Room to Breathe
Taking Mindfulness into the Classroom
Presented by Dianne Lemieux, Ph.D.
Introduction to Mindfulness
Definitions of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to what is happening inside and around us in the present moment.

Thict Nhat Hahn
Definitions of Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose non-judgmentally in the present moment.”

“Mindfulness meditation is a consciousness discipline revolving around a particular way of paying attention in one’s life. It can be most simply described as the intentional cultivation of nonjudgmental moment-to-moment awareness.”
Definitions of Mindfulness

**Innerkids**, a program designed to teach young children to learn basic mindfulness skills defines mindfulness as “Being aware of what is happening as it’s happening”

Components of Mindfulness

- Intentionality
- Present Centered Awareness
- Acceptance/Nonjudgment
Forms of Meditation Practice

- Concentration Practices use one-pointed focus on a single object (breath, sound, mantra, word, image) to calm and stabilize the mind. “Aim and sustain.”

- Mindfulness or awareness practices cultivate an open awareness on what is happening as it is happening without judgment. Also sometimes referred to as insight meditation.
Mindfulness Practice is Not

- Trying to have a blank mind
- Trying to achieve a special state of mind or trance state
- Avoiding difficulties
- Escaping physical pain
- Pushing away thoughts or emotions
- Bypassing our personality problems
- Withdrawing from other people
- A relaxation technique
- A religion
Types of Practice

Formal

Informal
Formal Practice
Examples of Formal Practice

- Sitting meditation
- Standing meditation
- Body Scan
- Walking Meditation
- Loving-Kindness/Compassion Practices
- Contemplative Prayer
- Yoga
- Taiji
- Qigong
Informal Practice
Examples of Informal Practice

- Washing your hair
- Brushing your teeth
- Shaving
- Taking a shower
- Eating
- Walking from your house to the car
- Driving
- Petting the dog
- Washing the dishes (any chore)
Applications for Mindfulness

- Health/Mental Health
- Business
- Education
- Military
- Politics
- Prison System
- Sports
Mindfulness and Education
Planting the Seeds

Cherry Hamrick—Welby Elementary School in South Jordan, Utah in the early 1990’s following MBSR training at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City

Susan Kaiser-Greenland—attorney turned mindfulness educator following a family health crisis -- introducing mindfulness to children in the late 90’s in California
Indirect vs. Direct Approaches for Integrating Mindfulness in K-12 Education
Indirect Approaches for Integrating Mindfulness in K-12 Education

We ask an awful lot of teachers these days...Beyond just conveying the course material, teachers are supposed to provide a nurturing learning environment, be responsive to students, parents and colleagues, juggle the demands of standardized testing, coach students through conflicts with peers, be exemplars of emotion regulation, handle disruptive behavior and generally be great role models;...the problem is we rarely give teachers training or resources for any of them. (p. 1)

Jennings (2009)
Mindfulness Based Training Programs for Teachers

- Mindfulness Based Wellness Education (MBWE)—Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto—Developed by Poulin et al. in 2005 to address increasing rates of teacher stress and burnout.

- Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)—offered by the Garrison Institute in New York

- Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in Education—Developed by Cullen through the sponsorship of the IMPACY Foundation and currently being piloted in Vancouver and Colorado.
Direct Approaches for Integrating Mindfulness in K-12 Education

- Inner Kids Program—www.susankaisergreenland.com
- Inner Resilience Program—www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org
- Learning to Breathe—http://learning2breathe.org
- Mindfulness in Schools Project—www.mindfulnessinschools.org—England
- Mindful Schools—www.mindfulschools.org
- MindUP—www.thehawnfoundation.org
- Sfat Hakeshev (The Mindful Language)—Israel
- Still Quiet Place—www.stillquietplace.com/
- Stressed Teens—www.stressedteens.com
- Wake Up Schools: Cultivating Mindfulness in Education (Elli Weisbaum) — elli@wakeupschools.org
- Wellness Works in Schools—www.wellnessworksinschools.com
Programs for Models of Mindful Educational Community Building

• **South Burlington Vermont School System** (manual in press at this time)

• **Wake Up Schools** -- an initiative to provide mindfulness training to teachers, administrators, students, and parents in order to “create sustainable and lasting programs in schools that (promote) social emotional learning, moral/ethical education, experiential learning, stress reduction, and inner resilience... In doing this the classroom and school become a family, enabling participants to lead happy, healthy, and meaningful lives.”
Research in Education
Some of the Beneficial Affects of Mindfulness Training on Adults

- Reduces stress, anxiety and depression
- Enhances neuroendocrine and immune function
- Improves adherence to medical treatments
- Alters perception of pain
- Increases motivation to make positive lifestyle changes
- Fosters social connection, communication and compassion for self and others
Middle Prefrontal Cortex Functions Enhanced by Secure Attachment and Mindfulness Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Mindfulness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of the Body</td>
<td>Regulation of the Body</td>
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<td>Attuned Communication</td>
<td>Attuned Communication</td>
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<td>Emotional Balance</td>
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<td>Response Flexibility</td>
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<td>Insight</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
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<td>Fear Regulation</td>
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Summary of Some of the Ways Meditation Changes the Brain

- Thickens some of the prefrontal cortical areas that help control attention.
- Thickens the insula which is involved with interoception, self awareness and empathy.
- Less cortical thinning of the prefrontal cortex and insula with aging.
- Increases grey matter density in the hippocampus which assists in providing a context for memory (explicit memory) and inhibits the amygdala.
- Increases activation in the left prefrontal cortex which lifts mood.
- Increases gamma-range brain wave activity and integration of neural networks.
- Increases overall brain connectivity.

Hanson, R. (2011)
Benefits for Teachers
Indirect Training Approaches

Preliminary Findings

• Increase teachers’ sense of well-being
• Increase teachers’ sense of self-efficacy
• Increase the ability of teachers to manage classroom behavior
• Increase teachers’ ability to maintain supportive relationships with students
Benefits for Students
Direct Training Approaches--Research Findings for Elementary and High School Students (14 studies)

- Improvements in working memory, attention, academic skills, social skills, emotional regulation and self-esteem
- Self-reported improvements in mood
- Decreases in anxiety, stress, and fatigue
Room to Breathe
Discussion/Questions
“You cannot transmit wisdom and insight to another person. The seed is already there. A good teacher touches the seed, allowing it to wake up, to sprout, and to grow.” — Thich Nhat Hanh
Resources

• References
• Programs/Training
• Training Manuals/CDs
• Additional Websites
References


• (2011). A. Johnson & M. Neagley (Eds.), *Educating from the heart: Theoretical and practical approaches to transforming education*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Education.

References


# Programs/Training

## Direct
- Inner Kids Program—www.susankaisergreenland.com
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- Sfat Hakeshev (The Mindful Language)--Israel
- Still Quiet Place—www.stillquietplace.com/
- Stressed Teens—www.stressedteens.com
- Wellness Works in Schools—www.wellnessworksinschools.com

## Indirect
- Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in Education—http://smart-in.org
Training Manuals


Guided Meditations for Adults

- Ferris Urbanowski Buck: www.ferrisurb.org
- Jon Kabat-Zinn: www.mindfulness tapes.com
- Elana Rosenbaum: www.mindfulliving.com
- Sharon Salzburg: www.sharonsalzberg.com
- Saki Santorelli: Guest –House Tapes, P.O. Box 1050 Belchertown, MA 01007
- Mark Williams: Mindfulness: An Eight Week Program for Finding Peace in a Frantic World (contains a website to down load all meditations)
- Susan Woods: www.slwoods.com
Guided Meditations for Children

*Still Quiet Place: Mindfulness for Teens*
Saltzman, Amy M.D.; Audio CD

*Still Quiet Place: Mindfulness for Young Children*
Saltzman, Amy M.D.; Audio CD
Books for Children

*Moody Cow Meditates*
MacLean, Kerry Lee; Hardcover

*Peaceful Piggy Meditation* (Albert Whitman Prairie Books)
Maclean, Kerry Lee; Paperback

*Peaceful Piggy Yoga*
Maclean, Kerry Lee; Paperback

*An Orange for You: A Child's Book of Awareness*
McGinnis, Mark W.; Paperback

*A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles*
Nhat Hanh, Thich; Spiral-bound

*Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children*
Thich Nhat Hanh; Paperback
Additional Websites

• Association for Mindfulness in Education: www.mindfuleducation.org

• The Aware Teacher: Bringing Reflection and Mindfulness to Our Schools: http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/schools.aspx

• CASEL: Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (Linda Lantieri, MA): www.casel.org

Additional Websites

- Contemplative Studies Initiative (Hal Roth, Ph.D.): www.brown.edu/Faculty/Contemplative/_Studies_Initiative


- Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence (Daniel Goleman, Ph.D.): www.danielgoleman.info

- Social and Emotional Learning: www.edutopia.org
Happy teachers will change the world.