



Mindfulness and Relaxation

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Disclosures

I receive royalties from Oxford University Press for co-authoring treatment manuals. I receive royalties from Springer for co-editing a book. I receive honoraria from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) for being Associate Editor of a journal.

Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is... the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

Mindfulness

- Learn to let thoughts and experiences come and go naturally
- Observe and describe them but do not interfere or try to control them
- Take a nonjudgmental stance
- Can use metaphors—leaves floating down a river, clouds in the sky, conveyor belt

Mindfulness

- Participating in life with greater moment-by-moment awareness (contrasted with mindlessness or automatic pilot)
- Roots within spiritual traditions, but now also part of popular culture and health care
- Mindfulness practice versus meditation

Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is being incorporated more and more into various types of therapy --
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT),
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT),
Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
and more

Mindfulness

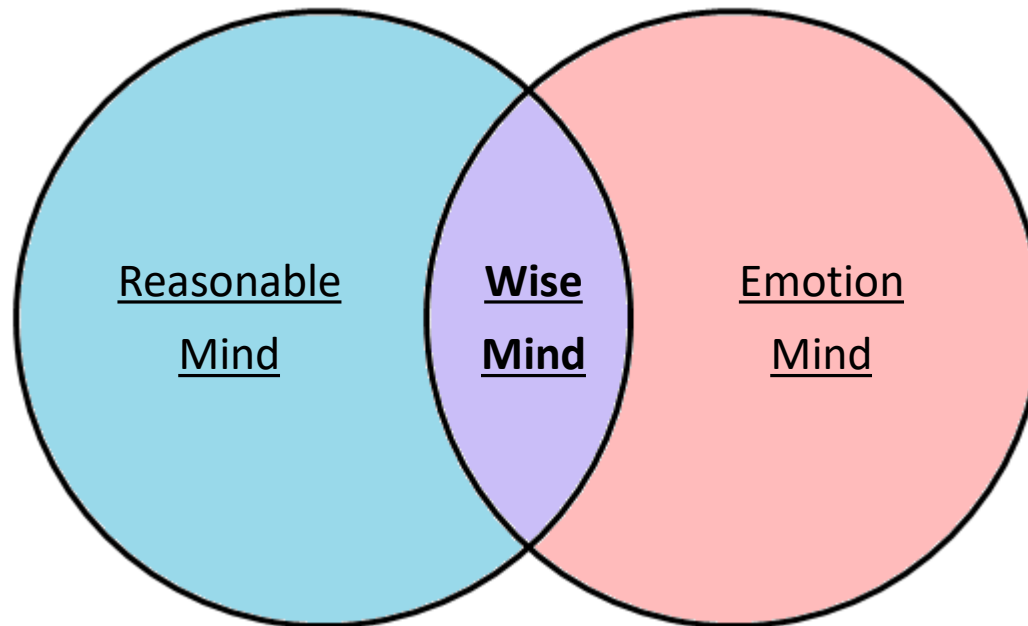
- With practice, helps patients to:
 - Experience feelings without being overwhelmed by them
 - Establish observing distance from emotional experience, introducing space to make more effective choices
 - Build a more cohesive, benign sense of self

DBT Mindfulness Skills

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills training group has an entire module on mindfulness (Linehan, 2015)

DBT Mindfulness Skills

- States of Mind:



(Linehan, 2015)

DBT Mindfulness Skills

WISE MIND

- Definition: a way of knowing ‘from deep within’ that synthesizes both feelings and logical thinking
 - Knowing from Wise Mind = balanced, flexible, open perspective
 - Relying on wisdom from whole self
 - Assumes that we have within us what we need
 - Exercises for accessing Wise Mind:
 - Imagery
 - Breathing in: say “Wise”, Breathing out: say “Mind”
 - Silently ask a question, listen for Wise Mind answer

Mindfulness: DBT “What” Skills

OBSERVE

- Definition:
 - Sensing and experiencing events, thoughts, emotions, even if they are upsetting
- Goal:
 - Experience the moment by paying attention and being aware to whatever is happening in the moment
- What it gets you:
 - Observing things requires you take a step back
 - This gives us distance needed to re-focus and get more expansive perspective on a situation

Mindfulness: DBT “What” Skills

DESCRIBE

- Definition:
 - Using words to say what you observe, Labeling
- Goal:
 - Learning to gain emotional distance, not take emotions or thoughts literally (thoughts are thoughts, not facts)
- What it gets you:
 - Being able to use words to describe behavior and environment
 - Critical for communicating with others and improving self control

Mindfulness: DBT “What” Skills

PARTICIPATE

- Definition:
 - Entering completely into whatever you are doing, without feeling self-conscious, distracted, or “outside” of what you are doing
- Goal:
 - Being in the moment, participation with awareness
- What it gets you:
 - Smooth quality of interacting
 - Feeling engaged and in the moment
 - Responding to what reality is, not what it “should” be

Mindfulness: DBT “How” Skills

NON-JUDGMENTAL

- Definition:
 - Just the facts, taking valence off the experience
- Goal:
 - To decrease affect, to view universe as it is
- What it gets you:
 - Acceptance of the world
 - Being in the moment without label of “good” or “bad”
 - Improved problem-solving
 - Less fuel for intense feelings

Radical Acceptance

- Radical acceptance is the ultimate goal of taking a non-judgmental stance.
- By “radically accepting” the reality of the current situation, it allows one to effectively deal with the situation.
- Can differentiate pain and suffering and help patients work on reducing suffering.
- Accepting something is not the same as judging it good.

Mindfulness: DBT “How” Skills

ONE-MINDFUL

- Definition:
 - Doing one thing in the moment
- Goal:
 - Keep attention focused, not fragmented
- What it gets you:
 - Fuller moment-to-moment experience
 - Non-fragmented attention

Mind Wandering Study

- “Experience sampling” data of 2,250 adults using phone app that contacted participants at random moments w/ 3 questions:
 - What are you doing right now?
 - How are you feeling right now?
 - Are you thinking about something other than what you are currently doing? If yes, is it something pleasant, neutral or unpleasant?
- People’s minds wander often:
 - At least 30% mind wandering in all 22 activities except sex.
 - Some activities had very high frequency of mind wandering (e.g., 75% while showering)

Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010

Mind Wandering Study

- For all activities, people were significantly less happy when mind-wandering than when one-mindful
 - True even for the least enjoyable activities
- People were no happier when minds wandered to pleasant content and significantly unhappier when wandering to neutral or unpleasant content
- Conclusion: “A human mind is a wandering mind, and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. The ability to think about what is not happening is a cognitive achievement that comes at an emotional cost.”

Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010

Mindfulness: DBT “How” Skills

EFFECTIVE

- Definition:
 - Do what works, what is called for, in each situation
 - Stay away from “fair”, “unfair”, “right”, “wrong”
 - Act as skillfully as possible to meet the demands of the current situation
- Goal:
 - To be effective, respond to the situation as it is (not as you think it should be)
- What it gets you:
 - Fewer emotional reactions
 - Ability to perceive accurately

Mindfulness Exercises

- Raisin exercise
- Body Scan
- Sounds and Thoughts
- Breath
- Three-minute Breathing Space
- Mindful walking

Relaxation

- Used to be a mainstay of CBT, but now is being used more selectively

Relaxation

- When is it helpful?
- When is it contraindicated?
- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Guided Imagery

Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Patients learn to breathe from their diaphragm, rather than from their chest
- Patients are taught to breathe very deeply, inhaling and exhaling slowly without pausing
- Exhalation is slightly longer than inhalation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Body is divided up into a series of large muscle groups. Each group is tensed and then relaxed
- Hands, arms, neck, shoulders, face, stomach, legs and feet
- Tension is maintained for about five seconds with a relaxation period of about 10-15 seconds

Guided Imagery

- Imagery is used to create a relaxing scene (often drawn from their own preferences, experiences)
- Patient learns to recall that scene, using cues about the sounds, sights, tastes, tactile sensations and smells when feeling stressed

Application to COVID-19 Pandemic

- Stress levels are understandably high.
- Mindfulness can help patients stay in the moment and avoid getting too far ahead of themselves.
- Relaxation skills can help patients manage stress.
- Radical acceptance can help patients remain effective (do things that are within their control and accept things that are not).

Additional Resources-Online Courses

- Some of the slides used in this presentation were drawn from the MGH Psychiatry Academy online course entitled, Advanced Psychotherapy Strategies; CBT, DBT and Dynamic Concepts for use with Challenging Cases (Harley, Jacobo and Prairie, course directors)
- The MGH Psychiatry Academy also has courses with the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine that provide additional information on relaxation and ways to elicit the relaxation response.
- Please visit our web site www.mghcme.org for more information.

Additional Resources—Books

DBT

- *DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition* (Linehan, 2015).

Mindfulness

- *Mindfulness Skills Workbook for Clinicians and Clients* (Burdick, 2013).
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).
- *Meditation for Beginners* (Kornfield, 2004).

Relaxation

- *The Relaxation Response* (Benson & Klipper, 2009).