

Learning and the Brain

Educating Mindful Minds: Using the Science of Stress to Improve Resilience, Behavior, and Achievement

Throughout this conference we learned a lot about how people's brains work while they are stressed. We learned about how the amygdala is affected during stress, and how that can permanently affect how people react in different situations.

Some facts that stuck with me from the sessions:

- Kids today are 5-8 times more likely to report anxiety and depression than during the Great Depression. This is since 2012, the rise of the smart phone. These are some of the changes that have happened since the onset of the smart phone:
 - Feeling left out and lonely
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Clinical depression has had 50% increase
 - Increased Self harm
 - Increased Suicide rate
 - Happiness is drastically decreased
 - Life satisfaction is lower
 - Self esteem is lower
- What causes stress in kids:
 - Novelty (reward NOW!)
 - Lack of predictability
 - Perceived threat
 - Low sense of control
- Autonomy is the biggest stress reliever. WE SHOULD ALWAYS BE SUPPORTING AUTOMONY.
- If you are under-rested the amygdala is 60% more likely to react. During REM this is the only time your brain is chemically stress free. This is why sleep is a healer. Anxiety and depression are both a symptom and a cause for this reason.
- When we focus on achievement, kids can often suffer. We CAN'T LET GO OF CHARACTER. When we make this the focus, the stress on kids becomes

about how you behave and KIDS HAVE CONTROL over that. Achievement is often outside kids' control (grades, winning, etc) Achievement will usually follow once focus is on character.

Some books I'm looking forward to reading to learn more about this topic:

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: The Acclaimed Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases and Coping By Robert M. Sapolsky

iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy- and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood By Jean Twenge