



## "Mindfulness in Psychology"

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# Mindfulness in Psychology

## 3 CEU Credit Hours

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### **Course Description:**

This course overviews mindfulness-based therapy practices, discussing its components, uses and evidence based outcomes for impacting client issues, altering destructive behavior patterns and emotional dissatisfaction.

### **Course Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this course the professional will be able to:

- 1.) Integrate mindfulness into traditional approaches to psychotherapy
- 2.) Create treatment plans that integrate mindfulness
- 3.) Describe mindfulness as a therapeutic concept in psychotherapy
- 4.) Demonstrate and teach clients adaptive living skills including mindfulness
- 5.) Apply mindfulness to counselor self-care

### **Purpose of this course:**

The purpose of this CEU course is to provide discussion relevant to the mental health counselor on the principles and uses of mindfulness-based therapy approaches with specific client populations.

### **Course Outline:**

Part 1: Course organization, Documentation and Introduction.

Part 2: Reading of the course materials (this document)

Part 3: Administration and Completion of the Evaluation of Learning Quiz

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### **3 Clock Hours / CE Credits**



If you ever have any questions concerning this course, please do not hesitate to contact **PeachTree at (800) 390-9536**.

Your instructor is **Richard K. Nongard**, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer.

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# Mindfulness in Psychology

## Course Outline

Modules      Topic

### **Preface**

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1.2          Origin of mindful practice

1.3          What are the benefits of mindfulness?

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# Mindfulness in Psychology

## Preface

The *Mindfulness in Psychology* course has been developed for mental health therapists and other helping professionals who wish to develop a deeper understanding of mindfulness philosophy and techniques. Mindfulness techniques can be integrated into psychotherapy treatment planning and compliment a range of evidence based approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT).

There is a growing body of research which supports the benefits of mindfulness-based practice across various populations who have a range of problems and mental health issues. Although mindfulness can be used as a stand alone treatment approach, it is more commonly used as complementary to a therapist's existing psychotherapy skill set.

This course has been designed to teach skills in mindfulness to helping professionals in fields such as psychology, social work and family therapy across various client populations.

The course includes an introduction to mindfulness which explores its meaning, benefits, origins and evidence-based research which supports its efficacy. For practice development, this course focuses on the applications of mindfulness techniques in psychotherapy as well as detailed instructions of various techniques that can be taught to clients. Common mindfulness techniques such as sitting meditation, body scans, mindful eating and walking are covered. The course also touches on some of the setbacks that clients may experience during mindfulness training and provides therapists with strategies to help overcome these. Applications of mindfulness specific to anxious and depressed populations as well as those with eating disorders and substance abuse problems are also included.

By the end of this course, therapists will have a better understanding of the mindfulness philosophy and how it can become a valuable approach that can be integrated into existing psychotherapeutic practice. Therapists will also learn specific techniques that they can teach clients in mindfulness to use in every day life.

Therapists will also learn about the benefits they can reap from engaging in mindfulness techniques in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, the course will provide therapists with not only the theoretical aspects of mindfulness in psychotherapy but also highly practical ways to use the techniques in practice.

## **1. Introducing Mindfulness**

Although fairly recently introduced to the stream of psychology, mindfulness is not a new concept. This module will explore the general definition of mindfulness and its origins in eastern traditions. We will also look at who can benefit from mindfulness practice, what are the benefits and what does the research say about the effectiveness of this approach. Mindfulness based approaches including mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy (MB CBT), mindfulness-based dialectical behavior therapy (MB DBT), mindfulness-based acceptance and commitment therapy (MB ACT) and relapse prevention are also covered.

### **1.1 What is Mindfulness?**

Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness training that involves bringing attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way. It is not simply a relaxation technique, but an approach to developing self-awareness and regulating thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

It contrasts to ‘mindlessness’ and acting on automatic pilot. We lead busy lives and it is easy to lose focus of the present moment as we become lost in juggling various responsibilities and worries about the future. Examples of mindlessness include eating a meal so quickly that it was not really savored or driven to work only to arrive and remember nothing of the journey there. These are common experiences in daily life where we lose awareness of the present moment and fail to notice the pleasant things in life.

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention purposefully and being present in the moment. The purpose of mindfulness is to skillfully respond to cognitive processes that contribute to emotional anguish and maladaptive behavior.

Mindfulness can involve formal meditation practices where you can sit or lie down for up to 45 minutes whilst directing your attention to one sensation at a time. Mindfulness can also be assumed in daily life during routine activities such as walking, eating, showering, driving, cleaning or shopping. During any mindful action the instructions remain standard. It involves focusing attention directly on an experience whether it is routine such as breathing or purposeful such as walking. The attention must be focused and observant of the experience and if the mind wanders into thoughts or becomes distracted by emotions, urges or other sensations then you are encouraged to acknowledge this without altering them in any way and then to shift back to focus on the breath. An experience in its entirety becomes part of mindful awareness as we observe all thoughts, feelings and sensations in the present moment.

The main skills learnt during mindful practice include observing or noticing internal sensations and external cues, labeling the thoughts, feelings or behavior associated with the experience followed by being present in the moment with acceptance and non-judgment.

The two main components to the practice of mindfulness are self-regulation and acceptance.

### *Self-regulation*

Attention is directed to the present moment and immediate experiences. This allows for increased appreciation of mental and emotional states in the present moment.

Mindfulness involves observing the change in feeling and thought states in daily life, highlighting its temporary nature and discouraging absorption in the content of the experienced thoughts.

Bringing attention back to the breath in mindful meditation keeps us anchored in the current experience of the breath and the process of breathing that our body undertakes. Those who practice mindfulness learn to switch their attention back to their breath once a thought, emotion or sensation has been recognized and released. This flexibility of attention develops from regular and dedicated practice to mindfulness techniques.

In everyday life it is easy to get caught up with our thoughts and worries and to engage in rumination about the implications of our decisions leading to feelings of anxiousness and/or unhappiness. Mindfulness teaches us to acknowledge our thoughts as just thoughts and to avoid getting caught up in the content of the worries. This doesn't mean that mindfulness encourages suppression of thoughts or feelings rather, each thought, feeling and sensation is acknowledged, accepted and the attention is shifted back to the present moment.

### *Acceptance*

Mindfulness requires that an attitude of acceptance and non-judgment is adopted as well as curiosity, openness and interest.

To practice mindfulness you need to commit to maintaining an attitude of curiosity about where the mind drifts to as it is inevitable that your attention will shift from your breath. There is no specific outcome of mindfulness and it is commonly expected that meditation will bring calmness and relaxation which is not always the case. The purpose of mindfulness is not necessarily to change how you feel but to observe your state and accept it. Worrying about what we should be doing or how things *should* be serves no purpose.

Acceptance and openness is the stance that is taken towards each moment of experience in mindfulness and allows us to be fully in the moment of an experience even if it is unpleasant.

## 1.2 Origin of Mindfulness

Mindfulness training originates in eastern meditative practices and Buddhist belief systems. It encouraged those who practiced to develop an awareness of spiritual purpose, insight, wisdom, self-control and compassion. Buddhism is a belief system that acknowledges that we cannot avoid painful experiences as they are an inevitable part of life however we can have some control over the degree of suffering we experience. The mind is a central theme in Buddhism and is noted to be influential over our thoughts, feelings and behavior. By being mindful and accepting of our inner experiences we can learn to be calm and still and feel the suffering without trying to distract ourselves or avoid the pain.

Mindfulness training has evolved from a traditional religious practice of the East to secular and clinical applications in the West. Mindfulness has been conceptualized into a set of skills *that can be taught separate to any religious followings*. It is important that clinicians properly inform clients that mindfulness is not a religion or religious practice and will not be in conflict with their present belief system. Mindfulness is a skill set, that although first recognized in ancient religious practice, is not exclusive to any religious faith. Both Buddhists and people of other faiths, and even people of no religious faith can put these ideas into practice and practical application that can produce many benefits to one's overall health and wellbeing.

Founder of modern day mindfulness Jon Kabat-Zinn, created a manualized treatment program known as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The purpose of this program is to help people with conditions such as chronic pain, anxiety and depression.

Mindfulness has become accessible to people in the West by clinicians that incorporate these techniques into other treatment approaches such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to become Mindfulness Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (MCBT). It has also been incorporated into Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Empirical support for mindfulness based techniques in therapy has strengthened over recent decades as a treatment approach successful in managing a range of problems, disorders and various populations. From treating chronic pain, to depression in adults to anxiety disorders in children as well as personality disorders, eating disorders and physical illnesses- mindfulness has found its place in modern psychology.

### **1.3 What are the benefits of Mindfulness?**

Mindful meditation aspires to improve the well-being of people and promote enjoyment and appreciation of life.

Mindfulness practice has many benefits for those who practice it regularly. The benefits include a developed self-awareness, emotion regulation, creativity, enhanced relationships and stress management.

#### *Self-awareness*

By being mindful of our thoughts, emotions and behaviors we can identify and understand the patterns that we repeat in our lives. Mindfulness practice helps us recognize and possibly change our automatic and habitual reactions. If we have an understanding of our reactions, situations become clearer and we can respond more effectively in difficult situations.

#### *Emotion Regulation*

Mindfulness meditation can improve one's distress tolerance and the ability to fully experience intense emotions without becoming overwhelmed or losing our composure. A regulation of emotions provides a greater insight into our inner thoughts and feelings. An improved ability to regulate one's emotions will promote confidence and reduce fear about experiencing intense emotions. Self-regulation of emotions can help overcome negative habits and compulsive behaviors such as substance abuse and eating disorders.

#### *Stress Management*

Mindfulness is a complementary therapy that can help treat and prevent stress-related disorders such as anxiety, panic attacks, depression, substance abuse and a range of physical conditions such as ulcers and chronic pain. In particular, mindfulness teaches us that thoughts are just thoughts and we do not need to get caught up in the content of our thought processes. We can see the temporary features of the sensations, emotions and thoughts we experience. We can observe thoughts without being pre-occupied with the past, worries about the future or analyzing what is happening in the present. This mindful awareness can reduce the anxiety that can arise with some thinking patterns. Meditation can improve health and quality of life as well as facilitate a greater sense of calmness.

#### *Creativity*

Mindfulness encourages creativity. When we have a better understanding of our habitual reactions, we can learn to delay or stop them which open up opportunities for us to have different experiences. Our thoughts, emotions and behaviors can be different as we can explore other possibilities and solutions to difficult situations that arise. People who meditate regularly are less likely to experience anxiety and depression.

### *Enhanced relationships*

Research has shown that people who mindfully meditate regularly report greater satisfaction in relationships and deal with relationship stress in a more constructive manner. Improved communication and less conflict are beneficial to social relationships where mindfulness is employed.

### *Improved health*

Meditation can bring about states of deep relaxation which not only benefits the mind but also the body and one's health. Mindfulness allows us to be more responsive and attuned to our bodies which results in increased alertness, improved metabolism and immune system. There have been studies which support that mindfulness meditation can produce positive changes to the brain's functioning.

Mindfulness meditation can benefit many areas of life and improve overall wellbeing and relationship enhancement.

## **1.4 Who can benefit from Mindful Practice?**

Mindfulness can be practiced by anyone, no matter what age, gender, religion or socioeconomic status. Everyone can benefit from the self-awareness and acceptance that develops from mindful practice.

In particular, mindfulness techniques are valuable skills to learn for people who feel overwhelmed by stress or pain, such as in physical illnesses. It is also beneficial for people who experience mental health or substance abuse problems.

The mind largely influences how we feel and behave. Our thought processes are often responsible for the development of stress-related conditions such as anxiety disorders. For people who feel that their emotions are sometimes overwhelming or in control of them, mindfulness can be helpful. It is also useful for people who have difficulties managing their anger or feel they have no purpose in life. Intense emotions are part of life, however it is how you let these emotions affect you that determines whether it becomes overwhelming or not. Often, people try to avoid their feelings or suppress them only to find it more difficult to cope. Chronic pain can also create overwhelmingly intense feelings and people who experience this can feel like the pain runs their life.

Mindfulness teaches people to better manage difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviors to improve their overall wellbeing.

## 1.5 How is Mindfulness beneficial?

Over the past few decades, there have been over 1000 publications documenting the effectiveness of mindfulness in medical and psychological research.

In this section, we will look at the research which supports that mindfulness is beneficial to overall wellbeing in the general population as well as in clinical samples.

Brown and Ryan (2003) explored the role of mindfulness in psychological wellbeing using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). MAAS measures various well-being constructs including self-awareness. They found that the more mindful participants in the study were, the more self-regulated and positive feelings experienced. They were more in tune with their affective states and better able to shift them to fulfill their basic emotional needs. Mindful participants were less likely to be self-conscious, anxious in social situations and engage in ruminating thought processes than those who scored lower on the mindfulness scale. Those who were less mindful were more likely to feel they were being judged by others and become more absorbed in their cognitive states. Mindful participants were more likely to report higher levels of positive emotions, general life satisfaction, self-esteem and autonomy. Furthermore, a study with cancer patients found that increased mindfulness over time was related to a decline in mood instability and stress. This study supports the notion that mindfulness is a reliable and valid characteristic which plays a vital role in mental health.

Davidson, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Schumacher, Rosenkranz, et al (2003) investigated the role of mindfulness in physical health. They explored the effects of mindfulness practice on the brain and immune system with a non-clinical sample. They focused on the enduring changes that can result from a short meditation training program as detected in baseline brain functioning. They were amongst the first studies to find that meditation can produce increased brain functioning which is associated with lower levels of anxiety and negative affect. They also found that meditation had a positive effect on immune function which is likely to be as a result of a rapid peak in antibodies amongst the mediators and lower levels of stress. Although this was a small study, they have sparked much interest into the positive physical effects that may be achieved by mindfulness meditation.

Baer (2003) conducted a review of various studies in mindfulness training in clinical interventions such as chronic pain, borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, depression and anxiety.

- **Chronic pain:** Mindfulness meditation involves extended periods of sitting or lying in one spot. Prolonged motionless can lead to aches and pains in joints and muscles. Clients are encouraged not to shift their position of discomfort, rather to focus their attention on the pain without judgment and the thoughts and feelings associated with it. Clients who can observe physical pain sensations without judgment will experience less distress associated with the pain. It is thought that mindfulness acts to desensitize the experience of the physical pain and in time will lessen emotional reactivity.

- **Borderline personality disorder:** Individuals with borderline personality disorder have difficulties regulating their emotions and are fearful of experiencing strong negative emotional states which are often very intense. These individuals often engage in maladaptive behaviors to avoid these states including angry outbursts, self harming behavior and impulsivity. Mindfulness techniques expose the individual to unpleasant thoughts and emotions without trying to escape them which helps improve their ability to tolerate negative affective states and cope with them more effectively.
- **Eating disorders:** Mindfulness is also beneficial for those who are bulimic or binge eat as an escape from unpleasant feelings (such as poor body image) as it teaches them to accept the aversive thoughts or feelings without giving into the compulsion to binge or purge.
- **Depression and anxiety:** Depressed or anxious individuals tend to become absorbed in negative thinking patterns which make them feel worse. Mindfulness teaches individuals to be observant of their thoughts without becoming caught up in them. Thoughts are just thoughts and not facts. For example, thinking you are a failure does not make you a failure. It is merely a thought. Mindfulness can help people who feel depressed to notice depressive symptoms and to redirect their focus to the present moment.
- **Stress induced physical conditions:** Mindfulness meditation has also been linked to improvement in medical conditions that are activated by stress such as psoriasis and fibromyalgia. Meditation can induce relaxation which is beneficial for these conditions.

Research on the benefits of mindfulness training has been encouraging for not only improving the overall wellbeing of the general population but also for treating various mental health problems.

## **1.6 Mindfulness- based approaches**

Well known treatment methods for managing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression have incorporated mindfulness techniques to improve outcomes for clients. There are various mindfulness based approaches which emphasize the following: bringing awareness to our actions, observing our experience without judgment, and bringing our focus to the present moment. Mindfulness has been incorporated into treatment programs for anxiety, depression, eating disorders and chronic pain. The most common mindfulness based therapies include Mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness- Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (MB CBT), Mindfulness- Based Dialectical Behavior Therapy (MB DBT) and Mindfulness- Based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (MB ACT).

### *Mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)*

MBSR is the most well known mindfulness training program used by clinicians. MBSR is a manualized treatment program which was originally developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn to treat patients with chronic pain. It incorporates mindfulness meditation and attitudes to effectively reduce symptoms associated with stress, depression, anxiety and pain.

Instead of avoiding painful feelings and memories, mindfulness encourages people to allow unpleasant sensations to be experienced within the present moment. MBSR is an eight week intensive training program that incorporates mindfulness meditation and yoga exercises during weekly sessions. The MBSR course also holds a full day meditation session to extend the mindfulness learning of participants.

### *Mindfulness- Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (MB CBT)*

This approach incorporates the structured cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program with aspects of the mindfulness based stress reduction program. It combines ideas of CBT with mindful meditation practices. It is designed to help in particular those who suffer from chronic depression and anxiety.

By utilizing the common ABC (antecedents, behavior, consequences) model of CBT mindfulness attitudes are integrated to improve thinking patterns. The following example is commonly used:

‘Close your eyes and imagine you are walking down the street. You see a friend on the other side of the street. You smile and wave at your friend, but they walk by without noticing.’

Clients are asked to describe their thoughts, feelings and other sensations that arise with this scenario. The antecedent is the situation whereby the friend did not notice you. The behavior or response is the thoughts that arise with this scenario. The consequence is the emotions associated with the situation and thoughts. Clients will vary in how they think and feel about the situation. For example some may just interpret that their friend didn't see them and feel okay about this. Whilst others may interpret that their friend deliberately ignored them and they may experience negative emotions such as anger or humiliation.

When mindfulness is incorporated into this scenario, particularly in a group situation clients can see that thoughts differ and that they are just thoughts, not facts. Mindfulness highlights that we can get caught up in our thoughts and ruminate about things whilst the alternative is to approach situations with awareness, openness and acceptance. So for this scenario, clients would be encouraged to notice the sensations that arise, label their thoughts and feelings and then let it go rather than analyzing and judging the thoughts, emotions and behavior of the friend that passes them by on the street.

### *Mindfulness- Based Dialectical Behavior Therapy (MB DBT) and*

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a comprehensive treatment program that integrates principles of CBT and mindfulness based practice. DBT is a successful program in treating borderline personality disorder and emotion dysregulation problems. It is designed to improve distress tolerance and stabilize emotions. Core mindfulness skills are incorporated into DBT to increase the clients understanding and management of overwhelming emotions.

Clients who undertake a DBT program generally have difficulties controlling their emotions, specifically negative feelings and this is associated with high emotional reactivity, impulsivity and relationship disruptions. Core mindfulness skills teach clients to develop flexibility to regulate their emotions whilst developing awareness and self-attunement. Labeling emotional states is an important part of MB DBT.

### *Mindfulness- Based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (MB ACT)*

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has two core messages. Firstly to accept what you can personally control and what you cannot control and secondly to commit to actions that will enhance your lifestyle. ACT teaches clients to deal with painful thoughts and emotions in a way that they do not hold influence over you. ACT helps you to clarify what is truly meaningful to you and let this guide your life.

ACT sees mindfulness meditation as one way amongst many of learning skills to be aware, focused and open to experience. Mindfulness is broken down into three steps with ACT. This involves letting go of unhelpful thoughts, accepting unpleasant feelings and being in the present moment.

ACT uses a wide range of experiential techniques, not just through meditation to address destructive thinking styles and behaviors.

### *Relapse Prevention*

Relapse prevention incorporates cognitive-behavioral therapy to prevent relapses in individuals with substance abuse problems and other addictive behavior. In recent times, mindfulness skills have been integrated into relapse prevention treatment programs to improve outcomes. Substance addictions stems from an inability to accept unpleasant sensations in the present moment and a persistent desire to avoid them. Mindfulness teaches substance abusers the temporary nature of the present moment and encourages them to stick out the urge (craving) for the substance without giving into it. In doing this they learn that the craving will pass. Clients are taught to accept the urges without judgment, observe sensations and experiences and cope in more adaptive ways.

## **2. Mindfulness Applications**

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) emerged as an independent mindfulness meditative approach which was developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn. It has become a growing trend for therapists to specialize in this area of treatment and facilitate the structured eight week group program with clients.

However, there are many ways to integrate mindfulness training for clients into psychotherapy treatments without being a trained and specialized instructor. Mindfulness is a valuable therapeutic approach which can compliment your own psychotherapeutic approach to treatment planning.

This module explores the basic principles of mindfulness and provides step by step instructions for therapists to teach clients how to apply learnt mindfulness exercises into their daily lives.

### **2.1 Mindfulness Basics**

There are basic principles that underlie all mindfulness techniques. It is important that that these principles are taught to clients and revisited if distractions and setbacks in mindful practice occur. Understanding the principles of mindfulness will increase the client's perception of its value in therapy.

#### *Attention*

Mindfulness involves deliberately paying attention in a certain way. Attention may be directed towards the breath or towards different parts of the body. When the mind wanders, attention is redirected back to the present moment.

#### *Awareness*

Mindfulness involves developing an awareness of the full range of experiences including thoughts, emotions, urges and sensations in the present moment. Self-awareness is developed through mindful practice.

#### *Acceptance*

It involves adopting a non judgmental attitude towards experiences and developing an openness, curiosity and interest to the sensations that arise in awareness. Thoughts, emotions and sensations are labeled with neutrality, not judgment in mindfulness practice.

## *Breath*

Breath is central to mindful practice and the breath is often where the attention is focused without trying to control or change the breathing process. Focusing on the breath, brings our awareness into the present moment and the sensation of breathing that is experienced in the body.

## *Thoughts*

Thoughts are regarded as equal in mindfulness. They are just thoughts and we can observe them without becoming absorbed in the content. When thoughts appear during mindfulness, they are acknowledged and then the attention is refocused on the breath.

### **2.2 One minute meditation**

For various reasons, some clients may not be open to the idea of extended periods of meditation or mindfulness techniques. A simple way to introduce mindful meditation is to do a brief exercise that will take only one minute. Clients will get a sample of meditative practice and whether they find the experience pleasant or unpleasant, a discussion about their experience can be initiated.

#### *Instructions for your client:*

1. Sit motionless for one minute. Close your eyes or gaze them downwards.
2. Focus your attention solely on the breath. Notice the sensations in your body as you breathe in air and the sensations as you breathe out.
3. If your thoughts wander, that is okay, once you are aware that they have drifted just label them as 'my thoughts have drifted' and then return your focus to the breathing.
4. I will tell you when one minute has passed.

Once a client feels more confident in mindfulness training, they can move on to longer periods of meditative practice such as sitting meditation and body scans.

### **2.3 Mindful Eating**

Eating meditation involves eating food with awareness. It entails paying full attention to the food and the tastes, sounds, feelings, sights and smells associated with eating.

Eating is part of our daily routine and for some people; the choice of food is made mindlessly and inattentively. Mindful eating aims to slow down this process by encouraging you to sit down and be attentive to the process of eating. It allows you to become more aware of the positive and nurturing properties that food provides and use all the senses to explore food.

The example used in this course for clients learning mindful eating is using a grape. However, any type of food can be used but try to keep it simple such as a piece of fruit which are natural products and can add to the experience of the mindful appreciation of eating.

*Instructions for your client:*

1. Take the grape and become aware of the details of this piece of fruit. Notice its texture, smell, color, size, shape and the sensation of it resting on your palm.
2. Appreciate the grape by giving some thought to how this grape arrived in your hand. It was grown, harvested, distributed and then paid for. Think about the money paid for this grape and how this supports farmers to continue producing grapes.
3. Now put the grape into your mouth without chewing or swallowing it just yet. Notice how it feels, where the tongue is and the possible urge to chew.
4. Then bite the grape and notice the sensation of the grape between your teeth and on your tongue, the clenching of your jaw whilst chewing slowly and feel the juiciness as it is swallowed. It may help you focus better if you close your eyes and succumb to the sensations of the grape in your mouth.

*Important points to remember:*

- It is okay if your mind wanders, just gently bring your awareness back to the sensation of the grape.
- It is important to acknowledge your responses to the food whether it is positive, neutral or unpleasant and to accept the response without judgment.
- Try mindful eating at home without the distraction of television, music or talking. Pay full attention to the piece of food you select from your plate and go through the eating meditation process.
- You may find food tastes different when eaten in this manner.

## **2.4 Body Scan**

The Body Scan is a meditation technique, where attention is focused to various parts of the body, from the toes up to the head.

The intention of this exercise is not necessarily to relax or fall asleep, although some people do and this is okay. Try to avoid using pillows as this will encourage sleepiness, but a blanket may be required as your body cools during meditation. This practice is intended to bring awareness to any sensations that may be experienced as you focus your attention on each part of the body in turn. Whilst bringing awareness to any sensation that arises, you are also remaining mindful and accepting of these sensations rather than trying to control or change them.

The body scan can take up to 45 minutes and the longer the scan the better; however it can be taught as a shorter exercise of up to twenty minutes. The role of the therapist is to

explain the instructions to the client and to talk them through the body scan in a calm, soothing voice.

It is important that the client is able to participate in this exercise within a quiet and comfortable space, with the option of sitting on the floor or on a chair, or lying down. Allow your client to find a position that is comfortable for them. If they choose to lie on the floor, a good meditative stance would be to lie flat on their back, with their arms by their sides and palms facing upwards. The knees can be supported by a cushion if this position causes discomfort for their back.

*Instructions for your client:*

1. Close your eyes and get in touch with your breathing. Bring your attention to your breathing and slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Notice the way your abdomen moves outwards and air is drawn into your lungs.
2. Bring awareness to the physical sensations in your body. Notice any sensations of touch, pressure or aches.
3. Bring the focus of your awareness to your left foot and out to the toes. Focus on each toe and the sensations that may be present such as tingling, warmth or coolness. When you are ready, let go of the awareness of the toes and bring your awareness to the sensations of the sole of the foot, the heel and instep. Be aware of your breathing in the background as you explore the sensations of your foot. You can imagine you are sending each breath exhalation down your leg and out your foot.
4. Then move your awareness to your ankle, imagining your out breath flooding the ankle and notice any sensations that you may feel. On an out breath let go of your foot completely and allow your awareness to scan up your left leg slowly, from your shin up to your knee and thigh. Accept any tension or discomfort in your leg. Then do the same process for your right leg.
5. Now focus on your abdomen. Feel it rising as you inhale and sink as you slowly breathe out. Take a few moments to become aware of the changes and sensations in your stomach as you breathe in and out.
6. Continue to bring awareness to each part of the body in turn, with a gentle curiosity of the physical sensations in your back, chest, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, head and face. As you move on from each body part, let go with an out breath.
7. Once you have scanned your body wholly, spend a moment being aware of the sensations in your body as a whole and the breath flowing generously in and out of your body. Feel how everything in your body is connected and let any sensations come to you. Slowly sit up when you are ready.

*Important points to remember:*

- It is okay if your mind wanders, it is inevitable that it will be drawn away from time to time and you will find yourself thinking about something else. During early practice, you may have to bring your attention back to the scan over and over again, but this is okay.

- If thoughts appear, gently acknowledge what your mind has drifted to and then bring your awareness back to your breath, shifting your focus to the part of the body that you have reached.
- If you reach parts of the body where there is tension or other sensations that feel particularly intense, then you can breathe in to them by gently inhaling and bringing awareness to the sensation and as best as you can, let them go while you breathe out.
- If you feel sleepy, try doing the practice with your eyes open or in a sitting position.

Some clients will worry about whether they are doing the scan correctly or feel that they can't relax. It is important to remind them that the purpose is not to relax, although it does happen. If a client does not feel relaxed, then they simply bring awareness to the tension in their body. Clients must be aware that there is no particular goal to achieve such as relaxation; rather the purpose is to just notice whatever is present within the body and mind without judgment. Clients are encouraged to acknowledge the presence of sensations in the body and observe them with curiosity and then redirecting their attention back to the body scan.

## **2.5 Sitting Meditation**

Sitting meditation is a mindful practice that involves bringing awareness to your breathing, bodily sensations, thoughts, emotions and the environment. Each sensation is observed without judgment and then awareness is shifted back to your breathing.

Mindful sitting is a common meditative practice which can be done in various positions, either cross legged on the floor or a cushion or upright on a seat or in a kneeling position. For the mindful sitting or sitting meditation exercise, clients will sit in a position that is comfortable and encourages alertness and relaxation. It helps to choose an area that is quiet and undisturbed. The posture adopted is one where the back is straight, though not rigid, and is in alignment with the head and neck. This position will help you breathe more easily. Eyes can be either closed or gazing downwards. For sitting meditation practice, you are encouraged to adopt an attitude of acceptance and autonomy.

*Instructions for your client:*

1. When you take your position take a moment to settle into your body and become centered before you bring your attention to the sensations and movement of breath through your body. The mind may wander frequently and you can gently redirect your attention back to your breathing. Focus on your breath for several minutes before moving on.
2. Shift your attention to your bodily sensations. Take note of the contact your body has with the chair or floor and the sensations associated with this. Notice the sensations in your body without judgment, just accept them and reflect on them with curiosity and interest, even if it is unpleasant.

3. Bring awareness to any urges you may have to relieve discomfort, such as moving your body or scratching an itch. Do not act on these urges right away, instead just observe the discomfort with acceptance. If you decide to move then do it mindfully, by observing the intention to move and the change in sensation as a result of moving.
4. You may bring awareness to your environment and listen mindfully to the sounds around you. Notice the volume, tone and duration of the sounds without analyzing or judging them. Observe the periods of silence between the sounds also and then redirect your focus to your breathing.

*Important points to remember:*

- It is okay if thoughts come into your awareness as this is normal activity for the mind. Observe the thought content briefly without becoming absorbed and then gently return to the breath. You may do this many times over, but what is important is that you observe and accept the thoughts and then return your attention to your breath.
- Similarly, with emotions that come to the forefront, just observe the type of emotion you are experiencing (such as sadness, anger, boredom) and then redirect your focus to your breathing.
- Sitting meditation is most beneficial when it is incorporated into a daily routine for a period of 10-45 minutes.

## **2.6 Walking Meditation**

Walking meditation is the act of walking mindfully. Attention is deliberately concentrated on the bodily sensations whilst walking to develop a greater awareness. To eliminate the goal of reaching a destination and to bring focus to the sensation of walking, encourage your client to walk back and forth across a room. The purpose of this exercise is to simply be aware of walking and stay in the present.

Walking meditation can be a good introductory exercise to mindfulness practice as it can be less anxiety provoking and uncomfortable than a sitting or lying meditation.

*Instructions for your client:*

1. Start by standing upright in one spot and be aware of the weight of your body transferred through your feet onto the ground. Be aware of the muscles in your body that keep you upright and balanced. To adopt a mindful walking posture, your gaze will be straight ahead rather than looking at your feet
2. Begin walking at a slow pace in your normal manner and bring your awareness to the shift of weight and balance in the feet and legs whilst you walk. Notice how your heel makes contact with the ground first and then sole of the foot rolls forward onto the ball and then lifts into the air. Be aware of the contact between

- your toes and the sensation of your shoes. Observe your ankle joints and how they move with your foot as you walk. Try to relax your ankle joint and notice the sensations in your shins and calf muscles.
3. Move your awareness up to your knees and the sensations in these joints and then scan up to your thighs. Notice any sensations where your clothes have contact with your body, the temperature on your skin.
  4. Bring awareness to your hips by relaxing the surrounding muscles. Notice the way your pelvis moves with each step.
  5. Continue shifting your awareness up your body, relaxing your shoulders and neck and noticing the position of your head. Try lifting your chin up high and notice the different sensations in your body.
  6. Try not to get caught up in what is happening around you. Just let your thoughts go and observe the view, noticing other walkers, feeling the wind or temperature on your skin.
  7. Keep bringing your focus back to your breathing during this exercise.
  8. When you are ready to stop walking, bring yourself to a natural halt without freezing on the spot. Just experience the sensation of standing and notice what it is like to no longer be moving.

*Important points to remember:*

- As in other meditative exercises, if your mind drifts off, then gently bring your attention back to the sensation of walking.
- Walking meditation can be incorporated into daily routine such as walking to and from your car from work or doing the grocery shopping.
- When learning mindful walking, it can be helpful to start with twenty minute exercises in a room or in a park and when you have got the hang of bringing awareness to the sensation of walking you can start doing shorter bouts in your daily life.

## **2.7 Mindfulness in daily life**

Mindfulness is most beneficial when it is applied to routine activities in daily life. Whether you are washing the dishes, driving, grocery shopping or eating, mindful awareness of each moment can lead to greater self-awareness and improves your ability to make adaptive decisions when problematic situations arise. It also enhances your level of enjoyment of pleasant moments that occur.

When working with clients who are experiencing stress in their lives, mindfulness can be incorporated into their treatment and is particularly useful for clients with low impulse control and unregulated emotions.

Everyday mindfulness involves focusing awareness on an aspect of a routine habit that is usually unconscious. For instance, being aware of what happens to your breathing and the physical sensations in your body that occur during an argument. This may include

shallower breathing, increased heart rate and sweating. If a client is able to associate these physiological changes with an emotion such as anxiety or anger, then they can have a better understanding of habitual reactions to unpleasantness (or pleasantness) including the associated thoughts, emotions sensations and the relationship between these and the behavior. They will also be more likely able to recognize these signs earlier rather than at a point of escalation.

Ways to incorporate mindfulness into daily life:

1. Mindful breathing- Clients are encouraged to turn their attention to their breathing at any moment during the day to increase self-awareness and insight and reduce automatic and maladaptive behaviors.
2. Mindful walking- as discussed earlier, mindful walking can be incorporated into daily life, whether it is walking to your car or walking around a supermarket. It is a way of engaging in mindful meditation whilst in action.
3. Environmental cues- Clients are encouraged to use environmental cues such as waiting at a red light or receiving the wrong meal at a restaurant as an opportunity to utilize mindful practice. Recognizing physical sensations as well as thoughts and emotions associated with the situation.
4. De-stressing- Throughout the day, clients can deliberately focus their attention inward. They can begin by asking themselves what is happening for them at the moment. Observe thoughts, sensations and emotions they experience. When intense emotions arise, they can label the feeling e.g. sadness or anger and then not become caught up in the emotion, rather let it drift away through meditative breathing.

## **2.8 Managing Distractions in Mindful Practice**

Many people find mindfulness practice difficult in the beginning as it is so different to what we are used to doing in our ordinary busy lives.

It is the role of the therapist to explore setbacks and distractions that clients experience during mindfulness to assist them in getting the most out of their practice. Therapists are encouraged to refrain from providing advice or behavior change strategies and instead focus on exploring the client's experience of mindfulness practice. Therapists should model a curious, open, accepting and non-judgmental attitude towards the clients experience and help to create a safe environment for client disclosures.

Sleepiness, distractions and self-doubt are common setbacks to mindful practice. Strategies to improve mindful practice with these difficulties are discussed:

- Sleepiness: Some clients find that mindful meditation can make them sleepy or restless. Or perhaps they were feeling sleepy to begin with. In this case, mindfulness can be used to observe the state of sleepiness and take an attitude of non-judgment. If your client is feeling sleepy, this does not mean that they are

doing the practice wrong, they just need to acknowledge their state and then return to their breath as many times as needed. For clients that are feeling sleepy, encourage them to focus on their nostrils rather than their abdomen during mindful breathing.

- **Self-doubt:** It is common for some clients to doubt their ability to participate in mindful practice successfully. They may make self-deprecating comments or voice that they aren't doing it 'right.' It is important to remind your client that there is no right or wrong way to do mindfulness as it is a process not a goal oriented practice. If clients are feeling agitated or anxious, encourage them to focus on their stomach whilst breathing as there is likely to be some physical sensations in relation to these emotions.
- **Thought distractions:** A common expectation of mindful meditation is that we should be able to clear our mind. However, it is normal for the human mind to wander and it is important that clients do not feel they have failed the practice if they frequently get distracted from their focus. Encourage the client to acknowledge that their mind has wandered, observe the thoughts without getting caught up in the content and then return to their focus. It is okay if this happens many times over.

#### *Tips for mindfulness:*

- Try not to eat within the hour of doing meditative practice, particularly the body scan as the feeling of fullness can prevent you from having a relaxed mind and body.
- Dim the lights to prepare your body for a calm resting period
- Ensure that there are no external distractions such as cell phones, television or dogs barking.
- Wear comfortable clothing and no shoes
- Morning is a preferable time for mindful practice as it sets the scene for the day or if you choose to meditate in the evening it is recommended that you do so prior to dinner.
- Make mindfulness a ritualistic practice. For sitting meditation it may be helpful to find a special place that is conducive to practice. Some people find candles or soft music calming and helps them to prepare for the exercises.

It is the role of the therapist to enhance the client's experience of mindful practice by exploring setbacks and modeling mindful attitudes towards the self.

### **3. Specific Applications**

Research has shown how mindfulness can benefit a range of disorders. Common mental health issues that clients present for to deal with in therapy are depression and anxiety. Mindfulness meditation techniques can benefit these populations and they will benefit from these approaches to improve their emotional wellbeing. Therapists need to have a thorough understanding of how depression and anxiety can be improved with mindfulness and the links between mental illness and lack of mindfulness. Eating disorders and relapse prevention are other areas covered that can benefit from mindfulness training.

#### **3.1 Mindfulness with depressed clients**

Depression is a commonly experienced mental health problem amongst children, adolescents and adults. Mindfulness based approaches have been shown to be effective in treating depression.

Depression is a state of mind characterized by sadness, hopelessness, apathy, fatigue and low motivation. Clients with depression dwell on the perceived shortcomings of themselves or others. They often feel resentful, irritable or angry and may suffer from various physical complaints. Usual daily rhythms become out of sync and they experience difficulties with sleep and appetite- either too much or too little. In severe depression, suicide is considered.

Depression can produce many unpleasant physical ailments such as stomach pains, chest pain, headaches, muscle tension and susceptibility to illness. Mindfulness works to get the client back in touch with their bodily sensations, to observe and accept them and then to let go of the thoughts and emotions associated with them.

Depressed clients often become overwhelmed by their negative thoughts and emotions and they can lose touch with the present moment. Mindfulness training shows clients how to get back in touch with the experience of being active and present. Mindfulness helps stop the escalation of negative thoughts that become caught up in the past and upsetting memories and teaches clients to focus on the present moment. It puts a stop to the thoughts that create the negative emotions associated with depression. Mindfulness creates a shift in thinking from rumination to non-judgment and acceptance.

Mindfulness helps depressed clients to:

- Understand their depression
- Discover what makes them vulnerable and identify triggers for their depression
- Recognize the connections between themes such as high expectations and standards of ourselves that contribute to feelings of worthlessness

For former depression sufferers, mindfulness can help clients identify patterns in their mood and recognize the onset of a low mood to manage it before it escalates. Mindfulness training teaches clients to fully experience the emotions and be open even to those that are unpleasant or painful.

Some people are enticed into believing that if they avoid their feelings or pretend the symptoms of depression are not there then the negative thoughts will not affect them. However this does not address the thoughts and emotions associated with the low mood, it just prolongs them. Mindfulness allows clients to experience the temporary nature of emotions and thoughts and to experience and accept them as they come and go- without fighting them. Soon realizing that unwanted feelings and thoughts can be held in awareness but bring compassion to the suffering that is being experienced.

Mindfulness teaches clients that they are not their thoughts. Thoughts are transient and will fade if they don't become absorbed in them. Practicing mindfulness makes clients an expert on their own mind and they can identify negative thoughts before they consume them.

Research has suggested that former depression sufferers who engage in a mindful meditation training program were less likely to experience a recurring depressive episode.

Mindfulness is based on the assumption that most unwanted inner experiences cannot be eliminated or controlled, so they must be accepted with a non-judgmental attitude. When you learn that you have no control over some aspects of your internal experiences then you can use that energy towards the things in your life you can control.

Mindfulness techniques can be integrated into a cognitive-behavioral treatment program to provide clients with a comprehensive skill base for managing their depression.

### **3.2 Mindfulness in anxious clients**

There are a range of anxiety disorders that are prevalent among children, adolescents and adults. There a range of anxiety disorders such as generalized anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder and phobias. Mindfulness based approaches have been shown to be effective in treating various anxiety symptoms.

The most common anxiety disorder is generalized anxiety disorder which is characterized by excessive anxiety and worry about various events and activities. It is usually accompanied by other symptoms including; restlessness, fatigue, difficulties concentrating, irritability, muscle tension and sleep disturbances.

Normal worry is generally short-lived, however unhelpful worrying is when clients worry about a variety of things on a frequent basis and it does not result in problem solving behavior. Clients who have ruminating thoughts engage in analyzing their problems over and over without constructively solving the problem. They become stuck in their negative

thinking patterns. The client must learn the nature of their anxiety which is fuelled by a coping strategy that attempts to avoid unpleasant sensations.

Anxious clients may have beliefs that their worrying is uncontrollable or that they are going crazy. They will often try to avoid their inner experiences through avoidant behavior, but avoiding confrontation of worrisome thoughts only sustains the worrying thoughts.

People who are anxious often worry about the past (regret, guilt) or worry about the future, but mindfulness can help stop the escalation of these negative thoughts and teaches people to focus on the present moment. Mindfulness is applied to anxiety with non-judgmental observation of thoughts, emotions and sensations. It uses therapeutic exposure to the primary emotional difficulties and seeks to interrupt the internal processes that sustain unnecessary anxiety.

Mindfulness helps anxious clients to:

- Understand their anxiety
- Discover what makes them vulnerable and identify triggers for negative thoughts
- Recognize the connections between themes such as worry and difficulties coping with uncertainty and how they escalate anxiety
- To put a stop to ruminating thoughts and a spiral of negative thinking by separating the thoughts and letting them go

Worrying is not a constructive problem solving technique, it involves repetitive thinking which is associated with heightened anxiety. Mindfulness allows the client to label the worry as 'just worrying' and then refocus their attention to their breath and the present moment. Every time their mind wanders to worrisome thoughts, they are encouraged to label the thought and then shift their focus. This technique requires a non-judgmental attitude, so the client will label the worrying as 'just worrying' not with judgments such as 'stop worrying' or 'don't worry.'

Mindfulness is a way of separating from or letting go of the negative thoughts. It involves practicing how to notice when thoughts automatically drift away with worries and then skillfully refocusing attention back to the present moment. Mindfulness does not necessarily mean switching off from negative thoughts; rather it changes how the thoughts are perceived.

Anxiety sufferers often find it difficult to cope with the uncertainties in life. Uncertainty is usually perceived as unpleasant or even agonizing. Clients who are anxious try to avoid feelings or situations of uncertainty. Worrying may be seen as a way of preparing oneself for the unexpected. It can help them feel that life is predictable and they believe that they have more control and certainty in their life. Realistically, the worry hasn't made anything more certain and doesn't change anything. Trying to control the uncertainties in life is focused on the future, rather than the present.

Mindfulness helps anxiety sufferers accept the uncertainties in life and become more focused on the present moment, rather than the future. It allows them to be aware of what they are feeling in their body (e.g. anxiety), to label the thoughts or feelings and to remain present, without letting thoughts drift to worries about the future. It is important that clients are encouraged to be non-judgmental towards their inner experiences and bring a gentle curiosity to the thoughts that drift without trying to change them. Then return the focus back to the present moment, focusing on the breath.

Mindfulness takes regular practice and anxiety sufferers may find it difficult to learn these strategies as it is so different from what they are used to. It is the role of the therapist to model and mentor the client through the mindful learning process.

Mindfulness techniques can be integrated into a cognitive-behavioral treatment program to provide clients with a comprehensive skill base for managing their anxiety.

### **3.3 Mindfulness in relapse prevention**

Substance abuse disorders include addictions to alcohol, drugs and nicotine. Substance misuse can have detrimental effects to the psychological, physical, emotional, relational and financial wellbeing of those using. Substance addictions stems from an inability to accept unpleasant sensations in the present moment and a persistent desire to avoid them.

Mindfulness helps substance abusers to recognize that they can have some control over their behavior; they have an opportunity to improve their lifestyle and address the lifestyle imbalances to improve overall coping strategies.

Mindfulness helps substance abusers to:

- Understand their addiction
- Discover what makes them vulnerable and identify triggers for their behavior
- Have control over urges and cravings for substances
- Acknowledge and label unpleasant thoughts and emotions and discourage avoidant behavior

Studies have found that incorporating mindfulness into a relapse prevention program has had the following effects for clients: decreased psychological and physical symptoms, greater ability to cope with stress, self-awareness and less substance abuse relapses.

Mindfulness has found its place in relapse prevention to help minimize relapses in substance abuse problems. Mindfulness teaches substance abusers that emotions and thoughts are transient and to stick out the urge or craving without giving into it. In doing this they learn that the urge will pass. Substance abusers are taught to accept the urges with an attitude of non-judgment.

Alan Marlatt founded the term 'urge surfing' as a mindful technique for managing a variety of addictions including substance abuse, gambling, eating problems and sexual impulses. The internal struggle for the substance fuels the cravings and this can become quite overwhelming. Mindfulness allows substance abusers to step aside and let the water flow past. Often clients will try to eliminate the urge by avoiding them or distracting them, however the more they try to avoid it the more likely they are to give in to them due to a lack of awareness about the triggers and thoughts/ feelings associated with the cravings. Mindfulness teaches clients to just let the urge be, without fighting it or feeding it until it passes. The craving will reappear for a period of time, but the intensity of the craving will diminish over time.

'Urge surfing' is an extension of sitting meditation and body scan techniques. It involves imagining that the urges are like waves from the ocean that arrive and peak and then fall away. Substance abusers learn to ride the wave of the urge by using mindfulness until it passes. It is important that the breath is continually refocused on and to notice any thoughts that enter the mind without judging them. Clients are also encouraged to notice the craving experience in the body and the physical sensations associated with the urge. Clients learn to approach their craving with interest in their inner experience rather than wishing it will go away.

This is a skill that takes time to learn and must be practiced frequently. The skill can be learned from more basic urges such as the urge to scratch, eat, move, drink and go to the toilet. With mindfulness, clients can learn to observe these urges without changing the discomfort experienced and so they replace aversion with curiosity. Clients are guided through the urge by noticing the physical sensation, the quality of the sensation, temperature, the boundaries of the sensation and how the intensity varies with each breath cycle. When the mind drifts to thoughts, clients learn to notice the thoughts and then come back to the physical sensations of the urge.

It is the role of the therapist to guide the client through the sensations of the urge. Ask them how the urge feels in their body and return their attention to the body if they become distracted by thoughts. The more practice clients have of managing urges in therapy, the more confident they will be to use mindfulness techniques in their daily life to manage more complex cravings such as addictions.

### **3.4 Mindfulness in eating disorders**

Eating disorders are problematic in both sexes particularly during adolescence and early adulthood. It can have a detrimental impact on the sufferer's mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

The primary features of eating disorders include disturbances in body shape and weight, unhealthy eating patterns, and compensatory behaviors such as self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise, fasting or misuse of laxatives.

Mindfulness techniques have found its place within eating disorder treatment plans to help improve outcomes for clients. Clients with eating disorders often set high personal expectations for themselves which lead to negative thoughts and unpleasant feelings, resulting in a desire to escape from self-awareness.

Mindfulness teaches those with eating disorders to adopt a non-judgmental attitude to their bodily sensations, thoughts and emotions. It increases their ability to notice hunger and fullness cues and enhances their willingness to sit with unpleasant emotions that usually trigger disordered eating behavior. It teaches them to choose adaptive behaviors in stressful situations rather than reactivity.

Mindfulness helps clients with eating disorders to

- Understand their triggers
- Self-regulate and identify basic cues such as hunger and satiety
- Be more in touch with their body, thoughts and emotions
- Be non-judgmental and release intense feelings of shame

Guided eating meditations can be used with clients who have eating disorders to address specific issues relating to self-regulatory processes such as appetite and hunger cues. This process is integrated into daily routines related to eating and food cravings. Clients focus on non-judgment during eating meditations and to focus their attention on the sensations, emotions and thoughts that arise in relation to triggers. The non-judgmental stance helps provide an alternative to the shame and embarrassment often accompanied with an eating disorder. Mindfulness works to allow the transience of thoughts and emotions to move on.

Meditations can begin with simple foods such as fruits and then move towards more complex foods such as a meal or dessert. Mindfulness techniques that aim to increase self-regulation are complementary to the dysregulation of behavior, emotions, thoughts and urges common in eating disorders.

The difficulty a therapist faces in teaching mindfulness to an eating disordered client is to convince them of the value in mindfulness and how to introduce meditation techniques to the client. In particular, binge eating and bulimic clients have a history of trying many different diets and may not be open to an approach that is not a quick fix. The one minute meditation exercise may be a soft approach to trialing mindful techniques with a client who has an eating disorder. Mindfulness can be promoted as a more enduring approach to managing their emotions, thoughts and behaviors associated with eating. Mindfulness is complementary to various other approaches to treating eating disorders.

## **4. The Mindful Therapist**

Therapists who practice mindfulness can reap benefits for not only their clients but also their own personal and professional lives. Mindfulness plays an important role in self-care and preventing burnout- a workplace hazard amongst the helping profession.

### **4.1 Enriched client experience**

Mindfulness is an experiential skill that requires practice and training just like playing a sport or learning a musical instrument. To teach mindfulness you need to have some mastery of the skill. Thus it is important that therapists have more than a basic understanding of the principles of mindfulness and meditation techniques. This continuity of experience creates an environment where the therapist can tune into the clients experience and modify the techniques to their specific needs.

Mindfulness allows us to be fully present with a client which can further enrich the client's experience of therapy. If a therapist is more present in the relationship, then they can be more empathetic. Mindfulness allows therapists to stay focused and present, even when the client is not. As a therapist we sometimes get caught up in the middle of our client's emotional distress, can lose focus and become absorbed in the content of their issues. Mindfulness assists therapists to stay more grounded, centered and composed in these circumstances, giving clients a unique and enriched therapeutic relationship.

If a client experiences a model of mindfulness in the therapeutic encounter where there are attitudes of non-judgment and acceptance and encouragement of self-awareness and observation then they will feel more confident in implementing the techniques.

### **4.2 Enhanced skills**

Being a mindful therapist, allows you to find generosity in the present moment. Therapists who practice mindfulness techniques develop a deeper way of relating to clients that enables them to be more compassionate and able to provide unconditional positive regard.

Therapists who engage in mindfulness training will gain additional tools that are crucial in treating a range of mental health issues and lead their clients to greater life fulfillment. Non-judgmental attitudes and acceptance of our clients can help therapists adopt a wholesome approach to therapeutic outcomes that is objective and beneficial for the client. Mindfulness can increase a therapist's skill in observing clients' responses. It can also improve the therapist's skill in observing their own thoughts and emotions that arise during therapy.

Mindfulness training provides therapists with practical skills that focus on daily life and enable us to extend our inner resources to cope better, be more resilient and to provide hope of happiness.

Mindfulness can bring personal peace for the therapist and a greater focus in work. But it can also give therapists a greater enjoyment of the present moment. As a therapist, if you can experience the full benefits of mindfulness, then your ability and authenticity in teaching these techniques will be heightened. We learn mindfulness by experiencing mindfulness and in turn can better teach it.

### **4.3 Self- care**

Working as a therapist can not only be a highly rewarding role but also quite emotionally demanding. As therapists we work intimately with clients and listen to their problems, losses and achievements. In every client encounter we are juggling attunement with our clients experience whilst we manage our own, thoughts, emotions and behaviors. Many personal and professional issues can influence the effectiveness of the therapists practice.

Given the nature of a therapists work, we are at risk of developing burnout, also known as compassion fatigue. These terms have been defined as a condition where helping professionals are in a state of emotional exhaustion, diminishing empathy and reduced effectiveness in their role which arises as a result of cumulative stress.

By learning mindfulness and cultivating a deeper presence of awareness, therapists can experience personal and professional benefits. Through the mindful process of acknowledging thoughts, feelings, urges and sensations as they arise and then letting them go, the likelihood of cumulative stress influencing the therapeutic relationship is greatly minimized. It can provide therapists with a calmness that will conserve and foster their own wellbeing and enables them to be more self-caring and skillful.

Additionally, mindful practice can assist therapists to be more aware of their own emotions to ensure that they do not detrimentally influence the therapeutic relationship. Mindfulness helps therapists to address their own problems rather than avoiding or suppressing them which can come through in therapy.

Research supports that mindfulness practitioners are more likely to have satisfaction at work, mental and emotional wellbeing, and lower experiences of compassion fatigue. Therapists who teach mindfulness are encouraged to engage in mindfulness practice regularly to further develop skills and self-awareness.

## 5. Summary

This course has provided an introduction to mindfulness in psychology and how to apply it to psychotherapy with clients. You will now be better equipped to use mindfulness techniques in therapy to improve outcomes for your clients.

Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness training that involves paying attention purposefully and remaining in the present moment. The two core components of mindfulness practice involve self-regulation and acceptance.

Mindfulness originates in eastern meditative practices and Buddhism belief systems but has since emerged as secular non-religious therapeutic techniques. Regardless of religion, mindfulness training involves learning a set of skills that can be applicable to daily life.

Anyone can benefit from mindfulness training, no matter what age, gender and religion. There are various benefits to learning mindfulness which includes self-awareness, emotion regulation, stress management, creativity, enhanced relationships and improved health.

There is abundance of research which supports the usefulness of integrating mindfulness training in clinical interventions with chronic pain, borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, depression and anxiety. Mindfulness techniques can be incorporated into therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and relapse prevention. The most common mindfulness training program is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn.

The core principles of mindfulness are attention, awareness and acceptance as well as focusing on the breath and acknowledging thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness training involves learning various techniques that encourage mindfulness and self-awareness. The most common method is sitting meditations and body scans where attention is focused on the breathing and specific parts of the body. Meditation can also be engaged in actively whilst eating and walking also. The purpose of these techniques is to teach clients to apply mindfulness to routine daily activities such as driving, shopping or washing the dishes.

Many people find mindfulness practice difficult in the beginning and so it is the role of the therapist to explore setbacks and distractions in mindfulness practice whilst being non-judgmental and accepting.

This course explored the specific applications of mindfulness to anxious and depressed clients. Mindfulness helps them understand their difficulties, identify triggers and stop them from becoming absorbed in negative thoughts. The value of mindfulness in eating disorders and relapse prevention was also covered to increase distress tolerance and resistance to urges.

Mindfulness is also valuable for therapists to learn to further develop their practice. It can have both professional and personal benefits. If a therapist is more present in the relationship they can find a deeper way of relating to the client which provides them with an enriched relational experience. Mindfulness practice as a therapist can also reduce the risk of burnout.

Throughout this course you have attained a greater understanding of the philosophy and principles behind mindfulness, how to apply practical techniques with clients and the importance of practicing it as a professional if you want to get the best outcomes for your clients.

<END>

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Executive Director

# “Mindfulness in Psychology”

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*(IF you FAX us your Evaluations do NOT mail them. Please WRITE NEATLY so you get your CEUs.)*

## “Mindfulness in Psychology”

This **3** Hour CEU Course is **\$49.00**

CIRCLE: Master Card   Visa   Discover Card   American Express   Check Enclosed

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail:** PeachTree Professional Education, Inc.  
7107 S. Yale, Suite 370 \* Tulsa, OK 74136  
**Phone:** (800) 390-9536   **Fax:** (888) 877-6020

## EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUIZ - PAGE 2 of 4

### “Mindfulness in Psychology”

#### 3 Hours of Approved Continuing Education Credit

*The purpose of the following Evaluation of Learning questions is to:*

- A.) Verify that you have read the required course materials
- B.) Demonstrate an understanding of the practical application of the course materials
- C.) Officially document your participation and completion of this course

#### **➡ ANSWER THE 20 EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUESTIONS – TRUE/ FALSE.**

- T F 1.** I have read all of the required reading material for this course.
- T F 2.** Mindfulness can be used as a stand alone treatment approach, or used as complementary to a therapist’s existing psychotherapy skill set.
- T F 3.** Mindfulness is a brand new psychological concept recently understood.
- T F 4.** The purpose of mindfulness is to skillfully respond to cognitive processes that contribute to emotional anguish and maladaptive behavior.
- T F 5.** Detachment and lucid dreaming is the stance that is taken towards each moment of experience in mindfulness.
- T F 6.** Mindfulness has been conceptualized into a set of skills that can be taught separate to any religious followings.
- T F 7.** Empirical support for mindfulness based techniques in therapy has strengthened over recent decades.
- T F 8.** Mindful meditation aspires to improve the well-being of people and promote enjoyment and appreciation of life.
- T F 9.** Mindfulness is a complementary therapy that can help treat and prevent stress-related disorders such as anxiety, panic attacks, depression, substance abuse and a range of physical conditions such as ulcers and chronic pain.
- T F 10.** Research has shown that people who mindfully meditate regularly report greater satisfaction in relationships.

**CONTINUED →**

## **EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUIZ - PAGE 3 of 4**

### **“Mindfulness in Psychology”**

**3 Hours of Approved Continuing Education Credit**

***(CONTINUED)***

- T F 11.** Mindfulness can be practiced by anyone, no matter what age, gender, religion or socioeconomic status.
- T F 12.** Mindfulness teaches people to better manage difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviors to improve their overall wellbeing.
- T F 13.** MBSR is the most well known mindfulness training program used by clinicians.
- T F 14.** Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is competing therapy that does not use mindfulness.
- T F 15.** Clients who undertake a DBT program only have undefined physical pain that is "in their head".
- T F 16.** ACT sees mindfulness meditation as one way amongst many of learning skills to be aware, focused and open to experience.
- T F 17.** A simple way to introduce mindful meditation is to do a brief exercise that will take only one minute.
- T F 18.** The Body Scan is a meditation technique, where attention is focused to various parts of the body, from the toes up to the head.
- T F 19.** Mindfulness is most beneficial when it is applied to routine activities in daily life.
- T F 20.** Mindfulness is an experiential skill that requires practice and training just like playing a sport or learning a musical instrument.

## **GRADE THIS ONLINE COURSE! – Page 4**

*It is helpful to us if you return this form via snail mail or fax, along with your Quiz and Payment, if you are not completing the form online.  
Thank-you!*

### **Participant Assessment of Home Study CEU Course**

## **“Mindfulness in Psychology”**

### **3 Credit Hours**

**Please Rate the Following Statements from 1-5**

**(1 being the Lowest, 5 being the Highest.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I found the PeachTree Online Home Study Course Instructions simple to follow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I found the PeachTree Online Home Study Course materials to be of professional quality, and easy to read.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I found the PeachTree Online Home Study Course materials to be of educational value, relative, and useful to my counseling practice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I completed the 3 Hour PeachTree Online Home Study Course in approximately 3 hours.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I would take another PeachTree Online Home Study Course, and/or recommend them to a co-worker.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**