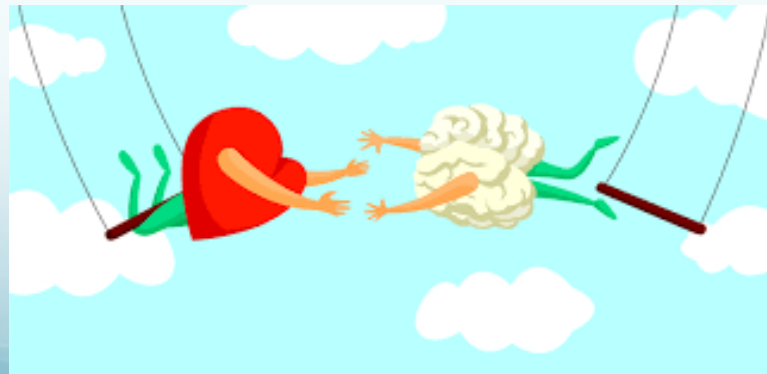


Mindfulness: Strategies at Home/School

Presented by: Dr. Victoria Doobay
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My background

- Clinical Psychologist
- DePaul Family and Community Services is a full-service Child, Adolescent and Family behavioral health clinic located on the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University
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Outline

- Activity 1: Mindful SEAT
- Anxiety
- Mindfulness
 - What is mindfulness?
 - Benefits
- Mindful Strategies
 - Mindfulness of the breath
 - Mindfulness of the body, thoughts, emotions
 - Mindful awareness/sensory based
 - Other strategies: Visualization
- Feedback, questions



Activity 1: Mindful SEAT

Sensations

Emotions

Actions

Thoughts

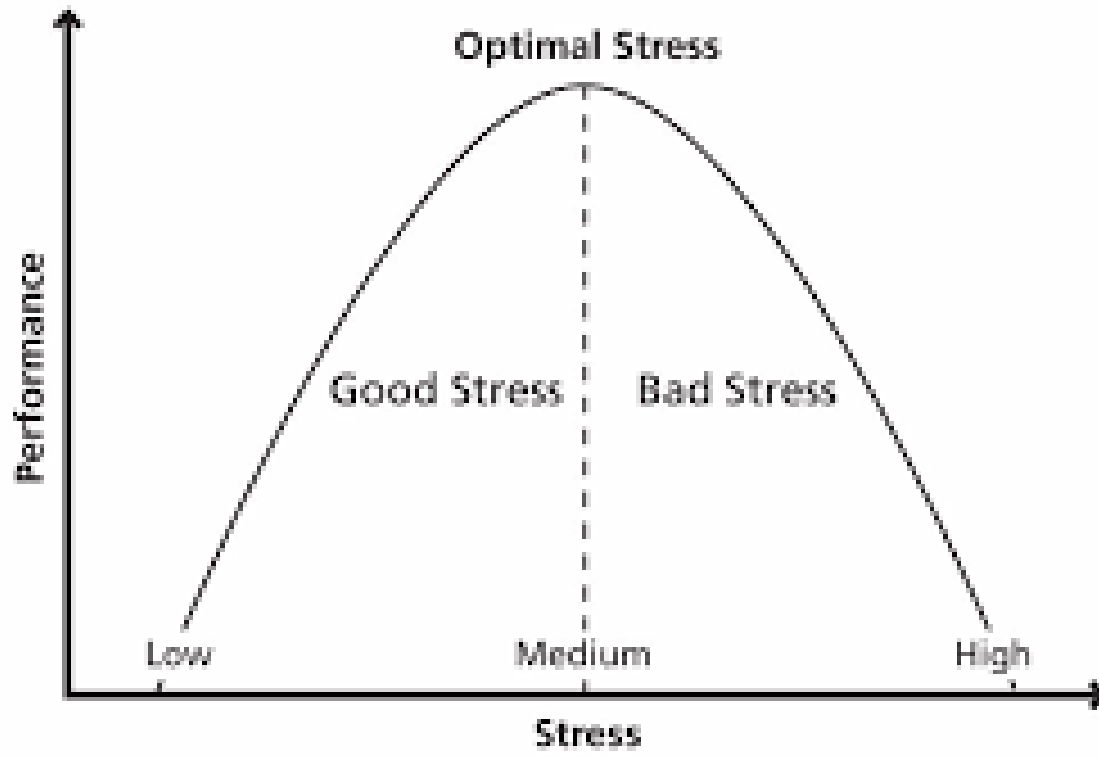


Anxiety

“Anxiety got the best of me
And made short work of my dreams
And stole my treasure
Taking this moment and whisking it away”
- Denis Kucharski (2008)

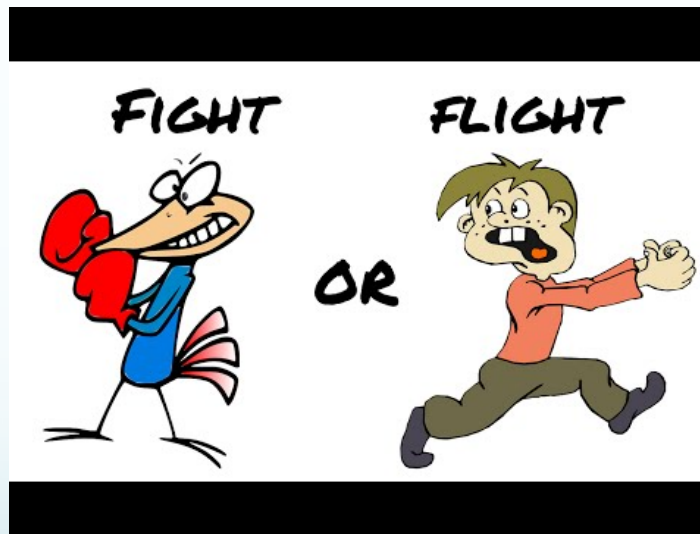
Anxiety as optimal?

The Yerkes-Dodson Law



Stress is the human reaction to events in our environment

Researchers define stress as a condition or feeling experienced when people perceive that the demand in their lives exceed the resources that they have available.



Too much anxiety

- 25% prevalence rate in 13-18 year olds
- Median onset age is 7 years old
- Approximately 2/3^{rds} do not receive treatment
- Co-occurring problems (behavior, depression)



Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalizing

"nothing good ever happens"

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

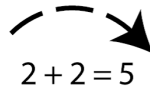
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labeling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot*

Personalization

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Though this natural survival response (fight or flight) was meant to preserve our lives, it can have negative consequences in our day to day life

- Physical effects
 - Heart beats rapidly, shortness of breath, dizzy, sweaty, tired, change in appetite, stomach pain
- Emotional effects
 - Cry, get nervous, angry easily, irritable, feel depressed, day dream, sense of catastrophe
- Behavioral effects
 - Difficulty concentrating, procrastination, smile and giggle, ignore feelings, argue with others, nightmares, bed wetting, age regressive behavior, school refusal, reassurance seeking, temper tantrums, avoidant, tearful

Stress response

- What does stress look like for **YOU**?
- What does stress look like for your **TEENS/STUDENTS**?





Coping with mindfulness



What is Mindfulness?

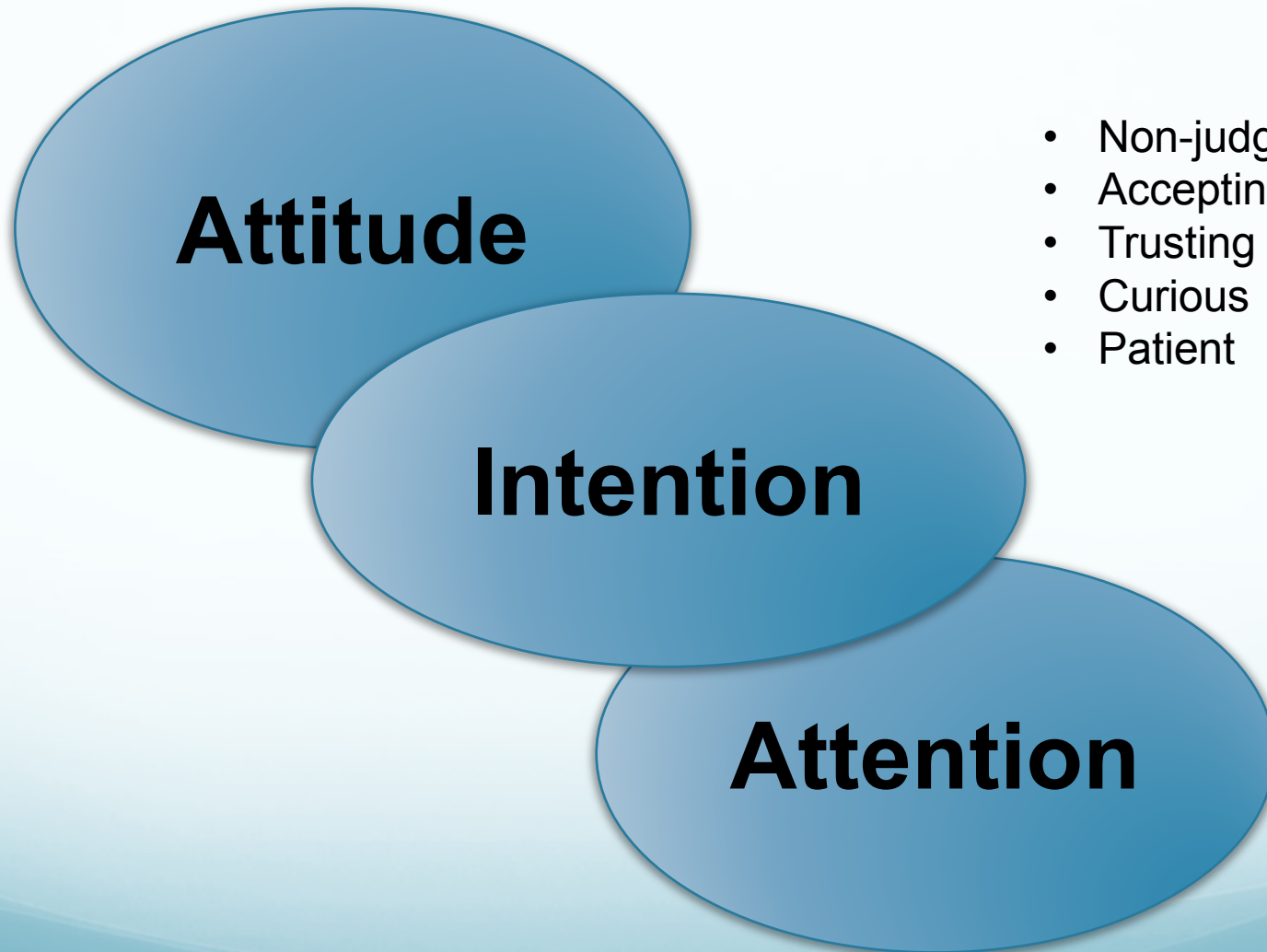
“Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”

(Kabat-Zinn (1994))

It's trending and it's evidence based



Components of Mindfulness



- Non-judgmental
- Accepting
- Trusting
- Curious
- Patient

Benefits

- **Stress Response**
 - We can **REACT** or we can **PAUSE** and **RESPOND**
 - **Trigger --→ Space to Respond--→ Response**
 - **Choosing** our response
- The power of **Observation**

What mindfulness is **NOT**

- Passive
- Shutting off thoughts
- A quick fix

Battle of the minds

Anxious Thinking

- Biased attention
- Past and future oriented
- Identified with thoughts
- Rumination/Loop
- Judgmental

Mindful Awareness

- Unbiased attention (observation)
- Present focused
- Decentered with thoughts (sense of connection with self and others)
- Direct experience
- Nonjudgmental

“Mindfulness is to **be aware**. To be aware when you are breathing in and to be aware when you are breathing out...it is the capacity to be of what is **here**. Anything can be the object of mindfulness. Your breath. The sky. It is to be in touch with **our felt experience in each moment.**”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Mindfulness

Involves a series of physiological changes including:

- Decrease in heart rate
- Decrease in respiration rate
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Decrease in skeletal muscle tension
- Decrease in metabolic rate and oxygen consumption
- Decrease in analytical thinking
- Increase in skin resistance
- Increase in alpha wave activity in the brain



More Benefits

- Reduction of generalized anxiety
- Prevents cumulative stress
- Increased energy and productivity
- Improved concentration and memory
- Reduction in insomnia and fatigue
- Prevention or reduction in hypertension, migraines, headaches, asthma, ulcers
- Increased self confidence
- Increased emotional management
- Improved prosocial behavior

Mindful strategies in the school/home setting



Guidelines for Practicing Mindfulness Strategies

- Practice together
- Practice every day (i.e., mindful mornings)
- Find a quiet location
- Practice at regular times
- Assume a comfortable position
- Loosen tight clothing
- Make a decision not to worry about anything during practice times

Questions to ask

- What was that experience like for you?
- What did you notice (thoughts, feelings, body sensations)?
- What felt familiar/unfamiliar?
- What surprised you?
- What were you curious about?
- What did you learn?
- How is bringing awareness to this experience different from what you do every day?
- How might this be helpful to you in your everyday life?

Mindfulness of the breath

- Breathing reflects level of tension
- **Under tension:** shallow, rapid, chest
- **Relaxed:** full breaths, deep, abdomen
- **Activities to do:** Taking Three Mindful Breaths; Belly Breathing; Mindful Breath Counting



Let's breathe



When can you implement
this?

Mindfulness of the body, thoughts, emotions

- Connects mind with body
- Ability to track body sensations
- Insight into how body feels
- **Activities to do:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation; Mindful Flower Stretch; Body Scan (or 3 minutes in my body); Matching Movement Moments; Mindful SEAT

Let's stretch



When can you implement
this?

Mindful awareness/sensory based

- Aware of surroundings
- Aware of thoughts, feelings emotions
- Using all senses (grounding)
- **Activities:** Grounding; Finding Five New Things; Mindful Humming/Listening to Music; Mindful Walk; Mindful Eating; Gratitude

Let's ground



When can you implement
this?

Other Strategies: Visualization

- Language of the unconscious mind
- Deliberately use images to modify behavior, feelings, internal state
- **Activities to do:** finding safe place using all senses

Create your own visualization

Think of a place where you are very relaxed _____

What do you see? Describe your surroundings

What colors/shapes are prominent? _____

What sounds are present? _____

What time of the day is it? _____

What is the temperature? _____

What are you touching or in physical contact with in the scene?

What does the air smell like? _____

Are you alone or with someone? _____

Example

You're walking along a beautiful, deserted beach. You are barefoot and can feel the firm white sand beneath your feet as you walk along the margin of the sea. You can hear the sound of the surf as the waves ebb and flow. The sound is hypnotic, relaxing you more and more. The water is a beautiful turquoise blue flecked with whitecaps far out where the waves are cresting. Near the horizon you can see a small sailboat gliding smoothly along. The sound of the waves breaking on the shore lulls you deeper and deeper into relaxation. You draw in the fresh, salty smell of the air with each breath. Your skin glows with the warmth of the sun. You can feel a gentle breeze against your cheek and ruffling your hair. Taking in the whole scene, you feel calm and at ease.

Questions?

- Exit Feedback Form:
 - <http://bit.ly/mindfulokpark>
 - vdoobay@depaul.edu



