

Counselor's Corner



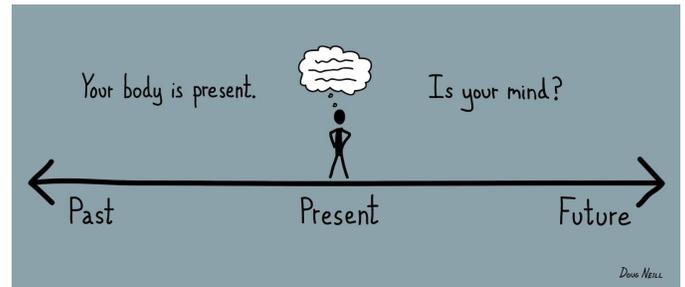
The Emotion Regulation Issue

According to an article from Cornell, "Emotion regulation is a term generally used to describe a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience. People unconsciously use emotion regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations many times throughout each day. Most of us use a variety of emotion regulation strategies and are able to apply them to different situations in order to adapt to the demands of our environment. Some of these strategies are healthy, and some are not. Healthy coping strategies can help to diffuse strong emotions, often allowing for a greater understanding of what led to the emotional experience."

As we continue our work around Emotional Intelligence with our students, Saxe Counselors would like to provide parents with more information on helpful regulation strategies to enhance your own EI, and general wellness.

Present Moment Attention (MINDFULNESS)

Present Moment Attention is defined as being aware of, and focusing on what's going on *right now* (ex. Thoughts, feelings, & physical sensations) without judgment, and without trying to change it.



Our mind often “time travels”, thinking about the past or the future. It's often these trains of thought that lead to our feelings of stress, and anxiety. The following quick strategies can help if you notice your mind is stuck on negative thoughts, you find yourself acting on “auto-pilot”, or you need clarity on what's going on for you in any moment.

- **Tap into your senses.** Notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- **Follow your breathing.** Take a moment to find your breath in your body. Do you notice it at your nose, your chest, or your belly? Focus on what you observe. Is your breath deep or shallow? Don't think too much about it or try to change it. Just notice your breath as it is.
- **Scan your body.** Beginning at your feet, slowly scan your body, bringing your attention through each body part. Notice what each part of your body feels like.

Remember- When we practice Present Moment Attention, our mind *will* wander off (this is just what's minds do). We strengthen our "attention muscle" everytime we notice our mind has wandered, and we bring it back to focusing on the present.

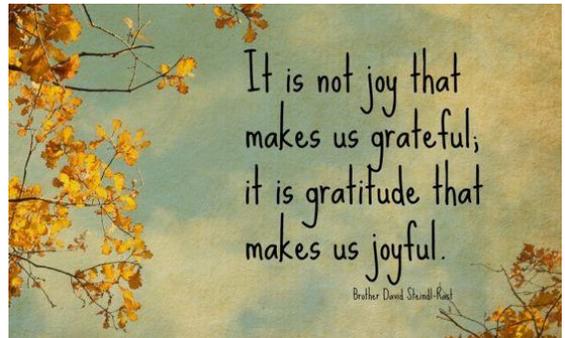


Gratitude

Creating a gratitude practice is a simple way to change the way our brain processes our experiences, and the world around us. Most of us can relate to the experience of having a positive day, but being stuck on a single negative comment or occurrence. Our mind is primed for negativity, and we have an easier time noticing and focusing on the negative, compared to the positive. Gratitude can help shift our perspective, and can allow us to more easily appreciate the good parts of our life. Research has shown that a regular gratitude practice can decrease inflammation, reduce production of cortisol (the stress hormone), and can even be beneficial to our relationships. Below are a few pointers for starting your own gratitude practice!

- **Choose a time & a place.** In the early stages of creating a habit, it can be helpful to decide when and where you're going to take a few minutes to note what you're grateful for. Find a time and space that works best for you! Some families work a gratitude routine into dinner time, or bedtime.
- **Be specific.** While you may feel gratitude for your family every day, make an effort to get specific. Each day ask yourself, what exactly am I grateful for when I think of my family? Who in my family am I grateful for, and why?

- **Share your gratitude.** Make an effort to share your gratitude with others. Find small, and thoughtful ways to recognize your gratitude for others. Not only will you be reaping the benefits of the gratitude practice, but you'll also be improving another person's day, too. Thoughtful compliments, thank you notes, or acts of kindness are great ways to show your gratitude.



We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas for our future editions of Counselor's Corner, please let us know!