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# project10 transition education network

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PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on mindfulness.

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## Stories

- [Mindfulness: Taking the World by ~~Storm~~ Serenity?](#)
- [Mindfully Educating](#)
- [Benefits of Mindfulness for Students](#)
- [Mindfulness for Teachers, Administrators and Parents](#)

## Resources

## Upcoming Events

## Upcoming Webinars

## Additional Announcements

## References

**Mindfulness: Taking the World by ~~Storm~~ Serenity?**

Mindfulness is popping up everywhere. A quick Internet search will provide information related to mindfulness in healthcare, finances, relationships, politics, exercise, eating and more. John Kabat-Zinn (2003) defines mindfulness as, "The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment," (p. 144).



(Photo Credit: Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)

Mindfulness showed up in the NBA in a big and, perhaps, unexpected way in 2017. The Golden State Warriors coach, Steve Kerr, led his team to victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers and become the 2017 NBA Champions. The surprising part was that they used a team culture structured around the core values of joy, **mindfulness**, compassion and competition. In some of the interviews with players following the Finals, talk circled around the importance of staying focused and remaining in the moment. Remarking on Kevin Durant's interview comments about staying in the moment throughout the series, journalist Jason Marsh (2017) wrote, "That sounds a whole lot like mindfulness, the moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, sensations and surrounding environment - and one of the Warriors' core values."

**With mindfulness bubbling to the top of conversations in so many fields, is it any wonder that educators are applying its principles as well?**

If you are looking for a way to help yourself and your students to focus on the important and relevant things and filter out distractions, consider practicing mindfulness and sharing it with your students. This Topical Brief will share resources and explore how mindfulness can positively benefit students, parents, teachers and administrators.

## Mindfully Educating

### What IS mindfulness in education?

The Association for Mindfulness in Education (AME) describes mindfulness as a kind and curious attentiveness. AME reports that mindfulness benefits the classroom by creating a calmer learning environment and assisting students to focus their attention.

### Why is mindfulness important for the classroom?

Richard Burnett, from the Mindfulness in Schools Project, provides a terrific TED talk that clearly explains the purpose of bringing mindfulness to students. In the featured video, Burnett states that students are not going to come into the class and ask, "Please, sir, teach us mindfulness, for we know it will make us happy and flourish!" He goes on to question why it is that we, as educators, enthusiastically teach on so many topics but fail to teach students how to develop and use the skill of attentiveness. Mindfulness is important because it is a way of thoughtfully and purposefully interacting with world while in school and throughout life.



Tune in at 3:55 for a simple, but illuminating activity that demonstrates how mindfulness works.

## Benefits of Mindfulness for Students

### Do students benefit from practicing mindfulness?

Many studies have been done to assess the benefits of mindfulness for students. Although there is much research still to be done, Mindful Schools, a not-for-profit mindfulness training organization, believes that mindfulness is a potential solution for the unhealthy stress that impacts students, educators and parents in the school community. Likewise, the Association for Mindfulness in Education, affirms the benefits of mindfulness and is committed to providing support for mindfulness training in K-12 classrooms. "School-based mindfulness training appears to offer a means for students to cultivate attentional skills as well as an array of other aptitudes that may enhance their capacity to cope with their psychosocial as well as academic challenges," conclude Meiklejohn et al. (2012).



### Do students with disabilities also benefit from practicing mindfulness?

Studies focusing on the effectiveness of mindfulness with students with disabilities are promising. Solar (2013) reports that mindfulness has been successfully used to relieve stress for students with an emotional or behavioral disability (EBD). Although he admits that more research is needed on the use of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) as a way to empower students with EBD to manage their own behavior, Solar (2013) maintains that the time has come to implement MBSR on a broader scale.

In a study involving students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), students and teachers reported a decrease in stress. In addition, a reduction in hyperactivity and emotional symptoms was observed by teachers and students reported that prosocial behavior was increased (Pahnke, Lundgren, Hursti and Hirvikoski, 2014).

Students with learning disabilities were shown to have benefitted from mindfulness training in a study focused on the reduction of anxiety. The high school students participating in the study completed surveys that indicated a significant decrease in anxiety. The students and the teachers reported an improvement in social skills and the teachers reported an improvement in student academic performance as well (Beauchemin, Hutchins & Patterson, 2008).

### How can mindfulness be integrated into the classroom?

There are three ways to bring mindfulness into the classroom. First, is a **direct approach** which includes teaching mindfulness skills directly to students. Second, is an **indirect approach** which impacts students through their teachers who practice mindfulness in their lives and in the classroom. Third is a **combined approach** that brings together both the direct and indirect approaches (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Mindfulness Instructor, Iris Neil, stated, "Mindfulness in the classroom begins with the mindful practice of the teacher. Students incorporate mindful strategies best when they permeate the classroom environment," (personal communication, August 25, 2017).

### What are the outcomes that result from using mindfulness strategies with students?

The Koru Center for Mindfulness conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of their mindfulness training for college students. Their study results show outcomes that are consistent with other mindfulness studies and the Koru training is now starting to be used with secondary students. When using mindfulness strategies, students feel the following:

- More calm; less stressed
- More mindful; better focused
- More rested; greater ease in falling asleep
- More self-compassion; better psychological well-being (Greeson, Juberg, Maytan, James & Rogers, 2014).

## Mindfulness for Teachers, Administrators and Parents

### What are the benefits of mindfulness for teachers?

Mindful Schools research highlights six categories of benefits for educators through the practice of mindfulness. These benefits likely apply to administrators and parents as well. The six benefits of mindfulness for teachers include the following:

- **Attention** - Strengthens the ability to focus attention where and when it is needed and/or wanted
- **Emotional Regulation** - Enables a more objective view of one's emotions in order to see that they are temporary and notice one's response to them
- **Adaptability** - Increases one's capacity to evaluate and change habitual behaviors
- **Compassion** - Fosters an awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and in order to grow in understanding of what other people are experiencing
- **Calming** - Accesses tools that relax the body and mind; enables one to access peacefulness in the middle of stressful situations
- **Resilience** - Increases the ability to form objectivity and gives us greater balance

The implementation of mindfulness through the direct approach in combination with the indirect approach appears to enrich not only the student, but also the teacher. "Nurturing teachers' inner resilience via mindfulness-based training creates a relational foundation in the classroom for offering students age-appropriate mindful skills that, in turn, appear to nurture their own inner resilience," wrote Meiklejohn et al. (2012).

### What are some mindfulness strategies that benefit administrators?

In *Dancing in the Rain: Tips on Thriving as a Leader in Tough Times*, Jerome Murphy (2011) provides some helpful insights for administrators. Murphy suggests that leaders need to release the internal drama that drives them to act first and reflect later.

"Relinquish control of . . . that private Hollywood production in which you are writer, director, hero and victim all in one," guides Murphy (2011, p. 37). He recommends the following strategies:

- **Accept discomfort** - This brings clarity and understanding to problem-solving by allowing the process to focus on the best solution instead of the quickest way to relieve the discomfort.
- **Watch one's thoughts come and go** - By holding our thoughts at a distance, ideas and reactions can be viewed objectively.
- **Take care of yourself** - Compassion for ourselves provides the balance that enables us to feel and display compassion for others.
- **Keep faith with your values** - Consistent observance of our core values keeps our work aligned with the values that motivate and sustain us.

Murphy (2011) advises leaders to avoid the "reactive self" who wants to rush in without careful consideration that often results in hasty, ill-conceived responses and, instead,

operate from the "balanced self". This is the part of us that takes space to simply be aware and takes time to formulate a well-composed perspective.

### What are the benefits of mindfulness for parents and/or families?

The long list of mindfulness benefits that apply to everyone are equally applicable to families of students with disabilities. There are also unique ways that mindfulness can benefit families. A significant stress that families experience is related to their role as advocate for their children. The task of communicating with a wide variety of community supporters can be challenging and exhausting. Burke, Chan and Neece (2017) conducted a study to assess the value and effectiveness of mindfulness in situations where families are being advocates for their child with a disability. The tables below, provide a summary of the mindfulness strategies as described by Burke et al. (2017) that families employed during Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings as well as the positive effects that resulted from the use of the strategies.



Families can improve the experience of advocating while also improving the outcomes of advocacy through mindfulness strategies.

## Resources

### [Association for Mindfulness in Education \(AME\)](#)

The AME is a collaborative association of organizations and individuals working together to provide support for mindfulness training as a component of K-12 education.

### [CARE for Teachers: Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education](#)

CARE is a program designed to help teachers reduce stress and enliven their teaching by promoting awareness, presence, compassion, reflection and inspiration. CARE strives to supply the resources teachers need to help students flourish.

### [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)

CASEL is an organization devoted to advancing the practice of promoting integrated academic, social and emotional learning for all children in preschool through high school.

### [Eight Tips for Teaching Mindfulness in High School](#)

A mindfulness teacher shares insights gained from teaching mindfulness to teenagers.

### [GreaterGood Magazine](#)

This website provides science-based insights that lead to the development of a healthy and happy life.

### [How Social-Emotional Skills Can Fit into School Curricula](#)



This article teaches how to integrate mindfulness into "already-existing" curriculum content.

### [Mindfulness: A Guide for Teachers by Amy Saltzman](#) (pdf)

This guide provides an overview of the why mindfulness training is important to offer to children and adolescents. Tips and resources for teaching mindfulness in the classroom are also included.

### [Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Strategies for Students with Disabilities and Caretakers](#)

This presentation was given at the 2017 VISIONS Transition Planning Institute by Mindfulness Instructor, Iris Neil. It provides an introduction to mindfulness and information about its usefulness in education.

### [Mindfulness in Education Network \(MiEN\)](#)

MiEN sees mindfulness as an antidote to the growing stress, conflict and confusion in educational settings, as well as, an invaluable gift to give students. Find resources, research and conference information on this website.

### [Mindfulness in Schools Project \(MiSP\)](#)

MiSP is a charity whose aim is to encourage, support and research the teaching of secular mindfulness in schools. MiSP produced a mindfulness curriculum, .b, pronounced [dot-be], which stands for "Stop, Breathe and Be!"

### [Mindful Schools](#)

Provides resources in the form of video, audio and book recommendations.

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## Upcoming Events

### 2017 Educational Strategies and Student Engagement Institute *Destination Graduation: Together Ensuring Every Student Succeeds*

Due to weather-related issues, ESSEI has been postponed. More information will be forthcoming.

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### Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute

September 27 - 29, 2017  
Hilton Orlando / Altamonte Springs  
Altamonte Springs, Florida

Click [here](#) to register.

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### Florida Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Conference

## ***Inclusion: Waves of Opportunity, Oceans of Success***

**October 15 - 17, 2017**  
**Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa**  
**Ponte Verde Beach, Florida**

Click [here](#) to register.



### **Upcoming Webinars**

#### **Pathways Research and Training Center (Pathways RTC)** ***Mental Health Needs and Service Use Among Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness***

September 19, 2017  
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM et

This webinar presents data from a new national study of homeless young adults (ages 18-26). Gathered through drop-in centers and shelters in seven cities across the country, the Homeless Youth Risk and Resilience Survey will provide more information about the intersection of homelessness and mental health problems.

Click [here](#) to register.

#### **Think College**

**What's Working with Vocational Rehabilitation Partnerships in Higher Education: Pieces, Puzzles, and Partnership**

September 26, 2017  
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM et

In collaboration with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Transitioning Youth and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Think College is pleased to present this webinar on the critical elements of promising partnerships between VR and institutions of higher education (IHE) serving students with intellectual disabilities on a path toward employment. Presenters will share national data and trends, discuss issues and challenges, and offer lessons learned from one state with strong strategic partnerships between VR and IHEs.

Click [here](#) to register.

#### **Think College**

**Lobbying, Educating, Advocating: What to Do, Where You Are, To Educate People Around You**

October 19, 2017  
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM et

State and local policymakers are looking for partners, solutions, and ways to stretch their dollars. Perhaps most importantly, they are looking for ways simply to make life better for their citizens. You have some of that information! It's important to share the benefits of inclusive higher education, including employment, with state policymakers. This webinar will look at what you can and cannot do, how to do it, who to approach and how to say it. Templates and tools will be shared. Whether you are an experienced advocate or a beginner, there is something here for you.

Click [here](#) to register.

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## Additional Announcements

### Project Search Expansion

For the second year, Florida has the opportunity to begin new sites for the 2017-18 school year. Project SEARCH is particularly interested in expanding to counties and school districts in geographically different areas of the state, and encourages consortium sites, particularly for small and rural counties and school districts. To view the Project SEARCH announcement and the application, see the attached documents. For more information about this opportunity, contact Carly Detlefsen at [cdetlefsen@usfsp.edu](mailto:cdetlefsen@usfsp.edu).

For more information about the program and to view the 20-minute Project SEARCH 101 video, go to <http://projectsearch.us/EDUCATION/ProjectSEARCHAcademy.aspx>.

[Project Search Expansion Announcement](#)

[Project Search Application for 2018 Sites](#)

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Project 10 Topical Briefs provide informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

**Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share?**

Email us at [project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu).

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit the newsletter page on the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php>.

### **Project 10: Transition Education Network**

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

### **Project 10: Transition Education Network University of South Florida St. Petersburg**

Questions or comments?

Email us at [project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu).

[www.Project10.info](http://www.Project10.info)

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