Mindfulness for Personal and Professional Resiliency
Canadian Forces Social Worker Training Day
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Intentions

• What do you experience as stressful in your work?
• How are you currently managing this?
• How would you like to be managing?
• What do you hope to get out of today?
Objectives

- To enhance personal and professional resilience of social workers in the Canadian Forces
- To learn the assumptions and principles of mindfulness
- To learn basic mindfulness practices and their relationship to stress
- To learn introductory clinical applications
Therapeutic Mindfulness

treatment modality

way to enhance helping/therapeutic relationships

mode of self care personal mindfulness practice
Experiential Learning
Large Group Exercise:
What is stress?

• When you think of workplace stress what comes to mind?
• How do you know when you are stressed?
• When you are stressed what kinds of thoughts do you have? What kinds of emotions do you have? What body sensations do you experience?
Web of Reactivity

Thoughts (cognitions, images, memories)

Emotions (moods, feelings)

Body Sensations

Behaviors (actions, interactions, impulses)
What is stress?

**Stressor**
Any external condition that arouses the adaptation response. The condition is neither necessarily negative nor positive.

**Stress**
The non-specific adaptation *response of the body to any demand or problem* (Selye, H).

**Alternative Definition**
The confusion created when one’s mind overrides the body’s basic desire to choke the living daylights out of somebody who desperately needs it!
What is burnout?

• Emotional exhaustion
  – Emotionally overextended and exhausted by work

• Depersonalization
  – Negative, cynical attitude, treating others as objects

• Sense of low personal accomplishment
  – Feelings of incompetence, inefficiency & inadequacy

• “Learned helplessness” and “chronic bitterness”

• May affect both work and personal life

Could this be analogous to Operational Stress Injury (OSI) in your clients?
Consequences of stress & burnout

**Personal**
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Marital/family stress
- Substance abuse
- Auto-accidents

**Professional**
- Increased sick leave and disability
- Dissatisfaction with job and work-life balance
- Poor communication with clients
- Compassion fatigue
- Impaired decision making
- Poorer outcomes
- Decreased client satisfaction

Social Worker Stress & Burnout

- 47% experience high levels of stress (Evans et al, 2006)
- 39% report current and 75% past burnout (King et al, 2002)
- 2 X the level as psychiatrists or psychologists (Snibbe et al, 1989; Evans et al, 2006)
- Sources of stress: role conflict & ambiguity and statutory responsibilities (Coyle et al, 2005)
- Burnout related to workload, feeling undervalued, limited decision making, lack of social support & conflict (Evans et al, 2006; Coyle et al, 2005)
Sources of Workplace Stress

- High Effort/Low Reward
- High Demand/Low Control

Factors:
- Job Specific
- Role in Organization
- Career Development
- Work Relationships
- Work Life Balance
- Organizational Structure/Climate

Stress Management

Adapted from: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2012 & The Siegrist Model, 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Change</strong></th>
<th><strong>Transition</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Event</td>
<td>Internal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Psychological response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Clear in retrospect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Begins with an ending</td>
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<td>Ends with a beginning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Involves turmoil</td>
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Stress: Change vs. Transition

- Stress occurs with external events.
- Stress is situational.
- Stress involves turmoil.
- Stress begins with an ending and ends with a beginning.
- Stress is quick in onset.
- Stress is clear in retrospect.
- Stress involves internal psychological responses.
- Stress is internal.

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*The Centre for Mindfulness Studies*
Stages of Transition

1. Old familiar
2. Endings
3. Chaos, Neutral Zone
4. Turning Point
5. Beginnings
6. New familiar

Adapted from William Bridges
Stress Management Goals

- Enhance behavioural management
  - Develop a plan
- Increase understanding
  - Lessen impact by reducing reactivity
  - Shift perceptions that enhance stress
- Increase internal/external coping resources
  behavioural/emotional/cognitive/physiological
Take a Breath
Large Group Exercise: What is mindfulness?

• When you think of mindfulness what comes to mind?
What is mindfulness?

- The awareness that emerges from “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally,”
  - Jon Kabat-Zinn, 1990
  - Zindel Segal et al, 2012
Raisin Awareness
Raisin Awareness – key points

• Training attention: focus/concentration
• Uses familiar external object
• Beginning practice: moving attention
• Training and enhancing sense awareness
• Coming out of automaticity to interrupt spirals of negative/anxious thinking
• Introduces concept of mindful eating
Break
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

INTENTION

ATTITUDE

ATTENTION

AWARENESS

PRACTICE

CHANGING RELATIONSHIP TO EXPERIENCE: turning toward the difficult

SKILLS & SHIFTS

Adapted from S. Shapiro et al, *J Clin Psych* 2006
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

INTENTION

• To attend to present moment experience, even if it is difficult
• NOT to fix or achieve any special state of relaxation, transcendence or transformation

ATTITUDES

• Beginner’s Mind
• Patience
• Trust
• Non-Striving
• Self Compassion
• Non-Judgement
• Acceptance
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

ATTENTION

- Sustained focus/concentration on body/mind (sensation, thoughts and objects of attention)
- Holding, releasing & shifting attention
- Dealing with distractions/obstacles
- Open and receptive attention
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

AWARENESS

• Parsing of body sensation, emotions, thoughts and behaviors
• Awareness of how mental proliferation perpetuates negative mood states
• Observational Stance (decentering, meta-awareness, receptive, observational ego)
• Awareness of impermanence of all phenomenon
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

CHANGING RELATIONSHIP TO EXPERIENCE

• Turning towards the difficult
• Acknowledgement ➔ Acclimatization ➔ Acceptance

• Acceptance of experience without needing it to be different and determining whether it needs to be addressed
Mechanisms of Mindfulness

SKILLS/SHIFTS

• ↑ emotional regulation
• ↑ tolerance for difficult mood states
• ↓ Avoidance
• ↓ cognitive elaboration
• ↓ negative self-evaluation
• Equanimity (suspension of judging experience as intrinsically good or bad)
• Empathy & compassion
• Moving from behavioral reactivity to skillful response
History of “therapeutic” mindfulness

- Meditation in Vipassana and other Buddhist Traditions
- MBSR
  - Jon Kabat-Zinn, University of Massachusetts
- MBCT
  - Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale, Toronto and UK
- Mindfulness in Psychotherapy
  - Mark Epstein, Stephen Hayes (ACT), Marsha Linehan (DBT), Ron Siegal, Tara Brach
- Mindfulness Based Clinical Care
  - Mick Krasner & Ron Epstein, University of Rochester
  - Tom Hutchinson & Patricia Dobkin, McGill
- Compassion Research
  - Chris Germer, Kristen Neff
- Neuroscience
  - Richie Davison, Norm Farb, Dan Siegal, Rick Hansen
Some Mindfulness Based Therapies & Other Applications

- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP)
- Recollective Awareness Therapy
- Mindfulness Based Pain Management
- Mindfulness Based Eating (MBEat)
- Mindful Attention for ADHD
- Mindful Parenting
- Mindfulness in Schools
- Mindfulness in the Workplace
- Organizational Mindfulness
- Mindfulness Based Medical Practice
- Mindful Conflict Resolution
The Science of Mindfulness

• Clinical Trial Research in different clinical populations (Mindfulness Based Therapy: a comprehensive meta-analysis. Khoury et al, 2013)

• Brain changes (Minding one's emotions: Mindfulness training alters neural expression of sadness. Farb et al, 2010)

• Altered Behavioral Traits (The Mindful Brain and Emotion Regulation. Farb et al, 2012)

• Immune and endocrine changes (Psychological, immune, endocrine and BP outcomes of MBSR in breast and prostate cancer outpatients. Carlson et al, 2007)

• Gene expression (Rapid changes in histone deacetylases and inflammatory gene expression in expert meditators. Kaliman et al, 2014)
Mindfulness for Stress & Burnout among Health Care Professionals

• 40 HCWs (including SWs) randomized to 8 wk MBSR or waitlist control. MBSR group: significant decreases in perceived stress, & ↑ in life satisfaction & self-compassion. (Shapiro et al 2005)

• 70 GPs in a mindfulness communication 8 week program had ↑, empathy and personality factors, ↓ in burnout. (Krasner et al, 2009)

• Review of empirical studies evaluating MBSR in HCWs concluded promising results although methodological issues remain. (Irving et al, 2009)

• Non-randomized study of 93 HCWs (including SWs) receiving 8 week mindfulness program had ↑mental well being and ↓ burnout (Goodman & Schorling, 2012)
Military Mindfulness: OSI

- Studies of yoga, TM and relaxation techniques in soldiers & veterans (eg Rees, 2011 & Libby et al, 2012)
- Mindfulness interventions studied in non-combat related PTSD (Smith et al, 2011)
- RCT of MBCT for PTSD in US Veterans (King et al, 2013)
- RCT of MBSR for PTSD in US Veterans (Kearny et al 2013)
- Non randomized study of MBSR in Iranian Veterans with PTSD (Omidi et al, 2013)
- Non randomized study of 6 week M-Vet program (Carlson et al, 2013)
- US Army Mind-Fitness Program (Stanley et al, 2011)
Clinical Contraindications & Considerations

Relative Contraindications

• Active Psychosis
• Active Substance Use
• Untreated trauma
• Inability to manage affect
• Severe depression or anxiety
• Depersonalization
• Derealization

Considerations

• Screening
• Preparation
• Referral, crisis back-up and follow-up
• Willingness to participate, attend and do home practice
• Self-care

Body Scan
Body Scan – key points

• Moving attention around the body: holding and releasing focus
• From doing to being
• Training awareness of sensation – benign
• Allows for a full range of experience
• Enables the insight that everything comes and goes
• Begins to highlight the risks of wandering attention
Lunch

• Can we make our breaks a mindfulness practice?
• Notice temptations to work or check emails
• Pleasant and Unpleasant Events Calendar
Lunch - debrief
Mindful Movement

- Walking Meditation
- Mindful stretching
- Yoga
- Chi Gong
- Tai Chi
- Aikido and other martial arts
Mindful Movement: Self Care

- Take care of yourself
- Listen to your body and move within your limits
- If you are concerned:
  - Only do exercises that feel comfortable
  - Do it in a chair or lying down
  - Imagine the movements in your mind
Yoga
Mindful Movement: key points

• Bringing awareness to sensations in the body arising through movement
• Body as an anchor and a return to the present
• Attending to sensations may result in a change to them.
• Movement can be an easier focus than breath.
• The movement practice can brings attention to the tendency to compare, compete or judge
Thoughts & Feelings Exercise

Thoughts
what we think

Emotions
what we feel

Behaviors
what we do

Body
what we sense

environment/context
Break
Three Minute Breathing Space: Responsive
Three Minute Breathing Space
Responsive: key points

• Quick formal practice to check into the present: Mindfulness and difficulty
• The bringing of attention directly to difficult body sensations (emotional correlates) interrupts thinking
• Helps to decenter from emotions (eg “anger is here”)
• Reduces experiential avoidance, increases acceptance, reduces judgment,
• Teaches a different relationship to the unwanted rather than ineffective problem solving strategies of rumination and obsessing
• Experiencing difficulty by bringing attention to the body enhances direct experience rather than our conclusions, stories or ideas about the experience
• Quicker recovery from difficult states
Sitting Posture

- Eyes at rest (closed/half open)
- Chin in line with the navel
- Spine upright
- Knees lower than hips
- Body supported
- Hands at rest on the thighs or in the lap
Awareness of Breathing
Breath –Key points #1

- Trains attention to a single point of focus over an extended period
- The body as a refuge and anchor – a place to return over and over
- Brings awareness to the changing nature of internal and external experience (breath, bodily sensations, sound)
- Reinforces the norm of wandering attention
Breath – Key points #2

- Reinforces the arising and passing of all experience
- The witnessing of experience (thoughts, emotions, behaviours and bodily sensations) from a point of reference, whether pleasant, unpleasant or neutral
- Helps to prevent attention from being hijacked into negative spirals of thought or emotions
3 Minute Breathing Space
3 Minute Breathing Space
Key points

- Checking in with present experience
- Interrupting automaticity
- Parsing experience: Thoughts, Emotions, Body
- Shifting attention from Broad focus, to narrowed and anchored focus (breath), to spacious awareness (body)
- Possibility of a skillful next step
- Benign Practice to be used when distress is present
Awareness/Mindfulness Primers

- Dots, stickers
- Magnet
- Apps
- Post-its
- Friend/relative
- Community
- E-Newsletter
- Morning intention
- Gratitude Journal

- To Be List beside To Do List
- Alarm reminders
- Workplace practice (sitting groups, yoga classes, daily walks)
- Mindfulness buddy
- Everyday mindfulness (walking, eating, 3MBS)
Closing

• Questions and Answers
• Resources
• Future Training
• Evaluation
Tips for Practicing Mindfulness

1) When possible, do just one thing at a time.
2) Pay attention to what you are doing
3) When the mind wanders from what you are doing, bring it back.
4) Repeat Step #3 several billion times
5) Investigate your distractions

Larry Rosenberg, 2004