

The 8th Annual Conference on Co-Occurring Disorders: Building Bridges Across Systems

Mindfulness Skills Training for the Behavioral Health Provider

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Who we are:

East End Mental Health is a private, behavioral health and wellness agency located on eastern Long Island. We provide psychiatric and holistic health services for residents on the North and South Fork, Shelter Island, and Suffolk County.

East End Mental Health was formed in 2012 to address the mental health and wellness needs of residents on Eastern Long Island. East End Mental Health fills the need for behavioral health treatment in a largely rural segment of Long Island.

Our goal is to improve the behavioral health and wellness for the people and the communities we serve by providing excellence in psychiatric services using a patient-centered approach while being committed to excellence, compassion, and improving the overall behavioral health and wellness of the community.

Who I am and what I do:

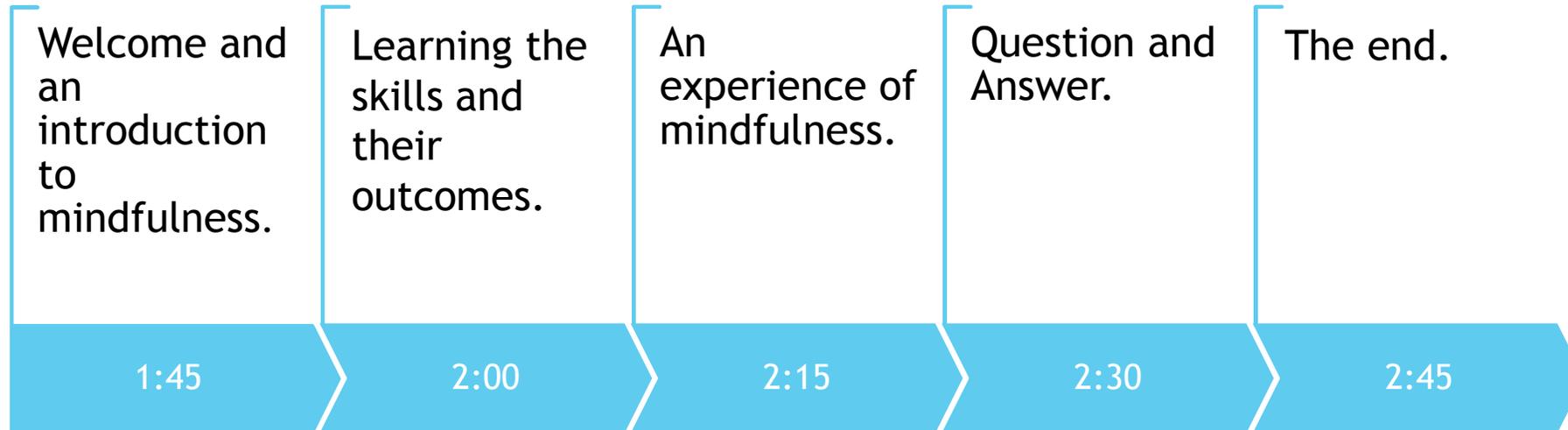
Direct Care
Provider

Social worker by
profession

Twenty+ years
of experience in
behavioral
health settings

Doctoral
research is in
collaborative
care

Presentation Agenda



Mindful Check-In

- ▶ Sitting with your eyes closed, bring your full, undivided attention to this practice;
- ▶ Focus on the inner experience of your mind and body;
 - ▶ Listen (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010)

My journey to mindfulness

- ▶ Contemplative meditation (1999)



Learning Objectives

Identify	Identify which skills you will use to develop your own practice
Understand	Understand how mindfulness can provide good self-care
Learn	Learn about the positive health effects of mindfulness techniques
Learn	Learn how to use these skills in clinical practice

Discussion Questions

1

What mindfulness skills resonate with you?

2

What, if any, might be the obstacles in developing a mindfulness practice?

3

What is one “next step” you can take to develop a core mindfulness practice?

Mindfulness defined

- The intentional process of observing, describing, and participating in reality *nonjudgmentally*, in the *here and now* moment, and with *effectiveness*.
- Mindfulness has to do with the quality of awareness or the presence you bring to everyday living. It's a way of living awake, with your eyes wide open.
- It is the accepting and allowing of experiences while and not suppressing, avoiding, or trying to change them.



“Mindfulness is the act of consciously focusing the mind in the present moment without judgment and without attachment to the moment”

(Marsha Linehan, 2015).

Jon Kabat Zinn

“Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, as if your life depended on it...it is not a technique, it is a way of being....a way of connecting with your life.”

- “Mindfulness practice” is the repeated effort of letting go....eliminating judgements and attachments. It is entering into the current moment without reserve or grudge, becoming fully aware that *life is a process of constant change* (Linehan, 2015).
- “Mindfulness everyday” is a way of living now, not in the past, not in the future, not even in your worries or to looking to someone else.

“Mindfulness is not a place we get to. Mindfulness is a place we are.”

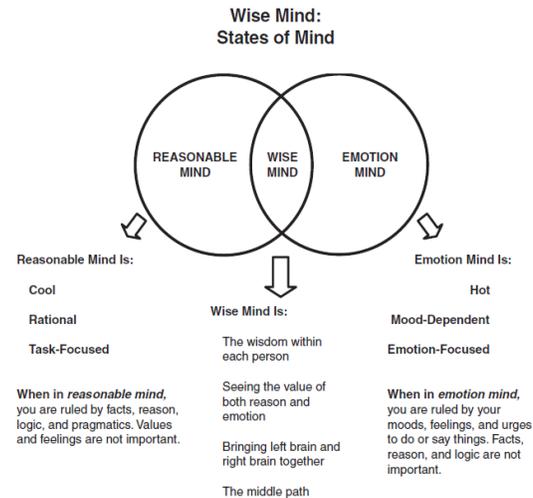
(Linehan, Page 152, 2015)

Mindfulness skills are:

- The psychological and behavioral translations of meditation practices from Eastern and Western spirituality;
- As essential for therapists and skills trainers to practice as they are for participants.
- Mindfulness skills comprise many psychological and stress reduction techniques. For example, there is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, etc.
- “Core mindfulness” skills are the first ones taught in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and support all the other DBT skills (Linehan,2015).

Types of core mindfulness skills (Linehan, 2011)

- ▶ **Wise Mind:** Reasonable mind, wise mind, and emotion mind
- ▶ **“What” Skills:** Observing (noticing body sensations), Describing (lying down to watch the clouds), and Participating (joining, become one with an activity)
- ▶ **“How” Skills:** Nonjudgmentally, One-Mindfully, and Effectively (less concern with being right; ask “Is this effective?”)



The ultimate goal of mindfulness skills practice is to develop a lifestyle of participating with awareness.

Two types of practices:

- ▶ **Opening the mind** involves observing or noticing whatever comes into your awareness. In a sitting meditation, it is the simple act of noticing thoughts, feelings, and sensations without becoming attached to them. It is like sitting and watching the boats go down the river without getting on board. (Linehan, 2011)
- ▶ **Focusing the mind** involves focusing your attention on specific events, either internal or external. For example, using a mantra while breathing in and out.

- ✓ Formal practice: scheduling the time to meditate or intentionally focusing on breath or sounds
- ✓ Informal Practice: you bring your mindfulness awareness to all daily events, including eating, walking, exercising, etc.

Why do mindfulness?

1. Clinicians with a mindfulness practice are correlated with a better therapeutic course and better treatment outcomes.
2. As your brain changes, so does your mind. And vice versa. Busy brain regions get more blood flow and oxygen.
3. “Neurons that fire together, wire together” (Hanson, 2011).
4. People who routinely relax have calmer stress reactions and improved resiliency (Hanson, 2011); reduced anxiety and less pain.
5. Enhances psychological and physical well-being, including better emotional regulation, increased compassion and happiness, reduced depression, and restorative and therapeutic benefits from past trauma (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010).
6. Interventions that are repetitive, positive experience are restorative and helpful with substance abuse recovery; unused neural connections wither away.

What are the mindfulness skills?

- ▶ Mindful eating, formal or informal practice
- ▶ Keep a Mindful Eating Journal
- ▶ Three minute Mindful check ins (Formal practice)
- ▶ Keep a Formal Practice Log and an Informal Practice Log
- ▶ Mindfully complete a task, for example, tooth brushing or cooking a meal
- ▶ Keeping a Mindful journal about the experience
- ▶ Mindfulness Walking
- ▶ Mindfulness Breathing from the abdomen
- ▶ Yoga
- ▶ Body Scan (Formal Practice)
- ▶ **STOP**: Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed
- ▶ Mindfulness Meditation
- ▶ Practice the eight mindfulness attitudes: beginner's mind, nonjudgment, acknowledgement, non-striving, equanimity, letting be, self-reliance, and self-compassion (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010)
- ▶ Loving Kindness

Mindfulness Meditation

Meditation is a practice of mindfulness: observing art or sitting quietly can be meditation.

It can be both secular and spiritual, depending on the individual.

Thomas Keating, "You become the meditation."

Let's try it:

Centering Meditation (Sitting) Guidelines

1. Choose a sacred word or mantra as the symbol of your intention to consent to go within
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent
3. When engaged with your thoughts,* return ever-so-gently to the sacred word
4. At the end of the meditation period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

*thoughts include body sensations, feelings, images, and reflections

Walking Meditation

- ▶ Find a quiet place where you can walk
- ▶ Stand and take a moment to feel the connection of the body to the ground
- ▶ Start walking slowly and pay attention to the sensations on the soles of the feet
- ▶ Notice the movement of each foot as you lift it and place it back down
- ▶ Think “Lifting, moving, placing, Lifting, moving, placing”
(Stahl & Goldstein, 2010) or a loving kindness phrase or mantra
- ▶ Walk with mindfulness

Loving Kindness

A way to increase love and compassion for ourselves and then others (Linehan, 2015)...helps us to let go of judgments and hostility.

1. Choose someone you want to send loving kindness toward.
2. Sitting and gently think about this person
3. Send loving kindness by repeating a warm phrase
4. Feel yourself immersed in loving kindness
5. Practice every day

Challenges to consider:

Negative self-talk

Fear and worry

Old habits, for example, catastrophizing or the “should”

Finding a quiet space

Time limitations

Lack of support

The Journey by Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice - - -
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
'Mend my life!'
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.

You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations - - -
though their melancholy
was terrible. It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.

But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do - - - determined to save
the only life you could save.

Developing your practice

Connect

Connect with others



Join

Join a group



Find

Find a retreat to deepen the practices

Comments and questions?



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THANK
YOU

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