



# Mindfulness

Changing your brain using your own mind.

# Overview

- ✓ What is it?
- ✓ Why use it?
- ✓ How do you do it?
- ✓ How does it work?
- ✓ How does it apply to parenting?

# What is mindfulness?

**Mindfulness is “paying attention to your life, here and now, with kindness and curiosity” – Dr. Amy Saltzman**

- *Paying attention on purpose*
  - *Awareness of yourself, thoughts, feelings, environment*
  - *It’s a “pause” from automatic reaction*
- *Being in the moment*
  - *No past or future*
  - *Enjoy the richness of life*
- *Observing in a non-judgmental way*
  - *No “good or bad”*
  - *No “shoulds”*

# Why mindfulness?

- Be in better control of your emotions and behaviors
- Be happier, reduce suffering
- Be more effective, productive and focused
- Sleep better
- Be less stressed
- Be healthier
- Increase your compassion for yourself and others





## 3 states of mind

# Mindfulness

Observe

Describe

Participate

What

Skill

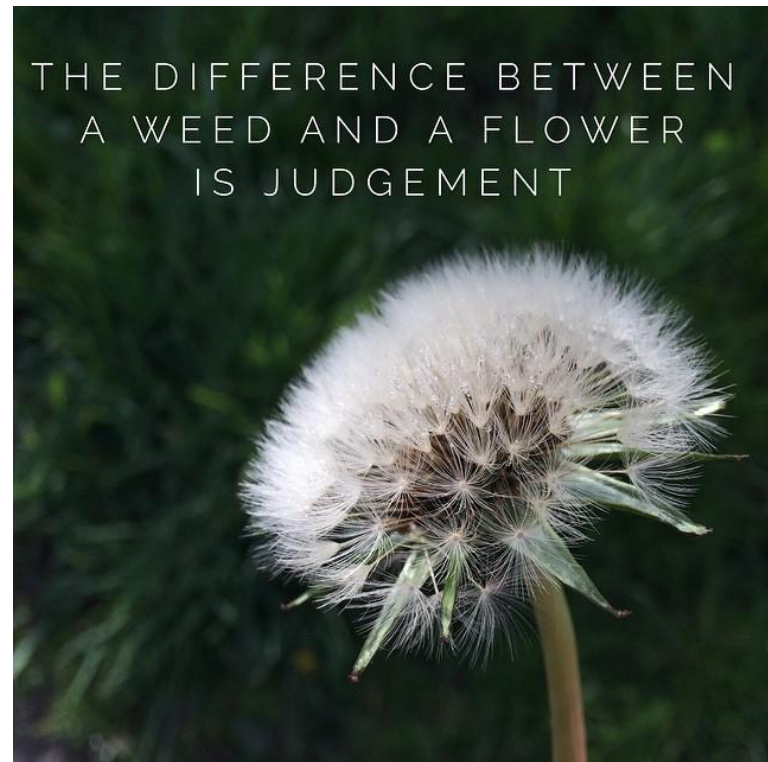
# Mindfulness

- Non-judgmental
- Stay focused
- Do what works

How  
skill

# Judgments

- What are judgments?
- Are they harmful or helpful?
- Practice a “non judgmental stance”
- The point is to notice!
- Catch yourself and reframe...





# Mindfulness vs. Mindlessness

## The Role of Automatic Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviors

- Help us manage day-to-day life (cognitive capacity)
- *Well-practiced and repeated*
- Stable and highly resistant to change



# WITHOUT MINDFULNESS

## STIMULUS



## REACTION



## REACTION...



# WITH MINDFULNESS

## STIMULUS



## MINDFULNESS



## RESPONSE



# “Shoulds”

Willing something to be different doesn't make it so ...

- Catch yourself in “shoulds”:
  - I should have done better.
  - I shouldn't have said that.
  - He should know better.
  - She should be able to get control over herself.
- Let go of “shoulds”



->OR ANYONE ELSE!

# Gratitudes:

- Incorporate the practice into daily routines (dinner, bedtime routines, etc)
- List 3 things you were grateful for each day.
- Write thank you notes to people for little things they have done for you.
- Write to the troops or a nursing home.
- Make a “gratitude wheel”
- Prayer



# Self Validation

When you feel a judgment or a should coming on.... Validate your own feelings.

- “It makes sense I am upset right now. Anyone would be upset in this situation.”



# Acceptance

- When you feel a judgment or a should coming on.... Practice acceptance...
- Notice when you are fighting reality.
- What is this changing, does this make me feel better or worse?
- Instead ACCEPT “things are as they are”. Doesn’t mean you agree or like it -> and accept that it just is.



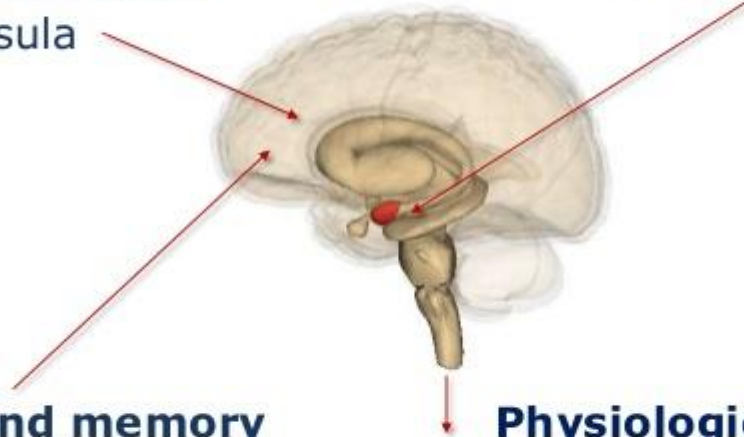


# Changing the Brain

## Neuroscience of Mindfulness

**Self awareness**  
Greater activation  
in the insula

Realigned activity  
of amygdala



**Focus and memory**  
Strengthens left prefrontal  
cortex increases white  
matter between prefrontal  
cortex and amygdala

**Physiological effects,**  
changes to breathing  
rate, heart rate and  
blood pressure



Problematic family interactions often involve automatic patterns of responding

Evidence that parents who have ADHD themselves respond better to parent training after mindfulness training

## Mindfulness for Parents

Most effective parent-training models focus on changing responses to children's behaviors

Parent-child relationship impacts child's self-regulation

# Integrating Mindfulness into Parenting

- Listen to your child with your full attention.
- Accept your child (and yourself) without judgment.
- Imagine your child's feelings and match your response.
- Manage your own feelings and reactions.
- Show compassion for yourself and your child.



# Crisis Intervention

- **Self-Awareness**
- **The Four Questions:**
  1. What am I feeling now?
  2. What does the other person feel, need, or want?
  3. How is the environment affecting the other person?
  4. How do I best respond?

# Mindfulness for Children

- Mindfulness can be taught effectively to children.
- duration and sophistication of mindfulness practices can be modified depending on age
  - Rule of thumb: practice for one minute per child's age

# Practice: Break Out Groups

## ➤ INFORMAL

- Count to 10
- Changing One letter

## ➤ FORMAL

- 3 minute guided body scan:
  - <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=quick+guided+body+scan&&view=detail&mid=45A55A1BF1C934AA578D45A55A1BF1C934AA578D&&FORM=VRDGAR>
- The 3-Step Mindfulness Exercise
- Observe Your Thoughts Exercise

# Coming soon...

- **10/19/21 - Parent support Group**
- **10/26/21 6:30-8 pm: Emotional Competence: Emotion Regulation & Copeing Ahead**
- **11/09/21 6:30-8 pm: Crisis Communication Validation & Active Listening**

# Other Ways to Practice:

1. Practice Slowing Down: set a timer for two minutes and do the following. Write your name slowly on a piece of paper. Notice that you will have to think about what you are doing more. Notice that your name looks different when writing. By slowing down and paying attention to the sensation associated with something as automatic as writing your name, you recognize that you can slow down and make changes in many other behaviors.
2. Practice Noticing: Pick up something familiar to you, keys, wallet, phone. Notice how it feels when you touch it, turn it over, look at it from all different angles. Just feel, no words. Notice if there is anything new.
3. Practice: Focus on the moment: Pick a routine behavior (eating, dishes, driving\_ that you do automatically. Focus on the task with your full attention without multi tasking and when your mind wanders just bring it back.
  - Remember the “pause”. BREATHE.
  - Practice Everyday

Other ideas for ways to practice:

- Formal: meditation, counting breaths, mindfulness to urges
- Informal: play a game, reorient to the moment, listen to a song etc.

# Additional Resources:

- The Still Quiet Place ([www.stillquietplace.com](http://www.stillquietplace.com))

Created by Dr. Saltzman for children, adolescents, and parents

- Attention Academy Program ([www.stressbeaters.com](http://www.stressbeaters.com))

Program to develop attention skills in students, teachers and parents

- Learning To BREATHE (<http://learning2breathe.org/>)

Mindfulness curriculum for adolescents

- Mindful kids (<https://mindfulkids.wordpress.com/>)

Mindfulness resources for young kids

- MindUP (<http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/>)

Curriculums for the classrooms



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<https://mindfulness4u.org/dbt-mindfulness-exercises/>

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>