



Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People, as the Custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past, present and emerging who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.





Yarra Ranges Council Family, Children and Youth Services

Visit www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au to learn more about the programs and resources available through Family, Children and Youth Services such as:

- Maternal Child and Health
- *Smalltalk* Supported Playgroups
- School Holiday programs
- Parent Information sessions
- Profession Development Training for Early Years professionals

Remember to follow the *Yarra Ranges Families* and *Yarra Ranges Youth* Facebook pages to stay up to date!

We're also available via email: earlyyears@yarraranges.vic.gov.au or
youth@yarraranges.vic.gov.au



Mindful Parenting

presented by
Sian Chambers-Vallance and Tony Vallance





About Us

Sian

I am the owner and manager of Artistic Revolutions and co-owner of Building Better Brains Australia. I am a clinical play therapist working in private practice specialising in early trauma and attachment difficulties. I work with children and families in a systemic way and passionately believe that brain-based parenting education and support is key to helping this next generation of children thrive.

Tony

I am the co-owner of Building Better Brains Australia, Australian Education Awards Teacher of the Year 2019, Secondary School Teacher, Victorian Excellence in Education Awards Finalist 2018, Drumbeat and Mindfulness Facilitator, STEAMWORKS Founder, Leadership team – curriculum development and STEAM, Teacher trainer, Certified Classroom Educator for Positive Discipline, and host of the Edubabble podcast.





Learning Outcomes

- Define mindfulness
- Examine different types of mindfulness practices
- Learn how mindfulness rewires the brain, expands window of tolerance and creates space between impulse and reaction
- Explore the evidence in support of mindfulness
- Examine how to create mindful moments

- Explore how to build a more mindful home
- Explore how we can refill our own self care cups to become stronger psychological anchors for our children
- Discover the power of a family gratitude practice for building healthy brains
- Explore the concept of self-compassion
- Explore lots of practical mindfulness resources and activities to help your family thrive





Quick Recap...



Behaviour is a Symptom...

- Behaviour is a symptom of something going on in the brain or amygdala (guard dog) activation – flight, flight, freeze, flop or faint.
- The brain and nervous system physically wire within the context of relationship (when under stress, did you learn to respond with fear, anger, compassion, sadness, kindness, security, or feel all alone when things got hard?)
- That trauma affects brain wiring, behaviour and responses to stress.
- That our window of tolerance (to stress) is set by the way our caregivers responded to us.
- The way we treat our children, the language we use to describe our children, how much we truly see, hear and try to compassionately understand our children, the space and support we provide our children to discover who they are (as separate to us) creates their self concept - their brain wiring, nervous system response, thoughts, beliefs, emotions, confidence etc.
- Brains learn best when we satisfy their evolutionary needs as animals/mammals/social beings - to feel safe, to feel connected and securely attached and to create/find who they/who they are to become in the world.



The Amygdala



The brain has a built-in alarm system designed to detect threat and keep us safe called the **amygdala – the guard dog**.

When feel stressed/scared emotional brain takes over and activates the sympathetic nervous system: **flight, fight or freeze**.

When the system becomes overwhelmed, the emotional brain remains on-alert and continues to send the body instructions to flight, fight or freeze, **even after the threat has passed**.

Children exposed to early trauma may remain in survival mode much of the time with limited access to their higher brain – **this affects learning thinking, regulation of emotions and behaviour and social functioning**.

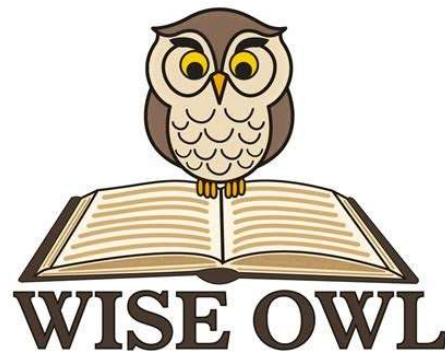


The Prefrontal Cortex

Our **prefrontal cortex**, or **wise owl**, is the part of our brain that helps calm the guard dog down, and helps us to think clearly, logically assess the facts or the threat and make reasoned decisions.

The wise owl is great at figuring whether the threat is real or not - whether a situation is actually dangerous.

The Pre-frontal cortex can help us to practice breathing, move our bodies and numerous other ways to help us calm our guard dog down.





What is a Healthy Mind?

A healthy mind can be defined as a mind that is **well integrated**, meaning there is a strong flow of messages being passed between left and right hemispheres and the upstairs (cerebral cortex) and downstairs (subcortical) parts of the brain.

Dan Siegal suggests that a healthy brain shows these **nine domains of integration**:

1. emotional regulation
2. a sense of wellbeing
3. wisdom (ability to self reflect)
4. happiness
5. flexibility in thinking
6. focuses on meaning
7. functions well in relationships with other people – social engagement, empathy, attunement
8. is able to achieve positive focused attention
9. shows mindsight (our ability to see within ourselves as if an observer – the practice of mindfulness).





What Makes You YOU?

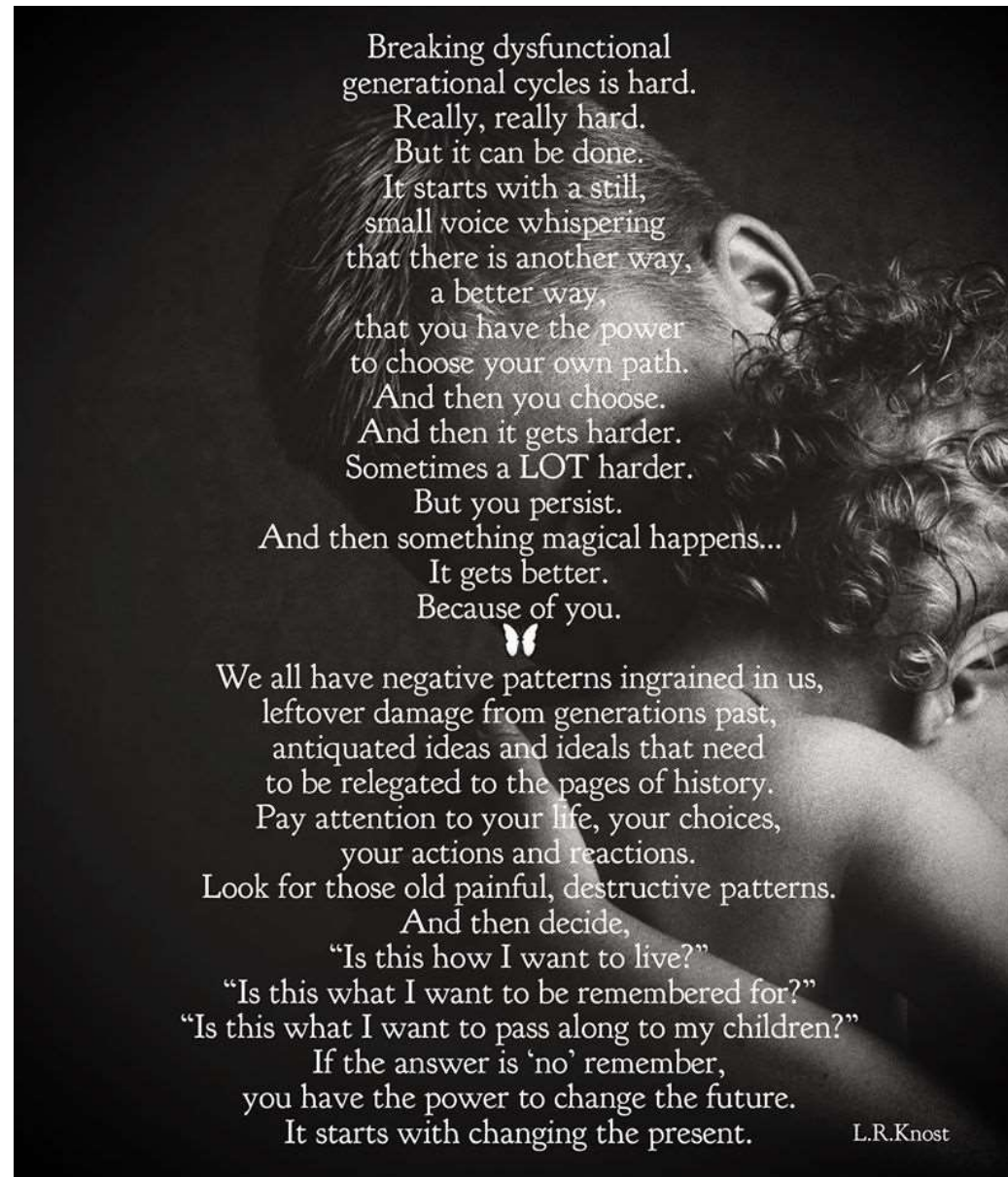
What Makes You YOU?

- Genetics
- Brain wiring
- Early attachment relationships (creating your self concept)
- Experiences
- Traumas
- Life education
- Epigenetics
- Environment
- Attuned/non-attuned supporters
- Experience of being parented
- Temperament
- Nervous system window of tolerance to stress.

What You are Not...

- Your behaviours
- Your emotions
- Your thoughts
- Your patterns
- Your beliefs
- Your traumas

*They are all
changeable and
changing!*



Personal Mindfulness



What is Mindfulness?



Paying Attention to the Present



Mindfulness can be described as:

- Paying attention to the present moment with our whole body, mind and emotions.
- Feeling the ground beneath your feet, the wind in your hair, feeling connected to yourself through a lens of compassion, empathy, understanding and kindness...and to view others through that same lens.
- A connection to self, others and the world around you in the present moment.

Being mindful allows you to use social engagement, mirror neurons, creativity, adaptation, problem solving and your whole brain.

Mindfulness Builds Healthy Brains!

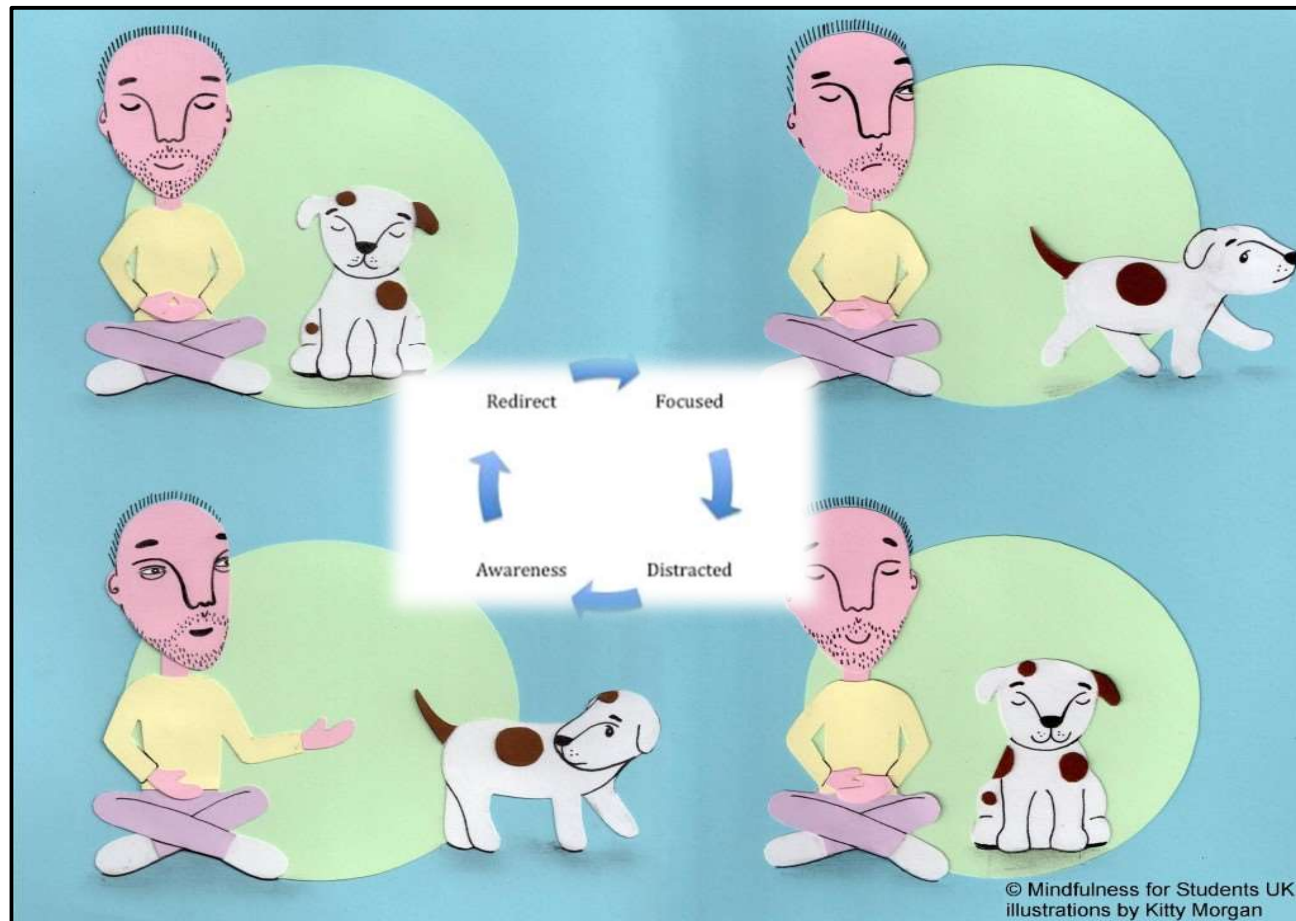


Mind Full, or Mindful?



The Puppy Brain

- Requires kindness, patience, humour and compassion
- Each time you do this you are rewiring your prefrontal cortex for calm.





Mindfulness Requires Practice

Whatever we practice grows stronger (builds super-highways), and we are **always** practicing something!

Be mindful of where YOU CHOOSE to direct your attention – because that is how your brain will wire! And how our brain wires drives our behavior, perception, choices, emotions and thoughts.

Anger



Love



Gossip



Giving



Compassion



(Source: 2004-2013 100 Hours Foundation)



Types of Mindfulness

Formal
Meditation

Guided
Visualisation

Yoga/tai chi,
martial arts,
dance

Creative
Expression
(art, singing,
drama *etc*)

Body check-
in (breathing,
emotional
check-in)

- Allow your emotions and thoughts to pass by like clouds across the sky – knowing that they do not define who YOU are.
- Be present without agenda or responding empathically to yourself, your children and others around you.
- But you can do anything mindfully – it is a conscious state of mind – washing the dishes, walking the dog, having a conversation, holding someone's hand or supporting a loved one.
- You can parent mindfully, you can take 'pieces of peace' several times a day to stay anchored. That is, five mindful breaths five times a day.



Why We Need Mindfulness



Creating Space for Choice

- Without mindfulness, we just **act out** whatever arises in our awareness – we follow the **repeated patterns and blueprints** set up by our early life experiences and our beliefs about the world, our place in it and the safety of our early relationships.
- Without mindful awareness we use our **past coping patterns to respond to stress – anxiety, anger, depression, numbing** (fight, flight, freeze, faint, flop).
- **Mindfulness** helps us discover that we can see emotions just as they are... strong sensations in our body or thoughts in our mind that have arisen in this moment.
- Through mindfully rewiring your brain you realise that you have a **choice** if they will take over your mind (our thoughts), and a **choice** whether to act on them (our behaviour).



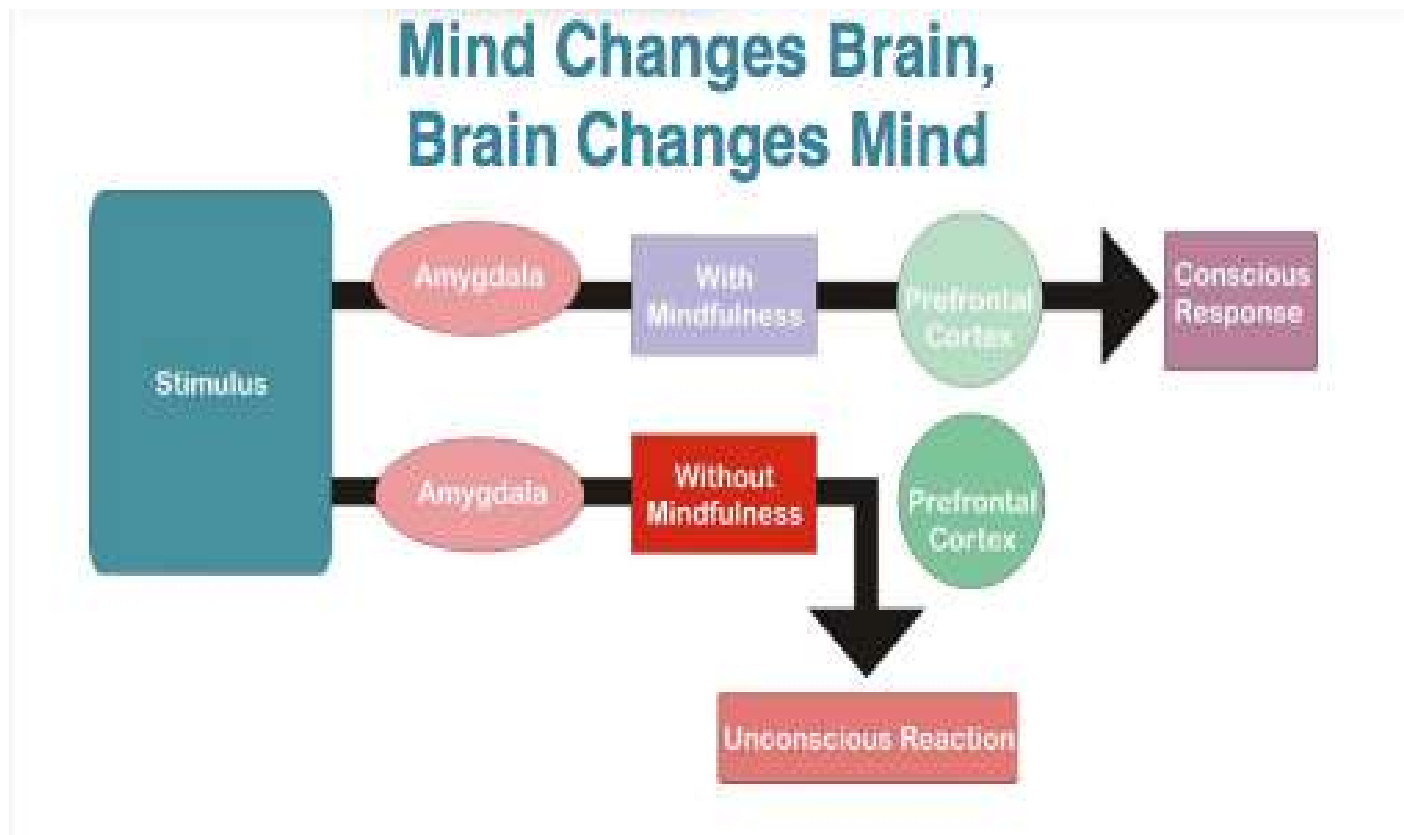
Why Do We Need Mindfulness?





Strengthening the Wise Owl

Mindfulness creates space between impulse and reaction – shifting brain activity and activation from **survival** (amygdala/guard dog reaction) to **reflective response** (prefrontal cortex/wise owl).



Source: www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/change-your-brain-with-mindful-meditation



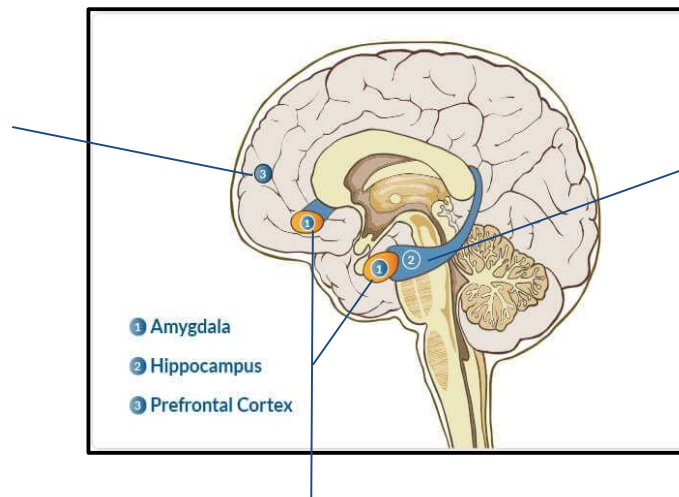
Mindfulness Physically Changes the Brain

Mindfulness changes firing patterns of neurons (formed unconsciously early on to 'aid' survival) and creates new firing patterns, allowing previously cut-off areas of the brain to link and become integrated.

As the brain becomes more interconnected, the mind becomes more adaptable, resilient and flexible (because it is functioning with a more integrated operating system).

Prefrontal Cortex – 'wise owl'

The part of the brain most associated with maturity, including regulating emotions and behaviours and making wise decisions. **Becomes more activated following mindfulness training and strengthens/builds pathways to the amygdala and other areas of the brain.**



Hippocampus – 'elephant memory'

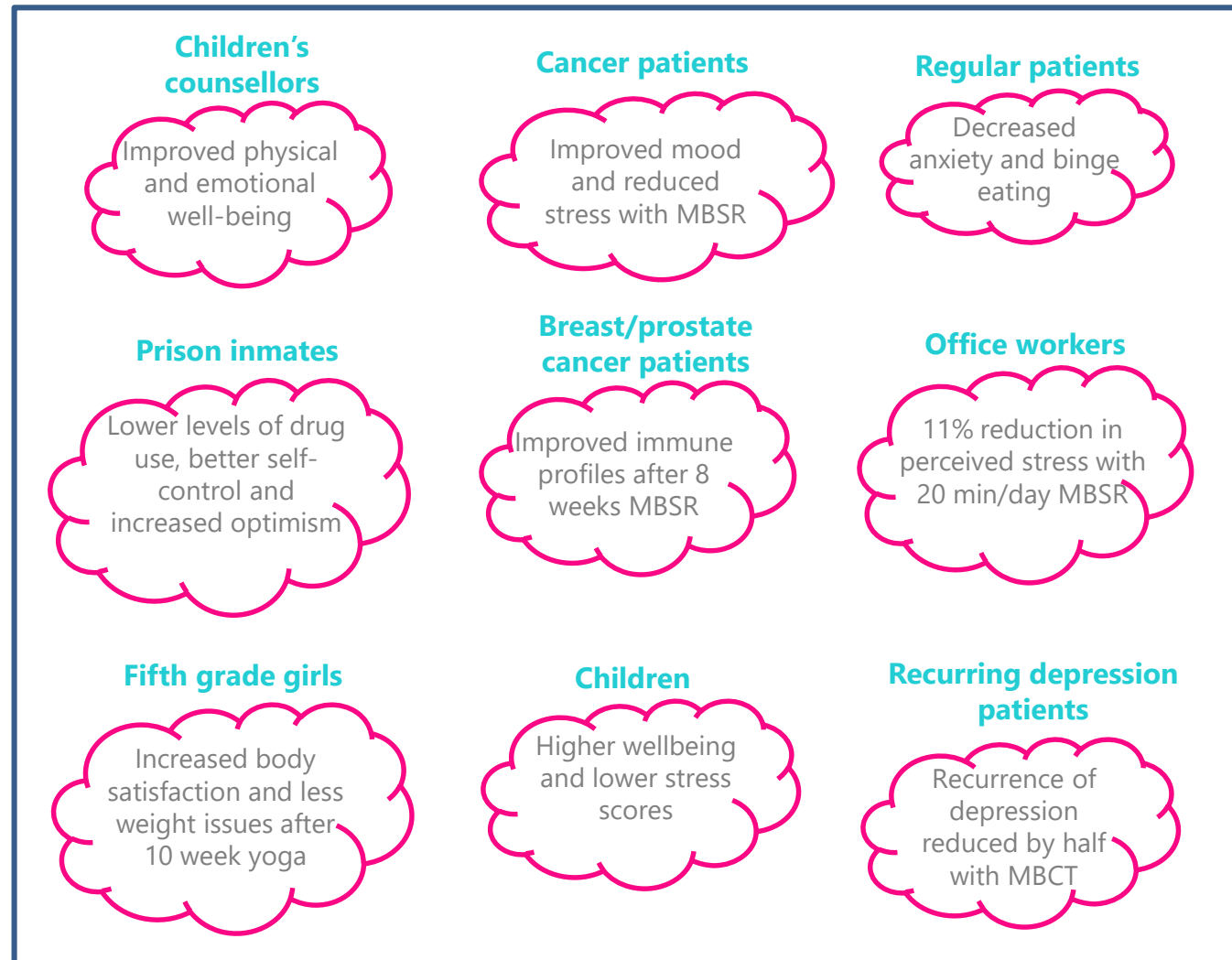
Critical to learning and memory, and helps regulate the amygdala. **Becomes more active and has more grey matter density following mindfulness training.**

Amygdala – 'guard dog'

Aroused when detecting and reacting to emotions, especially difficult or strong emotions such as fear. **Becomes less activated and has less grey matter density following mindfulness training.**



Scientific Evidence for Mindfulness

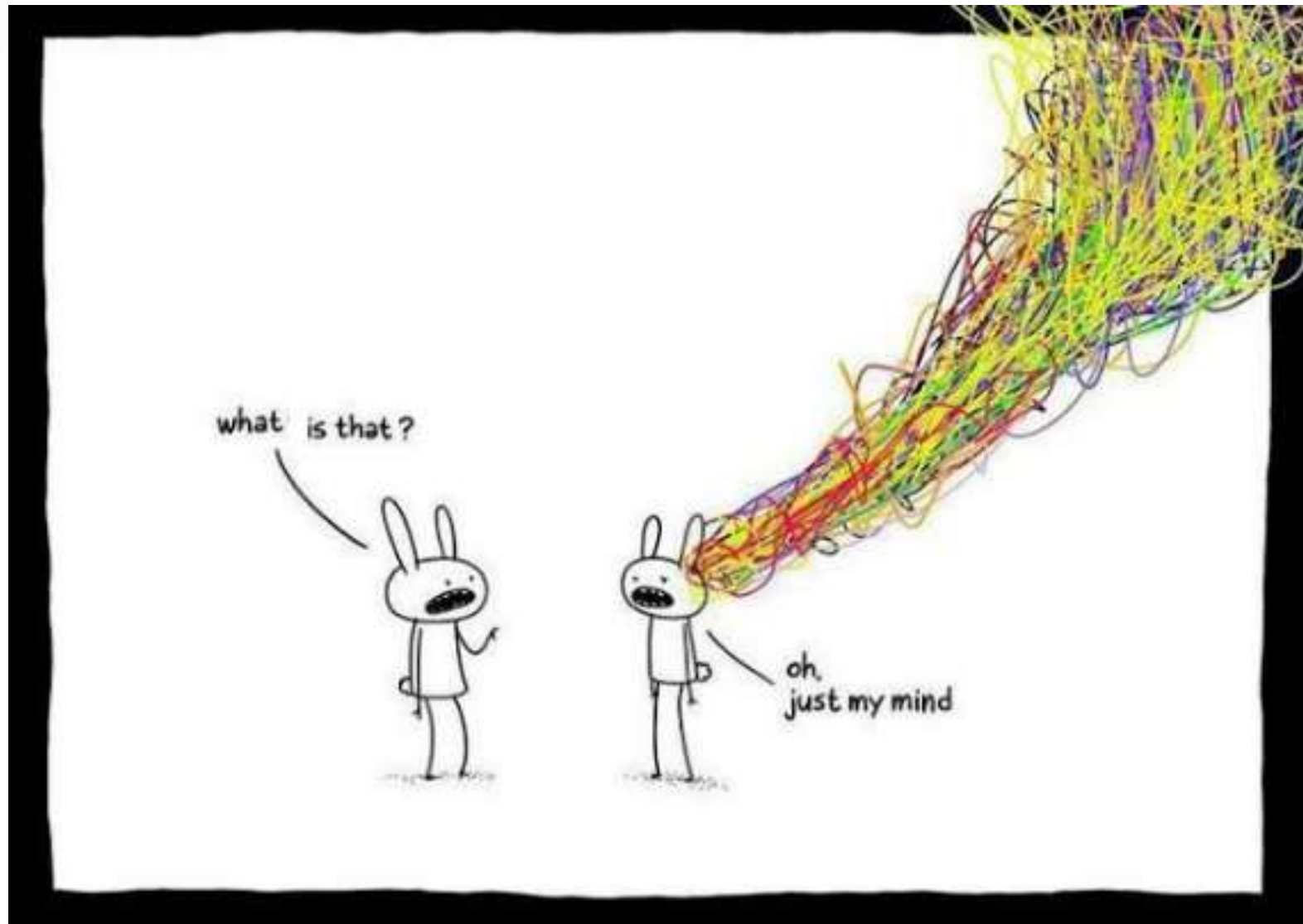


MBSR – Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction

SOURCE: www.mindful.org/the-science-of-mindfulness www.bemindful.co.uk/evidence-research/



Schedule Time for Mindfulness





Regular Mindful Moments

Practice mindfulness of surroundings

'Tune in' using breathing practice during daily activities or transitions.

4 breaths in, 8 breaths out, when you:

- Arrive in new environment
- Get to school or work
- Get home
- At traffic lights
- Walk into the house
- Putting kids to bed
- Reading stories
- Family dinner time

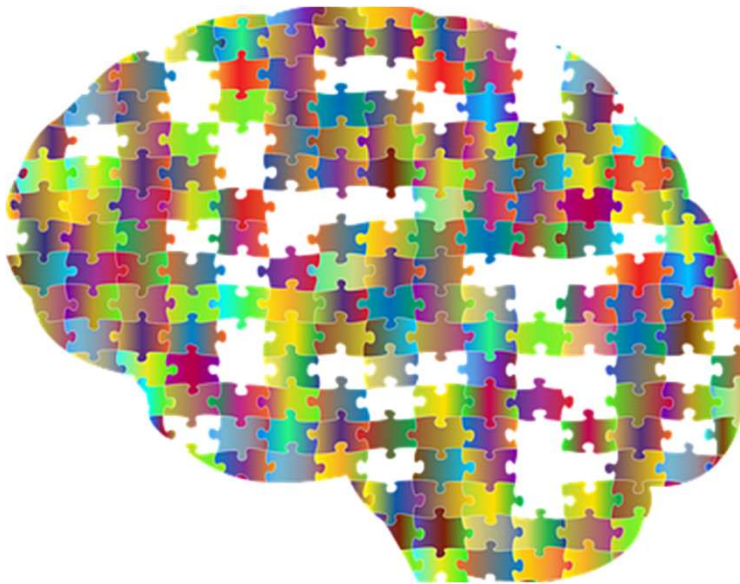




Mindfulness of Tasks

Breathe, be present, focussed

How does it feel, taste, smell, sound *etc*? Try this when you are:



- Brushing your teeth
- Walking the dog
- Cuddling your children
- Reading a book
- Washing the dishes
- Taking a shower
- Eating
- Exercise
- Playing/listening to music
- Art making



Formal Mindfulness Practise



- 5-15 minutes at same time each day (morning, before bed, on lunchbreak, in bathroom *etc*)
- Focus on breath
- Focus on object (candle, photo, smooth stone, painting *etc*)
- Focus on word, mantra
- Follow a guided meditation using app or Youtube free versions.



Mindful Parenting



How Do I Practice Mindful Parenting?



As you become more self-regulated and self-aware, so can your child!



Mindful Parenting Key Traits

1. **Become a coregulator** – the voice of calm for your child when their brain is in overwhelm.
2. **Become responsible for YOU** – your choices, emotions, triggers, thoughts, actions, needs, sensory and physical needs.
3. **Model repair if you make a mistake** – apologise to your child if you were wrong.
4. **Model regulation**, calming tools and self-care.
5. **Prioritise family fun and connection time** – no devices and screens – eye contact, physical connection, play, creativity. Play is mindfulness in action.
6. **Prioritise safety and connection above all** – this is healthy relationship.
7. **Become curious** – what is going on for you? Why? What is going on for your child? How can you help?
8. **Model empathy and kindness** – become the safe harbour for yourself and your child.
9. **Prioritise self-care and model this for your children** – this is not being selfish – it is being responsible!





Family Gratitude Practice

Research shows that creating a regular ritual for focusing on gratitude helps you rewire your brain for more positivity, resiliency and higher life satisfaction.

Studies have also shown:

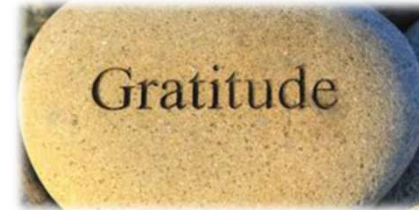
- Increased empathy for self and others.
- Reduced aggression.
- Improved sleep.
- Improved physical symptoms.
- Increased neuronal activity in prefrontal cortex – decision making/self regulation, learning (aiding whole brain integration).





Family Gratitude Practice Tools

- Start a family gratitude journal that you all add to (drawing or writing) weekly or daily. Start with 1 or 2 things you feel grateful for from each day and slowly increase the number as it becomes easier.
- Create a gratitude jar/box – put in slips of paper with your gratitudes and read as a family once a week.
- Go through your gratitudes before bed.
- Check in with highs and lows of the day at family dinner (no screens). If lows – how did you deal with that feeling/situation? Is there anything else you could have done? What would you do next time?
- Draw/write/speak our gratitudes about how we feel about each other – all our family members.





Family Gratitude

Morning

I'm grateful for...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I can make today awesome by...

I am...

My mantra:

Night

3 awesome things that happened today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



honeybeejoyous.com



Weekly Gratitude Journal

Sunday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Monday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Tuesday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Wednesday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Thursday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Friday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Saturday _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Self-compassion



What is Self-compassion?



Source: www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-cultures/201802/be-kind-yourself



Self-compassion Research

Research has shown the positive consequences of practicing self-compassion include:

- greater life satisfaction
- improved emotional intelligence
- interconnectedness with others
- curiosity, happiness, and optimism.
- Less self criticism, depression, anxiety, fear of failure and perfectionism (Neff, 2009).
- greater emotional resilience and self worth
- antidote to the habitual threat-based reactions (fight, flight, freeze).

1. Put both hands on your heart, pause, and feel their warmth.
2. Breathe deeply in and out.
3. Speak these words to yourself, out loud or silently, in a warm and caring tone:

This is a moment of suffering.

Suffering is a part of life.

May I be kind to myself in this moment.

May I give myself the compassion I need.





Self Compassion Practices

May I be safe.
May I be happy.
May I be healthy
May I live with ease.

May you be safe.
May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you live with ease.

Lisa A. McCrohan

Be a friend for yourself

Just as you would with a friend who is struggling, ask yourself these questions:

"What do I need?"

"What would I say to a dear friend in a situation like this?"

"How would I say it?"

"How would I show support?"

Practice loving kindness mindfulness meditation

Practice self-compassion

Find meditations on Youtube or apps



Instant Regulator Coping Skills

Breathing
Movement
Senses



Explicitly Teach and Model Mindfulness Coping Skills

What is a coping skill?

Strategies we use to deal with big feelings – there are healthy vs. unhealthy coping skills. These help us get out of flight, fight or freeze mode and back to rest and digest mode (autonomic nervous system) where our learning brain (wise owl) can switch on.

You need to model and practice coping skills when calm – you are building new roads in your brain and regulation capacity.

This takes time, consistency and practice!



Breathing for Regulation

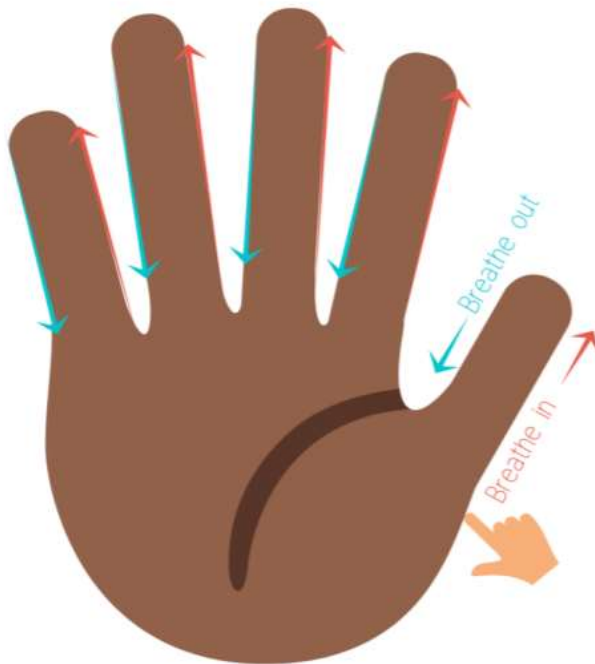


Instant Regulator Strategies

BREATHING

Five Finger Breath

Trace around your fingers with one finger on your other hand. When you trace up your finger, breathe in, and when you trace down, breathe out. Remember to take a pause in between each finger too!



Hot Chocolate Breathing

Hot chocolate breathing: in breath smelling hot chocolate/coffee/tea/soup, out breath cooling the item (Abblett and Willard).





Star Breathing

Use your finger to trace around star. Breathe in when we go up, and breathe out when we go down.





Snake Breath



1

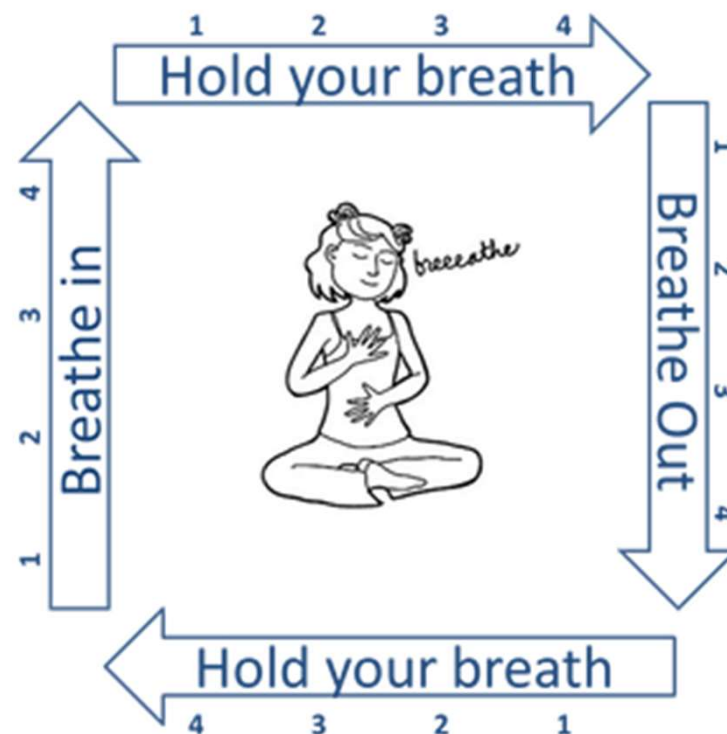
Take a deep breath in through your nose

2

Exhale out of your mouth and make the sound of snake sssssssssss...



Mindfulness Breathing



Mindfulness Breathing



FLOATING ON A CLOUD

- * Lie on your back & close your eyes.



- * Imagine what your cloud looks like. What color is it? Does it have a shape? This is your own special cloud... you are completely Safe & Happy when you are on your Cloud.
- * Climb up onto your cloud & it will take you anywhere you want to go.
- * What things do you see as you float on your cloud? Where will it take you? Let your cloud Fly you to a special place where you can rest Quietly & feel Peaceful.



Mindful Breathing Practice

1. Hoberman Sphere – 'breathing ball' – practice breathing together – using counting, breathe/hold, different patterns.
2. Blow bubbles.
3. Blow feathers back and forth to each other.
4. Blow cotton wool across scarf to each other.
5. Blow a pinwheel.
6. Practice some fun breathing exercises: star breath, square breath, triangle breath, figure 8 breathing.
7. Smell a flower, blow out a candle.
8. Make up your own breathing games.
9. Breathe in the good, breathe out the bad feelings/sensations.
10. Breathe into different parts of your body and ask them to relax.
11. Hot Chocolate Breath.





Movement for Regulation

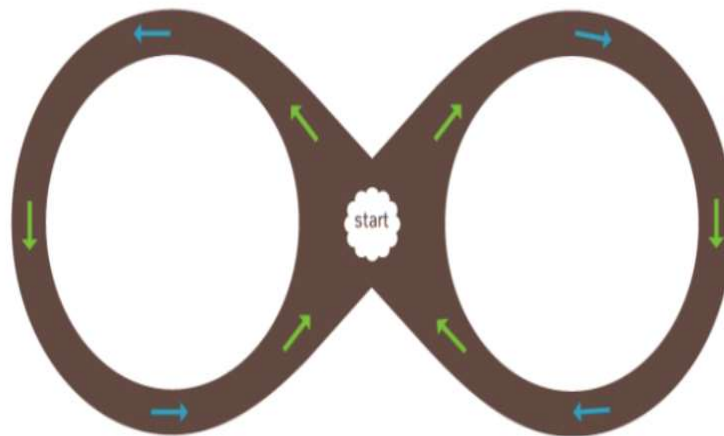


Instant Regulator Strategies

MOVEMENT

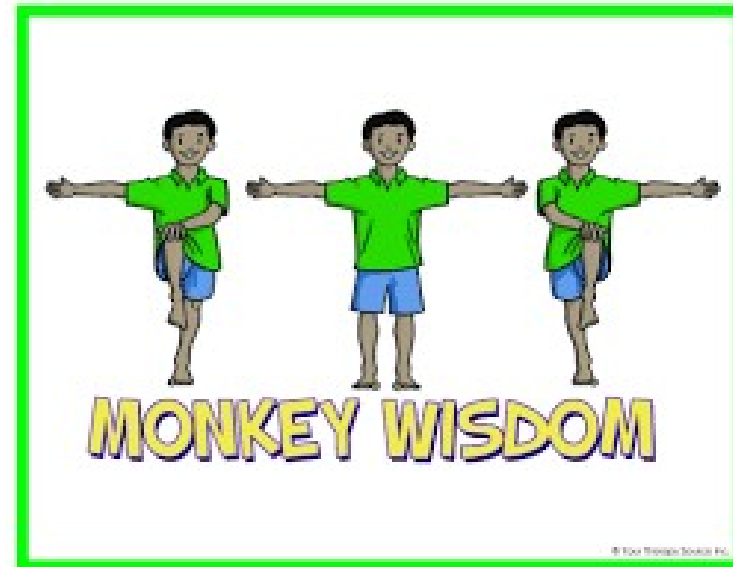
Double Air Doodle

Person "draws" figure 8 symbol in the air as above – first with right finger, then left, then both together (adapted from Brain Gym "double doodle")



Cross Crawl Mantra

Cross Crawl Mantra: Person touches hand (palm up) to opposite raised knee for one minute while repeating a positive mantra eg calm, be here now (adapted from Brain Gym "cross crawl")





Nervous System Calming Holds

Hold #1 - Place hands either side of your head.

For these holds you can have eyes open or closed.

- Breathe in for 4, and out for 8
- Repeat this 3 times
- Focus on feeling the pressure from your hands, and notice the structure and containment this provides

Hold #2 - Place one hand on the front of your head and the other on the back.

- Breathe in for 4, and out for 8
- Repeat this 3 times
- Focus on the feelings you can notice

Hold #3 - Place one hand on your forehead and the other on your heart

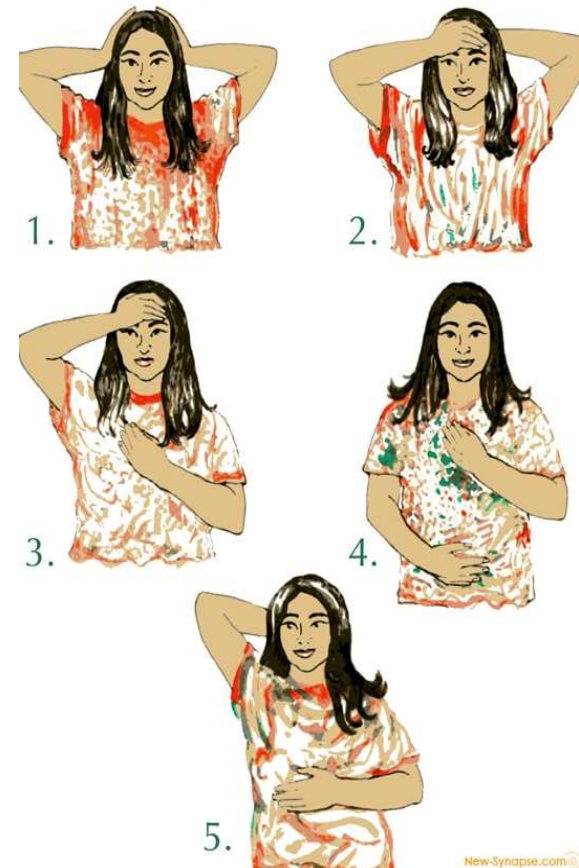
- Breathe in for 4, and out for 8
- Repeat this 3 times
- Focus on the feelings you can notice

Hold #4 - Place one hand on your heart and other on your stomach (above or on top of your belly button)

- Breathe in for 4, and out for 8
- Repeat this 3 times
- Focus on the feelings you can notice

Hold #5 - Place one hand on the back of your head and the other on your solar plexus (just above your belly button)

- Breathe in for 4, and out for 8
- Repeat this 3 times
- Focus on the feelings you can notice



New-Synapse.com



Senses for Regulation



Instant Regulator Strategies

SENSORY

5 Things Mindfulness

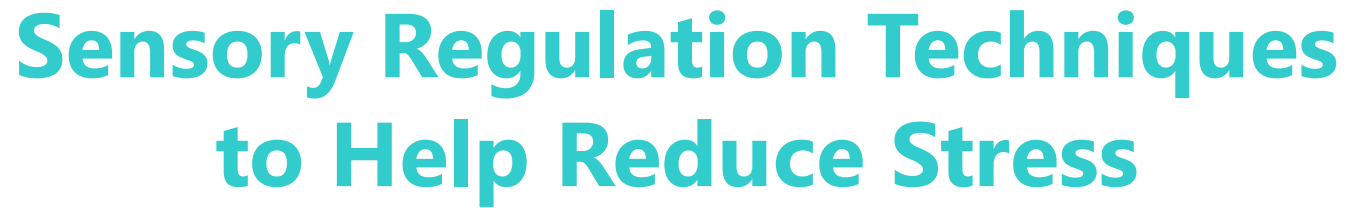
5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise



Jump in a Picture

Use Calm Image book (created by person - holding their favourite calm images) to "jump" into a picture and take in all sights/sounds/smells/tastes/textures. Can write/draw or share responses.





VISUAL

Visual timer, calm down jars, breathing charts, yoga cards, emotions books, calming photos of animals, sea etc, nature materials, glitter wands, battery candles/soft lighting, visual poster with words and symbols of how we can calm our bodies when we are feeling different emotions e.g. *When I feel sad I can...When I feel angry I can... When I feel anxious/worried I can...*

TACTILE

Hand cream and self massage, sensory inputs – weighted products like heat packs, feathers, sponges, massage rollers, balance boards, sensory pads, nature materials, fiddle toys, slime, theraputty, playdough, sandtray, squishy toys/stress balls, blanket, beanbag or large pillows.

AUDITORY

Singing bowl, calm music, guided meditation with headphones.

BREATHING

Hoberman sphere, feather, bubbles, cotton wool and straws, pinwheels, charts, scented products, breathing charts on wall, trace the figure 8.

MINDFULNESS

5 things exercise to ground, progressive muscle relaxation, use mediation apps or Youtube guided meditations.

GROUNDING

Use techniques to reconnect into body. 5 things mindfulness, trauma holds, movement techniques, singing, humming, music, relaxation.



Your Superhero Resource Pack



- Sensory input
- Theraputty, playdough or slime
- Water or sandtray
- Chew necklaces/toys
- Bouncing on trampoline or fitness ball
- Throwing ball back and forth
- Being held, food, water
- Rocking
- Starjumps
- Weighted blanket or object, light/strong touch
- Massaging hands/feet with cream, listening to music
- Dance party, yoga poses/story
- Drawing or writing how you feel
- Doing meditation
- Calm down jar
- Practicing breathing techniques, blowing bubbles/feathers
- Talking to mum/dad/friend.



Parental Self Care is Your Oxygen!





Prioritising Self Care = Being Responsible for Yourself

- We cannot help our children grow better brains if we do not support **resourcing ourselves first.**
- The central tenant in our parenting is relationship building – creating safety and connection before correction or effective learning can occur. If you do not resource yourself and grow your own stronger, healthier brain and nervous system this work will lead to overwhelm, reactivity and burnout!
- **You are the foundation of the house everything else is constructed upon.**
- You are the physiological and emotional template that helps wire your children's brains and nervous systems!
- We need to commit to helping ourselves become wiser, calmer and stronger through learning, daily practice, identifying (and meeting) our physical and emotional needs, and reaching out for extra support when needed.



Keep Your Cup Full with Daily Mindful Moments

1. **Mindful morning body scan check-in** - Take 2 minutes before you get out of bed, starting at your toes, breath into each part of your body. Be curious...how are you feeling? What sensations do you notice? When you are ready smile and start the day with 3 deep belly breaths.
2. **5 things mindfulness exercise**— During morning shower.
3. **Mindful walking/grounding your nervous system** - Walking the kids into school/kinder/daycare focus on taking deep breaths, feeling their hands in yours, the ground beneath your feet.
4. **Mindful eating** - If you get a chance to eat or drink anything alone today practice this exercise.
5. Between clients/on work break/in car before picking up kids etc do **5-10 minute guided meditation** on your phone app or free Youtube video (list in resources section).
6. **Mindful sleep**: use mindfulness meditation for sleep or sleep music. Practice breathing in through nose and out through mouth (1:2 ratio). If need to relax body more use nervous system trauma holds (e.g. hand on heart, other on solar plexus or both on stomach).
7. **Sensory supports** - Resource yourself through regular sensory supports.
8. **Nervous system trauma holds** - throughout day.





How Will You Fill Your Parenting Cup?

- Regular exercise or playing a team sport
- Time out in nature and sunshine
- Incorporate 4-6 mindful moments throughout the day
- Practice mindfulness meditation – 10 minutes a day
- Use soft music, nature sounds or guided meditations to have a deep sleep

- Tech free hours/days
- Download the calm app or headspace for mindfulness practice
- Practice breathing techniques
- Practice healthy brain integration exercises
- Enjoy a warm drink



- Watch a sunrise/sunset
- Make a playlist of positive, uplifting music – start the day with this
- Collect positive affirmation and love quotes for yourself – set up a pinterest board with positive ideas and images
- Family connection times

- Regular mindful play time for yourself, your children or your partner
- Create something!
- Have a regular massage
- Reach out to a friend for a catch up
- Create a gratitude practice or journal



Mindful Parenting Resources





Growing Mindful Families (1)

Activities

1. Create a mindfulness glitter jar for breathing/calm down practice (check resources)
2. Play together – be present, laugh, touch, have fun, be active – create safety, attachment, lower cortisol (stress hormone), increase dopamine (pleasure hit)
3. Do yoga together before bed
4. Practice mindfulness meditations together
5. Make breathing charts and practice breathing together – talk about when we can use our magic breaths to strengthen our wise owl brain
6. Create art, music, food, lego together = connect with each other. Ask your child what they would love to do with you and make a list/jar/book of the ideas for your family
7. Use conscious language around your child – you are wiring their self belief
8. Create a family gratitude journal to record daily good thoughts.



Growing Mindful Families (2)

Activities

1. Have daily emotions check-ins before bed/at dinnertime. Share high and low points of the day. If low – how did you respond? Could you have done anything differently? What would that look/feel like?
2. Throw a family dance party.
3. Have family bounce on trampoline, have a water fight, go for a bike ride, connect with healthy physical touch and respect your child's boundaries.
4. Have a mindful dinner out – really taste flavours, savour smells, *etc.*
5. Blow bubbles.
6. Set up a quiet space/sensory supports box in your house to practice self regulation.
7. Do regular emotional check-ins using emotions board/charts, drum your emotions, dance your emotions *etc.*



Growing Mindful Families (3)

Mindful Steps Exercise

- This activity is best completed outdoors and if suitable, you may like to walk barefoot.
- Each person selects a small area where they can walk in a line for about 5 or 6 steps and back, then back to where they started without getting into another person's way.
- Begin this practice with three deep breaths. Take 5 or 6 steps in one direction, turn slowly and then take 5 or 6 steps back to where you started. While walking, people bring their awareness to their breath and their body.
- What does the ground feel like under your feet? Which part of your foot touches the ground first when you take a step? Does your body feel heavy or light today? Are you slouching when you walk? Or, is your back up quite straight?
- Try not to change the way you walk, but instead just notice how your body naturally moves.

Bell Listening Exercise

- Ring a bell or singing bowl and ask person to listen closely to the vibration of the ringing sound.
- Tell them to remain silent and raise their hands when they can no longer hear the sound of the bell. You can try the exercise with eyes open or closed.
- Then tell them to remain silent for one minute and pay close attention to the other sounds they hear once the ringing has stopped.
- Draw or write all the things you noticed in that one minute.

Smell & Tell Exercise

Pass something fragrant out to each person (orange peel, flower, essential oils on cotton wool ball *etc*) Ask them to close eyes and focus on scent. Scent can be very powerful for reducing anxiety, focus and reconnecting and calming body.



Growing Mindful Families (4)

Mindful Body Scan

- Lay on the floor, with eyes closed if comfortable (or may prefer to look at the ceiling).
- Pay attention to feet for 5 or 10 seconds.
- Questions to ask during a body scan (or yourself or your child): How does this body part feel? Is it cold or warm? Does it feel tight or relaxed? Is all or part of that body part touching the floor? What does that feel like?
- Move on to toes, then ankles, then calves and knees. Continue body part by body part until you reach the head.
- Question how each part of the body feels to bring awareness to body in the moment.
- If there is tightness or stress, imagine breathing the stress out of that part of the body with each exhale.

The Art of Touch Exercise

Give each person an object to touch, such as a ball, a feather, a soft toy, a stone, *etc.* Ask them to close their eyes and describe what the object feels like to a partner. Then, have the partners trade places and share their sensory experience. Reflect on differences and similarities of experience. Use describing words – rough, small, cold, soft, heavy, sharp, smooth, round, spiky.





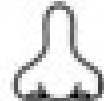
The Mindful Snack

Try mindful eating for a few minutes. Use a script like this to guide yourself or your children through the exercise:

"Let's try something called mindful eating. It's where you slow things down when you eat so you can notice things you don't usually notice. What does your food feel like to touch? What about the smell? What if you squish it a little – what does that feel like? Now take a bite but chew very slowly. Really notice your mouth moving up and down. Can you feel the food against your tongue and between your teeth. What does it taste like? What does it feel like? Keep chewing for a little while (20 to 30 seconds). When you're ready, notice what the food feels like as it moves down your throat and towards your belly".

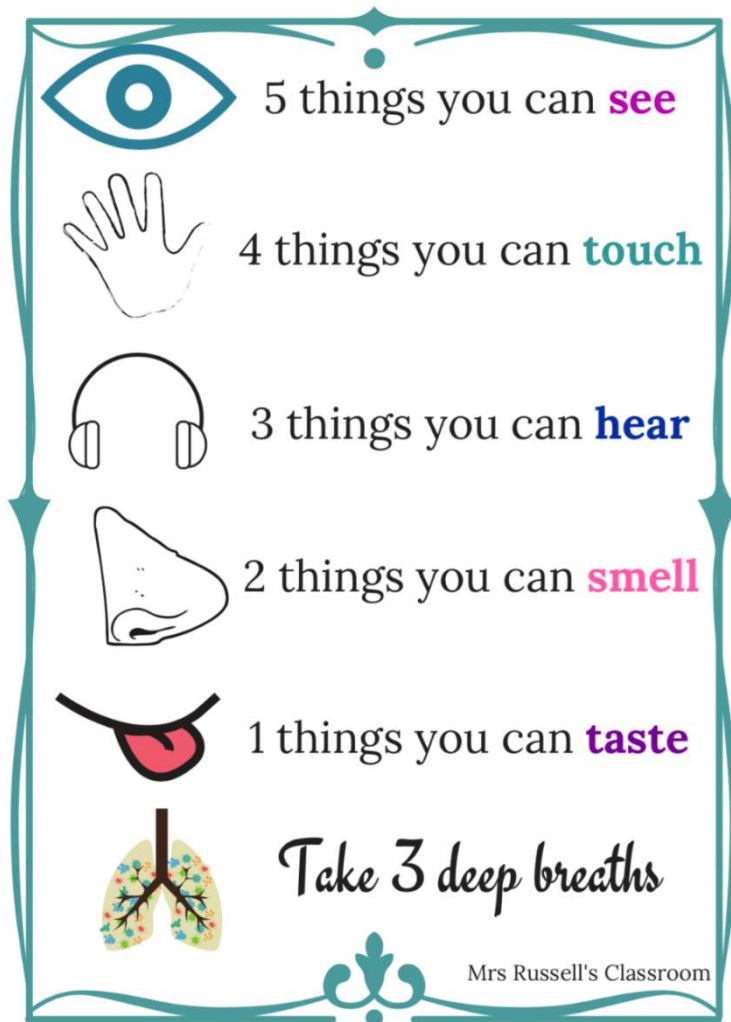


Mindful Parenting Tools (1)

<h2>5 Senses Scavenger Hunt</h2> <p>Use your 5 senses to go on a scavenger hunt.</p>				
Something you can see 	Something you can hear 	Something you can feel / touch 	Something you can taste 	Something you can smell 



Mindful Parenting Tools (2)



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Where Are Your Feelings In Your Body?

Feelings are something we feel in our body

Show the places with these colors

Sad - Blue

Fear - Black

Guilt - Brown

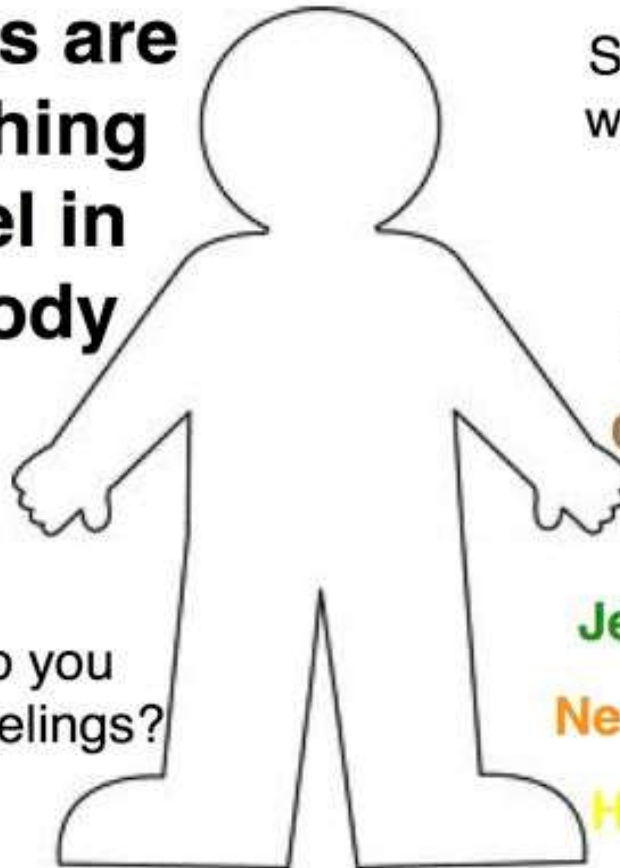
Anger - Red

Jealous - Green

Nervous - Orange

Happy - Yellow

Where do you feel your feelings?



The Mindfulness Jar



SOURCE: www.cosmickidsyoga.com



Mindfulness Information Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzR62JJCMBQ> All it takes is 10 mindful minutes | Andy Puddicombe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc&vl=en> – How mindfulness rewires the brain on a physical level

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsXxvPWd_k4 - Australian – Smiling Mind Associate Professor Dr Craig Hassed

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXxrJEnIboMDr. Dan Siegel- On The Importance of Mindfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqUNtLbwoj4> Dan Siegel, M.D. - Discussing the science of mindfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gi2ER4pSaU> How Mindfulness Transforms Us | Jo Pang | TEDxGatewayArchSalon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjtfyuTTQFY&t=23s> Mindfulness Animated in 3 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeCXhXDkzpw> Mindfulness - An introduction with Jon Kabat-Zinn



Guided Meditations (Youtube)

The Five Minute Miracle – Daily Guided Meditation

Guided Mediation (Blissful Deep Relaxation)

Search for anything by The Honest Guys

Healing Spirit – Guided meditation for Relaxation, Anxiety, and Depression

Self Healing – Body Healing

Can't Sleep – Meditation for Insomnia, guided voice

Guided Healing meditation on forgiveness, releasing guilt

Guided Meditation – deep relaxation and bliss

Letting Go Mediation – Freedom from all Limitations

10 minute guided mediation to ease anxiety, worry, overthinking





Mindfulness – Best Apps

The Smiling Mind - Get your students into the practice of meditation using Smiling Mind, an app that can be tailored to different age groups — even children as young as seven years old. Also offers an evidenced based schools program and curriculum

Insight Timer – lots of talks, information, training and meditations

Aura – every day you get a new personalised meditation

Omvana – strong morning meditations

Stop Breathe and Think

Calm - Loving-Kindness, Forgiveness, or the Body Scan, sleep stories, or quiet music, bells

The Mindfulness App - Packed with features, this meditation app includes a five-day guided meditation practice

Headspace - Its free trial includes 10 exercises geared toward beginners that can help you learn more about meditation as well as applying it to your life

Insight Timer - 4,500 free guided meditations from over 1,000 meditation practitioners with this app. It also gives you access to 750 meditation music tracks.





Mindfulness for Kids

Apps:

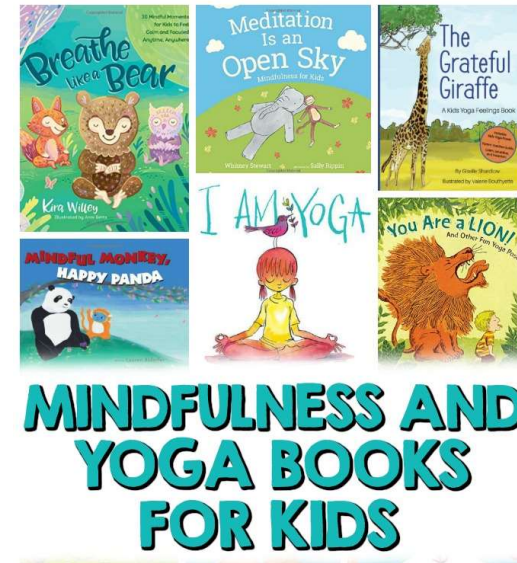
DreamyKid
Calm
Stop Breathe and Think Kids
Headspace
Yoga Deck
Breathing Bubbles
Smiling Mind
Positive Penguins
Take a Chill
Calm Counter
Relax Melodies

Mindfulness Books:

Peace Piggy Meditation by Kerry Lee MacLean
A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles by Thich Nhat Hanh
Meditation is an Open Sky by Whitney Stewart
Happy Mind by Andrew Jordan Nance
Breathe Like a Bear by Kira Willey
Sitting Still Like a Frog by Eline Snel
What Does It Mean To Be Present? by Rana DiOrio
Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Kerry Lee MacLean and Lauren Alderfer
Good Morning Yoga: A Pose-by-Pose Wake Up Story by Mariam Gates
You Are a Lion! And Other Fun Yoga Poses by Taeun Yoo
The Grateful Giraffe: A Kids Yoga Feelings Book by Giselle Shardlow

Guided meditations on Youtube for free

Coreys Conscious Living – My kids love these – so many to choose from
Relaxation music, nature sounds, wave sounds





Reflection Activities



Set Your Intention to Rewire Your Brain

I intend to practice **mindfulness in these two tasks** each day:

- 1)
- 2)

I intend to practice **mindfulness of my surroundings** (what can I see, hear, smell, touch), or attention to breath in these two places each day:

- 1)
- 2)

I intend to practice **formal sitting mindfulness** at o' clock each day (5-15 minutes).



Personal Wellbeing and Sustainability

Scheduling self-care reset breaks

DATE:

LOCATION:

DATE:

LOCATION:

Consider the following essential categories that form part of a healthy, well integrated brain and nervous system. How many self care activities do you have in each category?

Social goals for self-care (social engagement)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Mental goals for self-care (cerebral cortex)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Physical goals for self-care (brainstem)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Play/creative goals for self-care

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Emotional goals for self-care (limbic system)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Relationship/family goals for self-care

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Other self nurture activities

- 1.
- 2.



Commitment to Yourself

To do the work to help our children build better brains, we need to fill our own cups regularly through self-care and mindfulness. This widens our window of tolerance so we can stay more regulated and feel less stressed.

Iwill commit to **Filling My Own Cup** by:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Signed:

Dated:



Your Self-care Schedule

Time /Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning Mindfulness							
Gratitude/affirmations for the day							



Mindful Family Moments

How will I incorporate daily mindful moments in my family to help us all grow better brains?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

What date will I start trying out these activities?



BBBA Resources for Parents Group Resources

Click [HERE](#) to join our parents
and educators free resources
Facebook group!!!



BBBA Resources for Parents Group Resources

You can download your FREE copy of the kid's calm brains activity book here:

<https://buildingbetterbrains.com.au/kids-calm-brains-exercise-book/>

In the exercise book, there are colouring sheets, worksheets, and step-by-step guides on how to do the calm brain practices with your children.

The FREE downloadable Self Care resource manual for parents is here:

<https://buildingbetterbrains.com.au/self-care-resource-book-download/>

In the resource book, there are worksheets and step by step guides on how to do the self care practices.

Join our support group for parents and educators with the full video series and more resources here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/buildingbetterbrainsaustralia/>



MINDFULNESS

• IS A SUPERPOWER •



THAT
EVERYONE
CAN HAVE!



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Together we can build better brains!

- The mission of **Building Better Brains Australia** is to help make the world a better place through training, consultancy, education, connection and empowerment.
- We work to grow capacity and understanding in the systems around the next generation of children in our care – **parents, educators and mental health professionals**.
- Building Better Brains Australia is the love child of husband and wife team – Sian Chambers-Vallance and Tony Vallance. Just as Building Better Brains Australia is the bridge between the work Sian and Tony do to grow capacity and care in the systems they work with (mental health and education), it is also the bridge between the 20+ years of neuroscience and trauma research that needs to form the basis of best practice in the systems around our children (and all human beings).
- We hope you will work alongside us to help build a better world and healthy brains and relationship for the next generation in our care.

Come and join our worldwide community of world changers in our private online Facebook community, or subscribe to our e-mail list.

www.buildingbetterbrains.com.au

EDUCATE

CONNECT

EMPOWER

GROW