

Including Everything: Mindfulness and Transforming Suffering in Palliative Care

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Third Annual Palliative Care Institute Conference



Objectives

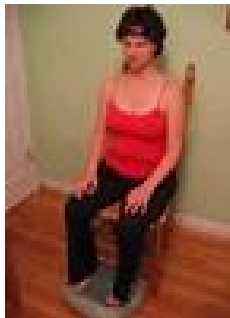
1. Understand what mindfulness is;
2. Know its clinical applications and recent areas of advancement;
3. Understand how suffering can be addressed by mindful awareness practices.

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What is Mindfulness?



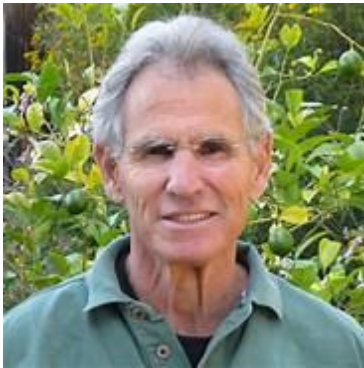
- Secular or religious?



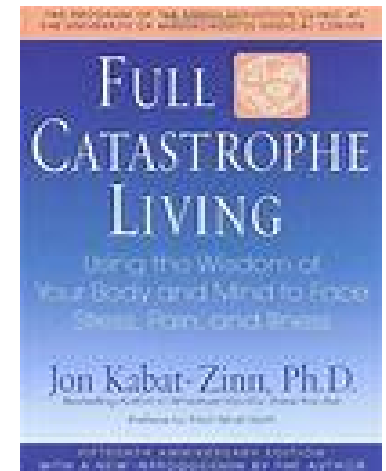
- What about you?

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What is Mindfulness?



“Non judgmental
non elaborative awareness”
of the what is happening right now,
in this moment. (JKZ 2003)



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Mindfulness Techniques



- Focus on particular objects or on no object
 - body scan,
 - breath, walking,
 - loving-kindness

- Varying practice lengths and protocols
- Different settings and populations



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Mindfulness Functions By...

- Paying attention on ***purpose*** - interrupts automatic negative thoughts;
- Paying attention in the ***present*** - interrupts rumination and worry;
- Minimizing negative appraisals of the situation.



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Mindfulness Supports a Healthier Response



- Mindful Appraisal
- Turning towards with curiosity
- Aware of breath & body -> more present-centered
- Aware of thoughts & emotions: less elaborative reactivity

Modified, Courtesy of Mindfulness Northwest

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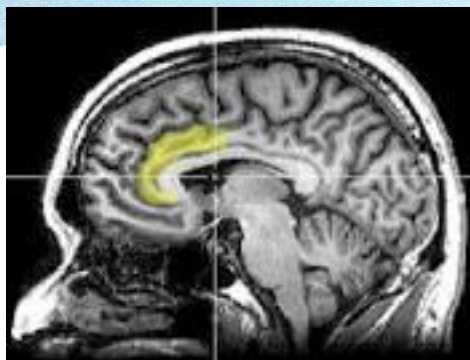
What's the Evidence?

- EEG and Blood pressure
- NEUROPLASTICITY
- IMMUNOBIOLOGY



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What's the Evidence



Neuroplasticity MRI/MRF data

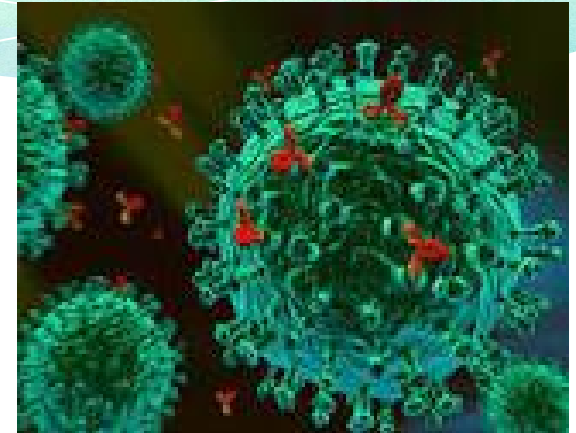
- Sustained increase in attentional and visceral awareness
- Anatomic changes in brain structure
 - increases in those of emotional regulation
 - decrease in those with judging and reacting
- Increased activity in areas correlating with present self

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What's the Evidence

Immunobiology

- Decreased inflammatory response
- Increased immune response
- Genetic modulation of inflammatory response



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Mindfulness Supports a Healthier Response

- ***Increase in Parasympathetic activation***



- ***More Oxytocin, less Cortisol***

- ***Perception is Powerful***

- ***Instead of Fight or Flight,
a considered and chosen Response is possible.***

modified from materials provided
courtesy of Mindfulness Northwest

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Mindfulness Clinical Efficacy



Every day – change, stress,
people, time,
role, work

Chronic pain - changes in perception of pain
in reactivity to pain



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Mindfulness Clinical Efficacy

Behavioral Health - Depression

Anxiety

Addiction Disorder

Mood disorder in cancer patients

Medical Conditions - IBS

Rheumatoid Arthritis



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What's the Evidence Summary

*While not yet definitive to rigorous standards, there is cumulating evidence
and no study has suggested a negative outcome....*

It's all to the good



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Mindfulness for Caregivers



NEW FAST FACT

FAST FACTS AND CONCEPTS #316

MINDFULNESS SELF-CARE STRATEGIES FOR CLINICIANS

Nicholas Kerr D.O

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Mindfulness Techniques for Caregivers

- Turn off electronic devices
- Remember to breathe
- Do a rituals at the beginning of a visit with your whole sensory awareness
(eg hand washing, opening the door)
- Sit at bedtime, fully in your body, aware of sensations



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Mindfulness in Palliative Care

Expanded Definition:

“Non judgmental
non elaborative awareness”
of the what is happening right now,
in this moment.



...with wisdom and compassion

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Suffering in Palliative Care

Suffering - “the affective experience of unpleasantness and aversion associated with mental or physical harm.”

The “something extra” that arises from the loss of who we think we are or what we hope for.

“Suffering is not you.”



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“Suffering is not you”

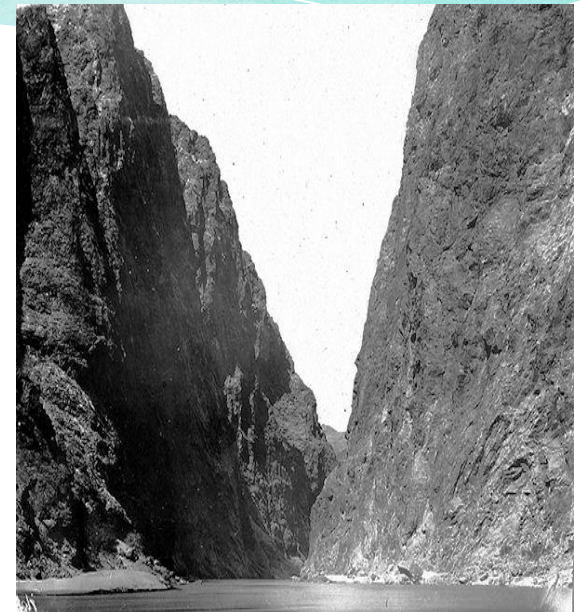
Dependency

Ability to do and think

Being a burden

Loss of those you love
you are leaving behind

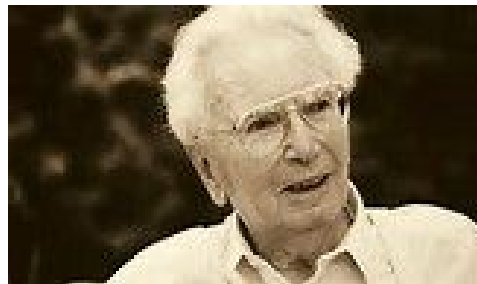
*What is this seen through
the lens of mindfulness?*



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Suffering in Palliative Care

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."



Dr. Viktor E. Frankl

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Reframing Healing in the Light of the Present

Healing is moving toward wholeness in response to injury or disease, (Mount, 2007) trauma or loss.

**“The healing that is affected is the ability to
come to terms with things as they are.”**

JKZ



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Research in Palliative Care and EOL

Coping - increased relaxation, comfort, happiness after sessions
- increased acceptance, curiosity and patience

Suicidality ??



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Caveats and Questions




Research Limitations

Time and training restrictions

Focus and energy at the end of life

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“We all have reservoirs of life
to draw upon of which we do
not dream.”

William James



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