

Welcome

How Mindfulness Can Support the Therapist, Enhance the Therapeutic Process, and Encourage Change in the Client.

“Mindfulness itself cannot be captured in a technique. It is a way of being.....Waking up to our lives in each moment requires intention and effort. It is an endeavor that we undertake for ourselves, and can share with our patients, using whatever means at our disposal.”

Germer, Siegel and Fulton, Mindfulness and Psychotherapy

What is Mindfulness?

- Giving intentional, nonjudgmental attention to our experience in the here and now.
- Is very simple, yet so counter to our mind's habits, what our culture encourages and what we do to stay safe or comfortable.
- Learning to stay present creates awareness that allows us to CHOOSE how to respond.
- Mindfulness = Awareness = choice.

Important Aspects of Mindfulness

- Approach is non-judgmental – accepting - curious. Judgement stops the ability to learn/choose.
- Learning to “Let go” or “let be” v.s. “fixing”.
- It’s purposeful –“training” a busy, distracted mind.
- It is an EMBODIED practice, not just “in our head”.
- We start to see our patterns and the negative effects of our attempts to avoid. (fix, blame or criticize)

Working with our Thoughts

“Awareness v.s. Content”

- Becoming aware of what we are thinking - creates separation from and perspective on our thoughts – do not feel so overwhelmed or controlled by them.
- Like developing an “observing ego/observing self” – becoming a “participant observer”.
- IMAGE: We are the sun, our thoughts are like clouds. Clouds are not the sun, they obscure the sun.

“Pain is Inevitable.... Suffering is Optional” (Pain + Resistance=Suffering)

- Being human is difficult. We are all imperfect. There is much we don't control.
- HOW we deal with difficulty is what we have control over. Our resistance can create more suffering.
- How do we develop wise and compassionate responses to the difficulty in our life?

Self Compassion

“The Missing Ingredient”

- Self compassion is a learnable skill, responding to our own suffering in a kind way builds resilience.
- Often there is misunderstanding about and resistance to self compassion. We tend to fix, blame, ignore or deny,

**Three components of Mindful Self-Compassion:
Mindfulness/Common Humanity/Kindness**

Mindfulness in Psychotherapy

- Focus is on the present moment and learning skills.
- We are not “self improvement projects” - we have what we need – we start where we are.
- Change occurs through acceptance and turning toward difficulty.
- Healing does NOT mean doing away with symptoms.
- Be aware of bias and social location.

How Mindfulness Helps the Therapist

- Improves focus and cognitive flexibility.
- Increases our ability to abide with difficult emotions in session and not carry them with us after session. (TONGLEN)
- Sharpens our awareness of our own reactivity, counter-transference, secondary trauma.
- Quiets our mind, renews our energy, Protects against burn-out and fatigue.

How Mindfulness Enhances the Therapeutic Relationship

- Deepens our capacity for compassionate and nonjudgmental presence, client “feels felt”.
- Increases credibility, trust and authenticity. (We have done what we are asking them to do.)
- Increases skill in using our own experience in therapeutic interventions.

How Mindfulness Helps the Client

- **Increases affect regulation and tolerance** (increases their ability to stay present to difficult emotions)
- **Develops an observing ego** (increased awareness of reactions “in the moment”)
- **Increases ability to change emotional states and self-soothe** (“training” the mind / tools for calming, grounding, soothing)
- **Alters negative core beliefs/schemas/working models** (reduces negative automatic thoughts and “story lines”)
- **Supports healing of traumatic wounding and shame** (deepens compassion for self and others, reduces feelings of isolation)

Trauma Informed Mindfulness

- Understand trauma - including ACE's and the effects of neglect, abuse and oppression.
- Intentionally engaging in “being present” can trigger thoughts, feeling and bodily sensations of unresolved or undiscovered issues and trauma.
- TITRATE: shorter, well-structured and supported. Client is in control of the process.
- Include practices for resourcing: grounding in the senses, orienting oneself, calming self-talk, soothing self touch, moving the body.

When Mindfulness May Be Contra-indicated

When a client:

- Has traumatic memories or flash backs that are too strong Feels overwhelmed or harmed by their inner experience
- Has “introjected voices” that are too harsh or unrelenting
- Fears possible disintegration or loss of sense of self
- Is in a state of acute grief or deep clinical depression
- Experiences breaks with reality-psychosis or disassociation
- Wants to use meditation for “spiritual bypassing”

Integration of Mindfulness Implicit to Explicit

Therapist explores mindfulness information, underlying principles

Therapist's approach to therapy is influenced by mindfulness

Therapist works with clients using mindfulness techniques

Therapist teaches meditative practice and explicitly discusses topics of mindfulness and meditation in session

Incorporating Mindfulness into Your Sessions

- Pause together at beginning of session.
- Encourage client to: come back to the present moment, (Sacred Pause) sense it in their body, notice common patterns/beliefs.
- Include brain/neuroscience information.
- Help client see their thoughts/feelings as separate from themselves and changeable.
- Teach skills to tolerate being present when uncomfortable. Self compassion, self soothing, breathing, grounding, affect tolerance (DBT, ACT)

Between Sessions / “Homework”

- Ask client to take moments to pause and **notice** what they are thinking and feeling.
- Explore exercises/practices from MSC, DBT, or ACT.
- Engage in breathing, grounding or self soothing techniques that they have practiced in session.
- If they are interested, encourage practices (that you have done): meditation, gratitude, loving kindness, yoga (Short, guided, perhaps within community).
- Read supportive books/articles. (Tara Brach, Pema Chodron, Rick Hanson)

Resources: BOOKS

- Mindfulness and Psychotherapy: Edited Germer, Siegel, & Fulton
- Sitting Together; Essential Skills for Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy, Pollack, Pedulla, and Siegel
- Self Compassion in Psychotherapy. Germer and Siegel
- The Mindful Way Through Depression: Williams, Teasdale.....
- Self Compassion: Kristen Neff
- The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Chris Germer
- The Buddha's Brain: Rick Hanson
- Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: David Treleaven.
- **WORKBOOKS**: DBT, Dialectical Behavior Therapy; ACT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and MSC Mindful Self Compassion

Resources for You and Your Clients

- **Apps:** Insight Timer, 10% happier, Headspace, Calm
- **Websites/You Tubes/Books for clients:** Tara Brach, Pema Chodron, Rick Hanson, Jack Kornfield. Richard Davidson, Dan Siegel,
- **Guided Imagery & Meditations:** Health Journeys
- **Workbooks:** DBT, ACT, Mindful Self Compassion
- IFOT Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy, Love and Rage, My Grandmother's Hands
- <https://dialecticalbehaviortherapy.com> (DBT)
- <https://positivepsychology.com/act-worksheets>
- www.centerformsc.org (MSC)

Thank you for your kind
attention.

Jane Rauenhorst Ph.D., L.P.

Contact Information:

jane.rauenhorst@gmail.com

651-757-0708