



# *Optimal Treatment for Anxiety & Mental Health*

Using Mindfulness and Validation  
for Student Self Care

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# Made in Partnership with Northern Kentucky Health Department



# NKYHEALTH

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# ABOUT ME

- I was born and raised in Minneapolis, MN
- Current Post-Doctorate Fellow at the Ross Center
- Hoping to continue serving folks struggling with anxiety, depression, interpersonal relationships, OCD, substance use disorder, and eating disorder recovery, and life adjustment issues

# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- “Mindfulness is the act of consciously focusing the mind in the present moment without judgment and without attachment to the moment. When mindful we are aware in and of the present moment.” (Linehan, 2015)
- “Be where your hands are”
- MINDFULNESS IS A SKILL

# WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF MINDFULNESS?

Looking to the past

Looking to the  
future

Looking to worries

Looking to  
thoughts

Looking to others

Looking  
everywhere else  
except at the  
present moment

Lack of the skill

Linehan, 2015

# WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF MINDFULNESS?

Judgements

Expectations

Shame

Anxiety

Depression

Trauma

BOREDOM

# TYPES OF MINDFULNESS

- Meditation: “Mindfulness does **NOT** require meditation” (Linehan, 2015)
  - *Guided meditations: Square breathing, repeating mantras, gratitude focused meditations, focus on a leaf floating on a stream, a candle, sunset/sunrise etc.*
- Contemplative or Centering Prayer
- Mindfulness Movement
  - *Dancing, martial arts (tai chi, karate), yoga, walking/hiking/being in nature, ritual music making like drumming*
- Daily Living
  - *We can typically practice being mindful anytime and anywhere! We can practice mindfulness when eating, washing dishes, folding laundry, hearing a lecture in class, teaching a class, or driving*

Linehan, 2015



## HOW TO BE MINDFUL

- Pay attention on purpose to the present moment.
- Observe
- Describe
- Participate
- Be nonjudgmental
- Do one thing at a time
- Be effective

Linehan, 2015

# BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS



REDUCES ANXIETY,  
DEPRESSION, INCREASES  
SLEEP PATTERNS (RICARD,  
LUTZ, & DAVIDSON, 2014).



WE GET TO EXPERIENCE  
MORE MOMENTS



WE REDUCE OUR SUFFERING



INCREASES CONTROL OF  
ATTENTION



INCREASES SOCIAL SKILLS

# MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS



The classroom is an easy place to be **mindLESS**



Modeling mindfulness can be **MAJOR**



Are there ways to encourage more participation?



Are there ways to incorporate mindfulness in the classroom?

# TO SUM IT UP...



# WHAT IS VALIDATION?

- “Validation has to do with communicating clearly to others that you are paying attention to them, that you understand them, that you are nonjudgmental, that you have empathy, and that you can see the facts or truth of their situation.” (Linehan, 2015)
- You have to be able to observe and describe in order to validate
- You also have to actively listen in order to validate

# VALIDATION IS NOT APPROVAL

- Finding the kernel of truth in a statement does NOT mean you approve, like or agree with what the other person is doing, saying, or feeling
- Validation does not mean that we validate the invalid
- Validation does not REQUIRE that you share your own experience

# WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF VALIDATION?



It's hard to observe suffering – especially if feeling attacked and getting defensive



Rushing into problem solving



Disagreeing with the “what” instead of validating the “why”



Lack of awareness on how or what to validate



Worry that it cause will intense/difficult feelings to escalate



This is hard!

# WHY VALIDATE?

- Validation improves our interactions with one another
- Validation increases connection
- Validation is another foundational key for behavior change
- Invalidation is hurtful

Linehan, 2015



# HOW TO VALIDATE

- Pay attention
- Reflect back
- “Read minds”
- Understand and be open to correction
- Show equality

Linehan, 2015

# VALIDATION FOR STUDENTS

- Teachers can model this for students with their interactions with one another as well as within their interactions with students
- Draw attention to the moment by asking students to validate each other
- Sometimes we have to self-validate

To Sum It Up....





Questions or comments?



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Thank you for your time!

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