

Mindfulness

Lecture 13
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What is Mindfulness?



“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn
(1994, p.4)

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Mindfulness: Other definitions

- “Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment by using meditation, yoga and breathing techniques. It involves consciously bringing awareness to our thoughts and feelings, without making judgments...” (MHF, 2010, p. 12).
- Shapiro (2009, p.556) defines mindfulness as “the awareness that arises through intentionally attending in an open, accepting, and discerning way to whatever is arising in the present moment.” Mindful awareness is the outcome of intentional attending (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009).

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Use of Mindfulness in Clinical Setting

- In the UK, for instance, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2004) recommended Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for people who had experienced depression.
- This was further confirmed by a research published by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF, 2010) that reported that out of the 250 General Practitioners (GP) surveyed, 72% think it would be helpful for their patients with mental health problems to learn mindfulness meditation skills.
- In a representative sampling of 2,007 British adults, 51% of those surveyed said they would be interested in attending free meditation classes to help them deal with stress and thus look after their health.

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Mindfulness & Psychotherapy

- **Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)** developed by Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2002) as a therapy for relapse prevention of major depression.
- Kabat-Zinn's (2003) **Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)** integrates components of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT; Beck, 1993).
- **Mindfulness-Action Based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (MACBT)**, which is said to hold promise in treating individuals with co-existing binge eating disorder and substance use disorder (Courbasson, Nishikawa, & Shapira, 2011).
- Mindfulness is also being employed to facilitate recovery from addiction and to prevent relapse (see for example, Appel & Kim-Appel, 2009; Carlson & Larkin, 2009; Marlatt & Chawla, 2007).

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Mindfulness & Psychotherapy

- Evidence for a beneficial effect of MBSR on depression and anxiety was equivocal (Toneatto & Nguyen, 2007).
- Mindfulness-based intervention might have some effect on stress reduction in healthy subjects (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009).
- Mindfulness-based therapy is a promising intervention for treating anxiety and mood problems in clinical populations (Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010; O'Driscoll, 2009).
- Baer (2003, p.140): although the “empirical literature supporting its efficacy is small,”...“mindfulness-based intervention can be rigorously operationalized, conceptualized, and empirically evaluated” in the context of health and wellbeing.

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