

Mindfulness (MFN) – An Introduction. The Synopsis.

Learning Objectives

- Define mindfulness - what it is and what it's not
- Discuss the benefits of mindfulness and meditation – the physiology and 'hard evidence'
- Describe efficient strategies to increase both formal and informal mindful practices in daily life.
- Explore the barriers to mindfulness

What is mindfulness (and what is it not)?

What mindfulness IS (Happify, 2015, 2016; Puddicombe, 2012)

- The ability to know what's going on in your head, at any moment, without getting carried away by it.

OR

- Focusing on the '*What is*', rather than the '*What if*'.

OR

- Bringing our attention to the present moment in an open, kind, and non-judgemental way.

It called '*Mindfulness Practice*' - it all requires practice.

Neuroplasticity means that we have the power to change our brains - any thing we practice and cultivate gets hardwired into our brains.

What mindfulness is NOT

- It's not religious
- It's not just about meditation
- It's not about escaping - it's about tuning in and connecting
- It's not about perfection.

Resources to start with for the above

Happify - Why mindfulness is a superpower

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>

Happify - Mindfulness and the wolves metaphor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzKryaN44ss>

Puddicombe - All it takes is 10 mindful minutes.

https://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes

Discuss the potential benefits of mindfulness and meditation - physiology and 'hard evidence'.

Psychological effects

- Mental health
 - Reduce anxiety, insomnia
- Cognitive function
 - Improved attention and performance

Physical effects

- Reduced cardiac events caused by chronic stressful stimulus
 - MI
 - HTN
- Immune System
 - Improves ability to fight infection
 - Decrease in inflammatory issues like arthritis

Structural Brain changes on MRI

- Increase
 - Hippocampus and Temporal Parietal Junction size
 - Grey matter differentiation in the Pre-Frontal Cortex
- Decrease
 - grey matter size of Amygdala

What does this mean in real everyday non-neuroanatomical terms?!

- Increase in
 - Ability to reason and plan
 - Learning memory and emotional regulation
 - Compassion and perspective
- Decrease in
 - Fight or Flight activation

(Hassed, n.d.; Lazar, 2012)

Resources to start with for above:

Lazar - Excellent Ted talk on the scientific effects meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc>

Craig Hassed - The Benefits of Being Mindful

http://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/694192/The-health-benefits-of-meditation-and-being-mindful.pdf

Describe efficient strategies to include mindful practice in daily life.

Meditation App (Alfred Hospital, 2017; Headspace, 2017)

- Most *efficient* strategy
 - Head Space
 - Calm
 - 'Treat' has been developed by Prince Alfred Hospital
 - Specifically, to facilitate Mindfulness and Meditation, for Health Care workers.

Meditation Space

- Find a space you won't be interrupted
- If it's quiet, it's especially good for beginners.

On-line mindfulness courses: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/mindfulness-wellbeing-performance>

- I've completed and highly recommend the Mindfulness and Performance Course from Monash and Future Learn. (Hassed, 2017)
- It's free about 4 times per year.
- If you pay approx. 50 Aus. Dollars you can do it any time.

Yoga: I highly recommend a 4-6-week intro course before deciding it *is* or *is not* for you.

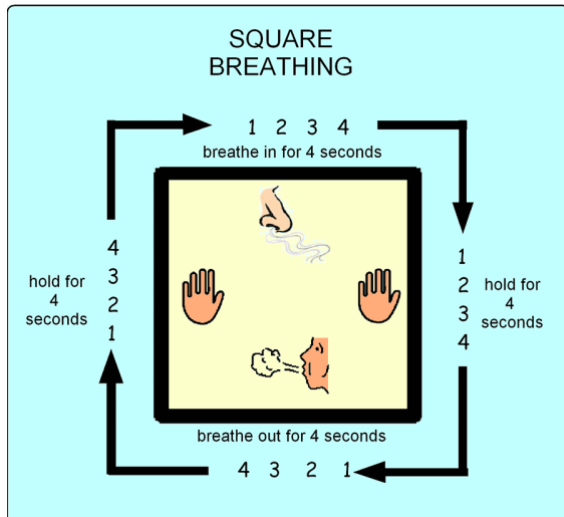
- Invest *some time* in looking at what's available local to you
- Get the local yoga classes timetables
- Remember though
 - finding the right yoga class is like finding the right GP or hairdresser
 - You might have to go through a few before you get the right fit!

Hospital Workplace Mindfulness Programmes

- Many EDs are starting to run more formal mindfulness training
- OneED programme by Dr Shahina Braganza (FACEM) at GCUH, Gold Coast, QLD
- The Intern Teaching MOLIE programme at PAH, Brisbane.

Breathing techniques

- Activates parasymp. Nervous system
 - Slowing HR and may lower BP
- Find a short breathing technique that works for you
- Consider Square/Combat breathing exercise for 60 seconds.



- Close you eyes
- Breath in for 4 secs
- Hold in for 4 secs
- Breath out for 4 secs
- Hold out for 4 secs
- Each round takes 16 second
- Start with 2 or 3 rounds

I do it with my sunglasses but you will just look like you're having a nap in the car park even if you don't do this!

(http://visuals.autism.net/main.php?g2_itemId=138)

Other way to use your breath could include:

- Take 2 deep breaths before you eat
- OR
- When you wake up in the morning and before you get out of bed take a breath and pay attention to the sounds around you for 30 seconds (*and not your emails and FB messages that have arrived overnight!*)

Listen mindfully! (Headlee, 2015)

- The brain can process language at 200 words a minute
 - We can only talk at 120 words a minute
 - Your brain will always try to get ahead!

A few strategies to try to help you listen better – it might revolutionise how you interact with your colleagues and patients

- Stop thinking about your reply to the other person statements before they finish
- Let a 1 or 2 second pause before you start talking
 - It may dramatically improve your ability to take the information in
- This is of particular important in a busy ED where you will be interrupted a lot and it's very noisy!

Resources to start with for above:

Apps: Headspace, Calm, Treat (Developed for Health Professionals), Insight Timer

What mindful people do differently - a great approachable summary.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/habits-mindful-people_n_5186510

Headlee - How we're learn to listen.

https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation?utm_campaign=social&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_content=talk&utm_term=humanities#t-8875

Explore the barriers to mindfulness and meditation?

It takes time.

- But 5 minutes or 2 deep breaths is a good place to start.

Mainstream Media / Society - *'It's all Mumbo - Jumbo and Woo - woo for hippies'*

- Mindfulness training has previously been seen by Western Society as non-scientific.
- However as is outlined above, there is now hard evidence that it actually changes the structure and function of the brain.

It takes ongoing effort.

It takes practice.

- It's called '*Mindfulness Practice*' as this all requires practice
- BUT because of neuroplasticity, we can change our brains as above.

Distractions

- There will always be distractions when you're trying to meditate
- There's always distraction in life too!

Procrastination can feel easier.

You have to prioritise the time to have formal mindfulness practice

- Schedule it
- Have a reminder on your phone.

Restlessness, frustration and even anger can arise when being mindful and meditating.

- Its hard to sit still if you never have before
- It's hard to slow down

Progress can feel slow sometimes.

- You might forget that the journey is what it's about, not the destination

(Junttila, 2017)

Full references list for above synopsis

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