




Asanas for Autism and Special Needs

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Our Kids are Stressed Out
Yoga & Mindfulness to Help Children and Youth
Find their CALMM



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Mental Health Statistics

- 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.
- 20% of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition.
- 11% of youth have a *diagnosed* mood disorder.
- 10% of youth have a *diagnosed* behavior or conduct disorder.
- 8% of youth have a *diagnosed* anxiety disorder.
- 17.1 million children are currently affected by mental health disorders in the U.S.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-disorder-among-children.shtml>


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SPD Statistics

- Sensory processing disorders affect 5-16 percent of school age children (not designated with autism)
<https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2013/07/107316/breakthrough-study-reveals-biological-basis-sensory-processing-disorders-kids>
- 1 in every 6 children experience sensory symptoms that may be significant enough to affect aspects of everyday life functions
[\[Ben-Casson, Carter, Briggs-Gowen, 2009\]](#)

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Autism Statistics

On April 26, 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data on the prevalence of autism in the United States. This surveillance study identified 1 in 59 children (1 in 37 boys and 1 in 151 girls) as having autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

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Possible Causes

- Socio-economic
- Biological/Genetic
- Environmental
- Psychological
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (Trauma)
- Children are not getting as much activity in their early developmental stages, which directly impacts developing brains.
- Children are being exposed to more technology, which can impact the sensory and nervous systems as well as social-emotional development.
- Children are over-scheduled and over-stressed by the world around them, stress directly impacts the brain and development.

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Impact of Stress

- Decreased focus and attention- Impacts learning, grades and performance in school.
- Poor Self-Esteem - Impacts social emotional learning, behavior & social-emotional development.
- Poor Social Skills (Isolation or acting out) - Impacts relationships, social development and ability to connect with others.
- Inability to self-regulate - Impacts mood, behavior, coping skills, learning & social-emotional development.
- Poor health - weakened immune system, missed school, difficulty with learning.
- Lack of sleep - impacts all areas of life.


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The Nervous System

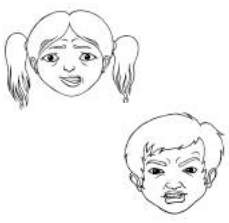
The diagram illustrates the human nervous system. It features a central figure of a person with labels for the brain, spinal cord, and nerves. To the left, there are five circular icons representing different parts of the system: an eye, a hand, a foot, a hand, and a foot. The title 'NERVOUS SYSTEM' is written above the diagram.

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Fight/Flight




Sympathetic Nervous System



- Chest breathing/hyperventilation
- Impulsivity
- Impaired cognition
- Sleep difficulties
- Impaired communication
- Anxiety, Frustration, Anger
- Acting out
- Difficulty focusing
- Poor health

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Siegel & Bryson, 2011 - The Whole-Brain Child

upstairs brain
helps to make good choices


downstairs brain
helps us when we're in danger

Prefrontal Cortex

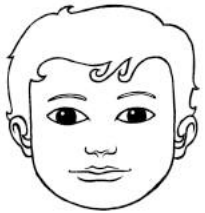
Amygdala & Limbic System

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Calm/Relaxed




Parasympathetic Nervous System



- Improved focus and concentration
- Better Sleep
- Self-Regulation
- Decreased anxiety, anger, frustration
- Improved behavior
- Improved Mood
- Improved communication and expression of emotions
- Overall improvement in physical and emotional health and well-being

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Interoception

INTEROCEPTION: *Internal Landscape*

- Interoception allows us to “feel” our internal organs, muscles and skin and gives us information regarding the *internal* state of our body.
- Interoception is a key component to our emotional experience. The awareness of our our internal body states is the basis for how we view, feel and experience emotions.


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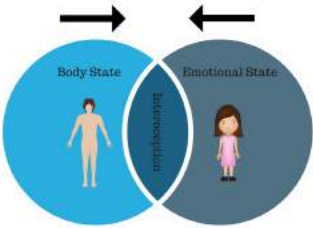
Interoception

<p>Body States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger or fullness • Social touch • Thirst • Body temperature • Breathing • Heart rate • Muscle tension • Physical energy level 	<p>Emotion States</p> <p>Moods and Emotional conditions of the body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Fear • Sadness • Frustration • Anxiety • Happiness • Excitement
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Interoception



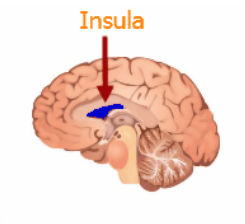
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Insula

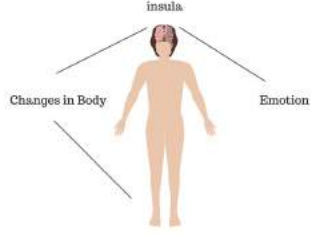
The insula is the **interoception** center of the brain

The insula Integrates and interprets input from the internal organs – including muscles, joints and our balance (proprioceptive) system – to generate the sense of *embodiment* (Bessel Van Der Kolk, 2014)




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Studies of Interoceptive Awareness & Trauma

- Brain-imaging studies of trauma patients find abnormal activation of the insula (Bessel Van Der Kolk, 2014)

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Research Suggests


Mindfulness activities like meditation and "reflection on interoceptive processes" may have an effect on regulating the mind's attentional and emotional response to interoceptive input.

AND

"Skillful attention to interoceptive sensation may improve self-regulation.

Farb, N., Dauenmier, J., Price, C.J., Gard, T., Kerr, C., Dunn, B.D., Mehling, W.E. (2015). Interoception, contemplative practice and health. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 763

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Yoga & Youth Research

Various studies have demonstrated effectiveness of yoga-based & mindfulness interventions with adolescents in:

- Reduced symptoms of eating disorders (Rain, Fyfe, Johnson, Breuner, & Brown, 2010)
- and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Jensen & Kenny, 2004)
- Decreasing antisocial behaviors (Kannappan & Lakshmi, 2008)
- Reduced gastrointestinal problems and emotion focused avoidance (Kuttner et al., 2006).
- Effective therapy for individuals suffering from anxiety and depression - can be effective across all age groups (Sharma & Haider, 2013).
- Reductions in stress for behaviorally inhibited and activated youth following a mind-body practice (Jellessa & Cornelius, 2014).
- Improved well-being and reduced negative responses to stress (Berger, Silver & Stein, 2009).
- Yoga-based therapy as a viable & effective intervention for ASD (Kenny, 2002).


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Benefits of Yoga for Youth

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Regulation • Balance • Coordination • Flexibility • Increases Self-Esteem • Improves Concentration and Focus • Hand-Eye Coordination • Coping Skills • Social Skills • Increases strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Confidence • Increases language & communication • Supports healthy digestion • Increases energy • Supports fine and gross motor skills • Decreases anxiety • Supports more regular sleep patterns • Supports healthy expression of emotions
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Mindfulness Defined

mind•ful•ness

1. The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.
2. A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts & bodily sensations.

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Self-Regulation Defined

- The ability to self-organize – to control ones activity level and state of alertness as well as one's emotional, mental or physical responses to sensations (Smith & Gouze, 2004)
- Inter-connected with Sensory Processing
- Greatly impacts a child's interaction with their environment and the world around them.

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Ability to Self-Regulate Impacts...


- Social Skills/Relationships with others
- Attention
- Mood
- Energy Level
- Learning
- Behavior

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"The foundation for developing self-regulation is self-awareness, the ability to recognize and connect to ones body state, thoughts and emotions"

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Yoga & Mindfulness can support children with...

- *Self-Connection* - learning to connect to their bodies, sensations & emotions so they can feel more EMBODIED.
- *Self-Awareness* - becoming more aware of their own actions, thoughts and feelings.
- *Self-Control* - taking control of their behavior, thinking and emotions (they learn to be in tune to and how to tune their own radios) and learn to be more flexible and to cope with unexpected or uncomfortable changes in their environment.
- *Self-Esteem & Self-Efficacy* -learning to reflect on their strengths, find acceptance for where they are at and recognize their ability to succeed.
- *Self-Reflection & Awareness of Others* - Learn how their thoughts, behaviors and actions impact themselves & others.

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Behind Every Behavior is a "Need"

A need for...



- Communication
- Sensory input
- Attention
- A break
- A deep breath
- To feel grounded, secure and safe
- Release of energy
- Interaction with peers & adults (belonging)
- Patience from others
- Acceptance, love & understanding


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C.A.L.M.M Yoga & Mindfulness Approach

- Tapping into the 5 senses
- Connection to Body and Body Awareness (Interoceptive Awareness)
- Movement & poses that supports grounding, organizing the brain and whole-brain connection.
- Mantras & poses for self-esteem.
- Mudras to support self-regulation, body awareness & decreasing anxiety.
- Breathing strategies and poses to reset the nervous system, support embodiment and release difficult emotions.


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C.A.L.M.M Strategy

- Center
- Assess How I'm Feeling
- Let Myself Breathe
- Move My Body
- Make Positive Choices

I can feel CALM mantra




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Body Awareness

- Heart/Belly Connection
- Body Scan
- Tap Tap Tap
- Proprioceptive Feedback



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Tapping into 5 Senses

- Auditory - Bee/Hum Breath
- Olfactory - Scented Cotton Balls
- Visual - Standing/ Balance poses with Drishti
- Gustatory - Chanting
- Tactile - Textures

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Grounding Poses & Poses that Organize the Brain

Chair Poses - Grounding



- Sit on the edge of the chair - begin with having the child find awareness of feet - feeling the bottoms of the feet on the ground then have them ground their feet down into the earth as if there are roots growing up through their feet.
- Heart/Belly Breath
- Mountain Pose
- Butterfly to Cocoon
- Orange Juice Squeeze
- Apple Picking
- Tug-O-War

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Mountain

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Butterfly to Cocoon



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The illustration shows a person sitting on a chair with arms raised behind their head. A butterfly is shown above them, and a cocoon is shown hanging from a branch above the butterfly. The photograph shows a person sitting on a chair with their arms raised behind their head.



Orange Juice Squeeze



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The illustration shows a person sitting on a chair with one arm raised to touch an orange hanging from a branch. The photograph shows a person sitting on a chair with one arm raised to touch an orange hanging from a branch.


Apple Picking



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The illustration shows a person sitting on a chair with one arm raised to pick an apple from a branch. The photograph shows a person sitting on a chair with one arm raised to pick an apple from a branch.

Poses and Mantras that Support Focus, Self-Esteem





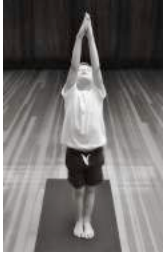
& Connection to Others.

<p>Balancing & Standing Poses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mountain</i> - Strong and steady as a mountain. • <i>Star</i> - I'm a Super Star! Unique & One of a Kind. • <i>Tree</i> - Rooted & Grounded, Stable. Growth & Transformation. • <i>Warrior</i> - Strong in their heart. Stands up for themselves and others. Can face challenges that come their way with courage. • <i>Eagle</i> - Adventurous and Wise. • <i>Flamingo</i> - Confident and Connected to others. 	<p>Mantras & Meditations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am meditation</i> - write down a positive word about yourself. Breathe in "I am" - Breathe out the word ex. "safe", "loved". • <i>Self-Hug</i> - "I'm so loveable." • <i>Loving-Kindness Meditation</i> - "May I, May You, May We...be happy, healthy, loved & safe."
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Mountain





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Star



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Tree



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The image shows a line drawing of a person in a tree yoga pose (Vrikshasana) on the left, standing on one leg with the other leg bent and foot resting on the inner thigh. To the right is a photograph of a person in the same pose. The word 'Tree' is written in blue above the images. A circular logo with a stylized figure is in the top right corner. A copyright notice is at the bottom.

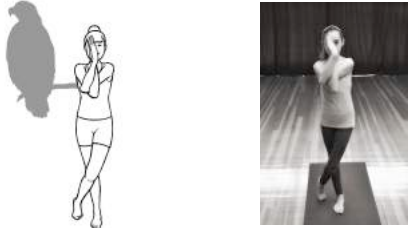
Warrior



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The image shows a line drawing of a person in a warrior yoga pose (Virabhadrasana II) on the left, with one leg forward and arms extended horizontally. To the right is a photograph of a person in the same pose. The word 'Warrior' is written in blue above the images. A circular logo with a stylized figure is in the top right corner. A copyright notice is at the bottom.

Eagle





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The image shows a line drawing of a person in an eagle yoga pose (Garudasana) on the left, with feet crossed and arms extended horizontally. To the right is a photograph of a person in the same pose. The word 'Eagle' is written in blue above the images. A circular logo with a stylized figure is in the top right corner. A copyright notice is at the bottom.



Flamingo

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Mudras

Focus & Calm

Diamond Mudra - Tip of thumb to pointer finger. Rest hands in lap. Mind is bright & sharp like a diamond.

Let it Go Mudra - Reach hands forward palms facing ground. Bring tips of all fingers together and imagine any stress or tension moving down the arms and dripping off the finger tips.

Baby Cradle Mudra - Rest the left hand on lap palm facing up - bring the right hand on top of left palm facing up. Think of a baby sleeping in a cradle - calm and safe - being held.


Connection to Heart & Truth

Heart Mudra - Palms together at heart center. Connect to the love and peace in your heart. Think of someone or something you love.

Heart Flower - Bring palms together at heart center - keep pinky and thumb fingers together and spread the other fingers out like the blossoming of a flower - let your heart open like a flower - who can you have more love & compassion for?

Eagle Mudra - Face both palms towards the body - interlock the thumbs together. Spread the fingers wide like eagle wings. In front of the heart courage & freedom, in front of the throat speaking your truth.



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Expressing difficult Emotions



I can feel C.A.L.M.M

1. Identify emotion.
2. Identify what happens in my body and brain when I feel that emotion.
3. Identify what makes me feel that emotion.
4. Choose something (a breath & pose) that will help me feel better.

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Breathing Strategies Support

- Communication & language development
- Expression and Release of Difficult Emotions
- Improved Concentration
- Improved Respiration
- Improved health & Well-being
- Increased Stamina
- Self-Regulation
- Improved Mood
- Calming the nervous system
- Positive Behavior!

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Breathing



Releasing Difficult Emotions


- Let it Go Breath
- Volcano breath

Decreasing Anxiety/Calming

- Pizza Dough Ear Stretch
- Alternate Nostril breathing
- Feather Breath

Energizing/Alerting

- Bee Breath
- Bunny Breath



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Releasing Emotions!




Let it Go Breath!

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Grounding, Focus and Standing Strong!



Tree Pose!

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Breathing



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The Best Part!



Resting Pose – Floating on a Cloud!

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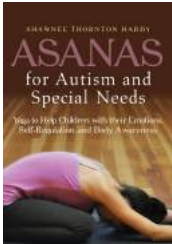
Namaste!




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Tools for Teaching

Book



C.A.L.M.M. Curriculum





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Join a Training!



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