

Mindfulness for Volunteer Advocates

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

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Martha Childers, LPC, EdS · martha@childerscounselingservice.com · 816.892.0803

"When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there?" - Thích Nhất Hạnh

If you have a medical condition, coordinate mindfulness practices with your doctor.

Types of Trauma

community violence, complex trauma, domestic violence, early childhood trauma (ages 0-6), medical trauma, natural disasters, neglect, physical abuse, refugee and war zone trauma, school violence, sexual abuse, terrorism, traumatic grief

Potential Results of Caregiving

Secondary Traumatic Stress: “Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Accordingly, individuals affected by secondary stress may find themselves re-experiencing personal trauma or notice an increase in arousal and avoidance reactions related to the indirect trauma exposure. They may also experience changes in memory and perception; alterations in their sense of self-efficacy; a depletion of personal resources; and disruption in their perceptions of safety, trust, and independence.” Retrieved Jan. 19, 2015 from <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/topics/secondary-traumatic-stress>

Signs: “Fear in situations that others would not think were frightening
Excessive worry that something bad will happen to you, your loved ones, or colleagues
Easily startled, feeling “jumpy” or “on guard” all of the time
Wary of every situation, expecting a traumatic outcome
Physical signs like a racing heart, shortness of breath, and increased tension headaches
Sense of being haunted by the troubles you see and hear from others and not being able to make them go away
The feeling that others’ trauma is yours”
Tips for disaster responders. Retrieved on Jan. 19, 2015 from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4869/SMA14-4869.pdf>

Burnout: feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, like nothing you do will help make the situation better

Compassion Fatigue: Made up of two main components: burnout and secondary traumatic stress.

Signs: “Feeling that nothing you can do will help
Tired—even exhausted—and overwhelmed
Like a failure
As though you are not doing your job well
Frustrated
Cynical
Disconnected from others, lacking feelings, indifferent
Depressed
As if you need to use alcohol or other mind-altering substances to cope”
Tips for disaster responders. Retrieved on Jan. 19, 2015 from
<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA14-4869/SMA14-4869.pdf>

What to do: talk with a trusted friend, mentor, or counselor, get adequate sleep, eat well, exercise regularly, use mindfulness techniques, drink enough fluids, and maintain basic hygiene

Benefits of Mindfulness

Results: Slower breathing, lower blood pressure, feeling of calm and well-being

Relieve: anxiety, depression, distress, fatigue, pain, stress, tension

Improve: mood by calming emotions, sleep, quality of life, and positive outcomes

Forms of Mindfulness

Affirmations

Awaken the senses

Body scan

Breathe

Concentrate on a thought, mantra, activity or image

Contemplation

Focus on breath

Guided imagery (focus on pleasant images to replace unpleasant ones)

Make the familiar new again

Martial arts: e.g. tai chi, karate, judo, aikido, nia

Mindful eating

Pay attention

Progressive relaxation (tighten and relax muscle groups)

Rest quietly and observe breathing and thoughts

Self-hypnosis (suggestion)

Sitting

Transcendental Meditation

Visualizing

Walking

Yoga

Zen meditation

Kinds of Mindfulness Practices

- Formal: Regularly practiced mindfulness (e.g. meditate each morning for 10 minutes)
- Informal: Mindfulness practiced at irregular times throughout the day (e.g. when waiting in the grocery line or at a stop sign)

Mindfulness Exercises

Beginning meditation (used for the following meditations to go into and come out of a meditative state)

- Be in quiet, safe place
- Close eyes
- Relax body
- Breathe in deeply
- Hold it briefly
- Breathe out slowly and fully
- 3 times
- Open eyes and be present in environment

For all of the following, go into a meditative state to begin and come out of a meditative state when done

Meditation for “Witness Consciousness”

- Breathe to go into meditative state (feel frontal lobe and insular cortex engage)
- Move consciousness to top of head and observe yourself
- Move consciousness on top of that and observe self observing self

Meditation to dissipate emotion

- Imagine putting 1T of salt in a glass of water and how it would taste
- Pour it into a pitcher of water
- Pour it into a lake
- Pour it into the ocean

Shapiro (2009)

Meditation to experience “No Self”: Explore your own self through time

- 13 years old
- 21 years old
- A year ago

Shapiro (2009)

Mindfulness Meditations for Kids

1. Deep breathing: sit in quiet place, inhale slowly through nose deep into lungs, hold 5 seconds, release slowly.
2. Muscle relaxation: contract group of muscles tightly. Hold for 5 seconds. Release. Repeat 5 times.
3. Visualization: close eyes, picture peaceful place or event and heart happy sounds, imagine stress flowing away from body; or visualize competitive sport activity

Shapiro (2009)

Meditation to experience “Essential Nature”

See yourself as a pure and noble essence, virtuous, pure, and deeply lovable

Shapiro (2009)

Meditation for Anxiety or PTSD

Recall an unpleasant memory causing anxiety

Notice physical feelings

Stay with the physical feelings until they dissipate or until concentration ends

Come out of meditative state slowly and carefully

Decision-Making Meditation

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Think of one option

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Think of another option

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Come out of meditative state and assess feelings to make decision

Six Focusing Movements: Meditation for Self-Healing

Choose a time and place which will be quiet for a prolonged period of time

Go into a deep meditative state

Clearing a space: Ask yourself, “How do I feel?”

Felt sense of the problem: Ask yourself, “Which problem is the worst?”

Finding a handle: Name the problem

Resonating handle and felt sense: Ask, “Is the handle right?” Adjust the handle as needed

Asking: Ask the problem

Receiving: Listen to the response

Come out of meditate state

Gendlin, E. T. (1981). *Focusing*. New York: Bantam Books

Energy Clearing Meditation (use at the end of the day)

Before bed, go into a deep meditative state

Ask your higher power to help you

Starting with your first human contact, identify the feelings in your body

Release the feelings

Move to the next contact and repeat until all contacts have been cleared

Finally, ask all dissonant energies in your home to leave

Visualize replacing them with light and love

<http://www.heartattune.com/>

Meditation to Induce Sleep

While in bed, go into a meditative state

Focus on the tips of your toes and relax them

Focus on the balls of the feet and relax them

Focus on the bottom of the arches of the feet and relax them

Move up the body one portion at a time until sleep begins

Meditation to Induce Sleep (2)

Count slowly when breathing out

Each time you breathe out, add one more count

Selected Resources

American Psychological Association website: <http://www.apa.org/>

Brainfacts.org

Kabaat-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

National Child Traumatic Stress Network <http://www.nctsn.org/>

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

PubMed.gov

Relaxation techniques for health: An introduction. (Retrieved Jan. 19, 2015, from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>)

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

Society of Neuroscience website: <http://www.sfn.org/>

Tips for disaster responders: Understanding compassion fatigue. (Retrieved Jan. 19, 2015 from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4869/SMA14-4869.pdf>)

Mindfulness Apps

The Mindfulness App: guided meditations from 3 to 30 minutes long

Simply Being: guided meditations

Get Some Headspace: guided meditations with capability to record own progress

Meditate: pre-recorded sessions with the sound of Tibetan singing bowls

Mindfulness Meditation: an 8-week program to learn meditation

Calm: guided meditation from 2 to 30 minutes long

Breathe2Relax: guided breathing sessions

Omvana: personally customize meditations for your unique style

Take a Break!: 2 meditations, 7 and 13 minutes long

Relax Melodies: gentle music to relax

Mindbody Connect: find meditation centers