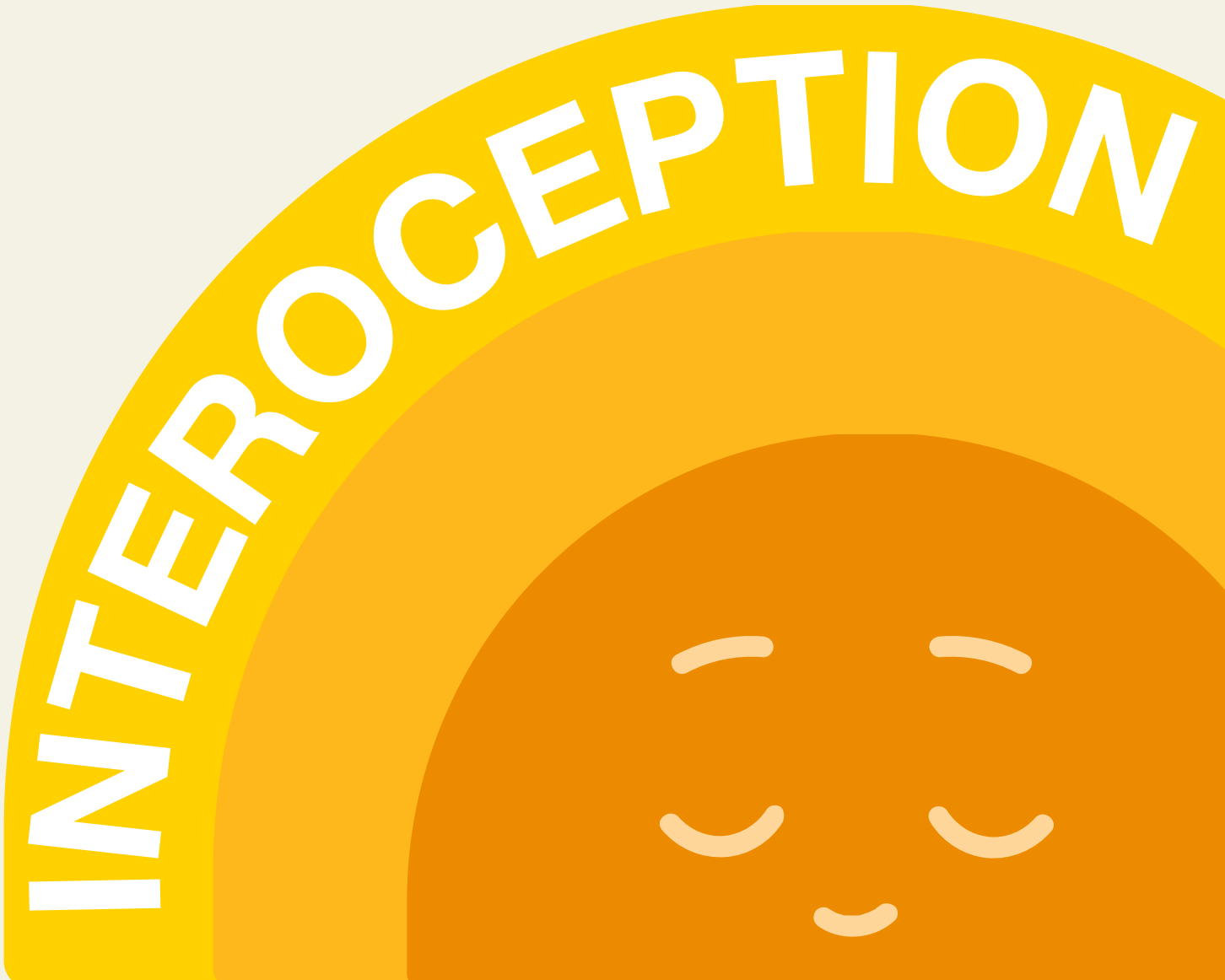
Australian Childhood Foundation

Educator handbook

A guide to help facilitate interoception education in the classroom.



Australian Childhood Foundation

Contents

1 What is interoception?

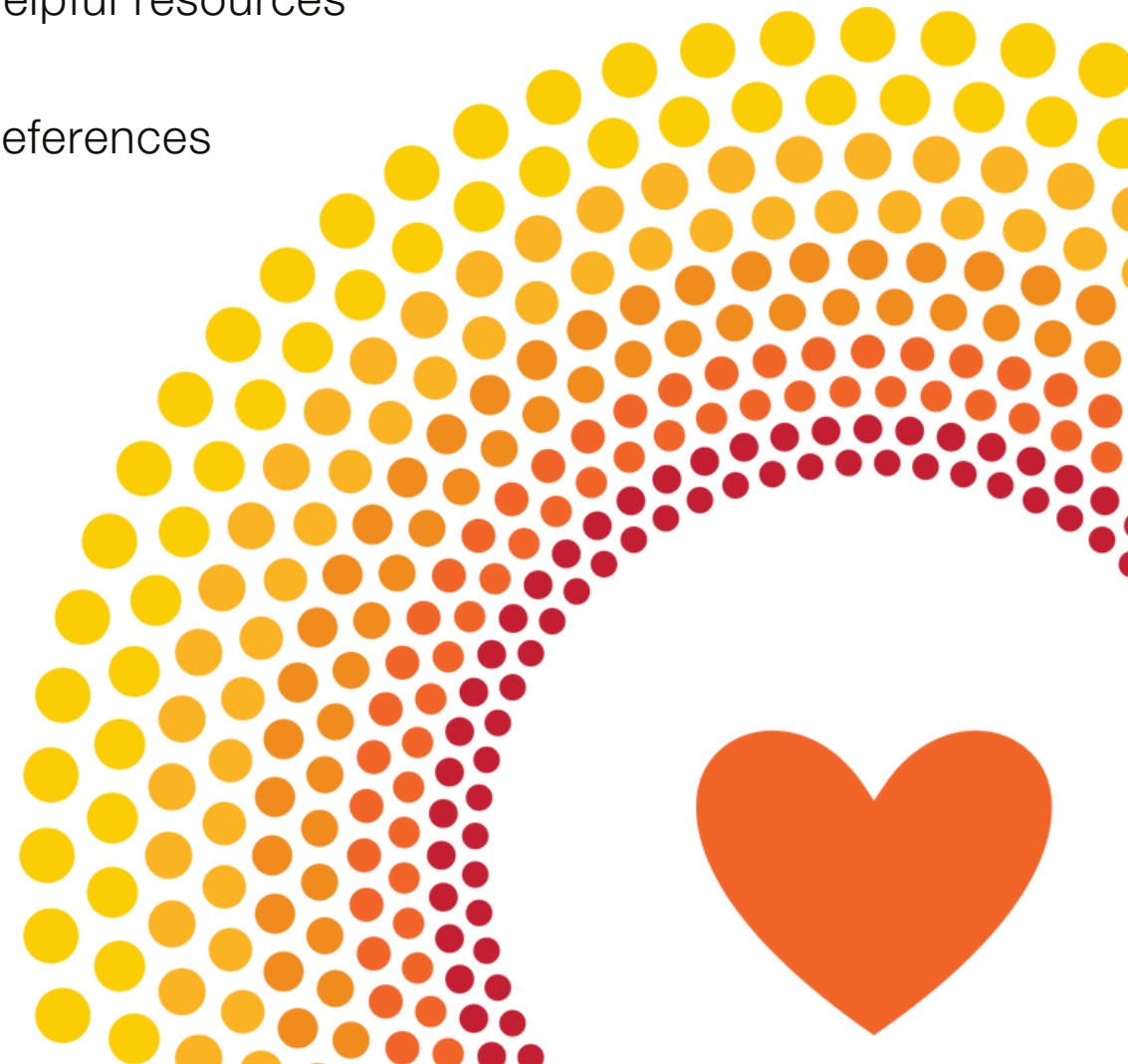
2 Why teach interoception?

3 Setting up your workshop

4 Facilitator notes

5 Helpful resources

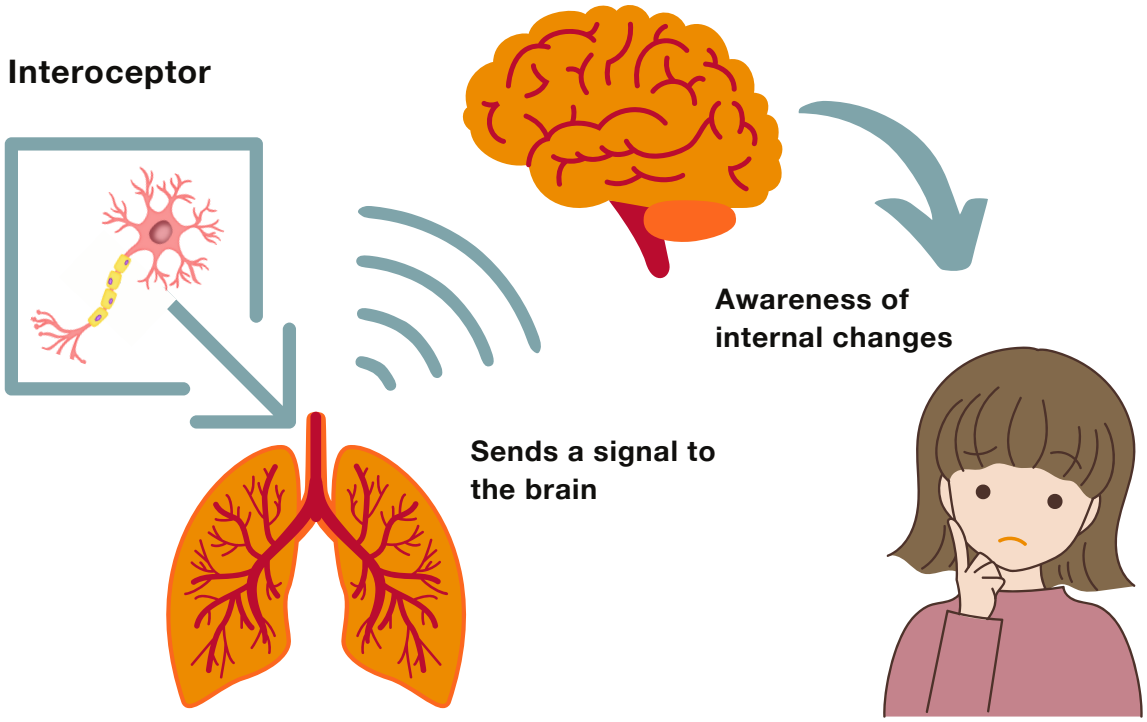
6 References



1 What is interoception?

Interoception is our internal body sense that tell us how we "feel" and understand what's happening inside our body, influencing both physical and emotional well-being (Farb & Mehling, 2017).

How It Works:
Sensory receptors called interoceptors located our internal body organs and tissues, send signals to the brain when responding to a stimuli (Pliakopanou, 2024). Giving us an awareness of our internal state.



Without this awareness, we struggle to meet our body's needs and engage in self regulation (Price & Hooven, 2017).

2 Why teach interoception?

"I am no longer spending all day on behaviour, but can actually focus on doing my job." - Principal

(Goodall, 2020)

"Students will even ask when we are going to do our interoception if I have forgotten. They really feel the benefit of it."- Class teacher

(Goodall, 2020)

Interoception education is an emerging practice within the education system. Studies suggest that schools who implement interoception learning, have decreased behavioural challenges over the school year (Department of Education South Australia, 2023). Benefits for students include:

- **Emotional Regulation**
- **Stress Reduction**
- **Improved Focus and Attention**

Improving Interoceptive awareness allows students to better manage stress, improve focus, and enhance their overall well-being, which supports academic success (Department of Education South Australia, 2023).

3 Setting up your workshop

The Australian Childhood Foundation has developed an educational workshop for teachers to deliver interoception education to students.

To access this presentation, click on the below link:

***Interoception in the Classroom**

TIP: To get the best interactive experience out of the presentation, it is best delivered via the Canva website. Follow this link to create a free account: canva.com

About the workshop

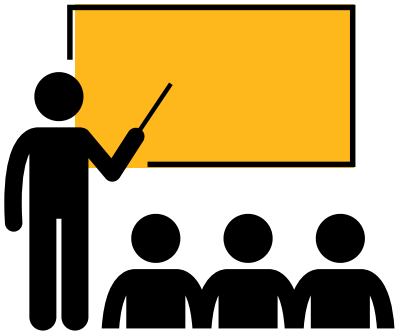
The presentation will take approximately 30 minutes



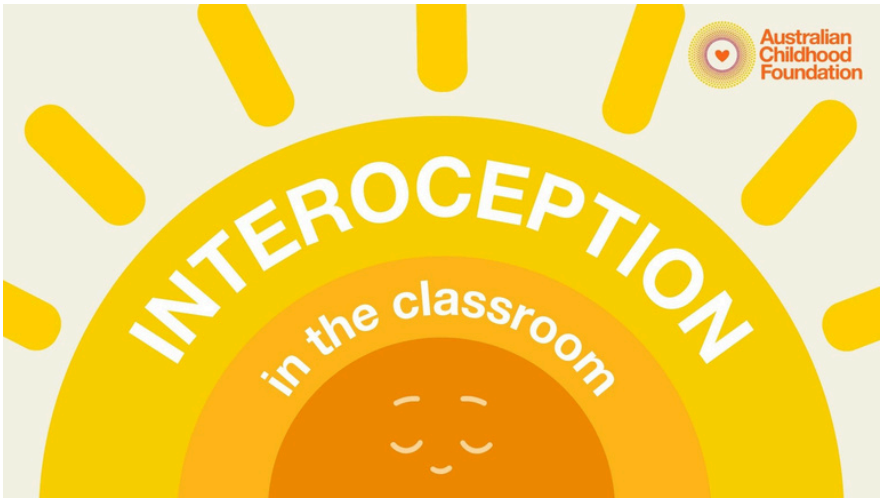
The presentation is best delivered in a group setting, for grades 7-9.

Sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences are strongly encouraged by both facilitator and students throughout the workshop.





4 Facilitator Notes



SLIDE 1

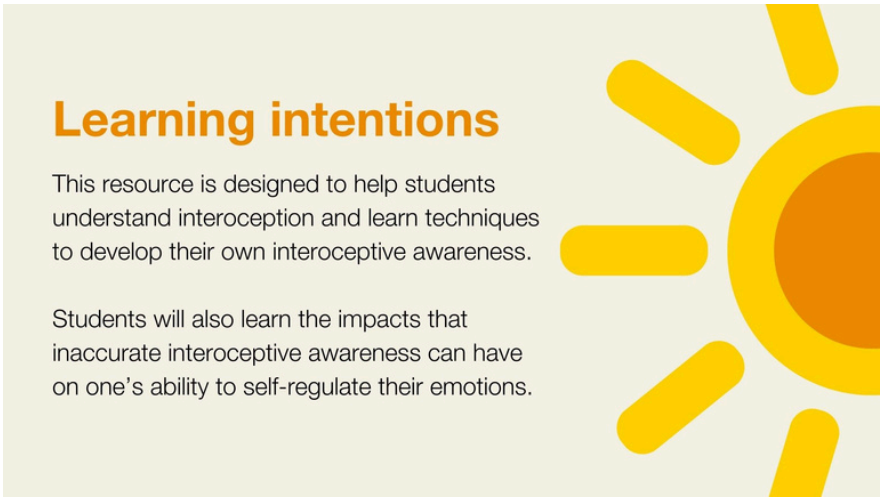
Good Morning, today we will be learning about our body's eighth sense called interoception.



SLIDE 2

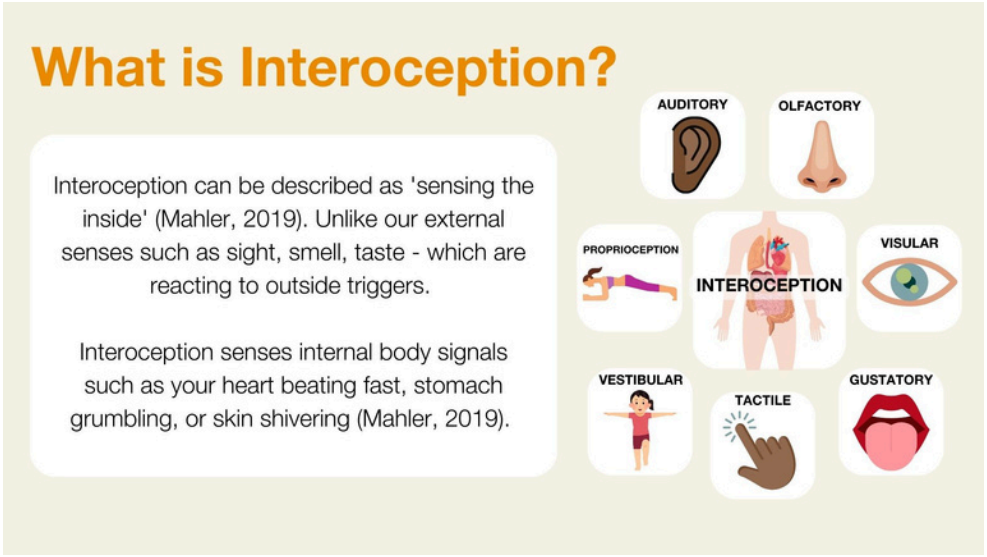
Please acknowledge the traditional owners of the land you are presenting on

---



SLIDE 3

All info on slide



SLIDE 4

All info on slide



SLIDE 5

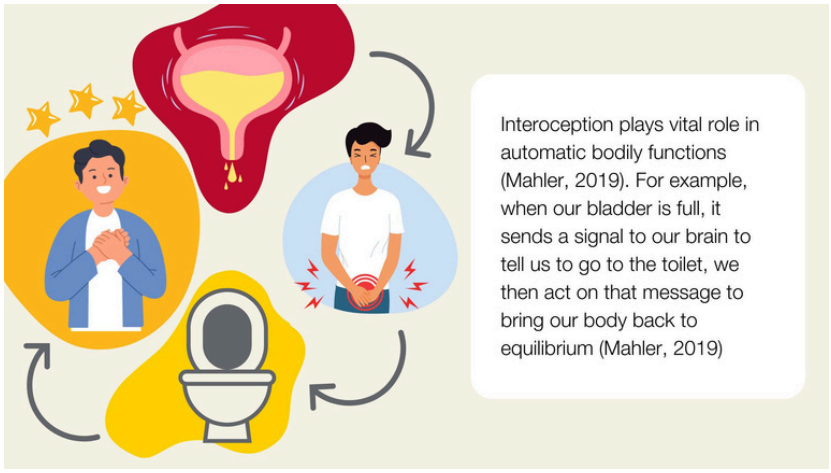
Prompt students to share their experiences



SLIDE 6

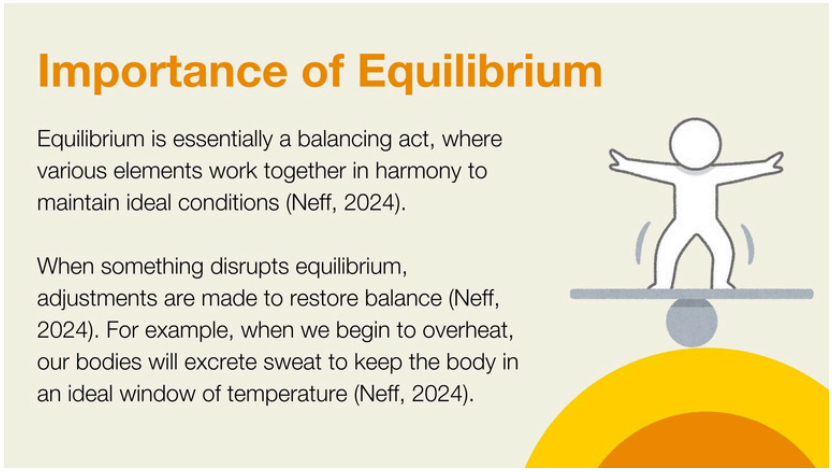
FAQ - what is the difference between interoception and intuition?

Our ‘gut feeling’ is an instinctive emotional response, and it can involve both bodily sensations (interoception) and unconscious mental processes (intuition). Essentially, interoception provides the physical sensation of the gut feeling, while intuition relates to the mental interpretation of that sensation (Shanks, 2008).



SLIDE 7

All info on slide



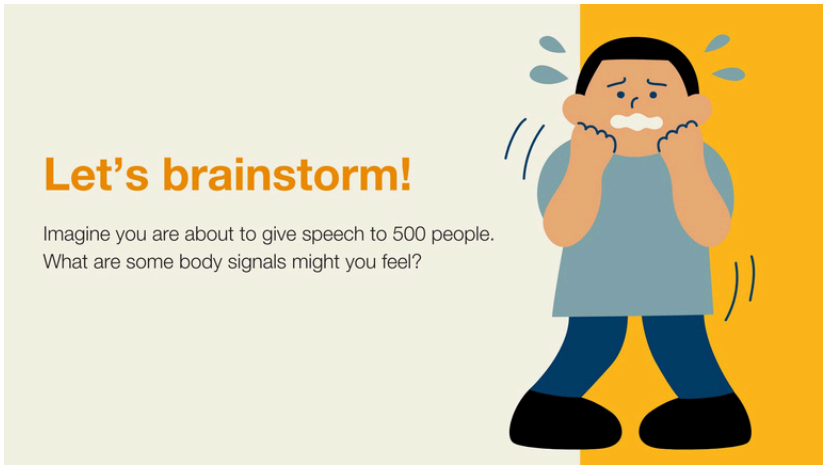
SLIDE 8

All info on slide



SLIDE 9

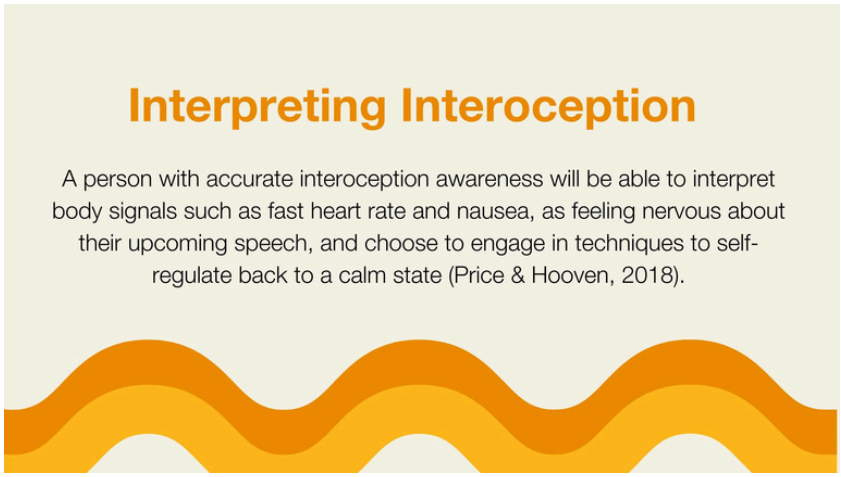
All info on slide



SLIDE 10

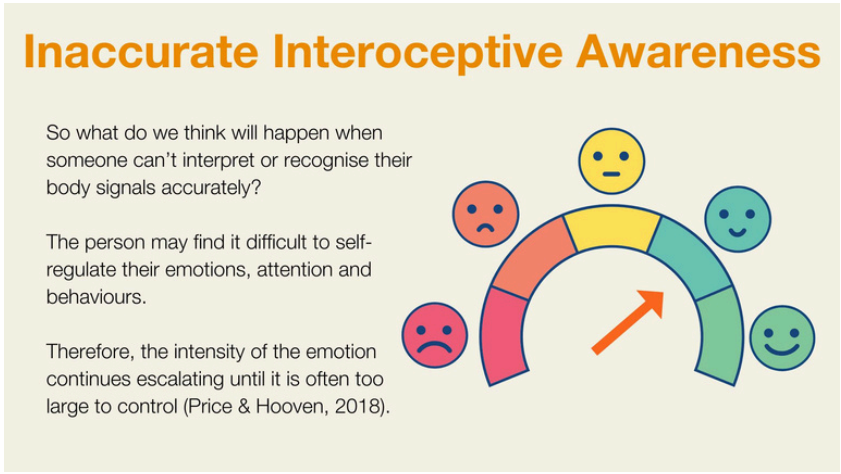
Prompt students to tune into what body sensations they would feel

Examples: skin shivering, need to pee, shaking, nauseous.



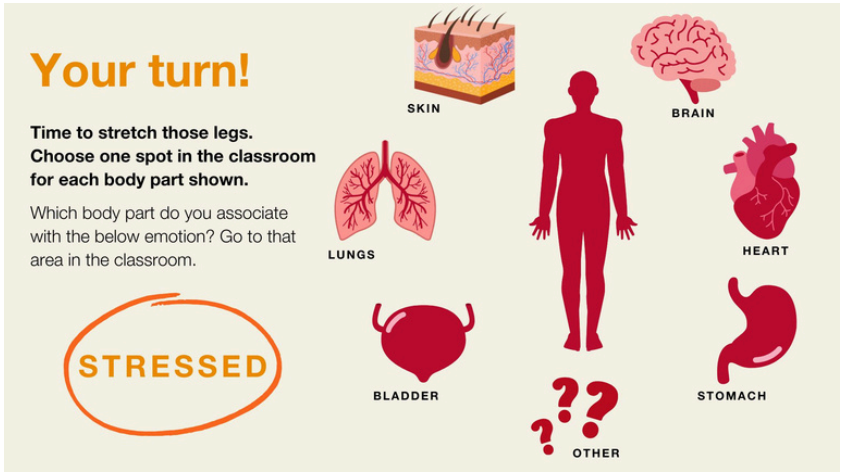
SLIDE 11

Example:
Body sensation: fast heart rate.
Interoception: Associating this sensation with feeling nervous.
Self regulation: Engaging in deep breathing to slow down heart rate and settle nerves.



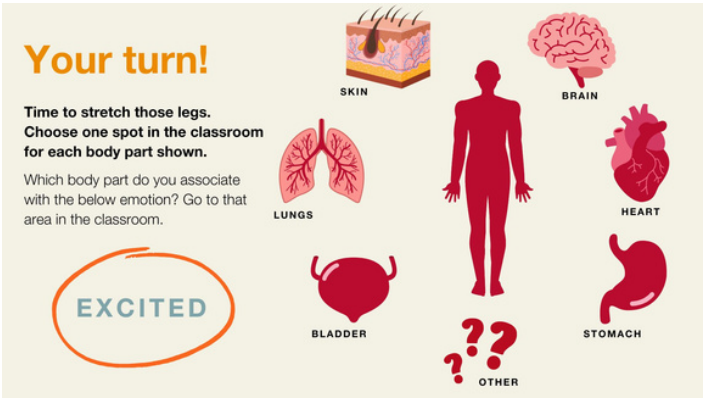
SLIDE 12

All info on slide



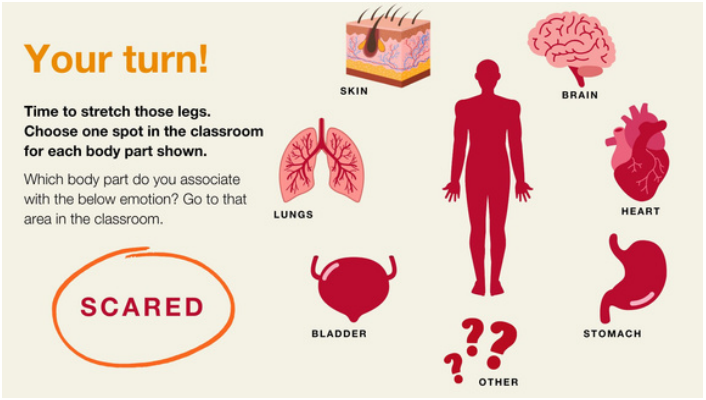
SLIDE 13

Pick 7 areas in classroom for students to walk to, or have students raise their hands to show which body part they associate with feeling stressed



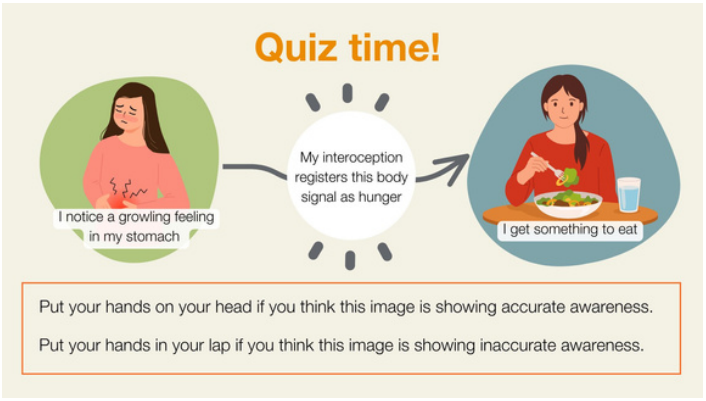
SLIDE 14

Continue the activity and ask students to share experiences of when they've noticed these signs in the past.



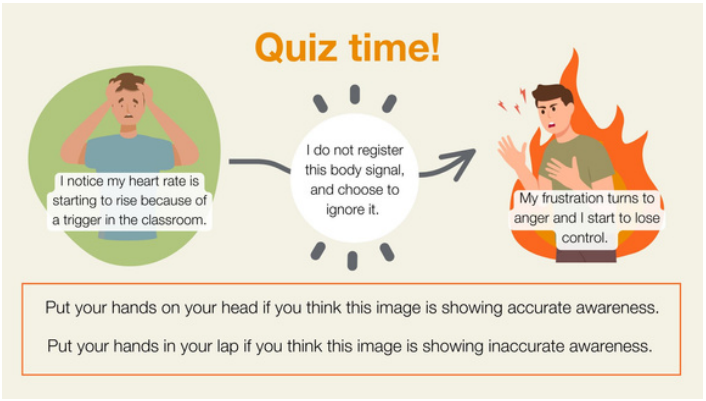
SLIDE 15

Ask students to return to their seats after the activity



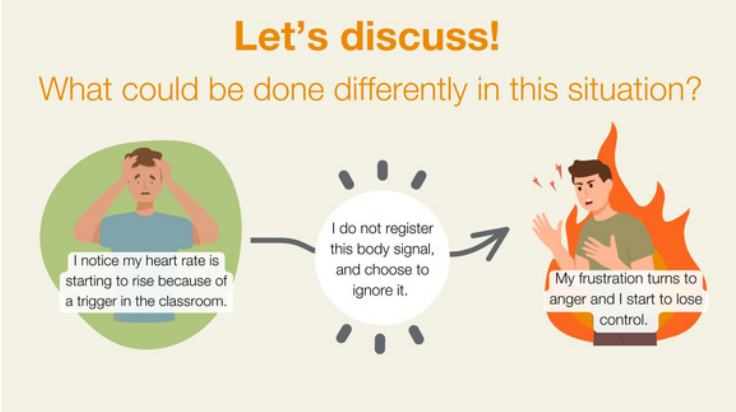
SLIDE 16

This image is displaying accurate interoceptive awareness



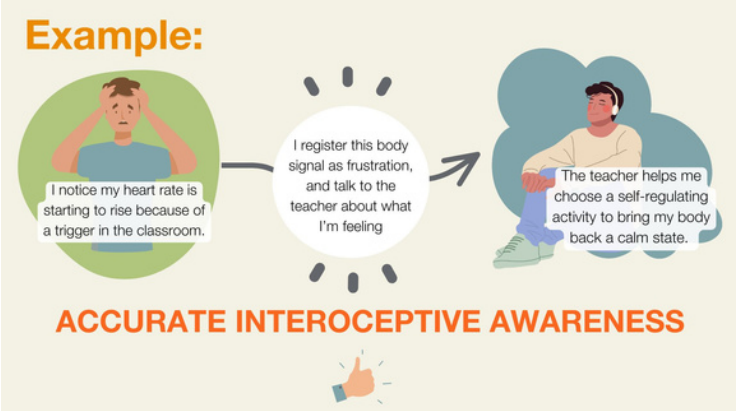
SLIDE 17

This image is displaying inaccurate interoceptive awareness



SLIDE 18

Encourage students to share



SLIDE 19

This image shows how accurate interoception awareness can be helpful in self-regulating emotions in the classroom.



SLIDE 20

Let's take a look at some activities we can do as a class and individually to help practice interoceptive awareness

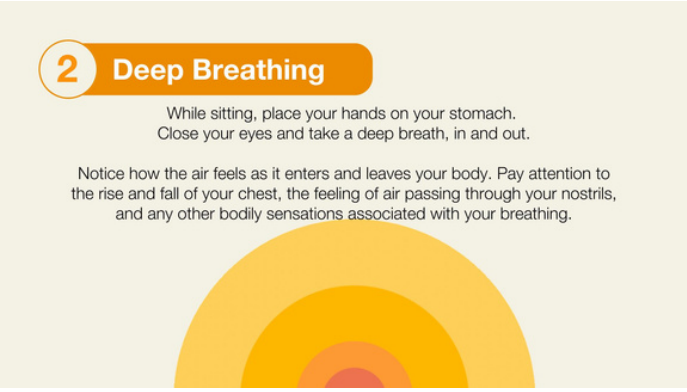
---



SLIDE 21

Please be mindful that body scans may be overwhelming or unsafe for students who have interoception difficulties or trauma experiences

All info on slide



SLIDE 22

All info on slide



SLIDE 23

All info on slide



SLIDE 24

Encourage students to try different activities and see which one helps them tune into their body. Hint: If an activity works well, it could also be used as a form of self regulation in future.



SLIDE 25

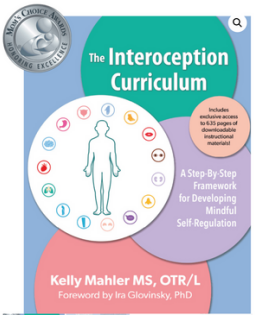
All info on slide

5 Helpful resources

Books / Courses

Interoception and self-regulation
Student Wellbeing Hub

The Interoception Curriculum
By Kelly Mahler



Articles / Blogs

Interoception: Knowing Yourself Inside and Out
Reframing Autism

Interoception: the hidden sense that can help children understand their feelings before they react
By Jessica Wright

Apps

Smiling Mind
Offers guided meditation and activities to improve mental fitness

Headspace
Offers guided meditation and mindfulness activities

6 References

Department for Education South Australia. (2023). Applying Interoception Skills in the classroom. https://www.education.sa.gov.au/schools-and-educators/curriculum-and-teaching/curriculum-programs/applying-interoception-skills-classroom.

Goodall, E. (2020). Thriving at School: how interoception is helping children and young people engage in learning everyday. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350960989_Thriving_at_School_how_interoception_is_helping_children_and_young_people_engage_in_learning_everyday

Farb, N. and Mehling, W E. (2016) Interoception, contemplative practice, and health. Frontiers in Psychology. 7. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01898.

Pliakopanou, A. (2024, August). Sensory receptors: Definition, types, adaption. Kenhub. https://www.kenhub.com/en/library/physiology/sensory-receptors

Price, C J. Hooven, C. (2018). Interoceptive Awarenefor Emotion Regulation: Theory and Approach of Mindful Awareness in Body-Oriented Therapy (MABT). Frontiers in Psychology. 9. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00798.

Shanks, D R. (2008). Guts vs. brains — A review of Gut Feelings: The intelligence of the unconscious. Evolution and Human Behavior. 29(3). pp (219-221). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2007.11.004