

Things you need to know to help young minds smile

What is Smiling Mind?

Smiling Mind is modern meditation designed to create healthier, happier and more compassionate children. Through our unique web and app-based programs, Smiling Mind helps bring balance to young people's lives.

Why Smiling Mind?

We know that to really make a positive impact on mental health, we need to provide children with skills that can be used throughout their lives. Smiling Mind raises the awareness of emotional health and wellbeing by helping students and educators learn to manage stress, increase emotional awareness, enhance focus and improve sleep quality.

Who is Smiling Mind?

Smiling Mind exists to help build individual mental health and wellbeing, through pre-emptive tools that are accessible to all. We are a not-for-profit organisation committed to seeing mindfulness meditation on the Australian National Curriculum by 2020. Our mission is to provide accessible, life-long tools based in mindfulness meditation.

Our Vision

To see mindfulness meditation on the curriculum by 2020, giving every student, educator, and parent access to this lifelong tool to transform the way we learn and live.

What is mindfulness?

Just as we teach kids to eat well and stay fit to keep their bodies healthy, teaching children how to proactively care for their mind is equally important.

Many children live busy lives in a state of mindlessness. This is the same as being on autopilot, or taking a back seat and letting thoughts and emotions drive actions and behaviour. Mindfulness puts the child's mind in the driver's seat. Instead of reacting, thinking in circles or repeating old habits, they can choose to act in ways that are both clear and empowered.

What is mindfulness meditation?

Mindfulness meditation is about becoming aware of the present, noticing thoughts as they come and go, and observing one's breath and any physical sensations. It's a simple skill that can be a life-changing practice. It is not about stopping the mind. It's about focusing on the present moment in a non-judgemental and curious way.

Scientific research has shown that mindfulness meditation assists with managing stress, builds resilience and compassion, and improves focus.

Why is mindfulness meditation needed in the classroom?

In our busy, often overscheduled culture, children can be overstimulated and over exposed to technology.

Research has shown that mindfulness meditation strategies can:

- improve learning readiness by enhancing working memory, processing and the ability to focus on one task,
- encourage brain development in areas important for cognitive and emotional processing and wellbeing, and
- improve the classroom dynamic by reducing anxiety, heightening optimism, improving attention and reducing aggression.

What are the benefits?

Each pre-emptive program is designed to assist young people to deal with the pressure, stress and challenges of daily life. This includes help with sleep, wellbeing, managing emotions, concentration and school behaviour including dealing with bullying. Smiling Mind programs also aim to assist with:

- stress management
- increased resilience
- increased creativity
- better decision making
- a sense of calm, clarity and contentment

Adolescents participating in mindfulness based stress reduction programs have reported reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression and somatic distress, while experiencing increased self-esteem and sleep quality. Mindfulness meditation has also been found to increase empathy and compassion by activating the limbic region of the brain.

Where is the proof?

In a 2015 study, Deakin University, Insight SRC, Young and Well CRC and Smiling Mind collaborated to survey 12 schools, 104 educators and 1,853 students to assess the impact of our mindfulness programs. We monitored students' stress, fatigue levels and wellbeing over eight weeks and found that those who participated in our program reported significant improvements in sleep, engagement with school, and reductions in classroom disruptions and bullying. They also noted improvements in emotional wellbeing and marked reductions in psychological distress, especially for those students who were more at-risk for anxiety.

The results confirm the findings of similar studies undertaken by UCLA, Harvard, Oxford, Monash and Johns Hopkins universities.



How does the Smiling Mind Education Program support the Australian National Curriculum?

The Smiling Mind Education Programs complement the Australian Curriculum and are designed to support educators to bring mindfulness into the classroom. They can be used to support existing wellbeing, pastoral care and training. All our lesson plans are customised to each age level across primary and secondary school levels.

Smiling Mind can be integrated with curricula around 'personal and social capability' and 'critical and creative thinking' as well as mental health curricula.

Our programs are designed to support children at each stage of their development, from younger children becoming more independent to older children taking on leadership roles. Transition to high school, making new friends and planning for exams are also covered in the program.

How is mindfulness meditation taught at schools?

Smiling Mind offers resources, training, support and professional development programs, tailoring each program around a school's unique culture, goals and requirements.

Our workshops are face to face with trained facilitators who demonstrate the ease of using meditation in the classroom, at home and in life. These workshops provide students, staff and parents with the tools to understand how to cope with emotions and feelings in a world that can be chaotic and overwhelming.

Schools are guided through a step by step introduction to meditation enabling them to develop a "tool kit" of practical exercises to demonstrate how to practise mindfulness on a daily basis. Educators are further supported with resources such as the Smiling Mind free app, online lesson plans, and online modules.

Our programs are designed to inspire, motivate and inform educators and students on the importance of having the tools of mindfulness and meditation throughout their school years.

Students and educators who have implemented the Smiling Mind Program are reporting they are less anxious, more alert and ready to learn, less stressed and have an overall feeling of being more positive and able to achieve greatness.

How does Smiling Mind work with teachers?

We work directly with educators, providing visual presentations, research, lesson plans, workshops and other resources to successfully implement Smiling Mind in the classroom or across the school. Our Education Programs are designed to be easily implemented without a large time commitment. Our app provides additional resources for educators.

What is the Smiling Mind app?

Our app is a simple tool which gives access to our programs, anytime, anywhere. Simply download it from the apple store or google play.

Lesson plans are available for all educators in the Classroom programs in the app. There is a Classroom program for each age level.

Can this training be part of professional development for teachers?

Smiling Mind recognises that educators need support to develop the skills to teach mindfulness meditation. The Smiling Mind Program is recognised as part of an educator's professional development. Our professional development workshops cover the benefits and research behind meditation as well as information on resources, techniques and practical exercises.

Who uses Smiling Mind?

Over 1.3 million people worldwide use the Smiling Mind app. Among these people are more than 13,000 educators who use our programs in the classroom. That's at least 600,000 students experiencing the benefit of our programs every day. We've also provided additional intensive professional development to up-skill more than 4,000 educators so that they can bring mindfulness into their classrooms.

How can a school make the most of Smiling Mind?

Research has shown that involving the whole community – teachers, parents and students – is the most effective way to gain the long-lasting benefits of mindfulness.

The program demonstrates the ease of using meditation in the classroom, at home and in life. It provides the tools to better cope with emotions and feelings in a world that can be chaotic and overwhelming and creates a culture of caring, compassionate, mature, engaging and focused staff and students.

What can I do?

Discover how to bring mindfulness into your classroom with easy-to-use lesson plans and programs. To try a session, go to <http://smilingmind.com.au> For more information about the Education Program, contact: education@smilingmind.com.au

What are the experts saying?

"The world needs mindfulness; and in this fast paced, stressed and distracted world, the children of today probably need it more than any other generation." - Dr Craig Hassed

"Smiling Mind is one of the most common apps that I regularly use professionally with adolescent clients suffering from both mood and affective disorders. It is beautifully designed, easy to use, and gets the thumbs up from my young clients." - Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

What is the community saying?

"I thought the Smiling Mind program was really beneficial for me because it calmed me down and helped me to relax and concentrate. I found when I was upset or angry and my emotions were getting the best of me, doing the meditation really did help". - Student

"I can see a real difference in my students when we practice being mindful. They are a lot more focused, calm and able to listen". - Educator

"I used to feel anxious at school but since we've been listening to Smiling Mind in class I feel calm and the butterflies in my tummy have stopped." - Student

