

# HeartMath® Institute Student Mental Health Initiative

Educator Reports: Implementing HeartMath® Programs and Technology



**RSU 3 School District, Maine**

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**We use HeartMath® programs and technologies in our high school resource room.**

Inner Balance™ technology is set up in the high school as an independent station and students self-select for training and participation.

**HeartMath is also used in the middle school** where identified students are trained in small group sessions and can access the technology independently at their own discretion. This has been met with some success. Of the students who have been trained, 3 have used the technology multiple times per week since being trained. A few have used it a few times, and a few have not used the program. One student who has used the program regularly reports greater concentration when playing his sport, and his teachers report more success in his classes.

**HeartMath is used with some elementary, middle and high school students throughout the district** in facilitated sessions 1-2 times per week, depending on the availability of the technology. Here are two reports of 2 students who participated in facilitated sessions.

## Student Reports

### Student 1:

**“Adam” is an 11th-grade student in a life skills program who has significant self-regulation deficits.**

Adam has a history of behavioral challenges that typically arise when faced with transitions, difficult classes, peer interactions at school, and expectations to do chores at home. Behaviors include eloping from appropriate levels of supervision, ignoring expectations to attend classes or complete chores, and high-severity emotional upsets that may include breaking items, yelling, and throwing items. Adam has participated in HeartMath two times per week since November 2022 and has recently begun using the Inner Balance occasionally. **HeartMath is part of a comprehensive intervention plan that includes behavior contracting, and daily calming activities.**

During a meeting in February 2023, Adam’s guardian reported that Adam has been much more flexible when faced with task demands in the home. She noted that he had begun to say, “I need to take some deep breaths and calm down,” where he previously yelled and left the house when prompted to do his chores.

At school, teachers reported that Adam has been attending more classes and has been much more likely to use a coping skill, such as taking a break and trying again, when faced with known difficult activities and tasks. Adam had also struggled to settle on a course of study early in the school year; he had switched concentrations two times since September. As of January 2023, Adam has stuck with his course of study at the technology center. **Adam reports that he feels “more in control” of his emotions and decisions since he started using HeartMath regularly.**

**Student 2:**

**“Danny” is a 1st-grade student who struggles with managing emotions and impulse control.**

Danny struggles with attending to lessons, following expectations and rules, and controlling his body. He has a hard time gaining academic skills and following the classroom routine. Danny’s peer relationships have suffered due to his challenges controlling his body and his struggles managing his emotions when faced with common social situations. Danny has been doing HeartMath 2 times per week, and paced breathing 3 times per week since January 2023.

Since beginning the program, his facilitator has noted greater ability to control his breathing and attend the program for longer periods. His teacher has noticed that fewer peer conflicts are occurring.

**Danny has reported a greater willingness to try calming skills that he is being taught when faced with situations in which he must share or cooperate with others.**

**Danny’s guardian recently reported that he is more willing to get ready to go to school in the morning, which was previously a daily struggle.**