Mindfulness Medicine

Mindful Strategies to Deal with Stress, Anxiety and Conflict in Chronic Physical and Mental Illness

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Overview

• Definitions of anxiety, stress, and conflict
• Stressors: patients, families, caregivers, and providers.
• Mindfulness intervention strategies and resources
What are Stress, Anxiety and Conflict?

**Stress** results from interactions with the environment in which there is perceived or actual threat.

**Anxiety** is a psychophysiological phenomena originating in the body and/or brain and affects our behavior, thoughts and interactions with the environment.

**Conflict** is transient or chronic interactions, with outside forces (e.g., people, institutions) that are obstacles or threats, or a failure to have our needs met.
What are Stress, Anxiety and Conflict?

Brain-body pathways in stress

- Stress
  - Pituitary gland
  - Adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH)
  - Hypothalamus
  - Autonomic nervous system (sympathetic division)

- Secretion of corticosteroids
  - Increased protein and fat mobilization
  - Increased access to energy storage
  - Decreased inflammation

- Adrenal medulla
  - Adrenal cortex

- secretion of catecholamines
  - Increased cardiovascular response
  - Increased respiration
  - Increased perspiration
  - Increased blood flow to active muscles
  - Increased muscle strength
  - Increased mental activity
What are Stress, Anxiety and Conflict?
Are Stress, Anxiety and Conflict Bad?

YES
- Change body and brain chemistry
- Increase morbidity – Illness
- Interference with goals and pursuit and realization of happiness

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NO
- Essential part of human experience
- Coping changes body and brain chemistry
- Improves cognition, awareness and self efficacy
Are Stress, Anxiety and Conflict Bad?...NO!

- Essential part of human experience
  - Evolutionary history
  - Understanding
  - Acceptance

- Coping changes body and brain chemistry
  - Health

- Coping improves cognition, awareness and self efficacy
  - Personal development
  - Increases:
    - Happiness,
    - relationships
    - Self worth
    - Capacity to love
Central Tenet of Mindfulness Practices

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”

Viktor E. Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning, 1946
Mindfulness Based Coping Strategies

MIND BODY INTERACTION

ACCEPTANCE

“
It’s not how much we give but how much LOVE we put into giving.”

— Mother Teresa

COMPASSION

MINDFUL COMMUNICATION
MIND BODY INTERACTION

- BREATH
- SENSATION
- EMOTION
ACCEPTANCE

CHRONIC CONTROLLABLE

ACUTE CONTROLLABLE

STRESSORS

CHRONIC UNCONTROLLEABLE

ACUTE UNCONTROLLEABLE
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/

• **Focus Mindfulness**: emphasis on internal thought/emotional/sensation

• **Awareness Mindfulness**: Observing your sensory, cognitive and emotional filters

• **Breath**

• **Body Scan**

• **Object Meditation**

• **Compassion Meditation**

• **Walking Meditation**

Targets

- Physiological arousal and tension
- Cognitive arousal
- Cognition schemas/rumination
- Physiological manifestations of affect
  - Avoidance vs. Acceptance
- Focus on goals, values and self
- Stimulus control and exposure, response prevention
- Pain
- Somatic presentation of emotion
- Procedure avoidance
Techniques

• Progressive Muscle Relaxation
• Guided Imagery
• Sensory focused
• Phrase repetition
• Breathing
• Using clients spirituality
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THANK YOU
Bibliography

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- Radical Acceptance, Tara Brach
- Loving What is. Byron Katie
- Things Might Go Terribly Horribly Wrong: A Guide to Life Liberated from Anxiety, Kelly G. Wilson
- Chopraananda.com (App for children)
- Calm (App for adults and children)