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Practicing Presence

Integrating Mindfulness into Psychotherapy with Adults

Practicing Presence
Participating in Practice

• You are in charge of where you place your attention
• Disregard or adapt any instruction that isn’t appropriate for you in this moment
• It is always possible to redirect your attention to another point of focus: sounds, the breath, body sensations, another object in the room

Take care of yourself!
Objectives

You will learn about:

• Three elements of mindfulness in psychotherapy
• Using mindfulness to work with body sensations, states of mind, and feelings
• Adapting mindfulness practices to the needs of particular clients
What is “Mindfulness”?

Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude. It is a practice that can be incorporated into everyday activities, such as meditation and acceptance. Mindfulness is often associated with Buddhist traditions, but it can also be practiced in various ways, including as a component of therapy.
How Does Mindfulness Develop?

- Innate capacity that can emerge spontaneously
- Sustained mindfulness requires cultivation
- Through formal meditation or other contemplative practices
- And informal practices that gradually help us weave mindfulness into the fabric of our lives

Most common current practices:

- Concentration
- Open Awareness
- Loving Kindness or Compassion
Continuum of Mindfulness in Psychotherapy

Clinician’s own mindfulness practice
Clinician’s presence & use of awareness with client
Integrating insights from practice
Using brief practices for a specific purpose
Guiding mindfulness exploration in session

Clinician well-being
Client well-being

Fulton (2013)
Element I: Starting Where You Are; The Clinician’s Mindfulness Practice

Increase your well-being, self-regulation, and openness to experience.

Strengthen therapeutic skills and qualities to help you become more effective.

Positively impact client experience and outcome.

“My presence speaks volumes before I say a word”-Mos Def
Psychological Effects of Mindfulness

**Increased:**
- Attentiveness
- Self-awareness
- Affect tolerance
- Cognitive flexibility
- Openness
- Creativity
- Emotional Regulation

**Decreased:**
- Negative emotion
- Anxiety
- Rumination
- Impulsivity (easier to manage urges)
- Reactivity

(Baer, 2003; Davis, & Hayes, 2011; Eberth, & Sedlmeier, 2012; Shapiro, Brown, Astin, 2008; Walsh, & Shapiro, 2006)
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Element II: Insights from the Practice

• We receive many insights from our ongoing practice

• Insights move us beyond conceptualization into experience, integration, and ultimately wisdom.

• We can begin to draw on these insights to help guide clients towards deepening understanding and increased freedom from their own dilemmas.
Resistance increases suffering

- Identify resistance
- Explore with awareness
- Insight
- Reorganization
Element III: Direct Interventions

- Informed consent - Is the client interested?
- Risks/Benefits
  - Heightened sensations
  - Increased awareness
  - No guarantees
  - Change is unpredictable
- Using practices we know, and can easily adapt
Element III: Direct Interventions

Matching the practice to the client’s readiness:

Concrete → Abstract
Briefer → Extended
More Guidance → Less Guidance
Element III: Direct Interventions

Principles:

- Matching practices to the client’s needs
- How much interoception can the client tolerate?
- Testing it in session and debriefing
- Always providing options/choices

Choices:

- Objects of focus
- Moving vs sitting
- Formal vs informal
- Style of practice

Privileging care
Pause for Practice

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Take care of yourself!
Working with Anxiety

- Approach
- Explore
- Tolerate
- Act
- Learn
Summary

We have explored:

✓ Three elements of mindfulness in psychotherapy
✓ Using mindfulness to work with body sensations, states of mind, and feelings
✓ Adapting mindfulness practices to the needs of particular clients
Resources

Websites
- Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
  http://mbct.com/
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
  http://contextualscience.org/act
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
  http://behavioraltech.org/resources/whatisdbt.cfm
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
  http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/Stress-Reduction/
- Center for Mindful Eating
  http://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/
- Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention
  http://www.mindfulrp.com/
- Mindful Self-Compassion Training
  http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org/

Books
How to Obtain Your Continuing Education Contact Hour for this Webinar, cont.

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