



TESTIMONIALS

From Educators

"Our whole community really loves IE! We will give you more feedback as the year progresses. I include information in my weekly newsletter also and the parents are very excited about it. It is so easy for teachers to use and the students are very engaged in the audios and sessions. "

Lindsey Keener, Principal
SF Public Montessori

"Currently we have 10 teachers who are using in their classes everyday, first thing in the morning, and several who will be starting up next week. I have to say in my 15 years as a school counselor, I have never had such interest and support from teachers and administrators with a social/emotional program as I am having with the Inner Explorer!"

Mark Sikora

"During elementary summer school, all grade levels used the program daily for at least 10 minutes per day. We used this along with other community building activities, such as circles and games, every day. The teachers said it was very easy to use, and they felt that it was worth the time to do it. In fact, some of the most resistant teachers were the most excited about doing it by the end of the summer. In one class, the students begged the teacher not to change to another activity the next day because they wanted to keep working on being still, quiet, and present with their current activity. They were still, quiet, and present for 9 minutes once! They were very proud of themselves."

Amy

"I have a cute story to share. Two girls in class were frustrated because other students were being mean to them. They decide to do mindfulness to calm down. It worked. These students shared as soon as they came into the classroom, they were so pleased with themselves! What a great lesson for them! Thanks for providing this site!"

Catherine Mills, Flint Schools



"From my perspective, as a principal of a school where this program is used, I have seen it to be a really great addition to the classes' morning routines. The kids can come in and re-center, get in touch with where they are emotionally and mentally (even physically), and acknowledge their connection to humanity as a central component of their experience. The teachers pull up each day's audio file from the website - you just need an account, and you are good to go. There are training materials as well for people who would be intimidated by the technology, but it is purposefully designed to be pretty streamlined with minimal teacher prep.

It has been really interesting to talk with teachers of different grades, to hear their classes' experiences and perspectives. We have one group of children who used the program last year as well as this year and their class has been so peaceful and emotionally tranquil - it is striking to everyone who walks in. These students have also experienced really dramatic learning gains as well as developing increased confidence, perseverance, and focus.

I know things are super hectic at this point in the year and we don't even know each other. But I just wanted to offer this as a possibility and let you know how much I support what you are doing. I really hope my kids (Ray - 3rd grade, Lora - 5th grade) can get an opportunity to take on some kind of regular mindfulness practice, but when I try to do it with them at home they aren't that serious. I think the schools are an incredible vehicle for this kind of teaching and obviously you do too!"

Alison Rini, IVMS

"I'm in Killeen, TX- Ft. Hood, visiting a few schools who began using this program a few months ago (in 5 or 6 of the 30 classrooms). The principal reported a 50% reduction in principal visits, detentions, etc. The more interesting phenomenon is the increase in compassion! They said the students in the classrooms running the program have become more helpful, more concerned about each other and go out of their way to engage when someone is hurt or in need.

We've had many schools report similar shifts in student behavior (which are not captured in the typical data that schools collect unfortunately) and we continue to wonder how these capacities grow year over year."

Laura



"I generally play Inner Explorer before I have counseling sessions after lunch duty. When I'm frazzled, it really makes a difference so I can get into a place, relaxed and renewed and ready to counsel kids."

School counselor, Sligh Middle School
Tampa, FL

"Inner Explorer has been a great support for our special education students and for me, we have all calmed down. My students took three tests in a row the other day and out of the 27, 23 of them improved. When students were stressed they utilized mindfulness strategies and I definitely have seen an improvement with their coping skills."

Middle School Special Education Teacher, San Lorenzo, CA

"The Inner Explorer mindfulness program has been very beneficial to me both professionally and personally. Like many people, I have known about mindfulness for years but never committed to it genuinely. After consistent use in the classroom, many students have expressed that the program really helps them calm down and think about what they are feeling. In addition, I have committed to practicing even beyond the program and emotional changes are apparent. While work is still challenging, mindfulness helps to minimize my frustration. I am able to keep my cool even when classroom situations are chaotic. Before my mindfulness practice, I felt the weight of the school day even after I left school. Mindfulness has helped me to stay in the moment and keep a positive perspective, before/during/after school."

5th grade Teach for America (TFA) Teacher, Oakland, CA

"Our kids did awesome on the MAP test!!!! Almost every single one of them improved with a great amount! The really great thing was that 26 out of the 46 students hadn't met the cut score for passing the test and meeting the 3GG requirements, and after this test round only 2 kids didn't pass :) Prior to Inner Explorer, 56.5% of students were below grade level, after Inner Explorer only 4.3% of students were below! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!"

3rd grade Elementary School Teacher
Wooster City School District, OH



"The ease of implementation was a HUGE advantage for our school!"

Principal, Oswego, IL

"I used to hate picking up my kids from recess and lunch; they were always the hardest times of the day. Now they are my favorite. After recess we do Inner Explorer and after lunch we practice a mindful minute. This program is so good for my students and for me."

2nd gr teacher, Oakland, CA

"I am a better teacher because of Inner Explorer."

4th gr teacher, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

"The one class that ran Inner Explorer last year had only two discipline referrals all year! The average in the other classrooms was 25 referrals! We're putting Inner Explorer in every classroom this year."

Principal, Sarasota, FL

"I have implemented the program every day with my students. It was a bit difficult to "buy in" with them in the beginning but I have definitely seen a change in their behavior. I have students who are hyperactive and I have noticed many positive changes."

Lupita Rameriz, Chicago, IL
Erie Elementary, 4th grade dual language

"I firmly believe mindfulness has been THE solution to the possibility of greatness in the classroom."

Edgar Rodriguez, Oakland, CA
3rd grade (TFA) teacher Reach Academy

"Today it was amazing when the kids were starting to breath calmly and relax. I had to start it over a few times since there were those that could not calm down to focus but it happened where I had two children actually fall asleep once I started showing them how to relax and how their bodies should respond they finally were calm



enough to really connect with the program. I know this is not something that actually happens over night but on days like this it is nice to know that I have a something I can use to get them to respond in a calm and quiet manner.”

Elementary teacher, New York City, NY

“One of the things I've noticed since implementing IE is that kids help each other stay on track. If a student notices another spacing out, he or she will remind the other to bring their attention back to the lesson. Unbelievable really.”

Elementary Teacher, Oakland, CA

“I have found when my boys have gotten very excited and are full of energy, it is difficult to calm down and start instruction. This is the perfect time when I pull up the Inner EXPLORER. The boys follow instructions and the energy level does go down enough where I can begin to teach. Not all the boys will follow directions, yet, (it's only been 2 weeks), but a good majority do which creates a more calm atmosphere.”

Janette Ramirez, Bradenton, FL
Visible Men Academy

“The kids have really taken to the program. I do have one boy and one girl that keep looking around, and even after I tap them and give gentle reminders to keep eyes closed, they still open them up and fidget. They're at least not disturbing others, so I just try my best to model the expectation and continue to participate w my eyes closed.

“I was out of the building the other day and didn't leave the sub the information to continue on with the next lesson. Upon my return, the kiddos were all expressing how disappointed they were that they didn't do Inner Explorer. One girl said, ‘I was so wound up, that by the time I got home, I just HAD to do the practice in my room....so I could feel centered.’ So awesome! Thanks again for bringing this program to us!”

Olga Gbur, Oswego IL
Prairie Point Elementary

“I loved using it! I was unable to use it with the same group as I am a school counselor and only see each class once per month. So, in an effort to hear many



different ones within the month trial, I used different ones for different classes. The feedback was really positive. I am currently discussing the possibility of having our PTA fund this so that I may do it with small groups more consistently.”

Monica M. Mirasola

Mitchell Elementary School Counselor

“A fifth grader recently approached his teacher and asked where he could buy something like Inner Explorer. He wants to get it for his mom for Christmas because ‘she really needs to relax.’

Also, I attended a Parent-Teacher Conference last evening for a 5th grade student. The parents had asked about doing an evaluation to see if the student has a learning disability in reading. During the conversation, I asked the student if she got nervous when she did math. She said, ‘I used to, but Inner Explorer is helping.’ She then asked the teacher if she could share her Inner Explorer journal with her parents.

It gives me a few chills to think that even a few lessons can have such an impact on a student.”

Sally Mueller, school psychologist

“I was so blown away by your program....if you recall my testimony about sweet little Maria. As you may recall, my passion is for very high-risk students and so this year I made the difficult decision to leave GI to return to the classroom. It is my calling. I teach high school students living in such adversity. I think about your program all the time. I would love to partner again if the opportunity arises. The budget is always in crisis so I would be happy to write a grant if you can guide me. Any words of wisdom are appreciated.”

Thank you so much,

Marisa.monroe@sdhc.k12.fl.us

“Yes, I have been using the Inner Explorer and the kids are very into it! They love their journal and their quiet time. They ask first thing in the morning to do it. We do our right after lunch just to get back on track.”

Marisa Cortes, Elementary school teacher
Streetsboro, OH



"Doing great! We had District Rounds in our school on Monday, which meant that around 60 people from all over the district were divided into smaller groups and they observed classes all morning long. I'm telling you this because we had not heard anything about the pilot program approval 'til you emailed me and my principal's boss was also on our campus that day. So I ran around and told all the pilot teachers to not do Inner Explorer until after their classroom had been observed. They were so funny! They didn't like me telling them that! They asked if they could just go ahead and do it because they were fairly sure they wouldn't be observed 'til later—in reality, they did not know what time they would be coming to their classrooms—so I had to tell them no. Another teacher said she really wanted to do it twice today—I told her that she'd have to wait. She said, well, I'm going to get in twice somehow today! The teachers love it!"

Karen Bunjes, Counselor, Killeen TX
Hay Branch

"Last year, we piloted one class with Inner Explorer's mindfulness program. The one class who used it was the calmest class with the fewest incident reports (0 versus an average of 21 in the other classrooms!) and the highest academic gains in reading (initially 10 of 28 students were below grade level, at the end of the year 0 of 28 were below, including several special needs students) from the whole school."

Principal, Sarasota, Florida

"Laurie - thanks so much for the support. This program is vital for the kids. The pricing you have provided will give many opportunities. Thanks again."

William, Administrator, Hawaii

"I've moved from awareness to advocacy. Inner Explorer should be a universal Tier I (all students) intervention."

Bea Laney- School Based Support Manager
Durham public schools



"My students this year are sooo good at mindfulness! Our attention signal is: I say, 'Inhale, 1 - 2 - 3.' They repeat back, 'Exhale 1- 2- 3.'"

Kristi S. La Vista Elementary, Omaha NE

"Began Inner Explorer today. The students were engaged. Later in the day we had a difficult time with a student that caused stress. I gave the bell to a student I knew had led Mindfulness before and asked him to lead the class in five minutes of Mindfulness so I could attend to the difficult student's immediate need. The class cooperated with the student led Mindfulness and the quiet and calm in the room actually helped the student with the emotional outburst to calm down. Thank you for all the effort and help you have provided to get this program running at REACH!"

5th grade teacher, Oakland, CA

"The program has been great. I really enjoy it and it is one of my favorite times of every day! I know the students (AND I!) enjoy the addition of the classical music into the program. It is a great program and I greatly appreciate you introducing it to me."

Christina B., Middle School Teacher
Richmond, CA

"Last year I was looking forward to the end of school; it was such a relief when it came. This year I'm really sad school is ending; I'm going to miss my kids."

Elementary Teacher, IL

"I just wanted to comment that my students took three tests in a row the other day and out of the 27, I see 23 of them improved. When students were stressed they utilized mindfulness strategies and I definitely have seen an improvement with their coping skills. I had two full periods where every single student improved in at least one area and out of the class that gets this program the most, 4 of my students improved in all areas. I just wanted to write this and thank Mr. Harris for being such a great support for our special education students and for this program in helping both the students and myself calm down for this second half of the year. Thank you, and I hope we can continue next year."

Vanessa Tamaru, High School Teacher
Edendale, CA



TESTIMONIALS

From Students

"Inner Explorer helps me conquer my homework".

Middle School student, Oswego, IL

"Inner Explorer helps me believe in myself."

Elementary school student

"It helps me concentrate and relax and be calm and learn. It helps me be prepared for anything."

Elementary school student

"If all the children had Inner Explorer, there wouldn't be any violence and they could feel safe wherever they are."

Elementary school student

"Because of Inner Explorer, I'm not a negative person anymore."

Elementary school student

"I love IE because it helps me not fight with my brother and it's so calm to hear. I love IE! It brings peace and love."

Elementary school student

"This is the first year that I haven't been totally stressed out about finals. I felt so calm. When my friends asked me, I told them it was because I was doing Inner Explorer every day. It's changed everything."

High school student, MA

"With the craziness of lunch and recess, it helps me calm down."

"Now I feel like I can do anything."

"Can we do it for 20 minutes?"

"It relaxes me."



"Mindfulness helps me take the power from the little man (Anger). Inner Explorer taught me the little man tries to carry me. It is so funny imagining the little man carrying me. I think all children should have mindfulness so they can relax."

Elementary school student

"I felt calm and relaxed. Inner Explorer helps me feel amazing, loving, calm, peaceful, powerful, honest, safe, and in control of my body. I like Inner Explorer!"

3rd grade boy, Sarasota, FL

From a 3rd grade class in Oakland CA (a really rough school in a crime filled neighborhood—several comments below):

"Mindfulness is peace. It helps me think. Inner Explorer taught me to listen."

"Inner Explorer helps me believe in myself."

"Mindfulness is starting a new day. My favorite Inner Explorer lesson is all of them."

"Inner Explorer helps me get ready for school."

"Mindfulness is your life. When you get mad if you take a deep breath then you will get calm."

"My favorite Inner Explorer lesson is 'Friendly wishes', because you can send love and kindness to people you don't know."

"Mindfulness is great and it helps us be present in the moment. It helps me believe in myself and get ready for tests."

"My favorite Inner Explorer lesson is sending 'Friendly wishes' because it lets you think the best about people."

"It helps me concentrate and relax and be calm and learn. It helps me be prepared for anything."

"I think all children in Oakland should have Inner Explorer because they could feel safe wherever they are."



"Mindfulness is a time to breathe. It helps me be peaceful."

"Inner Explorer helps you have good days."

"Mindfulness helps me get ready for school and ready for math."

"My favorite Inner Explorer lesson is the relaxation train because it helps our brains and bodies get ready to sit on the carpet and get ready for reading, math and writing."

"If all the children had Inner Explorer, there wouldn't be any violence."

"Mindfulness is a program that helps you for today. All children in Oakland should have Inner Explorer so they can have an exultant day!"

"It helps me concentrate and relax and be calm and learn. It helps me be prepared for anything."

Elementary school student

"I used to hate picking up my kids from recess and lunch; they were always the hardest times of the day. Now, they are my favorite. After recess we do Inner Explorer and after lunch we practice a mindful minute. This program is so good for my students and for me."

2nd grade teacher, Oakland, CA

"Because of Inner Explorer, I'm not a negative person anymore."

Elementary school student

"Inner Explorer helps me believe in myself."

Elementary school student

"Mindfulness is great and it helps us be present in the moment. It helps me get ready for tests."

Elementary school student



Parents/Community

"I have taken it as my goal the past couple of weeks to try and start each workday with one of the mindfulness exercises graciously provided to us by the Inner Explorer team. I have to say the exercises have really helped me with my focus, helped me center myself on the tasks at hand for each day and have brought about an increased positivity to my attitude and dealings with others. In fact, there have been a couple of times where I've used exercises in the middle of the day to push back against some negative or stressful event with great success.

I hope you will extend a big THANK YOU and my gratitude to the Inner Explorer team for thinking of CERTUS and having the generosity to lend a helping hand in this way. I am very grateful for these exercises, they sit on my cell phone in quick and easy reach at all times and are sure to get more and more use as I introduce these techniques to my wife and kid."

Thank you again!

Derrick

"Because of Inner Explorer I am less bothered by the discomfort of my many ailments. I'm a 91-year-old with rheumatoid arthritis who has had 10 surgeries in the last six years. The program has given me the courage to get up out of my room and participate in the fun activities downstairs."

91-year-old grandmother

"Yesterday when I was at the doctor's office, he took my blood pressure. He was not happy with me and he was going to give me new medicine. I asked him if I could have ten minutes. I practiced mindful awareness. My blood pressure went from 147/115 to 121/85...It was normal! The doctor told me he would hold off on new medicine."

3rd grade teacher, Oakland, CA



"Just wanted to drop you a note to say that Nathanael is an expert at guided mindfulness (thanks to you I assume)! This morning I was a bit upset that we were running late and *may have* raised my voice. On the way to school, Nathanael took my hand and said: 'Mommy, anger is a little thing inside of you that can either grow or turn into happy.'

I asked how to turn it into happy? He said, 'You can turn it into happy by thinking about it. Breathing in and out. Inhale, exhale Inhale, exhale. Don't forget, you are always in my heart.'

He kept talking me through this and explaining things very well. It was quite impressive. We held hands the rest of the way to school.

SO glad the Inner Explorer program is being worked into class and I hope that all the classes are doing this. Everyone could use a little happy in their day.

Thanks for everything you do."

Diane Noel, Parent

Dear William Laeha,

I wanted to share with you how "Mindfulness" has helped me. My wife, Sally, is a teacher at Mokulele Elementary School. She practices the Mindfulness program with her students daily. She has noticed less behavior problems and a more caring attitude amongst her students. She mentioned that she and I should try it out. We have been practicing the Mindfulness program together for several months now. I have noticed feeling much less stressed at my job at Kaiser Permanente. I practice "Mindful minutes" throughout my day! Practicing Mindfulness together has also brought us closer together in our marriage. Thank you so much for teaching Mindfulness to my wife and I!

Sincerely.

Dennis J. Devick



Success Stories

“Resilience”

It was the start of the school year and the warnings were coming from all sides. Every so often, a cohort of students comes along that is off the charts. In this case, the group coming into 3rd grade had quite a negative reputation. Their teachers in 2nd grade said they were the most challenging group they had taught, in more than 35 years! The district substitutes refused to cover their classes. Student test scores were the lowest ever measured in the district!

None of this scared their new 3rd grade teachers. They were committed to finding something that could help, recognizing that most of these children lived in poverty, violence and chaos. They implemented the Inner Explorer Program in November and by January a complete shift had occurred in their classrooms. Behavior problems were nearly eliminated, students were happier and more engaged in school, and test scores increased dramatically. In fact at the beginning of the year, 26 of 46 students, 56%, were testing below grade level. At the end of the year, only 2 students, 4%, were below!

There was a palpable effect on one boy in the class. At the start of the year, he was considered a “high flyer”. He arrived one day to telling his teacher he needed to talk to her. He said his mom was brought to jail last night, and he was really angry. He said his grandma told him he wouldn’t see her again for a long time.

He asked her to sit with him and practice IE. They sat and breathed together for a few minutes and he was ready to go reengage with the class. This 9-year-old boy with a mom who was now in jail, was able to compose himself enough to stay in class the rest of the day and fully participate in the lessons. Amazing!

Melrose Elementary School – Wooster, OH

“Girl of the Month”

Maria (name changed to protect identity) had been coming to Girls, Inc., nearly every day after school since she was 6 years old. At 11, both of her parents were in



jail and she lived with her aunt who was a known drug abuser. Shondra suffered from chronic stress, food insecurity and was repeatedly exposed to a violent household. She was often angry and violent herself.

While her behavior was not consistent with the values or training at Girls, Inc., the staff never gave up and spent countless hours trying to help her. After most other efforts failed to change her behavior, they decided to implement the Inner Explorer program, and offered it to all the girls, on a volunteer basis. Maria, along with 13 of her peers, decided to participate in the 10-minute per day mindful awareness practices.

After only 2 months, the director at Girls Inc. told us that all the girls who participated were growing and changing, but the most incredible change was with Maria. She was voted “Girl of the Month” that month, for the first time in 5 years. The nominations were unanimous and very touching. They told of a transformation so complete that it was awe-inspiring. The director said, as she held back her tears, “it’s as if Shondra found herself for the very first time”. She was no longer buried beneath the burden of a difficult and chaotic home environment. She was free to deeply explore her essence as a human being. She found beauty and potential and the inspiration to chart a new course for herself.

Girls, Inc. – Sarasota, FL (May 2013)

“Using Inner Explorer with Special Education Students”

I am a high school teacher, who is very interested in bringing mindfulness into the classroom as a tool for students to feel less anxious and more present. I have tried bringing this into the classroom by introducing Inner Explorer to my Grade 9 Special Education math class. Initially I was very hesitant since I felt that my students would be very reluctant to try this, and that I might get a lot of push back.

Day 1 went well, though many students felt it was “weird”. However, many students said they felt calm during the 8 minutes. There was a fair bit of fidgeting, but surprisingly no giggles or silliness during any of the breathing suggestions throughout the audio.



Day 2, most students chose to put down their heads, and it scared me to think many were tuning out the audio. But quite a few after the fact said that they were listening and trying the breathing practices - it just helped them to relax by putting their heads down. One student in class struggled a lot because he found it very challenging to just remain in his seat; he felt restricted and it wasn't helping him relax (this individual has a severe case of ADHD and has recently been off his medication). His fidgeting was also disrupting a few students around him, and they brought this up with me after.

Day 3, I got busy in the day-to-day stuff, and somehow forgot to start class with Inner Explorer. 15 minutes into class, a student brought it up and wanted to do it!! (success?!?) We paused what we were doing, and began the 8 minute audio. The student who had difficulty relaxing in day 2, asked to lie down on the floor, since he said it would help him feel better. I said sure, and next day I will bring a few yoga mats. This was the best 8 minutes of mindfulness we've had as a class so far. Almost everyone was engaged, and even the student who was very fidgety before, said he felt relaxed after. The few students who haven't bought into it yet, I'm hoping will give it a try at least in the next few weeks.

So far, I am extremely happy with trying out Inner Explorer in the classroom, even though I've only used it for three days. Advice I was given by a colleague that I feel is quite accurate was that, "Students who are the most reluctant to try it, are probably the students who need it the most. So keep trying." And that's what I will do... slowly but surely.

Thanks for reading! I would love to hear any experiences you might have had with Inner Explorer in the classroom.

Wajiha