

# Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness Youth Card Deck (MAIA-YCD): Administration Considerations

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The MAIA-YCD contains thirty-two cards and measures eight dimensions of interoceptive awareness in children and youth, ages 7 to 17 years (Appendix A). The card deck can be completed as a self-administered assessment, in which a youth completes the deck without assistance, or in an interview-administered format. It is recommended the deck be completed in an interview-administered format with young children and when used to evaluate changes in interoceptive awareness associated with clinical interventions.

Interoceptive awareness is multidimensional and each of the scales measure separate aspects of interoceptive awareness. For this reason, calculating a summary score for the eight scales is inferior to keeping them separate (Mehling et al., 2012). This allows users to drop scales less relevant to their aims and permits the deck to be administered in more than one session when administration time is a concern.

Most of the scales have acceptable internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .69 - .78$ ), however the Noticing, Not-Distracting and Not-Worrying scales have poor internal consistency reliability (Jones et al., 2021). Still, these scales have been important in studies of pain management (Mehling et al., 2014) and depression (Fissler et al., 2016). They have also been valuable in discriminating between clinical groups (Mehling et al., 2011, 2013). The three scales are valid measures of aspects of interoceptive awareness and are well suited to documenting and teaching the Noticing, Not-Distracting and Not-Worrying aspects of interoceptive awareness.

The Five Regulatory Dimensions of interoceptive awareness, as measured by the MAIA-Y Card Deck, are the ones expected to change the most in response to sensory based, body-mind interventions (Bornemann et al., 2015; Mehling, 2016). For this reason, it is recommended these dimensions be used in research studies and interventions designed to assess improvements in interoceptive awareness. We are not suggesting the elimination of the other three scales (Noticing, Not-Distracting and Not-Worrying) which are important aspects of interoceptive awareness. Instead, we recommend assessing self-reported changes in interoceptive awareness using the five regulatory dimensions: Attention Regulation, Emotional Awareness, Self-Regulation, Body Listening and Trusting. The Five Regulatory Dimensions instructional packet is available free of charge on the [Well & Ready Kids website](https://www.wellandreadykids.com).

## Acknowledgements

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## 8 Dimensions – 32 items

**Noticing:** Awareness of uncomfortable, comfortable, and neutral body sensations (Cards 1-4;  $\alpha = .43$ )

- When I am nervous, I can tell where in my body the feelings come from
- I can tell when I am uncomfortable in my body.
- I can tell where in my body I am comfortable.
- I can tell when my breathing changes, like if it slows down or speeds up.

**Not-distracting:** Tendency not to ignore or distract oneself from sensations of pain or discomfort. (Cards 5-7;  $\alpha = .36$ )

- I ignore bad feelings in my body until they become very strong.
- I distract myself when I feel uncomfortable or feel pain.
- When I feel uncomfortable or feel pain, I try to get over it.

**Not worrying:** Tendency not to worry or experience emotional distress with sensations of pain or discomfort. (Cards 8-10;  $\alpha = .47$ )

- When I feel pain in my body, I become upset.
- I get worried if I feel pain or if I feel uncomfortable.
- I can tell if I have a bad feeling in my body but I don't worry about it.

**Attention Regulation:** Ability to sustain and control attention to body sensations. (Cards 11-17;  $\alpha = .78$ )

- I can focus on how I breathe without thinking about anything else.
- I can focus on the feelings in my body, even when there is a lot going on around me.
- When I am talking to someone, I can focus on the way I am standing or sitting.
- Even if I am distracted, I can go back to thinking how my body feels.
- I can return my focus from thinking about things to feeling my body.
- I can pay attention to my whole body even when a part of it is in pain.
- I can focus on my entire body when I try.

**Emotional Awareness:** Awareness of the connection between body sensations and emotional states (Cards 18-22;  $\alpha = .70$ )

- I can feel how my body changes when I am angry.
- When something is wrong in my life, I can feel it in my body.
- After a peaceful moment, I can feel my body is different.
- I can feel that my breathing becomes free and easy when I am comfortable.
- I can feel how my body changes when I feel happy.

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**Self-Regulation:** Ability to regulate distress by attention to body sensations. (Cards 23-26;  $\alpha = .70$ )

- I can feel calm even if there is a lot going on
- When I focus on how I feel in my body, I calm down
- I can use my breath to help me calm down and relax
- When I am thinking too much, I can calm my mind by focusing on my body/breathing

**Body Listening:** Active listening to the body for insight. (Cards 27-29;  $\alpha = .69$ )

- I listen for clues from my body about my emotions.
- When I am upset, I take time to check how my body feels.
- I listen to my body to help me choose what to do.

**Trusting:** Experience of one's body as safe and trustworthy (Cards 30-32;  $\alpha = .78$ )

- I feel good in my body
- I feel my body is a safe place
- I trust the way my body feels

## ADDITIONAL INTEROCEPTION RELATED RESOURCES

### *Websites*

[Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness](#)  
[Well & Ready Kids](#)

### *Articles*

[Interoception and Mental Health: A Roadmap](#)  
[Introduction to the Special Issue on Interoception and Suicidality](#)  
[Interoception in anxiety and depression](#)  
[Interoception and emotion](#)  
[Interoception and stress](#)  
[Interoception, Contemplative Practice, and Health](#)