



Welcome!

The webinar will begin shortly...

Note: Your microphone is muted, and your camera is turned off.
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Mindfulness & Self-Care Essentials for Therapists

The Mindfulness Remedy for Living in a Chaotic World

Donald Altman, MA, LPC

Welcome!

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Mindful Living Newsletter

MindfulPractices.com

Travelers, a Mystical Novel of Healing, Hope and Renewal

Simply Mindful Coloring Book: 50 Drawings, Practical Tools & Daily Coping Skills

Simply Mindful: A 7-Week Course and Personal Handbook for Mindful Living

The Mindfulness Toolbox

101 Mindful Ways to Build Resilience

Mindfulness Training ● Consultation ● Speaking

Today's Roadmap

Stress and Mindfulness Fundamentals

- Effects of Stress – Cortisol, Telomeres & Mind-Wandering
- Neuroscience of Mindfulness

Coping Skills for Calm and Emotional Regulation

- Skill: Diaphragmatic Breathing
 - Turning on the parasympathetic nervous system
- Practice: The 5 Postures

Coping Skills to Distance from the “R.A.T.S.”

- Physical Grounding Skills to Create Space from Difficult:
 - Rumination
 - Anxiety
 - Stress
 - Transitions

Today's Roadmap

Coping Skills for Positive Affect and Depression

- Skill: Gratitude for Depression
 - Practice: The G.L.A.D. Technique

Coping Skills for Bouncing Back from Adversity

- Skill: The Supportive Power of Savoring
- Skill: Using Anchors for Safety and Security

Coping Skills for Optimal Brain and Body Health

- Skills: Nutrition, Activity and Sleep
 - Enhance Mental Clarity and More

Today's Roadmap

Coping Skills for Chronic Pain

- Skill: The Body Scan practice for changing the pain narrative and the experience of pain.

EXTRA: Coping Skills for Compassion and Safety in Relationships

- Loving-Kindness Practice as a Priming Tool for feelings of safety, security and trust.

Mindfulness Warm-Up

Brief Mindfulness Greeting

Using the CHAT function, share:

- 1) Your name, and write one sentence about the work you do.
- 2) In one sentence, tell what it was about this particular workshop that interested you.

Take a moment and appreciate the uniqueness of the people who are sharing this time with you.

Core Mindfulness Practice

WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT **NOW**?

3-Part Practice
“The Three Regulations”

BODY as it is
(Rooted, Posture)

BREATH as it is
(Physical Contact Point)

MIND as it is
(Non-judging Labeling)

Living in a Chaotic World

- Stress Research; Stress, Epi-Genetics and Mind-Wandering
- Identifying Stress
- Mindfulness as a Stress Antidote

Is Technology Rewiring Our Brains?

- Less Time in Nature
- Loss of Face-to-Face Communication
- Expectation of Speed and Instant Response Time
- Working Across Time-Zones
- Sleep Deficits

At the Movies... *Angry Yoga*

Why Worry About Stress?

Stress— a biological, psychological, social reaction to fear, anxiety, chaos, and demands of the environment.

- What music ripples through your brain and body during times of stress and transition?
- How can you reduce and replace ripples of stress with a tune of peace, harmony, and joy?

Effects of Daily Stress

- **Handling stress poorly each day puts you at a greater risk for mental health issues 10 years from now**
- Significant increase in clinically diagnosed anxiety and depression in those who reacted negatively to stress.
- Research suggests the importance of view stress as a challenge, rather than as a threat.
- Your attitude can make all the difference in your mental health.

The Wear and Tear of Daily Stressors on Mental Health, Psychological Science. 2013 24: 733 Charles, Piazza, et. al

Stress Survey in America

- **80% said their stress either stayed the same or increased over the past 2 years.**
- **PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:** 69% experienced upset stomach, headaches, muscle tension, insomnia, lack of appetite.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS:** 67% experienced irritability, anger, sadness, and tearfulness
- **UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS:** 36% reported eating unhealthy foods or eating excessively in response to job stress; Many reported treated family and others poorly.

APA. *Stress in America*. From: <http://www.APApractice.org>

Face Time or Face-to-Face Time?

Time Spent in front of Screens and Time Away from Screens

- * Today, 8-18 year-olds devote an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes to using entertainment media across a typical day (more than 53 hours a week).
- ** Preteens were tested for their ability to recognize non-verbal emotion and facial cues
- Subjects spent five days at a camp with only face-to-face interactions and without screens.
- Recognition of nonverbal emotion cues improved significantly more than that of the control group for both facial expressions and videotaped scenes.

* *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*; Kaiser Foundation, <http://kff.org/other/event/generation-m2-media-in-the-lives-of/>

** Five days at outdoor education camp without screens improves preteen skills with nonverbal emotion cues; *Computers in Human Behavior*, 39, 2014

A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

- People's minds wander an average of 47% of the time
- Mind wandering (state of not being present) is ubiquitous across all activities. Mind wandering is a predictor of feelings of unhappiness.
- It's not the activity, but how present one is that increases happiness

Mind Wandering and Telomeres

Mind Wandering and Aging Cells

- Telomere length is a measure of biological aging and a correlate of severe stress.
- Individuals reporting high mind wandering had shorter telomeres.
- A present attention state may produce cell longevity.

**Clinical Psychological Science*
Jan 2013 vol. 1 no. 1 (75-83)

At the Movies... *Stress, Mind Wandering, and Telomeres*

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

(Circle): 0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. *In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4*
2. *In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4*
3. *In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?0 1 2 3 4*
4. *In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4*
5. *In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?..... 0 1 2 3 4*
6. *In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4*
7. *In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? 0 1 2 3 4*
8. *In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? 0 1 2 3 4*
9. *In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? 0 1 2 3 4*
10. *In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? 0 1 2 3 4*

PSS created by Sheldon Cohn, et. al, Carnegie Mellon University

Perceived Stress Scale Scoring

1. Add up the numbers for questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10. **Write the total here** _____
1. For items 4, 5, 7, and 8 reverse the numbers (0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) and add these up. **Write the total here** _____
3. Add the two totals from steps 1 and 2. **Write total here for Overall Score:** _____

Perceived Stress Level Rating:

WOMEN:

0-7	<i>Low</i>
8-20	<i>Average</i>
21-26	<i>High</i>
27-40	<i>Very High</i>

MEN:

0-6	<i>Low</i>
7-17	<i>Average</i>
18-23	<i>High</i>
24-40	<i>Very High</i>

Mindfulness – Antidote to Stress

- Neuroscience and the Brain
- Core Mindfulness Practice
 - The Three Regulations: Body, Breath, and Mind
- Website Resources

Affect Labeling and the Brain

Dispositional mindfulness is associated with greater widespread PFC activation and attenuated amygdala responses during affect labeling.

Affect labeling encourages participants to treat affective states as “objects” of attention, promoting a detachment from these negative states.

Emotional Regulation Changes Amygdala

Study showed “evidence that cognitive regulation can create long-lasting changes in the ability of stimuli to elicit affective responses.

Amygdala response remained low during a follow-up after initial training.

Mindfulness Based Exposure Therapy for PTSD

- Combat veterans with PTSD used body scan, breathing, and self-compassion practices.
- MRI showed increased connections between brain areas related to less negative mind wandering and more present focused attention
- Over time, subjects showed increased capacity to volitionally shift attention from anxious states to present state attention.

King, A. P., Block, S. R., et. al. (2016), ALTERED DEFAULT MODE NETWORK (DMN) RESTING STATE FUNCTIONAL CONNECTIVITY FOLLOWING A MINDFULNESS-BASED EXPOSURE THERAPY FOR POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) IN COMBAT VETERANS OF AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ. *Depress. Anxiety*, 33: 289–299. doi: 10.1002/da.22481

in Elders with Mild Cognitive Impairment

STUDY 1: 3-mo. intervention for 55-90 yr. olds.

- 15-30 Min. Daily for 8 weeks; Treatment group had improved neurocognitive function
- Significantly improved verbal recognition memory compared to control group

STUDY 2: MRI showed increase in functional brain connectivity in areas affected by MCI and Alzheimers Disease.

- Mindfulness Meditation reduced hippocampal atrophy and increased networks related to past memories and associations.

J Am Geriatr Soc. 2013 Apr. (6) 14, 642-645 doi: 10.1111/jgs.12179; *Meditation for Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Pilot Randomized Trial*; Rebecca Wells, Catherine Kerr, et. al.

Useful (& Free) Web Resources

- Brain Resources
- Mindfulness Websites

Mindfulness Resources/Research

- Virtual Hope Box: https://www.research.va.gov/research_in_action/Virtual-Hope-Box-smartphone-app-to-prevent-suicide.cfm
Breathe2Relax CovidCoach
- Greater Good; The Science of a Meaningful Life www.GreaterGood.berkeley.edu
- Center for Investigating Healthy Minds:
<http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org>
- Mindfulness Research Monthly goamra.org
- DANA.Org Brain Research [Dana Foundation](http://DanaFoundation.org)
- TCME.Org [The Center for Mindful Eating](http://TheCenterforMindfulEating.org)

Pausing for Mindful Metacognition

- Taking a pause to reflect improves learning.*
- 2-Week Mindfulness Meditation Training increased the accuracy of perception and memory.**

Benefits of Metacognition:

- Helps us develop more accurate judgment about our abilities and insight about ourselves
 - Is a skill that can be developed by pausing to reflect.
 - Pausing in session helps clients to integrate what they have learned from therapy.
-
- **Improving learning through enhanced metacognition: a classroom study;** J. R. Baird, European Journal of Science Education 1986
-
- **** Domain-specific enhancement of metacognitive ability following meditation training;** Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2014 May 12.

Time for Reflection and Metacognition...

Skill: Breath for Calm and Regulation

- Train the Brain for Calm and Cognition
- Turn on the Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Navy SEALs method for arousal control
- Practice: Diaphragmatic Breath & the 3 Min. Question for Clients

William James wrote...

“...The power of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will...But it is easier to define this idea than to give practical directions for bringing it about.”

—*The Principles of Psychology, 1890*

“Boredom is simply lack of attention.”

-- Fritz Perls

*The secret of health for
both mind and body is not
to mourn for the past,
worry about the future, or
anticipate troubles but to
live in the present
moment wisely and
earnestly.*

—The Buddha

At the Movies... *Breathing and Mindfulness*

Mindful Breathing Awareness

20-minutes of diaphragmatic breathing produced:

- A reduction of negative feelings
- An increase in neurotransmitter serotonin for improved mood
- A higher concentration of oxygen in the pre-frontal cortex
(mindful attention and higher level processing)

International Journal of Psychophysiology 2011, May, Activation of the anterior prefrontal cortex and serotonergic system is associated with improvements in mood and EEG changes induced by Zen meditation practice in novices; Toho University School of Medicine

Brief Mindfulness Reduces Stress & Blood Pressure

Pilot Study with 13 Priests at University of Portland*

- Priests a vulnerable population to stress and high blood pressure
- Program consisted of two 1-hour training sessions on “contemplative breathing” and 3-minute practice sessions three times a day.
- Results: Significant reduction in Blood pressure and Perceived Stress Scale

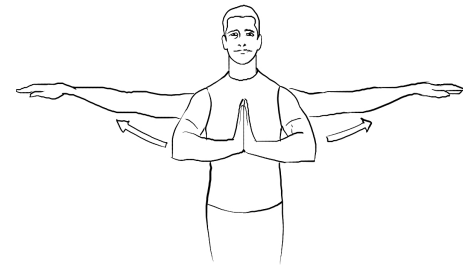
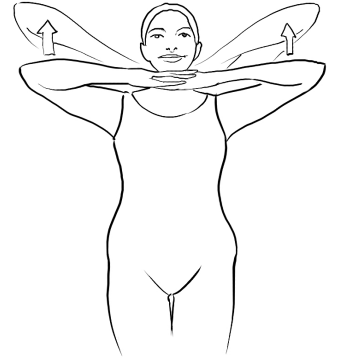
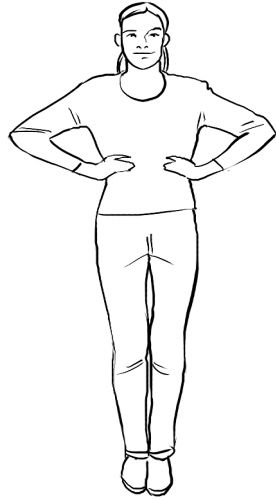
* Joy Mocieri, RN, BSN, CEN, TNCC, *The Unique Power of Mindfulness on Blood Pressure and Stress Reduction on a Priest Community*; University of Portland School of Nursing, June 24, 2018

Turning on the Parasympathetic System

Where are you breathing?

- **Rewiring the Stress Response**
 - 20-30 sec. to turn down stress volume
 - 10x increase in oxygen
 - Lower B.P., respiration
 - Increase alpha waves
 - Increase serotonin

5 Regulating Breathing Practices



Teaching Belly Breathing

- 1) Explain the benefits and physiology of breathing, and how it turns on the body's relaxation system
- 2) Check where they are breathing by having them put one palm on the chest, one on the belly.
- 3) Demonstrate how to get a fuller belly breath by placing the hands behind the back or behind the neck/head.
- 4) Problem solve how clients can use this each day.

Pair Belly Breathing with Other Pleasant Activities

- 1) Music
- 2) Walking
- 3) Swimming
- 4) Biking
- 5) Reading
- 6) Eating

The 3-Minute Question

You do lots of things to take of your physical hygiene
each day....

Are you worth 3 minutes a day to take
care of your mental well-being with
belly breathing?

Time for Reflection and Metacognition...

Skill: Grounding for Clearing Out the RATS

Physical Grounding Practice

Drop into the body...
and rest the weary mind.

Intervention for clearing out and
managing the **RATS**:

R-umination

A-nxiety

T-ransitions

S-tress

The New Science of Epi-genetics

[Nova and Epigenetics](#)

- Meditation altered gene expression changes to more than 2200 genes, including those responsible for inflammation, handling of free radicals, and programmed cell death

www.genome.gov

* Dusek JA, Otu HH, Wohlhueter AL, Bhasin M, Benson, H, et al. 2008 Genomic Counter-Stress Changes Induced by the Relaxation Response. PLoS ONE 3(7): e2576.

Mindfulness Enhances Mind-Body Connection

- Meditation strengthens connections between the frontal cortex and the insula *
- Mindfulness training for 7-8 yr. old anxious children showed clinical improvement, better attention, and included daily mindful walking. **

*Effects of Meditation Experience on Functional Connectivity of Distributed Brain Networks, Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, March 2012 | Volume 6 | Article 38 | 1; Wendy Hasenkamp and Lawrence W. Barsalou

** Treating anxiety with mindfulness: an open trial of mindfulness training for anxious children; Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, Vol. 19 No. 4, 2005. Semple, Reid, and Miller

Skill: Grounding with Palm the Present Moment

Practice:

- Guided Script is in Handouts.
Use script until you are comfortable and familiar with various steps.

Teaching: Palm the Present Moment

- 1) Get centered in body
- 2) Rubs palms together then place palms a foot apart
- 2) Slowly bring palms closer until they touch
- 4) Raise elbows and press palms together; Hold for four count
- 4) Release, letting go stress
- 5) Lower arms and hands onto legs; breathe out remaining stress
- 7) Stretch arms over head and exhale as arms come down

Palm the Present Moment

Guidelines for Teaching Clients:

- Frame as a portable tool for stress and rumination.
- Always demonstrate and have client follow along.
- Give handout after teaching client.
- Schedule Practice Times.
- Follow-up and practice again next session to ensure effective use.

Time for Reflection and Metacognition...

- 1) Use the Chat function to write your Experience of Palm the Present moment or the S-T-O-P Stress Practice.
- 2) What did you notice? How could one of these practices be adapted for clients?
- 3) Take a moment to read through comments from others.

Break

Skills for Positive Affect and Depression

Gratitude as a selective
attention practice

Four Psychological Reasons

Why Gratitude Is Good

Practice: Take G.L.A.D.

Snapshots Through the Day

Things We Sometimes Forget to Have
Gratitude For...

Consistent Gratitude Practice

PHYSICAL

- * Stronger immune system
- * Lower blood pressure
- * Less bothered by pain
- * Lower blood pressure
- * Exercise more and take better care of health
- * Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- * Increased positive emotions
- * More alert, alive, and awake
- * More joy and pleasure
- * More optimism & happiness

SOCIAL

- * More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- * More forgiving and more outgoing
- * Feel less lonely and isolated

Gratitude for Depression

Depression Intervention:

2003 study had participants write down five things they were grateful for during the week for a period of 10 weeks. These people were:*

- 25% happier than persons who wrote down their day's frustrations or simply listed the day's events.
- More optimistic about the future.
- Felt better about their lives.
- Participated in one and a half hours more exercise per week than those in the control groups.

Gratitude as a Selective Attention Practice

- Brain wires up by what is in the field of focused attention
 - Focus on the good things
 - Notice and savor the ordinary
 - Develops an attitude of kindness

At the Movies... *Robert Emmons: Why Gratitude Is Good*

Five Kinds of Gratitude...

- 1) Basic Gratitude, Necessities
- 2) Ordinary Gratitude
- 3) Personal Gratitude
- 4) Relational Gratitude
- 5) Paradoxical Gratitude

...AKA Silver Lining Gratitude

Gratitude for the Ordinary Study

- Participants chronicled both an “Ordinary” daily event and “Extraordinary” Event
 - Photos and writing about the day
- Subjects predicted which they would most interesting to review in the future
- Majority predicted the Extraordinary Event
- 3 Months Later, Subjects Reviewed Both Events:
 - Individuals greatly underestimated the ordinary day and what they could gain from it.
 - Subjects found the Ordinary Event more meaningful and interesting than the Extraordinary one.

Saint Teresa's Ordinary Gratitude

My daughters, what are these drops of oil in our lamps?

They are the small things of daily life:

faithfulness,

punctuality,

small words of kindness,

a thought for others,

our way of being silent, of looking,

of speaking, and of acting.

These are the true drops of love.

Be faithful in small things because
it is in them that your strength lies.

Three Gratitude Practices

INTERPERSONAL PRACTICE 1: Write down one thing you were grateful for in the past week and then tell the story behind that gratitude to another.

INTERPERSONAL PRACTICE 2: Write a Gratitude Letter about something positive that another person did for you, and present that individual with the letter.

PERSONAL PRACTICE 3: Make a Gratitude Bowl (or teacup) for the day or week, and put a penny in for each time you feel grateful for something. Track how many pennies you accumulate.

G.L.A.D. Daily Snapshot*

*G.L.A.D. is an acronym for finding joy
and balance using cognitive,
behavioral and mindfulness skills*

G - find one **Gratitude** you're thankful for today

L - find one new thing you **Learned** today

A - find one **Accomplishment** you did today

D - find one thing of **Delight** that touched you today

Journal or write on an index card

Using G.L.A.D. at Home

G.L.A.D. is an acronym for finding joy and balance using cognitive, behavioral and mindfulness skills

- Make this a partner practice sharing all the **G.L.A.D.** elements you noticed that related to a significant person in your household. Then, they share their **G.L.A.D.** with you.
- At mealtime, go around the table as each person takes one letter from **G.L.A.D.** and shares that with others.
- Keep a **G.L.A.D.** journal that you can look back on and review.

Skills for Bouncing Back from Adversity

- Mindfulness as a Selective Attention Tool for Distancing from Negativity and Triggers
 - 2 Kinds of Savoring Memories for Building Positive Affect and Enhancing Social Identity
 - Savoring a Past Success or Accomplishment
 - Savoring Times of Helping Others
 - Anchoring in the Environment

Savoring a Past Success or Accomplishment

- Recalling past successes or good times can boost feelings of positivity.
- Extending a positive memory for a longer period of time, known as “savoring” can produce feelings of well-being.

Savoring for Older Adults

- Older adults associate tranquility and contentment with life-satisfaction.
- Use a Savoring Exercise with Tranquility as the focus.
- Have client make a list of ways they feel content in their life to help them experience a life well-lived.

Practice: Savoring a Past Success

During the next 4 minutes, savor a favorite memory, a past success, or something you are proud of, that makes you feel joyful.

You can either write this down or just savor the memory in great detail.

(Use tranquility and contentment as a focus if you want.)

Savoring Times of Being a Benefactor

Reflecting on voluntarily giving or being a benefactor produces:

- Increased positive affect and greater pro-social behavior than when reflecting on receiving.
- Stronger self-identity as a capable and caring contributor.

Practice: Being a Benefactor

For the next 4 minutes, write about a recent experience at work or in your life in which you volunteered or made a contribution that enabled other people to feel grow, flourish, or feel grateful.

Write down your experience of being a benefactor in as great detail as you can.

Savoring Reflection

Use Chat Function to Share:

- What was it like to do both of these?
- Which appealed to you most? Why?
- How might this practice have a positive impact on your day, work, or relationships?
- How might you use or adapt either of these interventions with clients?

Anchoring in the Environment

Ordinary Symbols and Objects are Anchoring, such as:

- Shapes, such as a circle, a ring, etc.
- Sounds or musical instruments
- A comforting color or object in nature
- A favorite object or family keepsake.

Anchors from Daily Experience

- Name of a Favorite Sports Team
- Smell of Lavender
- Childhood toy or favorite object
- Non-verbal gestures, postures
- Geographic safe place, nature

Anchors from Various Life Stages

Children relate to grounding symbols, such as:

- * Favorite childhood books
- * Chair in their room
- * Pets and animals
- * Favorite comics; game cards
- * Dolls, Pokemon, model trains, etc.
- * Cap and gown are symbols at graduation
- * Plants are symbols for life, death, and rebirth
- * Adult symbols are family keepsakes, cultural holidays, flags, Mother's and Father's Day, etc.

Practice: Here and Now Anchor

Finding Pleasantness

Ask the question:

**What one thing can I find that is pleasant
in my environment right now?**

Colors

Objects

Sounds

Shapes

Sensations

Smells

Textures

Anchor Questions

- What was your experience of identifying and anchoring with a symbol like for you?
- What object(s) connect you with family in a positive way?
- How might you use anchoring during the day to lift your mood and get you focused on the positive?

Practice: Savoring the Ordinary

Using the categories below, choose 1-3 “small things,” as Mother Teresa referred to them—to savor for the next 5 minutes.

1) Identify One Small Thing from This Week

- Things cherished or appreciated, like reading the paper, sipping coffee, giving a hug or kiss to someone special, feeling of water in the shower, etc.

2) Observe One Ordinary Good Thing in Your Surroundings

- Take a mental snapshot of how you’re sitting in a nice chair, watching your kids play, interacting with a friendly person, or seeing the sunlight coming in through a window.

3) Remember One Kindness from Today

- Did you help someone today? Did someone help you? Bring to mind that ordinary (yet special) word of encouragement you shared with another or vice versa. Remember even the smallest act of kindness—a pat on the back, a smile, etc.

Time for Reflection and Metacognition...

Coping Skills for Optimal Brain/Body Health

- Required for optimal cognition and learning
 - Thinking brain needs protein
 - Brain's glymphatic system
 - Sleep enhances learning

* from: *Simply Mindful: A 7-Week Course and Personal Handbook for Mindful Living* by
Donald Altman

Healthy Eating & Nutrition

Identify eating patterns and strategies

- Identify meal skipping or mindless eating
- Protein to help with mood, attention and motivation
- Drugs and alcohol patterns
- Role of caffeine with depression/anxiety
- Identify: simple, realistic and achievable goals
 - “What is one small change you can make today?”

<http://www.caffeineinformer.com>

Healthy Eating & Nutrition

- Foods for Attention and Motivation
 - Neurotransmitters **Norepinephrine** and **Dopamine**: synthesized from tyrosine; sources include almonds, lima beans avocados, bananas, dairy, pumpkin and sesame seeds
- Foods for Calm, Mood Regulation, Mental Flexibility
 - Neurotransmitter **Serotonin**: synthesized from tryptophan; sources include brown rice, cottage cheese, meat, turkey peanuts, and sesame seeds
- Foods for Thought and Memory
 - **Acetylcholine** (not made from amino acids): Choline belongs to the B family of vitamins is found in lecithin. Foods include salmon, egg yolks, wheat germ, soybeans, organ meats, and whole wheat products.

Sleep Hygiene

- Brain and Sleep: The Glymphatic System
- How much sleep do you need? How much sleep do you get? What is your daily sleep deficit?
- Factors of life style affecting sleep
 - Technology, time, etc.
- Medical factors affecting sleep
- Problem solving sleep issues, even bad mattresses
- Develop a healthy sleep ritual

* 2011 Study shows that chronic sleep problems commonly found in anxiety and depression can produce more negative thoughts and memories.

At the Movies..23 ½ Hours: *What is the Single Best Thing?*

Exercise and Movement

- Physical Exercise and Pleasant Activities boost mood and reduce anxiety
 - Exercise produces brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) good for brain and learning
 - Movement stimulates the production of a host of neurotransmitters and hormones that safeguard against anxiety, depression, ADHD, dementia, aging, and obesity.*
- Identify simple, realistic and achievable pleasant activity to implement.
- Don't reinvent the wheel; use activities that worked in the past
- Select date and time to do activity.

* *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*— James Ratey and Eric Hagerman New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2008

Coping Skills for Chronic Pain

Introduction to the Body Scan

Changes Perception of Pain

Practice: Surf the Body

Body Scan for Pain Reduction

- Four 20-min. sessions of mindfulness meditation reduced pain unpleasantness by 57% and pain intensity by 40% *
- Engages multiple brain mechanisms that alter the subjectively available pain experience.

* "Brain Mechanisms Supporting the Modulation of Pain by Mindfulness Meditation,"
The Journal of Neuroscience, 6 April 2011, 31(14): 5540-5548

Practice: Body Scan

- Non-judging awareness and acceptance with the Body Scan
 - Used in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and
 - Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression (MBCT)

Body Scan Reflection

How can the Body Scan be part of a daily practice?

What obstacles could get in the way?

What would be the best time and place to incorporate the Body Scan into your day?

How could you adapt this practice?

How will you know if the Body Scan is being effective?

Loving Kindness to Heal Trauma

- Fredrickson's *Broaden and Build* Theory for Positive Emotions

- Asserts that positive emotions broaden attention and thinking in response to diverse experiences, not narrowly focused threats.
- Positive emotions increase connection, trust, and openness.
- Positive emotions build relationships and resources.
- Loving-kindness Meditation (LKM) increased daily positive experiences and broadened personal resources and life satisfaction, and altered response to negative, depression-inducing emotions.

Open Hearts Build Lives: Positive Emotions, Induced Through Loving-Kindness Meditation, Build Consequential Personal Resources, J Pers Soc Psychol . 2008 November ; 95(5): 1045–1062. doi:10.1037/a0013262, Fredrickson, Cohn, et. al.

Loving Kindness Affirmation

- *May I be safe*
- *May I be happy*
- *May I be healthy*
- *May I be at peace*
- Optional to add: “May I be...Secure, Loved, Forgiven, Accepted, etc.”

Loving-kindness and compassion meditation: potential for psychological interventions ,
Hoffman, Grossman, and Hinton, et. al., Clinical Psychological Review, 2011
Nov;31(7):1126-32. Epub 2011 Jul 26.

Loving Kindness Affirmation

After practicing sending these warm feelings to yourself, you can extend these to others:

- Teachers, mentors, guides

- Family and friends

- Neutral persons

- Unfriendly persons

- To all persons without discrimination

1-Minute Loving-Kindness + Breath Practice

- **1-minute: Breath in loving kindness for yourself; exhale it for all other beings**
- OPTIONAL: Use a single word, such as “safe” “connected” “secure” “peaceful” “energized” “compassion” with each in and out breath.

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The Mindfulness Toolbox by Donald Altman

Tool #12 –Palm the Present Moment

LEARNING STYLES:

The following learning styles are compatible with this practice:

Bodily-Kinesthetic-Tactile

Visual-Spatial

Reflective-Intrapersonal

Thoughts for Therapists

Anxious clients are often caught up in a myriad of thoughts spinning in their head. For some, this rapid spinning of thoughts can even result in an overpowering sensation of nausea—almost like being on a boat that is bouncing up and down in choppy water. That makes sense when you consider that it has been estimated that the mind can generate up to 125 thoughts per second. Getting solidly rooted or grounded back in the body is one method for calming down, quieting the anxious or ruminating mind, and getting back onto more firm and peaceful ground.

In addition to anxiety, this practice is a good way of creating space from any negative emotional feeling, ruminating thoughts, or feelings of being overwhelmed from stress or chaos. I also recommend this as a tool for when clients come into the counseling office and are not settled down due to the demands of time pressures, traffic congestion, getting a parking space, etc. Spending a minute or two getting grounded and centered at the start of a session can help the client enter a more receptive space.

One of the advantages of the *Palm the Present Moment* practice is that is portable and easy to use. It offers a multi-purpose means of centering to counter anxiety—especially when transitioning from one physical location or situation to another. (This is also a useful one-minute mindfulness technique for therapists to use between sessions for the same reasons.)

Tips for Working with Clients

- ✓ *Palm the Present Moment* practice is a readable script that you can use in session to guide clients through the practice. Do this prior to giving them the handout.
- ✓ Follow along with the movements so patients can visually see you model this practice for them.
- ✓ Other sense grounding practices for anxious clients that can be bundled with this one include:
 - Tool #13, *Ground Surfing*
 - Tool #16, *BE-THIS Sense Grounding*
 - Tool #33, *Squeeze Out Stress*
 - Tool #35, *Take a Stress Pause*

HANDOUT: Palm the Present Moment GUID

Instructions: Use this portable grounding meditation script whenever you find yourself getting anxious, worried, feeling overwhelmed, lost in negative thoughts, or feeling uncertain about the future while transitioning from one place to another. Spend as much time as necessary to do this the first time.

Once you're familiar with how to *Palm the Present Moment*, you can shorten the process and do this in just one-minute, if desired.

Sit in a comfortable chair and take a couple of nice, long, calming breaths.

Now, just raise your hands up to the height of the heart center, with the palms facing one another—about a foot or so apart. Notice how much tension there is in just holding the arms and hands up in the air.

Next, ever so slowly, bring the hands closer until you feel even the slightest or subtle sensation of energy, pressure, heat, or warmth. Stop when you feel this, and just notice this for a few moments. Observe closely this sensation. Is the heat, warmth, energy, or pressure constant? Or, does it vary slightly moment to moment?

Now, gently move the palms closer until just the fingertips come together with the most feathery, lightest touch. Imagine that the molecules from the fingertips of your right hand are dancing with the molecules of the fingertips of your left hand. You might even think about what dance they are doing... the foxtrot, the samba, the tango, the waltz, or the jitterbug.

Now, you continue to bring your palms together until they lightly touch. As you do this, notice how the fingers straighten out and how more heat builds up between the palms. With your palms together, this is a good time to pause for a few moments and have appreciation for the body, which is a precious gift that we possess. We can also reflect on the words of former priest and author John

O'Donohue who wisely wrote in Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom, "Your body is the only home in the universe."

(Rest in silent appreciation for 5-10 seconds)

Now, let's spend a few moments to see what it's like to tense, and then relax the body. Keeping your palms touching, raise your elbows up to the side. Press with only ten percent of the total pressure you could exert. Now, press your hands together even harder—up to twenty percent of total pressure.

Stop pressing if you feel any pain. Press only as hard as you experience no pain or discomfort.

Again, observe how far up your arm the tension goes. Does it extend to the wrists, the elbows, the shoulders, the shoulder blades, the back, the chest? Maybe you feel more heat building in the palms of your hands? Which muscles are tense? After about five seconds of this, let your shoulders and elbows relax and fall. Release all this tension. Notice how nice it is to let go of tightness and tension in the body.

Finally, very slowly open your palms, like flower blossoms opening to the morning sun. Sense the coolness in your palms as the heat dissipates. Finally, let the weight of gravity tug on your hands and arms, letting these gently fall like leaves from a tree, until they come to rest on your lap or legs. Take a nice, long inhale, and as you exhale, imagine all the remaining stress draining out with the exhale down your legs and out of the bottom of your feet—where it will flow into the Earth for recycling. If you want, just sit for a few more moments in appreciation for the body that follows your commands and carries your consciousness so you can achieve your life goals. How marvelous!

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Body Scan

Sample Script: The purpose of this activity is not to relax these body parts, but to increase your awareness of them and notice any sensations that may be present from moment to moment. Later on, after practice, you may choose to include thoughts of gratitude and thanks to each part of the body—but that is not necessary when learning this technique.

To begin, we will just be sensing each part of the body. If at any time any sensation feels overwhelming, you can open your eyes or move to another body part where there is no pain or negative feelings. This is a good activity to use in the morning. You can also use this at night before going to bed or anytime you want to get centered. Again, remember that this practice may or may not produce relaxation. It will be different each time you practice it be you are encouraged to let go of expectations as part of this practice. Know that while you are sensing your body, you are actually scanning the motor and sensory cortex of your brain.

Right now, center your mind on your body's presence. Take three deep breaths and feel your diaphragm move. Feel how marvelous it is that each breath fills your lungs, sends oxygen to your muscles and organs, and sustains you. You may want to wiggle your toes and feel how effortlessly they follow your command. Take a few moments to feel grateful for this body, this extraordinary gift that you possess.

Now, starting at your feet and working your way up to your head, you will place your attention on each part of your body. If you feel discomfort with any part, you can remind yourself that this is simply a sensation. The sensation does not define who you are. You are simply observing signals. When you are ready, you can always decide to move on to another location in the body where there is less discomfort. Know, however, that by resting with the discomfort, you are allowing yourself to bear witness to the feeling and sensation that exists, and experiencing the fullness of what is occurring. If you have pain in a certain area of the body—such as your neck or shoulders—you may find that focusing on that area increases the sensation. You can always move focus to another part of the body and return to the painful area later.

Also, as you do this exercise, you may notice that the awareness of sensation or pain is not the sensation or pain itself, but just awareness. This may lead to greater understanding about discomfort or pain. Viewed like this, you may begin to witness the feeling for what it is. It is simply a sensation that is separate from the story you have about the pain—like how it is making your life miserable, keeping you from doing the things you want, and other strong

attachments to ideas and beliefs you may have. But at this point, just notice the sensation, and notice the awareness that notices the sensation. See if you can recognize the difference.

Let's begin now, by focusing on your toes. As you do this, acknowledge how your toes have been masterfully constructed to help you walk and carry your weight. Picture your toes from the inside, filled with muscles, tendons, and bones, all working in concert. Feel a sense of gratitude and thankfulness to them. As you breathe, you may even visualize them filling up with the breath. Do this now for a few moments.

Optionally, if you want, you may send gratitude and appreciation to each part of the body as you go through this exercise.

Move now to the soles of your feet, to the ball of the feet and the heel. Feel any sensations in the soles. Sense the tendons and tissue that are below the skin. Notice any feelings or signals from inside this part of the body. Take time now breathe into this part of your feet. Again, you can optionally give thanks to the soles of your feet for supporting your body, and for allowing you to feel sensations as you walk and move and stay active. Or, you can just continue to sense each part of the body.

Now, move your mind's attention to the ankles, taking time to experience any sensations that are present. You can imagine the inside of this part of your body, how it is both flexible and strong enough to help you pivot and change directions. Allow yourself to let go of any sensation so as to contact the next sensation as it appears. In this way you can contact new sensations as they appear, in this moment, and the next, and the next.

You can continue this sequence as you move upward, scanning various body parts, including parts like the heart, intestines, stomach, genitals, kidneys, liver, spine, and brain, as well as other sense organs that assist in your well being.

Feel your connection to each of these parts that help to make a joyful and fulfilling life possible. Again, as an option, you may give special recognition to any part of your body is injured or needs healing—and you may send to it your desire for healing and well-being. You can also breathe in a white, healing light with your in-breath. Imagine that this light fills up your body or any injured part. Then, as you exhale, imagine the breath taking any impurities with it and leaving through your feet, where the impurities return to the earth for recycling.

When you have completed this practice by addressing all your body, let yourself rest for a moment in the presence of it. Give thanks and ask for your body to guide you in doing what is

best for it. Let your body know that you will pay attention to the signals it sends you, and that you will follow up any warning signals by getting check-ups and taking care of your body through learning about health and preventative measures. By now, you may really be smiling and ready to face the day (or night, as the case may be). This is a wonderful ancient practice that will help you find the strength to do what is right for your body—and the rest of you.

During the day, let yourself be more aware of your body. It really will let you know when it is happy and when it is not. I know several people, for example, who have told me that they feel less energetic when they drink too much caffeine. It is easy to make corrections if you take the time to become good friends with your body.

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Excerpted from:

The Mindfulness Toolbox by Donald Altman, M.A., LPC

Tool #48 – Loving-Kindness Affirmation

LEARNING STYLES:

The following learning styles are compatible with this practice:

Verbal-Linguistic

Visual-Spatial

Reflective-Intrapersonal

Existential-Meaning

Thoughts for Therapists

Suffering is one thing that all humans have in common. (Hopefully, so is joy) Still, as a human being it is not possible to avoid loss of some kind. Possessing a human body means being subject to illness, frailty, aging, and ultimately, death. Of course, trying to deny, resist, or pretend that this doesn't exist is yet another form of suffering. There seems to be no way out of this mess, and yet, there is a way to bring meaning to loss and pain. It is called compassion—whose original meaning translates as “to be with suffering.”

To know suffering means that we can try to relieve suffering. Unlike empathy, through which we can step into the emotional shoes of another person, compassion impels us toward being available to reduce the suffering of others through selfless action. Indeed, over twenty-five percent, or one-quarter of all Americans, volunteer or give service to those in need. While some researchers believe compassion is an instinct that leads to survival, others believe that it can be taught. Either way, more compassion—and self-compassion—is greatly needed.

Researcher Richard Davidson—director of The Center for Investigating Healthy Minds and author of *The Emotional Life of Your Brain* (co-authored

with Sharon Begley)—has put the Dalai Lama’s monks into magnetic resonance imaging machines to see if brain function was altered in those who have practiced ten- thousand hours or longer of compassion meditation. His work shows that intensive training in compassion produces significant changes in brain function. Davidson has also found that compassion can be learned, and that it results in altruistic behavior in subjects who undertake compassion training.

What do we do with this knowledge? We can put it to use by using the ancient loving-kindness meditation or affirmation practice. This practice generates compassion toward oneself and others, as well as forgiveness—both attributes that can firmly assist those struggling with pain and the loss of physical well-being.

Tips for Working with Clients

- ✓ *The Loving-Kindness Affirmation* is closely related to Tool #50, *At Peace with Pain*, which is another meditation that can be used to engender warm feelings of love and understanding. Share both of these with clients as a nice boxed set.
- ✓ Before working with loving-kindness, it is important to understand the religious or spiritual background of your client.
 - While loving-kindness was originally an ancient Buddhist practice, the words are considered by attachment researchers to be “security priming words”—that is, words that prime the limbic emotional core of the brain for feelings of safety, trust, and openness.
 - When exposed to certain words, such as *love*, *closeness*, *safety*, etc., people have experienced more openness and trust toward others. To be described in a more secular way, this meditation can be described as a security priming.
 - This meditation is about the deep wish for one’s well-being, and that can be imagined as coming from any source—as a blessing, as an affirmation, as coming from any higher power or from God, etc.
- ✓ Work with clients in adapting the words in this meditation in appropriate ways. For example:

- The words “May I be...” could be transformed into an active choice by stating, “I choose to be...”
 - The meditation could be stated as an affirmation by stating, “I will be...” or “I am...”
 - Other words can be added to the actual meditation, such as “May I be *loved, accepted, understood, forgiven, pain-free,*” etc.
- ✓ What follows in the handout can be used as a script for guiding the client through this practice for the first time.
 - ✓ Practicing this meditation can be a powerful and emotional experience. Always allow time for processing after using this in a session.
 - Always have the client state loving-kindness for themselves first, *then* afterwards send it out to others.

HANDOUT: Loving-Kindness Affirmation

In his book *Works of Love*, Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard shared some wisdom on the essence of love. He wrote:

*To cheat oneself out of love is the most terrible deception;
it is an eternal loss for which there is no reparation,
either in time or in eternity.*

As someone grappling with pain—either physical or emotional (maybe both)—it may be hard to think about the idea of love. But the affirmation practiced in these pages is not like the love you may be thinking of. It is not the flavor of love that is romantic, sentimental, or nostalgic—dependent on one person or a specific memory. Rather, this is the deeply profound and compassionate wish for the well-being of all persons.

It is predicated on the basis that all beings deserve this non-discriminating love, that we all *need* it because all of us have struggled or suffered in some way. Even that person who seems happy and appears to have it all together will deal with loss and pain in life. And so, this practice is a form of compassion—which really means *to be with the suffering of another*.

We begin by developing compassion for ourselves. This is a process, since you may not feel you are deserving of this deep wish for your well-being. If this is the case, you can begin by picturing the young baby, toddler, or child you once were, and who was deserving of this loving meditation. State the words for that part of you.

Offering love and charity toward our neighbors is a central tenant to all wisdom traditions. Key examples of loving-kindness are found in stories of how Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed all fed the hungry and starving, without discrimination. Whatever your background may be, this is an inclusive practice that anyone can benefit from. In addition, you can see the words here in any way that fits with your religious or spiritual background—as a blessing, a prayer, an affirmation, and so on.

Instructions: Follow along with the words below, stating them to yourself over and over... *like you really mean it.*

1) BEGIN WITH FORGIVENESS.

We've all been hurt, which is why this practice begins with forgiveness. You may be that parent, for example, who knows you have unintentionally wronged your children and yet hope for the grace of forgiveness. Or, you may have inadvertently hurt someone because you didn't know any better. Whatever the case may be, reflect on the words below. Allow forgiveness to act as a salve for your wounded spirit so that you may let go and move on. By sending forgiveness, you also open the gateway to a more awakened and sensitive behavior—alert to even the subtle consequences of your actions and thoughts. Jesus spoke to this in the Bible (Luke 6:37) when he said, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

Repeat the following words once before moving on.

*May I forgive myself for hurting others.
May others forgive me for hurting them.
May I forgive myself for hurting myself.*

2) SAY LOVING-KINDNESS FOR YOURSELF.

Repeat the following words over and over. Say them until you can feel the words resonating within. This could be for five minutes, for 10, for 30 minutes.

*May I be safe.
May I be happy.
May I be healthy.
May I be peaceful.*

Optionally, add these words—
May I be free from pain, hunger, and suffering.

3) SAY LOVING-KINDNESS FOR OTHERS.

Next, you will repeat the loving-kindness meditation/affirmation for others. Picture these individuals looking radiant and healthy and happy as you send them this deep wish for their well-being.

Look at the list of six groups below. The top two are self-explanatory, but the “neutral persons” group refers to persons who you may see or interact with from time to time but who you don’t really know—such as that person at the checkout stand at the grocery store, that person who lives down the street who you wave to, etc.

The “unfriendly group” represents those persons who are difficult persons in your life. They may have even created pain and abuse. This is a group that presents the greatest challenge for sending out the loving-kindness words. If you find that you can’t send to this group, you can stop and start sending love to yourself. Then, where you feel resonance with the words, again start sending loving-kindness to others, starting from the top of the list.

Remember, that even that abuser or difficult person in your life has suffered in some way. Even this person would benefit from such a blessing. In addition, you can know that difficult person does not have to know you are sending these words out to them. In fact, they may not even be alive. Because loving-kindness breaks down the walls of separation between ourselves and others, saying it for others—even those who may have hurt or harmed us—is also beneficial to us! Here are the categories and the way you can repeat the loving-kindness wish of well-being for these groups of persons.

- 1) Teachers/mentors/guides
- 2) Family members
- 3) Friends
- 4) Neutral persons
- 5) Unfriendly persons
- 6) All Persons/living beings/living things without discrimination

Repeat the following loving-kindness words for each of the above groups.

May (name here) be safe.
May (name here) be happy.
May (name here) be healthy.
May (name here) be peaceful.

Optionally, add these words—

May (name here) be free from pain, hunger, and suffering.

4) CONCLUDE WITH A FINAL BLESSING OR WISH FOR OTHERS.

After you have extended loving-kindness to all the six groups, end with following words.

Say the following words once.

*May suffering ones by suffering-free,
May the fear-struck fearless be,
May grieving ones shed all grief,
May all beings find relief.*

Reflections: What was it like for you to say the loving-kindness meditation or affirmation? Was there any part of this that you found difficult?

The loving-kindness practice takes time and patience. How do you think this could help you move toward forgiveness—either toward yourself or others?

How could you develop an ongoing loving-kindness meditation or affirmation practice? Where would be an ideal place to practice this—where you might be in the solitude of Nature or at a place you design and dedicate to this gentle practice of cultivating peace, kindness, and compassion?
