The background of the slide is a photograph of a university courtyard. A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled branches dominates the left side. In the foreground, a lush green lawn is filled with numerous bright yellow daffodils. In the background, a stone building with Gothic-style windows and a wooden bench is visible.

An Introduction to Mindfulness

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What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness involves paying attention...

on purpose

in the present moment

with curiosity and kindness

... to things as they are

Jon Kabat-Zinn

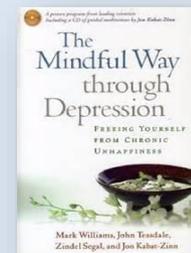
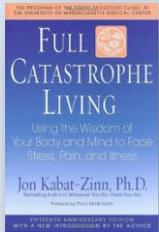
Mindfulness: ancient roots, modern applications



- Translation of Pali word, *sati*
 - Pali: Canonical language of Theravada - form of Buddhism found in Southeast Asia
- Connotes: *Awareness, Attention and Remembering*
- Western based mindfulness approaches:
 - Based on combination of traditional Buddhist meditation techniques and psychological models of mental health

Research into benefits

- 1979 Kabat-Zinn adapted Buddhist techniques for secular stress reduction programme (MBSR) for patients with chronic difficulties
- 1995 Teasdale et al, adapted MBSR to create MBCT: a group based, relapse prevention programme for people with history of recurrent depression
- Combines meditation exercises, targeted at enhancing awareness and self compassion, with cognitive behaviour therapy



Psychological and cognitive benefits of mindfulness

- Reduction in psychological symptoms associated with low-mood, depression and anxiety
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Better emotion regulation
- Enhanced attentional skills
- Increase in compassion and altruistic behaviour
- A greater sense of ‘resilience’

Mindful Nation UK



Mindfulness in the workplace

- Increasing number of organisations offering mindfulness training to employees. E.g.:
 - Google, General Mills, Goldman Sachs, Apple, Medtronic, Intel, McKinsey, Deutsche Bank, Proctor & Gamble, Barclays, JP Morgan, and others ...
- It makes sense. Less stress and anxiety in the workplace means less absenteeism
- Behaviour drives health; this needs to be managed from the inside-out

Workplace applications

- Health (preventative: depression, anxiety; etc.)
- Wellbeing (resilience, stress reduction)
- Cognitive skills (attention, focus, memory)
- Self-regulation of emotions (responsive vs reactive)
- Interpersonal skills (communication, assertiveness)
- Leadership (increased empathy, decision-making, perspective)
- Team development (awareness of others' needs)

Mindfulness in practice

- Mindfulness is essentially experiential. It involves:
- Formal practice – meditation e.g. bodyscan, mindful movement, breath and body, sitting practice
- Informal practice – awareness of body sensations, thoughts, emotions and sensory input during daily life. Practiced in ordinary activities like brushing teeth, eating, walking etc.

Doing vs Being

- Conceptual vs Embodied
- Past & Future vs Present
- Autopilot/Habitual vs Intentional/Creative
- Reacting vs Responding
- Thoughts as Facts vs Thoughts as mental events



Mindful living

- Regular practice of mindfulness leads to:
 - Increased awareness – recognising the automatic pilot; placing our attention where we want it to be
 - *Being* mind rather than *Doing* mind
 - Developing a new relationship with experience
 - Responding to experience based on awareness of what's actually here rather than habitually reacting
 - Equanimity: the ability to 'be with' experience with an attitude of gentle matter-of-factness

Begin today! Five tips for mindful living

1. On waking in the morning focus your attention on your breathing; observe five mindful breaths
2. Where possible, do just one thing at a time. Pay full attention to what you are doing. When the mind wanders from what you are doing, bring it back

Repeat this step several billion times!

Five tips for mindful living

3. Notice your body while walking or standing. Take a moment to notice your posture. Pay attention to the contact of the ground beneath your feet
4. Whenever you are about to eat or drink something, pause and breathe. Pay attention as you eat. Bring awareness to seeing, smelling, tasting, chewing and swallowing your food
5. Before you go to sleep at night turn your attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths

“Mindfulness is not the answer for all
life’s problems.
Rather it is that all life’s problems can
be seen more clearly through the lens
of a clear mind”.

(Kabat-Zinn 1991)



Mindfulness Resources

- Oxford Mindfulness Centre:
oxfordmindfulness.org
- Mindfulnessoxford: MBCT/Wellbeing Courses
mindfulnessoxford.com/
- Mindfulnessworks: MBSR Courses
www.mindfulnessworks.co.uk/
- BeMindful: Information on countrywide courses.
Register of qualified mindfulness teachers:
www.bemindful.co.uk/

QUESTIONS?

