

Why Mindfulness Matters... And How to Introduce it to Teens

Danella Hafeman, M.D. Ph.D.



Outline

- ▶ What is mindfulness?
- ▶ Science vs. Hype: What is the evidence?
- ▶ How do we engage children and adolescents in mindfulness activities?

What is mindfulness?

“Paying attention in the present moment...”

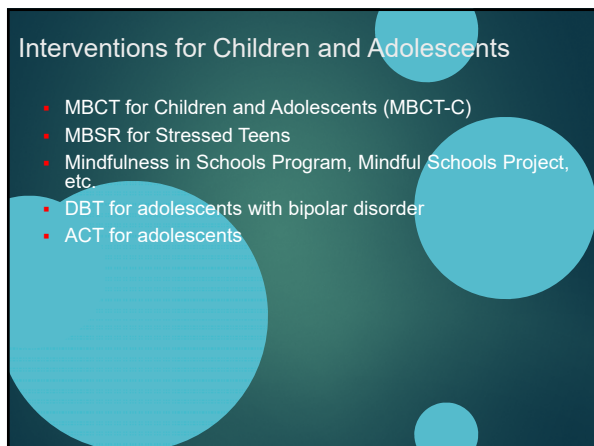
“... on purpose...”

“... in a non-judgmental way.”

(Kabat-Zinn, 1997)

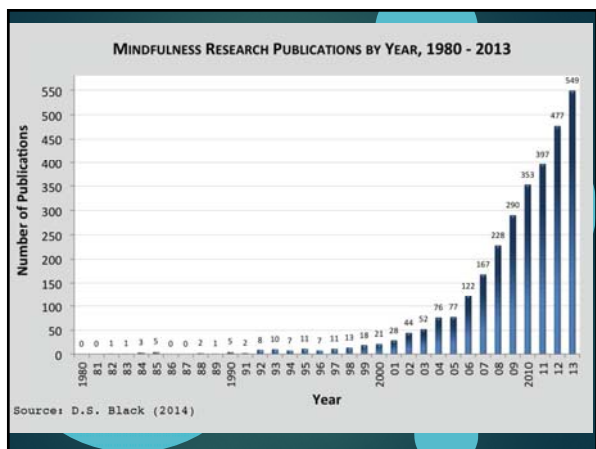


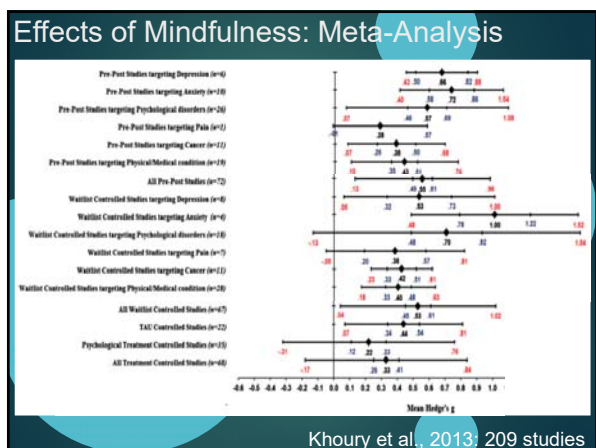




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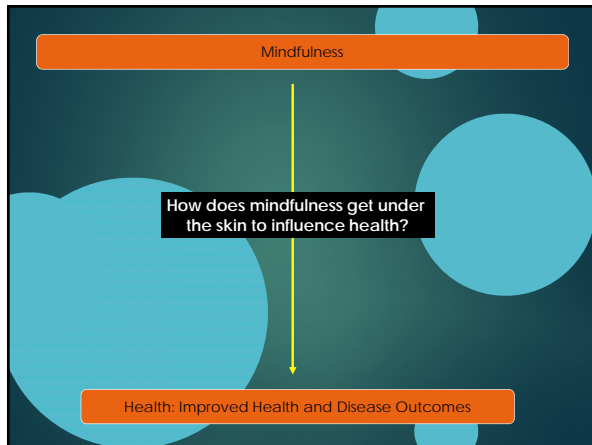
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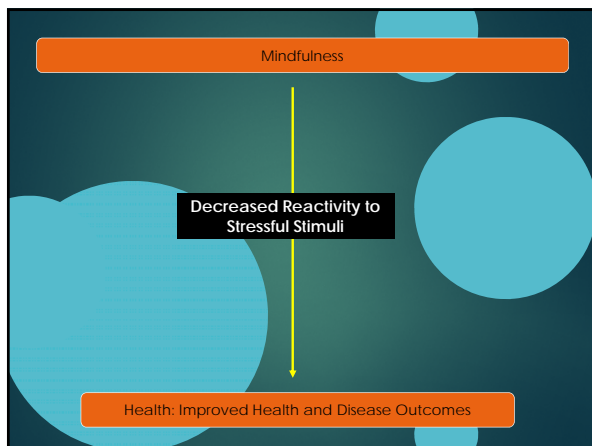




Mindfulness Training RCTs for Health


- ▶ **HIV/AIDS:** mindfulness training slows HIV-progression in stressed HIV+ adults (Creaswell et al., 2009; Seyed Alinaghi et al., 2012)
- ▶ **Depression:** reduces depression relapse in at-risk individuals (Treadwell et al., 2000; Segal et al., 2010)
- ▶ **Stress in Youth:** reduces anxiety, emotional lability, depression, and PTSD symptoms in children and adolescents (Biegel et al., 2009; Semple et al., 2010; Sibinga et al., 2015)
- ▶ **Drug Abuse:** reduces drug relapse and heavy drinking in substance abusing individuals at 12-month follow-up (Bowen et al., 2014)
- ▶ **Medical Symptoms:** accelerates skin clearing in psoriasis patients (Mabat-Zinn et al., 1998)





The Mindfulness Stress Buffering Hypothesis

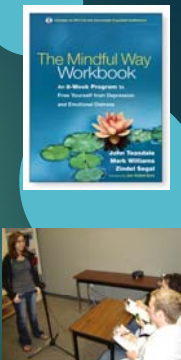
- * Mindfulness skills (attention + acceptance) are critical components for **stress regulation** and **resilience**
- * Effects will be observed in **high-stress populations** for which stress is known to affect the onset or exacerbation of disease-pathogenic processes



(Creswell & Lindsay, 2014)

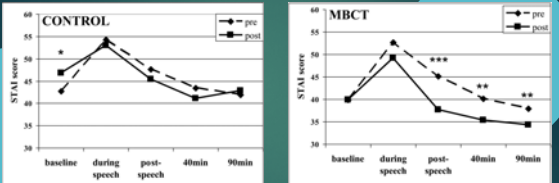
MBCT and Stress Reactivity

- N=52 adults with partially-remitted depression
- Randomized to 8-week MBCT course vs. wait-list control
- Pre- and post-intervention: Trier Social Stress Test (TSST)



(Britton et al., 2012)

Stress Reactivity After MBCT vs. Control



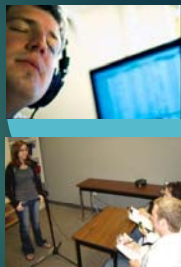
(Britton et al., 2012)

Time Point	pre (dashed line)	post (solid line)
baseline	~45	~48
during speech	~55	~52
post-speech	~48	~45
40min	~42	~40
90min	~42	~40

Time Point	pre (dashed line)	post (solid line)
baseline	~40	~42
during speech	~50	~48
post-speech	~45	~38
40min	~40	~35
90min	~38	~35

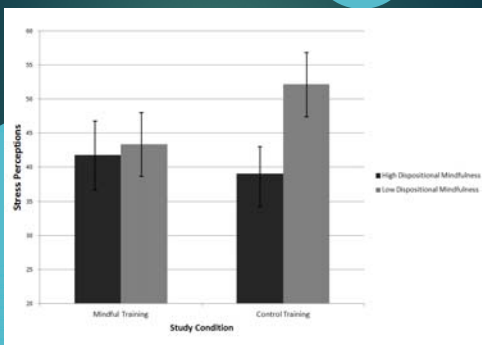
Similar results after a 3-Day Laboratory Mindfulness Training

- N=66 Attention Training with CMU undergraduates
- 3 consecutive days of guided 25-minute mindfulness meditation vs. analytic (poetry) attention training
 - Participants were similarly engaged in training tasks
- Day 3, participants complete Trier Social Stress Test (TSST)



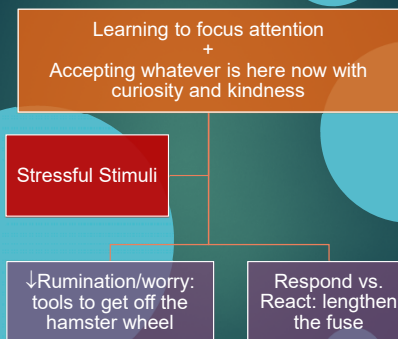
(Creswell et al., 2014)

Mindfulness training and dispositional mindfulness buffers psychological stress reactivity



(Creswell et al., 2014)

How does this help?



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How to Adapt for Kids/Teens

- ▶ Make it relevant
- ▶ Making it Concrete
- ▶ Shorter Practices with Catchy Names
- ▶ Practical Exercises to use when Stressed
- ▶ Engaging the Senses
- ▶ Choose your own adventure

Making it Relevant

- ▶ What are they struggling with most?
 - ▶ True with adults too... but with kids, need to sell it a bit more
- ▶ Use video clips to illustrate



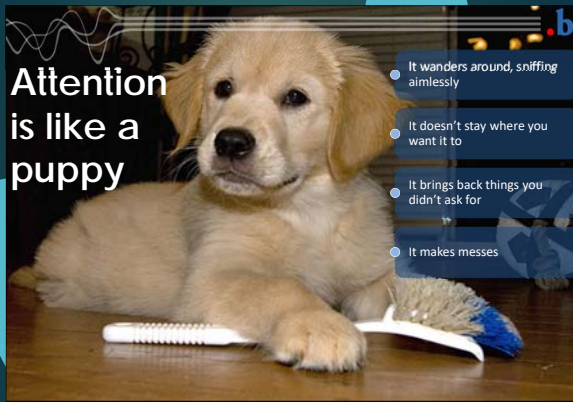




Making it Concrete

- ▶ CLAP 1-2-3
- ▶ Spotlight of attention
- ▶ Puppy Mind
- ▶ Finger breathing
- ▶ Rumination

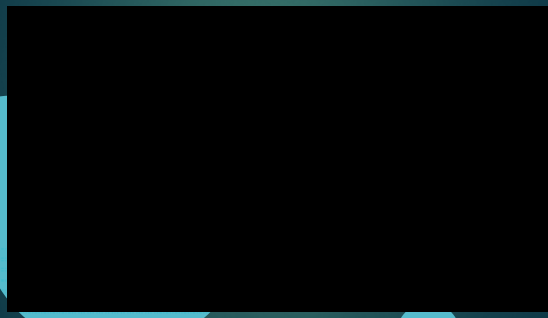
Attention is like a puppy



- It wanders around, sniffing aimlessly
- It doesn't stay where you want it to
- It brings back things you didn't ask for
- It makes messes

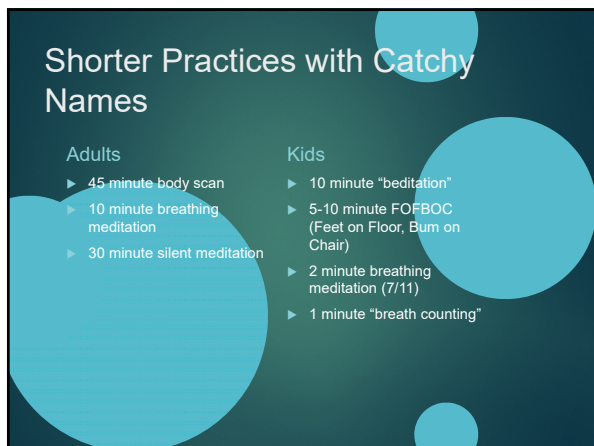
Mindfulness in Schools Project, .b

Puppy Mind









Practical exercises for stress

- ▶ .b
- ▶ FOFBOC
- ▶ 7/11

.b

Stop

Feel your feet

Feel your breathing

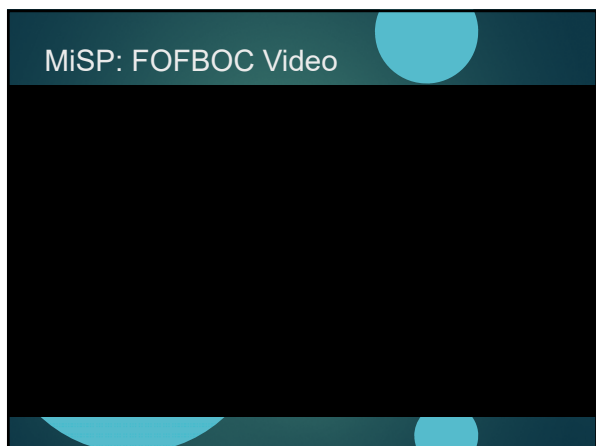
Be

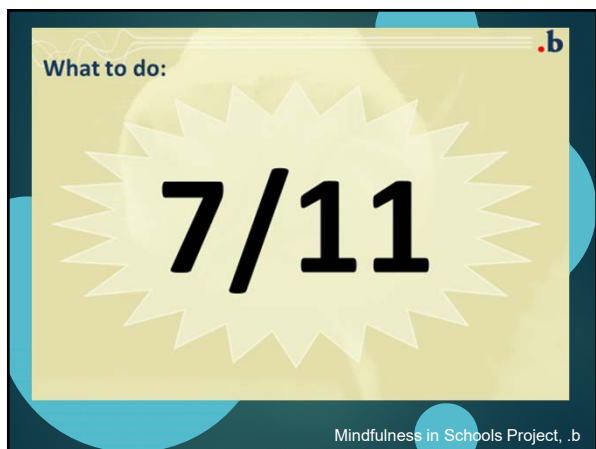
Mindfulness in Schools Project, .b

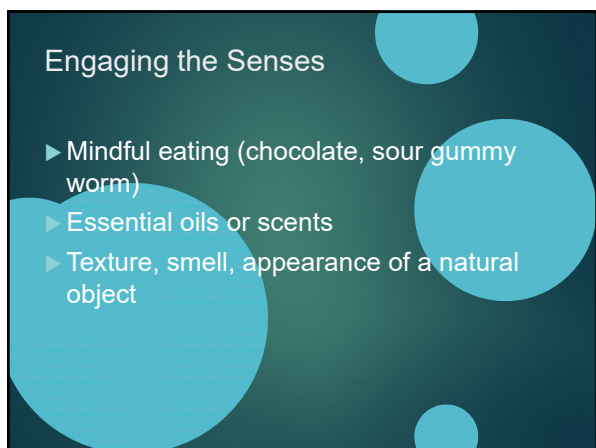
FOFBOC

Feet on Floor, Bum on Chair

Mindfulness in Schools Project, .b







As important as the actual practice...

- ▶ Reflection: Encouraging noticing
- ▶ No right or wrong answers
- ▶ Separating out raw experience from judgement
- ▶ Not judging the judgement

How to adapt this practically

- ▶ Refer patients to a mindfulness group
- ▶ Use brief grounding exercises (e.g. FOFBOC, .b)
- ▶ Refer patients to “beditation” recording for difficulty sleeping
- ▶ Use it yourself: e.g. before/during a difficult clinical encounter, etc.

Take-home Messages

- ▶ Mindfulness is simply being present with whatever is happening now
- ▶ Practicing mindfulness can improve response to stressful situations
- ▶ With adaptations, mindfulness can be accessible and useful to teens

Acknowledgements

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