

Bouncing Back with HeartMath:

Promoting Positive Mental Health & Collaborative Partnerships in a School Community

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Kids have stress too!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI3Cq6Z53FE>

What is positive mental health?

- Being mentally healthy means ...
 - Coping with normal stresses of life
 - Maintaining healthy relationships
 - Contributing to the community
- In children and youth, this means ...
 - Bouncing back from hard times
 - Feeling good about yourself
 - Good friendships and relationships
 - Enjoying life



Mental health: Why it is important!

- 15% or 1.2 million Canadian children/youth affected
 - Anxiety most common
- Only 1 in 5 Canadian children receive services for help they need
- 70% mental health problems begin in childhood or adolescence
- Research shows that promoting positive mental health is important for academic and life success!



School context for positive mental health

- Critical context for PMH
 - >6 hrs & >180 days/year
 - Social emotional learning
 - Resiliency
- Public health nurses: “Influence, inform, inspire!”
 - Have a key role in comprehensive school health
 - Can promote and support positive mental health as:
a catalyst, an advocate, a collaborator, a facilitator



HeartMath pilot: Needs assessment

CBE: Prince of Wales elementary school showed:

- A rise in anxious/stressed students
- An increase in special needs/complex learners

They hoped to:

- Strengthen social/emotional learning
- Strengthen teacher/staff/parent knowledge/skills

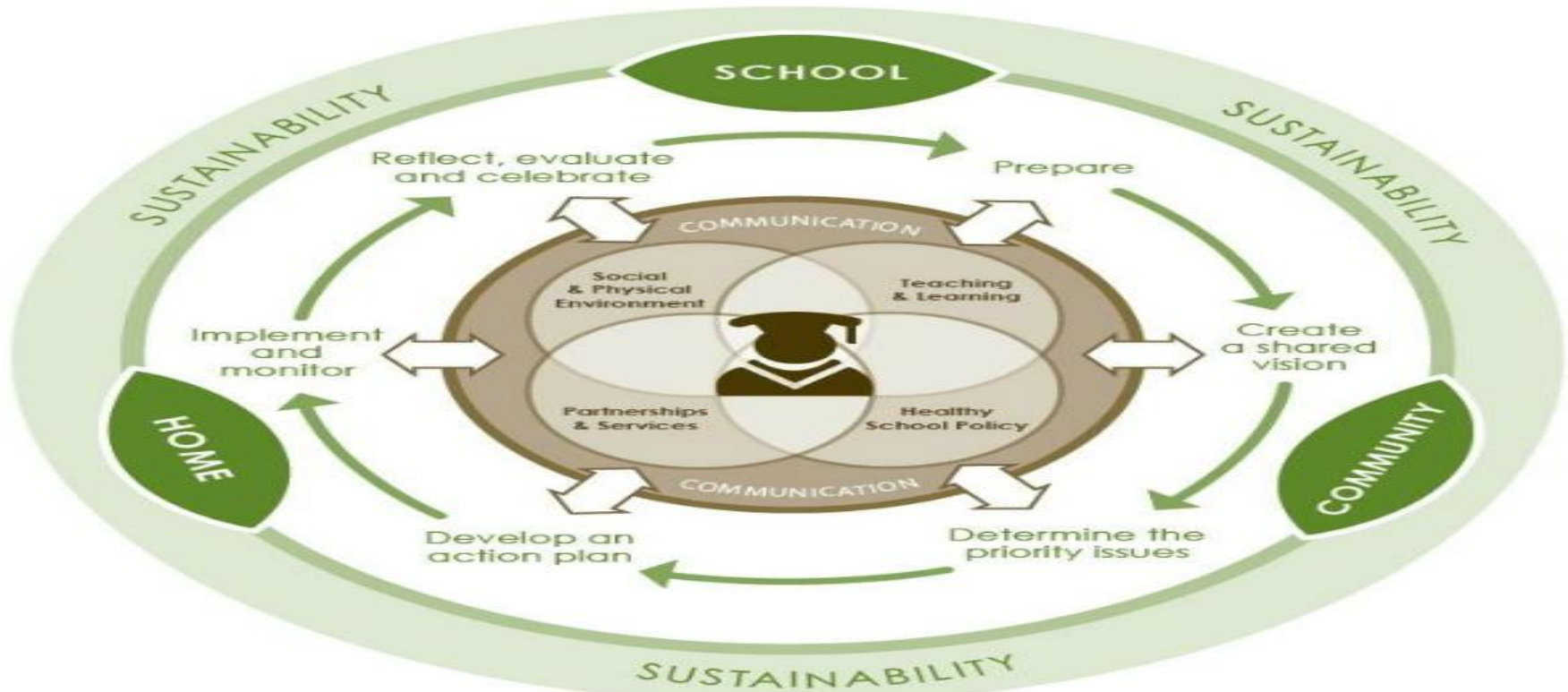


Planning

- Wellness committee
- Action plan
 - a) CSH framework
 - b) Vision/goal/objectives, target groups, program resources/funding, evaluation process
 - c) Partnership: AHS MH Screening/Early Identification
 - d) Universal vs targeted program
 - e) Engaging staff commitment



Comprehensive School Health Model



Alberta Health Services. (n.d.). *Tool Kit for Health Champions: Working through the phases*.
 Joint Consortium for School Health. (2008). *What is Comprehensive School Health?* Retrieved February 28, 2011, from http://eng.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=40&Itemid=62.
 Queensland Government. (2005). *Health Promoting Schools Toolbox: Booklet 2 – how do we do it?...the process*. Retrieved February 28, 2011 from <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthyschools/toolbox.asp>.

Vision, goals, objectives and funding

Vision

- Create a positive social environment

Goal

- Increase social-emotional literacy

Objectives

- Improve social emotional developmental skills and resiliency

Target Groups

- Students, staff and parents

Funding

Partnership: AHS Mental Health

- Training
- Evaluation



Universal vs. targeted programming?

Does everyone benefit?

Is it better just for kids that
“need it”?



Everyone benefits from social emotional
learning skills!

Engaging Staff Commitment

- Team work
- Leadership
- On-going professional development
- Communication



SEL & HeartMath

Social Emotional Learning

➤ Five Core social/emotional areas

Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies



HeartMath

- Early HeartSmarts K-Grade 1
- HeartSmarts Grades 3-5
- Emwave PC Visual biofeedback



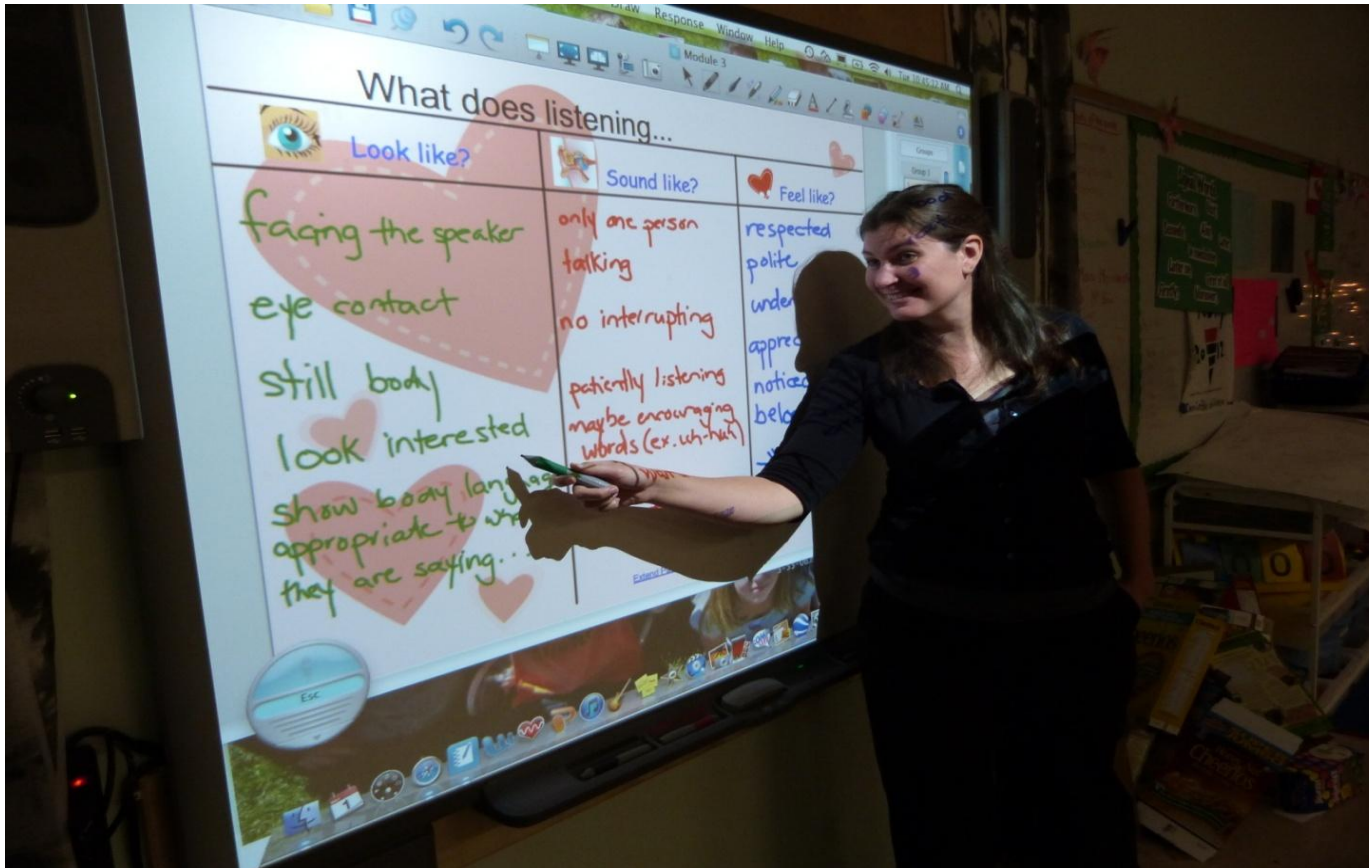
HeartMath LLC

Implementation

- Training for staff
- Training for parents



Implementation



Implementation: EmWave



Quantitative Evaluation

- Outcome Evaluation: Pre-Post test questionnaires
 - DESSA-Mini for K-Gr. 1 N=96
 - Post program scores slightly higher
 - Not statistically significant
 - Modified HeartSmarts self report rubric Gr. 3-5 N=140
 - Post program scores higher than pre program
 - Not statistically significant

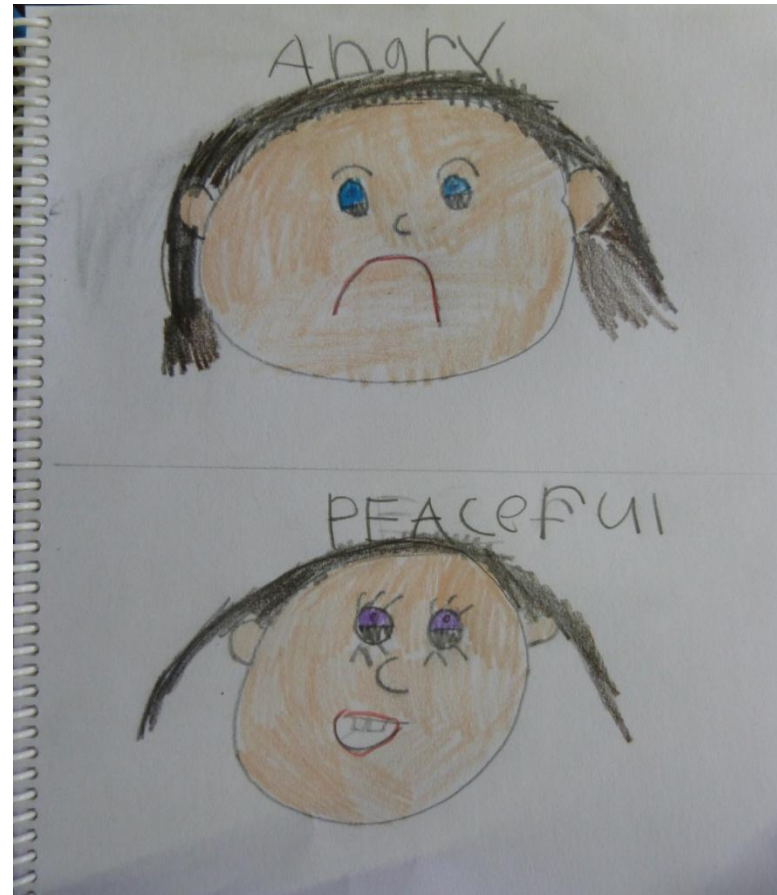
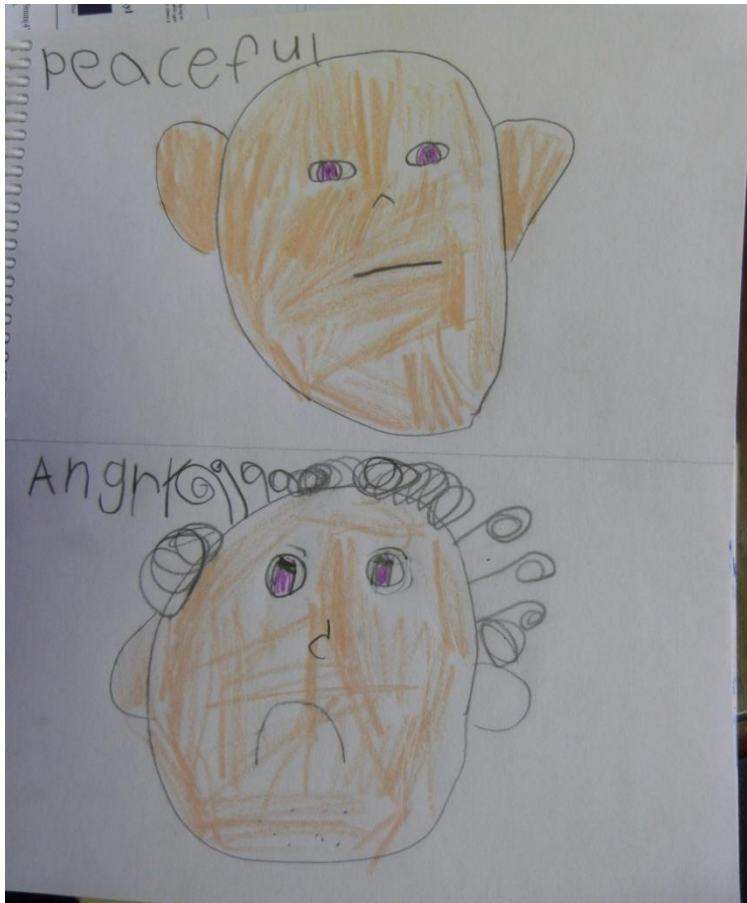
Qualitative Evaluation

Semi-structured interviews

- Teachers, Principal, parents
- Identified Strengths/Facilitators
 - Social emotional literacy/skill development
 - Learning in and beyond the classroom
 - Parent participation and fostering communication



Emotional Literacy



Coping: A Student Helps Himself



Caring for Others



Teacher Vignettes

“I have a child that is in trouble. They come to my office and I can see them put their hand over their heart, little Gr. 1 and breathe...One little girl who had been in my office frequently, she was able to articulate what the issue was, whereas previously before we did HeartMath she would come in and we would spend 20-45 min even trying to open the dialogue about what the problem was...”

Teaching Others

“I have seen...the kids start using it with each other, saying, in the playground when they have been having an argument ‘oh you need to calm down; use your HeartMath. And...you can see the other child...took a step and they did the breathing, and you could see they started losing the red in their face. So the kids are telling each other to use it, which I think is probably the most effective way to use it



Parent Vignette

- **After attending the workshop, I better understand some of the simple yet effective strategies for anxiety management that she has learned in the classroom. I have been using them with her, and they do help her manage her anxiety...**
- **The workshop reminded me of the stress that accompanies childhood. It gave me time to pause, to imagine things from her perspective. Being able to anticipate some of her anxieties means we can work together to address them proactively, not reactively.**
- **. My husband and I are pleased that she is in a school where education involves the whole child.**

Challenges

Identified Weaknesses/Challenges

- Program content: Grade specific
- Implementation Challenges
 - Time constraints
 - Universal approach versus targeted group delivery
- Evaluation Challenges



Key “Take-aways”

- CSH Framework & Action plan
- Plan for evaluation sustainability upfront
- Involvement & buy-in from all stakeholders
- Knowledge translation: research-practice-community
- Leadership and Health Champions
- Resource assessment, time, budget
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Celebrations

Summary



Designed by Chelsea
Anderson 2013

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Questions?



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