

The image features abstract black line art in the corners. The top-left and top-right corners have swirling, organic shapes. The bottom-left and bottom-right corners have more fluid, wavy lines. These elements frame the central text.

NOTICING OUT LOUD:

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***AN ADULT'S
GUIDE TO
INTEROCEPTION
MODELING***

WWW.KELLY-MAHLER.COM

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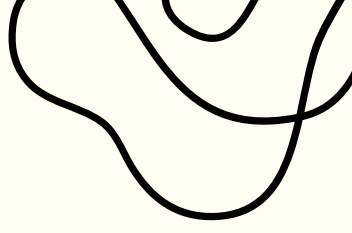
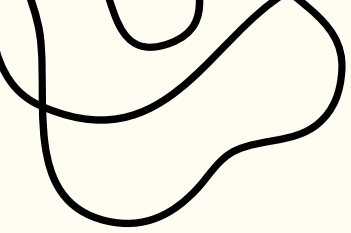
WELCOME!

Interoception is the sense that helps us understand what's happening inside our bodies. It gives us signals that form the foundation of our emotions—clues that tell us when we're hungry, tired, overwhelmed, content, need to pee and more.

When we're more connected to these body signals, we're better able to understand ourselves, express how we feel, and make choices that support our unique physical and emotional well-being. Interoception is at the heart of self-awareness, self-regulation, and even self-compassion.

But many of us weren't raised in environments that encouraged this kind of bodily connection. We may have heard messages like "You're fine," "Ignore it," "No pain, no gain," or "Push through." These responses—often well-meaning—can teach us to doubt or dismiss what our bodies are saying.

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That's why supporting interoception isn't just about teaching kids a skill. It's about creating a space where body signals are welcomed, explored, and trusted. It's about modeling curiosity, honoring inner differences, and helping each person feel safe to discover what their body is telling them.

This booklet will guide you through a gentle, affirming way to support interoception learning—starting with you. Because the way we talk about, respond to, and model interoceptive awareness can make a lasting impact.

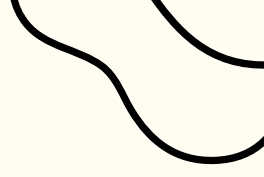
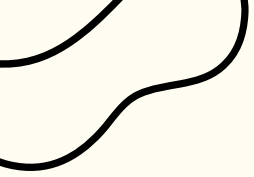
Let's get curious—together.

Until next time,

Kelly Mahler


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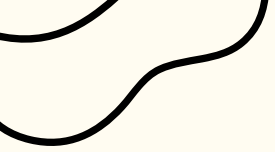


WHY INTEROCEPTION MODELING MATTERS

Modeling interoception is a powerful way to support inner body awareness—but that doesn't mean it's always easy. Especially if you grew up in environments where body signals weren't talked about, or even worse your body signals were unintentionally dismissed or mislabeled, connecting to your body might feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable at first.

Many adults are still learning what their own body is trying to say—and that's okay. In fact, that makes your modeling even more meaningful. When you model out loud—by gently naming what you notice or what you need—you're helping to build new pathways for connection. Not just for the child, but for yourself too. Everyone in the space can benefit.

Modeling shows that listening to your body is not only allowed—it's encouraged, supported, and celebrated.



WHO CAN USE INTEROCEPTION MODELING?

Interoception modeling doesn't have to come from parents alone. Educators, therapists, family members, and other support professionals can all play a role. The more, the merrier!

The more trusted adults a child hears modeling or narrating their inner experience, the more opportunities they have to learn—not just that noticing and responding to body signals is important, but that everyone's signals can be different.

When multiple people model, it becomes a concrete example of how no two bodies—or inner experiences—are exactly alike. That diversity is a natural and valuable part of being human.

Modeling shows that there's no wrong way to feel, and that tuning in is something we can all explore together.



THE BASICS OF INTEROCEPTION MODELING

Modeling interoception might feel unfamiliar at first—especially if you grew up with messages that encouraged pushing through or ignoring body signals. But even simple modeling can be incredibly powerful. It's about making your inner experience visible by noticing a body signal out loud and sharing how you might respond to it.

A helpful way to start is with this 2-part structure:

- Noticing a Body Signal: *“My hands feel cold.”*
- Regulate the Body Signal with an Action: *“I think I’ll grab some mittens.”*

There are a few examples on the next page.

Try to model both comfortable and uncomfortable signals when you can. This helps show that all body signals are valid—not just the ones that lead to action. Pleasant signals matter too, and noticing them can build trust and body connection.

THE BASICS OF INTEROCEPTION MODELING

Notice a Body Signal	Regulate the Body Signal with an Action
My hands feel sticky.	I'm going to wash them.
My fingers feel restless.	I need to squeeze something.
My stomach is growling.	I'm going to grab a snack.
I feel a flutter in my belly.	I need a moment to pause.
My brain feels foggy.	I'm going to get a drink of water.
My head hurts.	I need to turn the lights down.
That sound is sharp in my ears.	I'm going to step away.
This music is comforting to my body.	I'm going to keep it on.

THE BASICS OF INTEROCEPTION MODELING

Notice a Body Signal	Regulate the Body Signal with an Action
My shirt feels scratchy.	I'm going to change.
My tummy feels empty.	I think I need a snack.
My legs feel jumpy.	I'm going to take a quick walk.
My eyes hurt from the bright sun.	I'm going to put on my sunglasses.
My mouth feels cold when I sip my water.	I'm going to take another sip!
The wind feels nice on my face.	I'm going to lie here for another 5 minutes.




MODELING WHEN SIGNALS CAN WAIT

Modeling interoception doesn't always mean taking immediate action. Sometimes a signal is subtle, or the timing isn't quite right to respond—and that's okay.

These moments are just as valuable to model because they show that body signals can vary in intensity. That intensity can offer clues about urgency—how quickly (or not) our body might want a response.

Modeling this can support a growing understanding that not every signal leads to immediate action, and that as we learn about our bodies, we can also learn the timing of the actions that feel most supportive.



MODELING WHEN SIGNALS CAN WAIT

Here's how you might model a flexible or delayed response:

Notice a Body Signal	Regulate the Body Signal with an Action
My hands feel a little cold.	But I can keep going. I'll warm them up in a minute if they feel colder.
I notice a little pee feeling right here.	I'm going to wait until it feels a bit stronger before heading to the toilet.
I can feel a bit of frustration starting in my chest.	I'm going to finish what I'm doing, and then I'll go cuddle with the dog if I still feel that way.

The goal is to model that you're noticing your body signals and using them as clues—information your body is giving you about what it may or may not need in that moment.



MODELING

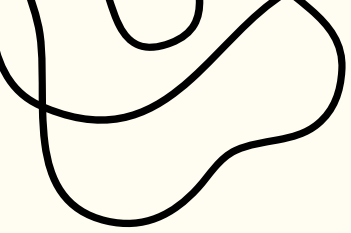
“NOT KNOWING”

Sometimes the most powerful thing we can model is not knowing how our body feels or what it might need. You don't have to have all the answers. In fact, modeling uncertainty can provide reassurance that interoception isn't always easy—and that's completely valid.

When you're not quite sure how your body feels—or you notice a signal but don't know what it means or what to do about it—you can try saying things like:

- *“I don't know what my body needs right now, but something feels off.”*
- *“I'm having a hard time figuring out what's going on inside—I think I need a moment to check in.”*
- *“This feels like something new in my feet. I'm still trying to learn what it means.”*

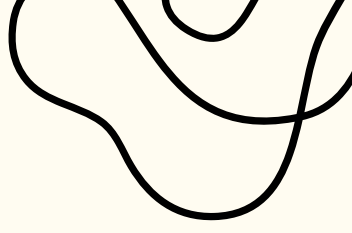
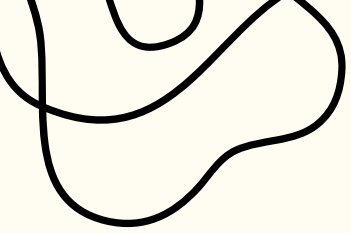
These moments send a powerful message: interoception can be tricky. It isn't about knowing exactly how you feel all the time—it's about building knowledge about your body, one curious moment at a time.



TIPS FOR INTEROCEPTION MODELING

What to do:


- Be real and authentic about your inner experience. Let it reflect how your body actually feels—not what you think should be modeled. Model the messy, uncertain experiences too!
- Model a variety of body signals across different body parts (e.g., head, stomach, skin, muscles, feet, mouth, etc).
- Narrate both comfort and discomfort. All signals matter.
- Model in real time when possible. Daily routines—like eating, toileting, transitioning between activities, or resting—are great opportunities to notice and name body signals.
- Focus on body signal language rather than emotion words. Emotion words can be abstract, especially when body signals are unreliable or confusing.



TIPS FOR INTEROCEPTION MODELING

What to do:

- Use a variety of expressive tools—if that’s authentic to you. You can describe body signals using traditional words (e.g., wiggly, warm, itchy), or creatively through colors, textures, animals, weather systems, songs, artwork, etc.
- Model a wide range of intensity. Body signals don’t have to be big or overwhelming to be noticed.
- Circle back when you miss a moment. You might say, “I just realized my brain was spinning and my muscles were stiff earlier—I think I needed a break and didn’t take one.”



TIPS FOR INTEROCEPTION MODELING

What to do:

- Wonder out loud about the child's inner experience, but without expectation of a response. Even if the child doesn't respond, this kind of curiosity can be validating—and may encourage their own inner curiosity, too. For example, try:
 - *"I wonder if your body feels the same or different from mine."*
 - *"I wonder if your body needs anything right now."*

What to avoid:

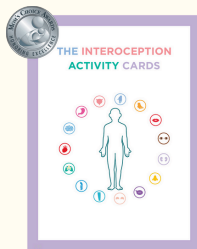
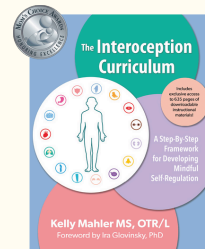
- Labeling the child's inner experience. For example saying "You must be tired." This implies that you know how they feel. Many times, when we label another person's emotions we are at high risk of being wrong. Try using more curiosity instead. For example, "I wonder how your body feels right now".

CONTINUED INTEROCEPTION LEARNING

When you're ready for more interoception learning, this modeling becomes the perfect foundation for continued interoception work.

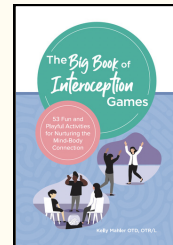
Explore tools like:

The Interoception Curriculum



Interoception Activity Cards

The Big Book of Interoception Games



Body Check Ring

These resources help deepen the connection between body signals, regulation, and meaningful participation—building on the foundation you’ve already started.



CONCLUSION

Interoception modeling is one of the most powerful ways to support interoception learning—because it shows, rather than tells, that body signals are real, worth noticing, and important to explore. Whether you're a caregiver at home, educator, therapist, or other support professional, your willingness to model out loud can shape how someone connects with their body for years to come.

You don't need perfect words or perfect timing—just curiosity, honesty, and the courage to narrate your inner experience out loud. Let your own interoception journey be the invitation others have been waiting for.

Keep noticing. Keep wondering. You're already making a difference.