MINDFUL MEDITATION

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Learning Objectives:

- Discuss and understand some of the neurobiological foundations of mindful meditation.
- Discuss and learn some basic techniques that will help develop mindful meditation as a coping mechanism.
- Practice a simple, short meditation session that will provide two examples of mindful meditation.
- Discuss opportunities that are readily present in almost any setting to practice this valuable tool.
**MINDFULNESS vs. MEDITATION**

**Mindfulness**
- A state of being...a result!
- Focus without distraction
- Continuous Awareness
- To pay attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally

**Meditation**
- A tool
- Art or technique of quieting the mind, to diminish the internal noise in your system.
- When your thoughts are held in awareness, they LOSE THEIR POWER to dictate our responses.

*Kabat-Zinn, 2003*
I. **Focused Attention Meditation**
Directing attention to one specific object (the breath) while monitoring and disengaging from extraneous thoughts or stimuli.

II. **Mantra Recitation Meditation**
Includes “Transcendental Meditation” – repetition of a sound, word or sentence with goal of calming the mind, maintaining focus and avoiding mind wandering.
**TYPES OF MINDFUL MEDITATION**

**Open Monitoring**
- Attention to the present moment.
- Impartially observing all mental contents.
- Possessing an open, accepting attitude – neither resisting or elaborating on the mental context.

**Loving – Kindness & Compassion**
- Deepens feelings of sympathetic joy for all living beings.
- Promotes altruistic behaviors.
- Usually begins with generation of loving, kindness and joyful feelings towards oneself, then others, including enemies.
- Compassion develops in non-referential way and addresses the physical and/or psychological suffering of others.

**Other**
- Visualization
- Sleep Yoga
- Dream Yoga
- Withdrawal of the senses
Workplace Practices

- Where are my feet
- Squeegee Breathe
- Breathe in (Pure)
  Breathe out (Love)
BREATHE
BREATHING MEDITATION

• Sit comfortably with your legs uncrossed

• Arms, hands on your lap

• Start with your eyes open, breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. As you breathe in feel the lungs as they expand with air and as you breathe out, feel your body soften

• Gently close your eyes. Allow the breath to return to its natural rhythm... in and out.

• Pause for a moment and notice the feeling of the body, the weight of the body pressing down against the seat beneath you
BREATHING MEDITATION

• Feel the feet on the floor.

• Start noticing the sounds that come and go ...as you pause, notice how the body feels, how the breath feels in the body

• There is no special way of breathing...just notice the rising and falling rhythm...

• If you can’t feel anything, gently place one hand over your stomach and follow the movement of the breath...in and out

• Now, the mind starts wandering away...this is inevitable, it is perfectly natural...just let it go, don’t judge it, gently bring your attention back to the breath...to that rising and falling sensation....

• Now, let the mind do what it wants...bring your attention back to your body and open your eyes
BREATHE

Take a moment to see how you feel

Does it feel different?

Acknowledge what it is like to take a few minutes to unwind

This is not about getting rid of thoughts: it's about changing your relationship with the thoughts and feelings.
Which of the following are associated with meditation?

- Decreased Systolic Blood Pressure
- Decreased Cytokine levels
- Decreased Cortisol levels
- All of the above
- None of the above
● All meditation subtypes reduced systolic blood pressure.

● Meditation is also associated with decreased cortisol, heart rate and cytokine levels compared to active controls (relaxation, exercise or education).

Meta-analysis (Pascoe MC, et.al, 2017)
Anatomical likelihood estimation (ALE) meta-analysis of 21 neuroimaging studies:

8 brain regions consistently altered in meditation practitioners

Areas involved include:

- Sensory cortices and insular cortex.
- Hippocampus (memory consolidation and reconsolidation).
- Anterior cingulate and mid-cingulate cortices and orbitofrontal cortex (self and emotion regulation).
- Superior longitudinal fasciculus and corpus callosum (intra and inter-hemispheric communication).
- Off task thinking (memory retrieval, planning for the future, judging the present).
- Default Mode Network (DMN) includes
  - Medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC)
  - Posterior cingulate cortex (PCC)
  - Left temporoparietal junction (TPJ)
  - Hippocampus, precuneus and inferior parietal lobule.

**H Sheibner and colleagues:**
- Mindful attention is associated with reduced DMN compared to mind wandering (fMRI studies)
Real time fMRI (rtfMRI) links subjective experience with brain activity during focused attention.

When instructed to volitionally decrease the feedback graph, meditators, but not non-meditators, showed significant deactivation of the posterior cingulate cortex.

Separate group of meditators only, in a step-wise discovery protocol, demonstrated rtfMRI evidence of focused attention versus mind-wandering.
Mediators Suppress DMN
Default Mode Network (DMN) turns the Task Positive Network (TPN) off, and vice versa.

Experienced meditators have smaller amygdala's.
BODY SCAN

- Breathe in through your nose to the count of 1-2-3-4.
- Exhale through the mouth 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.
- Bring your attention to your feet (right then left).
- Move up to the ankles, knees, thighs, and hips noticing sensations: pain, tightness. Just observe. Don’t judge.
- Now focus your attention in your hips.
- Go up to your belly.
- Now to the back: lower back, mid back, upper back.
- Send warm thoughts of relaxation to your back.
- Move up to your shoulders: take a deep breath, notice tension on your shoulders, send cleansing breaths.
- Move down to your arms, hands, fingers: feel any tingling.
- Breathe....
- Now move up to your throat and neck: notice how it feels. Send healing thoughts to that area.
- Now pay attention to your face, eyes, mouth, and chin.
- Finally, direct your attention to your head: scalp and the brain: observe the activity in your mind. Send thoughts of kindness and connection. Connect with your inner wisdom.
- Now take a deep breath and feel your body with healing energy.
- Smile and open your eyes.
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

NEXT WELLNESS SESSIONS

- Marginalization and Mental Health - Sept. (Co-Sponsored with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion)
- Chronophysiology of Sleep – Oct.
- Stress and Substance Use – Nov.

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