Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others: Mindfulness Practice in Everyday Life

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Agenda: 40 minute mix

• Mindfulness overview:
  • Intentions
  • What it is, what it is not
  • Some research highlights
  • Resources (+handouts)

• Mindfulness Practice & Self Care
  • Formal
  • Informal
Disclosures

• Laura is not serving as a paid consultant for any pharmaceutical or medical device company

• Laura works for the University of Michigan Alzheimer’s Disease Center – Dept of Neurology

• Laura also works for Presence Care, a non-for-profit dementia care and mindfulness organization

• Laura is a founding member of the Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness, a local non-for-profit
“We’ve been wrong about what our job is in medicine. We think our job is to ensure health and survival. But really it is larger than that. It is to enable well-being.”
What kind of care partner/provider do you intend to be?

What are the qualities you hope to cultivate?
Presence Practice

3 Minute Breathing Space

Life is all a memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quickly you hardly catch it going.

~Tennessee Williams
"It is not the load that breaks you down. It’s the way you carry it."

~Lena Horne
What is Mindfulness?

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Cultivating mindfulness is training the mind to develop greater awareness of the present moment, including current physical sensations, thoughts, and feelings, without judging one’s self or one’s experience.
Mindful & Mindfulness

• **Mindful** — anything we do that brings us into the present moment. Attentive, *aware* and appreciative.

• **Mindfulness** — maintaining a moment-by-moment *awareness* of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. Includes formal, secular practice of present moment awareness through meditation. Characterized by certain attitudinal foundations (non-judgment, acceptance, curiosity, patience...)

L.Rice-Oeschger/2017/MADC
To move in the direction we intend to go, we must first know where we are.
Mindfulness is not:

- a panacea or a cure for every ill
- a religion
- a state of bliss
- an empty mind
- mind control
- something to harass yourself about
- an assurance that you will always be happy, well, safe, and stress-free.
Mindfulness is:

• A practice and a way of being in wise relationship with the moment and in our lives

• about becoming less reactive and more intentionally present

• a willingness to modify our perspective and includes attitudinal foundations/pillars which support practice (non-judging, patience, beginner’s mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance, letting go/be..)

• fostered by “assuming the stance of an impartial witness to your own experience.” (J.K-Zinn)

• being aware of our proclivity to become entangled in our stories, lost in our incessant thinking and doing.

• observing our impulses and ultimately, having skillful means to respond to life as it unfolds – moment by moment
S.T.O.P.

Stop
Take a breath (take note of where you feel it most easily in the body)
Observe (acknowledge what is happening in this moment)
Put aside (pause, proceed, plan....)

Breath - Body - Thoughts
Why the Breath as an Anchor?

- Always available
- Free
- Accessible, easily felt
- Connects mind and body
- It is a measure of well-being
- Fairly neutral
A Brief Summary of Research on Mindfulness’s Effects

Research on mindfulness-based interventions is growing and now includes neuroimaging studies and sophisticated research designs.

Effects include:
- Reductions in depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders, stress, and pain.
- Increased immunological response, reduced blood pressure and cortisol.
- Increased psychological well-being and enhanced cognitive functioning.

Holzel, Lazar et al, 2011
Some Specific Findings:

- Improvements in ratings of pain & other medical symptoms.
- Decreases in anxiety and depression.
- Improved eating patterns & mood among those with eating disorders.
- Fibromyalgia patients improved.
- Psoriasis cleared faster in patients exposed to recordings of guided mindfulness meditation than those who were not.
- Decreases in substance use both in MBRP & other MB interventions.
- Changes appear to persist.

American Mindfulness Research Assoc
https://goamra.org/
Based on neuroimaging, self-report and behavioral research, individuals practicing mindfulness experience increases in:

• Attention regulation
• Body awareness
• Emotional regulation, including
  – Reappraisal
  – Exposure, extinction, and reconsolidation
• Changes in perspective on one’s self
• Compassion toward self & others

Holzel, Lazar et al, 2011
Transition Practice

Life is like a ten speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use.

~Charles Shultz
Micro-Practice

Tiny Habits - (BJ Fogg)

• Door knob, car door
• Doorway, exam room entering and exiting
• Walking – in the offices, to meetings, to car
• Sitting & standing, between tasks
• One-bite each meal
• One-breath, many times
• Book-ending the work day – arrival & departure
• Book-ending the day itself – upon waking & before sleeping

BJ Fogg, PhD
Director, Persuasive Tech Lab
Stanford University
Mindful Check-in
Mindful Communication
Clients, colleagues, patients & families

• S.T.O.P.
• Begin by creating space within yourself
  – Slow down and take a brief, quiet moment
  – Pay attention to your breath
  – Notice how you are feeling
  – Recognizing any tension
• Notice your thoughts – without judgment
  – The future is unknown
  – Create room for listening, communication and possibility
  – Quiet expectations, assumptions or anticipated frustration
Where to Begin?
Simple Intentional Practice

• Experience small doses
  – Read, listen, practice at home or locally

• Take an MBSR class or MBCT
  – 8 weeks is really just a beginning. Experience before referring. Experience before seeking training.

• Experience a mini-retreat, ½ day facilitated day of mindfulness
Secular Resources
Ann Arbor Area

Drop-in sessions:

Free, open to beginners & experienced meditators, 20-25 minute guided meditations. Hour-long sessions include two meditations or readings and discussion (Saline Open Meditation). See www.aacfm.com for more details. AAOM offers one-day retreats twice/year.

• **Being in Tune**, Tuesdays, 12-12:30, at the Ark
• **Cancer Support Community**, Tuesdays, 12-1, 2010 Hogback Rd #3, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.
• **Saline Open Meditation**, Tuesdays, 11-12, Old St. Joe’s, 400 Russell Street.
• **Ann Arbor Open Meditation (AAOM)**, Thursdays, 7:30-8:30, Lotus Center, 2711 Carpenter
• **Ypsilanti Open Meditation**, Fridays, 11-12, Downtown Public Library on Michigan Ave
Mindfulness Education & Training Resources

• Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society - UMASS Medical School
  http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/

• Center for Mindfulness – UC San Diego
  https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/Pages/default.aspx

• The Center for Mindfulness Studies – Toronto
  http://www.mindfulnessstudies.com

• PESI training – On-line & In Person Introductions
  http://www.pesi.com/
  – Jon Kabat Zinn, Daniel Siegel, Elana Rosenbaum.......

• Sounds True – On-line MBSR & other resources
  http://www.soundstrue.com/store/the-mbsr-online-course-3226.html