Stress Less with Mindfulness!

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Ground Rules

• Cell phones off
• One person talks at a time
• It’s okay to pass
• Use respectful language
• Everyone’s opinion is respected
• Confidentiality – things said here stay here
• Are there any other ground rules you would like to add?
Through “Stress Less” you will:

- **Learn** your patterns of strength and vulnerability.

- **Experience** the benefits of paying mindful attention.

- **Learn self-care practices** to help you feel better, including mindful breathing, mindful movement, mindful eating, thought-surfing, laughter, and more.
Stress Less with Mindfulness!

Lesson 1

Begin with the Breath
Why are you here?

One thing I hope to gain from these classes . . .

One thing I can give to these classes . . .

One understanding: I know I am stressed when . . .
Today we will...

• Learn about the benefits of mindfulness.

• Pinpoint behaviors that can make you vulnerable or resilient to stress.

• Experience Mindful Movement and Mindful Breathing as ways to reduce stress.
Three small steps...

- **CHOOSE TO NOTICE** what happens when you get anxious, angry, or happy.
- **SHIFT** to gentle acceptance.
- **PRACTICE** daily tuning into what you are doing with your thinking.
(MBSR) Mindfulness Based Stress Management

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.
Medical and psychological research for 36 years

University of Massachusetts Medical School Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society

Systematic retraining: “Attention with intention”
— 8-week class
— 45 min/day: In-home practice with CDs
Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D. What is Mindfulness?

https://www.youtube.com/user/PsychAlive
Keys to learning about mindfulness – your role.

1. Experiencing new possibilities for responding to life
2. Discovering embodiment – connecting with body sensations
3. Cultivating observation - "Now I see, I am noticing...“
4. Moving toward acceptance - willing to see things as they are
5. Growing kindness & compassion - Removing rejection and judgement, so that natural kindness can shine through.

Mindfulness is...

• Paying attention
• On purpose
• In the present moment “Here and Now”
• With a nonjudgmental attitude

Mindful Breathing

*Follow your breath in and out
Mindful Awareness of Breathing

just breathe.
3 Minute Breathing Space
Breathing Mindfully

What do you think are the benefits of Mindful Breathing?

- Easy to notice
- Always with us — many opportunities throughout the day
- Returns us to the present moment — calms and settles the mind
- Relaxes the diaphragm and GI system
- Natural tranquilizer — reduces stress, anxiety, and depression
Mindfulness starts with noticing
How do you know when you are out of balance?

Stress Cues
Personal Stress Barometers = Signals to be mindful

- Body tension/pain
- Thoughts
- Feelings/moods
- Relationships
- Meaning of Life
- Behaviors
Risk Factors

- Lack of social support/isolation
- Negativity and pessimism
- Poor eating and sleeping habits
- Family demands and pressure
- High pressure work environment
- Financial strain
- Sense of time urgency “Type A”

Is Stress or Anger Risky?

Stress Less with Mindfulness WVU Extension Families and Health Programs
Family Stress Symptoms

* No time to relax
* Sense of guilt
* No time to find the root of the problem
* Conversations center on tasks and time rather than people and feelings
* Explosive arguments
* Little enjoyment from family life
Protective Factors

- Social support
  - Network of friends/family
- Optimistic stance toward life
- Healthy eating and sleeping habits
- Spirituality
- Adaptability
  - Able to manage change
- Curiosity/openness to experience
- Attitude of Gratitude
Mindfulness Promotes Resilience

* Reduce stress
* Increase life satisfaction
* Improve relationships with others
* Help gain mastery of your environment
* Help you deal with life's challenges more calmly and effectively
The Explosion of Mindfulness Research

- Self reported effects—well populations
- Clinical interventions with specific populations
- Neuroscience & Gene Studies
  - Changes in brain function
  - Changes in brain mass
  - Changes at the cellular level (DNA!)
Mental Health Benefits

• Decreased anxiety, depression, ADD, substance abuse, grief, and more
  It is now included as part of formal psychotherapy

• Improved quality of life while living with back pain, heart disease, and other chronic physical conditions

• Assisting in ways to help people find meaning and purpose in their jobs and lives

• Improved memory and concentration
Physical Health Findings

- Reduction in Chronic pain
- Diabetics: Better able to control blood glucose
- Better sleep
- Reduced cardiac risk factors, including lowered blood pressure and cholesterol
- Increased exercise
- Improved immunity, based on blood samples
Mindfulness activates the left side of the brain which inclines us toward positive emotions.

Thickened brain tissue (gray matter) improves problem-solving and emotional self-control.

Increased activity and brain tissue in areas involved in self-awareness and empathy for other people.
• Hypothalamus spectacularly important!
• Chronically elevated cortisol appears to kill brain cells.
• Chronic stress contributes to Alzheimer's.
• Leads to memory loss
• Stress is linked to cell damage.

www.topnews.in/health/scientists-reveal-clue-why-brain-cells-die-alzheimers-2986
How Vulnerable Are You?
What does your score mean?

0 - 10 indicates you have excellent resistance to the vulnerability of stress
11 - 29 little vulnerability to stress
30 - 49 some vulnerability to stress
50 - 74 serious vulnerability
75 - 80 extreme vulnerability

You can make yourself more stress resilient by improving your health behaviors, modifying your lifestyle, and building up your financial, social, personal, and spiritual resources for coping with stress.
Resiliency – the ability to bounce back from adversity.

“Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.”

-Dalai Lama
Mindfulness is...

- Paying attention
- On purpose
- In the present moment “Here and Now”
- With a nonjudgmental attitude

Using the body to settle the mind
• Lift your arms
• Reach For the sky
• Bloom Like a flower
• Make A circle
• Touch the sky, touch the ground
Can Any Movement be Mindful?
The Non-judgment of Mindfulness

- Paying attention to your experience in a gentle, kind way.
- Learning to view all your body, your thoughts, and your feelings with compassion and kindness.
- Extending thoughts of compassion toward others.
Just Breathe Video

http://yhoo.it/1OUWDT1
How do I practice at home?

- Audio Resources
- See the Resource Sheet
*Add a mindfulness bell to your computer, or an app on your cellphone or tablet.

* When it chimes, bring your attention to the present moment and to your breath moving in and out.

www.mindfulnessdc.org/mindfulclock.html

Insight Timer app
Mindfulness is . . .

- Open
- Receptive
- Curious
- Gentle
- Nurturing
Your Plan for More Mindfulness?

What is the most interesting thing you learned?

Which practice will you do in the coming week?
Thank you for attending.