



Building Professional Excellence- Part 1

Session 8: Experiencing Mindfulness

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Corinne Zupko

1. Question from Emily McDonald

I'm a counselor who practices mindfulness and MBSR (mindfulness based stress reduction) both personally and professionally and have attended many trainings, workshops, etc. I would, however, like to gain credentialing in mindfulness practice. Do you have any suggestions as to what my next step might be?

Answer from Presenter

If you are interested in becoming a certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher, or are interested in some foundational training in mindfulness, visit the Center for Mindfulness' training Institute here: <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/training/>. Taking one of their foundational trainings would be a great “next step.”

2. Question from Sandy Guergues

I often work with teenage clients who resist the practice of mindfulness at times because they label it as being "boring." How can I make this practice more appealing to an age group that is bombarded with stimuli at all times?

Answer from Presenter

See my answer to #4 below. I would want to show them how they are utilizing mindfulness already in other aspects of their life, and help them see how it already benefits them. Make it fun! Go outside and “mindfully shoot hoops” or go for a mindful walk. You can practice mindfulness anywhere.

3. Question from Danielle Tisdale

How do you incorporate mountain meditation when a client is going through an internal transformation/change?

Answer from Presenter

There is room for creativity here. Could their internal change be looked at as a process of becoming more of who they truly are (i.e. are they getting to know their “true self”)? If the client resonates with this perspective, I might emphasize that the mountain sheds its outer layers (as they change with the seasons) and yet remains true to its core. If the client resonates with a going through a pure internal transformation, I might emphasize that the mountain visualization can help one feel grounded while going through an inner change.

4. Question from Jo-Anne Karlsson

How would you explain it with adolescents if they were adverse to meditation or skill training?



Answer from Presenter

I would begin by finding an area of their life that they are dissatisfied with, and tie in how mindfulness may be able to help. For instance, if they are struggling with stress, mindfulness can help to change their relationship to stress. This can help raise their motivation to give mindfulness a try. If they are adverse to the term “mindfulness” or “skill training” I might call it a tool or a technique. I might also draw out ways in which they are already using mindfulness. For instance, if they are into basketball, I might help them see how basketball involves paying attention to the ball, and to the body while throwing the ball into the hoop. They would apply that same skill of paying attention (which they are already doing) to a different area of their life.

5. Question from Tracy Still

Is there a best practice guide or resource you would recommend for use in school setting groups; presuming the school policy allows such usage?

Answer from Presenter

There are many different programs being developed for use with kids in schools. I would recommend checking out the program, “Mind UP” by the Hawn Foundation (available on Amazon) or Mindful Schools: <http://www.mindfulschools.org/>. Activities can include breathing, letting go of judgment and criticism, gratitude exercises (like writing a list of what they are thankful for), taking mindful action in the world (performing acts of kindness for those in need), and turning to their breath to help calm themselves in stressful moments.

6. Question from Tahseen Shaista

What mindfulness activities are there for us to use with children who are aggressive?

Answer from Presenter

Singh et al (2003) reported a technique called “Soles of the feet” that helped an adult with an intellectual disability reduce their level of aggression, and I believe this technique can easily be adapted for use with other clients, including children. It involves helping the client first recognize the triggers of aggression before aggression occurs (i.e. a thought, a situation, or an emotion). The individual is then instructed to shift their awareness away from the triggers and to a neutral point on their body – the soles of their feet. Various situations can be role played with the client to test out this technique. Step-by-step instructions from a Singh article are posted online here: <http://www.community-networks.ca/uploads/Meditation%20on%20the%20Soles%20of%20the%20Feet%20Training%20-%20Instructions.pdf> (note that “step 3” is missing – this step is to “breathe naturally, and do nothing”).

For more information see: Singh, N.N., Wahler, R.G., Adkins, A.D. & Myers, R.E. (2003). Soles of the Feet: a mindfulness-based self-control intervention for aggression by an individual with mild mental retardation and mental illness, *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 24(3), 158-169.

7. Question from Jennifer Citarella

As you mentioned, mindfulness needs to be practiced regularly. When working with children how can we get them to do this on a daily basis... especially when we don't see them every day?



Answer from Presenter

Keep it fun! For instance, if you are working with a child on the “breathing with a stuffed animal” exercise (see the handout from the webinar), ask them to rock a different stuffed animal on their belly every day (they might “rock the stuffed animal to sleep” on their belly, just like they were rocked to sleep when they were a baby). Another idea is to get parental buy-in, and ask parents to practice daily with their kids and report back to you in session how their practice periods were. If you have a number of different ways that they can practice, they can also vary their practice (e.g. one day they “breathe with a stuffed animal, and the next day they can practice breathing into a pinwheel).

8. Question from Patricia Kryger

Do you find that men in general are open to this?

Answer from Presenter

In my experience, yes, I have found that men are open to this practice.

9. Question from Christina Cipriano

Is there a way to tie in affirmations?

Answer from Presenter

If one is strictly practicing mindfulness, thoughts or self-talk (like affirmations) are simply “mental events” to be observed in one’s field of awareness. A person might use affirmations though to help them return to the present moment, or even to generate feelings of lovingkindness during a compassion meditation. So my personal opinion is that you can tie in affirmations, as long as you are clear that you are tying in affirmations. Affirmations may be helpful for some beginners to stay focused on the present. Pure mindfulness practice would involve simply becoming aware of self-talk, and affirmations are a form of self-talk.

10. Question from Dawn Gaden

Do you have recommendation for documented research to refer to on how mindfulness has been helpful for people with pain issues?

Answer from Presenter

There are almost too many to list! Results in this area are promising. You might try a Google scholar search to find more, but here are a few suggested articles:

- 1) Day, Jensen, Ehde, & Thorn (2014). Toward a theoretical model for mindfulness-based pain management. *The Journal of Pain*, 15(7), 691-703.
 - 2) Kozak, A. (2008). Mindfulness in the management of chronic pain: conceptual and clinical considerations. *Techniques in Regional Anesthesia & Pain Management*, 12(2), 115–118.
 - 3) Morone, N.E., Greco, C.M., Weiner, D.K. (2008). Mindfulness meditation for the treatment of chronic low back pain in older adults: A randomized controlled pilot study. *Pain*, 134(3), 310-319.
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11. Question from Marjie Roddick

Where can I find out more on "Nature Meditation?"

Answer from Presenter

Dr. Ron Siegel explains this in his book, "The Mindfulness Solution."

12. Question from Nisha Talwar

What can I do to increase and sustain my length to focus?

Answer from Presenter

Regular mindfulness practice is important for building and maintaining neural connections in the brain. Practicing mindfulness on a regular basis can therefore help with focus.

13. Question from Loretta Walton

I work with ADHD children. As we know their attention capacity is limited for each individual. My question is would this be something in small steps could be utilized with them?

Answer from Presenter

More research is needed in this area. I believe that in small steps, yes, this can be utilized with children with ADHD. There is more research on ADHD in adults right now, but we are going to see more research studies on mindfulness and ADHD in children soon.

14. Question from Teresa Conway

Is there an age limitation?

Answer from Presenter

No, mindfulness can be adapted for use with all ages.

15. Question from Johari Allen-Davis

When is mindfulness-based psychotherapy best to use versus Mindfulness-informed?

Answer from Presenter

Think of this in terms of when you would use a specific technique with a client versus just being guided by a counseling theory. Mindfulness-based psychotherapy is when you are explicitly teaching mindfulness skills to your clients. To do mindfulness-based psychotherapy, your client would have to agree that they want to learn mindfulness skills (just as they would agree to try a specific homework assignment or a specific counseling technique). Mindfulness-Informed psychotherapy is when you are guided by a mindfulness-based theory just as you might be guided by any other theory. This is something that you would disclose to your client in your professional disclosure statement, which you would also review with them.



16. Question from Lashay Taylor

Does the wisdom that is learned in MMFT help troops learn what is the correct thing to do (meaning RIGHT) as well as the right thing right now?

Answer from Presenter

Since I am not an MMFT trainer, this would be a great question to ask the Mind Fitness Training Institute. You can reach them through their website at: <http://www.mind-fitness-training.org/>.

17. Question from Jennifer-Anne Douglass

I heard at the beginning of the webinar that you may be based out of NJ. How difficult is it to become certified in mindfulness in New Jersey?

Answer from Presenter

I am not presently aware of any formal certification in mindfulness in New Jersey. As we do not want to practice outside of the scope of our expertise, the best way to add a new counseling skill to our professional practice is to take as many professional trainings in that skill as possible and seek supervision and consultation. There are many conferences on mindfulness offered in NJ and in other states. One resource for conferences is www.PESI.com.

18. Question from Julio Martinez

Do you have more information to help soldiers with PTSD?

Answer from Presenter

Here are a few articles to get started:

Potential of Mindfulness in Treating Trauma Reactions

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/overview/mindful-PTSD.asp>

How Mindfulness Training Could Help People With PTSD Symptoms:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/29/mindfulness-ptsd-symptoms-cortisol_n_3348593.html

Prolonged Exposure, Mindfulness, and Emotion Regulation for the Treatment of PTSD:

<http://ccs.sagepub.com/content/11/3/184.abstract>

Mindfulness therapy might help veterans with combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/04/130417130007.htm>

19. Question from Marta Muniz

Would you recommend mindfulness skills training for adult clients with attention deficit disorder?

Answer from Presenter

Absolutely. I would recommend getting this book as it is a fabulous resource for working with clients with ADHD: "The Mindfulness Prescription for Adult ADHD" By Lidia Zylowska. You can find it here:

<http://lidiazylowska.com/book/>.



20. Question from Patricia Nielsen Wilkie

What is wrong with autopilot mode? It gives you time to think about other than mundane things or to let your unconscious work on things.

Answer from Presenter

Galera et al (2012) surveyed people admitted to the hospital who were responsible for getting into an automobile accident. Of those responsible for accidents, 20% were distracted by their own THOUGHTS. These people were not distracted by their phones, or their iPods, but only by their own thoughts. So automatic pilot keeps us out of the present moment. In addition, it has been shown that “A wandering mind is an unhappy mind” (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010). Being present is associated with being happier. See these references:

Galera, C., Orriols, L., M’Bailara, K., Laborey, M., Contrand, B., Ribéreau-Gayon, R.,... Lagarde, E. (2012). Mind wandering and driving: Responsibility case-control study. British Medical Journal, 345, retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3521876/>

Killingsworth, M.A., & Gilbert, D.T. (2010). A wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Science, 330, 932.

21. Question from Anand Vyaas

Do you recommend any apps on mindfulness?

Answer from Presenter

I personally do not have experience with apps, but others have said that Headspace is a wonderful app (<https://www.headspace.com/>).

22. Question from Mary Louise Hildebrandt

After the exercise in a group, is it affirming or not to let clients share their mindfulness experiences with the other group members?

Answer from Presenter

Absolutely! I always give clients an opportunity to share their experiences if they feel moved to. Learning from other group members is a powerful method of learning.

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