

SEL MONTHLY™ COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)
& MINDFULNESS/TESTING

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Testing can cause stress which may surface some “uncomfortable emotions” for a child, even at a young age. When we teach young learners to be more aware of their emotions, we help them become more purposeful in their responses and actions. Asking questions is a great start. You can ask, “How are you feeling about your upcoming test?” and actively listen to their response. Then validate their feelings by relating to them and reminding them it’s normal to feel the way they do and offer strategies for managing these emotions. Exposing young learners to tools on how to cope with stress will better equip them to navigate stressors on their own as they get older. [Click here](#) for 7 calming and creative mindfulness activities that will be fun to try!

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Once a child reaches middle school, they will take more tests in more subjects than ever before. The increase in demands and rigor, on top of navigating all the new realities that come with being a middle schooler, can evoke anxiety. Incorporating frequent practices of mindfulness can enhance academic performance and improve the overall mental health of students by helping them focus on the present moment, as opposed to being distracted by external factors and thoughts. Students will begin to feel less stressed and start to understand they have the power to manage their own emotions which will give them a sense of peace. Edutopia shares some additional ways to create a calm learning environment for middle schoolers during test season [here](#).

HIGH SCHOOL

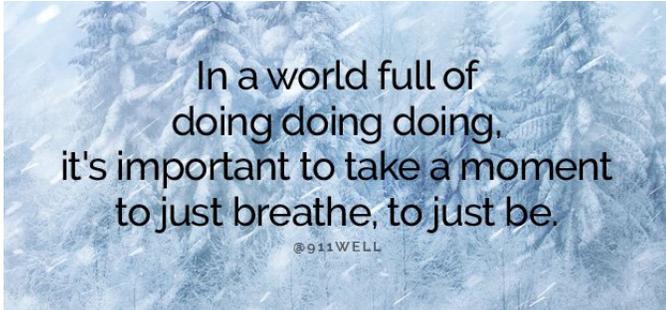
Many students in high school report being more stressed by tests and by schoolwork than by anything else in their lives. As students get older, they seek ways to help them cope with their daily life stressors and to plan for their future. Although some high school students may be apprehensive about the idea of deep breathing at first, with an encouraging, consistent, and motivating leader, students will begin to open up, feel and understand the benefits of pausing for a moment and clearing their minds of clutter. Learn how to introduce mindfulness to your high school students [here](#).

MINDFULNESS AND TEST ANXIETY

by Saima Qadree
Program Development Officer

In today’s academic environment, testing is an ever-present reality for educators, students, and families. Compounded by the effects of the pandemic, test-related anxiety may be heightened this year. The practice of mindfulness can be a great tool to manage this type of anxiety.

Mindfulness is the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something. Strategies such as deep breathing, positive self-talk/affirmations, visualization, relationship building, and more can come in handy as tools that both children and adults can add to their proverbial toolboxes and pull from when faced with fraught situations. In this edition of the SEL Monthly Community Newsletter, the team at Frameworks of Tampa Bay shares strategies, research, and resources to assist in navigating the practice of mindfulness, with an added emphasis on the upcoming and uncertain testing season.



In a world full of
doing doing doing,
it's important to take a moment
to just breathe, to just be.

@911WELL

COPING SKILLS & ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITIES FOR MINDFULNESS

by *Eddie Underwood*
SEL Program Specialist

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention to the present. This state is described as observing one's thoughts and feelings without judging them as good or bad (Psychology Today). Testing can cast a shadow of anxiety over the classroom, not only for the student, but for the teacher as well. The stress of students' performance reflecting teaching ability can be overwhelming.

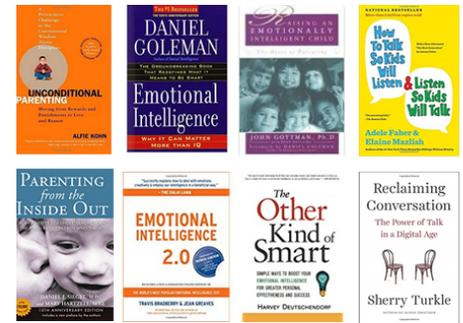
Participating in daily relationship building activities such as morning meetings or the Frameworks' program, Community Building Sessions™, can set a positive tone for the whole day as students are given space to share their current emotional state. These temperature checks help to guide students in identifying anxiety and how to cope with it. Simple mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, stretches, movement breaks, and even asking to take a break are a great way to introduce coping techniques for not only testing, but for life.

SIMPLE MINDFULNESS PRACTICES THAT CAN BE USED AT HOME

by *Charese Cook*
Senior SEL Program Specialist

Mindfulness can help lift our mood, focus our thinking, and is beneficial for not only children, but adults too! Take a look below at 4 ways to practice mindfulness at home:

- **Build and establish a daily routine** - Having a sense of rhythm throughout the day helps boost our mood, promote better sleep, and provide designated time and structure to accomplish tasks.
- **Focus your mind** - It's helpful to have constructive thinking about what lies in your control. Gently allow yourself to vanish away "what ifs" and worries, and focus on the present moment.
- **Make time to connect** - Connect with your loved ones, friends, family, and coworkers. This can be done through the use of technology when we are apart from others. Connection is what fuels our heart and mind.
- **Recharge yourself** - Make mindful choices to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Nourish your downtime by listening to podcasts or audiobooks, doing yoga, journaling, and identifying moments of gratitude.



RESOURCES AND READINGS

by *Jordan Sims*
Community Programs Specialist

Test anxiety is becoming more and more common, but it is something many of us still don't fully understand, and may need help with to best support our students. Fear not! The Florida Department of Education's *Just Take 20* initiative has worked to demystify test anxiety and provide ways to combat it. In "[Just Take 20: Relaxation Techniques to Cope with Test Anxiety](#)," you'll find information on what test anxiety is and where it comes from, 12 myths about test anxiety, suggestions for self-talk, and three mindfulness strategies to have your student try before or during their next test.

For more resources, visit www.myframeworks.org

NEW!
[Recurso en Español](#)

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Frameworks
PRESENTS
OUR 10TH ANNUAL

2021 Head & Heart Luncheon



FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER
MARC BRACKETT
AUTHOR OF *PERMISSION TO FEEL*

ARMATURE WORKS | APRIL 22, 2021

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"SELEMENTARY"**