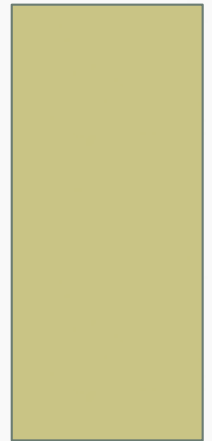


MINDFULNESS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS
SEPTEMBER 28TH, 2018

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HEART, MIND, BODY



OBJECTIVES

- Define mindfulness
- Describe the process by which mindfulness interrupts and subsequently weakens the negative stress cycle
- Practice at least two mindfulness exercises and access resources to foster/build upon a mindfulness practice
- Describe ways to incorporate mindfulness strategies into your healthcare practice

MINDFULNESS BACKGROUND



MINDFULNESS: WHAT IS IT?

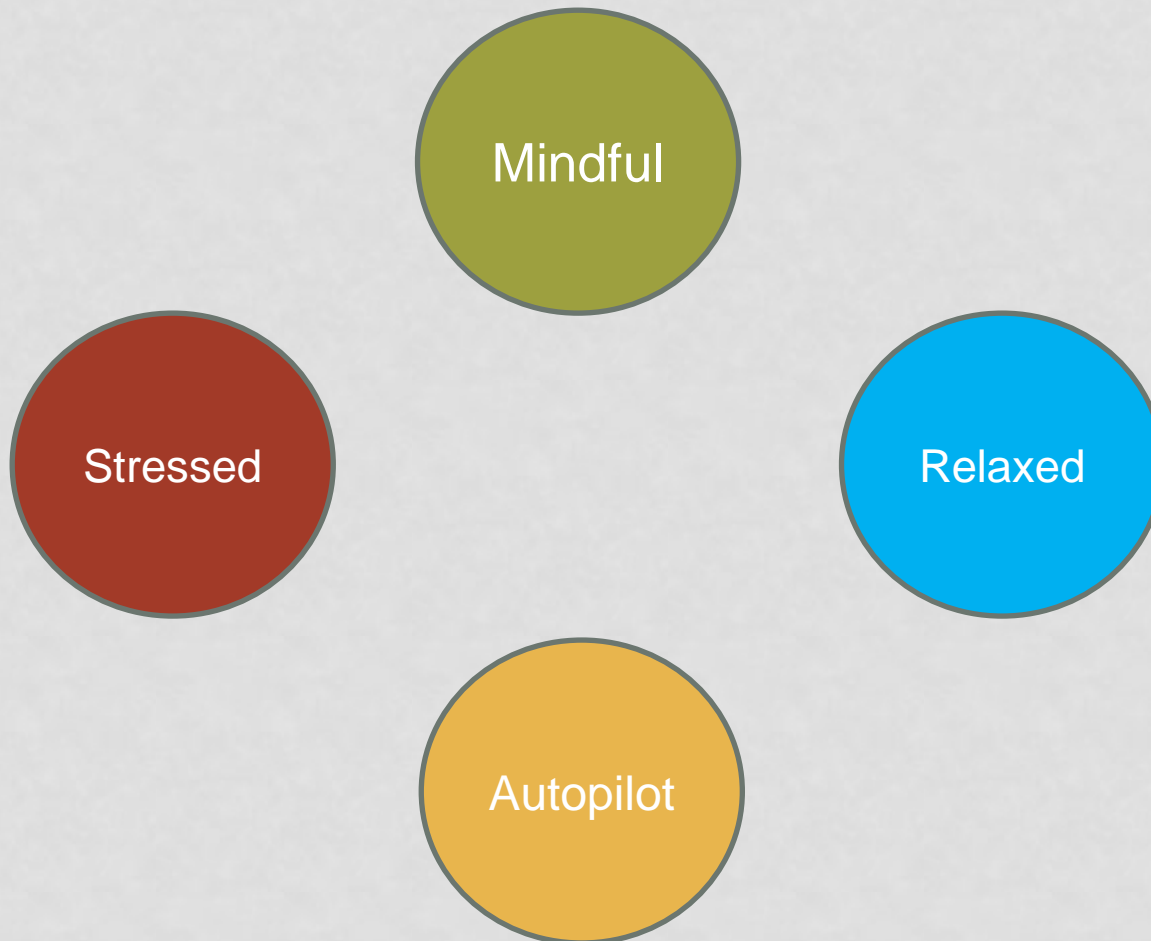
- Mindfulness is the act of:
 - paying attention to the present moment
 - on purpose
 - while suspending judgement



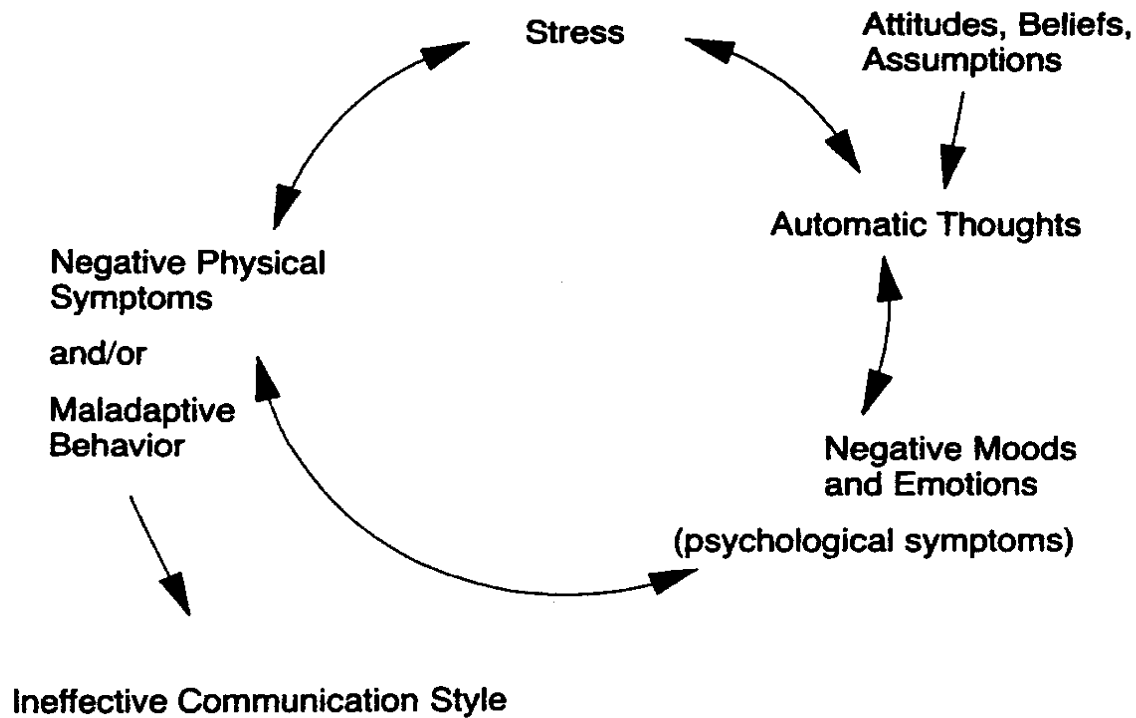
MINDFULNESS MYTHS

1. Mindfulness is the latest trend in pop-psychology and has no basis in science
2. Mindfulness must be done while seated, in a quiet location, legs crossed, bells and incense included.
3. Mindfulness is a way to relax.
4. Mindfulness is easy.
5. Mindfulness means analyzing our thoughts/minds.
6. Mindfulness means trying to achieve a state of clearing the mind.
7. If I dislike and/or feel unsuccessful with MF the first few times I try it, it just won't work for me.

MINDFULNESS: WHAT IT ISN'T



NEGATIVE STRESS CYCLE



BREAKING THE CYCLE

Each time you use a mindfulness strategy, three things happen:

1. Stress cycle is interrupted and cannot strengthen
2. More coping options become available, and a more beneficial response can be chosen
3. Beneficial response becomes stronger and more habitual with practice



THOUGHTS THAT AFFECT MOOD

Who has ever had any of these thoughts?

Unless I criticize myself, I'll become mediocre.

I should be able to control everything. If I can't, I'm doing something wrong.

I must feel loved and accepted by every significant person in my life.

I must meet other people's expectations.

I must be completely competent all the time and in every situation.

THOUGHTS THAT AFFECT MOOD

Who has ever had any of these thoughts?

My accomplishments make me lovable.

There is a definite right way and wrong way to do everything.

If I'm not happy at my job all the time, I've made a grave career mistake.

If the people around me aren't happy all the time, I'm doing something wrong.

If something is dangerous or frightening, it helps to get preoccupied and upset about it.

THOUGHTS THAT AFFECT MOOD



WHAT ARE THOUGHTS?

- Thoughts are mental events.
- Thoughts aren't facts.
- Thoughts are transient; you are always here.
- You are NOT your thoughts.
- Oftentimes thoughts are triggered by something and run off quite automatically.
- Thought patterns are changeable.



MINDFUL BREATHING

When you become aware of uncomfortable thoughts, emotions, or sensations...

1. Congratulate yourself on noticing.
2. Hold the thought/feeling in your awareness. This awareness creates a sense of distance.
3. Actively allow the thought/feeling to exist. Notice the urge to resist it.
4. Visualize the thought/feeling passing.

Key attitude when observing your inner experience:
gentle interest and curiosity.

MINDFULNESS: HOW IT WORKS

- Mindfulness interrupts the negative stress cycle by raising awareness of our inner experience.
- In turn, it creates space/distance from our thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations and allows us to choose a response rather than defaulting to a reaction.
- The more mindfulness is used as an interruption, the more the new paths are reinforced and the old paths are grown over.



MINDFULNESS FOR PROVIDERS

Responding vs. reacting: Mindfulness practices can help providers respond rather than react in stressful situations in often fast-paced environments.

Stress prevention/management: a mindfulness practice can help you prevent and manage job-related stress

Patient-centered care: Engaging in a mindfulness exercise with patients can have a positive impact on the clinical encounter and relationship between patient and provider

MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

I've got...	Mindfulness Strategies
One minute:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take 5-10 slow, deep breaths with patients• 5,4,3,2,1 (see, hear, touch, smell, taste)• Heart, Mind, Body• Grounding (naming colors, counting shapes)
Five minutes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Mindful breathing” (YouTube)• Alternate nostril breathing
10 minutes or more:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mindfulness Coach (free VA app)• Mindful breathing” (YouTube)
Interest in building a mindfulness practice and cool graphics help me:	Headspace (not-free app)
Racing thoughts that are driving me nuts:	https://thinkmindfully.com/try-it
Strong emotions inside me right now:	“Soften, Soothe, Allow” (YouTube)

CLOSING & QUESTIONS

- What knowledge or skill are you walking away with today?
- What are you curious about? What questions do you have?
- How are you considering incorporating mindfulness into your practice?

Additional questions or thoughts? Please reach out! Jenson.Reiser@va.gov