

Research and Practice in a Real World Setting: Creating Making Mindfulness Matter (M3) - A concurrent Parent-Child Group to Build Resilience Within the Family

A UNIQUE COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP WORKING ACROSS SYSTEMS TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

“ Higher education institutions may be one of the largest, relatively untapped resources that our communities have”

Director, Office of Community Based Research, University of Victoria



Who we are



Dr. Karen Bax, Ph.D., C.Psych.

- Director, Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre
- Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University
- Adjunct Professor, Clinical Psychology, Western University

Western  Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre at Merrymount



Who we are

Sherin Hussien, Ph.D., MSW, RSW

- Program Director, Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre
- Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University
- Assistant Professor, Alexandria University, Egypt

Sarah Wells, BA, CTS

- Child and Parent Group Facilitator
- Trauma Specialist/ Play Therapy
- Adjunct Professor of Field Practice Education



Who we are

Melissa Read, BA(H), BEd

- MA Candidate School and Applied Child Psychology
- Research Assistant at Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre

Emilia Pacholec, BA(H)

- MA Candidate Counselling Psychology
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Western
Education

Who we are

Steering Committee and Rest of the Team:

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Consultation team at Merrymount




TEAM





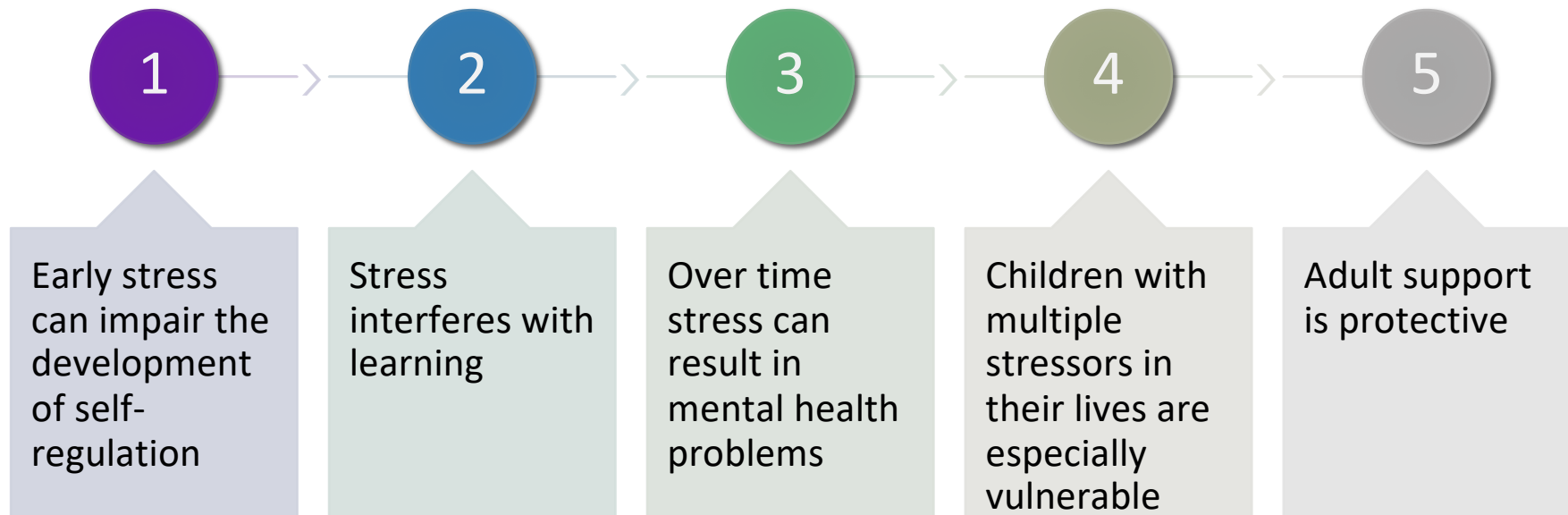
What we Hope to Share with you Today

- The co-creation of a family resilience program called Making Mindfulness Matter or M3
 - Why such a program is needed
 - The research being completed to evaluate the program
 - Preliminary results
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Setting the Stage

- One in five children in Ontario experience MH problems (Waddell et al., 2019)
- Caregivers and children perceive a greater need for MH services (Waddell et al., 2019)
- We've seen a 54% increase in youth seeking hospital MH services since 2006 (CMHO, 2016)
- Many children struggle to develop personal resilience (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016)
- Parental stress is associated with negative outcomes for children (Chaplan et al., 2018)
- Early adversity can negatively impact a child's development (Masten, 2011)
- The earlier prevention or intervention is offered- the greater the likelihood of a better outcome and the lower the cost to society (Silburn, Nutton & Moss, 2011)

Why a Program About Stress and Resiliency?



Making **M**indfulness **M**atter

M3

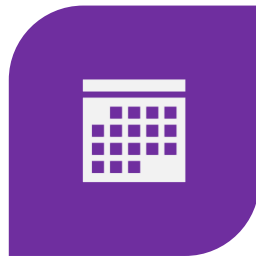
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The M3 Program



IS 8 WEEKS LONG



INCLUDES ONE 90 MINUTE
SESSION PER WEEK



CONCURRENT GROUPS
WITH PARENTS AND
CHILDREN JOINING
TOGETHER AT THE END OF
GROUP TO PRACTICE M3
SKILLS TOGETHER



What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?



- Self-awareness of one's emotions, strengths, and limitations
- Social awareness and taking the perspective of others
- Regulating feelings and behaviours
- Making good choices
- Relationship skills

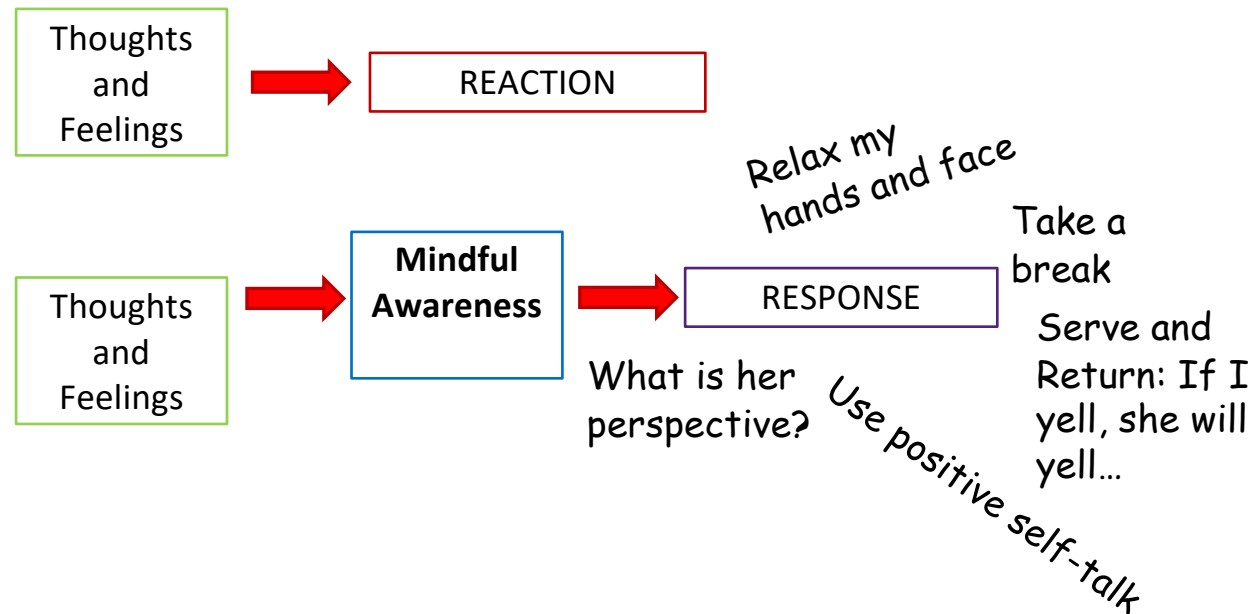


Mindful awareness is...

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT
MOMENT--

- To our thoughts
- To our feelings
- To our bodies
- To others and our surrounding environment

How are Mindful Awareness and SEL connected?



SEL and Mindful Awareness Research

- There is a well documented link between the development of SEL skills in children and a number of positive outcomes (Duralek et al., 2011)
- A recent meta-analysis of RCTs of the effects of mindfulness based interventions on cognition and MH in children found modest benefits (Dunning et al., 2019)
- Parenting-focused mindfulness interventions reduced stress and improved parenting behaviours (Chaplin et al., 2018)
- A pilot of a mindfulness based intervention for child welfare-involved families found reductions in parenting stress and coercive behaviours (Brown et al., 2018)



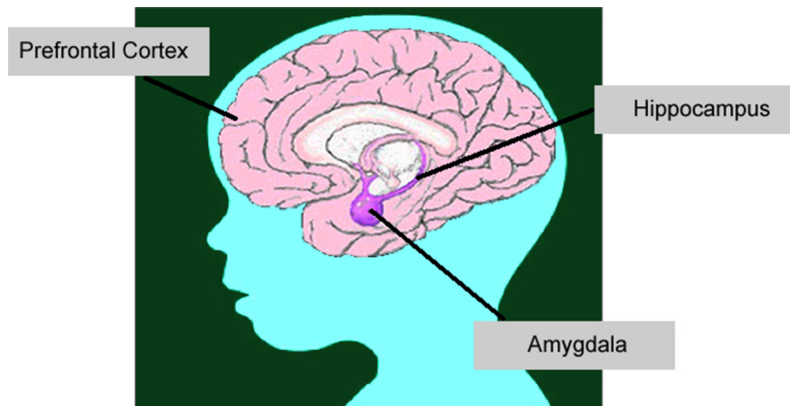


M3: Creating a Culture of Resilience in the Family

Offers a new approach to parenting in stressful situations.

Helps children build skills to manage their emotions and behaviours and to build caring relationships with those around them.

M3: Creating a Culture of Resilience in the Family



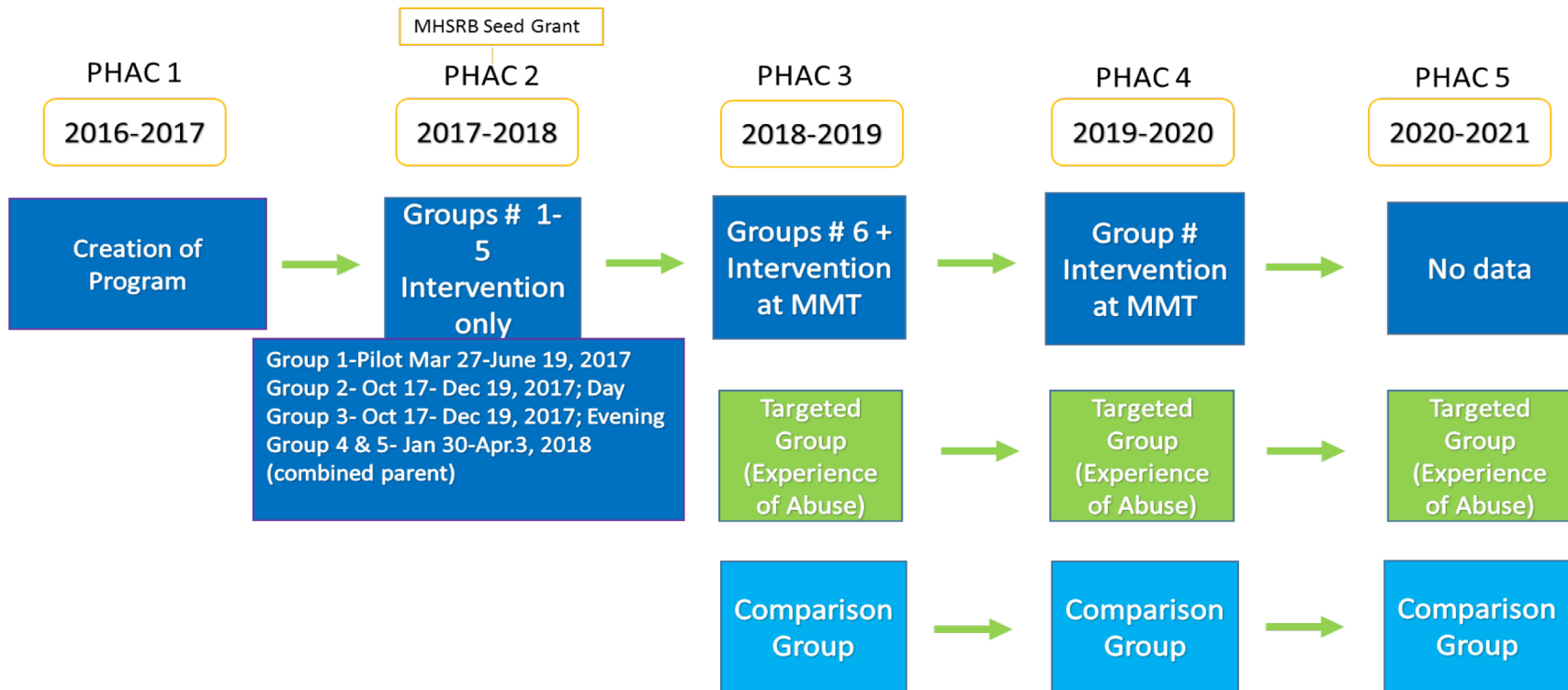
How our brains work under stress.

How we can pay better attention to our feelings, thoughts and behaviours through mindful awareness to make better decisions about how we respond.

Teaches positive ways to respond like perspective taking, using gratitude, kindness and positive thinking.

DESIGNING THE PROGRAM





M3 Research Participant Group Flow Chart



Creating the M3 Program

- Parent and child component
- Facilitation manual
- Full-day training
- Facilitation resources
- Family resource kit
- Family weekly resource cards



Brain Breaks

Purpose: Brain Breaks are often used to refocus our minds and calm our bodies so we can pay better attention to what we are going to do next (e.g. moving from one activity to another, getting ready to do homework).

Instructions:

1. Get comfortable → Sit down in a comfortable position, with your eyes closed.
2. Get ready → Take a few deep breaths to calm your mind and body.
3. Ring the chime → Bring your attention to the sound.
4. Focus your attention on the sound of the chime until you can no longer hear it. Raise your hand when you can no longer hear the chime, and ask your child to do the same.
5. End your brain break when both you, and your child have your hands raised.

Helpful Tips:



Don't worry if your mind wanders- that's what they do! Your only job during the Brain Break is to notice when your mind wanders off, and to gently try to bring your attention back to the sound of the chime. **Remember-** you aren't trying to control your brain, you are practicing noticing what is happening in your brain!

It's okay to start small! Building mindful awareness is like building a muscle by going to the gym- it gets easier with practice. Start with a short 10 second Brain Break, and once that gets easier, slowly increase your time by 5-10 seconds.





Perspective Taking

Purpose: We want to teach our children that there is more than one way to understand behaviour, or an event or situation. By practicing different scenarios and matching our feelings that are connected to these scenarios, we can help children understand that their peers may feel and behave differently than they do. This ability to consider a situation in multiple ways is the foundation for helping children accept the differences of others, and developing skills to get along with their peers (i.e. social skills, problem-solving skills).

Reading Books: Taking a Character's Perspective



Read one of your child's favourite stories, or one of the books from your MindUP take home kit with your child. As you read, have your child guess the emotions of each of the characters in the book. Ask your child what they would do if they were each character in the story.



Who Are You Hats

Bring out several hats (or other items of clothing such as scarves, costume pieces, etc.) and encourage your child to imagine the person/character who might wear this hat. What would their voice sound like? What would they wear? How would they do their work?

Animal Perspectives



Help your child take on the perspective of an animal, such as your household pet. Encourage your child to imagine what that animal might think and feel. What do you think makes it happy? How do you know what this animal likes? Why do you think it hides during a thunderstorm but likes to play in the snow?



FACILITATOR KITS



FAMILY KITS

EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

M3



Evaluating the M3 Program Curriculum



Feasibility

- Parent feedback questionnaires
- Facilitator feedback and focus group

Program content evaluation

- Parent feedback
- Child informal feedback
- Facilitator feedback





You can bounce back,
be flexible & flourish.



Evaluating the M3 Program Outcomes

- Parent stress and well-being
- Child self regulation
- Child resilience
- Child internalizing and externalizing behaviours

M3: The First 1.5 Years



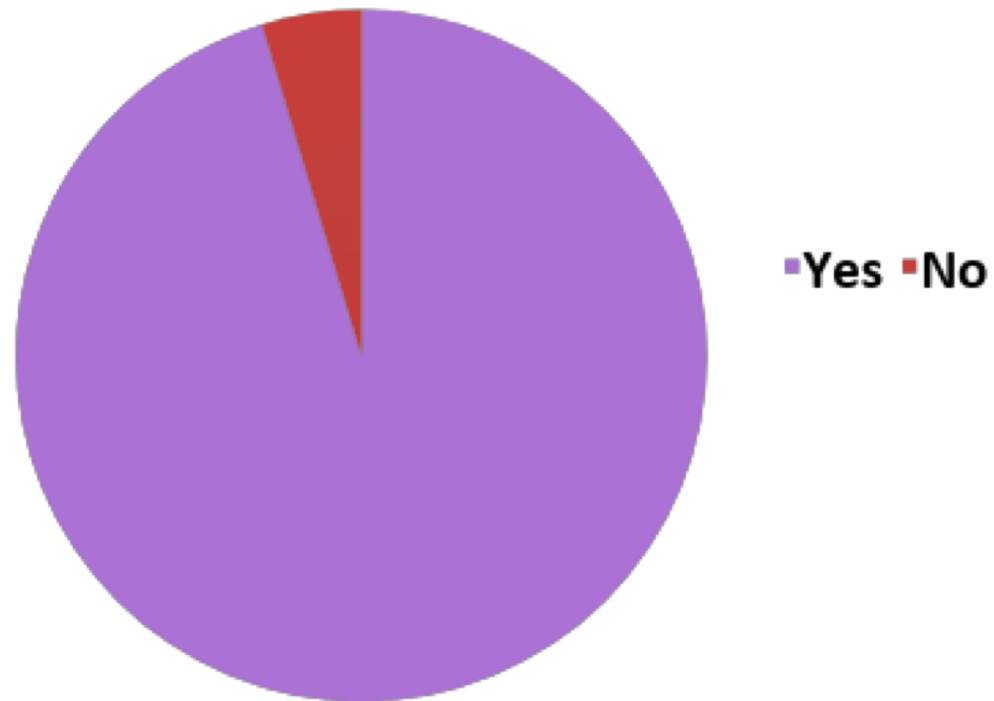
Did you or your child practice a M3 skill since our last session?



What situation led up to using the M3 skill?



Did you find using the M3 skills helpful?



Preliminary Evaluation: Practicing Skills

- Over time in the M3 program, parents reported increased levels of practice
 - For each week in the program, parents were twice as likely to report practicing M3 skills with their children
- The skills taught were equally practiced regardless of:
 - Gender
 - Child EF
 - Parental stress



What Parents are Saying

BREATHING BREAKS

- “I like the many breathing activities, gives us a variety of excellent visuals to go with it”

MINDFUL AWARENESS

- “Taking time to be in the moment with my child, appreciate him and enjoy the efforts we put in”

MINDFUL SENSING

- “Working with my son to do whole body listening to teach him to become more aware of his body and how it relates to his emotions and be more mindful”

BRAINS UNDER STRESS

- “The three parts of the brains. Helps me understand why he is responding the way he is and how my response is playing a role

PERSPECTIVE TAKING

- “Being more aware of the child’s perspective. Recognizing that what my seem trivial or unimportant to you may be very important to the child”

CHOOSING OPTIMISM AND APPRECIATING HAPPY EXPERIENCES

- “Learning to change my mindset from being more pessimistic to optimistic by changing my own self-talk and encouraging positive self-talk daily with my kids”

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

- “Learning more gratitude strategies, because it will help me and my children be happier people”



I really enjoyed being a part of this group and have learned how to be a parent again"

"I never want this class to end"

"Please say thank you, the group and everyone was God sent. I am so thankful. This group did so much for my family and we are doing much better"



Questions?

We would love to hear
from you

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