

What is INTEROCEPTION?

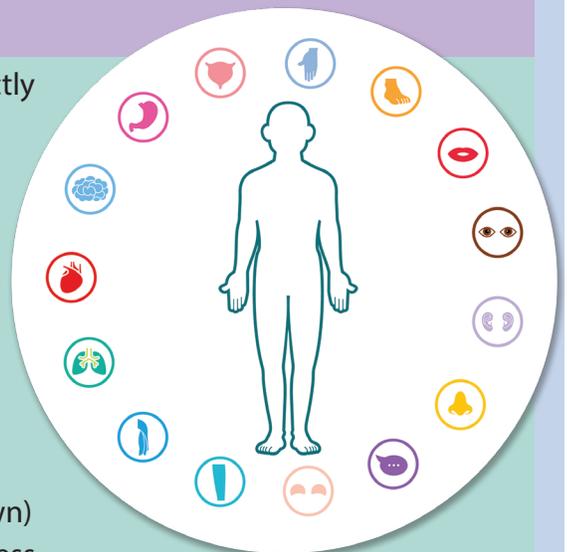
Interoception is a sense that allows us to notice internal body signals like a growling stomach, racing heart, tense muscles or full bladder. When we notice these body signals our brain uses them as clues to our emotions. Interoception helps us to feel many important emotions including:

Hunger	Pain	Sleepiness	Anxiety	Calm
Fullness	Illness	Need for Bathroom	Distraction	Boredom
Thirst	Body Temperature	Anger	Focus	Sadness

Differences in Interoception

are very common and can lead to challenges in identifying exactly how one feels. Common signs of interoception differences can include **difficulty** with one or more of the following:

- Recognizing when hungry, full or thirsty
- Toilet training (daytime and/or night time)
- Identifying when sleepy
- Overly sensitive or not sensitive enough to pain
- Pinpointing symptoms of illness
- Identifying emotions in self
- Identifying emotions in others
- Recognizing building signs of distress (before a full meltdown)
- Independently using coping strategies during times of distress



Can interoception be improved?

The good news is YES! Research shows that interoception can be improved. There are many easy strategies that can be incorporated into your daily routines that can improve your child's interoception.

Strategies

- 1) Use '**Interoception Talk**': Label the way your various body parts feel during daily activities (e.g. "My hand feels warm when you hold it; My cheek feels wet when you kiss it; My breathing feels fast when I run with you.").
- 2) Encourage your child's '**Interoception Attention**': Encourage your child to notice how various body parts feel during daily activities (e.g. "How do your hands feel when you are holding a glass of ice water?; How do your eyes feel at bedtime?; Look at the goosebumps on your skin; Put your hand on your chest and feel your heart beating fast.").

For more information and free resources visit www.kelly-mahler.com.

For even more free information join the Facebook Group **Interoception: The Eighth Sensory System**