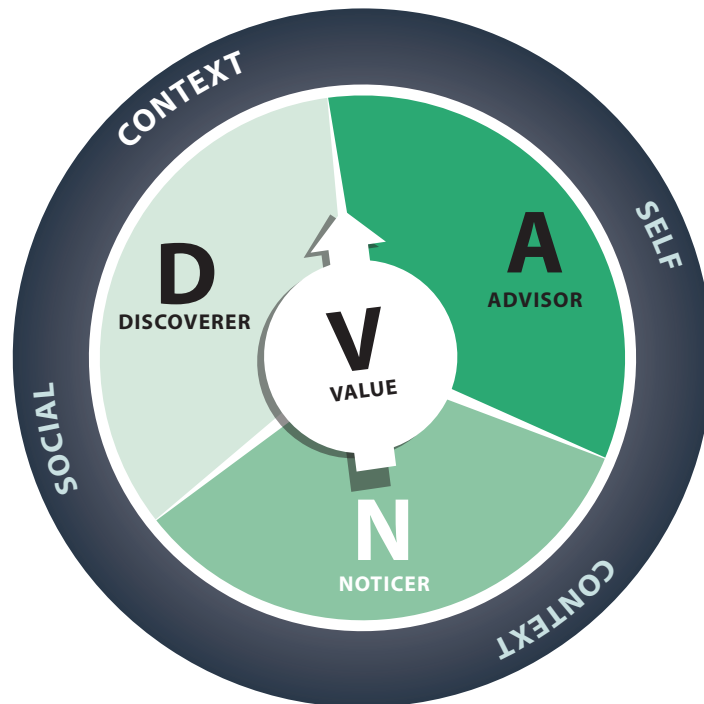


DNA-V



Helping kids and parents thrive

DNA-V is the latest scientific knowledge on growth and development for kids, using mindfulness, acceptance and positive psychology. DNA-V is made for kids, based on a developmental awareness of what kids can do and what they need to do to reach their full potential. DNA-v is for the whole child — body, mind and relationships.

DNA-V is a holistic way to help your child learn how to discover their talents, connect with their feelings, use their minds, learn how to be with themselves, and make friends and social connections. The model is designed to work developmentally with kids from 5 or 6 years and upwards.

Part 2 - DNA-v self-view: For flexible kids

Working on the self can be one of the most powerful ways to help adults with personal struggles to become more psychologically flexible, but it's always been a challenge to help kids do this. DNA-v makes it easier and more fun. With DNA-v you can use mindfulness and acceptance work on the self in a more holistic and developmentally sensitive way. And, you can give the information directly to parents, so you'll be helping parents get more flexible too.

Also see:

Part 1: The basics

Part 1, describing the basic skills of D, N, A and V is important for fully learning the concepts described in this booklet. It can be downloaded here - <http://thrivingadolescent.com/dna-v-a-developmental-model-for-kids/>

Part 3 - Becoming social

Part 3 describes social DNA-v and how we use the model to help kids with friendships, relationships, handling difficulties, and being in groups.

Coming in August 2016.

How to use this tip sheet

These tip sheets are designed for easy use by parents, teachers and professionals — adult learners. Although the information can stand alone, we have found the best way to understand how to use DNA-V is to show adult learners how to do the skills on themselves. It is best to give out one sheet at a time, and allow learners to slowly build their skills. Build skills experientially. Help learners step inside DNA-V and you will be giving them a powerful tool to help their child.

Go to www.thrivingforkids.com and sign up for our newsletter.

Never miss a new DNA-v free resource again.

No spam, ever!

DNA-v tip sheets for families

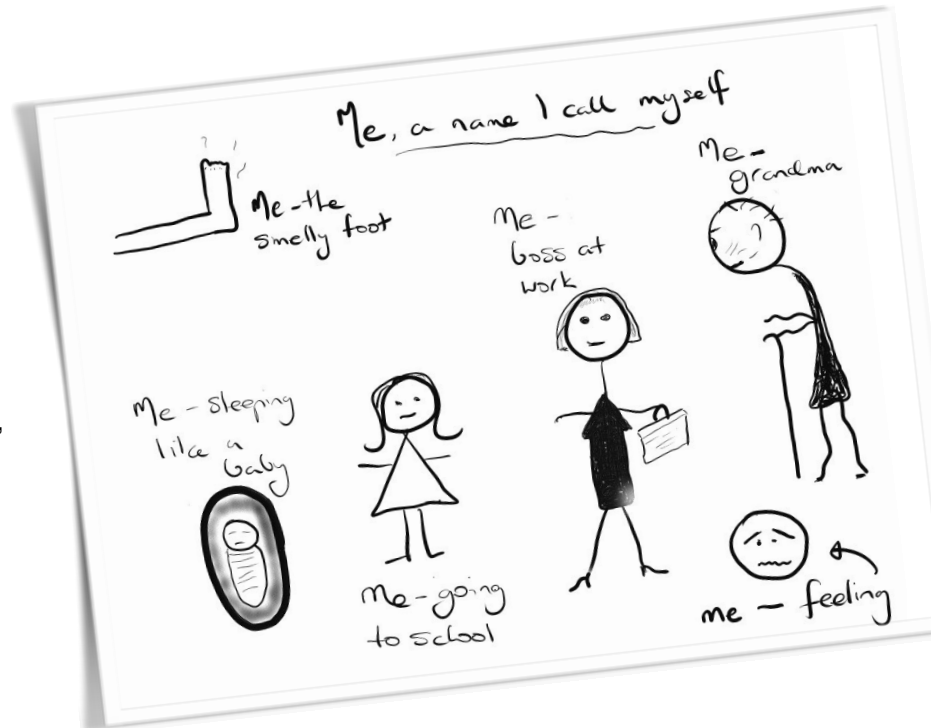


DNA-v self-view: For flexible kids

This tip sheet is for kids under 12 years and their parents/carers. This first section is for adults to read. The second section has activities you can do with your kids.

DNA-v is a child and teen developmental model based on the psychological science of mindfulness, acceptance and positive psychology¹

We begin by looking at how a young person's sense of self can help them stay motivated, and also demotivate them. We will learn how to promote a flexible, helpful sense of self.



The what where and how of the self

If you were asked, "Where is your self?" how would you respond?

Perhaps you would point to your chest and say, "This is me, my self is here". But think about this, your body is totally different now to the body you had as a newborn baby, and different to the one you will have when you are very old. If we took all of the photos of you across time and morphed them into one image we might get closer to something that resembles your 'self' because we would see that you are not one thing, but a constantly changing process, like nature.

It isn't just your body that changes. Your feelings are different now to how they were

when you were younger and how they'll be when you are old. Your thoughts are different now to when you were a baby, and they'll change with each passing year.

Imagine if we could use a computer to morph all of our thoughts and feelings across the course of our life. We would see a constantly changing and evolving process; sometimes confident, sometimes critical, but always changing.

Even after reading this, you are likely to answer a question, "What is your self?" as if you are the 'right now' person and you are likely to add some labels to describe yourself (smart, dumb, mother, son, etc). But just like your thoughts, feelings, and bodies, your roles are always changing. You are always a role. Now you are a 'learner,' later you may be a 'teacher' or 'parent,' and still later you may

be a 'son' or 'daughter'.
You are not one of
these. You are all of
these and more.

You are more than
your thoughts, feelings,
bodies, and self-
judgments. You are like
the sky, and all these ideas about
yourself are like the weather. Sometimes the
ideas are good (sunny), sometimes not so
good (cold and dark), but you always there
just as the sky is always there holding all the
weather.

Kids the self, and DNA-v

The key to strong flexible kids is to help them
see themselves through many views. They
are all their DNA-v, not just their feelings and
sensations (noticer) or their thoughts and
beliefs (advisor) or their repeated or
exploratory behaviour (discoverer).

Things you can say and play

Say what they do:

Whenever you can, try to encourage a growth
mindset by speaking of the behaviour you want to
encourage. Remember, labelling is for products not
for people.

Believe it or not, some types of encouragement
may not be helpful. For example, praising young
people because of their talent can actually hold
them back³. We think we are being nice when we
say a young person is clever, smart, good, or
whatever, but when we say this, the young person
becomes attached to this idea of themselves. They



The key point is that
because they are not any
one label, they don't have to
be limited by labels. Our kids
are capable of growing and
changing.

It's hard to grab this idea, but teaching it to
kids can set them on a growth path². We
want them to learn that just like a computer
can morph images, our self is a creation from
our ever changing bodies, thoughts, feelings,
actions, learning, the people we spend time
with, the experiences we have, and much
more.

In a nutshell, DNA-v can be used to help
your child discover that they are more than
the labels they use to describe themselves;
more than, *smart or dumb, girl or boy, poor
or rich, black or white*. We help them see
their self is all DNA-v, they are the discoverer,
the noticer, and the advisor.

4 ways to give praise that encourages growth

1. **Praise effort:** "I like the way you tried hard on the test".
2. **Praise strategy:** "It's great that you tried a few ways to solve this".
3. **Praise choice:** "It must have been hard to choose which friend to play with today. I like that you chose to speak nicely to both girls".
4. **Give corrective feedback:** "It's hard doing homework and it is more fun to play your game. How do you think you can get your homework done today?"

want to "keep" the idea of talented. As a result, they avoid risking failure in order to not appear "untalented".

Just as talent labels can be unhelpful, so can critical labels. Speaking of your child using words like, "You are _____ (insert negative word = lazy, annoying, etc)" teaches them they are a fixed, negative thing. It teaches them to label themselves and can undermine their hope. Rather than praising or criticising a young person's self, we want to praise and give corrective feedback on their behaviour.

Help them see they are all DNA-v:

At the end of this tip sheet is a DNA-v blank disc. You, your child, and your family can do lots of activities that show how we are not just one small part — we are all DNA-v.

A simple drawing task. Inside each part of the disc draw icons, images, to represent each part. Try to avoid using words (because we are so used to labelling ourselves, this task is about seeing our self as more than the label). Don't worry about the art being good or bad. Everything is just fine.

As in all DNA spaces, simply draw low skill icons or high skilled icons to show things that you do. For example, in discoverer you can draw low skilled behaviour, such as exploring in a way that is impulsive, or you can draw high skilled behaviour such as exploring in a way that builds skills.

For the **discoverer**, draw things that show the parts of you that like to explore, test and try. (Refer to the discoverer tip sheet for more information.) In this drawing, the person likes to challenge themselves in nature (mountains), likes to work with a team (row boat), likes to challenge themselves at learning (book), and likes to see if their behaviour is working out (the cogs).

For the **advisor**, draw things that show how your past learning, evaluations, judgements,



beliefs, are used to give your self advice. Here we show sometimes worrying, following the rules, thinking flexibly (spring), and many ways of talking to oneself (the shadow images).

For the **noticer**, draw ways that you use your body to notice, how your emotions come and go (waves), how all your feelings are a normal part of you (happy, sad, angry faces) and how you can pause or notice reactions (balloon for balloon breathing activity — see noticer tip sheet).

For **value**, we draw things you like to do that connect with value, what you love, the things

that help you live vitality. Here the drawing shows a heart for loving animals, a family, a person behaving peacefully, and nature.

Use the drawing for discussion. Talk with your child about how they are all these parts. You can even use paper to cover all but one part of DNA-V and comment how all the other parts are still there but they just cannot see them. Help them see they are not just one of these things. They are all of these and more! They are the one who shifts to D, N, and A to build V.

Use the drawing for living. Put the drawing on the fridge. When your child sees

themselves as just one thing, help them to see that the other parts are always there. For example, if your child is feeling grumpy or sad, help them practice noticing skills (see noticer tip sheet) and see that they are many things as well as this feeling (we are not trying to make the feeling pass, just broadening their perspective).

Draw your own DNA-v disc and use that too. Make your own drawing and put it on the fridge too. You and your child can notice together they way your own behaviour also moves around the disc, and that you are many things other than the one thing you are doing at that time.

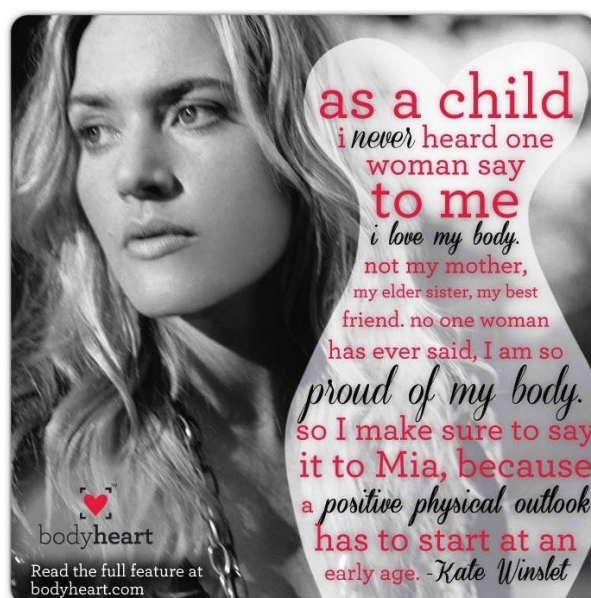
What you say, shows the way:

The way we talk to ourselves has an enormous influence on our children. Far more influence than many parents realise. Do you constantly talk about yourself in negative ways, "I'm too fat/lazy/ugly/old?" When you do this, your child will also learn to do this to themselves. Your child won't stop labelling themselves just because you tell them to stop. They need to see you modelling how to step away from labelling and how to be kind to yourself.

Think of it like this, if you want your child to grow up being kind to themselves, feeling strong and able to test themselves, where will they learn that?

They can learn that from you. The greatest gift you can give your child is to model how you are kind to yourself on your hardest days³.

Pause for a moment and imagine that one day your child is grown up, and they are able to be kind to themselves because they watched you be kind to yourself. That is an incredible gift of love.



Games to play:

Self-view games can be helpful to show your child how they can be seen from different perspectives.

There are some wonderful smartphone/tablet apps you can use for self-view games. Photo morphing apps put lots of photos together so young people can help see how they have changed across time (most tablets have photo software built in that does this). There are also apps that change your voice (Songify) or animate you into cartoon characters (Talking Tom). Of course there are always less high tech games like pretending, dress ups, and story telling with your child as that can be used to help children see themselves from different perspectives.

As you play, discuss with them how different they feel, how they are *more than* the role (it is a part), and how they might see you or others in many ways.

Resources

For more information on DNA-v for kids go to www.thrivingforkids.com

For information on adolescents go to www.thrivingadolescent.com

References

1. Hayes, L., & Ciarrochi, J. (2015). The thriving adolescent: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Positive Psychology to Help Young People Manage Emotions, Achieve Goals, and Build Positive Relationships: Oakland, CA: Context Press.
2. Dweck, C. S. (2000). Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.
3. Wilson, K. G. www.onelifellc.com

