



# MINDFULNESS: LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT

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# Overview

- ▣ Why am I here?
- ▣ Stress in the workplace
- ▣ Stress and Emotion Reactivity & Regulation
- ▣ Mindfulness
  - What is it?
- ▣ Does it work?
  - Research
- ▣ Is it for everyone?
  - Obstacles
- ▣ How to do it
  - Key elements
- ▣ Doing it!
- ▣ Conclusion



# Introduction

- ▣ Why am I here?
  - Research on Non-suicidal self-injury → Mindfulness
  - Stress related health problems and challenges → Mindfulness
  
- ▣ Stress in the workplace
  - The annual cost in Canada of work time lost to stress is calculated at \$12-billion. (*Statistics Canada, 1999*)
  - Disability claims have been significantly on the rise over the past few years, due mainly to Long Term Disability claims. The area with the biggest increase is “mental-nervous conditions”. (*Making the Disability Connection, Canadian Healthcare Manager, April/May, 1999*)



# Signs of Stress in the workplace: check all that apply....

- ▣ Nervousness
- ▣ Worrying
- ▣ Anxiety
- ▣ Panic
- ▣ Irritability
- ▣ Depression
- ▣ Forgetfulness
- ▣ Mood swings
- ▣ Crying easily
- ▣ Easily angered
- ▣ Poor concentration
- ▣ Restlessness
- ▣ Insomnia
- ▣ Fatigue
- ▣ Constant feeling of time pressure
- ▣ Tension headaches
- ▣ Tight shoulder and neck muscles
- ▣ Teeth grinding
- ▣ High blood pressure
- ▣ Erratic or racing heartbeat
- ▣ Migraine headaches
- ▣ Stomach pain
- ▣ Diarrhea
- ▣ Constipation
- ▣ Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- ▣ Frequent minor illnesses

# HOW DOES STRESS WORK?

When it begins to feel stressful....your  
emotions are in charge:

**Emotion Regulation**

# Emotion Reactivity: A Key to Emotion Dysregulation

## ▣ Sensitivity

- I tend to get emotional very easily

Not at all like me ..... Completely like me  
0 2 3 4

## ▣ Arousal/Intensity

- When I experience emotions, I feel them very strongly/intensely

## ▣ Persistence/Recovery

- When I am angry/upset, it takes me much longer than most people to calm down

## ▣ **Emotion Reactivity Scale. Nock, Wedig, Holmberg, & Hooley, 2008**

# Reactivity to Regulation

High Reactivity = Stress



# Reactivity to Regulation

High Reactivity = Stress



High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation



# Reactivity to Regulation

High Reactivity = Stress



High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation =  Stress

# Reactivity to Regulation

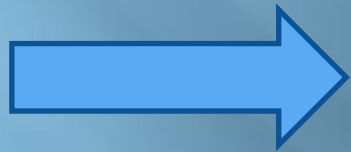
High Reactivity = Stress



High Reactivity + Good Emotion Regulation =  Stress

So ability to regulate emotions is important!!

# Emotion Regulation



So how regular are you?

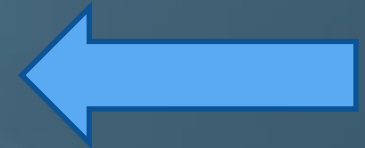


Image source: [www.neuronarrative.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/](http://www.neuronarrative.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/)

# Emotion Regulation and You!

**When I'm upset, I feel like I am out of control.** (circle one)

Never      Some of the time      Half of the time      Most of the time      Always

**When I'm upset, I feel like there is nothing I can do.** (circle one)

Never      Some of the time      Half of the time      Most of the time      Always

**When I'm upset, I can't think of anything else.** (circle one)

Never      Some of the time      Half of the time      Most of the time      Always

**When I'm upset, I know that I can find a way to eventually feel better.** (circle one)

Never      Some of the time      Half of the time      Most of the time      Always

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, Gratz & Roemer, 2004

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**Yellow is difficulty with regulating emotions!**

# How to cope with.....





# Result → Stress!



THERE ARE ONLY  
TWO TIMES  
I FEEL STRESS:



DAY

AND



NIGHT.



"STRESS"



# Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994) Adapted

<i>In the last month, how often have you...</i>	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
1. ...been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. ...felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
3. ...felt nervous and “stressed”?	0	1	2	3	4
4. ...questioned your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5. ...felt that things were just not working out for you?	0	1	2	3	4
6. ...found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7. ...felt unable to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8. ...felt that you were overwhelmed by things?	0	1	2	3	4
9. ...been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4
10. ...felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

# Scoring

Age	Endangering Health	Med/High Stress
18-29	27+	22+
30-54	26+	20+
55-64	25+	19+

(Cohen, 1994)

How to decrease reactivity,  
and regulate emotions?

To manage stress?



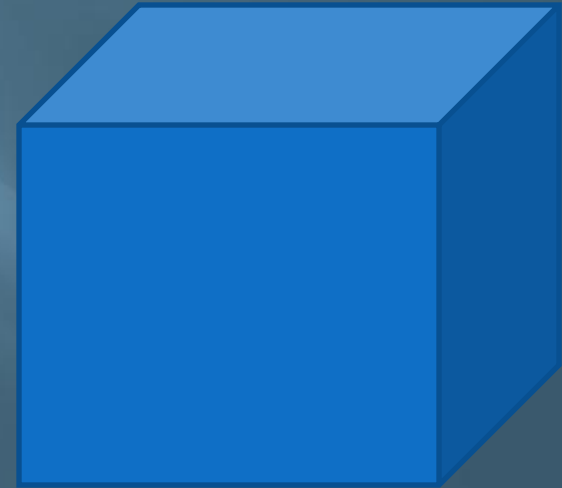
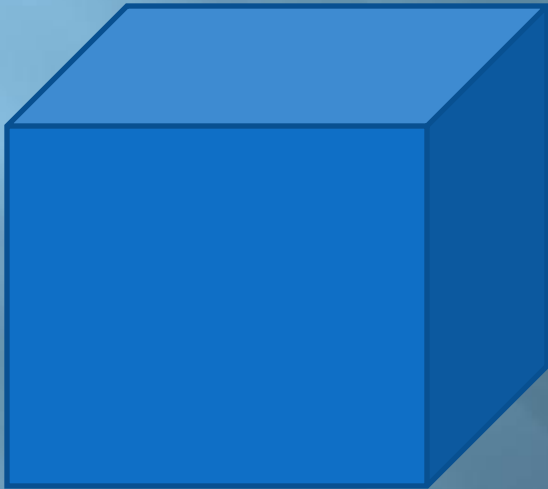
Mindfulness



# Mindfulness



What is it?

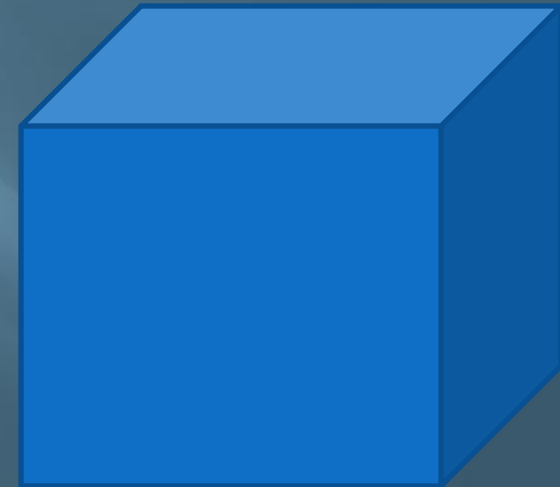




# Mindfulness



What is it?





# Mindfulness



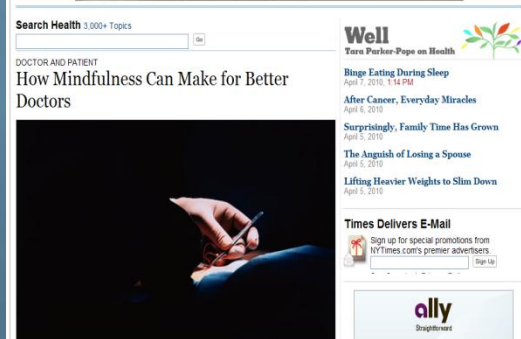
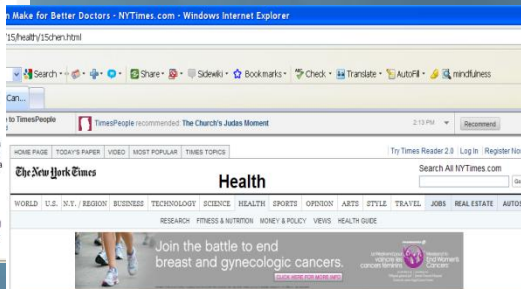
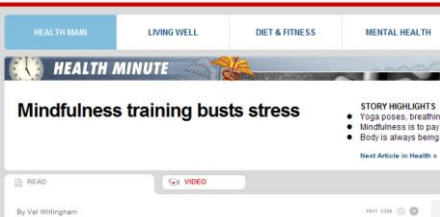
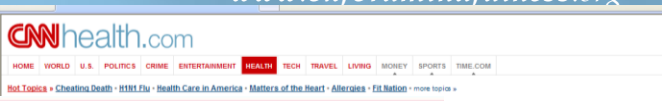
What is it?

**Attention**  
to immediate experience

**Acceptance**  
of the experience

# Mindfulness is everywhere

**Oxford Mindfulness Centre – Home:** The Oxford Mindfulness Centre aims to extend the understanding mindfulness through research, training and providing classes for NHS patients. Oxford Mindfulness is a centre within **Oxford University's** Department of Psychiatry. omc The Centre was founded in 2007 to realise the ...  
[www.oxfordmindfulness.org](http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org)

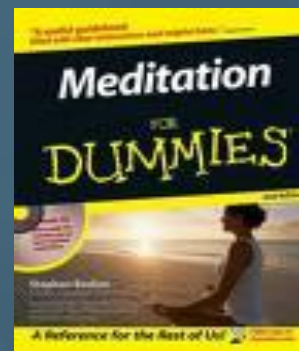


**Mindfulness Meditation Course - Stanford Hospital & Clinics ...**  
The Mindfulness Program in the **Stanford** Center for Integrative Medicine Clinic is designed to teach mind and body awareness techniques for coping with ...

## Mindfulness improves quality of life

BOSTON , MA –Mounting evidence is showing that mindfulness can increase life enjoyment, expand the ability to cope with illness, and possibly improve physical and emotional health. The **February issue of Harvard Women's Health Watch** takes a detailed look at how learning to focus the mind can be a healthful antidote to the stresses of everyday living.

[http://www.health.harvard.edu/press\\_releases/mindfulness\\_improves\\_quality\\_of\\_life](http://www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/mindfulness_improves_quality_of_life)





# But does it work???

## ▣ Mindfulness interventions have been shown to be effective for

- Sleep disturbances, stress, mood and fatigue in cancer patients (Carlson & Garland, 2005)
- For military in IRAQ, (Jha et al., 2007, 2010)

Cognitive Neuroscientist Dr. Jha notes: “Our findings suggest that, just as daily physical exercise leads to physical fitness, engaging in mindfulness exercises on a regular basis may improve mind-fitness”

- Hot flashes! (Carmody et al., 2006)
- An array of of physical and psychological symptoms illness (e.g., Miller, Fletcher, & Kabat-Zinn, 1995; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Kaplan, Goldenberg, & Galvin-Nadeau, 1993; Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Rosenzweig, 2001; Weissbecker et al., 2002).

# But does it work? And...

- ▣ Participating in an 8-week mindfulness meditation program changes brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy and stress. In a study in the January 30, 2011 issue of *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, researchers (Lazar et al., 2011) report :
  - Meditation group participants reported spending an average of 27 minutes each day practicing mindfulness exercises,
  - Analysis of MR images, found increased grey-matter density in the hippocampus, known to be important for learning and memory, and in structures associated with self-awareness, compassion and introspection.
  - Decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala, which is known to play an important role in anxiety and stress.

# Currently Mindfulness is part of

- ▣ Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn 1982; Kabat-Zinn 1990),
  - ▣ Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al. 2002),
  - ▣ Mindfulness for depression (Williams et al., 2007)
  - ▣ Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993)
  - ▣ Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) (Hayes et al. 1999);
- ....And leads to clinically significant improvements in psychological functioning in a wide range of populations. (Carmody & Baer, 2008)

# Is it for everyone?

## Obstacles to using mindfulness

Misunderstanding of how  
it should “work”

Societal values/ competitive stress!

psychological identity/ “not me”



# How do you use it exactly??

## ▣ Formal Practice

- Body Scan- scanning physical sensation from toes up, and breathing in to the body and out with it
- Mindful yoga- gentle movement with the body to be aware of the sensations and moving with the breath
- Sitting Meditation- focus on breath, body, sound, thought/emotion, “choiceless”
- Walking Meditation- physical sensation of foot to ground, heel to toe, slow, mind in the sensations

## ▣ Informal Practice (Day-to-day)

- Aware of breath, body, sound, thought, emotion
- Falling into “now” “moment-to-moment”, washing dishes, waiting for elevator, sitting in a meeting

# How do you use it exactly??

- ▣ Sitting Meditation (see take home handout)
  - Start with stilling the body, “settling”,
  - Then turn your attention inward to the feeling of your breath
  - After a while you will turn your attention- like soft spotlight- to the sensations in your body, physical sensations.
  - Next turn your attention to sound, hearing.
  - Then you will turn your attention to your thoughts themselves, not as distractions but as the focus of your attention.
  - And finally an “open awareness”: whatever comes up watching, observing, noting without fighting it or commenting/judging it, just being aware.



# Mini- mindfulness!

- ▣ A small mini-mindfulness activity....



# Conclusion

- ▣ My personal experience
- ▣ Research: it works through decreasing emotional reactivity, increasing emotion regulation and decreasing rumination
- ▣ Don't believe me... research it!
- ▣ Do it for 8 weeks and see...(20 minutes a day)

# Resources

## Centers in Montreal that Offer Mindfulness Based Stress Management courses\*

- Whole Person Care, Faculty of Medicine, McGill
  - 514-398-2298 (for medical professionals & chronic illnesses)
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Clinic (for stress, chronic illness, and mild/moderate anxiety or mood issues)  
Queen Elizabeth Health Complex, N.D.G.  
(514) 481-0317
- Living Arts: Montreal Based Wellness Services (for all)
  - 514-730-7882 [www.living-arts.ca](http://www.living-arts.ca)

\*currently I have no affiliation with any of these centers and in no way benefit from referrals.

# Resources

## Doing it on your own

- ▣ See Kabat-Zinn speaking about MBSR academically and its physiological/health and psychological effects

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSU8ftmmhmw>

Kabat-Zinn walks you through a Mindful practice (with Google employees)

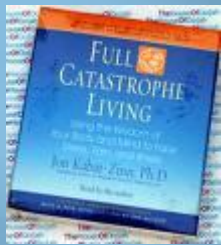
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM\\_vJc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc)

- ▣ Jon Kabat-Zinn's work Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction:

- Book : Full Catastrophe Living with Series 1 CDs

<http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/about.html>

- ▣ Williams et al., (2007). [The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness](#) (with CDs).



QUESTIONS?