

Smiling Mind News - Term 3 Week 1 and 2

We have started our term off focusing on the importance of **GRATITUDE**. Our learning intention has been to develop an understanding of what it means to be grateful and to foster gratitude personally and through the community. Our meditation for the fortnight has focused on how to cultivate gratitude through mindfulness.

Some of the benefits of practicing gratitude include:

- When we practice gratitude our brain releases our happy neurotransmitters Dopamine and Serotonin, these are two crucial neurotransmitters responsible for our emotions.
- Strengthens and boosts our immune system
- Paying attention to what you are thankful for helps you switch out of negative thinking as your focus becomes on appreciating what is here in your life right now instead. Our minds are good at focusing on what we don't have, so cultivating gratitude is a way to work against this tendency.
- Practising gratitude promotes the experience of positive emotions as we begin to notice goodness wherever we find ourselves.
- When we are grateful, the brain regions associated with understanding other people's perspectives, empathy, regulating emotions, and feelings of relief, light up/ are activated.
- Whenever you do a gratitude practice, you deepen your feelings of joy and increase the joy around you.

Fun activities that can help promote gratitude for kids:

- Alphabet gratitude: Thinking of something for each letter of the alphabet you are grateful for
- Journaling- writing down the things you are grateful for e.g. I am grateful for..
- Gratitude artwork or collage
- Family gratitude jars- family members write down what they are grateful for and place it in a jar, when you have free time read what others have written in the jar
- Random Acts of Kindness

Smiling Mind have just released digital Care Packs that provide practical tools and resources to help foster positive mental health habits, these can be accessed along with meditation resources from www.smilingmind.com.au or via the Smiling Mind app.

With gratitude,
Miss Castle
Smiling Mind coordinator