Mindfulness Meditation

Resilience through Mental Wellness

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Objectives for Today

● Why Mindfulness? Learn evidence-based strategies to manage anxiety, enhance focus, improve memory and classroom performance through meditation
● Learn how mindfulness/meditation changes the brain
● Understand how to guide meditation for others even if you have no experience
● Experience various forms of meditation
How do you feel right now?

Completely Relaxed
I’m about to lose it!
Some stress but it’s manageable
60 Seconds of Silence
How do you feel right now?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Completely Relaxed
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Analogies for how western society lives

- Do, do, do, do… what happened to being?
- Do we eat 5 apples all at once? Time to digest...
- Breathing shallow or holding our breath
  - Breath in, breath in again without breathing out
- All the musical notes of a song played at once...no pause in between
- Running the marathon (mentally) - without training?
Want to Better Remember What You Learn?

Recent Research Says Try 10 Minutes of Mindfulness Beforehand

A 10-minute (or less) mindfulness exercise may leave you feeling refreshed and help you remember more.
Research on Meditation in Higher Education

-College students struggle to focus in class (Grinols & Rajesh, 2014)

-Depression, anxiety, and stress on the rise among college students (Beiter et al., 2014)

  -most commonly diagnosed mental health condition on college campuses.

-report of anxiety doubling in the past 15 years among college students. (ACHA, 2019)
Research on Meditation in Higher Education (con’t)

-Meditation correlated with...

- improved attention & cognitive flexibility in the classroom (Moore & Malinowski, 2009)

-enhanced focus, heightened awareness, improved creativity, more engaged in learning (Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2008).

-increased positivity, energy, and focus and decreased distraction (Kok & Singer, 2016)

-decreased anxiety and depression (Bamber & Morpeth, 2019)
Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation

- purposefully paying attention to the here and now
- being aware of each moment through body senses
- accepting nonjudgmentally what is
- not thinking about past or future
- right here, right now

Open-Monitoring Meditation
Various forms of meditation and the brain patterns

- Focused attention
- Open monitoring
- Automatic self-transcending
Instructions for Mindfulness Meditation (MM)

MM can help if you're willing to exhibit three qualities in particular:

- willingness
- curiosity
- being unattached to the outcome

1. Be willing to interrupt your impulsiveness.

Pause and connect with your body and senses.
Unlike your thoughts, your body moves at the speed of the present moment.
Paying attention to your body and sensations can anchor you, which brings us to the next step.

2. For a minute or two, guide your attention, slowly moving it from the top of your head down to the soles of your feet.

Do so like a leisurely walk, relaxed, unhurried, and curious.
Pay attention to how each part of your body feels as you conduct your top to bottom "scan."
3. Take a series of full breaths (three or more), relaxed and unforced.

Let your lungs fill, expand, and then release. In addition to strengthening your attention, deeper breathing increases production of serotonin and dopamine -- neurotransmitters in the brain associated with positive emotion and working memory.

4. Let your breathing return to its natural rhythm.

As you exhale, practice releasing the attachment to a specific outcome (such as, "I really need to be calm right now!"). Breathe, release, and be curious about what’s happening now in your body. Ask yourself, "What else do I notice?"

5. Don't try to stop your thoughts, it won't work.

Just let your thoughts go by without engaging in them or judging them. Just notice them. Continue to bring relaxed attention to your body and breathing. Get curious about what’s happening right here and now, and, relax your attachment to a specific outcome.

Consistent practice is what brings the most benefit.
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Discussion Questions

● Did you feel any different after each meditation?
  ○ If so, how?

● Do you think you would benefit from regular meditation practice?
  ○ What about our students?

● How could meditation be used in your work as a staff or faculty member?
Zen Den for faculty and staff

Did you know that faculty and staff can use the Zen Den in BMU 301 Monday-Friday 11am-6pm?

Inside the Zen Den, you will find comfortable seating, self-care resources including coloring materials and stress-relief tools, and a wall full of reference books covering a variety of mental health and wellness topics.

Next to the Zen Den, you will find a private room with a massage chair and music to unwind. No appointment needed!
Free apps and website to lead meditation

- Calm
- Insight Timer
- Headspace
- YouTube
Resources

Want to Better Remember What You Learn? Recent Research Says Try 10 Minutes of Mindfulness Beforehand by Scott Mautz, Inc. Magazine

How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains: Dr. Sara Lazar at TEDxCambridge 2011
Research Neuroscientist, Sara Lazar, Ph.D., is a Research Neuroscientist at Harvard
Web Site: https://scholar.harvard.edu/sara_lazar/home
8.5 minute video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc&t=23st

Three Forms of Meditation
Neuroscientist Fred Travis, Ph.D., explains that meditations can be classified into three categories: Focused attention, Open monitoring, and Automatic self-transcending.
7 minute video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqek0s9l59w
Web Site: http://drfredtravis.com/to%20do.html

Transcendental Meditation (Training will be offered in Chico in Late February)
https://www.tm.org/research-on-meditation