

Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building

A Practical Primer

Creating the Social-Emotional Health that All Kids Need
(and we do too!)

Tam Lundy, PhD
Take 5! Self-Reg Learning Hub

SELF-REG ASSET-BUILDING

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5 SELF-REG ASSET BASICS



- BE HERE - Mindful Awareness Assets
- BE WITH - Interpersonal Effectiveness Assets
- BE CALM - Emotion Regulation Assets
- BE STRONG - Resilience & Thriving Assets
- BE CHANGE - Connectedness & Contribution Assets



SELF-REG ASSETS: EVERYONE NEEDS A BUCKETFUL



Self-reg assets are building blocks for thriving - growing our capacity for mental wellness, learning, healthy relationships and lifelong development.

The more assets a child has, the more chances that he or she will thrive ... even in difficult circumstances - *Search Institute*



SELF-REG ASSET-BUILDING PRINCIPLES



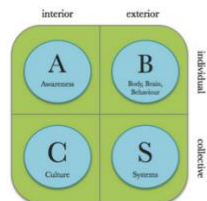
- Inclusive:** All kids, not just some kids.
- Child-empowering:** As kids grow skills, the need for adult intervention decreases.
- Strengths-based:** Starting with current strengths, growing new ones.
- Nudges healthy development:** Focusing on potentials, not just problems.
- Engages the community:** Attention to strengthening self-reg assets in kids, the adults that support them, and the social & cultural surround.



SELF-REG MADE SIMPLE ... 1, 2, 3



- Know the assets:** I can name the assets, and know how they make me feel - in my body, my mind & my connections with others.
- Grow the assets:** I'm growing my self-reg strengths by practicing a little each day. More and more I can say that I'm the boss of my emotions, my thoughts, my behaviours ... "I'm the boss of me!"
- Flow the assets:** I can 'be self-reg' more often than not. And I help others grow their own bucketful of self-reg assets.



SELF-REG ABC'S: ACTION + TRACTION

Take 5! is an integrative approach to self-reg. Evidence shows that our efforts are most effective & sustainable when we strengthen self-reg assets in people + organizations + communities.

Graphic adapted from Lisa Chacon's ABC's of Social Change



SOURCE:

Tam Lundy, *Take 5! Learning Hub*
www.take5selfreg.com

Self-Reg Assets: Everyone Needs a Bucketful

The more assets a child has, the more chances that he or she will thrive ... even in difficult circumstances. - *Search Institute*

Self-reg assets are building blocks for thriving – growing our capacity for mental wellness, learning, healthy relationships and lifelong development.

The basic idea is simple: everyone has a bucket that needs filling. And everyone can be a bucket-filler. This metaphor aligns beautifully with the core messages of asset-building: everyone needs assets, and everyone can be an asset-builder.

How to support kids to thrive? We can help them acquire a bucketful of self-reg assets. The fuller a child's bucket, the greater the capacity to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG and BE CHANGE.

Why bucket-filling? Parents, educators and kids alike love the 'bucket-filling books'.¹ The concept of bucket-filling offers kids – even very young kids – an easy and accessible way to become aware of their own inner experiences and needs, and those of other folks in their life. It's become a tried-and-true teaching tool that emphasizes the importance of kindness and appreciation, both given and received.

By applying the bucket-filling image to the building of self-reg assets, kids discover ways that they can not only fill their own buckets, but also contribute to the buckets of others. And the assets that everyone wants in their bucket include mindful awareness assets, interpersonal effectiveness assets, emotion regulation assets, resilience & thriving assets ... and, of course, connectedness and contribution assets.

To be healthy and happy, kids need to give as well as receive. And for kids who might have a difficult time being on the receiving end of things, bucket-filling helps to create an environment of safety, mutual trust, and reciprocity.



¹ There are several children's books available that explore the theme of bucket-filling. Two very popular offerings are Carol McCloud's *Have you filled a bucket today?* and Tom Rath's *How full is your bucket?*

Self-Reg Asset-Building Principles

1. **Inclusive: Building assets in *all* kids, not just *some* kids.**

It's true that some kids need more self-reg support than others. But it's also true that *all* kids benefit when learning & practice is a regular part of classroom activity. Everyone has some areas in which their skills are lagging – neurotypical and non-typical kids alike. When self-reg asset-building is just part of the everyday classroom, everyone benefits.

2. **Child-empowering**

The ability to self-regulate is a potent form of empowerment. In everyday 'kid' language, it's the ability to 'be the boss of me!' and to navigate life's challenges moment to moment. Growing their self-reg capacities, kids can be the boss of their thoughts, emotions, impulses & behaviours, as well as their engagement in social interactions. And as kids grow more skills, the need for adult intervention decreases.

3. **Strengths-based**

Take 5! promotes assets that are known to generate health, well-being and thriving. In other words, it's salutogenic.² While it's important to identify the gaps, or deficits, in a child's ability to self-regulate, it's also important to acknowledge current and growing strengths, and offer supportive scaffolding as new capacities are explored and developed.

All kids have strengths – let's optimize them. And, yes, there are gaps – let's help to bridge them.

4. **Nudges healthy development**

An essential human capacity, self-regulation is key to healthy development. Humans are born with an innate drive to thrive and, in supportive conditions, development continues throughout life. With that developmental journey in mind, self-reg asset-building supports young people to meet life's challenges *and* rise to life's potentials. Young people with self-reg *savvy* learn that they have power over the ways they respond to life in every situation ... even the challenging parts. And these capacities can last a lifetime.

5. **Engages the community**

Kids do better when the community is actively engaged in asset-building.³ And, when it comes to self-regulation, everyone has something to contribute; everyone's an asset-builder. Professionals, certainly. But, also, parents, grandparents, aunts & uncles, coaches, and the neighbour down the street. And, of course, kids themselves.

When communities come together – singing from the same songsheet, so to speak – self-reg asset-building becomes part of our culture; it's just the way we do things around here. This doesn't mean developing costly new programs ... rather, it means getting the community involved in "knowing, growing, and flowing" the assets that are known to boost learning, mental health & well-being, social engagement and lifelong thriving.

² Salutogenic means 'health-generating.' With a salutogenic orientation, we optimize those conditions that promote higher levels of health and well-being – in people, and in systems.

³ See, for example, an abundance of research from Search Institute: www.search-institute.org

Self-Reg Made Simple ... 1, 2, 3

1. **Know the assets:** I can name the assets, and know how they make me feel – in my body, my mind & my connections with others.
2. **Grow the assets:** I'm developing my self-reg strengths by practicing a little each day. More and more I can say that I'm the boss of my emotions, my thoughts, my behaviors ... "I'm the boss of me!"
3. **Flow the assets:** I can 'be self-reg' more often than not. And I help others grow their own bucketful of assets.

Knowing the assets

Self-reg asset-building supports kids to grow their awareness skills as well as their action skills.

When it comes to self-regulation, awareness comes first, followed by mindful action.⁴ The child is aware of how she feels in the moment, and how she'd *prefer* to feel. She can then form an intention to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG and/or BE CHANGE. And she can choose to use her self-reg skills to get there. But it all begins with awareness.



Growing the assets

Self-reg asset-building equips kids with powerful tools to prevent problems, *and* to unleash their potential. When kids have lots of self-reg assets in their bucket, learning, relationships, mental wellness and healthy development are optimized.

Neuroscience shows that the more we practice a skill, the more it's 'on line' and available even when the going gets rough. With self-reg it's not just the brain that's being rewired, however, but the mind as well. In fact, when it comes to self-reg strengths-building, it's the mind that flexes most of the muscle. The more we practice and build those muscles, the more the mind can help the brain and body to self-regulate.

So we needn't wait until problems arise; the best time to begin growing self-reg assets is *now*.

⁴ A large body of research shows that asset-building is most effective and sustainable when kids can name the assets they're hoping to grow, and not just the problems that need to be solved. See, for example, Search Institute's work on Developmental Asset Building.

Flowing the assets

Self-reg and flow

Really, self-reg is all about flow. When humans self-regulate, we experience a harmonious flow of energy and information ... in mind and body, and within our relationships with others. All of our parts – thoughts, feelings, breath, senses, movements, communication - flowing freely, integrated and in synch.

Integration is the cornerstone of self-regulation. For neuroscientist Dan Siegel, it's integration that creates harmony. Integration, he explains, means "linking differentiated parts into a functional whole."⁵ In other words, when I'm self-regulated, I'm self-integrated.

Dysregulation, on the other hand, is a sign of stuckness, or impeded flow. And when flow is blocked, problems arise, including learning problems, mental health problems, relationship problems – even arrested development.

When my mind, body and relationships are not in flow, things can quickly go sideways.⁶ I can't sit still. I'm breathing too fast. My muscles are tense. My limbs are shaky. My stomach's upset. I get angry easily. I feel like crying. I worry about things. I get scared. I can't focus. And it's not much fun.

Flow creates the conditions for flourishing. So how do we create more flow in kids and classrooms?

Me and We: Two ways to flow the assets:

Self-reg Assets and Me

When any new skill is learned, at first it's hit and miss. But then we reach a tipping point, when we can access that skill with greater consistency. And eventually that new skill becomes our 'go to.'

That's the way it is with self-reg skills. With lots of practice. I can 'be self-reg' more often than not. I now have skills, for example, that let me BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG and BE CHANGE – at least most of the time. Neuroplasticity has done its job, and self-reg is becoming my 'new normal'.

Self-reg Assets and We

With lots of opportunity to practice, all kids can grow the assets in their own personal bucket. And they can help other kids to grow their own bucketful of self-reg assets. Even the youngest kids seem to understand that everyone benefits when each person has lots of self-reg assets in their bucket. Educators can help. So can parents. In fact, everyone in a child's life can play a positive role as a self-reg asset-builder.

- Start anywhere, with any of the assets. To open the conversation, you might invite kids to 'take a selfie.' What are their self-reg strengths? What are the challenges? And which assets will, with lots of practice, give a healthy boost to their self-reg capacities?
- Make the learning fit the moment. Or the curriculum. The bottom line is practice. And integrating self-reg asset-building into the regular school day, and into the many other ways that young people spend their time, is an effective way to practice building healthy self-reg habits ... assets that can then be called at any time, even when life offers a self-reg challenge.

⁵ Siegel, Daniel J. (2012). *The developing mind*. New York: The Guilford Press.

⁶ Thanks to Linda Lantieri for her helpful list of stress signals.

Self-Reg ABC'S: Action + Traction

Take 5! is an integrative approach to self-reg. And there's lots of evidence that our efforts are most effective & sustainable when we strengthen self-reg assets⁷ in people + organizations + communities.

An integrative approach to self-reg pays attention to how we interact with the world, and how the world interacts with us. That means that, while it's important to pay attention to each individual person, it's equally important to address the ways in which we're all in this together. This means paying attention to the collective factors that influence self-regulation: the systems and structures in which we work and learn, for example, and the culture of our organizations and communities.

Let's start with systems and structures. Many schools are exploring ways that classroom design can enhance self-regulation. And there's a growing awareness that self-regulation gets a real boost when the whole school is involved, and not just a 'problem' kid or classroom. Similarly, self-regulation capacities are strengthened when the family is on board, when kids experience consistent expectations and support at home and at school. And, as the self-regulation movement grows, we see how policies and programs in other sectors can foster self-regulation capacities in kids and adults: early childhood education, health prevention & promotion, recreation, child and youth care, suicide prevention programs, mental health services ... even municipal planning. Each sector can make an important contribution to promoting self-regulation, especially when there are opportunities for collaboration.

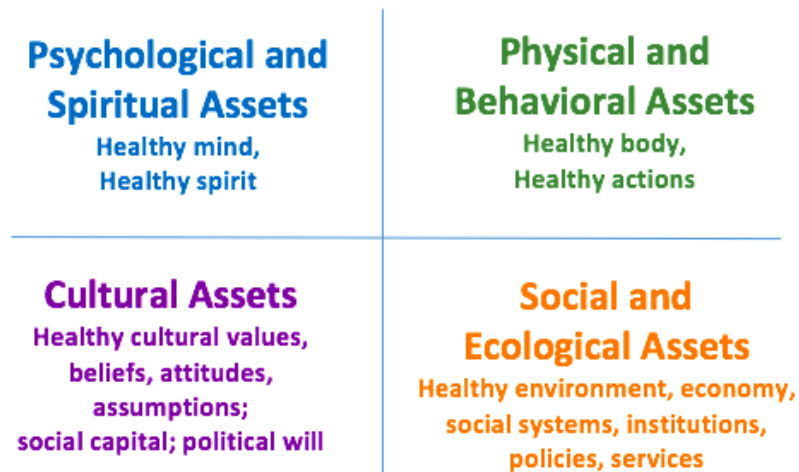
Culture is equally important. This dimension of self-regulation is harder to pin down and measure; nonetheless, it exerts significant influence on our approach to self-regulation. This dimension is the gathering place for our shared attitudes, values and beliefs, our assumptions, our taken-for-granted's. When we pay attention to the cultural factors that influence self-regulation ... that make it easier to talk about mental health challenges, for example, and to ask for help ... we create new norms, and new possibilities. And we can agree to a shared purpose: building a culture of self-regulation in our school, our organization, our community. We'll know we've had a significant cultural impact when we can say "Self-reg? It's just the way we do things around here."

Integration is key to creating the conditions in which self-regulation becomes the norm ... in individuals, in families, in schools, in communities.



⁷ Assets include the kinds of relationships, social experiences and patterns of interactions known to promote health and over which a community has considerable control. Richard M Lerner in *Developmental assets and asset-building communities: Implications for research and practice*.

Integration in Action: Four Asset-Building Zones



Four Asset-Building Zones

Self-Reg: Creating the conditions for success⁸

1. **Time.** Is there dedicated time to explore self-reg topics – at staff meetings and in other individual and team capacity-building settings?
2. **People.** Are we aware of the self-reg capacity that currently exists in the school? Who are the in-house leaders? Who can play a coordinating role? Is there a commitment to enhance self-reg capacity throughout the school – teachers, EA's, other support staff, parents, volunteers, etc.?
3. **Budget.** Are dedicated resources available to support self-reg learning and practice?⁹
4. **Learning.** Do staff have opportunities for ongoing professional development growth?
5. **Culture.** Is there a shared vision and sense of purpose that drives action and accountability? Do we share stories of asset-building successes and challenges? Can we say that “self-reg is just the way we do things around here”?

⁸ Thanks to Search Institute for their decades of research and evidence-gathering – we continually learn from their experience.

⁹ Research shows that students who participated in evidence based social emotional learning programs showed an 11% gain in academic achievement compared to students who did not. And, among six evidence based social emotional learning (SEL) interventions studied, it was determined that, on average, for every \$1 invested in SEL programming, there is a return of \$11. *School District 61 (Victoria, BC)*

TAKE 5! IN A NUTSHELL

5 Self-Reg Asset Basics

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BE WITH	Interpersonal Effectiveness Assets
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BE CHANGE	Connectedness & Contribution Assets

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TAKE 5! Self-Reg Assets for Kids

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Self-Reg Skills that Strengthen Each Asset

BE HERE Skills:

Mindful Awareness

- **Self-Awareness:** I'm aware of my thoughts, feelings, body, actions.
- **Mindfulness:** Being here *with* myself, *for* myself.
- **Felt-sensing:** Getting information from my mind & body; trusting my gut sense.
- **In-Sight:** Making 'me maps'; seeing my thoughts & feelings; seeing my triggers & reactions.
- **Being Myself:** Seeing my uniqueness; valuing my strengths & challenges; trusting my senses & my experiences in life.

BE WITH Skills:

Interpersonal Effectiveness

- **Other-Awareness:** Being present in 'we space'.
- **Perspective-Taking:** Others might see things differently.
- **Mindsight:** 'Me maps' and 'you maps'; insight & empathy
- **Boundary Awareness:** Me and you, separate and together; respecting my own body, thoughts, feelings & perspectives, and also valuing yours.
- **Mindful Togetherness:** I think about you, and I think about me. We validate each other's experiences & perspectives.



BE CALM Skills:

Emotion Regulation

- **Sensing:** What's happening in my body? How is that connected to my thoughts, my emotions and my actions?
- **Conscious Breathing:** What shifts when I pay attention to my breath?
- **Standing on the Moon:** Does the problem look different if I'm seeing from a distance ... e.g. 'standing on the moon?'
- **Being the Boss:** I can be the boss of my senses and my responses. 'I have emotions ... my emotions don't have me.'
- **Building Mastery:** I practice my calming skills every day.

BE STRONG Skills:

Resilience & Thriving

- **Distress Tolerance:** I can soothe myself when I'm feeling triggered. I can notice my impulse, then do the opposite.
- **Reality Check:** I can't always change the situation but I can change the way I respond.
- **Lemonade Thinking:** Seeing the opportunity within the problem.
- **Wise Mind:** Using my thinking mind *and* my feeling mind.
- **Rocking Resilience:** I can resist urges, rebalance my thoughts & emotions, bounce back from adversity.

BE CHANGE Skills:

- **Being Connected:** I feel connected to people & nature. What I do affects others; what others do affects me.
- **Being a Change Wizard:** Life is always changing. I can be a force for positive change; I can make a difference in my world.
- **Stepping Up:** "What if I ...?" "What if we ... ?"
- **Playing It Forward:** In my mind, I wonder: How will this action affect me, my friends, my family, my community?
- **Seeing my Resistance to Change:** How do I sometimes get stuck in old habits, even when I know a change is needed?



Take 5! for Everyone

Take 5! Self-Reg Assets for Kids: Everyone Needs a Bucketful

BE HERE	BE WITH	BE CALM	BE STRONG	BE CHANGE
<p>Mindful Awareness: <i>Being Present in ME Space</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness – Me: I'm aware of my thoughts, feelings, body, actions Mindfulness: Being here <i>with</i> myself, <i>for</i> myself Felt-sensing: Getting information from my mind & body; trusting my gut sense. In-Sight: Making 'me maps'; seeing my thoughts & feelings; seeing my triggers & reactions. Being Myself: Seeing my uniqueness; valuing my strengths & challenges; trusting my senses & my experiences in life. 	<p>Interpersonal Effectiveness: <i>Being Together in WE Space</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness – We: Being present in 'we space' Flexible Thinking Others might see things differently. Mindsight: 'Me maps' and 'you maps; insight & empathy Boundary Awareness: Me and you, separate and together; respecting my own body, thoughts, feelings & perspectives, and also valuing yours. Mindful Togetherness: I think about you, and I think about me. We validate each others' experiences & perspectives. 	<p>Emotion Regulation <i>Senses in Sync</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sensing: What's happening in my body? How is that connected to my thoughts, my emotions and my actions? Conscious Breathing: What shifts when I pay attention to my breath? Standing on the Moon Does the problem look different if I'm seeing from a distance ... e.g. 'standing on the moon'? Being the Boss: I can be the boss of my senses and my responses. 'I have emotions ... my emotions don't have me. Building Mastery: I practice my calming skills every day. 	<p>Resilience & Thriving ... <i>Even When Life Gets Tough</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Distress Tolerance: I can soothe myself when I'm feeling triggered. I can notice my impulse, then do the opposite. Reality Check: I can't always change the situation but I can change the way I respond. Lemonade Thinking: Seeing the opportunity within the problem. Wise Mind: Using my thinking mind <i>and</i> my feeling mind. Rocking Resilience: I can resist urges, rebalance my thoughts & emotions, bounce back from adversity. 	<p>Connectedness & Contribution <i>Making Change that Makes a Difference</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Being Connected: I feel connected to people & nature. What I do affects others; what others do affects me. Being a Change Wizard: Life is always changing. I can be a force for positive change; I can make a difference in my world. Stepping Up: 'What if I ...?' 'What if we ...?' Playing it Forward: In my mind, I wonder: How will this action affect me, my friends, my family, my community? Seeing My Resistance to Change: How do I sometimes get stuck in old habits, even when I know a change is needed?

Tam Lundy, 2016



Take 5! Self-Reg Assets for Youth

BE HERE	BE WITH	BE CALM	BE STRONG	BE CHANGE
<p>Mindful Awareness: <i>Being Present in ME Space</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness – Me: Thoughts, feelings, body, actions 2. Mindfulness: Being here <i>with</i> myself, <i>for</i> myself 3. Felt-sensing: Mindful focusing; tapping inner wisdom 4. In-Sight: Making ‘me maps’; seeing perspectives, assumptions, taken-for-granted’s, judgments 5. Presence in Every Moment: Tuning in to the present moment & accepting it; validating my experience 	<p>Interpersonal Effectiveness: <i>Being Together in WE Space</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness – We: Being present in ‘we space’ 2. Perspective-taking: There’s always more than one perspective 3. Mindsight: Integrating insight & empathy 4. Boundary Awareness: Me and you, separate and together 5. Mindful Togetherness: Being here <i>with</i> others, and <i>for</i> others. 	<p>Emotion Regulation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensing – What’s happening in my body? How is that connected to my thoughts, my emotions and my actions? 2. Conscious Breathing: What shifts when I pay attention to my breath? 3. Standing on the Moon What shifts again when I stand back a little, when I practice “witness awareness?” 4. Living my Power: What shifts again when I bring awareness to my actions? When “I’m the boss of me?” 5. Building Mastery: Practice, practice, practice ... 	<p>Resilience & Thriving ... <i>Even When Life Gets Tough</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distress Tolerance: Accepting, finding meaning in, & tolerating distress 2. Truth Testing: Is there more than one truth in this situation? 3. Making Sense of the Problem: A ‘sense of coherence’ generates health & well-being 4. Wise Mind: Integrating rational mind & emotional mind 5. Rocking Resilience: Resisting urges; Working with dynamic tension; bouncing back from adversity 	<p>Connectedness & Contribution <i>Making Change that Makes a Difference</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flex/Flow Thinking: Change is constant; everything has its opposite; yes/and thinking; finding hidden potential in the problem 2. Imagine a Preferred Future: A chosen future, not just an inherited future 3. Stepping Up: “What if I ...?” “What if we ...?” 4. Playing it Forward: How will this action affect my future, our future, the planet’s future? 5. Busting My Immunity to Change: How do competing commitments undermine my very best intentions?

Tam Lundy, 2016



Self-Reg Assets for Personal & Professional Development

BE HERE	BE WITH	BE CALM	BE STRONG	BE CHANGE
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SELF-REG ASSET-BUILDING

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... with special thanks to Mike McKay, founder of the Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative, educator extraordinaire, and a valued colleague on this self-reg journey.