WHAT IS A GROWTH MINDSET?

- Developed by Dr. Carol Dweck, psychologist who has been researching the way we learn for 30 years.
- Incorporates positive psychology and principles of neuroplasticity
- Mindset is described as “the view you adopt for yourself”, and it can profoundly affect the way you lead your life.
- Two types of mindset and how those mindsets view ability:
  - A fixed ability that needs to be proven
  - A changeable ability that can be developed through learning
- Fixed Mindset: abilities and talents are fixed, cannot be changed – you are born with a certain amount
- Growth Mindset: people have limitless potential to learn and grow

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD A GROWTH MINDSET

We have adapted activities from The Growth Mindset Playbook, as they were designed for younger students

- Start with a survey to assess their growth and fixed mindsets
- Give background on growth mindset theory, research, depending on student interests and understanding
- Resources for videos on the theory/science:
  - Classdojo.com
  - Youtube: videos of Dr. Dweck giving talks, ‘The Power of Belief – Mindset and Success by Eduardo Briceno
- Our Changing Brains – have students engage in a variety of activities using both their dominant and non-dominant hand
  - Students pay attention to how it feels when using their non-dominant hand
  - Create a word bubble or figure with these feelings
  - This is how it feels to learn something new – it’s supposed to be hard! With practice, it will get easier

GROWTH MINDSET AND DISCLOSURE

- Many of our students struggle with disclosing their disability in higher education or at work, especially if their disability or challenges are recently acquired.
- Teaching students a growth mindset can help facilitate their willingness to disclose and utilize accommodations
- Accommodations can be seen as strategies to facilitate their learning.
- Turn fixed mindset voices about disclosure/accommodations into growth mindsets

BENEFIT OF A GROWTH MINDSET FOR STUDENTS

- See failures and challenges as opportunities for learning and growth
- Individuals with growth mindset are more resilient than those with fixed mindset when faced with setbacks or obstacles
- Can help motivate students when struggling in college
- Frustration when things are hard, such as adjusting to new diagnoses or challenges, is part of learning and normal
- Can allow students to be more open to disclosing their disability, using accommodations, and accepting their challenges

- Responding to fixed mindset triggers: identify fixed and growth mindset ways of thinking, practice changing a fixed mindset to a growth mindset
- Planning for Failure: since failures can often send us down the path of a fixed mindset, make a plan for potential failures to keep your growth mindset voice strong

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT A GROWTH MINDSET

- Start by looking at your own mindset – are you demonstrating a growth mindset for students? Do you have a growth mindset about their abilities?
- Incorporate growth mindset ways of thinking when working with students
  - Set high standards for all students
  - Frame failures or setbacks as an opportunity for learning
  - When giving feedback, praise efforts instead of outcomes
  - Encourage students to try a new strategy when something isn’t working
- Have students engage in activities described to learn about growth mindset
  - Lots of good resources and videos online as well
  - Explain the science behind a growth mindset for students who will understand and appreciate these details
- Point out when students are saying things with their fixed mindset voice – and help them reframe their thinking into a growth mindset voice
  - Use the power of yet – “I can’t do this…yet”

REFERENCES