

Sitting Meditation Overview

- Overview of orientation
 - Teamwork exercises
 - Name, favorite ice cream flavor or dessert/interesting fact
 - Any experience with/ perceptions of mindfulness?
 - Class Guidelines (have class set their own)
 - This is a safe space. Respect each other. Confidentiality.
 - We are here for you.
 - No wrong experience. Appreciate that others will experience this different from you.
 - Not a perfect thing
 - Mindfulness is not tied to any religious or external belief system
 - Participation
 - Attentiveness to one's experience as the primary "data."
 - Not required to speak in class, but we will have small group reflections and the larger group, and you can participate as much or as little as you like
 - I am not the expert; we all are our own experts in what works and what doesn't
 - Questions always welcome.
 - Any other guidelines?
 - Brief history of MBSR and the Stress Reduction Clinic (SRC) (adapt for local venue as needed) **(5 min)**

MINDFULNESS ORIGINS

- Mindfulness has many origins and influences, and is believed to have been practiced in different shapes and forms for thousands of years -- some commentators argue that the history of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism and Hinduism, and also has roots in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Trousselard et al., 2014). But the first two are which primarily influence mindfulness in the US.
- Mindfulness has been intertwined with Hinduism for millennia. It is included in the Bhagavad Gita's (hindu scripture) discussions of yoga to Vedic meditation, and and its concepts are intertwined with Hindu history and culture
- Mindfulness is also tied with Buddhism, as mindfulness (Sanskrit: Sati) is considered to be the first step towards enlightenment in Buddhism. In fact, some sources even consider the English word "mindfulness" to be a simple translation of the Buddhist concept of Sati. The fact that mindfulness is such a crucial aspect of Buddhism combined with the fact that many Western influences in mindfulness studied under Buddhist teachers shows that Western mindfulness is largely indebted to Buddhism.

MINDFULNESS IN AMERICA

- Perhaps the biggest influence on bringing mindfulness from the East to the West, at least recently, was Jon Kabat-Zinn (PhD in Biology). He founded the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the Oasis Institute for Mindfulness-Based Professional Education and Training in these practices. This is also where Kabat-Zinn developed his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, an eight-week program aimed at anyone looking to reduce their levels of stress through mindfulness practices -- THIS IS WHAT OUR WORKSHOP IS BASED ON
- Kabat-Zinn learned about and studied mindfulness under several Buddhist teachers, including Thich Nhat Hanh (an influential and popular figure in Western mindfulness himself). This gave him an Eastern foundation in mindfulness that he integrated with Western science to develop MBSR. This integration with Western science was a crucial aspect in helping mindfulness gain widespread popularity in the West.
- MBSR served as an inspiration for another mindfulness-based therapy program, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), aimed at treating Major Depressive Disorder. Roles: positive psychology, chronic pain/chronic illness, mental illness, even sports and competition
- Used as a tool to relax, control, and focus the mind to promote wellness
<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/history-of-mindfulness/>

Overview of practice today

- **Sitting meditation**
- Goal: Buddhist term Satipaṭṭhāna (SA-tee-pa-TAH-na) (buddhist practice). **Place where you are observing your thoughts, and not caught up in the thinking of these thoughts as much as you are “watching them”**. So often that we get distracted in our lives, and run in autopilot, and often times stress can get in that way without our awareness of it. Our goal today is to try to break out of that autopilot, if even for a second, and use awareness to balance our mind.
- **Don't worry if you get distracted**
- **I'll mark the beginning and end of practice with a bell**
 - What are the expectations for this? Any questions?
 - Gauge room and have discussion

Sitting Meditation Practice

Intro

- Comfortable
 - Straight, but relaxed posture, with your head, neck, and back aligned vertically. Allows for easy breath and embodies the inner attitudes of self-acceptance, and alert attention yet level and calm that we are cultivating.
 - Either on a chair or on the floor -- straight back is most important (if on chair then sit forward in chair to allow back to straighten)

- Quick body scan to reposition and get comfortable
- “We call the heart of the formal meditation practice “sitting meditation” or simply “sitting.” As with breathing, sitting is not foreign to anyone. We all sit, nothing special about that. But mindful sitting is different from ordinary sitting in the same way that mindful breathing is different from ordinary breathing. The difference, of course, is your awareness.”
- Looking into ourselves
- Create a place, set aside the constant “doing”, “non-doing” = “being”
- Stillness, Slowness
- Awareness and Acceptance

Breathing

- **Focus on BREATH only**
 - **Noticing how your abdomen moves on each in-breath and out-breath**
 - **Movement of air through your nostrils**
 - **Slight movement of chest and shoulders.**
 - **Just bring your awareness to your breath cycle and wherever it is the most vivid, notice it, picture it in your head in whatever way it makes sense, whether it is just feeling it, imagining it in a picture, focusing on the sound of it. This is personal, and whatever feels the most comfortable/natural is most likely the best method.**
 - **Noticing the entirety of breath, from the movement of the air coming in, and filling the lungs, and extending the abdomen slightly, the movement of air going out, and being aware of the pause, the stopping point**
 - **Where are all the points you can feel the in breath, and in what order – first nostrils maybe, and then throat, then where?**
 - **Maybe even try to notice it in other less conventional places – legs, feet**
 - **Metaphor: like a stream – (how does it feel when it is flowing smoothly and when it is not?)**
 - **Try to occupy your mind with this breath awareness, be aware of this and nothing else (breath is the sustenance for life, never ever ends, even in sleep, and it is a powerful aspect of life and sustenance)**
 - **When you get distracted, please accept this distraction, and don’t scold yourself or try to force yourself to do better. Simply acknowledge and accept that you got distracted (this is important to recognize the movement of your attention), and gently refocus new attention on the breath once more.**
- **Use attention to breath to start focusing on MIND**
 - **Use same type of attention we are already using**
 - **When you are ready, gently shifting your awareness from sensations of breath, to thoughts of the mind**
 - **** Different ways to acknowledge (mantra based, or simple awareness, or imagery/metaphor)****
 - **Notice the tendency to want to CONTROL your thoughts, just like you might want to control your breathing...if you feel this, then simply be aware of and acknowledge it**

- Let the quality of attention be light and easy... one of simply observing and noticing... just as if you were floating on a gently moving ocean... where you're up with one wave and down with the next... you don't control the duration of the wave, or the depth between the waves; you're just riding... And just gently coming back to sensations of breathing...
- TV example
- Know that simple awareness is enough to be mindful, and controlling or changing is not necessary
- Again, when you get distracted, please accept this distraction, and don't scold yourself or try to force yourself to do better. Simply acknowledge and accept that you got distracted (this is important to recognize the movement of your attention), and gently refocus new attention on the breath once more.
- (Give time to experiment)
 - ❖ Prompts: mind will flow, good and bad, need to be accepting of thoughts, and simply aware without trying to change
 - ❖ If you get distracted and cannot maintain awareness, THIS IS OK, use the breath as an anchor, and move your awareness gently back to the breath
- Conclusion
 - We will be ending soon, and so keep your awareness for now, and in the next minute or two, start to gently move your awareness back to the breath
 - (once everyone is back to the breath), take a couple deep breaths, any concluding thoughts, thankfulness for this awareness
 - Open your eyes

Check-In

- Dealing with discomfort
 - Speed of thoughts, difficult/recurrent thoughts, emotional/physical pain
 - Acceptance (don't have to "enjoy it", but accept and be aware of it)
- Wholeness in stillness (breath, body, mind, rhythm)
 - In-breath thoughts, and out-breath thoughts, heavy breath thoughts and light breath thoughts
- Reflection
 - How did it feel to meditate in this way?
 - What were some of the difficulties? What did you find helped or that was particularly easy?
 - Do you think this is doable at home? Barriers?

- Suggested HW/Handout with points for continuing practice
 - Tips for home practice, app names, links (section for self-meditation with bullet points – place, breath, body, mind, push and pull)
 - Continue sitting meditation at home,
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U70osw7R1A4>, “Name of video”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOzsMntyE6k>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzvDWyozT30>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8zs8tJlkZM&list=PLMQMboFdse0rP9R3448V0EEq8i_o-0duS&index=134
- Suggest a journal (provide a sample journal or at least more information)

<https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/center-for-mindfulness/documents/mbsr-curriculum-guide-2017.pdf>
