Tailoring Mindfulness
Fitting the Practice to the Person
Ronald Siegel, Psy.D.

The Roles of Mindfulness

Implicit
- Practicing Therapist
- Mindfulness Informed Psychotherapy
- Mindfulness Based Psychotherapy

Explicit

How it Works
Mindfulness Informed Psychotherapy

A Transtheoretical Mechanism?

- Might mindfulness be an element in all effective treatments?
- Can deliberately cultivating mindfulness make all treatment more effective?

Overwhelmed?

Intensity of experience
Capacity to bear experience
The Thinking Disease

- Analyze past pleasure and pain
- Maximize future pleasure and avoid future pain

Two Wings

Insight Into Selfing

Jung’s Shadow & The Separate Self

- Identifying with only some mental contents
- Creates dissociated “Shadow”

Therapeutic Progress

-- Adapted from Engler & Fulton
Interbeing

Condon, Desbordes, & Miller (2013)

Fitting the Practice to the Person

Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy

Decisions, Decisions

1. Which skills to emphasize?
2. Formal or informal practice?
3. Which objects of attention?
4. Religious or secular practices?
5. Narrative or experiencing mode?
6. Relative or absolute truth?
7. Turning toward safety or sharp points?

Core Practice Skills

1. Concentration (focused attention)
2. Mindfulness *per se* (open monitoring)
3. Acceptance and Compassion
Concentration vs. Mindfulness

- Concentration
  - Choose an object and follow it closely

- Mindfulness
  - Attend to whatever object rises to forefront of consciousness

Acceptance

Loving-kindness Practice

- “Metta” practices
  - May I be happy, peaceful, free from suffering
  - May my loved ones be happy . . .
  - May all beings be happy . . .

Self-Compassionate Letter

- Describe something that makes you feel badly about yourself
- Think of loving, accepting, imaginary friend
- Write a letter to yourself from your friend’s perspective

--- Kristin Neff

Continuum of Practice

Informal Mindfulness Practice

Formal Meditation Practice

Intensive Retreat Practice

Telephone Meditation
Taillight Meditation

Shower Meditation

Formal Practice
(Results May Vary)

• Data supports effects of formal meditation
• Structural and functional brain changes.

Intensive Retreat Practice

Objects of Attention

Coarse
- Feet touching ground
- Sights and sounds of nature
- Taste of food
- Sound of bell
- Breath in belly
- Mantra
- Air at tip of nose

Subtle

Religious or Secular?
• “Spiritual” practices
  ▪ Devotional and theistic
• Secular practices
  ▪ Science grounded
• Seek cultural consonance
Narrative Mode

- Psychodynamic
  - Earlier, transference, other relationships
- Behavioral
  - How learned, how reinforced
- Systemic
  - Maintained by family, community, culture

Experiencing Mode

- How is it felt in the body?
- How does the mind respond?
  - Grasping
  - Pushing away
  - Ignoring

Relative Truth

- Human story
  - Success & Failure
  - Pleasure & Pain
  - Longing
  - Hurt
  - Anger
  - Envy
  - Joy
  - Pride

Absolute Truth

- Anicca (impermanence)
- Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness)
- Anatta (no enduring, separate self)

Processing Trauma

1. Open to painful emotions
2. Explore the facts of trauma
3. See it through lens of dependent origination
4. Develop compassion

Timing is Everything
Turning toward Safety I

- Outer or distal focus
- Walking Meditation
- Listening Meditation
- Nature Meditation
- Eating Meditation
- Open eye practices

Turning toward Safety II

- Inner focus
  - Mountain Meditation
  - Guided Imagery
  - Metta Practice
  - DBT techniques

Turning Toward the Sharp Points

- Moving toward anything unwanted or avoided
- How is it experienced in the body?
  - Pain, fear, sadness, anger
  - Unwanted images or memories
  - Urges toward compulsive behaviors

Different Strokes

- Need for frequent adjustment of exercises
- Elicit feedback about the experience
  - Both during and after practice
- Titrate between Safety and Sharp Points

When Mindfulness of Inner Experience Can Be Harmful

- When overwhelmed by traumatic memories
- When terrified of disintegration, loss of sense of self
- When suffering from psychosis

Alternate Techniques when Overwhelmed

- Eyes open, external sensory focus
- Ground, trees, sky, wind, sounds
Decisions, Decisions

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3. Which objects of attention?
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5. Narrative or experiencing mode?
6. Relative or absolute truth?
7. Turning toward safety or sharp points?

For meditations & other resources:
www.mindfulness-solution.com

email:
rsiegel@hms.harvard.edu
Clinician Resources

Please visit [www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org](http://www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org), [www.mindfulness-solution.com](http://www.mindfulness-solution.com), and [www.sittingtogether.com](http://www.sittingtogether.com) for updated listings.

**Mindfulness-Oriented Psychotherapy**

**Books**


**Websites**

Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy: [www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org](http://www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org)

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: [www.umassmed.edu/cfm](http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy: [www.behavioraltech.com](http://www.behavioraltech.com)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: [www.acceptanceandcommitmenttherapy.com](http://www.acceptanceandcommitmenttherapy.com)

Mindfulness and Acceptance Special Interest Group of the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy: [listserv.kent.edu/archives/mindfulness/html](http://listserv.kent.edu/archives/mindfulness/html)

Self-Compassion Resources: [www.self-compassion.org](http://www.self-compassion.org)

The *Back Sense* program for treating chronic back pain: [www.backsense.org](http://www.backsense.org)
Mindfulness Practice Resources


Please visit [www.mindfulness-solution.com](http://www.mindfulness-solution.com) and [www.sittingtogether.com](http://www.sittingtogether.com) for updated listings.

**Mindfulness Practice**

**Books**


**Recordings**

www.mindfulness-solution.com

Meditations from *Sitting Together: Essential Skills for Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy*:  
www.sittingtogether.com
Meditation Training Centers

Secular

Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Healthcare, and Society, University of Massachusetts Medical School, 55 Lake Avenue North, Worcester, MA 01655.
http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/mbsr/

Vipassana

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, 149 Lockwood Road, Barre, MA 01005
http://www.dharma.org

Insight Meditation Society, 1230 Pleasant St., Barre, MA 01005
http://www.dharma.org

Insight LA, 2633 Lincoln Blvd, #206, Santa Monica, CA 90405
http://www.insightla.org

New York Insight, P.O. Box 1790, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156.
http://www.nyimc.org

Spirit Rock Meditation Center, P.O. Box 909, Woodacre, CA 94973
http://www.spiritrock.org

Tibetan

Naropa University, 2130 Arapahoe Ave Boulder, CO 80302
http://www.naropa.edu

Shambala Mountain Center, 4921 County Road 68-C, Red Feather Lakes, CO 80545
http://www.shambhalamountain.org

Zen

San Francisco Zen Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
http://www.sfzc.com

Zen Center of Los Angeles
http://www.zcla.org

Zen Mountain Monastery, P.O.Box 197, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457
http://www.mro.org/zmm/zmmhome/
**Buddhist Psychology**

**Books**


**Websites**

Buddhist information and education: [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)

Buddhism and science: [www.mindandlife.org](http://www.mindandlife.org)

Audiovisual materials of all kinds: [www.soundstrue.com](http://www.soundstrue.com)

Mindfulness teacher talks: [www.dharmaseed.org](http://www.dharmaseed.org)

Buddhist journal (USA): [www.tricycle.com](http://www.tricycle.com)

Journal for mindfulness practitioners: [www.inquiringmind.com](http://www.inquiringmind.com)

Mindfulness and self compassion: [http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org](http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org)
About the Presenter

Dr. Ronald D. Siegel is an Assistant Professor of Psychology Part Time at Harvard Medical School, where he has taught for over 30 years. He is a long time student of mindfulness meditation and serves on the Board of Directors and faculty of the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy. He teaches internationally about mindfulness and psychotherapy and mind/body treatment, has worked for many years in community mental health with inner city children and families, and maintains a private clinical practice in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Dr. Siegel is coauthor of the self-treatment guide *Back Sense: A Revolutionary Approach to Halting the Cycle of Chronic Back Pain*, which integrates Western and Eastern approaches for treating chronic back pain; coeditor of the critically acclaimed text, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy, 2nd Edition*; author of the guide for general audiences, *The Mindfulness Solution: Everyday Practices for Everyday Problems*; coeditor of *Wisdom and Compassion in Psychotherapy: Deepening Mindfulness in Clinical Practice* with a foreword by His Holiness the Dali Lama; and coauthor of the new skills manual, *Sitting Together: Essential Skills for Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy*. He is also a regular contributor to other professional publications, and is co-director of the annual Harvard Medical School Conference on Meditation and Psychotherapy.

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For information about the *Back Sense* program for treating chronic back pain, please visit [www.backsense.org](http://www.backsense.org)