Welcome

Mindfulness: Enhancing the Clinical, Professional and Personal Outcomes of Dental and Dental Hygiene Students
ADEA Workshop March 16, 2011 Annual Session
Presented by

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Objectives for Today

- Describe the history of mindfulness practices.
- Cultivate self-awareness through the use of mindfulness practices.
- Interpret the current research supporting mindfulness' usefulness in the health professions.
- Describe how mindfulness practices enhance self-care, technical skills, professionalism, and empathy.
- Discover foundations of mindfulness in your own life and your program curricula.
Schedule

- Gather, Settle, Welcome
- Definition and History of Mindfulness
- The Purpose: What’s, Why’s, Benefits
  - The Evidence: Current Research
  - BREAK
- The Practice: Three Experiential Activities
  - BREAK
- The Application: How is Mindfulness Being Integrated in Dentistry and Medicine
  - Questions and Answers
STOP
BREATHE
BE
Mindfulness at the Faculty of Dentistry Dalhousie University

ADEA
March 13, 2011

John Lovas DDS
Purpose

- **WHY** did we start teaching Mindfulness?
  - Inattentiveness
    - only at Dalhousie?
    - lack manners
    - faked sincerity pre-admission?
    - impairs learning & clinical performance

- **How can we engage students?**
  - To improve attention
  - To **become** caring clinicians
WHAT do we do?

- “Wellness” Lecture
  - early in 1st year DDS1 + DH1
- BIG QUESTION & WORTHY DREAM:
  How can we best work together to heal
  - decrease suffering & provide best QOL for -
    ourselves, others, our environment?
- White coat ceremony - professionalism - calling
- “Wellness” Seminars
  - share self-care activities, hobbies etc - balance, joy
- “Mindfulness for Health-Care Professionals” Elective
Rationale

- Research: idealism declines, cynicism rises throughout dental & medical education

  - Cynicism = Can’t do it & ain’t I smart!?
    - workload, hidden curriculum, etc
    - “a disconnect” from self, society, environment
    - toxic effect on constructive engagement

- “Task saturation” when pilots must suddenly cope with so many things at once that it becomes difficult to set the right priorities
  - adhere to inappropriate course of action (“rigidity”)

Idealism Connections Engagement

- *Inspire core values-based behavior ASAP*

- **Self**
  - Self-care - Care for others (QOL vs self-neglect)
  - “Full body learning” (vs scientific detachment)
    Learning & executive functions work best when we go beyond the rational mind by also involving emotions & physical behaviors
    
    Adele Diamond PhD

- **Others**
  - Sharing in safe environment students & profs (vs isolation)
  - “All life is interrelated (we are all) caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”
    
    Martin Luther King Jr
Psychological flexibility
Kashdan & Rottenberg - Clin Psychol Rev 2010; 30(7): 865-78

- Key overarching component of psychological health
  - recognizing & adapting to situational demands
  - maintaining balance among important life domains
  - being aware, open & committed to behaviors that are congruent with deeply held values

- Can be enhanced by eg mindfulness training
Results … so far

- Remarkable attentiveness at Wellness lecture
  - engages innate idealism?
    - feel “respected”
  - QOL & life-work balance already priorities?
- Good participation at Wellness seminars
- 14 of 38 DDS1 students took the Elective
- Qualitative study re effects of Elective
Well-established programs

- Jon Kabat-Zinn PhD - UMASS Medical Center
  - founder of MBSR 1979 - elective

- Craig Hassed MD - Monash University, Australia
  - MBSR + comprehensive self-care program
    integrated into core curriculum 2002
    Hassed et al 2008

- Ron Epstein MD - Rochester Medical School, NY
  - MBSR - strong cognitive emphasis
    Krasner et al 2009

- Many starting in Medical centers globally
THE RESEARCH
Key Research Players

- Mind and Life Institute
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Kentucky
- University of Massachusetts
- Brown University
- Santa Clara University
- University of Texas Austin
- UCLA
Many empirical and scientific studies in academic arenas including health care education

Findings:
- Mental processing
- Stress and anxiety reduction
- Concentration enhancement
- Cognition/Metacognition
- Self-awareness/Emotional regulation
- Creativity
- Self-compassion
- Empathic behaviors

No research in dentistry, only extrapolation
Neuroscience

Richard Davidson UWM. Dan Siegel UCLA: Mindful Brain, MindSight
Photo credits: examiner.com, happyheartandmind.com
Stress and Anxiety Management

“[stress] handicaps our abilities for learning, for holding information in working memory, for reacting flexibly and creatively, for focusing attention at will, and for planning and organizing effectively”.

Dan Goleman in Social Intelligence (2006)
Focused Attention

Self-Awareness

University of Zurich Department of Psychiatry
Photo credit: eldodd.com

Stanford Department of Psychology.
Cognition

Empathic Behavior

Photo credit: empathysymbol.com
Attributes of Mindful Practice in Health Care Education

- Attentive Observation
- Critical Curiosity
- Beginner’s Mind
- Presence

Epstein, R., Krasner, M., University of Rochester School of Medicine
Just a Thought....

- Dentistry is largely a behavioral science---human beings providing care to human beings.

- How do we intentionally develop
  - the human being?
  - the human relationship?
  - compassion and empathy?
  - professional behaviors?

- Could Mindfulness be a new role and responsibility for us?
“Mindfulness, an open awareness needs to be taught to our young people who are the future leaders!

When individuals develop the skill of relaxed attention they gain self-mastery in listening, thoughtful speech, creativity, risking, changing and building community.

The world is rapidly changing and education is needed to include self-mastery in order to embody the responsibility required in today’s world.”

~Jeffrey Walker, Managing Partner, JP Morgan Partners
STOP

BREATHE

BE
“Mindfulness for Health-Care Professionals”

Elective

- Official course: DDS, DH & MD students
- Students, faculty, staff - Dalhousie U & Hospitals
  - can re-take
- 1.5hr session, once per week, x8 weeks
- Format ~ MBSR:
  - Open with qi gong breathing
  - Brief overview of week’s theme
  - Sitting meditation - start with 5min
  - Discussion - share experiences
  - As time permits ± Sitting ± Walking ± Standing meditation
  - Close with qi gong breathing
Themes

- Session 1: Cultivating Awareness
- Session 2: Awareness & Acceptance
- Session 3: The “Observer Self” (True Self - IFS)
- Session 4: Non-Doing
- Session 5: Open Awareness & Presence
- Session 6: Mind-Heart
- Session 7: Emotions
- Session 8: Congruence
“It’s terrific - everyone should take it!”

- Not for everyone - 8-week best as an elective
  - “forced to take it” - toxic effect (Shapiro et al 2009)

- 10-20% drop out - usually after 1st session
  - Many misconceptions - trance, sleepy, quick-fix, “I’m too busy” ...

- “Just sitting” is “simple, but not easy”
  Consciously, intentionally working directly with (“processing”) resistance to stillness, stable awareness.
Elective Feedback

Anonymous written (& Exit interviews)

- Consistently positive - self-selected
  - Lovas handout informative details
  - “made me realize … not mindful most (of the time)”
  - “helped me identify (when I) ‘drift away’ … & kind of bring myself back”
  - “feel less reactive, more objective & calm … a work in progress”
  - “we are in control of our lives … by being more aware of what’s going on”
  - “Certainly beneficial … taking time for myself & helping to enjoy the moment.”
Feedback cont’d

- “more mindful when negative obsessive thoughts crop up, greatly decreased living in past / worrying about future.”

- “Extremely useful, beneficial ... When I ‘non-react’ people treat me differently - they don’t counter negatively as before when I became reactive.”

- Very beneficial. … The idea of compassion toward ourselves cannot be underestimated & that simple idea taught me much about myself. This has already shaped how I help others.”

- “able to be less ‘flustered’ when things get chaotic at work. I have enjoyed my family time & time with friends much more than before ... Life seems ‘richer’ & more clear. I am able to better cope with anxious moments, which is one of the main reasons I took the course.”