The Mindsight Approach
to Social-Emotional Wellness:
Caregiving from the Inside Out

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Mindsight Origins

• Based on work by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Harvard-trained physician, Mindsight has enormous implications for how we care for young children.
  • Based on Dr. Dan Siegel’s books:
    Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation
    Parenting From the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive (co-authored with Mary Hartzell)

What is the Brain?
What stimulates the activity and growth of the brain?

• Experiences (positive, consistent ones)
• Focused Attention
• Aerobic exercise
• Novelty
• Emotional Arousal
The brain is well defined, but what is the mind?

- Dr. Dan Siegel’s definition:
  “*A relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information.*”
  “*As a regulatory process, the mind involves monitoring and modifying the flow of energy and information.*”

What is Mindsight?

“**Mindsight** is the capacity of the human mind to see itself. It is a powerful lens through which we can understand our inner lives with more clarity, integrate the brain, and enhance our relationships with others.”

Dr. Dan Siegel, Executive Director of Mindsight Institute

What is Mindful Awareness?

- “Being mindful, having mindful awareness is often defined as a way of intentionally paying attention to the present moment without being swept up by judgments.”

Dr. Dan Siegel
What goes on in the mind?

- Within each of us is an internal world of thoughts, feelings, memories, fantasies, hopes and dreams

- Managing our thoughts and feelings supports social and emotional well-being

- Most modern societies and cultures fail to fully guide young children in how to navigate the inner world of thoughts and feelings

The Power of Attachment

- Secure attachment in the child’s relationship with caregiving adults is THE foundational element of healthy emotional and social development

What is Attachment?

- An inborn system of the brain that evolved to keep an infant safe.

- A baby is hard-wired to seek close connections with caregivers in order to get his needs met.

- Meeting the needs of babies and young children increases attachment and security and promotes good mental health.
Responsiveness Feeds Attachment

• “How you are is more important than what you do.” Jeree Pawl

• “It's not enough just to respond to your child, it's HOW you respond.” Dan Siegel

• “Attunement to the child's inner world is foundational to being responsive to the child in a meaningful way.” Laura Bridges

What is Attunement?
The ability to sense the innermost thoughts and feelings of others is a core aspect of Mindsight.

The Power of Self-Understanding
How do you support a child’s attachment to you?

• “Amazingly, the most important thing a parent can do, if you look at the research, is understand themselves.”  Dr. Dan Siegel

Caregiver Self-Attunement = Attachment

“Self-Understanding and being open to your own feelings and the feelings of your child, is the best predictor of child attachment.”

-Dr. Dan Siegel

Remember COAL

• C – Curious (about your child and why he behaves and speaks the way he does)
• O – Open (to exploring ways to interact and respond to your child)
• A – Accepting (of your child unconditionally)
• L – Loving (Expressed in ways that the child understands)  Siegel, The Mindful Brain, 2007
Seven Steps to Mindful Caregiving
(parenting/teaching)
1. Be in the moment
2. Be consistent
3. Be kind to yourself
4. Take time for Reflection, Contemplation or Meditation
5. Enjoy your child
6. Communicate Consciously
7. Incorporate emotionally reflective storytelling

Step One: Be in the Moment
- Give your full attention
- Set aside distractions
- Wonder what she is thinking/feeling
- Practice Mindsight – seeing into his mind and emotions
- Anticipate his needs

Be Consistent & Kind…
Step 2: Be Consistent
- Respond “mindfully” in the same way each time

Step 3: Be Kind to You
- Have compassion toward yourself
- Tell yourself the narrative about your life choices that leaves you feeling good about yourself and your life
Time for Self – Enjoy Your Child

Step 4: Take time for Yourself
• Reflection
• Contemplation
• Meditation
• Take time to practice seeing into your own mind and emotional states daily.

Step 5: Enjoy Your Child
• Make it fun
• Find humor
• See things through their eyes: in awe and wonder.

Step Six: Communicate Consciously
• How we express ourselves to children (or around children) sculpts the child’s sense of self and their relationship with others
• Be very careful about non-verbal cues
• Tell real life stories to your child about herself.

Step Seven: Emotionally-Reflective Storytelling
1. Re-tell stories that describe events in the child’s life
2. Focus on the child’s feelings
3. Avoid focusing on your feelings or what you expect the child to feel
4. Use, books, dolls & puppets
5. Lots of empathic imaginative play
Mindsight, the inner journey…

- Mindsight is your own inner journey that opens doors to greater self-awareness, self-compassion and empathy toward others.

Mindsight Bibliography
Books by Dr. Daniel J. Siegel

The Mindful Therapist. 2011
Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation. 2010
The Neurobiology of "We": How Relationships, the Mind, and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are (Audio book), 2008
The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are. 1999

Resources
- www.mindsightinstitute.com***
- www.drdansiegel.com
- www.maryhartzell.com
- www.bridgestransformation.com☺

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