

Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building

Starter Kit for Early Years and Elementary School Classrooms



A SAMPLER

This sampler contains excerpts from the *Take 5! Starter Kit for Early Years and Elementary Classrooms*.¹

Welcome	Page 5
Take 5! Framework: Five Self-Reg Assets that All Kids Need	Page 7
Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building: Guiding Principles	Page 7
Self-Reg Made Simple ... 1, 2, 3	Page 8
Take 5! Self-Reg Learning Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early years (Pre-, K & 1)• Elementary (Grades 2, 3, 4 & 5)	Page 8
Building Self-Reg Mastery by Connecting the Dots <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose• Practice• Probe	Page 11
Take 5! Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Basic Recipe• The Basic Tool• Take 5! Hand Signals• Take 5! Hand Tools• Sample Hand Tool: On the Other Hand	Page 12 Page 13 Page 14 Page 15 Page 16

¹ For older elementary and middle school students, we recommend the Take 5! Starter Kit for Elementary and Middle School Classrooms. Also note that each Starter Kit is designed to be used in conjunction with our training resource, *Take 5!: A Practical Primer*.

- Sample Capacity-Building Activities:
 - Russian Nesting Dolls (BE HERE) Page 17
 - Seeing Me Seeing You (BE WITH) Page 19
 - Paper Chains (BE CALM) Page 21
 - Good News / Bad News (BE STRONG) Page 22
 - Instead I (BE CHANGE) Page 23

Grow Self-Regulation Capacities: Getting Started

- Integrating Self-Reg Asset-Building into Everyday Classroom Activity Page 22
- Ages & Stages: Make the Activity Fit the Child Page 23

Sample Lesson Plan Page 24

Five Developmental Principles that Shape Take 5! Practices Page 25

Principles into Practice

- Growing Capacity for Awareness Page 31
- Growing Capacity for Perspective-Taking Page 33
- Growing Capacity for Flex / Flow Thinking Page 34
- Growing Capacity for Distress Tolerance Page 35
- Growing Capacity for Integration Page 37

Take 5! Capacity-Building Framework Page 39

“The Take 5! approach is teacher-friendly,
an excellent staff development opportunity,
and a valuable tool for parents.”

*Lorna Wuertz,
Retired Teacher & Administrator
San Rafael, California*

Take 5! Starter Kit Excerpts

Welcome

This starter kit is just that – a way to get started introducing Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building to kids in school and other community settings. Rather than offering a step-by-step curriculum, or structured lesson plans, this resource is intended to spark your own ideas and creativity to make self-reg learning part of everyday classroom activities. And to help you create your own lesson plans.

With self-reg asset-building, the important thing isn't the activity itself, although that can be fun and lots of learning can happen. But what we're really wanting to do is to create learning loops, linking the learning from each activity back to the five self-reg assets: BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE.

How to get started? Here are some ideas:

- a. Put posters on the wall as inspiration and reminder. Have kids use their artwork as supplementary 'visuals'.
- b. Set aside time each day or week to introduce and review the five self-reg assets, and engage in some fun activities that help strengthen those capacities.
- c. Borrow ideas and activities from other SEL approaches you have access to. For example, you might already have a copy of *Sitting Still Like a Frog*² on your library shelf – it's a great resource for teaching mindful awareness to kids. And the accompanying CD introduces kids to a variety of mindfulness practices.
- d. 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.
- e. Take advantage of all of those 'teachable moments' that arise during a typical day – opportunities to expand thinking, practice skills, and grow capacity. Harvest those moments – not just the meltdowns, but those moments when a child exemplifies a self-reg asset. For example, Justin is showing us how he can BE HERE. Or Julia, managing a transition that used to cause her great difficulty, is showing us how to BE CHANGE.
- f. Offer reminders when needed, or create some playful code language that everyone can use. There's no 'right' way to teach self-reg skills, so be flexible and creative.

² Snel, Eline (2013). *Sitting still like a frog: Mindfulness exercises for kids (and their parents)*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

- g. Connect the dots between DO'ing and BE'ing. Help students to connect each activity to the self-reg asset(s) it's helping to strengthen. Use the 3 P's to strengthen capacity for the five BE's: BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG and BE CHANGE.
- h. Encourage children to ask for what they'd like to learn. Students can initiate and guide learning by choosing the self-reg asset they'd like to focus on ... BE HERE, for example, or BE STRONG. Once students become more familiar with each of these five assets, you could just ask an open-ended question: which self-reg asset would you like to learn more about today? You might also encourage children to request some self-reg learning when they feel the need to strengthen one of their self-reg assets.
- i. Emphasize practice, not perfect. And, as kids practice, offer a helping hand. With the right support, students can go to their current learning edge in each of the self-reg asset areas ... and then just a little bit further. And remember, the more kids practice their self-reg skills, the less you will need to intervene in 'unexpected' behaviors and situations.
- j. Help students and fellow staff members to create a culture of self-regulation in the classroom, and throughout the school. With commitment, mindful attention, and lots of practice, self-reg asset-building becomes "just the way we do things around here."

I hope you have fun introducing Take 5! to your students. I am certain that it will have a positive impact on their school experience, supporting learning, relationship-building, mental wellness and healthy development. And the self-reg assets that kids acquire now will help to guide them for the rest of their lives.

Tam Lundy, PhD
Take 5! Institute

The Take 5! Framework:

These are the five self-reg assets that all kids need:

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



Take 5! Guiding Principles:



SELF-REG ASSET-BUILDING PRINCIPLES



- 1. Inclusive:** *All* kids, not just *some* kids.
- 2. Child-empowering:** As kids grow skills the need for adult intervention decreases.
- 3. Strengths-based:** Starting with current strengths, growing new ones.
- 4. Nudges healthy development:** Focusing on potentials, not just problems.
- 5. 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

Here's a simple 3-step approach to self-reg asset building:



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 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!"
- 3. Flow the assets:** I can 'be self-reg' more often than not. And I help others grow their own bucketful of self-reg assets.



Take 5! Self-Reg Learning Objectives

Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building builds strengths in five core areas of self-regulation competency:

BE HERE
BE WITH
BE CALM
BE STRONG
BE CHANGE

Mindful Awareness Assets
Interpersonal Effectiveness Assets
Emotion Regulation Assets
Resilience & Thriving Assets
Connectedness & Contribution Assets



These skills can be introduced in age- and developmentally-appropriate ways, beginning in the early years, and continuing through elementary, middle and high school. Here we offer learning objectives for the early years (roughly ages 3-6), and elementary school students aged 7 and up. But, child development is a fluid and flexible process. And *you* know the kids in your care – their strengths and challenges, their learning edges. So we recommend choosing activities that are a developmental fit for the children you are working with. And, with scaffolding in mind, help them to try something that's just a little beyond their current capacity.

The Early Years

Learning Objectives:

1. Know the assets:

- I have a sense of myself, my needs and preferences, and how I am unique.
- I'm aware of my feelings, and can name them.
- I'm aware of my actions, and can make choices.
- The adults in my life help me to self-regulate (co-regulation), *and* they model the self-reg assets: mindful awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, resilience & thriving, and connectedness & contribution
- I'm learning how it feels when I can BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE. I'm learning to use language to describe these feelings.
- I know which self-reg assets are strongest for me, and which assets need some practice.

- Basic Recipe:
Awareness + Action
- Five Assets:
Five Ways to BE.

2. Grow the assets:

- When I'm playing and learning, I practice using my self-reg skills.
- I practice using words that describe how I'm thinking, feeling, acting. Adults help me to find the right words.
- More and more, I can say: I'm the boss of my emotions, my thoughts, my behaviors ... "I'm the boss of me!"

3. Flow the assets:

- I notice when I'm feeling anxious, angry, sad, frustrated, etc. And I notice how those feelings influence my behavior and my connections with others.
- I notice that other people have their own thoughts & emotions, and may see things a little differently than I do (theory of mind).
- I help others to remember to use their self-reg tools.

Elementary School

Learning Objectives:

1. Know the assets:

- I can name the assets.
- I know how it feels – in my mind and my body – when I can BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE.
- I'm aware of my thoughts, emotions, & behaviors, and my ways of interacting with others. I can make choices in each of these areas.
- I know the self-reg 'basic recipe': Awareness + Action = Self-Reg Empowerment ... more and more often, I can say that awareness comes before action.

2. Grow the assets:

- I'm learning to use my mind to tame my body, brain & behaviors.
- I learn from and support others to remember to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE.
- When I'm feeling some self-reg challenges, I ask for help from supportive others in my life.
- I practice the tools that help me to grow my awareness and take skillful action – in each of the five asset areas.
- More and more, I can say: I'm the boss of my emotions, my thoughts, my behaviours ... "I'm the boss of me!"

3. Flow the assets:

- I notice when I'm feeling anxious, angry, sad, frustrated, etc. And I notice how those feelings influence my behavior and my connections with others.
- I remember to use the tools I've learned to re-balance my thoughts & emotions, the sensations in my body, my impulses & behaviors, and my interactions with others.
- I remember that other people have their own thoughts & emotions, and may see or feel things a little differently than I do. I try to imagine what they might be thinking or feeling.
- I help others to know, grow and flow their own bundle of self-reg assets.

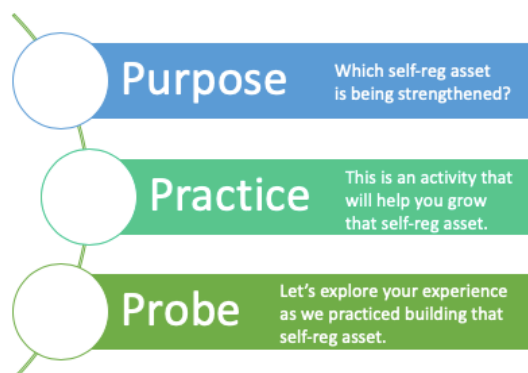
- Basic Recipe: Awareness + Action
- Making friends with awareness ... the qualities of being aware *and* the objects of awareness
- Five Assets: Five Ways to BE
- Use the information that my body provides
- Use my mind to tame my body, brain, & behaviors
- Relational self-reg: thinking about you, thinking about me
- Perspective-taking as a primary self-reg tool

Building Self-Reg Mastery by Connecting the Dots: Purpose + Practice + Probe

Like other approaches to social and emotional learning, Take 5! offers a range of tools, activities and practices that help to strengthen children's capacity to self-regulate. These are the DO's of Take 5! They're important because, with lots of practice, all kids can grow their capacity to self-regulate, in age- and stage- appropriate ways.

Practice is important for kids of all ages – it's the basic principle that underlies neuroplasticity. But, especially as children grow older, practice alone isn't sufficient. Children must understand the purpose that's at the heart of every practice. And every activity will have greater impact when children are given the opportunity to debrief their experience, to explore how they feel, to imagine what might be different if they continue to practice this skill.

So, every activity has three parts: 1) Purpose, 2) Practice and 3) Probe. This three-step process helps to integrate activity-related DO's with the real purpose of every activity: to enhance student's capacity to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG and BE CHANGE.



Here are the three steps:

1. *Purpose*: Share the primary purpose of the activity with your students. This will inform them that the activity has a self-regulation objective: to build our capacity to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG or BE CHANGE.
2. *Practice*: Introduce one of the activities in this Starter Kit. Or borrow activities from other SEL approaches you have access to – it might be a book from the library, or adapted from another SEL resource. Or innovate – you'll find lots of ways to integrate other curricular activities with SEL learning.
3. *Probe*: Debrief the activity, inviting curiosity, understanding, insight, and a sense of motivation. Ask, for example, what did you notice? Students might also share how they're feeling empowered by their growing ability to self-regulate – to be the boss of their senses, their actions, their emotions, their minds ... and to bounce back when life brings adversity. This would also be a good time to ask students what they'd like to learn next.

Take 5! Tools

Tool #1: The Basic Recipe



The Basic Recipe

In every situation, we're aiming for AWARENESS BEFORE ACTION. So, as we build our capacity for awareness, we're also growing our capacity for skillful action. And that's what self-regulation is all about.

So, don't act without awareness!

Tool #2 Your Hand: You've always got this tool with you



The Basic Tool

This handy tool is always there when you need it. You were born with this tool. And you have it with you, everywhere you go.

So, USE IT! Especially when you think you might LOSE IT!

Take 5! Hand Signals

Hand signals help younger children remember that they always have a practical self-reg tool at their disposal.

Here are the five self-reg hand signals:

1. **BE HERE:** Place one hand on top of your head, and hold it there as you become more aware of what's happening inside you, and around you. This will help you to bring your attention to the present, to really *be* here in this place, in this moment.

Note to teachers: This is also a great way for each student to signal that they're present and ready to take part in the group.

2. **BE WITH:** Hold your hands outstretched, reaching toward others (or holding the hand of people on either side).
3. **BE CALM:** Cross your hands over your heart. And, while you're there, take a moment to feel your chest rise and fall with your breath. Alternate: Place both hands on your tummy. And feel your tummy get bigger and smaller as you breathe deeply.
4. **BE STRONG:** With your hands open, fingers apart, raise your arms up and outward in a superhero pose. Alternate: with hands on hips, and knees bent just a little, stand firm, proud and purposeful.
5. **BE CHANGE:**

Younger kids: With your hands open and fingers relaxed, let both hands flow from one side to the other, as if you were making waves in the water or in the air. As your hands make that flowing movement, notice how you're creating a wave of energy (chi gong style). It's even better if you add a gentle sound effect, blowing air from your lips as you create the wave with your hands.

Older kids: With your hands open and fingers relaxed, let both hands flow from one side to the other, as if you were making waves in the water or in the air. As your hands make that flowing movement, notice how you're creating a wave of energy (chi gong style). Now try going in both directions ... left to right, then right to left. Once you've really got the feel of these movements, try hooking them up ... first left to right, then right to left, in a flowing figure eight pattern.



Hand Signals Help Students to Know, Grow, and Flow the Self-Reg Assets:

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.
 - Practicing hand signals offers a practical ‘hands-on’ way to learn the five self-reg assets, and to remember to use them.
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 in charge of my emotions, my thoughts, my behaviors.
 - This is a great way to start the day, for example in circle time. Helping everyone in the group to show that they’re in touch with their basic self-reg skills.
 - Hand signals can help to ease transitions from one activity to another.
 - Hand signals can also be used to bring a group back after an energetic activity.
3. **Flow the assets:** I can ‘be self-reg’ more often than not. I can feel the flow. And I help others grow their own handful of assets.
 - Practicing the hand signals, I’m growing my capacity to “be self-reg.” And when we practice in a group, everyone builds the same capacity.

Question for educators: What are some other ways that hand signals can be incorporated into different aspects of the school day?

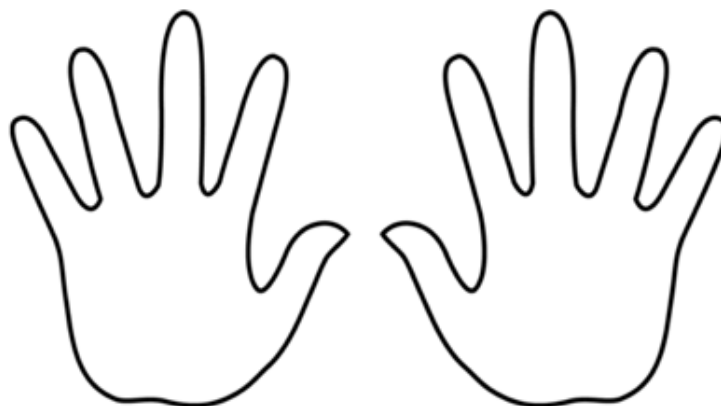


25 Hand Tools to Grow Awareness:

1. Five-Finger Check-In
2. Big Emotions: Keep It Below the Knuckles
3. Five-Finger Breathing
4. Self-Soothing Breath
5. Self-Calming Hold'Em
6. Hug and Hold
7. Holding the Heat
8. Hook-ups
9. Pros & Cons
10. On the Other Hand
11. Two Truths
12. Five Assumptions
13. When You Point Your Finger, There are Three Pointing Right Back at You
14. STOP!
15. Hit the Pause Button
16. Changing the Rhythm
17. Opposite Action
18. Willing Hands
19. Wise Mind
20. Flow Hands
21. Helping Hand
22. Five Things
23. Gratitude
24. Tapping It In
25. Give Me Five!



Sample Hand Tool: On the Other Hand



On the Other Hand

Try it!

On the Other Hand is a perspective-taking tool that helps us to see any situation in two ways: through our own eyes, and through the eyes of another. It's especially helpful when we're certain that we're right, and the other person is wrong.

Think about a situation in which you're utterly convinced that you're right. In your mind, picture that situation, and its only reasonable solution – yours. Then, using your mind again, imagine placing that picture in one of your hands.

Next, with your mind's eye, draw another picture. This time, your picture will portray the way someone else sees the situation. Now place that *different* picture in your other hand.

Now you're holding *two* perspectives in your hands. How does that feel? And what are you noticing? For example, does it help you to see that the other person has thoughts, feelings, hopes and beliefs that may be different than your own? And that those thoughts, feelings, hopes and beliefs are just as valid?

Having considered another way of seeing the situation, does *your* way still seem like the *only* way? Or is there *another* way ... one that can make sense for both of you?

Sample Asset-Building Activity: Russian Nesting Dolls

BE HERE
Mindful Awareness
Being Present in ME Space

Asset Building Block: In-Sight

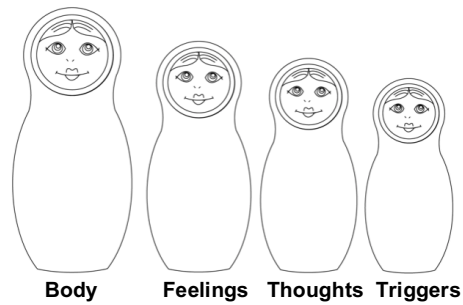
Making “me-maps”; seeing my thoughts & feelings; seeing my triggers & reactions.

Russian Nesting Dolls

In your mind’s eye, imagine a set of Russian nesting dolls ... you know, those little painted wooden dolls that, when you open one, you find another one just like it, only smaller. And when you open that one, there’s another. And another, until you come to the tiniest doll nestled inside. Now imagine that *you* are that Russian nesting doll and that each doll you find is really a part of you.

- First Doll: Let’s start with the largest doll, the one that holds all the others. As you hold this doll in your hand, imagine that what you see is a perfect replica of your “outside self.” This is the “you” that everyone can see – your face, your eyes, your hair, your hands ... and also your actions. How would you describe this doll?
- Second Doll: Now take a look at the next, smaller-sized doll. This version represents a part of your “inside self” – your feelings. You can’t see feelings with your eyes, but you can sure sense them in your body. How would you describe what you’re feeling right now? If you could give that feeling a color, what would it be?
- Third Doll: This doll represents yet another part of your “inside self” – your thoughts. Imagine a thought bubble coming from this doll ... what thoughts are running through your mind? How are these thoughts connected to your feelings?
- Fourth Doll: This doll helps you to notice the inside “triggers” that can prompt big emotions or negative behaviors. When you feel triggered, it means that something is bugging you, or you feel bad about something. A trigger might be something that someone said that made you mad or sad. Or it might be something that makes you feel ashamed. When that happens, you might be tempted to react with big emotions or unexpected behaviors. But, when you can notice that you’re feeling a trigger, and understand what’s happening inside, you’re less likely to act without thinking. Or to behave in ways that you’ll later regret. Oops.

Note to teachers: Explain to students that each one of these dolls is a part of you - your body, your feelings, your thoughts ... even the ways that you get triggered. Each experience gives you important information about yourself, and increases your ability to respond positively in any situation. With younger children, it may help to offer a worksheet that they can color and reflect on those inner aspects of themselves: actions, feelings, thoughts, & triggers. And how each forms part of an interconnected whole: you.



Sample Asset-Building Activity: Seeing Me Seeing You

BE WITH
Interpersonal Effectiveness
Being Together in WE Space

Asset Building Block: Flexible Thinking

Others might see things differently.

Seeing Me Seeing You

Perspective-taking is the ability of one person to become aware of, and take into account, another person's experience. This includes imagining their point of view, their preferences, their intentions, and their motives for acting in a particular way.

Perspective-taking is an important inner capacity. It's what lies at the heart of our assumptions, our judgements, and our ability to see things from more than one vantage point. It's also at the heart of our capacity for empathy.

Many children find it difficult to take the perspective of another person. Even more challenging is to imagine that the other person is also developing a perspective of you. And that perspective will influence how they think about you.

- Sit students in pairs. Explain that this activity is an opportunity to imagine the inner world of another person. And to imagine how that person might be imagining your inner experiences.
- Next, pose a question. Each student will respond to their partner in turn, ideally with several different responses to each question. For example, if asked: what would you think about me if I bumped into you in the hallway, I might respond in several different ways:
 - "You were running and not looking where you're going."
 - "You were mad at me, and wanted to give me a shove."
 - "You were thinking about a problem at home, and were distracted."
 - "You were trying to avoid bumping into Ava, and bumped into me instead."

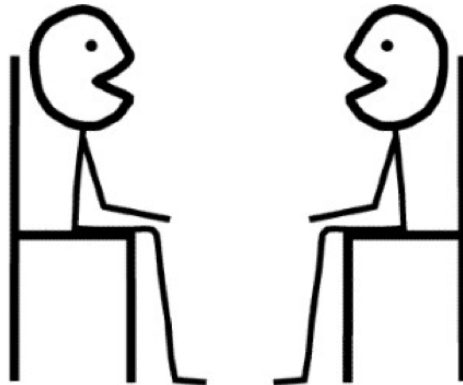
Providing a number of different responses gives each student the opportunity to explore the situation from several different perspectives, and to consider the "inside" view of "outside" events.

- Here are some questions to get started:
 - What would you think about me if ... I started eating an apple in the middle of a class lesson?

- What would you think about me if ... I bumped into you in the hallway?
- What would you think about me if ... I turned my back to you?
- What would you think about me if ... I started frowning as you were talking?
- What would you think about me if ... I started crying in the middle of recess?
- What would you think about me if ... you asked me a question and I yelled: Stop bugging me!
- What would you think about me if ... I ask you a question and you say: It's none of your business!

When each pair of students has responded to a few questions, bring the class together to examine their experience. How did it feel to be thinking about someone else's inner world? What was it like to have them think about your inner world? What does this tell you about your inner dialogue ... your thoughts, assumptions or judgements? Does it help you to feel more compassion for another person?

This is a great way to have students think about the “inside story” of behavior – their own behavior, and the behavior of others. This is an activity that can be repeated many times during the school year.



Sample Asset-Building Activity: Paper Chains

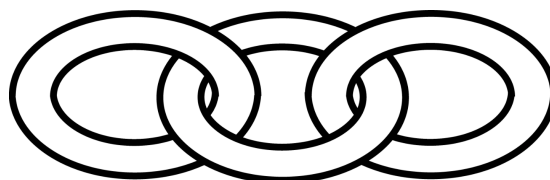
BE CALM
Emotion Regulation
Senses in Sync

Asset Building Block: Standing on the Moon

Does the problem look different if I'm seeing from a distance ... like standing on the moon?

The Activity: Paper Chains

- This activity helps a child to see patterns in themselves and their behaviors, and in their experiences with others. It also helps them to identify the sequence of events that led to an upset, and to break down the moment-to-moment sequence of emotional trigger and reaction ... and even to imagine a different, less triggered, response. And it helps them to create linkages between what happened, and how they feel about what happened.
- Using strips of construction paper, have children make paper chains. Make sure they have at least five links on their chain.
- Now ask students to think of a time they got angry. Starting at the *end* of your chain, tell us how you expressed that anger. Then, going backwards, tell us what happened before that? And before that? How are these experiences connected? How did one experience lead to the next, and the next? How does this help you to think about what you might do differently next time?
- The Paper Chain activity is a great way to explore other emotions as well: feeling sad, for example, or ashamed, excited, or embarrassed. It helps children to become aware of events or experiences that can trigger big emotions, and how those prior experiences can influence their actions.
- This is a good group activity. But you can also keep a chain on hand, and use it when you want to defuse a difficult situation involving one or two individuals.



Sample Asset-Building Activity: Bad News / Good News

BE STRONG
Resilience & Thriving ...
Even When Life Gets Tough.

Asset Building Block: Lemonade Thinking
Seeing the opportunity within the problem.

Bad News / Good News

Have students sit in a circle and play the Bad News / Good News game. The objective is to find an opportunity or potential in any problem ... and to see how problem and potential are interconnected.

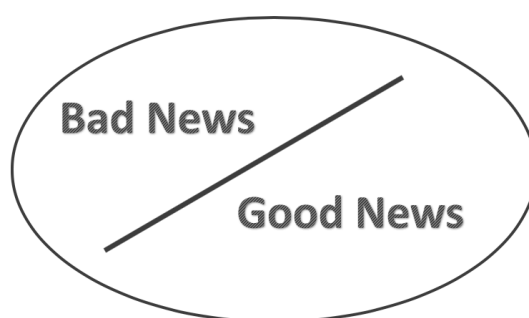
Here's an example:

- One student starts off the round with: "The bad news is ... I'm coming down with a cold."
- The student next to him says: "The good news is ... you get to stay home for a day and read comics."
- The next student says: "The bad news is ... you will miss tomorrow's trip to the zoo."
- The next student responds: "The good news is ... you won't fall into the monkey pit."

And so on. You get the idea. This activity can be as creative and as silly as kids are inspired to make it. And if the banter slows down or stops, you can start them off with another bad news cue. Prompts might include: it's raining, the party is cancelled, my dad burned dinner, we lost our soccer game ... etc.

You might also point out that what is bad news for one person might actually seem like good news to another person. It's often just a matter of perspective.

Once students get the hang of this process by playing the game a few times, it's easy to integrate this practice into everyday classroom activity.



Sample Asset-Building Activity: Instead I

Asset Building Block:

Seeing My Resistance to Change

How do I sometimes get stuck in old habits, even when I know a change is needed?

BE CHANGE

Connectedness & Contribution

***Making Change that
Makes a Difference***

Instead I

Change is part of life. It's something we all experience. But sometimes we resist change. And we hang on to our old habits.

When you notice signs of resistance, you can stop and take a breath. Pay attention to your first impulse, and try something different instead.

This activity helps children identify their habitual responses, and then choose a different response – a response that creates less resistance, and more flow.

In this activity, you will share a short scenario with students, followed by a typical, habitual response. Then, introducing the sentence stem “Instead I ...”, invite them to brainstorm other responses. Students can do this individually, using a sheet of paper. Alternately, they can brainstorm as a group. Or try a little of both. For example:

- My parents want me to try a new vegetable. I don't like vegetables and, as usual, I'm tempted to say “no!” Instead I ...
- There's a new kid in my class. The other kids are teasing him. I want the other kids to like me so I'm tempted to tease him too. Instead I ...
- I'm on the playground and no one asks me to play with them. I want to hide in a corner. Instead I ...
- My friend won't share his new bike. I'm so mad I feel like pushing him. Instead I ...
- My sister said something mean to me. I want to say something mean right back to her. Instead I ...
- My parents told me that we're moving to a new house, and I'll be going to a new school. I'm feel so anxious about the move, I want to crawl into bed and stay there all day. Instead I ...

I'm tempted to ...

Instead I ...

Growing Self-Regulation Capacities: Getting Started

Integrating Self-Reg Asset-Building into Everyday Classroom Activities

The examples in the following section are more fitting for younger kids. But, for students of all ages, the principle is the same: Everyday activities are an opportunity for building self-reg assets. And every moment is a potential teachable moment.

- **Inside/Out Art:** Exploring and expressing inner experiences through art activities, encouraging creative use of color, shape, texture ... even scent when scented markers are available. And don't forget that artwork can portray thoughts and feelings as well as things or events. Encourage kids to interpret their own artwork subjectively. For example, instead of asking "What is it?" you might say: "Tell me about your picture." And, probing a little further perhaps, "tell me how your picture makes you feel."
- **Games:**
 - BE HERE: Games that explore sensory awareness (e.g. body movement vs. stillness); games that explore thoughts, feelings, reactions, etc.
 - BE WITH: Games that give a felt sense of self- and other, build trust, express affection, etc.
 - BE CALM: Games that help me connect my experiences to my emotions; games that help me see from different perspectives, etc.
 - BE STRONG: Games that create awareness of my own personal space, and the personal space of others; games that help me consider what's true, and what's not true in different situations, etc.
 - BE CHANGE: Games that involve change: for example, everyone takes a turn initiating and directing change.
- **Imaginative Play** – During creative play time, encourage kids to notice body responses, thoughts & feelings ... and to imagine what another person might be experiencing.
- **Circle Time or Class Meeting:** Circle Time or Class Meeting is the perfect opportunity to gather students together to talk about the importance of each of the self-reg assets, and to explore some practical tools that help kids to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE. And even when you're doing something entirely different with the group, when attention wanders or behaviors become disruptive, spending a few moments with one or two of the Take 5! tools can be a quick way to bring the group back to its intended focus.

- **Show and Tell:** use show and tell time to share what helps students to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG & BE CHANGE. Share your own experiences as well.
- **Storytelling / Story reading** – Most stories for children will provide opportunities to explore at least one or two of the self-reg assets: mindful awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, resilience & thriving, and/or connectedness & contribution.
- **Music** – Music is a sensory experience; we engage with music using our ears, but the rest of our bodies as well. Music also engages the mind, and can help to inspire our imagination and creativity. And music is a wonderful way to participate with others in a shared creative activity. Explore with students: How do you respond when you listen to different types of music? Does some music make you feel grounded and present? Does some music calm you down when you're feeling anxious or upset? What do you notice when you sing with others? Is it different than when you just listen to music through your headset? How does music help you to change how you're feeling?
- **Science – Nature** – When kids are connected with their own inner nature, they're better able to connect with nature in the environment. And, paradoxically, connecting with the natural environment helps kids to discover aspects of themselves that they may not yet be familiar with. And there are many science-based activities that support this interactive inquiry – into self, and into nature. Science activities are an ideal way to explore how the self-reg assets show up in nature as well as in our personal lives ... especially examples of resilience and change.

Ages & Stages: Make the Activity Fit the Child

The following activity ideas are organized into two sections: Pre-, K & 1, and Grades 2-5. But kids learn and develop at different rates. And any of these activities can be adapted to be an appropriate fit for the kids in *your* educational or community setting. So, be creative.

With any of these activities, invite curiosity and the willingness to take a risk. Turn each “lesson” into an inquiry. Ask open-ended questions. Encourage creative thinking. Turn a question back to the child or the group, and encourage them to respond. Expect the unexpected, and allow the learning to head off in unplanned directions. And, most important, don't be afraid to say “I don't know.”

Sample Lesson Plan

The BE HERE Asset

Learning Objective:

Students will learn about mindful awareness ... the capacity to be present in 'ME space.'

Action Learning:

- Choose several activities that help children to become more mindfully aware.
- Try some of the activity ideas in this Starter Kit, or in other resources that you currently use.
- Invite students to create or model some of their own ideas for strengthening this self-reg asset.

3 Step Process:

Purpose:

Remind students that the purpose of each activity is to strengthen their capacity to be fully present: focused, centered and grounded. Explain that being present means being aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and actions, *and* to notice what's happening around us. It means noticing when we're becoming distracted, and bringing our attention back to the present moment.

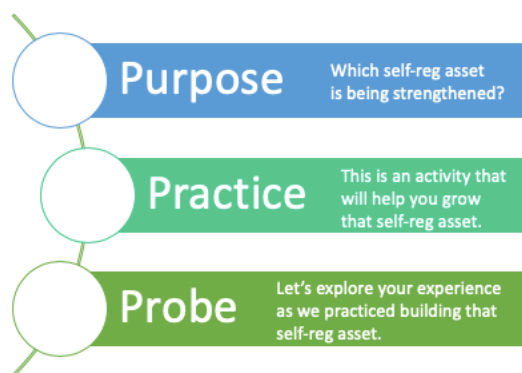
Practice:

Introduce the activity with clear instructions. Make it fun.

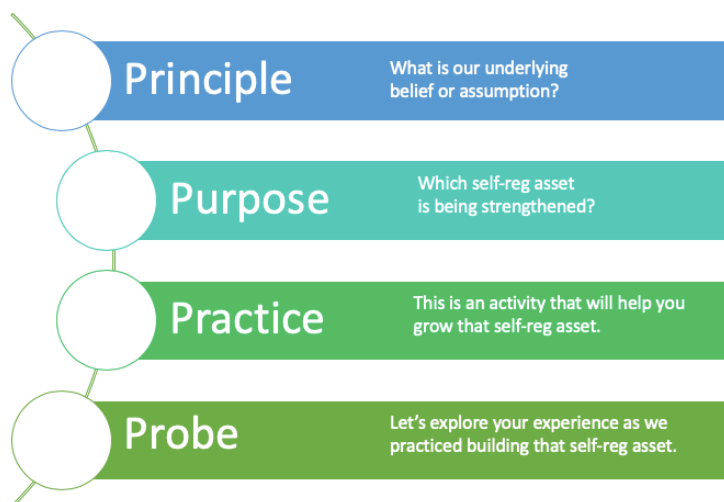
Probe:

Discussion with students might include:

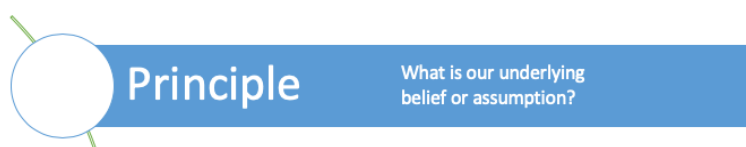
- When is it easy for you to BE HERE?
- When is it difficult for you to BE HERE?
- What might go wrong when you're not able to BE HERE? How are other people affected?
- What helps you to become more present, more mindfully aware?
- How do you remind yourself to BE HERE?



Five Developmental Principles that Shape Take 5! Practices



Educators know how important it is to take a principled approach to practice. So, to assist with mindful planning and preparation as you introduce Take 5! to your students, let's add one more "P" – Principle. Very simply, a principle describes the beliefs and assumptions behind each practice.



Take 5! places emphasis on five foundational principles that inform thinking and practice. Each principle reflects assumptions & beliefs about growing the capacity for self-regulation.

Metaphorically, these principles act as developmental ‘leavening agents’; it’s what helps the cake to rise.



- **Awareness:**

Awareness is key to self-regulation: self-, other- and context-awareness.

Put simply, self-regulation is the ability to monitor and modify my experiences, including my energy, emotions, focus & attention, and my interactions with others. To monitor my experiences, I need to be aware. And to modify my experience, I must take action. Self-regulation, then, is a process that integrates awareness and action. Both are needed. But, really, self-reg always begins with awareness. And awareness is the work of the mind.

Take 5! strengthens students’ capacity for awareness in key areas, including: thoughts, emotions, perspectives, assumptions, intentions, movements & actions, five senses and gut sense, as well as context-awareness: how the social and cultural surround shapes students’ experience ... and how students can influence the social and cultural surround.

- **Perspective-Taking**

Perspective describes what we see, and how we see it. Perspective-taking is the process by which we become aware of, and take into account, another person’s experience; it enables us to consider a point of view that is different from our own. And, it’s a way of seeing our own seeing – the ways we observe and make meaning of our experiences and the world around us have a big impact on our actions.

Perspective-taking is an important inner capacity. It’s what lies at the heart of our assumptions, our judgements, and our ability to see things from more than one vantage point. It’s also at the heart of our capacity for empathy.

Perspective-taking capacities grow and develop as kids grow and develop. This is important because: “What I can see, I can act on. And what I can act on, I can change.”

▪ ***Flexible Thinking / Flex/Flow Thinking:***

From the early years onwards, Take 5! asset-building activities promote developmental complexification of cognitive capacities, in age- and stage-appropriate ways ... first growing capacity for Flexible Thinking and, when that has been mastered, opening the door to Flex / Flow Thinking.

Flexible thinking is the opposite of stuck thinking; it's an important first step in creating minds that can stretch and grow beyond a single perspective: black and white, right or wrong thinking. Flexible thinking is an important foundation for a Growth Mindset.

As kids mature, Flex/Flow Thinking capacities reflect another important developmental leap. Markers of this perspectival capacity include:

- Change is constant
- Everything has its opposite
- Yes / And Thinking
- Finding hidden potential in the problem

For example, with flex/flow thinking capacities, I'm comfortable with complexity in people, and in systems. I'm even comfortable with paradox: two things, seemingly opposite, can be equally true. I can see more than one perspective. And I can see more than one option for action. I can see the problem, but I'm also curious about the seeds of potential in that problem. I can be flexible with myself, and with others.

▪ ***Distress Tolerance:***

Distress tolerance is a self-regulation capacity that *everyone* needs. It's especially important for those of us who have experienced adversity and trauma in our lives.

Everyone experiences distress from time to time, during times of crisis, for example, or in the ups and downs of everyday life. But we can learn to accept distress as part of life, and not allow our thoughts and feelings to run the show. And, even when triggered, we're less likely to activate the tendency toward 'fight or flight' reactions.

Growing my capacity for distress tolerance, I can learn to say that "distress is part of life, and I accept it." I can stay present to difficult experiences and emotions, even when I'm feeling uncomfortable. I can soothe myself when I'm feeling triggered. I can notice my impulse, and then do the opposite. And I can go with the flow.

Distress tolerance is a core capacity for resilience. Distress tolerance capacities support kids (and adults) to create more flexibility & flow in their lives, and to bounce back from adversity.

▪ **Integration:**

Take 5! is designed as an integrative approach to self-regulation and social-emotional learning. To explore this further, here is an excerpt from Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building: A Practical Primer ...

Guess What?

Self-Regulation is Self-Integration

Anyone seriously exploring the topic of self-regulation will soon encounter the work of Dan Siegel. A neuroscientist and psychiatrist, Siegel is an internationally renowned resource who has been instrumental in expanding self-regulation thinking and practice in diverse settings, including education, neuroscience, mental health services, and within the family.

For Siegel, integration involves “linking differentiated parts into a functional whole.”³ And integration is the key to self-regulation; it’s the “underlying mechanism.”⁴ In fact, he says, integration is “the principle underlying health at all levels of our experience, from the microcosm of our inner world to our interpersonal relationships and life in our communities.”⁵

For example, integration of mind and body is the key to personal health and well-being. And integration between two people is key to healthy relationships. As Siegel summarizes, health is “a state of optimal regulation and adaptive functioning of body, mind, and relationships.

Good health emerges from integration.”⁶ So does our capacity for self-regulation.

³ Siegel, Daniel J. (2012). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. (2nd edition) New York: The Guilford Press.

⁴ Siegel, Daniel J. (2012). *Pocket guide to interpersonal neurobiology: An integrative handbook of the mind*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

⁵ Siegel, Daniel J. (2011). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. New York: Bantam Books.

⁶ Siegel, Daniel J. (2012). *Pocket guide to interpersonal neurobiology: An integrative handbook of the mind*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

Integrated Self-Reg: Linking *All* of the Parts

So, integration involves the “linkage of different elements.”⁷ Here are some examples of self-reg linkages, or integration, that occur within ourselves and with others:

- Right *and* left hemispheres of the brain
- Reptilian brainstem, limbic system, *and* neocortex
- Neural systems within the brain
- Mind *and* body (and the body includes the brain, of course ...)
- Body sensations *and* emotional awareness
- Thoughts *and* emotions
- Personal needs *and* relationship needs.
- My inner world *and* your inner world
- Safety & security needs *and* self-actualization needs
- My preferred outcome *and* other people’s expectations
- Etc.

Rather than viewing ourselves as a collection of separate parts, then, we see how those parts connect to form a more complex whole, a more integrated system – within us, and between us.

When our bodies are not integrated, our health suffers. When our minds are not integrated, our health also suffers. In bodies and in minds, a lack of integration equates with dysregulation. The same is true in our relationships.

Integration is not only good for our health, it’s the very process by which healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy relationships are generated. As Siegel notes, “well-being emerges when we create connections in our lives” – especially when we learn to use the power of the mind to “help the brain achieve and maintain integration.”⁸ Further, he says, it is integration that

enables us to be flexible and free; the lack of such connections promotes a life that is either rigid or chaotic, stuck and dull on the one hand or explosive and unpredictable on the other. With the connecting freedom of integration comes a sense of vitality and the ease of well-being. Without integration we can become imprisoned in behavioral ruts – anxiety and depression, greed, obsession, and addiction.⁹

⁷ Ibid.

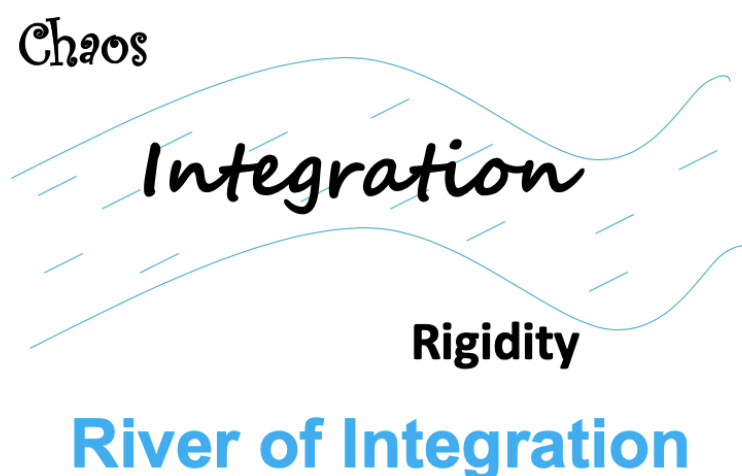
⁸ Siegel, Daniel J. (2011). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. New York: Bantam Books.

⁹ Ibid.

In fact, says Siegel, all of the ‘diagnoses’ in the DSM¹⁰ can be categorized in two ways: chaos or rigidity.¹¹ Each is a lack of integration. Conversely, health is synonymous with integration, with wholeness.¹²

As Siegel explains, it’s integration that leads to optimal regulation.¹³

Siegel explains that self-regulation is the process by which we influence the flow of energy and information that makes up our moment-to-moment reality, within our minds and throughout our brain/body system. Mind and brain work together, within ourselves, and in relationship with others.



¹⁰ The DSM, or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, is a reference resource published by the American Psychiatric Association, and used by clinicians, researchers, policy makers and others to identify mental disorders and determine appropriate responses to presenting symptoms.

¹¹ Siegel suggests that on the river bank labeled chaos, for example, we’ll find symptoms that correlate with mental health conditions such as anxiety, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, addiction, borderline personality disorder, and bi-polar disorder. On the bank labeled rigidity, we’ll find symptoms associated with such diverse diagnoses as depression, anger, and oppositional defiance disorder, even those associated with autism spectrum disorder.

¹² The word ‘health’ comes from the old English root, ‘haelan,’ which means ‘whole.’

¹³ Siegel, Daniel J. (2012.) *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are.* (2nd edition) New York: The Guilford Press.

Principles into Practice

Working with Awareness – self, other, context

Elementary School:

- Mindful Movements
- Animals that Know How to Be Present
- Listening Walk
- Mind Your Senses
- Body Mapping
- Personal Space Camp
- Personal Space Freeze
- Faces Have Feelings
- The Way You Walk
- Paper Chains
- Yes I Can!
- Liking Myself as Much as I Like You
- Playing With Opposites
- Freeze!
- Rhythm Band
- Little Sprouts
- Thought Watching
- Grounding Myself
- Inside Sense
- Russian Nesting Dolls
- The Many Parts of Me
- Cultivating Curiosity
- Seeing Me Seeing You
- Mindsight Thought Bubbles
- Saying Yes, Saying No
- Is It Helpful?
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
- Anchor Breath
- The View from the Moon
- Stop! I'm the Boss
- Go with the Flow
- Truth Detectives
- Wise One
- Be the Mountain
- Transitions
- What If I ... / What If We ...?
- My Personal Change Challenge
- Instead I



Middle School:

- Take a Selfie
- Breath Awareness
- Thought Awareness
- Trusting My Inner Compass
- 'Being Myself' Journal
- Validating Me, Validating You
- Accepting Reality: "It is what it is ..."
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Checklist
- A Person Just Like Me
- What's Up With You? What's Up With Me?
- Protection Circle
- Mindful Social Media
- More than Words
- Breathing Meditation
- Freezing the Moment
- Acting Opposite to My Urges
- Rainbow Thinking
- Why Oh Why Oh Why Oh Why? Because, Because, Because.
- Wise Mind Fishbowl
- Turning the Mind
- Yes / And Improv
- Giving Wishes Wings
- What If I ...?
- Five Whys
- Chain of Events
- I Wonder Why I Did That?

Hand Tools:

- Five Finger Check-In
- Big Emotions: Keep It Below the Knuckles
- Five Finger Breathing
- Self-Soothing Breath
- Pros / Cons
- On the Other Hand
- Two Truths
- Five Assumptions
- When You Point Your Finger ...
- Stop!
- Hit the Pause Button
- Changing the Rhythm
- Opposite Action
- Willing Hands
- Wise Mind
- Flow Hands
- Helping Hand
- Five Things
- Gratitude
- Give Me Five!



Working with Perspective-Taking

Elementary School:

- Storytime: Seeing Inside
- Personal Space Camp
- Paper Chains
- Yes I Can!
- Playing With Opposites
- Want To! Got To! (Or Do I?)
- Little Sprouts
- Responsibility Flags
- Thought Watching
- Inside Sense
- Russian Nesting Dolls
- The Many Parts of Me
- Cultivating Curiosity
- Seeing Me Seeing You
- Mindsight Thought Bubbles
- Saying Yes, Saying No
- Is It Helpful?
- The View from the Moon
- Stop! I'm the Boss
- Go with the Flow
- Truth Detectives
- Good News / Bad News
- Wise One
- Be the Mountain
- Wishes for the World
- Transitions
- What If I ... / What If We ...?
- My Personal Change Challenge
- Instead I

Middle School:

- Take a Selfie
- Thought Awareness
- Trusting My Inner Compass
- "Being Myself" Journal
- Validating Me, Validating You
- Accepting Reality: "It is what it is ..."
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Checklist
- A Person Just Like Me
- What's Up With You? What's Up With Me?
- Mindful Social Media
- More than Words
- Freezing the Moment
- Acting Opposite to My Urges
- Rainbow Thinking
- Why, Oh Why, Oh Why, Oh Why? Because, Because, Because.
- Wise Mind Fishbowl
- Turning the Mind
- Yes/And Improv
- Wishes for the World
- Five Why's

Hand Tools:

- Pros/Cons
- On the Other Hand
- Two Truths
- Five Assumptions
- When You Point Your Finger
- Opposite Action
- Wise Mind
- Helping Hand
- Five Things
- Gratitude
- Give Me Five!
- Holding the Heat

Working with Flex/Flow Thinking

Elementary School:

- Emotions in Sync
- Playing with Patterns
- Paper Chains
- Yes I Can!
- Bounce Back
- Thought Watching
- Inside Sense
- Russian Nesting Dolls
- The Many Parts of Me
- Cultivating Curiosity
- Seeing Me Seeing You
- Mindsight Thought Bubbles
- Saying Yes, Saying No
- Is It Helpful?
- The View from the Moon
- Go with the Flow
- Truth Detectives
- Good News / Bad News
- Wise One
- Be the Mountain
- Wishes for the World
- Transitions
- What If I ... / What If We ...?
- My Personal Change Challenge
- Instead I

Middle School:

- Thought Awareness
- Trusting My Inner Compass
- “Being Myself” Journal
- Accepting Reality: “It is what it is ...”
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Checklist
- A Person Just Like Me
- What’s Up with You? What’s Up with Me?
- Mindful Social Media
- More Than Words
- Freezing the Moment
- Acting Opposite to My Urges
- Rainbow Thinking
- Why, Oh Why, Oh Why, Oh Why? Because, Because, Because
- Wise Mind Fishbowl
- Turning the Mind
- Yes / And Improv
- Wishes for the World + Giving Wishes Wings
- What If I ... ? + Five Whys
- Chain of Events
- I Wonder Why I Did That?

Hand Tools:

- Hook-Ups
- Changing the Rhythm
- Willing Hands
- Wise Mind
- Flow Hands
- Helping Hand
- Five Things
- Gratitude
- Tapping It In
- Give Me Five!

Working with Distress Tolerance

Elementary School:

- Thought Watching
- Grounding Myself
- The Inside Sense
- Russian Nesting Dolls
- The Many Parts of Me
- Cultivating Curiosity
- Seeing Me Seeing You
- Mindsight Thought Bubbles
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
- Anchor Breath
- The View from the Moon
- Stop! I'm the Boss
- Go with the Flow
- Truth Detectives
- Make a Face
- Truth Detectives
- Bad News / Good News
- Wise One
- Be the Mountain
- Transitions
- Instead I

Middle School:

- Take a Selfie
- Breath Awareness + Thought Awareness
- Trusting My Inner Compass
- "Being Myself" Journal
- Validating Me, Validating You
- Accepting Reality: "It is what it is ..."
- A Person Just Like Me
- What's Up with You? What's Up with Me?
- Protection Circle
- Breathing Meditation
- Freezing the Moment
- Acting Opposite to My Urges
- Rainbow Thinking
- Why, Oh Why, Oh Why, Oh Why? Because, Because, Because
- Wise Mind Fishbowl
- Five Whys
- Turning the Mind
- Chain of Events

Hand Tools: The following Hand Tools can be helpful when you're in the heat of the moment.

- STOP!
- Five-Finger Breathing
- Self-Soothing Breath
- Self-Calming Hold'Em
- Hug and Hold
- Hook-ups
- Pro's & Cons
- Changing the Rhythm

Then, when the moment is a little calmer, these Hand Tools can help to shift the energy, re-assess the situation, and re-focus the mind:

- 5 Finger Check-In
- Big Emotions: Keep It Below the Knuckles
- Holding the Heat
- On the Other Hand
- Two Truths
- Five Assumptions
- Hit the Pause Button!
- Opposite Action
- Willing Hands & Half-Smile
- Wise Mind
- Flow Hands
- Gratitude

Working with Integration

Elementary School:

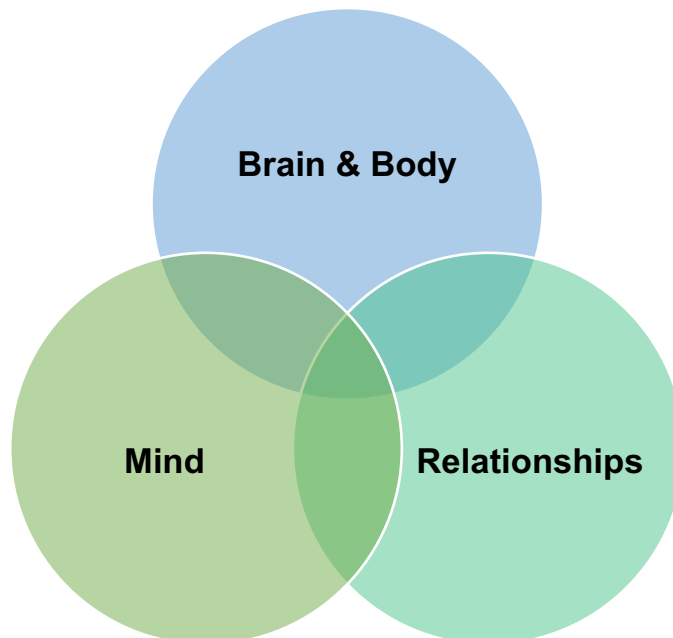
- Yes I Can!
- Playing With Opposites
- Cross the Line
- Thought Watching
- Grounding Myself
- Inside Sense
- Russian Nesting Dolls
- The Many Parts of Me
- Cultivating Curiosity
- Seeing Me Seeing You
- Mindsight Thought Bubbles
- Saying Yes, Saying No
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
- Anchor Breath
- The View from the Moon
- Stop! I'm the Boss
- Go with the Flow
- Truth Detectives
- Good News / Bad News
- Wise One
- Be the Mountain
- Wishes for the World
- Transitions
- What If I ... / What If We ...?
- My Personal Change Challenge
- Instead I

Middle School:

- Take a Selfie
- Breath Awareness + Thought Awareness
- Trusting My Inner Compass
- "Being Myself" Journal
- Validating Me, Validating You
- Accepting Reality: "It is what it is ..."
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Checklist
- A Person Just Like Me
- What's Up with You? What's Up with Me?
- Protection Circle
- Mindful Social Media
- More than Words
- Breathing Meditation
- Freezing the Moment
- Acting Opposite to My Urges
- Building Mastery: Practice, Practice, Practice
- Distress Tolerance Activities
- Rainbow Thinking
- Why, Oh Why, Oh Why, Oh Why? Because, Because, Because
- Wise Mind Fishbowl
- Turning the Mind
- Yes / And Improv
- Wishes for the World + Giving Wishes Wings
- Five Why's
- Chain of Events
- I Wonder Why I Did That?

Hand Tools:

- Five Finger Breathing
- Self-Soothing Breath
- Self-Calming Hold'Em
- Hug and Hold
- Holding the Heat
- Hook-ups
- Pros / Cons
- Flow Hands
- Willing Hands
- Flow Hands
- Helping Hand
- Five Things
- Gratitude
- Tapping It In
- Give Me Five!



The Take 5! Self-Reg Asset-Building Framework

Take 5! is a helpful resource for educators working with children of all ages. The Take 5! framework grows as children grow. By age seven or so, children can often bring a higher level of complexity to the ways they relate to themselves, to others, and to the challenges that life brings.

The following chart identifies some of the building blocks that grow our capacity to BE HERE, BE WITH, BE CALM, BE STRONG, and BE CHANGE. The Take 5! Starter Kit provides activity ideas that address the self-reg capacities listed in each column.

For example, in the BE HERE section, you'll find a sample activity that addresses each of the skill areas that build capacity for mindful awareness, or "being present in me space." And so on.

Take 5! Self-Reg Assets for Younger Kids

BE HERE	BE WITH	BE CALM	BE STRONG	BE CHANGE
Mindful Awareness: <i>Being Present in ME Space</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness – Me: 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. 	Interpersonal Effectiveness: <i>Being Together in WE Space</i> <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. 	Emotion Regulation <i>Senses in Sync</i> <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. 	Resilience & Thriving ... <i>Even When Life Gets Tough</i> <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 and my feeling mind. Rocking Resilience: I can resist urges, rebalance my thoughts & emotions, bounce back from adversity. 	Connectedness & Contribution <i>Making Change that Makes a Difference</i> <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?



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SELF-REG ASSET-BUILDING

TAKE 5!