MINDFULNESS: LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT

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Overview

- Why am I here?
- Stress in the workplace
- Stress and Emotion Reactivity & Regulation
- Mindfulness
  - What is it?
- Does it work?
  - Research
- Is it for everyone?
  - Obstacles
- How to do it
  - Key elements
- Doing it!
- Conclusion
Introduction

- Why am I here?
  - Research on Non-suicidal self-injury → Mindfulness
  - Stress related health problems and challenges → Mindfulness

- Stress in the workplace
  - The annual cost in Canada of work time lost to stress is calculated at $12-billion. (Statistics Canada, 1999)
  - Disability claims have been significantly on the rise over the past few years, due mainly to Long Term Disability claims. The area with the biggest increase is “mental-nervous conditions”. (Making the Disability Connection, Canadian Healthcare Manager, April/May, 1999)
Signs of Stress in the workplace: check all that apply....

- Nervousness
- Worrying
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Irritability
- Depression
- Forgetfulness
- Mood swings
- Crying easily
- Easily angered
- Poor concentration
- Restlessness
- Insomnia

- Fatigue
- Constant feeling of time pressure
- Tension headaches
- Tight shoulder and neck muscles
- Teeth grinding
- High blood pressure
- Erratic or racing heartbeat
- Migraine headaches
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Frequent minor illnesses
When it begins to feel stressful….your emotions are in charge:

Emotion Regulation
Emotion Reactivity: A Key to Emotion Dysregulation

- **Sensitivity**
  - I tend to get emotional very easily
  - Not at all like me ................................... Completely like me
  - 0 2 3 4

- **Arousal/Intensity**
  - When I experience emotions, I feel them very strongly/intensely

- **Persistence/Recovery**
  - When I am angry/upset, it takes me much longer than most people to calm down

Reactivity to Regulation

High Reactivity = Stress
Reactivity to Regulation

High Reactivity = Stress

High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation
High Reactivity = Stress

High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation = Stress
High Reactivity = Stress

High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation = Stress

So ability to regulate emotions is important!!
Emotion Regulation

So how regular are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When I’m upset, I feel like I am out of control. (circle one)</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Half of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I’m upset, I feel like there is nothing I can do. (circle one)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I’m upset, I can’t think of anything else. (circle one)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I’m upset, I know that I can find a way to eventually feel better. (circle one)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, Gratz & Roemer, 2004
When I’m upset, I feel like I am out of control. (circle one)
Never  Some of the time  Half of the time  Most of the time  Always

When I’m upset, I feel like there is nothing I can do. (circle one)
Never  Some of the time  Half of the time  Most of the time  Always

When I’m upset, I can’t think of anything else. (circle one)
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When I’m upset, I know that I can find a way to eventually feel better. (circle one)
Never  Some of the time  Half of the time  Most of the time  Always

Yellow is difficulty with regulating emotions!
How to cope with...

Emotion Reactivity

Poor Emotion Regulation

STRESS
"The article you sent me on how technology causes stress crashed my computer."

"There are only two times I feel stress: day and night."

"STRESS"
## Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994) Adapted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the last month, how often have you…</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Fairly Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. …been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. …felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. …felt nervous and “stressed”?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. …questioned your ability to handle your personal problems?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. …felt that things were just not working out for you?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. …found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. …felt unable to control irritations in your life?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. …felt that you were overwhelmed by things?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. …been angered because of things that were outside of your control?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. …felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Endangering Health</th>
<th>Med/High Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>27+</td>
<td>22+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-54</td>
<td>26+</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>19+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cohen, 1994)
How to decrease reactivity, and regulate emotions?
To manage stress?
Mindfulness
What is it?
Mindfulness

What is it?

Attention to immediate experience

Image source: www.centreforcbtcounselling.co.uk/mindfulness_cbt.php
What is it?

Attention
to immediate experience

Acceptance
of the experience

Image source: www.centreforcbtcounselling.co.uk/mindfulness_cbt.php
The Oxford Mindfulness Centre aims to extend the understanding of mindfulness through research, training, and providing classes for NHS patients. Oxford Mindfulness is a centre within Oxford University's Department of Psychiatry. The Centre was founded in 2007 to realise the ...
Mindfulness interventions have been shown to be effective for:

- Sleep disturbances, stress, mood and fatigue in cancer patients (Carlson & Garland, 2005)
- For military in IRAQ, (Jha et al., 2007, 2010)
  Cognitive Neuroscientist Dr. Jha notes: “Our findings suggest that, just as daily physical exercise leads to physical fitness, engaging in mindfulness exercises on a regular basis may improve mind-fitness”
- Hot flashes! (Carmody et al., 2006)
- An array of physical and psychological symptoms of illness (e.g., Miller, Fletcher, & Kabat-Zinn, 1995; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Kaplan, Goldenberg, & Galvin-Nadeau, 1993; Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Rosenzweig, 2001; Weissbecker et al., 2002).
Participating in an 8-week mindfulness meditation program changes brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy and stress. In a study in the January 30, 2011 issue of Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging, researchers (Lazar et al., 2011) report:

- Meditation group participants reported spending an average of 27 minutes each day practicing mindfulness exercises,
- Analysis of MR images, found increased grey-matter density in the hippocampus, known to be important for learning and memory, and in structures associated with self-awareness, compassion and introspection.
- Decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala, which is known to play an important role in anxiety and stress.
Currently Mindfulness is part of

- Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn 1982; Kabat-Zinn 1990),
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al. 2002),
- Mindfulness for depression (Williams et al., 2007)
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993)
- Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) (Hayes et al. 1999);

...And leads to clinically significant improvements in psychological functioning in a wide range of populations. (Carmody & Baer, 2008)
Is it for everyone?

Obstacles to using mindfulness

Misunderstanding of how it should “work”

Societal values/ competitive stress!

Psychological identity/ “not me”
Formal Practice

- **Body Scan** - scanning physical sensation from toes up, and breathing in to the body and out with it
- **Mindful Yoga** - gentle movement with the body to be aware of the sensations and moving with the breath
- **Sitting Meditation** - focus on breath, body, sound, thought/emotion, “choiceless”
- **Walking Meditation** - physical sensation of foot to ground, heel to toe, slow, mind in the sensations

Informal Practice (Day-to-day)

- Aware of breath, body, sound, thought, emotion
- Falling into “now” “moment-to-moment”, washing dishes, waiting for elevator, sitting in a meeting
How do you use it exactly??

- Sitting Meditation (see take home handout)
  - Start with stilling the body, “settling”,
  - Then turn your attention inward to the feeling of your breath
  - After a while you will turn your attention- like soft spotlight- to the sensations in your body, physical sensations.
  - Next turn your attention to sound, hearing.
  - Then you will turn your attention to your thoughts themselves, not as distractions but as the focus of your attention.
  - And finally an “open awareness”: whatever comes up watching, observing, noting without fighting it or commenting/judging it, just being aware.
Mini- mindfulness!

- A small mini-mindfulness activity....
My personal experience

Research: it works through decreasing emotional reactivity, increasing emotion regulation and decreasing rumination

Don’t believe me… research it!

Do it for 8 weeks and see… (20 minutes a day)
Centers in Montreal that Offer Mindfulness Based Stress Management courses*

- Whole Person Care, Faculty of Medicine, McGill
  - 514-398-2298 (for medical professionals & chronic illnesses)

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Clinic (for stress, chronic illness, and mild/moderate anxiety or mood issues)
  Queen Elizabeth Health Complex, N.D.G.
  (514) 481-0317

- Living Arts: Montreal Based Wellness Services (for all)
  - 514-730-7882 www.living-arts.ca

*currently I have no affiliation with any of these centers and in no way benefit from referrals.
Doing it on your own

- See Kabat-Zinn speaking about MBSR academically and its physiological/health and psychological effects
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSU8ftmmhmw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSU8ftmmhmw)
  - Kabat-Zinn walks you through a Mindful practice (with Google employees)
    - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc)
- Jon Kabat-Zinn’s work Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction:
  - Book: Full Catastrophe Living with Series 1 CDs
    - [http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/about.html](http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/about.html)
QUESTIONS?