

Slide 1

MINDFULNESS



Slide 2

What is it?

- It is a type of meditation
- Traditional meditation requires that you try to rid your mind of thoughts
- However, unlike traditional meditation – instead of quieting the mind – mindfulness asks that you focus on something specific in the present
- It finds its roots in Buddhism, Taoism and Native American traditions



Slide 3

Benefits of Mindfulness

- Physical Benefits: lowers heart rate and blood pressure, reduces chronic pain, improves sleep and can improve intestinal issues
- Mental Health: Can help with depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, relationship conflicts, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders
- It is believed that mindfulness is helping people to accept their experiences—including painful emotions—rather than react to them with aversion and avoidance.



Slide 4

Mindfulness

- Living in the moment – lowers stress levels
- Stress is most often a product of worrying about what you cannot control –
- In particular – the future and the past
- Focusing on the present prevents worrying
- It also provides an opportunity to see things in a new perspective – you will take things less for granted



Slide 5

Living in the moment

- It is a paradox
- It does not involve the pursuit of benefits – as that requires thoughts of the future (rewards are a future event)
- The paradox is this – During mindfulness, you let go of what you want as a means of getting what you want
- You need to trust that it will come as you focus on the present
- Here are few steps to help



Slide 6

1. To improve how you perform – don't think about – the best dancers, for example just let go
- Thinking too hard about what you do causes you to do worse
2. Stop worrying about the future – work in the present and experience life now and enjoy it – learn to savour
3. If you want a future with someone – focus on living in the present. One study showed that by doing mindfulness exercises of focusing on the present made people less aggressive towards others when upset



Slide 7

- 4. To make the most of time – lose track of it - in other words being so engrossed in a task that you are totally absorbed – this is known as creating flow
- You can't force flow (like sleep)but you can set the stage for it to occur
- You do this by setting a goal that is challenging but not unattainable so you can fire on all cylinders
- There also needs to be immediate feedback as to whether you are going in the right direction so you can make corrections as you go



Slide 8

- 5.If something is bothering you, move towards it – do not avoid it.
- Avoiding the pain only makes it worse – we have primary emotions and secondary ones – you stress about the bad feelings you have and fight trying to have them which creates more stress.
- Instead – acknowledging the feelings and realizing they are normal reduces the effect they can have



Slide 9

6. Know that you do not know – have you even been lost in your thoughts that you cannot remember what just happened in the present – this is known as mindlessness
- Once we think we know something – we stop paying attention to it (like our drive home)
 - We should be looking at everything with fresh eyes – living in the present allows for this
 - Try this the next time you leave the house – look at everything around you – you will see it is different each time – it will be a new adventure



Slide 10

Mindfulness

- This must be practiced and there are courses that can teach this
- The practice will take time
- It does not mean you do not make plans – it just means that you make your plans but stay focused on one task at a time
- It takes time to develop the skill but it is worth the effort and it will lower stress levels
- It allows you to be you

"Today you are you,
that is truer than true.
There is no one alive who
is youer than you."
- Dr. Seuss

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