MINDFULNESS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS: FACILITATING STRESS MANAGEMENT AND BEYOND

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Overview

- Breathing exercise
- What is mindfulness?
  - *Preconceived notions and stereotypes*
- History - how it moved in US
- Education and mindfulness - how is mindfulness incorporated in schools
- Our experiences
- How to implement it in schools
- Experiential activities – body scan, mindful eating, ringing of the bell
- Q&A
Mindful Breathing/Listening
What is Mindfulness

- Mindfulness or mindful awareness is “paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).
  - Formal
  - Informal

- Common Misunderstandings
  - Not having a blank mind
  - Not becoming emotionless
  - Not withdrawing from life
  - Not seeking bliss
  - Not escaping pain
Mindfulness in the U.S.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, MD: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- 70’s, Studied in Tibet with Buddhist Monks
- Initially developed program for chronic pain management with Cancer Patients
  - Immune function
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Hypertension
  - Hot flashes
  - Psoriasis
  - Fibromyalgia
  - Headaches
  - Depression
Mindfulness in Schools

- Reduction in:
  - Anxiety, depression, stress, off task behaviors, test anxiety

- Improvement in:
  - Academic performance, social skills, emotion regulation, psychological well-being
Mindful Eating
How I Use It: Stefani

- **Self**
  - Wake each morning mindful I have been given another day: a gift
  - Mindfully make my coffee...mmmmmmm
  - Mindfully give my kids a good, warm hug
  - Take a break in the day for a 3-5 minute exercise (sitting or stretching)
  - Mindful breathing to return to sleep at night

- **Adults (Graduate Counseling Students):**
  - Brief exercises at start of class (3-5 min.)
  - Students unwind, get centered
  - Sets a peaceful tone for class to begin

- **Kids (4th and 2nd Graders):**
  - 1 hour class for six weeks
  - Varied activities between calming and active
  - The children really enjoy the resting
How I Use It: Sneha

■ Self
  - *Each morning spend 3-5 mins focusing on breathing*
  - *Before sleeping engage in mindful meditation – guided imagery or body scan.*
  - *Experience lesser anger, more optimistic thinking, and better emotion regulation.*

■ Adults (graduate school counseling students)
  - *Implement it in class on days student express stress, anxiety, or tensions*
  - *Close the class with a ten minute guided mindful meditation*
  - *Students leave feeling clam, relaxed, and reduced stress levels*

■ Clients (women, teens, and children)
  - *Clients dealing with grief, anxiety, trauma, and stress related concerns*
  - *Use body scan, focus on breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, imagery*
  - *Clients leave the session feeling calm, relaxed, positive, reduced anxiety*
Responses

- Adult Class Evaluations...
- Children’s Feedback

Mindfulness is where I can find the peace inside of me. I can be calm and not dwell on the past or worry about the future. I can just focus on what I can hear, touch, see, and think about. I don’t have to be smart or pretty. I just have to be me.
How to Implement

- Have your own mindfulness practice before you begin to teach
- Create the environment
- Involve the children
- Encourage sharing
- Amy Saltzman: Pitching the Program In Schools, Appendix A
- School Counselor training: To use as an intervention with kids.
- Work with teachers/administrators/counselors to use as a personal wellness/stress reduction method.
- Practice everyday
Mindful Body Scan
Questions???
References


Kabat-Zinn, Jon (1990) Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress


Saltzman, Amy (2014) A Still Quiet Place: A Mindfulness Program for Teaching Children Adolescents to Ease Stress and Difficult Emotions (list of resources included)

OTHER MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

Books
The Mindful Child by Susan Kaiser Greenland
Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents) by Eline Snel
The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time (The Instant Help Solutions Series) by Dzung X. Vo MD FAAP
Rays of Calm: Relaxation for Teenagers (Calm for Kids) Audio CD – by Christiane Kerr

Websites
Annaka Harris: http://annakaharris.com/mindfulness-for-children/
Mindfulness for teens : http://mindfulnessforteens.com/
Mindfulness everyday: http://www.mindfulnesseveryday.org/

Videos
Mindfulness for Children Free Meditation for kids: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEctySiCoI0
Mind in a Jar - Planting Seeds: The Power of Mindfulness for Children MOVIE!: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNmMH6tqiMc
Mindfulness Meditation - Guided 10 Minutes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p_yaNFSYao