindfulness and Trauma-Informed Teaching Don't Always Go Together](#)
- [Why Teachers Say Practicing Mindfulness is Transforming Their Work](#)
- [Stop, Breathe, Think](#)
- [Yoga 4 Classrooms](#)
- [ChildLight Yoga for Children](#)
- [Dr. Dan Siegel](#)
- [Mindful.org](#)
- [MindfulSchools.org](#)

Selah.