







Mindfulness is not...

- Just a relaxation technique
- Going into a trance
- A mysterious practice which cannot be understood
- A means of becoming a psychic superman!
- Dangerous and to be avoided!
- Just for saints, gurus or holy people
- Running away from reality

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Mindfulness is not...

- A great way to “get high”
- Selfish
- Sitting around having lofty thoughts
- Something you do for a couple of weeks and then all your problems go away

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Mindfulness is...

- Active awareness of the present moment
- Not judging your experience – actively accepting in the moment no matter what
- Not getting caught up in automatic reactions, thoughts, feelings, sensations but simply noticing and being aware of them
- Catching yourself when you are not being aware and gently bringing yourself back to the present moment

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Mindfulness is...

- An effective way to handle distress – both physical and emotional
- A way of improving performance on well learned activities
- Related to some things you may already do naturally
- A way of more fully experiencing those things that might otherwise slip by you

Mindfulness is...

- Universal and cross-cultural
- A practice that is really, really old!
- Not easy – takes a lot of practice

How to achieve
mindfulness more
often than not?

Mindfulness meditation

Meaningful pauses

Moment to moment awareness

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Cultivating mindfulness:
Meditation

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Mindfulness Meditation

- For cultivating moment to moment mindfulness practice
- Daily practice
- Start with shorter durations (5-10 minutes) and work up to longer durations (45 minutes to an hour)
- Guided meditation practice
- Classes
- Be creative!

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Meaningful Pauses

Meaningful Pauses

- To learn to practice mindfulness throughout the day
- Scheduled or cue-based
- Short pause from what you are doing
- Focus on breath, soles of the feet, counting, etc... but doing so mindfully
- Go about your business with awareness

Moment to moment awareness

Moment to moment awareness

- The ultimate goal
- Anything can be done mindfully – your LIFE can be lived mindfully
- Takes LOTS of practice
- You will never do this perfectly – people spend their entire lives practicing

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Obstacles to becoming aware

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I don't WANT to accept everything!
Some things are simply unacceptable!

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It is too difficult and I don't have the time!

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I keep getting distracted!

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It's too boring – nothing is happening!

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I don't like what goes through my mind!

I keep falling asleep when I meditate!

Demonstration

WELCOME



Ron Richer BSW RSW

Developmental Clinical Services
Sudbury Regional Hospital

ronricher@hrsrh.on.ca

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What's to Learn?

- My mindfulness journey
- Mindful group work
- Mindful practice at work
 - Patty

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My Mindfulness Journey

- Martial Arts
- Social Work
 - New client Patty
 - Support staff training
- Awareness group (anger treatment)
- Dawn (agency training)

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Awareness Group – Year 1

- Anger treatment
- 6 participants
- 1 moderate, 5 high functioning individuals
- 22 weeks
- From week 4
- Relaxation
- Deep breathing
- Good outcomes

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Awareness Group – Year 2

- Anger treatment
- 6 Clients and 2 caregivers
- 1 moderate, 5 high functioning
- 22 weeks
- From week 4
- Relaxation script (guided imagery)
- Relaxation music (CDs provided)
- Deep breathing
- Mindfulness procedure – Meditation on the Soles of the Feet
- Very good outcomes
 - 2 clients use Soles of the Feet and or relaxation out of group

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Mindful Practice at Work



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Case Study: Patty

- 39-year-old woman
- Aboriginal
- Intellectual Disability
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Self harmer (cutting/overdosing)
- Aggressive towards others
- Difficulty moderating emotions
- Difficulty trusting
- Abandonment issues
- Poor relationship with mother
- Afraid of other family members
- Witnessed father's suicide
- No friends or other natural connections
- Religious
- Very shy in new situations
- Pharmaceutical narcotic addict
- Developmental Disability
- Fibromyalgia
- Pseudo seizures

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Patty

- Patty has a very long history of mental illness, resulting in multiple long term hospitalizations in both acute and tertiary care centers.
- Patty has also experienced multiple incarcerations spanning her lifetime.
- In January 2009 after spending 18 months in an acute care mental health facility in Sudbury, it was determined that she should be discharged as there was no medical need for her to occupy a mental health bed.

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What does that look like?

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- Staff observing a behaviour, would then "label it" as...



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What goes around comes around...

- If staff perceived that Patty was behaving a certain way, staff would treat her in accordance with how staff interpret Patty's actions and behaviours.
- Without realizing they were the cause, the manner in which staff treated Patty often resulted in activating the triggers for Patty's next set of behaviours.



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- Patty comes to you, at a busy time in the home, and asks for time to talk with you...



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Staff Response

- "I'm too busy. Come back later."



- Patty interprets this to mean you don't like her.
- Patty would then ruminate on how much the staff hate her....

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- 5 minutes later Patty is back... "How about now?"

- "NO, not now. Later."



- This only fuels Patty's rumination.
- Patty responds by getting allies to confront this staff behaviour.
- "So-and-so hates me. Why does she hate me? Will you help me and ask her why she hates me?...." Patty is fearful of asking due to possible reprisals...

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5 minutes later they are back again....and again, and again...until....



- Patty goes into crisis, and it requires 3 staff to help calm her
- 1 and ½ hours
- A call to the police
- A trip to the hospital....

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Mindful Way (Response)

- **STOP!**
- Acknowledge and greet Patty, making eye contact, making Patty feel validated.



PAYING ATTENTION

- in a particular way;
- on purpose; and
- in the present moment

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Mindful Way: Think twice

- Say: "I am busy now, but I would be happy to talk with you in 15 minutes."
- Emphasize the "I WILL BE HAPPY" to talk in 15 minutes part of the sentence...



NON-JUDGEMENTALLY

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Mindful Way: Choose

- "I will be done in 15 minutes, can you come and get me." (giving her a task)
- Patty then ruminates on the time and not on the "you don't like me thoughts" or other negative thoughts...



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Mindful Way: Action

- Make sure you are there at agreed upon time. It is okay to put a time limit on your talk, but mention it at the beginning – “I only have 5 minutes then I have to go. Please tell me what you want to talk about.”



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Mindful Way

- Process: Paying attention, In a particular way, On purpose, In the present moment, Non-judgementally
- Stop – Acknowledge, Validate, Listen (Being & Doing)
- Think twice – Acceptance, Facts (Being)
- Choose – Options, Plan, Set limits (Doing)
- Action – Answer need, Be consistent (Being & Doing)

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The Secret of Mindfulness Practice at work

- Is to remember to be Mindful, to remember to breathe.
- Mindfulness means paying attention to things as they actually are in any given moment. (Williams et al 2007)

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Thank-you for attending



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- Sanderson, Cindy (2007). *Mindfulness for Clients, their Friends, and Family Members*. http://behavioraltech.org/downloads/Mindfulness_for_clients_and_family_members.pdf
- Hick (2009) *Mindfulness and Social Work*
- Williams et al. (2007) *The Mindful Way through Depression*

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References

- Singh et al. (2008). A mindfulness-based health wellness program for an adolescent with prader-willi syndrome. *Behavior Modification*. Vol. 32 (2)

Mindful Data Collection

- If one is being mindful more often than not, one is more aware
- When at work, one is at work
- Observing and non-judgmental awareness of people's behaviour
- Seeing what happens before, during and after when people you support are having problems
- Recording these mindful observations = excellent behavioural data!

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In Closing

- Mindfulness practice improves health and well-being and increases resilience
- Caregivers practicing mindfulness results in fewer behaviour challenges
- Helping people with mild or moderate ID learn mindfulness techniques can reduce challenging behaviour
- It takes lots of practice!

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Mindfulness Resources

Jon Kabat-Zinn

- *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* (Hyperion, 2005)
- *Calming Your Anxious Mind: How Mindfulness and Compassion Can Free You from Anxiety, Fear, and Panic.* Jeffrey Brantley, Jon Kabat-Zinn (Foreword) (New Harbinger Publications, 2003)
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* (Hyperion, 1995)
- *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness* (Delta, 1990)

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Mindfulness Resources

- Henepola Gunaratana: Mindfulness in Plain English
http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/mindfulness_in_plain_english.pdf
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- Audio Dharma
<http://www.audiodharma.org/index.html> - A great online resource for mindfulness exercises and information
