




Compassion Fatigue Through A Mindful Lens

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“Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted parts of ourselves. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.”

— Pema Chodron



Compassion Fatigue

- Joinson (1992) coined the term to describe the “loss of the ability to nurture” in nurses.
- In 1995, Charles Figley, expanded the meaning of the term CF, and identified additional symptoms.

The formal caregiver's reduced capacity or interest in being empathic or “bearing the suffering of clients” and is “the natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced or suffered by a person”



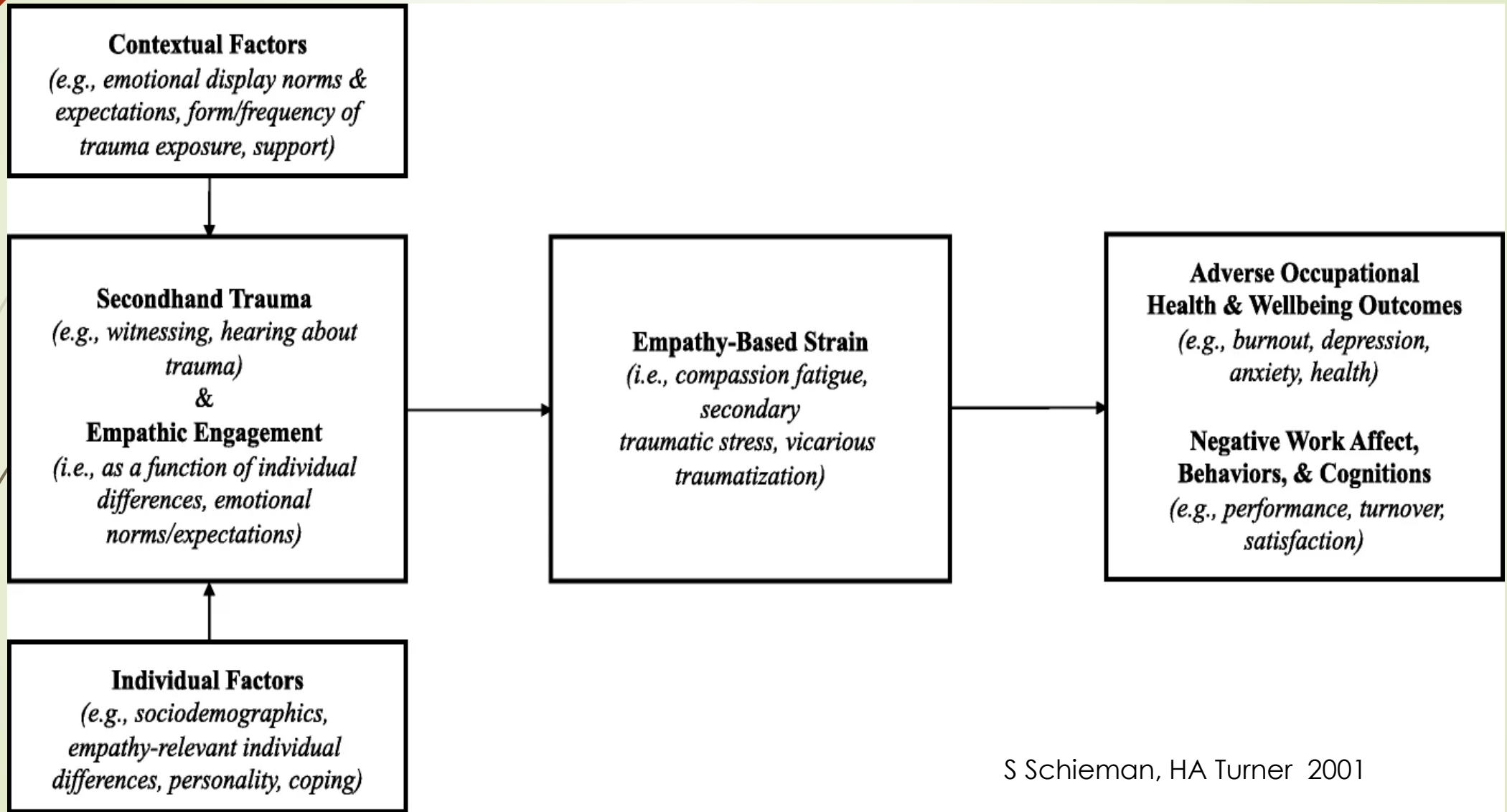
Compassion Fatigue

According to Figley's model, the worker must have concern and an empathic ability or feel motivated to respond when they perceive that the care recipient is suffering.

When workers have this empathic response, coupled with an unwillingness or inability to detach from the caregiving situation and the absence of feelings of satisfaction, the worker develops compassion stress.

Compassion stress results in compassion fatigue if the worker has prolonged exposure to suffering coupled with traumatic memories and competing life demands.

Empathy Based Stress Process





Digital Fatigue



- ▶ “Currently, 37% of Canadians say that video calls leave them feeling drained, 29% say the number of apps they are expected to use gets in the way of productivity, and 38% say the amount of technology they use makes it difficult to disconnect from work,”
- ▶ Recent research from O.C. Tanner found that the pandemic made 52% of Canadians feel physically or emotionally exhausted.
- ▶ “Clearly, more than a third of the Canadian population is suffering from some form of digital fatigue.”

O.C. Tanner Institute May 2021



Issues in the world to contend with

- 
- COVID 19 and variants
 - Employment issues
 - Gas price, interest rates
 - Violence
 - Politics
 - Racism
 - Environmental change
 - And so on.....

The Water Bottle





Empathy and compassion are related yet different.

- Empathy is being able to experience another's perspective and feel their emotions—"walk in their shoes."
- Compassion involves empathy but also involves the desire to help that individual with what may be challenging them.
- Compassion involves more of a cognitive response-feeling for that person in a way that leaves us eager to do what we can to help (Well, 2017). Too much empathy (empathy strain) leaves us drained, overwhelmed and unable to help. CF is the decreasing ability to help due to being unable to distance ourselves from the emotions, the pain of others. Steele (2020)



Who can experience compassion fatigue?

People who provide:

Care, assistance and support to others in physical or emotional pain with empathy and compassion.



“Compassion Fatigue”

- Feels similarly to “burnout” but:
 - Can emerge suddenly
 - Existential/spiritual effects: overarching meaninglessness, worthlessness, hopelessness
 - A sense of isolation from supporters, hyper-vigilance or fear
 - Symptoms often disconnected from real cause
 - Difficulty concentrating, pre-occupation, exhaustion
 - Nightmares/flashbacks
 - Over-reactions or avoidance of sensory/emotional stimuli
 - Chronic physical ailments: colds, stomach problems
 - Apathy, anhedonia
 - Excessive negativity: blaming others, complaining
 - Compulsive/avoidant behaviors: substance abuse, over-spending, over-eating, gambling
 - Problems in personal relationships, intimacy
 - Denial of difficulties or problems



What we may see at work

- High absenteeism and/or staff turnover
- Increasing difficulty completing routine tasks, assignments
- Inability of staff to respect and meet deadlines
- Unprofessional outbursts of anger, aggression
- Instability, conflict in staff/team relationships
- Desire among staff member to break the company rules
- Staff inflexibility, increased rigidity, resistance to change
- Excessive complaining, negativity towards management
- Skepticism or apathy about organizational vision, future
- Inability of staff to believe improvement is possible



True or False?

Compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma are also seen within the profession and the literature as being an inevitable side effect of the job.



Mind wandering

Forty-seven percent of the time, people are thinking about something other than what they're currently doing.

We've been fortunate with this project to collect a lot of data, a lot more data of this kind than has ever been collected before, over 650,000 real-time reports from over 15,000 people.

How does mind-wandering relate to happiness? We found that people are substantially less happy when their minds are wandering than when they're not, which is unfortunate considering we do it so often.

Mind-wandering precedes unhappiness but unhappiness does not precede mind-wandering.


Matt Killingsworth, Ph.D Gilbert Harvard



Why compassion?

There is growing evidence that self-compassion is an important variable in stress and coping (Allen & Leary, 2010); Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, & Hancock, 2007; Neff & Mcgehee, 2010; Sirois, Molnar, & Hirsch, 2015).

It has also been found to promote a range of positive outcomes, including happiness, optimism, emotional intelligence, wisdom, and adaptive coping (Allen & Leary, 2010; Neff & Germer, 2013; Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterait, 2005).



Researchers point to emotional resilience as key to managing burnout and compassion fatigue.

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People who are emotionally resilient may display some or all of the following qualities of resilience to a greater degree⁵:

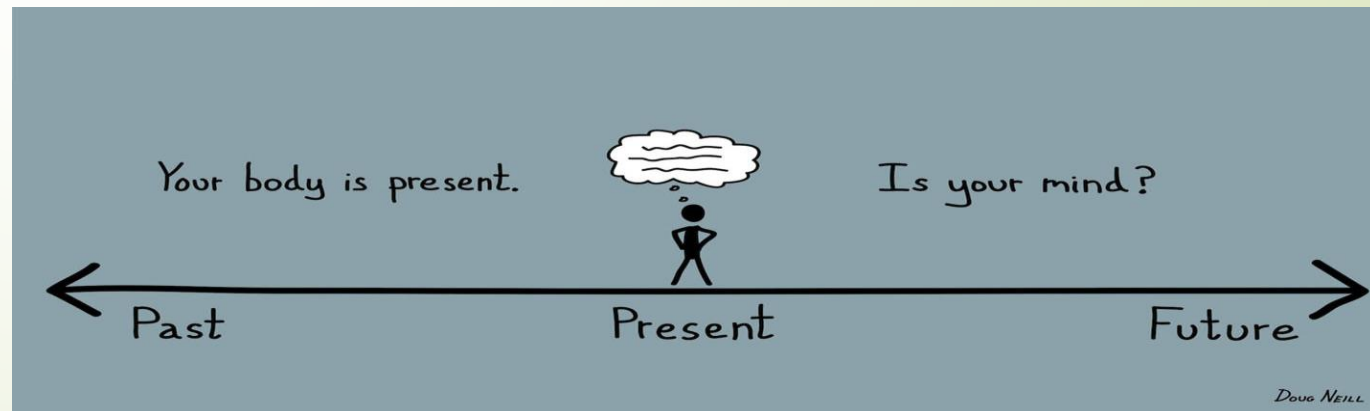
1. Ability to self-calm
2. Exercises self-care
3. Ability to self-replenish
4. Emotional expressiveness
5. Nonjudgmental/self-supporting (lack of perfectionism)
6. Optimism
7. Hope
8. Hardiness
9. Sense of coherence
10. Social support

Why Mindfulness?

A mindful psychological counselor is likely to focus on the present moment with a clear mind, can be fully aware of the happening during sessions, and deal better with the challenges in the context of counseling (Wei et al., 2015).

Many cross-sectional surveys proved that mindfulness was positively associated with context-specific self-efficacy (Blecharz et al., 2013; Hanley et al., 2015; DiRenzo et al., 2018; Neace et al., 2020).

A recent randomized controlled trial explored the causal relationship and found that an increase in the level of mindfulness of undergraduate counseling trainees led to an increase in the level of context-specific self-efficacy of these trainees (Chan et al., 2020).





Resilience

Resilience is a dynamic process including positive adaptation in a context of significant adversity. Luthar et al


Or

The ability to bounce back from stress or trauma. Smith(2008)



Hotline counsellours study China


- Studied 712 COVID-19 Hotline Counsellour
- Overall, the present study aimed to examine the association between self-oriented empathy and CF, and further investigate the mediating roles of mindfulness and counselor's self-efficacy.
- Mediators Dispositional mindfulness was measured using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale-Chinese version (MAAS-C) (Chen et al., 2012).
- The self-efficacy of hotline psychological counselors was measured using the Chinese version of the Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (CSES-C) (Gao, 2013).
- ***The present study elucidated the important role of self-oriented empathy in CF, and found that mindfulness and counselor's self-efficacy independently and serially mediated the empathy-CF linkage. Second, a practical implication is that the present study provides a pathway to decrease the psychological counselor's CF.***
- ***In order to decrease CF, intervention programs should involve mindfulness training to improve the level of mindfulness, as well as some training, supervision, or positive feedback to enhance the psychological counselor's professional self efficacy.***



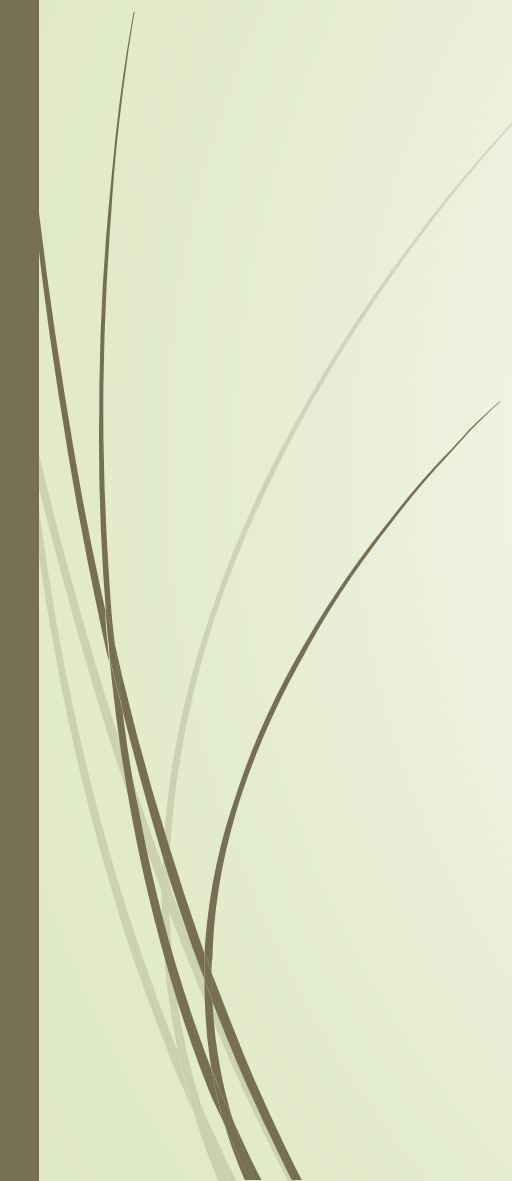
Article: Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Vicarious Traumatization: a Qualitative Review and Research Agenda (2019)


We recommend that these efforts continue, including work to separate the influence of “trait” and “state” mindfulness (i.e., as in other areas of the literature; e.g., Medvedev et al. 2017), and to explore multi-part interventions with training in self-care techniques and at earlier career stages (e.g., during education and prior to formal employment; Tucker et al. 2017; Wald et al. 2016).

Building interventions into earlier occupational and/or organizational entry stages may prove **crucial** for preventing empathy-based stress and sustaining employees' wellbeing across the lifespan; moreover, the method of delivery and source (e.g., peers, leaders and managers with differing levels of experience and leadership approaches) that optimize impact will be relevant to investigate as well.



Definition of self-compassion as a way of responding to oneself during times of stress and difficulty, and involves three key capacities:

- 1.** a mindful awareness of one's own pain and suffering;
 - 2.** treating oneself with care and concern during difficult moments;
 - 3.** and the capacity to relate one's suffering to the wider spectrum of human experience (Neff, 2003a).
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Mindfulness is often defined in terms of bringing one's complete attention to what is happening in the present moment in a nonjudgmental way

Kabat-Zinn (1993)

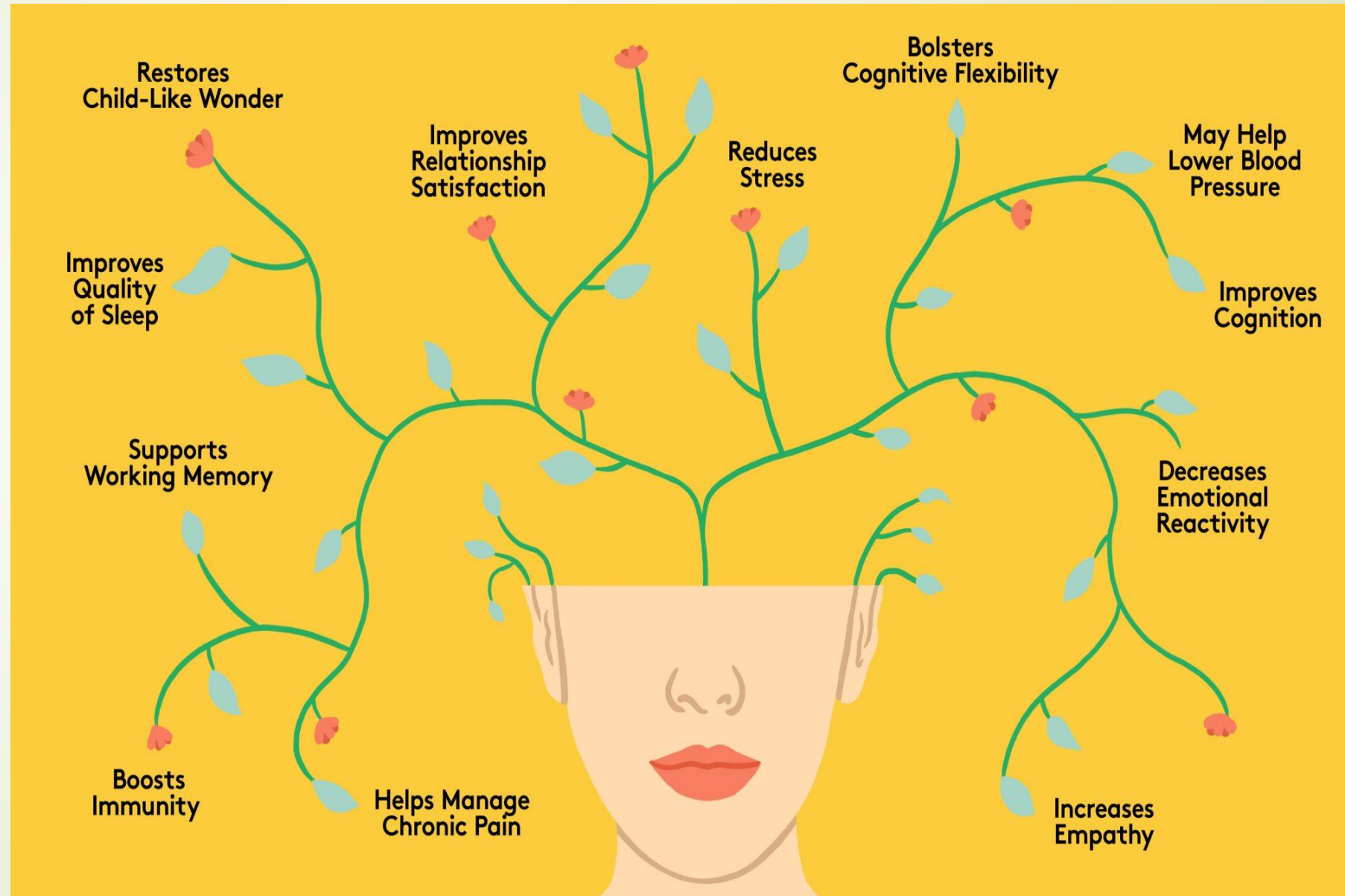


Eight-week pilot mindful self-compassion (MSC) training program on nurses' compassion fatigue and resilience

Emerging research suggests that self-compassion interventions may provide protective factors and enhance resilience.

Secondary traumatic stress, however, is a consequence of nurses and other caregivers daily exposure to their clients suffering. It comes about as a result of a countertransference of suffering from the clients to nurses as a result of an unconscious attunement to and absorption of the clients' stresses and trauma.


Benefits of Mindfulness





Mindfulness may be an overlooked pathway to resilience.

- Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel (2007) reported that psychology trainees who went through the eight-week Mindfulness based Stress Reduction course (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990), significantly increased empathy.
- Greason and Cashwell (2009), showed that practicing mindfulness by mental health providers is a significant predictor of counseling self-efficacy and attention during therapy sessions.




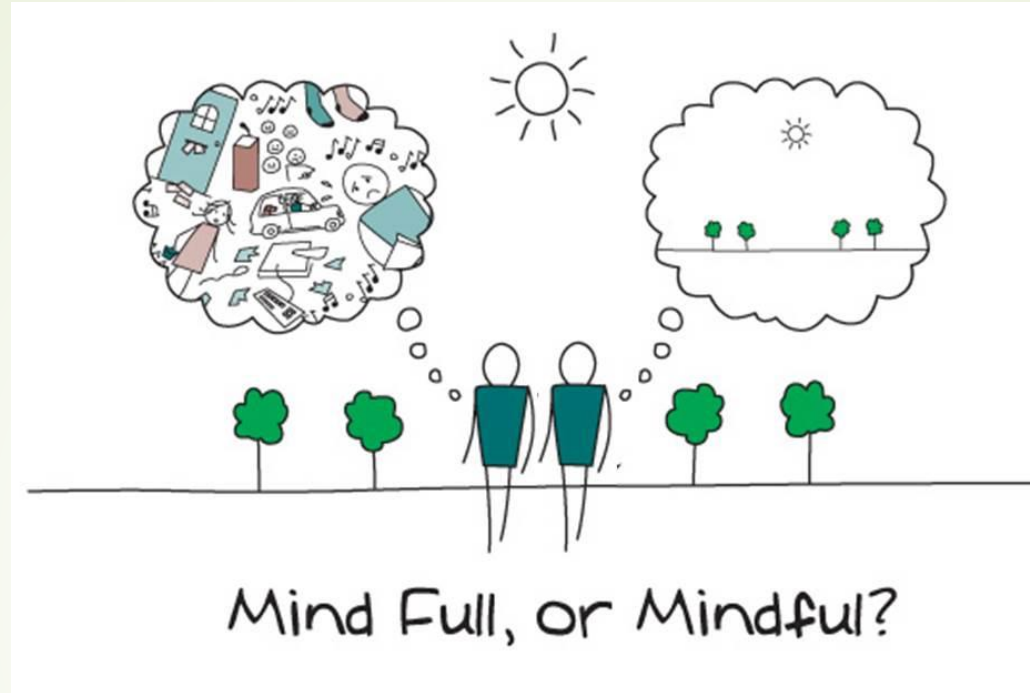
Increasing evidence from laboratory studies of meditators has shown that the *repetitive practices* at the heart of meditative disciplines can drive positive neuroplastic changes that also reflect mental and physical well-being, such as greater emotional balance, compassion and genuine happiness, as well as a potential buffering of stressful and traumatic experience when it does occur (Lutz, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008).



Self compassion and Mindfulness

- In the study conducted by Shapiro et al. (2005) on 38 Health Care professionals in the United States. MBSR plus a guided *lovingkindness meditation* was taught, in an attempt to help health care professionals develop greater compassion for themselves, their coworkers, and their patients.
- Using Neff's Self-Compassion Scale (2003a) For the MBSR group, 90% of the participants demonstrated increases in self-compassion.
- Shapiro et al. (2007) state: The effects of mindfulness training on positive affect and self-compassion found here may help to enhance professional skills, reflected in a greater kindness towards, and acceptance of clients and patients... ”

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- ❖ Emerging research suggests that compassion skills training could serve as an antidote to nurses' secondary trauma and burnout. Rabb K 2014
 - ❖ Figley (2002b) suggests that the most effective therapists are those who utilize and expresses empathy and compassion. In sharing the client's suffering, the caregiver expresses compassion that in turn strengthens and comforts the sufferer (Morse et al., 1992).
 - ❖ There is evidence to support the positive and protective effect of mindfulness in preventing burnout. A study by Krasner, et al. [23] found that training in mindful communication reduced psychological distress and burnout while also increasing empathy among healthcare providers.

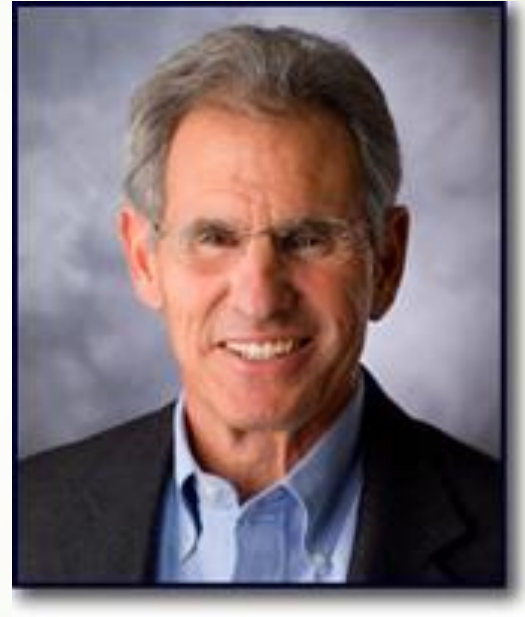


PRESENT MOMENT

Defining Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgementally to things as they are. This means paying attention to things as they really are in any given moment not what we want them to be.

John Kabat-Zinn





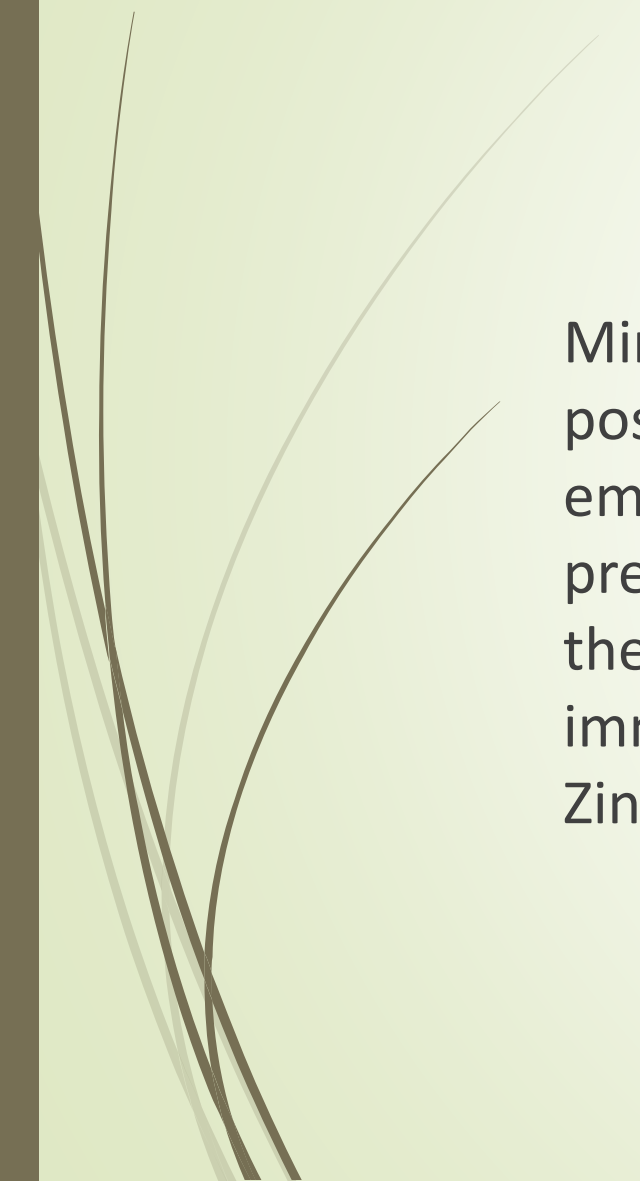
MBSR

MBSR A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program was initially developed and implemented in 1979 by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Spanning 8 weeks, MBSR programs consist of weekly 2.5 hour-long classes with a Silent Retreat component.


As the practitioner learns to let go of ruminations about the past and fears about the future, they learn to see habitual reactions to stress and to cultivate healthier, more adaptive ways of responding. While the goal of MBSR is to be present to whatever one's experience is at the moment, training in mindfulness attempts to increase awareness of thoughts, emotions, and maladaptive patterns of mind that render one more vulnerable to stress (Shapiro et al., 2005)



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) has also been shown to positively affect the way in which the brain processes difficult emotions under stress; shifting activation in particular areas of the prefrontal cortex from rightsided activation to left-sided activation- in the direction of greater emotional balance- and to induce positive immune system changes that correlate with the brain changes (Kabat-Zinn, 2012).



Mindfulness is an integral component of therapies such as:

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) John Kabat-Zinn, 1990
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999)
- Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT; Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002),
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993),
- Addiction Treatment and Relapse Prevention (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985),
- Mindfulness-based intervention for Eating Disorders (M-BEAT; Wolever, 2009).



How mindfulness can be useful

- We can make a choice:

React or Pause & Respond

- Mindfulness helps to develop awareness of personal triggers and habitual reactions and learn to create a pause in one's default patterns

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space and in that space lies our freedom and power to choose a response” Victor Frankl

Breaking it Down: Present Moment

35

- Past and future thinking generate most of our mental distress

40% - 10% - 50%

- The % of time our mind is concerning itself with and focused on the:

Past - Present - Future

Practices

- Breathing exercises
- Bodyscan
- Mindful movement
- Sitting practice
- Guided meditation
- Guided Imagery
- Mindful Self-Compassion
- Loving Kindness Meditation

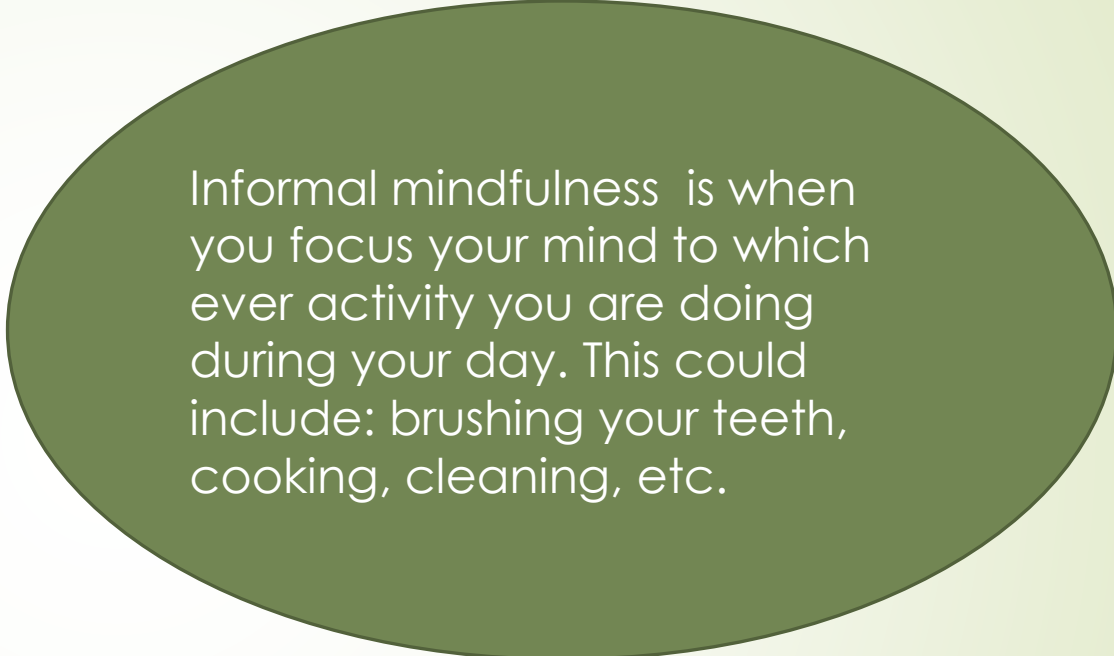




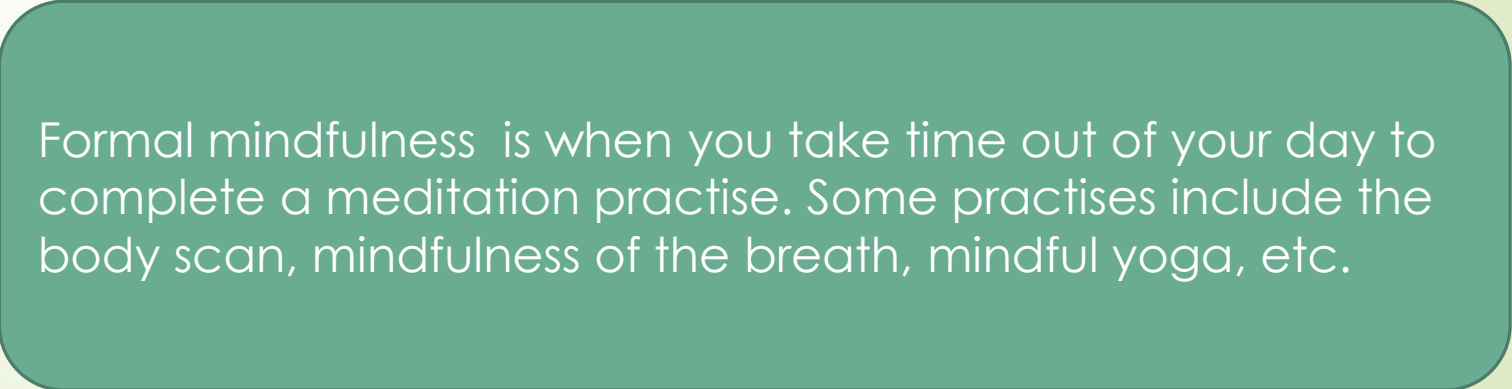
Informal vs Formal Practice



Informal vs Formal

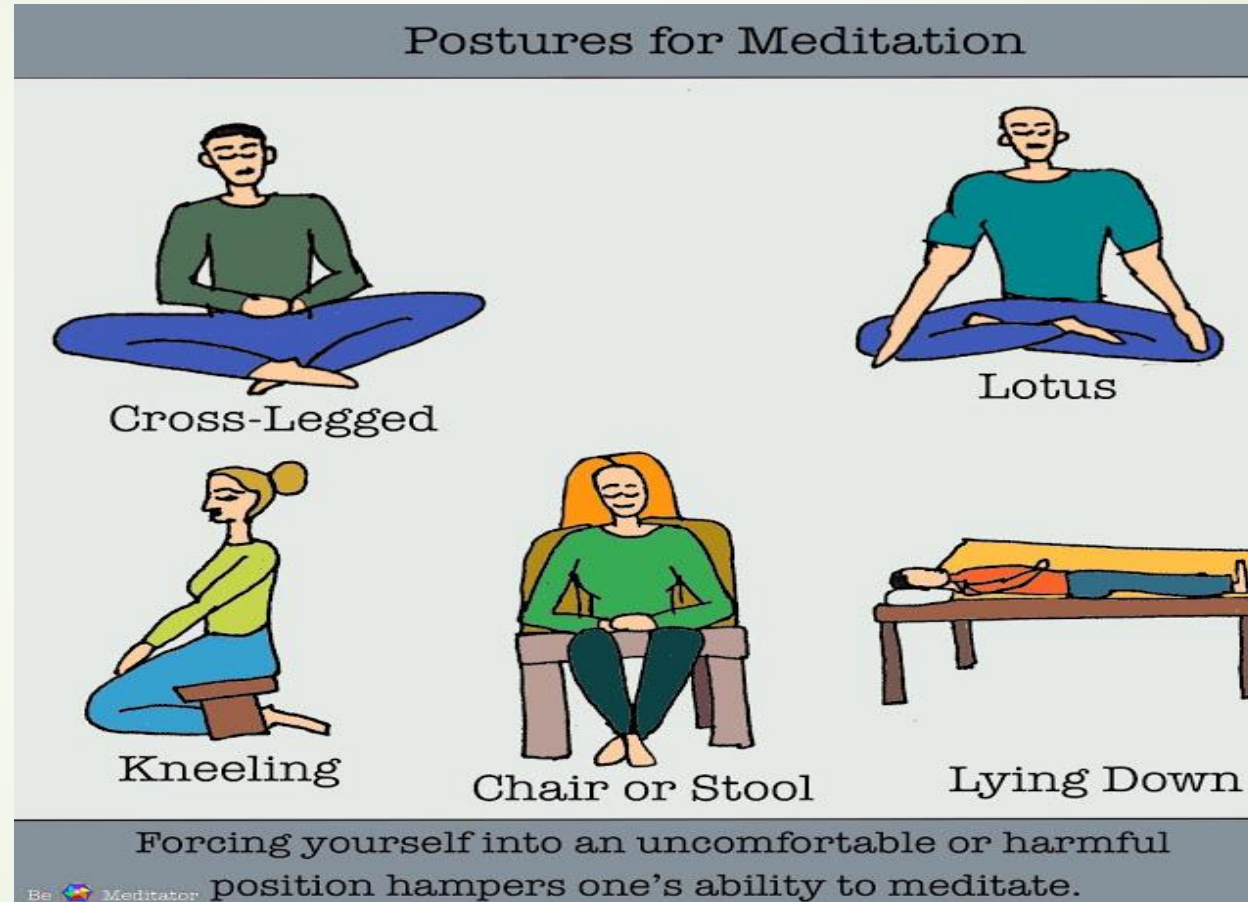


Informal mindfulness is when you focus your mind to which ever activity you are doing during your day. This could include: brushing your teeth, cooking, cleaning, etc.



Formal mindfulness is when you take time out of your day to complete a meditation practise. Some practises include the body scan, mindfulness of the breath, mindful yoga, etc.

Let's try the basics



The 3 Minute Breathing Space

39



3 steps, 1 minute each

- 1. Stop doing what you're doing, observe what is present** (thoughts, emotions, sensations, urges)

Describing or Labeling may be helpful

"Sadness has arisen" or "worry thoughts are here"

- 2. Redirect attention to your breath**


Labeling or counting may help (e.g. inhale, exhale)

- 3. Expand attention to your body as a whole**

Notice any discomfort, tension, pain

Practice acceptance of it, breath with it

Verbal self-encouragement (it's ok to feel this)



What is happening in your work place?

What can you do within your team, organization, supervision, with peers?

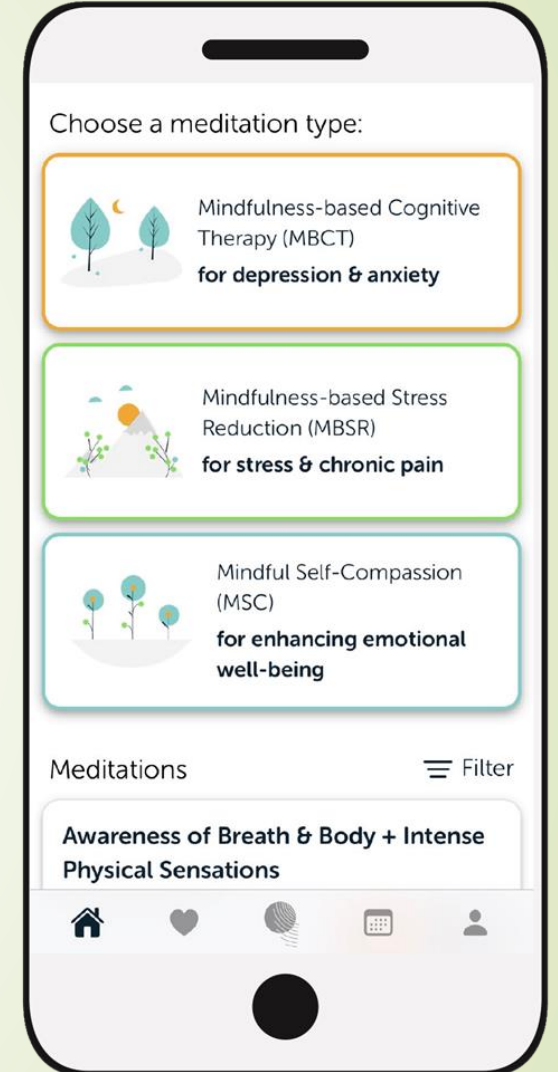
Links and resources

Centre for Mindfulness Studies Toronto
<http://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/>

<https://learn.utoronto.ca/programs-courses/health-and-social-sciences/mindfulness>

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction – Toronto
General Hospital Website: www.uhn.ca 585 University
Avenue Phone: 416 340 4452

Mindfulness Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Program
– Toronto Western Hospital Website: www.uhn.ca 399
Bathurst Street Phone: 416 340 4452





Books

- *Meditation for Beginners* – Jack Kornfield
- *How to Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind* – Pema Chödrön
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* – Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Insight Meditation: A Step-by-step Course on How to Meditate* – Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein
- *Guided Meditation: Six Essential Practices to Cultivate Love, Awareness, and Wisdom* – Jack Kornfield and Sounds True
- *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation* – Thich Nhat Hanh, Vo-Dihn Mai and Mobi Ho
- *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* – Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: Embodied Presence & Inquiry in Practice* – Susan L. Woods, Patricia Rockman, Evan Collins



Questions ?

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Effective Self-Care and Resilience in Clinical Practice : Dealing with Stress, Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

Sarah Parry, Mary Prendergast, Hannah Wilson, Ciara Joyce, Liz Tallentire, Caroline Wyatt, Olivia Wadham, Amy D'Sa, Ndumanene Silungwe, and Kirsten Atherton

Effective Self-Care and Resilience in Clinical Practice : Dealing with Stress, Compassion Fatigue and Burnout, edited by Sarah Parry, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central,

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Citation: Delaney MC (2018) Caring for the caregivers: Evaluation of the effect of an eight-week pilot mindful self-compassion (MSC) training program on nurses' compassion fatigue and resilience. *PLoS ONE* 13(11): e0207261. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0207261> Editor: Andrew Soundy, University of Birmingham

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