

# Mindfulness for Mental Health Professionals

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Research Psychiatric Center  
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11:30-12:30 pm

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Be

# Present

Be Present

# Overview of Mindfulness

# History of Mindfulness in The West

- Ancient Eastern religious practices, particularly India, China, Tibet, and Japan
- 1960s, Indian guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi brought Transcendental Meditation to U.S.
- 1968, Harvard cardiologist Herbert Benson tested ability to lower blood pressure (results—no change); he later developed relaxation response
- 1970s, Ainslie Meares, an Australian psychiatrist, studied meditation to enhance immune system to reduce tumors

# Clientele Readiness

36% of Americans use some form of alternative medicine, including herbal supplements, meditation, acupuncture, chiropractic and yoga

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (National Institutes of Health)

# Database Search Results

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>MedlinePlus.Gov (mindfulness NOT attention)</b>  | <b>197</b>       |
| <b>APA website (mindfulness)</b>                    | <b>387</b>       |
| <b>ACA website (mindfulness)</b>                    | <b>343</b>       |
| <b>PsychInfo (mindfulness in title) (2014-1975)</b> | <b>2,736</b>     |
| <b>Google (mindfulness)</b>                         | <b>6,170,000</b> |

# Research

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
|   |              |
| <b>NIH RePORTER</b><br><b>NIH funded for past 25 years</b>          | <b>136</b>   |
| <b>ClinicalTrials.gov</b><br><b>privately &amp; publicly funded</b> | <b>444</b>   |
| <b>PubMed</b><br><b>2013-1982</b>                                   | <b>2,170</b> |

# Mindfulness Definitions

**Mindfulness:** A moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment

**Mindful awareness:** deep abiding presence

# Mindfulness Assumptions

Mindfulness is a natural human capacity

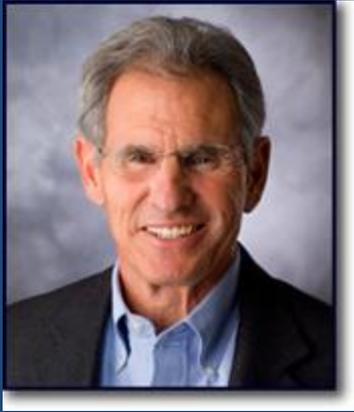
All human beings want health, happiness and freedom from suffering

# Benefits

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
|  |                                |
| Boost to working memory                    | No known side effects          |
| Less emotional reactivity                  | Reduced rumination             |
| Relationship satisfaction                  | Stress reduction               |
| Increased immune function                  | Increased focus                |
| More cognitive flexibility                 | Reduced psychological distress |
| Enhance self-insight, morality, intuition  | Fear modulation                |
| Increased information processing speed     | Improved well-being            |
| Inexpensive (purchase books, attend class) | Decreased task effort          |

# Risks

- A small number of people became disoriented or anxious and experienced some negative feelings
- Utilizing mindfulness techniques alone without conventional medical care for some diseases may have serious consequences
- Escapism



Jon Kabat-Zinn, pioneer in applying mindfulness to healing in America, developed the first and still most popular mindfulness-based technique in 1979 at University of Massachusetts Medical School and subsequently founded the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the Medical School.

# Jon Kabat-Zinn

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aaJtBKwK9U>

# Mindfulness Practices

**Informal practice:** Intentionally bringing open, accepting, discerning attention to daily life.

*Note: clinical practice is considered informal*

**Formal practice:** Systematic meditation practices geared to cultivate mindfulness skills.

# Elements of Mindfulness Practice

**Intention:** set a goal to reach it

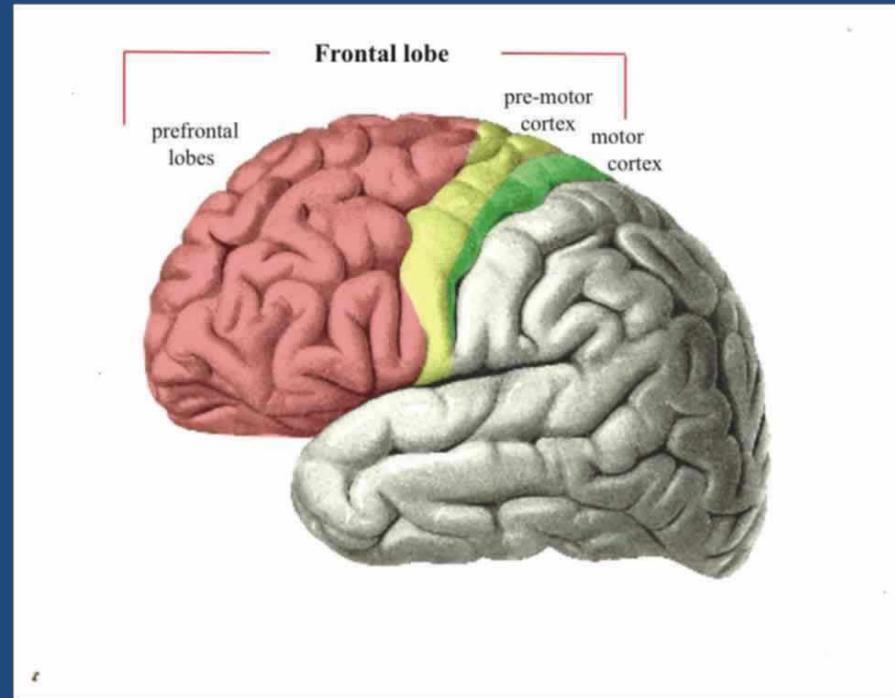
(e.g., self-exploration, stress management, self-liberation and compassion)

**Attention:** observe internal and external experience in a discerning, nonreactive, sustained, and concentrated way

**Attitude:** nonjudging, nonstriving, nonattachment, acceptance, patience, trust, openness, curiosity, letting go, gentleness, nonreactivity, loving-kindness, warmth, friendliness, kindness

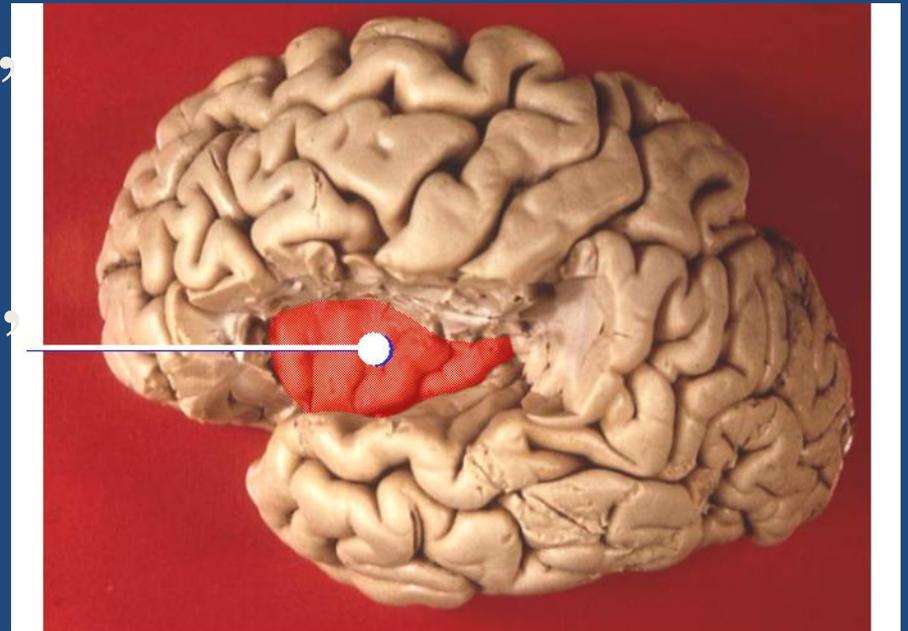
# Brain Changes

The frontal lobe is shown to increase in size with meditation: responsible for initiating and coordinating motor movements; higher cognitive skills, such as problem solving, thinking, planning, and organizing; and for many aspects of personality and emotional makeup.



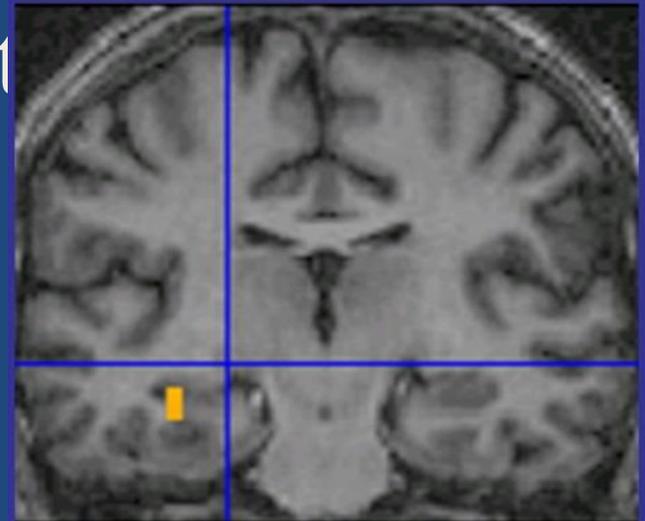
# Brain Changes (cont'd)

The insular cortex is shown to increase in size with meditation: responsible for emotional awareness, self-recognition, sense of homeostasis, music, rhythm, and language processing



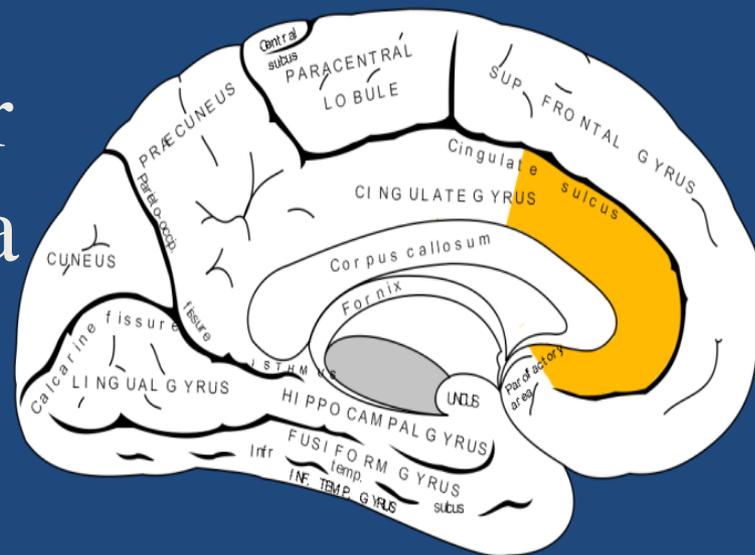
# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Gray matter increases in left hippocampus: plays a distinct role in complex aspects of perception, movement, emotion, and cognition, each of which contributes to the overall experiences captured in declarative memories.



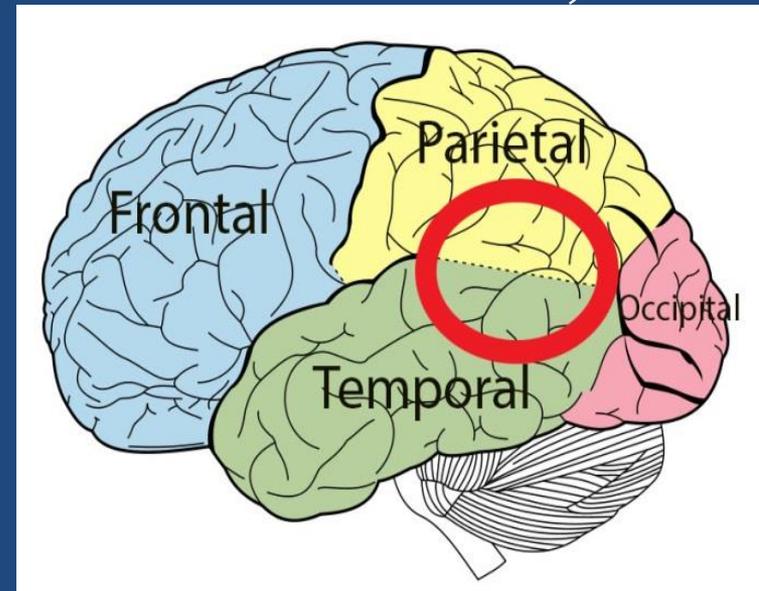
# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Posterior cingulate cortex shows increased gray matter density: prominent role for pain and episodic memory retrieval, may be involved in the capacity to understand what other people believe. This area has been defined in Alzheimer's disease.



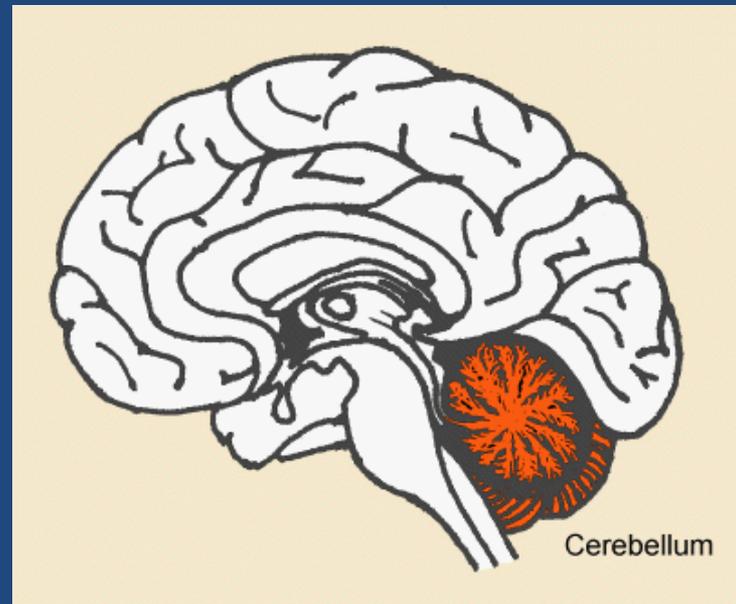
# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Gray matter increases in temporo-parietal junction: recruited selectively for the attribution of mental states, memory, learning, involved in social cognition



# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Gray matter increases in cerebellum:  
helps to regulate emotion and  
cognition



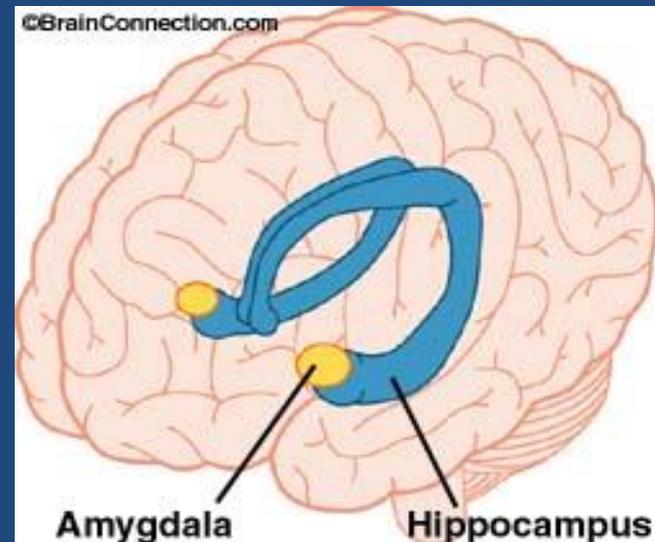
# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Decrease in parietal lobe:  
visual and spatial



# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Decrease in amygdala: role in processing memory and emotional reactions,  
player in stress



# Brain Changes (cont'd)

Decrease in size of thalamus: relaying of sensory and motor signals to the cerebral cortex, and the regulation of consciousness, sleep, and alertness



# TED Talk: Brain Changes

Sara Lazar, neurologist and psychologist who studies brain changes due to meditation at Harvard Medical School

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc>

# Benefits of Mindfulness

# Benefits of Practice

- Bring unconscious values to awareness
- Decide whether to pursue those values
- Develop wholesome and skillful values  
(based on universal values)

# Benefits to Psychotherapy

Strongest predictor of therapeutic outcomes is relationship variables

**Freud:** “An evenly hovering attention”

**Perls:** “Attention in and of itself is curative”

**Rogers:** empathy, unconditional positive regard, congruence

# Benefits for the Clinician

- Foster attention, empathy, compassion, patience, intentionality, gratitude, body awareness, presence
- Understand own psychodynamics, difficulties, goals
- Better able to develop new adaptive behaviors
- Fewer symptoms of anxiety, depression, hostility, somatization, stress, obsessions, and compulsions
- Means of self-care
- Better quality of life
- Useful for a wide range of populations
- Improve ability to develop therapeutic skills
- Expand professional focus to include positive growth, development, and transformation

# Mindfulness-Oriented Psychotherapy

# Mindfulness-Oriented Psychotherapy

- 1. Mindful therapist:** personal practice of mindfulness meditation to cultivate presence in therapeutic work
- 2. Mindfulness-informed psychotherapy:** application of mindfulness theories and research along with Buddhist psychology
- 3. Mindfulness-based psychotherapy:** teaching clients mindfulness skills and practice

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# Mindful Therapist

# Mindful Therapist

- Attention and therapist presence
- Therapist attitudes
- Self-compassion and attunement
- Empathy and attunement with others
- Emotion regulation

# Mindful Therapist

## Attention and Therapist Presence

- Attention capacity and therapeutic presence
- Attitudes applied during therapy
- Self-compassion and self-attunement of therapist
- Therapist empathy attunement toward client
- Therapist emotion regulation and handling of countertransference

# Mindful Therapist: Therapist Attitudes

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
|               |                 |
| Nonstriving   | Curiosity       |
| Nonattachment | Gentleness      |
| Acceptance    | Nonreactivity   |
| Nonjudging    | Letting go      |
| Patience      | Loving-kindness |
| Trust         | Warmth          |
| Openness      | Friendliness    |
| Kindness      |                 |

# Mindful Therapist

## Self-Compassion and Attunement

- Ability to feel empathy for another or own suffering and wish to act on these feelings to alleviate suffering
- Self-attunement requires development of a “witness consciousness” or in psychodynamic terms, “observing ego”

# Mindful Therapist

## Self-Compassion and Attunement (cont'd)

- Attend to our own suffering
- Recognize our own suffering is not unique
- Begin to understand in a visceral way that all beings experience suffering
- Develop compassion for others and a strong desire to alleviate suffering in self and others
- Universality of being human helps develop self-compassion

# Mindful Therapist

## Self-Compassion and Attunement (cont'd)

- Therapists who are *less accepting and more critical* of themselves have been shown to be more hostile, controlling, and critical toward their clients
- Therapists who are *more self-accepting* tended to engage clients in more accepting, supportive transactions

# Mindful Therapist

## Empathy and Attunement with Others

Empathy is necessary for effective therapy

Research has shown that meditation strengthens empathy

# Mindful Therapist

## Emotion Regulation

- Research shows that mindfulness practice can help individuals regulate their emotions
- Attending to and regulating personal emotions, therapists can be more present and accepting of their clients
- Witnessing clients' experiences provides a place for clients' emotions and sets a boundary around client and therapist experiences

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# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

# Individuals Possibly Unsuitable for Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

- People with personality disorders may require traditional counseling before they learn meditation to look deeply inside themselves
- Clients who may have psychotic tendencies may not have strong enough psychic structures to practice mindfulness
- Individuals diagnosed with major depressive disorders may not be able to concentrate enough, and meditation could potentially lead to rumination, resulting in a depressive episode
- Some controversy about using it in cases of traumatic stress

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

- Impermanence
- Accepting What Is
- Conscious Responding vs Automatic Reactivity
- Curiosity and Investigation
- Paradox
- Interdependence
- Essential Nature

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy (cont'd)

Recommended books:

Epstein, M. (2013). *Thoughts without a thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist perspective*. New York: Basic Books.

Kornfield, J. (2008). *The wise heart: a guide to the universal teachings of Buddhist psychology*. New York: Bantam Books.

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Impermanence

Everything changes

This too shall pass

Persian این نیز بگذرد

Arabic كله ماشي

Hebrew גם זה יעבור

Turkish *Bu da geçer (yahu)*

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## No Self

No stable, solid, unchanging entity labeled “self” exists

Experience the ever-changing and flowing reality of self

“The mind changes with inconceivable rapidity.” Subhuti

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Accepting What Is

- Resisting what is actually happening, wanting things to be different than they are creates suffering
- Suffering based on one's relationship to what is happening
- Not accepting what is creates suffering
- *Goal: no resistance*

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

Therapist asks --

What is the patient not accepting?

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Conscious Responding vs Automatic Reaction

- Let go of habitual problem solving mode
- Bring to awareness difficult emotions
- Feel the emotions in the body

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Conscious Responding vs Automatic Reaction

*Insanity*: Doing the same thing  
over and over again and  
expecting different results.

*Albert Einstein*

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Curiosity and Investigation

- Investigate own experience deeply
- Trust own experience
- Develop own beliefs on the basis of own experience
- Explore self to find a deep sense of self-knowing

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy Curiosity and Investigation (cont'd)

Out of caring curiosity and interest, help client investigate own experience by stepping outside personal, subjective experience and take a more inquisitive, objective view.

Ultimately help the client get in touch with own instincts.

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Curiosity and Investigation (cont'd)

“I have been and still am a seeker, but I have ceased to question stars and books; I have begun to listen to the teaching my blood whispers to me.” Hermann Hesse, *Demian*

“I will follow my instincts, and be myself for good or ill.” John Muir

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Curiosity and Investigation (cont'd)

“Instinct is a marvelous thing. It can neither be explained nor ignored.” Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*

“Trust instinct to the end, even though you can give no reason.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Instinct leads me to another flow.” Queen Latifah

Mindfulness-Informed Therapy  
Curiosity and Investigation (cont'd)

Be a lamp unto yourself  
The Buddha

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy Paradox

Penetrate deeply into the nature  
of things

Accept that one simply does not  
know some things

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy Interdependence

*All things are intimately connected*

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy Interdependence (cont'd)

**butterfly effect** *n* (Physics / General Physics)  
the idea, used in chaos theory, that a very small difference in the initial state of a physical system can make a significant difference to the state at some later time

# Mindfulness-Informed Therapy

## Essential Nature

All beings are born with a pure and noble essence

A client's essential being is virtuous, pure, and deeply lovable

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# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

- Mindfulness-based stress reduction
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy
- Mindfulness-based eating awareness training, art therapy, relapse prevention, relationship enhancement
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)
- Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

8-week program

Up to 35 participants

Meet weekly for 2 ½ - 3 hours

6-hour silent retreat weekend after week 6

Kabat-Zinn, J., & Nhất Hạnh, T. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to overcome pain, stress, and illness*. New York: Delta.

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

Integrates MBSR and CBT

Developed in late 1990s for depression relapse prevention

Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., Teasdale, J. D. and Kabat-Zinn, J. (2012). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

# Mindfulness and Cognitive Therapy

- Perception and thought drive emotion and behavior; change relationship to thought and change behavior
- Cognitive therapy: technique to change thought, resulting in changed behavior
- Mindfulness: emphasizes meditation as way to become aware of moment-to-moment experience, resulting in behavior change

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training

Based on MBSR and integrates CBT.

Helpful for binge eating disorder and obesity.  
Meditations address issues around body shape, weight, etc.

Kristeller, J.L., Baer, R.A., & Quillian-Wolever, R. (2006). Mindfulness-based approaches to eating disorders. In R.A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp. 75-91). London: Academic Press.

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement

Modeled on MBSR to enhance relationships of relatively happy couples

Loving-kindness meditations intended to generate feelings of loving and caring for partner

Carson, J.W., Carson, K.M., Gil, K.M., & Baucom, D.H. (2006). Mindfulness-based relationship enhancement in couples. In R.A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp. 309-331). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

# Thich Nhat Hanh

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ9UtuWfs3U>

19.06

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Art Therapy

Based on MBSR

Developed for medical populations, piloted for women with breast cancer. Utilizes creative process to process emotions arising from the illness, health, and healing

Monti, D. A., et al. (2005). A randomized controlled trial of mindfulness based art therapy (MBAT) for women with cancer. *Psycho-Oncology*, 15, 363-373.

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

Patterned after MBCT

Used for drug, alcohol, and smoking. Relapse prevented through ability to act as observing witness and skills to cope with urges, etc.

Marlatt, G.A., & Gordon, J. R. (Eds.). (1985). *Relapse prevention: Maintenance strategies in treatment of addictive behaviors*. New York: Guilford Press.

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Combines CBT, emotion regulation, and mindful awareness to treat borderline personality disorder

Linehan, M.M. (1993). *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. New York: Guilford Press.

# Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Uses acceptance and mindfulness with commitment to goals and values along with behavior change strategies.

Hayes, S.C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K.G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

# Application

# Some Mindfulness Practices

|                |   |                    |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Sitting        | Transcendental Meditation                           | Affirmations       |
| Walking        | Martial arts: e.g., tai chi, karate, judo, aikido   | Awaken the senses  |
| Breathing      | Make the familiar new again                         | Visualizing        |
| Yoga           | Concentrate on a thought, mantra, activity or image | Zen meditation     |
| Mindful eating | Pay attention                                       | Focus on breathing |
| Body Scan      | Rest quietly and observe breathing and thoughts     | Contemplation      |

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions

**Alzheimer's:** reduce loneliness and isolation, linked to increase risk

**Asthma:** improve

**Back pain:** less disability, pain and depression

**Balance:** improve

**Blood cortisol levels (stress hormones):** reduce

**Brain:** relax, focus on current moment, go with flow of thoughts and sensations

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions (cont'd)

**Cancer:** reduce stress hormones that bind with cancer cells, making cells more invasive; relieve anxiety, depression, distress, fatigue, mood, sleep disturbances; improve quality of life; improve positive outcomes

**Cholesterol:** reduce

**Chronic pain:** reduce

**Colds:** relief

**Dental work:** reduce gag reflex

**Deep belly fat:** decrease

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions (cont'd)

**Eating:** more balanced and emotional regulation

**Epileptic seizures:** control

**Fertility:** increase

**Fibromyalgia:** tai chi can improve sleep quality, mood, and quality of life

**Headaches:** reduce

**Health care services:** reduce usage

**Heart disease:** less lonely, less stress, reverse carotid atherosclerosis

**Heritable disorders of connective tissue:**  
ameliorates pain

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions (cont'd)

**High blood pressure:** reduce

**Inflammation:** reduce levels of proteins linked to inflammation (heart disease, Alzheimer's);  
reducing loneliness reduces inflammation

**Interstitial cystitis:** some relief

**Irritable bowel syndrome:** relief

**Labor pain:** reduce

**Longevity:** increase

**Menopause:** reduce hot flashes

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions (cont'd)

**Migraine headaches:** reduce

**Multiple sclerosis:** reduce fatigue

**Osteoporosis:** maintain bone density

**Pancreatitis:** reduce need for medication and  
increase quality of life

**Poor health:** reduce

**Psoriatic Arthritis:** reduce stress and anxiety

**Physical functioning:** improves

# Mindfulness for Medical Conditions (cont'd)

**Respiratory infections:** reduce

**Rheumatoid arthritis:** improve quality of life  
and reduce psychological distress

**Skin:** clearer

**Sleep:** improve

**Stress:** linked to heart disease, compromised  
immune system functioning, premature cellular  
and cognitive aging

# Mindfulness for Psychological Health

**Anxiety:** reduce long-term

**Caregivers:** feel less lonely, isolated, depressed, less emotional stress

**Chronic pain:** reduce

**Cognitive decline:** decrease or prevent

**Depression:** reduce

**Emotion regulation and control:** improve

**Emotional stress:** decrease stress, decrease feelings of overwhelm and depression

**Focus:** improve

# Mindfulness for Psychological Health (cont'd)

**Learning:** improve

**Life satisfaction:** improve

**Memory and mental clarity:** improve

**Mood:** improve

**Negative thinking:** reduce

**Parents of children with disabilities:** reduces stress, anxiety, and depression

**Perspective taking:** improve

**PTSD:** useful for treatment

**Quality of life:** improve

# Mindfulness for Psychological Health (cont'd)

**Relationships:** possibly improve

**Relaxation:** increase

**Self-awareness:** increase

**Smoking:** reduced; area of brain linked to self-control shown to be more active

**Stress:** reduce, improve coping strategies

**Sports:** help children and athletes focus on present, reduce nervous energy; positive affirmations “I learn from my mistakes” “I’m in control of my feelings” “I can make this goal”

**Values:** clarify

# Selected Resources

American Psychological Association website

Brainfacts.org

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2012). *Mindfulness for beginners: Reclaiming the present moment and your life*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

*Meditation and brain changes: Recent research and new applications.*

(June 25, 2012) Jon Lieff. (Retrieved Nov. 13, 2013, from

<http://jonlieffmd.com/blog/meditation-and-brain-changes-recent-research-and-new-applications>

MedlinePlus.gov

Nhát Hạnh, T. (1987). *The miracle of mindfulness: An introduction to the practice of meditation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

PubMed.gov

Shapiro, S.L., & Carlson, L.E. (2009). *The art and science of mindfulness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Society of Neuroscience website

# Mindfulness Centers

[Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society. University of Massachusetts Medical School](#)

[Insight Meditation Community of Washington](#)

[The Mindfulness Training Institute of Washington](#)

[Mindful Schools](#)

# Mindfulness Quizzes

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/mindfulnessscale.pdf>

Quiz on Complementary and Alternative Medicine

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter09/articles/winter09pg21.html>

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