

Mindfulness Matters:

Integrating Mindfulness Based Interventions for Palliative Care Providers, Patients, and Caregivers

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Objectives

- 1.** Gain understanding of mindfulness-based interventions and how palliative care patients, caregivers, and providers benefit from MBIs.
- 2.** Learn mindfulness exercises to develop your own mindfulness practice and be able to introduce mindfulness-based interventions to patients and caregivers.
- 3.** Learn how to prevent burnout with mindfulness-based interventions.



Mindfulness:

Meditation expert Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as:

“Paying attention in a particular way: **on purpose**,
in the **present** moment, and **non-judgmentally**.”

Three Aspects of Mindfulness

On Purpose:

- In the practice of mindfulness, the intention is to be as aware as possible

Present Moment:

- Mindfulness helps us learn how to skillfully and consciously engage with the present moment.

Nonjudgmentally:

- We cultivate an attitude of acceptance and kindness (non-aggression) to whatever is happening in our present moment experience

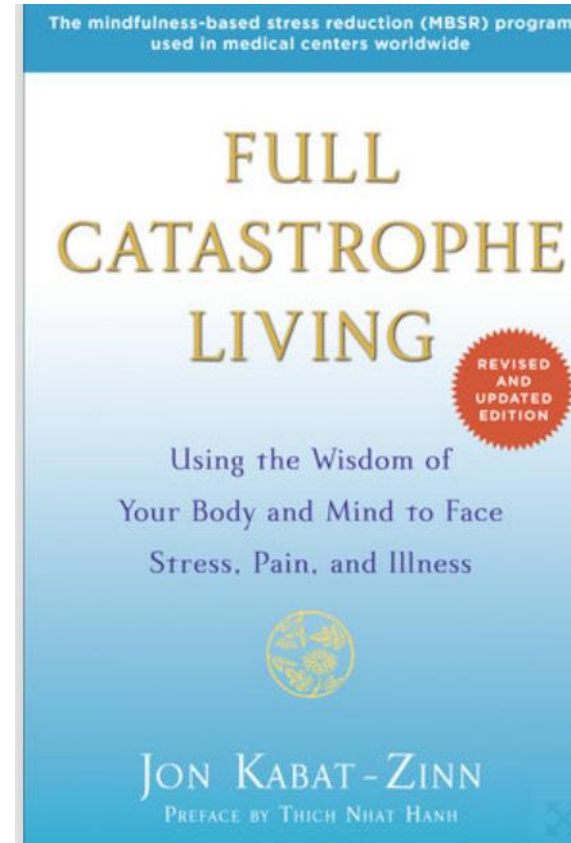
A Brief History

1979 Jon Kabat-Zinn started a stress-reduction clinic in Massachusetts University Hospital

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for chronic pain

1990s TV programming introduced mindfulness to a wider audience and Jon Kabat-Zinn wrote Full Catastrophic Living.

Early 2000s psychotherapists integrate and study Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)



Mindfulness in Palliative Care Practice is Evidence Based!

Patients

Breath work: (Kim & Kim, 2005)

Body scan: (Sauer-Zavala, Walsh, Eisenlohr-Moul, & Lykins, 2013)

Guided meditation: (Chen, Wang, Yang, Chung, 2015)

Yoga and tai chi: (Zwicker, 2017)

Caregivers

MBSR group: (Birnie, Garland, & Carlson, 2010)

Providers

Mindful presence and mindful listening (Pier, 2017)

Benefits of Mindfulness for Palliative Care Patients, Caregivers, Providers



Reduce: pain, tension, stress, depression, anxiety, insomnia



Increase: joy, sense of control, peace, quality of life, positive social interactions

(Pier, 2017)

Developing Self Practice Skills

Identify how you learn best

- Visual
- Reading
- Experiential

Set reasonable goals and manage expectations

- The more you practice the more comfortable you will be integrating MBIs into clinical practice

Integrate mindfulness practices daily

- Create a list of “formal” and “informal” mindfulness practices

Consider training courses

- Take an eight-week MBSR course
- Webinars
- Online or in person workshops/retreats

Mindfulness Exercises:



Breath work:

Intentional focus on the natural breath
Deepening the breath
Counting the breath



Body Scan:

Focusing on each area of the body and bodily sensations gradually (head to toe)
Practice observing without judgement



Mindful Movement:

Tai Chi
Yoga
Walking meditations



Guided Imagery

Focusing the attention on positive imagery



Bilateral stimulation

Stimulation of both sides of the brain
Tapping
Butterfly hug

Brief MBIs for patients, caregivers, providers:

5 Minutes of Mindful Breathing (4-7-8 breathing):

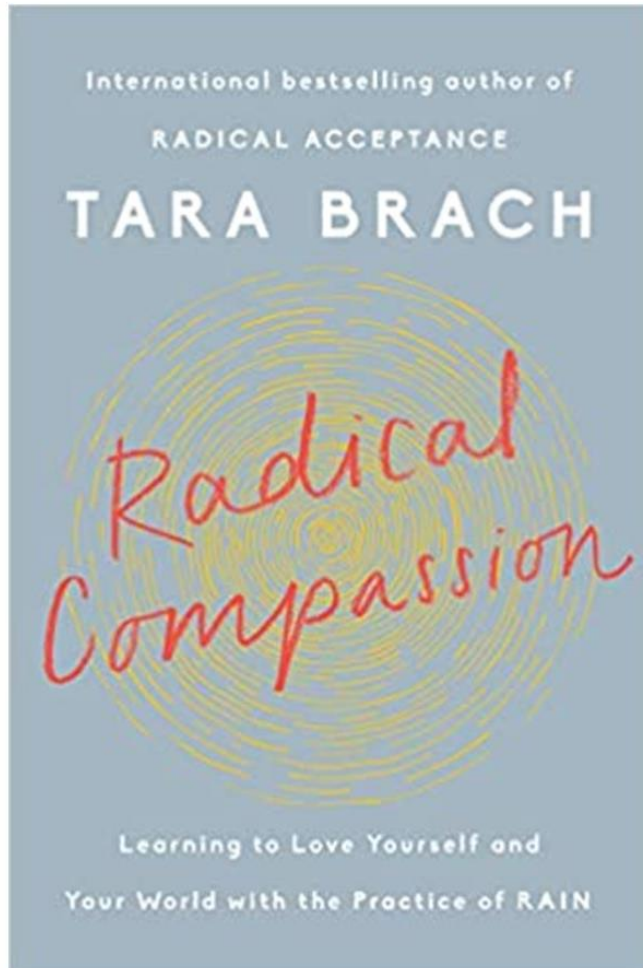
- **Step 1:** Gently close your eyes and sit still.
- **Step 2:** Focus on your breathing.
- **Step 3:** Pay attention to what you're thinking, feeling, and hearing. Imagine breathing out your stress.

Give Gratitude:

- Reflect on three things you are grateful for today.
- Write down what you are thankful for or share with a family member or friend.

Set an Intention:

- "I have no time to rush"
- "I breathe in peace and breathe out stress"
- "The only constant is change"



RAIN

R**ecognize** what is going on in the present moment

A**llow** the experience to be just what it is

I**nvestigate** with curiosity and kindness

N**urture**, rest here, respond with compassion

(Brach, 2016)

The Neuroscience of Grief and Meditation

Mary France O'Connor:

Dr. O'Connor is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Arizona, studies what happens in our brains when we experience grief. She says grieving is a form of learning — one that teaches us how to be in the world without someone we love in it.

Mediation can be an effective intervention when an individual experiences persistent yearning and grief rumination.



Defining Yearning and Grief Rumination

Yearning is defined as an intense longing oriented towards an object of desire and is considered an expected aspect of grief.

Grief Rumination refers to the repetitive thoughts about the loss, such as the causes and consequences of the loss and/or negative emotions including preoccupation with the deceased.

(Knowles, 2021)

MARY-FRANCES O'CONNOR, PhD



The Grieving BRAIN

The Surprising Science of
How We Learn from Love and Loss

How The Neuroscience of Grief Can Inform Best Practices

- Neuroscience exploration of grief and bereavement can inform how to support someone experiencing loss.
- The brain learns and connects best in the present moment.
- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy supports processing thoughts and emotions with compassion and developing new neuropathways.
- Research and understandings of grief and loss can be applied to a variety of grief experiences (not only the death of a loved one).

Introducing Mindfulness to Patients

Build rapport

- Trust and relationship is everything

Assess coping

- Discuss current coping strategies
- What works and what doesn't work

Provide psychoeducation

- Discuss connection between mind and body (pain/anxiety cycle)
- Review how mindfulness could benefit them
- Introduce exercises that best fit

Practice together

Provide encouragement and resources

- Regular practice increases effectiveness
- Discuss options for ongoing practice/learning

Caring for Caregivers

Introduce simple MBIs

- **Self awareness:** How are you doing? Physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually
- **Mindful movement:** walk, stretch, any movement
- **Mindful breathing:** 4-7-8 breath cycle, 10 deep breaths, ocean breathing (in/out of nose)
- **Guided meditations:** Caregiver can choose a guided meditation that speaks to them, podcasts are also great resources

Encourage and build on strategies that caregivers already utilize

- Assess current self care practices and coping style

Provide a resource guide

- Have a collection of websites, books, apps, exercises



Mindfulness Matters

What is mindfulness and how can it help me?

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment. Practicing mindfulness provides the opportunity to observe one's thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.

Mindfulness techniques have been shown to decrease anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia.

Simple Mindfulness Strategies:

1. *Take 5 minutes to calm your mind and focus on breathing.*

Step 1: Gently close your eyes and sit still.

Step 2: Focus on your breathing.

Step 3: Pay attention to what you're thinking, feeling, and hearing. Imagine breathing out your stress.

2. *Relax your body.*

Start by tensing and relaxing the muscles in your toes and progressively working your way up to your neck and head. Tense your muscles for about five seconds and then relax for 30 seconds, and repeat.

3. *Give Gratitude for the Little Things.*

Reflect on three things you are grateful for today. Write down what you are thankful for or share with a family member or friend.

Resources:

Books

Mindfulness for Beginners, by Jon Kabat-Zinn

The Mindful Way through Depression, by J. Mark G. Williams

You are Not Your Pain: Using Mindfulness to Relieve Pain, Reduce Stress, and Restore Well-Being: An Eight Week Program, by Danny Penman and Vidyamala Burch

Websites

www.mindfultrain.org

Free Audio MP3 recordings of mindfulness by Ben Gaibel

www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations

Free audio MP3 recordings of mindfulness by Tara Brach

www.vidyamala-burch.com/book-resources

Free audio MP3 recordings of mindfulness for chronic pain by Vidyamala Burch

Apps

CancerCare Meditation- This app will help restore your body, calm your mind and reignite your hope during stress-filled days.

Insight Timer- Offers the soothing sound of a bell to begin and end meditations, as well as guided meditations.

10% Happier- Daily videos and audio guided meditation instruction

St. Louis Community

www.stlouismindfulness.org- 6 week group mindfulness course

www.stsupportcenter.com- 8 week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Courses

www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk- online mindfulness course to learn mindfulness for health

Resource Guide for Patients and Caregivers



Mindfulness Matters at Work

Mindfulness at work and how can it help me?

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment. Practicing mindfulness provides the opportunity to observe one's thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, without judgement.

Mindfulness exercises can be as short as you wish. Even one minute of consciously connecting with one of your senses can be classified as a mindful exercise. Walking, washing your hands, or drinking a cup of coffee are all opportunities to slow down and be present in the moment.

Simple Mindfulness Strategies at Work:

1. *Staying in the present moment: Mindful breathing.*

Step 1: Notice your breath.

Step 2: Pay attention to what you're thinking, feeling, and hearing.

Step 3: Imagine breathing out your stress and breathing in relaxation.

2. *Refresh yourself at the beginning, middle, or end of your work day: Relax your body.*

Start by tensing and relaxing the muscles in your toes and progressively working your way up to your neck and head. Tense your muscles for about five seconds and then relax for 30 seconds, and repeat.

3. *Build resiliency at work: Give Gratitude.*

Being mindful of what's going well at work helps to improve your resilience.

Consider starting or ending the work day thinking about something you are grateful for. Consider keeping a gratitude journal at home or at your desk to keep a gratitude log.

Resources:

Books

Radical Acceptance, by Tara Brach

The Joy Within: A beginner's guide to meditation, by Joan Goldstein and Manuela Soares

Mindfulness for Beginners, by Jon Kabat-Zinn

The 4 Foundations of Mindfulness in Plain English, by Bhante Gunaratana

Websites

www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations

Free audio MP3 recordings of mindfulness by Tara Brach

www.mindfultrain.org

Free Audio MP3 recordings of mindfulness by Ben Gaibel

Apps

Calm – Provides guided meditation, meditation music, mindful breathing.

Insight Timer Meditation – Offers the soothing sound of a bell to begin and end meditations, as well as guided meditations. Here are several sessions:

- 17 minutes: Mountain Meditation by Denise Gour
- 15 minutes: Body Scan Meditation by Kate James
- 4 minutes: Meditation to Relax Before Sleep by Beth Kurland

10% Happier – Daily videos and audio guided meditations.

Headspace – Provides guided meditations and mindfulness exercises. Includes research on benefits of mindfulness including stress reduction at work.

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Provider Resource

Natural Challenges

Hospital environment

Crisis/acute situation

Limited rapport

Patient/caregiver motivation

Overwhelming physical symptoms

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Rumi

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Thank you!

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