Integrating Mindfulness Based Interventions.

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Learning outcomes

- Overview of research findings
- Confidence comparing neuroplasticity/stress model vs. illness model
- Familiarity with MBSR/MBCT course content
- Making the skills relevant
Approaches

- Mindfulness - MBSR, MBCT, MiCBT
- Interpersonal Neurobiology - Daniel Siegel (Child Psychiatrist)
- Positive Psychology - Prof Barbara Fredrikson
- Compassion Focused Therapy - Prof Paul Gilbert

The evidence and rationale for training

- Stress and brain function
- Neuroplasticity
- Negative bias
- Executive skills
Resources

• American Mindfulness Research Association: www.goamra.org
  • A comprehensive research database with monthly newsletter

  • Conclusion - MBT is an effective treatment for a variety of psychological problems and is especially effective for reducing anxiety, depression and stress

Resources cont.

• “Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density” Psychiatry Research, 2011 Jan 30;191(1):36-43 Holzel et al
  • Conclusion - MBSR is associated with changes in grey matter concentration in brain regions involved in learning and memory processes, emotion regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking.

• “Neuroplasticity in Depressed Individuals Compared with Healthy Controls” Neuropsychopharmacology, (2013) 38, 2101-2108 Player et al
  • Conclusion - demonstrated reduced neuroplasticity in depressed subjects
“On Mind-Wandering, Attention, Brain Networks and Meditation” Explore, May/June 2013, vol 9 no 3

Conclusion - Mind wandering is associated with a group of neurons called the default mode network. Heightened DMN activity is associated with depression, anxiety, attention deficit disorders, PTSD, and other disorders. Meditation is associated with reduced DMN activity.

Patient Resources

“The Mindful Way Workbook - An 8 Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress” John Teasdale, Mark Williams, Zindel Segal

Professors of psychology who designed the MBCT course

“Buddha’s Brain” Rick Hanson.

An informative guide to the science of neurobiology, stress and neuroplasticity. Practical tools and skills for everyday life.
Patient Resources cont.

  - Practical and informative guides to parenting children and adolescents, based upon the science of interpersonal neurobiology.
- “Positivity” Barbara Fredrickson - Professor of Psychology.
  - An overview of research and techniques of positive psychology

Useful Websites

- [http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/)
  - Bangor University Mindfulness Training and Resources, includes informative video clips
- [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/)
  - University of California, Berkeley. Go to the Resource list and find many interesting videos and podcasts on mindfulness, parenting,
Definitions

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally”
- Jon Kabat-Zinn

“Again and again, counteract the agitation and turbulence of the mind by relaxing more and more deeply, not by contracting the body or mind”
- B. Allan Wallace

The ABC Model

Figure 5.2. The ABC model of situation, thoughts, and feelings.
Claire

- 43 year old mother of 2 daughters, 6 and 9 years
- GP with irritability and poor sleep
- Marital tension
- Past history of anxiety
- 5 years - Therapy and SSRI’s
What happens to you when you are stressed?

Behaviour?

Relationships? Mood?

The mountain of emotional relativity

Dopamine
Cortisol
Endorphins, oxytocin

DRIVE, VITALITY, STRIVE
CALM, CONNECTED, CREATIVE
STRESS, ALERT

10% Brain activity in awareness
The 8 week programs: MBSR/MBCT

Core theme:

Driven/Doing mode vs. Being mode

(building self-awareness and changing systems - emotional/neural networks)

Seven core features of Doing Mode

1. Automatic Pilot
2. Works through thinking
3. Focus upon past and future
4. Tries to avoid unpleasant experiences
5. Needs things to be different
6. Accepts ideas/thoughts as real or fact
7. Persistent focus upon goals (often harsh, uncompromising)
Course content MBCT

- **Week 1:** Moving from living on “automatic pilot”
  Awareness/conscious choice  *(meditations raisin, body scan)*
  - Training executive (frontal lobe) skills - concentration, attention, directing focus of awareness, and beginning to develop equanimity
- **Week 2:** Shift from thinking to directly sensing
  *(understanding purpose of body scan, breath meditation)*

Course content MBCT

- **Week 3:** Move from dwelling in past/future to present moment
  - Explore driven/doing mode *(stretch and breath meditation, mind wandering is not a mistake, unpleasant events diary)*
- **Week 4:** Recognising aversion, tackling avoidance, distraction
  - *(Recognising negative thinking, sitting meditation - choiceless awareness; learning to build attention and focus even when strong aversion/discomfort arises; 3 minute breathing space)*
Course content MBCT

- **Week 5:** Working directly with wanting things to be different. *(Inviting difficulty in to practice - hardwiring equanimity)*

- **Week 6:** Recognising thoughts as limited interpretations, not facts *(feelings/emotions give rise to particular thought patterns.)*
  - Your mind’s top 10 unhelpful thoughts, recognising early warning signs, stepping back from thoughts)

Course content MBCT

- **Week 7:** Self-care. Kindness and compassion vs self-criticism and striving *(you can change how you feel by changing what you do, pleasurable activities. Using body to cultivate awareness of emotion and thoughts)*

- **Week 8:** Planning a mindful future *(integrating plans for stepping out of negative thinking patterns, committing to regular practice)*
After the program

- Identify Situations of reactivity
- Focus upon relationships
- Revisit the ‘Mountain of Emotion’ diagram (emotion regulation as a skill)

Informal Mindfulness

- Driving
- Exercise
- Relationships
The Triangle of Wellbeing and Resilience

Commonly asked questions

- Can I just use an App?
- What are the dangers?
- Can I stop my medication?
- When I don’t use the guided meditation my mind wanders, what am I doing wrong?
- I feel bored/restless when I try to meditate
- I’ve tried mindfulness, it doesn’t work for me
- Why the emphasis on kindness?
Thank you.

- Any questions?