

An Introduction To Mindfulness

Based on the *Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction Workbook*
by Bob Stahl, Ph.D. & Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D.



Introductions – Annie & Karen

Confidentiality

Participation

Housekeeping



Zoom Tips and Tricks

- Helpful hints
- What to do if you are struggling
- Jen: info@starfht.ca or 226-779-1187
- Interaction

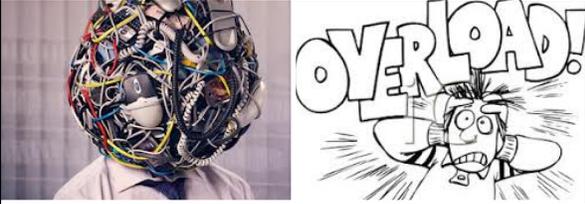
Overview for this week

- Stress in our lives
- What is Mindfulness?
- How can Mindfulness be helpful?
- Mindfulness vs. Meditation
- Mindful eating
- Mindful Check-In



CTV NEWS

Causes of Stress



Symptoms of Stress



Stress & Anxiety

There is an urgent need for an alternative way to cope

The Mind-Body Connection

Fight, Flight & Freeze Response





FIGHT or FLIGHT

NOTICEABLE EFFECTS

- PUPILS DILATE
- NECK + SHOULDER MUSCLES TENSE
- HEART PUMPS FASTER
- CHEST PAINS
- PALPITATIONS
- SWEATING
- MUSCLES TENSE FOR ACTION
- BREATHING FAST + SHALLOW - HYPERVENTILATION
- OXYGEN NEEDED FOR MUSCLES

HIDDEN EFFECTS

- BRAIN GETS BODY READY FOR ACTION
- ADRENALINE RELEASED FOR FIGHT/FLIGHT
- BLOOD PRESSURE RISES
- LIVER RELEASES GLUCOSE TO PROVIDE ENERGY FOR MUSCLES
- DIGESTION SLOW - OR CEASES
- SPHINCTERS CLOSE - THUS RELAY
- CORTISOL RELEASED (DEPRESSES THE IMMUNE SYSTEM)

Sympathetic Nervous System
The "Accelerator"



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Parasympathetic Nervous System
The "Brake"

Parasympathetic = Rest and Digest





Stress Reaction vs. Stress Response

If you can respond to stress mindfully, you can begin to break old patterns of unawareness associated with stress reactions

Mindfulness

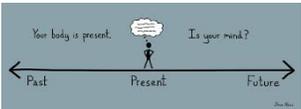
“Mindfulness is awareness that arises by paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally”
- Jon Kabat Zinn



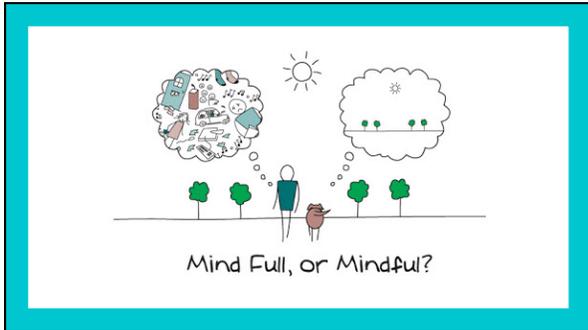
What is Mindfulness?

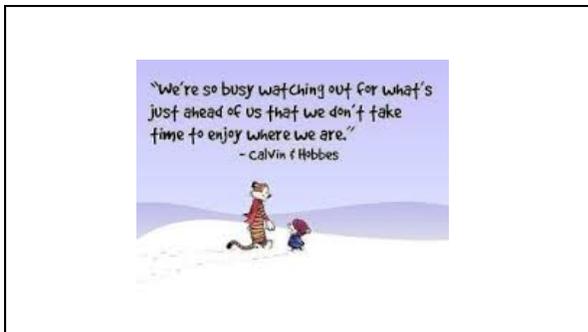
Mindfulness: the “being mode”; paying attention to things as they are

Mindlessness: the driven, “doing mode”; automatic pilot; driven by the wish to get rid of, avoid, or prevent a negative mood



“I need to find a way to always feel safe and at home within myself because I can never rely on a physical place”
Emma Watson-actress

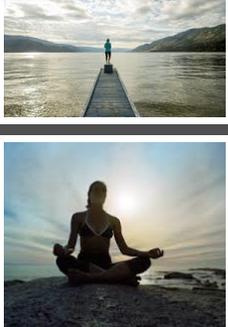




MIND FUL NESS...	<p>Mindfulness is NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having a blank mind• becoming emotionless• withdrawing from life• seeking bliss• escaping pain <p>Mindfulness increases our capacity to bear our experiences</p>
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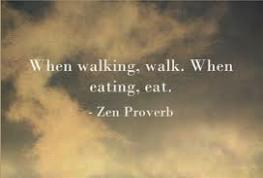
Mindfulness & Religion



Everyday Mindfulness

Can be practiced *formally* and **informally**

Mindfulness vs. Meditation



MINDFUL EATING
Informal Practice

Mindfulness' Role in Stress Reduction

Mindfulness based approaches have proven effective in decreasing many symptoms of physical and mental health issues

PROOF THAT IT WORKS

Study at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University*

- Brain scans reveal that after 8 weeks of MBSR training, brain mass increased in the areas related to :
 - Learning and memory, emotion regulation, sense of self, and perspective taking
- Brain mass decreased in the amygdala – are of the brain responsible for assessing and reacting to perceived threats

Study at Stanford University

- After 8 weeks, MBSR participants demonstrated improvements in
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Increase in self-esteem
 - Increased ability to control negative self-perspectives

*Hazel, B.K., Carmody, J., Vangel, M., Congleton, C., Yerramsetti, S.M., Gard, T., Lazar, S.W. Mindfulness practice leads to increase in regional brain gray matter density. *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, 2010.
#Goleen, P.K., and Gross, J.J. Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on emotion regulation in social anxiety disorder. *Emotion*, 2010

PROOF THAT IT WORKS

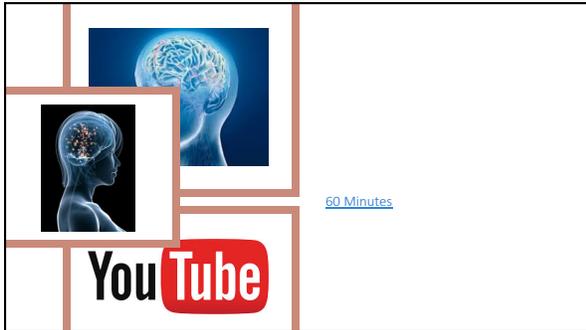
Study at the University of Wisconsin*

- Training healthy volunteers in MBSR reduced the effect of psychological stress on inflammation in the body (neurogenic)

Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery Program - Tom Baker Cancer Center at the University of Calgary

- Numerous studies reveal major improvements in patients with breast cancer and prostate cancer:
 - enhanced quality of life
 - decreased stress symptoms
 - altered cortisol and immune patterns (i.e. less stress and less mood disturbance)
 - decreased blood pressure

*Rosenkranz M.A., Davidson, R.J., MacCoon, D.G., Sheridan, J.F., Kalin, N.H., Lutz, A. A comparison of mindfulness-based stress reduction and an active control in modulation of neurogenic inflammation. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 2013
Kabat-Zinn, J. *Full Catastrophe Living*. New York: Bantam Books, 2013



60 Minutes



How Can Mindfulness Be So Beneficial?

"It is not that mindfulness is the 'answer' to all life's problems. Rather, it is that all life's problems can be seen more clearly through the lens of a clear mind"

- Jon Kabat-Zinn



Informal Practice:

Weaving Mindfulness Throughout Your Day

MINDFUL CHECK-IN
Formal Practice





Planning Your Practice
Try to practice at least 5 days a week

Formal Practices:
- Mindful Check-In

Informal Practices:
- Weaving Mindfulness Throughout Your Day
- Mindful Eating

Planning your Practice



Make this journey your own, and work with the practices in a way that fits your life

Try to practice daily
Remember: Don't judge yourself if you miss a few days

Questions?

An Introduction To Mindfulness

How to Practice Mindfulness Meditation

Session 2
Based on the *Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction Workbook*
by Bob Stahl, Ph.D. & Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D.



Recap from last week

- Stress in our lives
- What is Mindfulness?
- How can Mindfulness be helpful?
- Mindfulness vs. Meditation
- Mindful eating
- Mindful Check-In

Overview for this week

- Attitudes of Mindfulness
- Wandering Mind
- Mindful Breathing



Attitudes of Mindfulness

"It is the soil in which you will be cultivating your ability to calm your mind and relax your body, to concentrate and to see more clearly"

- Jon Kabat Zinn

Attitudes of Mindfulness



- Beginner's Mind
- Equanimity
- Non-judgement
- Letting Be
- Acknowledgement
- Self Reliance
- Non-striving
- Self Compassion



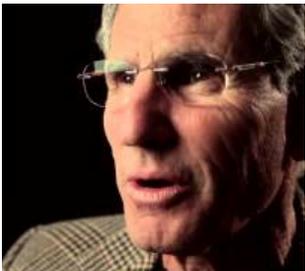
Beginner's Mind



Non-Judgment

“Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming the stance of an impartial witness to experience”

Jon Kabat Zinn



Non-Judgment

“When you find the mind judging, you don't have to stop it from doing that, and it would be unwise to try. All that is required is to be aware of it happening”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Dm8Bwz1u08>

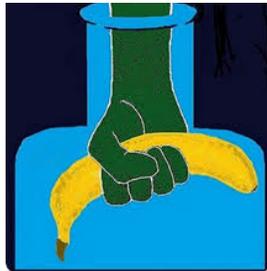
Acknowledgement
Acceptance

".....in the course of our daily lives we often waste a lot of energy denying and resisting what is already fact. When we do that, we are basically trying to force situations to be the way we would like them to be, which only makes for more tension".

Jon Kabat Zinn

Letting Be

" the best thing one can do when it's raining is to let it rain"
- Henry Longfellow





Non - Striving

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H43Z15VIE4>

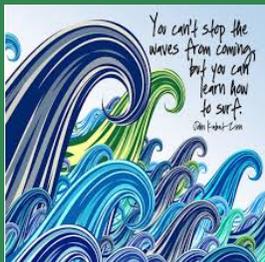
"Almost everything we do we do for a purpose. But in meditation this attitude can be a real obstacle. That is because meditation is different from all other human activities. Although it takes a lot of work and energy of a certain kind, ultimately meditation is a non-doing. It has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony... that you already are... points you toward a new way of seeing yourself, one in which you are trying less and being more."

— Jon Kabat Zinn

Equanimity

is a state of psychological stability and composure which is undisturbed by experience of or exposure to emotions, pain, or other phenomena that may cause others to lose the balance of their mind







Self Reliance & Trust
Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings rather than looking outside of ourselves for guidance

<https://www.youtube.com/video>



Self Compassion
A quality of awareness cultivates love for yourself as you are while withholding self blame and self criticism

Mindful Breathing
A Fundamental Formal Practice



Breathe mindfully.

Just breathe normally and *feel* the sensations



Mindful Breathing

Be mindful of:

- Breath in your nose
- Breath in your chest
- Breath in your belly
-or your entire body

Deep Breathing

During stressful periods, engage in abdominal breathing





Wandering Mind

[Headspace - Training the Monkey Mind](#)

Wandering Mind



The moment that you realize that you are not present, you have become present

Posture and Practice

- Sit on the floor or on a meditation cushion (zafu), or a folded towel, blanket or couch cushion (or in a chair if that is more comfortable)

- Can meditate with eyes closed or partially open
- Fold hands in lap or place on thighs
- Position self in order to remain alert yet comfortable
- If sleepy, can meditate standing or with eyes open



 **Desire** - wanting things to be different than they are, right now!

 **Aversion** - resisting what is happening in this moment. Anger, pushing away

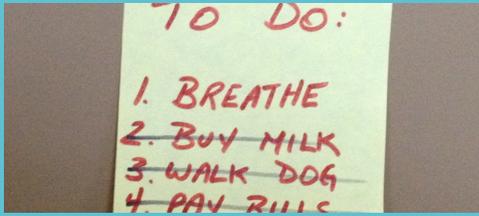
 **Sleepiness** - can indicate an unmet need; however, it also can be a form of resisting something that feels frightening, painful etc.

 **Doubt** - "I can't handle this." Doubt is often expressed as words in your mind, and feelings of fear and resistance to what is happening

 **Restlessness** - can be very uncomfortable, often an array of thoughts, emotions and sensations that can be very distracting

What gets in the way?

SOURCE: DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY SKILLS WORKBOOK (2019), PG 140



Formal Practice
5-Minute Mindful Breathing

Mindful Breathing Journal

Take some time to write about whatever came up for you mentally, emotionally and physically

You can make notes on your formal practice log

Discussion

Planning Your Practice
Try to practice at least 5 days a week

- **Formal Practices:**
 - Mindful Check-In
 - 5 Minute Mindful Breathing
- **Informal Practices:**
 - Bringing the 8 Attitudes of Mindfulness Into Your Life
 - Weaving Mindfulness Throughout Your Day
 - Mindful Eating



Questions?

An Introduction To Mindfulness
Mindfulness and Stress Reduction

Session 3
Based on the
Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction Workbook
by Bob Stahl, Ph.D. & Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D.



Recap from last week

-  Attitudes of Mindfulness
-  Wandering Mind
-  Mindful Breathing

Overview for this week

-  Role of thinking and negative self talk
-  Mindfulness of thoughts
-  Mindful breathing – 15 minutes

Seeing Thoughts As Creations of the Mind

Example: Boy waiting for his father after school



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Negative Self Talk



"We get so used to its whisperings that we don't even notice it's there"
– A Mindful Way Through Depression

Negative Self Talk

We are often our own worst critic



- I'm such an idiot!
- I'm not good enough
- What is wrong with me?
- Nobody understands me
- I hate myself
- Things will never get better

Habitual Styles of Thinking



Habitual Styles of Thinking

They often occur unconsciously so it is helpful to be familiar with them

- Catastrophizing
- Exaggerating & discounting
- Mind Reading
- External Expert
- Shoulds
- Blaming



How thoughts impact our experience

Negative Interpretations

"I'm the only one who does anything around here!!"

"No wonder I can never get anything done!"

"All I need is a little bit of help...Nobody cares about me. This is never going to change..."



"Why does everyone else get to relax and I'm left to work?!"

"Oh no, here I go again. I need to get this under control. Just relax! What is wrong with me?....."

Negative Interpretations

Scenario #1:

You are feeling down because you've just had an argument with a coworker ...

Shortly afterward, you see another coworker in the hall and he or she rushes off quickly, saying her or she can't talk. What would you think?

Negative Interpretations

Scenario #2:

You are feeling happy because you and a coworker have just received positive feedback from your boss.....

Shortly afterward, you see another coworker in the hall and he or she rushes off quickly, saying her or she can't talk. What would you think?

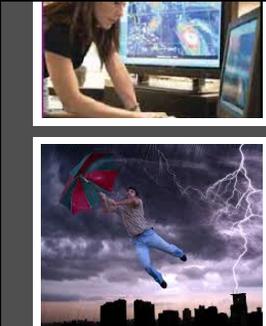
Mindfulness & Negative Self Talk

Mindfulness helps you to treat thoughts as mental events, rather than as facts.



Mindfulness: Seeing Thoughts As Thoughts

- Our thoughts are NOT facts
- Learn to relate with thoughts from "being mode" of mind (i.e. observing)



You do not have to believe your thoughts.



You are the sky.
Everything else
is just the weather"
-Pema Chodron

"You are the sky.
Everything else
is just the weather"

Thought Stream:
Getting Carried Away

Observe thoughts as you would observe actors on a movie screen

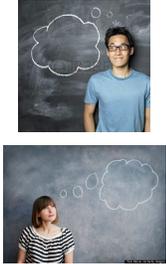
"It's as if the mind has left its seat and gotten sucked into the action up there on the screen, now playing a part in the story that it was mindfully observing the moment before"

— (The Mindful Way Through Depression)

Mindfulness & Negative Self Talk

Not banishing or repressing thoughts, just relating to them differently

Practice observing without getting caught up



Mindfulness & Negative Self Talk

Helpful to give a name to patterns of thinking that habitually occur:



“Judging Mind” “My worst critic”
“Hopeless Mind” “Doubting Thomas”

Formal Practice:
15 Minute Mindful Breathing



15 Minute Mindful Breathing

Take a moment to write about whatever arose for you mentally, emotionally, and physically when doing this practice for the first time.

How was it different for you than the five-minute practice?

Planning Your Practice
Try to practice at least 5 days a week

Formal Practices:

- Mindful Check-In
- 5 and 15 Minute Mindful Breathing

Informal Practices:

- 8 Attitudes of Mindfulness in Your Life
- Weaving Mindfulness Throughout Your Day
- Mindful Eating