



**Peace of Mind Community of Practice
January 10, 2018 4:15 to 5:30 pm
Peace Room, Lafayette Elementary**

It was wonderful to have over 20 educators join us for our third community of practice. After a welcome and mindful moment, participants introduced themselves, their connection to Peace of Mind, and their reason for coming. Our gathering included the Peace of Mind team - Linda, Jillian, Cheryl and Janine - as well as early childhood educators, classroom teachers, principals, counselors and parents, and others committed to bringing mindfulness to elementary school students and their families.

After a round of inspiring introductions, we broke into three group discussions: Early Childhood, Grades 1-5, and Parents. We've summarized the highlights of those conversations below, including what's going well, what challenges teachers have faced, and ideas, suggestions and questions.

We were so inspired by the conversations and ideas during this gathering! It sounds as if participants were too. Comments from participants on their exit surveys included:

- "This is great!"
- "I appreciated listening to the practical tools and resources that teachers are implementing to support POM in the classroom. Would like to have more KP resources and more possible networking and PD opportunities for teachers."
- " a total delight to learn about the gift of bringing mindfulness to students and parents alike. [Appreciated] the openness and invitation to learn and explore more ideas for children and parents."
- "So grateful for the work you are doing. I'd love to help spread the word and bring it on to middle and high schools!"
- [enjoyed] "hearing how everyone is using Peace of Mind in all the different age groups."
- [enjoyed] "sharing success stories."
- "Really like the curriculum"
- "Great to break into groups by area of focus. I appreciate the chance to meet colleagues working this way."
- "I would to learn more about:"parent piece; teacher training; using techniques with the youngest children."
- "This was terrific! Yay you guys!"
- "loved resource/use of curriculum share."
- "Would like more Visuals! How to implement kindness pals a bit better. "
- "I love the idea of creating an on-line resource where people can share ideas about lesson plans and how to teach various skills and concepts."
- "wonderful to hear from others about how they are using Peace of Mind."

Grades 1-5 Discussion Group

What's going well:

- Teachers generally agree that the curriculum is working well for their students and for them!
- Parents in one class love the curriculum and are always sending the teacher pictures of the kids meditating at home.
- One teacher especially likes Kindness Pals and uses that in many ways and appreciated all of the suggestions for extending it. She did secret kindness pals at holiday time and the kids loved that.
- Mindfulness seems to help students with special needs.
- Take 5 is something that one teacher is teaching to other teachers and seems to be a bridge to those who are a little put off by mindfulness until they see it in action like that.

Challenges:

If Peace of Mind is on a classroom master schedule for Friday, missing Fridays means missing classes. But it's possible to work PoM elements in during other days (Mindful Moments and Kindness Pals, for example).

Suggestions

- Would like to see more visuals in the book - anchor charts, examples of work, posters. (We're on it!)
- One teacher has made mindfulness journals for her students (Great idea!)
- Principals and teachers were very interested in being part of a team that spreads the news about Peace of Mind to colleagues, perhaps through a PD day in May. (We're on it! Love it!)
- There was a lot of support for creating a digital "pot" that teachers put lesson ideas, extensions and adaptations into to share with other Peace of Mind teachers. (Great idea!)

Early Childhood Discussion Group

What's going well

- Peace of Mind Early Childhood Curriculum is going well for all schools!
- Early Childhood students at one school are developing a common language and skill set, including getting into "Peace Pose."
- Two PreK teachers at one school have partnered with their two K teacher colleagues so that they each teach one lesson a month to all students, allowing the teachers to learn from each other.
- Puppet use is going well, the kids love them and the puppets have their own personalities.

Challenges

- One teacher talked about a challenging student who responds well to the lessons but then has poor behavior outside of Peace class. She'd like to see him carry over more skills into general life. (A: be patient; sometimes the change takes a few years!)
- Teachers from one school said the first few lessons felt slow and they were a bit worried it would be too slow, but now looking back it feels like everyone was adjusting and now they don't have that issue anymore.

Suggestions/Questions

- One teacher uses a collapsible giraffe at Temple Sinai (where you push the button on the bottom and it collapses and pops back up when you release) to show the kids the differences between mindful bodies and regular bodies. (Good idea!)
- One teacher would like more ideas on expanding Kindness Pals so kids can do more acts for each other. (Kindness Pal Workbooks on the way!)
- One teacher would like to know more about gestures and hand movements to help teach the lessons. (Jillian gave an example of what to do when a kid blurts out "I still hear it" when the bell is ringing. This could be a good subject for one of our upcoming training videos)

Parent Discussion Group

We are beginning work on a Parent Companion book and resources to support parents while their children take part in Peace of Mind Class. With this in mind, Cheryl asked parents what their questions they have, and what they would like to know more about. Parents' responses were so helpful.

Parents said they would like to know more about:

- What happens in class every week, and to know more about what practices they can do at home with their kids.
- Questions they can ask their kids at home related to Peace of Mind.
- The common language children are learning in Peace of Mind Class.
- The research behind what we are teaching, and resources to support mindfulness for parents.

How would parents like to receive this information?

- Parents said would find a companion book helpful, but would also like videos they could watch with their kids demonstrating the practices kids are learning in class.
- They liked the idea of a student journal that might include exercises for parents and students to do together at home.
- They would like it if these videos featured "regular parents", not mindfulness experts.
- They would also like audios to listen to in the car, at the gym, etc.

- Parent mindfulness evenings to learn how to practice mindfulness themselves

How could Peace of Mind skills help at home?

Parents are interested in learning the Peace of Mind practices that might help with

- Temper tantrums
- How to resolve conflicts
- What language to use to help children calm down

We are taking all of these ideas and suggestions into account as we develop our parents resources. If more thoughts arise, please don't hesitate to let us know:

teachpeaceofmind@gmail.com. Thank you!