

Lesley University

DigitalCommons@Lesley

---

Mindfulness Studies Theses

Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences  
(GSASS)

---

1-15-2023

## A Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Educators: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion to Increase Well-Being and Mitigate Burnout

Emily Squyres  
esquyres@lesley.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/mindfulness\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/mindfulness_theses)



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Squyres, Emily, "A Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Educators: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion to Increase Well-Being and Mitigate Burnout" (2023). *Mindfulness Studies Theses*. 74. [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/mindfulness\\_theses/74](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/mindfulness_theses/74)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences (GSASS) at DigitalCommons@Lesley. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mindfulness Studies Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Lesley. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@lesley.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@lesley.edu), [cvrattos@lesley.edu](mailto:cvrattos@lesley.edu).

**A Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Educators: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion to Increase Well-Being and Mitigate Burnout**

Emily L. Squyres

Mindfulness Studies, Lesley University

January 2023

Dr. Melissa Jean & Dr. Andrew Olendzki

### **Dedications**

Thank you to my family who are my unwavering support system in more ways than they know. Thank you to Tacoma Public School educators who demonstrated the need for this intervention and are the inspiration for this creative project. Thank you to my many colleagues and Mindfulness Studies cohort members who helped me flesh out ideas, encouraged more exploration, and provided such a supportive community to thrive in. Thank you to my advisors who were always supportive and inspiring. They led me to discover capacities within myself that I did not know I was capable of. Gratitude to all.

### **Abstract**

Mindfulness-based interventions that include an element of self-compassion training are beneficial in mitigating burnout and increasing educator well-being when implemented in the educational workplace. The recent and continuing interaction with the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of actively cultivating collective mental health. Schools can no longer take a passive stance when it comes to bolstering resilience regarding mental health and well-being of their educators. The impact of negative stressors precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other recent cultural and occupational phenomena, have taken a toll on mental resilience. To support educators, mindfulness interventions may be offered as a new type of holistic benefit. The skills gained in these interventions will serve as tools to mitigate educators' reactions to occupational stressors and the factors of secondary traumatic stress that threaten one's well-being. When these interventions include elements of self-compassion practice, resilience training, and mindfulness practices, educators gain an understanding of how to strengthen their own resilience, mitigating the chance of burnout while increasing their own well-being.

## Contents

Dedications .....	2
Abstract .....	3
A Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Educators: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion to Increase Well-Being and Mitigate Burnout .....	6
Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Educators: A Literature Review .....	8
COVID-19 Related Stresses and Interventions .....	8
Burnout.....	10
Professional Development for Educators .....	11
Self-Compassion .....	16
Considerations/Cautions.....	17
Discussion and Rationale .....	21
A Mindfulness-Based Intervention: The Forest and the Trees .....	22
Conclusion .....	26
References.....	28
Appendix I: The Forest and the Trees – A Mindfulness-Based Intervention .....	35
Unit Plan – The Forest and the Trees .....	35
Lesson Plan 1 – Introduction to Mindfulness.....	40
PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 1.....	45
Handout – Lesson 1 .....	48
Homework – Lesson 1 .....	52
Lesson Plan 2 – Neuroscience of Mindfulness .....	55
PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 2.....	66
Handouts – Lesson 2.....	71
Homework – Lesson 2.....	74
Lesson Plan 3 – The Stress Response and Resilience Training .....	76
PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 3.....	84
Handouts – Lesson 3.....	88
Homework – Lesson 3 .....	94
Lesson Plan 4 – Empathy and Self-Compassion.....	97
PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 4.....	104
Handout – Lesson 4 .....	108

Homework – Lesson 4.....	109
Evaluations .....	114

## **A Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Educators: Cultivating Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion to Increase Well-Being and Mitigate Burnout**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant amount of stress for people in all walks of life. The effects seem to be more pronounced and appear more visibly in professions that were already deemed stressful. Educators are one of the professional groups that had been considered to be at a higher risk for stress-related burnout pre-pandemic. There has been an increase of educator attrition since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and ripple effects of this “mass resignation” is taking a toll on the existing educational workforce. There are more responsibilities to accomplish in less time with even fewer resources available. Educator accountability for student success is at the forefront of expectations and educators are finding themselves psychologically and physiologically disadvantaged to deal with the stresses that come along with these expectations. These are significant stress factors that contribute to educator burnout.

One strategy to mitigate these increasing stress factors is for educators to utilize mindfulness-based interventions to ease their response to these work-related stresses. Educational leaders can also promote the holistic health of their constituent educators by supporting mental health and well-being interventions in the educational workplace. The U.S. Surgeon General (2022) has stated that “workplace mental health and well-being is a critical priority for public health” (p. 6). Within the context of research, mental well-being is defined as “the subjective experience of happiness or affect, and life satisfaction; and positive psychological functioning, good relationships with others and self-realization” (Sharrocks, 2014, p. 20). When educational administration promotes educator well-being and mental health, they are making a

statement that they value the whole person, the whole educator, and want them to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. This can only result in positive ripple effects for our society at large.

In recent years extensive research has been conducted on the different types of interventions available to educators to promote well-being and mitigate the impact of stress factors. Two of the most promising and scientifically proven interventions to support well-being are mindfulness meditation and self-compassion practices. These interventions support individual well-being by helping condition the way individuals interact with or perceive the stress factors in their lives. These factors cannot always be eliminated. In the course of developing this understanding of acceptance, qualities are cultivated that yield resilience strategies mitigating the impact of stress.

According to the definition offered by Bishop et al. (2004), mindfulness has two main elements: paying attention to one's present moment experience as it is happening and relating to this experience with a curious, open, accepting stance. There is ample evidence that mindfulness has positive psychological effects, including increased subjective well-being, reduced negative symptomology and emotional reactivity, and improved behavioral regulation (Roeser et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2016). When educators engage in mindfulness practices that increase inner personal strengths, they strengthen their inner resilience and are better prepared to attend to occupational stresses that can lead to burnout.

Mindfulness meditation develops the ability to pause and consider how one will react to stressors or a stressful stimulus. Self-compassion training teaches patience and acceptance in the present moment and increases relational engagement (Nelson et al., 2018). These practices allow educators to accept things as they are without dwelling or ruminating upon them, thus resulting in resilience from occupational stress. Mindfulness-based interventions that include an element



of meditation and self-compassion training are beneficial in mitigating burnout and increasing educator well-being and should be implemented in the educational workplace.

### **Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Educators: A Literature Review**

#### **COVID-19 Related Stresses and Interventions**

As teachers returned to the classroom for the 2020-21 school year, they faced new and challenging environments, instructional approaches, and roles as educators (Pressley, 2021). Pressley (2021) conducted the first empirical study that identified factors contributing to teacher burnout during and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results found significant predictors for teacher burnout due to stress – those being COVID-19 related anxiety, current teaching anxiety, anxiety communicating with parents, and uncertain administrative support. To limit teacher burnout, Pressley (2021) stated that schools and districts need to monitor teachers during the pandemic and afterward, providing support throughout the school year. There is a need for interventions for educators to manage their anxiety and this is partially due to the current state of education and the complications brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a study conducted in Argentina by Vargas-Rubliar and Oros (2021) found that teachers of all education levels and modalities had to substantially modify their way of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Argentine educators (n=9,058) completed self-report measures via a volunteer basis. More than 60% of the educators surveyed reported high and moderately high levels of stress. The strain they perceived was due to a higher load of stress with more psychological indicators of discomfort. The factors that were assessed for psychophysical symptoms included environment and work overload, use of new technologies, uncertainty about the duration and the consequences of the pandemic, organizational aspects, relationships with the student environment, conflict, and ambiguity of their role. These results revealed the

psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational staff and encouraged the development of intervention measures to preserve the mental health and well-being of education professionals.

Although teachers and other school system employees play a vital role in society and have reported high levels of distress during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Hirshberg et al. (2022), relatively little attention has been placed on promoting their mental health and well-being. Hirshberg et al. (2022) conducted a randomized trial of 662 Wisconsin school system employees, 64.4% of whom were teachers. The trial consisted of a four-week smartphone-based meditation app aimed to significantly reduce psychological distress and improve well-being, while also strengthening key skills underlying well-being such as cognitive diffusion and social connection. Mobile meditation-based interventions may be an effective and scalable approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of teachers and other school system employees, with implications for several critical challenges facing educational systems, including employee retention, educator performance, and the relationship of these factors to student outcomes.

Data from the study conducted by Hirshberg et al. (2022) suggest that in the midst of a global pandemic, a four-week, self-guided, meditation-based well-being training is acceptable to school system employees and has immediate moderate-magnitude benefits on psychological distress that persist for three months following the intervention. In addition, assignment to the Healthy Minds program (Smartphone-based mindfulness-based intervention) predicted immediate small to moderate-magnitude improvements in well-being skills, including mindful action, self-compassion, cognitive diffusion, social connectedness, presence of purpose, and meaning. “In the case of school system employees, impacts of reducing distress and improving well-being extend to students, schools, and educational systems” (Hirshberg et al., 2022, p. 12).

The benefits of reducing psychological distress and enhancing well-being are self-evident and important. Educators are experiencing more and more secondary traumatic stress because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Students and co-workers are bringing their traumatic experiences with them into the classroom and workplace, increasing the chance for educators to experience secondary traumatic stress (National Child Traumatic Stress Network).

### **Burnout**

Burnout refers to “a state or process of mental exhaustion,” and it has been widely investigated through the popular Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Within the mindfulness-based intervention theoretical framework, “burnout is a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion and negative feelings and attitudes, both towards one's work (lack of personal accomplishment) and toward others, possibly leading to an excessively detached response to the job (depersonalization)” (Fabbro et al., 2020, p. 517). Emotional exhaustion is considered a core aspect of the burnout syndrome.

Educators that suffer from burnout have decreased classroom organization and a diminished ability to model emotional regulation. Educators who experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion facilitate less student motivation, negatively impacting student academic outcomes. This cyclical interaction drives emotional distress as well. Teachers, specifically, report emotional stress and poor emotional management amongst their primary reasons for leaving the classroom and this has resulted in teachers leaving the profession at alarming rates. These attrition rates are further corroborated by a policy brief conducted by the National Commission on teaching and America's future:

This brief found that in urban populations the rate of teacher attrition exceeds 20% yearly. Furthermore, turnover rates continue to grow, increasing over 50% in the last 15 years, and these high rates of turnover are estimated to cost the United States over \$7.3 billion a year. Not only are these costs draining on our economy, but also damaging our relationships with students and impacting academic outcomes. To create a sustainable and economically sound teaching profession, methods for decreasing feelings of anxiety, stress, depression, and burnout are crucial. (Carroll, 2007)

These statistics are not inclusive of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the increased stress factors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators are surely experiencing an increased lack of well-being. Educators need a form of intervention that addresses the particular stresses of the teaching profession while addressing basic tenets of mental health.

Fabbro et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effects of mindfulness training on schoolteachers' levels of stress and burnout. Fabbro et al. (2020) assessed the participants' dispositional mindfulness, personality styles, their perceived stress, and perceived burnout. Following the mindfulness training, teachers in the intervention group showed higher trait mindfulness and conscientiousness, lower neuroticism, and lower stress and burnout levels than the teachers in the waitlist control group. These results support the beneficial role of mindfulness practice in individuals' effective management of stressful conditions in the workplace.

### **Professional Development for Educators**

Overlooking the mental health and well-being of school system employees has important societal and educational implications. Teacher well-being and social emotional skills have been associated with improved instruction and student outcomes. Conversely, higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction are associated with earlier career attrition from teaching and school

administrative positions. Reports from the Economic Policy Institute (2022) suggest that concerns about health and safety on returning to school (after the COVID-19 pandemic), job insecurity for many categories of school system employees, as well as the typical stresses of these professions, have led to substantial levels of early retirement or career change. The return to in-person instruction presented a variety of COVID-19 related risks and stressors, including the potential of infection if proper mitigation strategies were not implemented and enforced. Teachers and other school system employees, therefore, fit many of the criteria for elevated deleterious mental health effects resulting from the pandemic. There is an urgent need to provide school system employees with acceptable, accessible, and scalable strategies to reduce distress and promote well-being (Hirshberg et al., 2022).

Several domains of skills relevant to effective teaching, which are referred to as “professional dispositions” or “habits of mind,” have been researched for their implications in promoting educator well-being and job satisfaction (Roeser et al., 2012). These habits include tendencies to gather data through all of an individual’s senses, to be aware of and reflect on experience in a non-judgmental manner, to be flexible when problem solving, to regulate emotion and be resilient after setbacks, and to attend to others with empathy and compassion. These “habits of mind” are all elements of mindfulness. Roeser et al. (2012) hypothesized that promoting teachers’ habits of mind will increase their occupational health, well-being, and capacity to create and sustain supportive relationships with students and regulate classroom climate. Through professional development programs cultivating habits of mind, teachers cultivate their own mindfulness traits.

Klingbeil and Renshaw (2018) conducted another meta-analysis on differing mindfulness practices for teachers in the workplace. Their review of 29 studies suggests that mindfulness

interventions are effective in reducing psychological distress and increasing educator wellness. Klingbeil and Renshaw (2018) led a comprehensive search of the literature and coded for a variety of intervention characteristics. Their review included a total of 1,493 participants and intervention time span from two weeks to 36 weeks, with dosages of interventions given at varying levels. They found that “mindfulness-based interventions with teachers are promising for promoting mindfulness, increasing in psychological well-being, and decreasing psychological distress. Schools interested in addressing these teacher outcomes could consider adopting mindfulness-based interventions” (Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018, p. 501).

A meta-analysis conducted by Zarate et al. (2019) investigated the effects of mindfulness-based interventions on educators and in schools. To be included in the study, each of the interventions needed to have mindfulness as a major component. The search procedures led to the identification of 18 manuscripts that included a total sample of 1,001 educators. The mindfulness interventions ranged greatly in dosage, frequency, and delivery models. Mindfulness-based interventions resulted in large effects on feelings of mindfulness, moderate effects for decreases in stress and anxiety, and small effects on feelings of depression and burnout.

Some elements that contributed to elevated stresses on educators include increased standardized testing, larger class sizes, challenging student behaviors, increased demands on teachers’ time, more paperwork, and other environmental factors related to school climate and culture. These factors, reported in 2019 by Zarate et al., do not take into consideration the current shared experiences of isolation and uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors are drastically impacting educator well-being and effectiveness. This study indicates that without intervention, school personnel will continue to experience social and emotional

challenges that directly impact their ability to provide meaningful instruction and support to students.

A study conducted by Matos et al. (2022) investigated the feasibility and effectiveness of an eight-week Compassionate Mind Training program for Teachers (CMT-T). The results suggested indicators of psychological and physiological well-being resulting from engaging in the CMT-T were feasible and effective. Compared to the waitlist control group, the CMT-T group showed improvements in self-compassion, compassion to others, positive affect, and heart rate variability (HRV) as well as reductions in fears of compassion, anxiety, and depression. Participants who received CMT-T revealed additional improvements in compassion for others and from others, and satisfaction with professional life, along with decreases in burnout and stress. Teachers scoring higher in self-criticism at baseline revealed greater improvements post CMT-T. At 3-month follow-up improvements were retained (Matos et al., 2022). CMT-T shows promise as a compassion-focused intervention for enhancing compassion and well-being, reducing psychophysiological distress in teachers, and contributing to nurturing compassionate, prosocial, and resilient educational environments.

One study by Roeser et al. (2013) conducted a randomized controlled study comprising two field trials measuring the psychological and physical indicators of teachers' occupational stress and burnout. Roeser et al.'s (2013) goal was to determine whether a mindfulness program aimed at stress-reduction for teachers was feasible and acceptable. Measures were collected at baseline, post program, and at a three-month follow up interval. Results showed that 87% of teachers who completed the program found it to be beneficial. Teachers randomized into the mindfulness training program study showed greater mindfulness, focused attention and working memory capacity, occupational self-compassion, as well as lower levels of occupational stress

and burnout at post program and follow up than those in the control group. In these regards, it is through the skills of mindfulness and a self-compassion mindset that teachers can more effectively manage stress on the job and by inference, better attend to the interpersonal and instructional complexities of teaching and learning.

In another study conducted by Roeser et al. (2022), researchers found that a mindfulness-based emotional balance program was effective in middle school teachers who engaged in the training program. This randomized-controlled trial examined the near- and longer-term impacts of the Mindfulness-Based Emotional Balance (MBEB) program with regard to improving middle school teachers' mindfulness, self-compassion, occupational health and well-being, and quality of interactions with students in their self-nominated most stressful classroom. Participants reported lower job-related stress and fewer feelings of anxiety immediately after the program and four months post program. Teachers in the program felt less emotionally exhausted and depressed four months later compared with control teachers. Teachers also found that participating in the mindfulness training resulted in better classroom organization in their most stressful classroom of adolescents at follow up.

A study conducted by Chen (2022) investigated the lived experience of stress and stress-coping among eight first-year early childhood teachers (teaching preschool-3rd grade) in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study, applying self-compassion as the conceptual framework, showed teachers' stress resilience appeared to have been facilitated by self-compassion, reflecting a transformative journey from a place of self-judgment to self-kindness, psychological isolation to psychological connectedness, and emotional rumination to emotional mindfulness. This journey was mobilized by self-introspection and social support. The



element of self-compassion is a key factor that should be present in a mindfulness-based intervention for educators to enhance overall well-being.

### **Self-Compassion**

Self-care is vital to well-being, but few individuals learn specific self-care skills, such as self-compassion, to integrate into their own self-care practice. Self-compassion is a simple practice used in the immediate moment to increase and strengthen relational connection and is an important determining factor in educational success (Nelson et al. 2018). Mindfulness in the context of self-compassion involves “being aware of one’s painful experiences in a balanced way that neither ignores nor ruminates on disliked aspects of oneself or one’s life” (Neff & Germer 2013, p. 29). It is necessary to be mindfully aware of personal suffering to be able to extend compassion towards the self and others. At the same time, it is important to pay attention in a grounded way that prevents being carried away by the storyline driving the suffering, a process that Neff (2011) has termed “over-identification” (p. 1).

Although mindfulness is required to experience self-compassion, it is important to recognize that the two constructs are not exactly the same.

First, the type of mindfulness entailed in self-compassion is narrower in scope than mindfulness more generally. The mindfulness component of self-compassion refers to balanced awareness of the negative thoughts and feelings involved in personal suffering. Mindfulness in general refers to the ability to pay attention to any experience—positive, negative, or neutral—with acceptance and equanimity. (Neff & Germer, 2013, p. 29)

Another distinction between mindfulness and self-compassion lies in their respective targets (Germer, 2009). Mindfulness tends to focus on one’s internal experience (sensations, emotions, thoughts) rather than oneself as the experiencer. Self-compassion entails treating oneself with

kindness, recognizing one's shared humanity, and being mindful when considering negative aspects of oneself (Neff, 2011). Mindfulness-based interventions utilizing the elements of self-compassion are integral in cultivating resilience in educators, which, in turn, supports educator well-being and can positively impact the decrease of educator burnout.

Almost all of the practices taught in the 8-week Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) program, which was designed to increase self-compassion skills in daily life, address compassionate and uncompassionate behaviors simultaneously (Neff & Germer, 2013). As an example:

Small group discussion of personal suffering was used to increase feelings of common humanity and to decrease feelings of isolation and self-judgment. A variety of exercises helped participants to directly replace critical inner dialogues with kind and supportive ones that acknowledged the shared nature of imperfection. And mindfulness practices such as awareness of emotions in the body were taught to help participants disentangle from over-identification with the storyline driving emotional reactions, facilitating active self-soothing. (Neff, 2016, p. 270)

Elements of the MSC program developed by Neff and Germer (2013) along with the Self-Compassion Scale Survey (SCS) developed by Neff (2016), should be considered when developing a mindfulness-based intervention for educators to promote overall well-being.

### **Considerations/Cautions**

Manning et al. (2020) conducted a research study of very small sample size on teacher well-being and strategy to support the well-being of teachers in England. They argued that well-being support should be matched to the needs of recipients and support should increase teachers'

freedom to act, rather than simply mitigate “in the moment” feelings of stress. This internal and intrinsic capability can come from participation in a mindfulness-based intervention.

Giving a person who lacks access to transportation a bicycle might be imagined as supportive of their well-being, and in many cases, it would be, but if the roads and the recipient's area are in such poor repair that they prevent its use, their well-being will not be supported – their functioning will not be altered and their freedom to act will not be enhanced. In the context of well-being, interventions might be categorized by the degree to which they support teachers’ freedom to act. Whilst interventions that reduce in the moment feelings of stress are doubtless valuable, they do not give teacher access to different functioning once the intervention is complete; the teacher must continue to carry out the same stress inducing tasks. (Manning et al., 2020, p.79)

In other words, the intervention should promote sustainability and this sustainable daily practice cannot be overlooked. Well-being should be a lifelong focus, not just a means to an end to achieve a productivity or efficiency goal.

Because mindfulness concerns the ability to maintain awareness and attention in the present moment, with non-judgmental attitudes towards oneself and others, it is important to analyze the degree to which teachers are able to adapt these psychosocial functions to their daily work in the school context. The study by Guidetti et al. (2019) enhanced the existing knowledge of the role of mindfulness as a personal resource at work. In the last 10 years, the number of non-teaching related demands, such as performing administrative work, participating in meetings, and keeping updated with new educational and pedagogical approaches often reflect the double bind of being adherent to teaching tasks and to being committed to the pedagogical mission of students’ education. Teachers must interact with an increasing number of students per classroom

to whom they bear greater responsibilities. In this vein, the experience of distress occurs every time a person perceives the situation as too demanding or threatening, exceeding one's resources to deal with it.

The differentiation between sources of stress, such as workload, and people's cognitive appraisal of them, is key to this study on mindfulness. Mindfulness involves a greater capacity to re-perceive external and internal stimuli focusing on present moment instead of activating maladaptive cognitive schemas. Dispositional mindfulness alters the stress process, lessening negative appraisals of stress and in turn favoring more adaptive cognitive strategies. In summary, mindfulness plays a central role in affecting, on one hand, the workload stress appraisal that constitutes the energy-depleting process leading to burnout, and on the other hand, in fostering meaningfulness of work for teachers, as it favors a better alignment with self-determined behaviors and the focus on the core characteristics of the teaching process, thus preventing the onset of burnout. (Guidetti et al., 2019, p.3)

This determines the negative cognitive appraisal of demanding work characteristics or threat perception performed in a central role in the onset of subsequent negative outcomes for teachers, thus mediating the relation between workload and burnout.

Early interventions or prevention approaches may support teachers to develop positive coping mechanisms and reduce the experience and impact of stress. Emerson et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review and narrative synthesis for quantitative and qualitative studies that reported the effects of mindfulness-based interventions for teachers of children ages 5 to 18 years on symptoms of stress, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. Educator social and emotional competence has implications for pupil well-being through educator-pupil relationships and

effective management of the classroom. A range of mindfulness-based interventions were employed across the literature, ranging in contact hours and aims. Mindfulness based interventions showed strongest promise for intermediary effects on teacher emotional regulation.

Emerson et al. (2017) addressed several potential barriers to introducing mindfulness to educators. Potential participants and their senior leadership team benefit from understanding that a mindfulness-based intervention has good potential to be helpful to the participants in unexpected ways:

Currently, there is only limited evidence of this of its benefit to the profession for managing stress. There may also be concerns that offering an individual-level approach to stress management program removes responsibility from organizations to protect employees from stress via workload management. However, not everyone is equally resourced to manage normative stress, stress is not equally distributed, and not all stress is workload related. Thus, offering a mindfulness-based intervention is a way to support teachers and maybe appropriate alongside continued responsibility of employers to support a healthy work environment for their staff. (Emerson et al., 2017, p. 1147)

While mindfulness-based interventions may be able to help mitigate stress factors related to burnout, there are still measures administrators and districts can take to help lessen or reduce stress factors for their educators.

Montero-Marin et al. (2021) conducted a study on mindfulness training enhancing teachers' well-being. This study compared two different mindfulness training formats with a sample of 206 secondary school teachers using an experimental design. Results suggested that teacher well-being was increased in both formats of delivery and both generated similar expectancy and engagement with the mindfulness practice. However, the instructor-led format

appeared to be more credible and effective and was also able to reduce teachers' perception of stress, anxiety, depressive symptomology, and burnout. In contrast, the self-taught program might be useful for those teachers who cannot access or commit to an instructor-led program, provided they engage with the mindfulness practice with fidelity.

### **Discussion and Rationale**

Decades of research have confirmed that teaching is a demanding job, and the scenario may have worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the difficult demands of their work, educators (including para educators, administrators, bus drivers, nutrition services workers, nurses, instructional coaches, and support personnel) feel increasingly stressed, and their stress and burnout levels can affect their health, well-being, and professional performance (de Carvalho et al., 2021). Efforts have been made to develop grounded and culturally adapted interventions that may act as a buffer against educators' stress and burnout risks, promoting their physical, emotional, and occupational health. Mindfulness and occupational self-compassion are key self-regulatory resources that may increase after mindfulness training, and research has shown that mindfulness training appears to partially mediate stress overtime. This could contribute to potential positive downstream effects on the reduction in educator stress and burnout associated with the teaching practice, classroom climate, and student outcomes.

There are several factors to take into consideration when constructing and implementing a mindfulness-based intervention for educators. The timing and duration of a mindfulness-based intervention should be considered, and research has shown that brief informal practice options are most effective (Verger et al., 2021). The development of social emotional competences, which include self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship management, and

responsible decision making (CASEL.org) should also be considered as a framework for the creation of curriculum for mindfulness-based intervention.

It is also clear that mindfulness-based interventions may include an element of resilience training to mitigate risk of burnout in educators (Harker et al., 2016). Vonderlin et al. (2020) indicated that mindfulness-based programs effectively reduced stress, burnout, mental distress, and somatic complaints, while improving mindfulness, well-being, compassion, and job satisfaction. Through professional development programs cultivating habits of mind, teachers cultivate their own mindfulness traits, which have been shown to help mitigate the effects of stress factors (Roeser et al., 2012). Delivery modes could include a self-guided option, which has been shown to be effective and acceptable (Hirshberg et al., 2022), but instructor-led mindfulness-based interventions are more desired and considered more successful (Montero-Marín et al., 2021).

It may also help to take a creative approach when developing a mindfulness-based intervention. Mobile meditation-based interventions may be an effective and scalable approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of teachers and other school system employees, with implications for several critical challenges facing educational systems, including employee retention and performance and the relationship of these factors to student outcomes (Hirshberg et al., 2022). Overall, mindfulness-based interventions will support cultivating a lifelong practice, not just a means to an end or efficiency goal (Manning et al., 2020), but as a tool to promote genuine, enduring, and meaningful personal well-being.

### **A Mindfulness-Based Intervention: The Forest and the Trees**

I chose to theme my mindfulness-based intervention around the nature-based analogy of Neff et al.'s 2018 article title, *The Forest and the Trees: Examining the Association of Self-*

Compassion and its Positive and Negative Components with Psychological Functioning. In this article, two research studies are presented with findings suggesting that self-compassion is best understood as a holistic construct that represents the balance of increased compassionate and decreased uncompassionate self-responding in times of distress.

To use an analogy from nature, findings support the idea that one can examine the particular tree species (i.e., the six components) that make up the “forest” of self-compassion or else the forest as a whole. The use of the total SCS score is the most straightforward way to understand the link between self-compassion and well-being, as it reflects most directly the implications for intervention. For those more interested in unpacking the mechanisms of how self-compassion enhances well-being, however, it may be useful to examine the six constituent components themselves. (Neff et al., 2018, p. 642)

I chose the “Forest and the Trees” theme because the natural theme resonates with me, and I feel that the analogy is appropriate for corresponding accomplishment goals of the intervention within the “forest” of self-compassion.

According to Neff (2016), the six components of the SCS are conceptually distinct (individual species of trees) and represent the compassionate and reduced uncompassionate ways individuals relate to themselves along three basic dimensions: “how they emotionally respond to pain or failure (with kindness and less harsh judgment), cognitively understand their predicament (as part of the human experience and as less isolating), and pay attention to suffering (in a mindful and less over-identified manner),” (Neff et al., 2018, p. 628).

For the learning objective competencies of my intervention, I chose to adopt the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework (CASEL.org),



as many educators are already familiar with the social emotional curricular framework of CASEL for their students. The use of this framework will help build competencies for educators within the domain of personal self-awareness, then self-management. Additional reasoning behind the choice of CASEL framework is the intent for the framework to create the conditions needed for individuals and schools to examine and interrupt inequitable policies and practices, create more inclusive learning environments, and reveal and nurture the interests and assets of all individuals (CASEL.org). This will have positive implications for educator well-being and society at large.

The scope and sequence of the mindfulness-based intervention curriculum is intended to build an internal compositional understanding of general mindfulness, explain how mindfulness practice can benefit educators immediately. The learning objectives for each lesson include showing how mindfulness practiced on a daily basis can be used as a tool to help mitigate burnout, learning the four brain systems that are enhanced by mindfulness meditations, and understanding the relationship between the stress response, burnout, and the mindfulness tools that can be used to combat chronic stress. Educators will also learn ways to cultivate resilience in the face of chronic stress by learning the power of self-compassion practice for influencing the way we interact with others and how the practice can benefit our overall well-being.

Self-compassion is a core element woven throughout the mindfulness curriculum. Ideally, I would like to offer eight lessons, as this format is supported by the scope and sequence findings in almost all of the studies mentioned in the literature review. It is no coincidence that the highly successful and popular Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) training takes place in an eight-week time frame (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 2013). However, I chose to create a four-week intervention, as it will be more time-conducive, palatable, and attractive to already

overwhelmed educators. There is ample opportunity to create companion programs that utilize the CASEL framework competencies as an extension of the learning started in this intervention. These might include interventions around mindful communication that build on the CASEL framework, primarily the components of social awareness and relationship skills.

The intervention includes four comprehensive lesson plans complete with resource handouts, PowerPoint slide decks, and mindfulness practice scripts for each of the lessons. The first lesson will be comprised of an introduction to mindfulness, including the importance of having a beginner's mind, the basic psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness, and an overview of meditative practice. The second lesson will build on the physiologic benefits of different types of meditation affecting different systems of the brain (neuroscience). This lesson will further develop self-awareness competencies by drawing connections between the different types of mindfulness practice available for personal use. In the third lesson, resilience practices will be explored with an understanding of how they condition educators' response to occupational stresses and secondary traumatic stress. The concentration will focus on practical application. The fourth lesson will also emphasize self-management as the desired competency, using the mindful focus of self-compassion meditation. The practice will consist of sending compassion to others, practicing in a way that cultivates sustained resilience to the secondary traumatic stresses that educators face. The final lesson will also provide further resources and opportunities to continue compassionate self-practice via community building and relational practice.

This mindfulness-based intervention may create the conditions that are important for fostering a more mindful space to examine one's inner resources. The intervention may develop a set of inner-personal skills based in compassion, such as empathy for others, expressing

gratitude, appreciating diversity, and building cultural competence. The encouragement of these embodied inner changes adds to the resilience one can access when confronted with occupational stresses. This intervention may be impactful in developing the tools to promote personal and professional well-being.

### **Conclusion**

Compassionate mindfulness training holds promise for the improvement of teaching and learning in public schools by assisting teachers in managing job-related stress and feelings of burnout more effectively. By helping teachers to develop self-regulatory resources rooted in self-awareness and self-management to meet the cognitive, social, and emotional demands of teaching, mindfulness training may also help teachers to conserve precious motivational and self-regulatory resources for investment in relationships with students rather than for coping and defense. This shift from internal regulation and skill building to external relational skill employment will result in better overall satisfaction in outlook, disposition, and capacity. These effects seep over into other aspects of life, creating better work life-balance and overall well-being.

An initial 4-week mindfulness-based intervention for teachers may be acceptable, feasible, and efficacious with respect to helping teachers to reduce their reaction to stress and symptoms of occupational burnout, therefore bolstering their well-being. To support educators, mindfulness interventions may be offered as a new type of holistic benefit in the form of tools to mitigate their reactions to occupational stressors and the factors of secondary traumatic stress that threaten one's well-being. When interventions include elements of self-compassion practice, resilience training, and mindfulness practices, educators gain an understanding of how to

strengthen their own resilience, mitigating the chance of burnout and increasing their own well-being and are empowered to do so.

## References

- Baer, R. (2005). *Five facet mindfulness questionnaire*. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <http://ruthbaer.com/academics/FFMQ.pdf>
- Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J., & Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 11*(3), 230–241.
- Carroll, T. G. (2007). *Policy brief: The high cost of teacher turnover*. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Chen, J. J. (2022). Self-compassion as key to stress resilience among first-year early childhood teachers during COVID-19: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 111*, 103627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103627>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2022, August 3). What is the CASEL framework? <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>
- de Carvalho, J. S., Oliveira, S., Roberto, M. S., Gonçalves, C., Bárbara, J. M., de Castro, A. F., Pereira, R., Franco, M., Cadima, J., Leal, T., Lemos, M. S., & Marques-Pinto, A. (2021). Effects of a mindfulness-based intervention for teachers: A study on teacher and student outcomes. *Mindfulness, 12*, 1719-1732. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01635-3>
- Economic Policy Institute Report. Cooper, D. & Hickey, S. M. (2022). *Raising pay in public K–12 schools is critical to solving staffing shortages: Federal relief funds can provide a down payment on long-needed investments in the education workforce*. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved October 29, 2022, from <https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>

- Emerson, L.-M., Leyland, A., Hudson, K., Rowse, G., Hanley, P., & Hugh-Jones, S. (2017, February 23). *Teaching mindfulness to teachers: A systematic review and narrative synthesis - mindfulness*. SpringerLink. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12671-017-0691-4>
- Fabbro, A., Fabbro, F., Capurso, V., D'Antoni, F., & Crescentini, C. (2020). Effects of mindfulness training on school teachers' self-reported personality traits as well as stress and burnout levels. *Perceptual & Motor Skills*, 127(3), pp. 515–532. [https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1177/0031512520908708](https://doi.org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1177/0031512520908708)
- Flook, L., Goldberg, S. B., Pinger, L., Bonus, K., & Davidson, R. J. (2013). Mindfulness for teachers: A pilot study to assess effects on stress, burnout, and teaching efficacy. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(3), 182–195. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12026>
- Galante, J., Friedrich, C., Dawson, A. F., Modrego-Alarcón, M., Gebbing, P., Delgado-Suárez, I., Gupta, R., Dean, L., Dalgleish, T., White, I. R., & Jones, P. B. (2021). Mindfulness-based programmes for mental health promotion in adults in nonclinical settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *PLOS Medicine*, 18(1), 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003481>
- Germer, C. K. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions*. Guilford Press.
- Harker, R., Pidgeon, A. M., Klaassen, F., & King, S. (2016). Exploring resilience and mindfulness as preventative factors for psychological distress burnout and secondary traumatic stress among human service professionals. *Work*, 54(3), 631–637. <https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-162311>

- Hilton, L. G., Marshall, N. J., Motala, A., Taylor, S. L., Miake-Lye, I. M., Baxi, S., Shanman, R. M., Solloway, M. R., Beroesand, J. M., & Hempel, S. (2019). Mindfulness meditation for workplace wellness: An evidence map. *Work, 63*(2), 205–218.  
<https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-192922>
- Hirshberg, M. J., Frye, C., Dahl, C. J., Riordan, K. M., Vack, N. J., Sachs, J., Goldman, R., Davidson, R. J., & Goldberg, S. B. (2022). A randomized controlled trial of a smartphone-based well-being training in public school system employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000739>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990, 2013). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. Bantam Books.
- Klingbeil, D. A., & Renshaw, T. L. (2018). Mindfulness-based interventions for teachers: A meta-analysis of the emerging evidence base. *School Psychology Quarterly, 33*(4), 501–511. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000291>
- Manning, A., Brock, R., & Towers, E. (2020). Responding to research: An interview study of the teacher wellbeing support being offered in ten English schools. *Journal of Social Science Education, 19*(2) 75-94. <https://doi.org/10.4119/jsse-3312>
- Massachusetts Adult Education Professional Development System. Curriculum, lesson plan and unit templates. <https://www.sabes.org/pd-center/ela>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupation Behavior, 2*, 99-113.
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). *Maslach burnout inventory manual* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Consulting Psychologist Press.

- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397.
- Matos, M., Albuquerque, I., Galhardo, A., Cunha, M., Pedroso Lima, M., Palmeira, L., Petrocchi, N., McEwan, K., Maratos, F. A., & Gilbert, P. (2022). Nurturing compassion in schools: A randomized controlled trial of the effectiveness of a Compassionate Mind Training program for teachers. *PLoS ONE*, 17(3), 1–36. [https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263480](https://doi.org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263480)
- Mindful Leader. *Certified workplace mindfulness facilitator training*. September 14, 2022 – December 7, 2022. <https://www.mindfulleader.org/facilitatorcertification>
- Mindful Schools. *Mindfulness foundations 101 training*. January - February 2021. <https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/101-mindfulness-foundations/>
- Mindful Schools. *Mindfulness in the classroom 201 training*. March - May 2021. <https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/201-mindfulness-in-the-classroom/>
- Montero-Marin, J., Taylor, L., Crane, C., Greenberg, M. T., Ford, T. J., Williams, J. M. G., García-Campayo, J., Sonley, A., Lord, L., Dalgleish, T., Blakemore, S.-J., & Kuyken, W. (2021). Teachers “finding peace in a frantic world”: An experimental study of self-taught and instructor-led mindfulness program formats on acceptability, effectiveness, and mechanisms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(8), 1689–1708. <https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1037/edu0000542.supp>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/secondary-traumatic-stress>



- Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-Compassion, self-esteem, and well-being. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass Journal*, 5(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00330.x>
- Neff, K. D. (2016). The Self-compassion scale is a valid and theoretically coherent measure of self-compassion. *Mindfulness*, 7(1), 264-274. <https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0479-3>
- Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2013). A pilot study and randomized controlled trial of the Mindful Self-Compassion Program. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69(1), 28–44. <https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1002/jclp.21923>
- Neff, K. D., Long, P., Knox, M. C., Davidson, O., Kuchar, A., Costigan, A., Williamson, Z., Rohleder, N., Tóth-Király, I., & Breines, J. G. (2018). The forest and the trees: Examining the association of self-compassion and its positive and negative components with psychological functioning. *Self and Identity*, 17(6), 627–645. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1436587>
- Nelson, J. R., Hall, B. S., Anderson, J. L., Birtles, C., & Hemming, L. (2018). Self-compassion as self-care: A simple and effective tool for counselors, educators, and counseling students. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 13(1), 121–133. <https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1080/15401383.2017.1328292>
- Pressley, T. (2021). Factors contributing to teacher burnout during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x211004138>
- Roeser, R.W., Skinner, E., Beers, J., & Jennings, P.A. (2012). Mindfulness training and teachers' professional development: An emerging area of research and practice. *Child Development*, 6(2), 167-137. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00238.x>

- Roeser, R. W., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Jha, A., Cullen, M., Wallace, L., Wilensky, R., Oberle, E., Thomson, K., Taylor, C., & Harrison, J. (2013). Mindfulness training and reductions in teacher stress and burnout: Results from two randomized, waitlist-control field trials. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105*(3), 787–804. <https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1037/a0032093>
- Roeser, R. W., Mashburn, A. J., Skinner, E. A., Choles, J. R., Taylor, C., Rickert, N. P., Pinela, C., Robbeloth, J., Saxton, E., Weiss, E., Cullen, M., & Sorenson, J. (2022). Mindfulness training improves middle school teachers' occupational health, well-being, and interactions with students in their most stressful classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 114*(2), 408–425.
- Sharrocks, L. (2014). School staff perceptions of well-being and experience of an intervention to promote well-being. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 30*(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2013.868787>
- U.S. Surgeon General. (2022). *Workplace mental health & well-being - current priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General*. Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. Retrieved November 12, 2022, from <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html>
- Vargas-Rubilar, N., & Oros, L. B. (2021). Stress and burnout in teachers during times of pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.756007>
- Verger, N., Shankland, R., Strub, L., Kotsou, I., Leys, C., & Steiler, D. (2021). Mindfulness-based programs, perceived stress and well-being at work: The preferential use of informal practices. *European Review of Applied Psychology, 71*(6), 100709. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2021.100709>

Vonderlin, R., Biermann, M., Bohus, M., & Lyssenko, L. (2020). Mindfulness-based programs in the workplace: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Mindfulness, 11*(7), 1579–1598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01328-3>

Wayfinder. Curriculum and format templates.

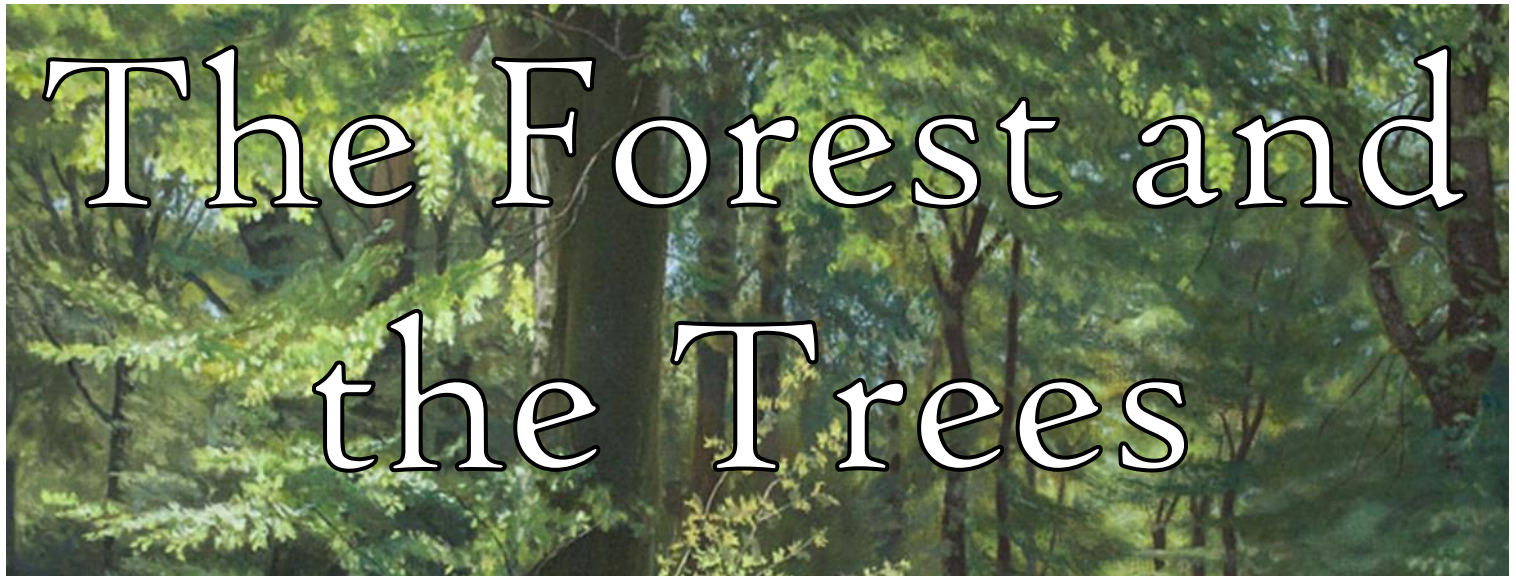
<https://www.withwayfinder.com/curriculum/curriculum>

Zarate, K., Maggin, D. M., & Passmore, A. (2019). Meta-analysis of mindfulness training on teacher well-being. *Psychology in the Schools, 56*(10), 1700–1715.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22308>

**Appendix I: The Forest and the Trees – A Mindfulness-Based Intervention**

**Unit Plan – The Forest and the Trees**



**Unit Plan: Forest and the Trees** [Revised January 2023.]

**Unit Plan: Forest and the Trees**

<p><b>Background Information: The Inspiration Behind the Title</b></p>	<p>I chose to name this mindfulness-based intervention after the nature-based analogy from Neff et al.’s 2018 article, <i>The Forest and the Trees: Examining the Association of Self-compassion and its Positive and Negative Components with Psychological Functioning</i>.</p> <p>To use an analogy from nature, findings support the idea that one can examine the particular tree species (i.e., the six components) that make up the “forest” of self-compassion or else the forest as a whole. The use of the total SCS score is the most straightforward way to understand the link between self-compassion and well-being, as it reflects most directly the implications for intervention. For those more interested in unpacking the mechanisms of how self-compassion enhances well-being, however, it may be useful to examine the six constituent components themselves. (Neff et al., 2018, p. 642)</p> <p>I chose the “Forest and the Trees” theme because the natural theme resonates with me, and I feel that the analogy is appropriate for the corresponding resilience training, mindfulness, and self-compassion practices – “the trees”, falling under the umbrella of well-being – “the forest”.</p>
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>Why this intervention? Why now? Tacoma Public School educators are in immediate need for tools to fill their personal social emotional toolboxes. Educators are finding themselves mal resourced to deal</p>

	<p>with the intensifying stresses of the profession, some of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This intervention introduces and cultivates mindfulness practices that strengthen one's defenses against negative effects of stress including occupational burnout and overall lack of well-being. The qualities that we are trying to cultivate with this intervention are steeped in the self-awareness that mindfulness practice can help provide. Building upon those initial qualities, the intervention introduces practices to develop self-management techniques for the benefit of overall well-being.</p>
<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesson 1 (week 1) – Introduction to Mindfulness (2 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework – (4.5 hours, including recommended daily meditation practice)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 2 (week 2) – Neuroscience of Mindfulness (2.5 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework – (4 hours)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 3 (week 3) – The Stress Response and Resilience (2.5 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework (4 hours)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 4 (week 4) – Empathy and Self-Compassion (2.5 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework – (4 hours)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Total in-class and out-of-class time = 26 hours over the course of 4 weeks</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Student Materials</b></p>	<p>Each lesson plan is accompanied by handouts and a homework/additional resources page. This homework/additional resource page includes links to TED talks or videos with content pertinent to the learning objectives of the lesson. The homework also includes recommended reading selections (that participants are encouraged to browse, not read in their entirety), and links to surveys that participants may choose to take for their own knowledge and benefit. The PowerPoint slides will be made available to participants after each class to allow them to review material and use the links embedded in each of the PowerPoints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesson 1 (week 1) – Introduction to Mindfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework</li> <li>○ Handout: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informal Practices</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 2 (week 2) – Neuroscience of Mindfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework</li> <li>○ Handouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Benefits of Enhancing Brain Systems</li> <li>▪ Neuroscience in Action</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 3 (week 3) – The Stress Response and Resilience Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework</li> <li>○ Handouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomic Nervous System</li> <li>▪ Physical Impact of Trauma</li> <li>▪ Resilience Practices</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Lesson 4 (week 4) – Empathy and Self-Compassion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Handout:
  - Self-Compassion Practices

## Learning Objectives

For the learning objective competencies of my intervention, I chose to adopt the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework (CASEL.org), as many educators are already familiar with the social emotional curricular framework of CASEL for their students. The use of this framework will help build competencies for educators within the domain of personal self-awareness (Lessons 1 and 2), then self-management (Lessons 3 and 4).

Self-Awareness Objectives	Assessment of Objectives
To learn the basic practice of mindfulness (L1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience mindfulness practice, and understand mind wandering is natural</li> <li>• Practicing Mindfulness as tool to strengthen attention and awareness</li> <li>• Articulate the relevance of mindfulness</li> <li>• Cultivate the ability to bring back attention and focus to the present moment.</li> </ul>
To understand that mindfulness can be built into everyday activities (L1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a game plan for how to incorporate mindfulness into everyday activities</li> <li>• Participants adopt a new spin on intention and attention in everyday tasks</li> <li>• Participants are empowered to experience practices and explore self-awareness in a mindful way</li> </ul>
To understand the role of mindfulness in self-care (L1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> <li>• Understanding the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>
To gain an understanding of how mindfulness meditations affect the brain (L2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants start to practice mindfulness as tool to strengthen attention and awareness</li> <li>• Articulate the relevance of mindfulness and which practices enhance which brain systems</li> </ul>
To learn the four brain systems that are enhanced by mindfulness meditations (L2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants are empowered to experience mindfulness practices on their own</li> </ul>
To experience how meditation exercises activate or deregulate each system (L2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants make a game plan for how to incorporate one mindfulness practice into daily life to affect change in one personal area of concern</li> <li>• Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> <li>• Participants understand the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>
Self-Management Objectives	Assessment of Objectives
To learn how our brains react when a stressful stimulus presents itself (L3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants familiarize themselves with the autonomic nervous system</li> </ul>

To learn ways to modify our reactivity using mindfulness practices (L3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are empowered to practice responding versus reacting</li> </ul>
To understand the relationship between the stress response, burnout and the tools that can combat it (L3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants practice the tools to mitigate burnout such as mindfulness practices</li> </ul>
To understand the ways to cultivate resilience in the face of chronic stress (L3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants consider their own stressful stimuli and cultivate ways to condition their response to the stress</li> <li>Participants walk away with tools to use in stressful situations</li> </ul>
To gain self-awareness around thoughts, emotions, and feelings (L4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants examine their own capacities for empathy</li> </ul>
To understand the difference between Empathy and Compassion (L4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are able to articulate the difference between empathy and compassion</li> </ul>
To gain familiarity with the practice of Self-Compassion (L4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> </ul>
To understand the power of the practice of Self-Compassion for influencing the way we interact with others and how it can benefit our overall well-being (L4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants understand the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>

## Suggested Sequence of Lessons

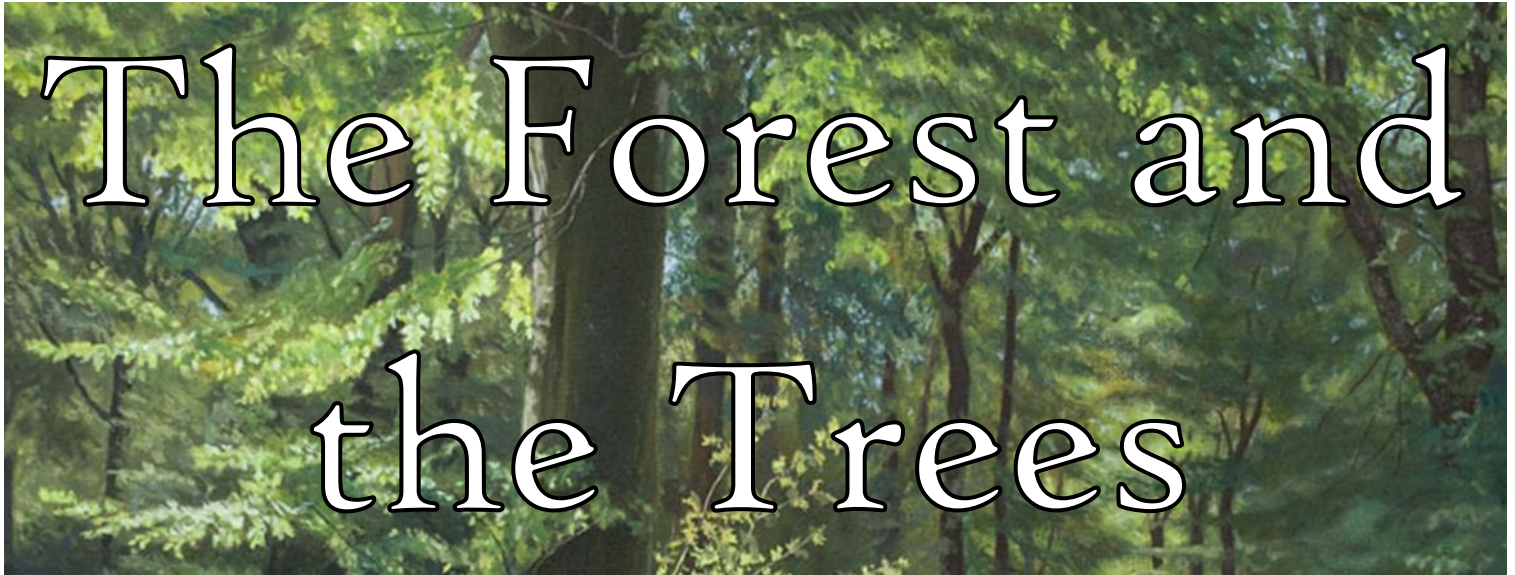
- **Lesson 1** (week 1) – **Introduction to Mindfulness** (PowerPoint side deck: 18 slides = 2 hours)
  - The focus of this lesson is to introduce the concept of mindfulness practice, the basic mechanics of mindfulness practice, the benefits of regular mindfulness practice, and the effect that these practices can have on overall well-being.
- **Lesson 2** (week 2) – **Neuroscience of Mindfulness** (PowerPoint side deck: 28 slides = 2.5 hours)
  - The focus of this lesson is to acquaint participants with the regions and structures of the brain and familiarize participants with the function of these areas. Mindfulness practices will be introduced that research has shown to affect brain structure by way of neuroplasticity.
- **Lesson 3** (week 3) – **The Stress Response and Resilience** (PowerPoint side deck: 24 slides = 2.5 hours)
  - In this lesson we focus on the continuation of our learning from last week by learning about the autonomic nervous system (fight, flight, and freeze). We continue with exploring what happens in our brains when we react to a stressful stimulus. Mindfulness practices will be introduced that lessen the effect of these stress responses. Many resources are presented to keep participants within their “window of tolerance.”
- **Lesson 4** (week 4) – **Empathy and Self-Compassion** (PowerPoint side deck: 23 slides = 2.5 hours)
  - In this lesson we introduce the concept of empathy and highlight why this is an important quality in building relationships with others. We progress with the concept, adding in the element of compassion and how this takes our intention further. We conclude with the practice of turning compassion toward ourselves and drive home the concept of self-compassion as a viable tool to cultivate resilience.

## Course Evaluation

Various opportunities are provided throughout the intervention for participants to take surveys or tests related to their aptitude for mindfulness or risk of burnout. These evaluations include the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educator Survey (MBI-ES), and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). These tests are all optional and participants are able to make use of them as they see fit. A comprehensive evaluation will be given at the beginning and then again at the conclusion of the unit to inform and improve future offerings. This evaluation includes two sections, one for personal evaluation and one specifically for course evaluation. The personal evaluation includes elements of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). The course evaluation is Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS) and the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI). There are also some open-ended questions to garner qualitative data as well.



## Lesson Plan 1 – Introduction to Mindfulness



## Lesson Plan 1: Introduction to Mindfulness [Revised January 2023.]

Social Emotional Competencies	Learning Objectives	Evidence of Learning
<p><i>Self-awareness through the practice of mindfulness</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn the basic practice of mindfulness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience mindfulness practice, and understand mind wandering is natural</li> <li>• Practicing Mindfulness as tool to strengthen attention and awareness</li> <li>• Articulate the relevance of mindfulness</li> <li>• Cultivate the ability to bring back attention and focus to the present moment.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Self-awareness of resources and abilities that can be cultivated</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand that mindfulness can be built into everyday activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a game plan for how to incorporate mindfulness into everyday activities</li> <li>• Participants adopt a new spin on intention and attention in everyday tasks</li> <li>• Participants are empowered to experience practices and explore self-awareness in a mindful way</li> </ul>
<p><i>Self-care is not selfish</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand the role of mindfulness in self-care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> <li>• Understanding the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>

## Preparation for Lesson

- *Familiarize yourself with the material and run through the PowerPoint 2 times to practice timing and content.*
- *Practice delivering the mindfulness practice*
- *Communicate with students and make sure you have email addresses for homework assignments to be given after the class*

### Day of Lesson:

- Arrange room (chairs/tables) for maximum efficiency and appropriateness for mindfulness practices
- Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation
- Cue up the PowerPoint
- Check embedded links in PowerPoint
- Check for sound
- Print out handouts
- Arrange any props needed for meditation practice

# Lesson Plan

PART OF LESSON	TIME	STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS	MATERIALS/SLIDES
<p><b>Prep/Welcome/Settle In</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Warmly welcoming participants into the space</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring space is prepared for learning</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation</li> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check embedded links in PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check for Sound</li> <li>• Arrange any other resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 1 – welcome</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review unit goal/cumulative project</i></li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient yourself and the participants in the space.</li> <li>• Tribal land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Create a safe container for learning</li> <li>• Review common agreements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak from your own authentic experience</li> <li>○ Share only what you are comfortable with</li> <li>○ Respect others' opinions and acknowledge that they may be different from your own and that is fine</li> <li>○ Be open and curious about what we are about to learn</li> <li>○ Listen to others fully – this is a form of mindfulness (giving your full attention)</li> <li>○ Try these practices, even if you are uncomfortable – discomfort is where growth happens</li> <li>○ Attend to your own needs – listen to your body</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 2 – tribal acknowledgement</li> <li>• Slide 3 – common agreements</li> </ul>

<b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Set the right mind frame for the material that will be taught in this lesson</i></li> </ul>	2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Three Deep Breaths</li> <li>○ Diaphragmatic Breathing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 4 – opening</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce the objectives - and address why they are important</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 5 – goals</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is Mindfulness</li> <li>• Start with definition</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Based on a centuries old practice</li> <li>• Mindfulness is an element in Meditation, but Meditation is not Mindfulness</li> <li>• Mindfulness can be incorporated into any other task</li> <li>• Basics of Practice</li> <li>• Best way to understand a practice is by doing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 6 – Jon Kabat-Zinn</li> <li>• Slide 7 – misconceptions</li> <li>• Slide 8 – Mindfulness vs Meditation</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	13 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 9 – practice</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• What did you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• Did you find it hard to focus your attention?</li> <li>• Was this difficult?</li> <li>• What was the most difficult element for you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ judgment</li> <li>○ mind-wandering</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 10 – discussion</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ staying present</li> <li>○ rumination</li> </ul>	
<b>Break</b>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 11</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 12 – FFMQ</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Benefits of mindfulness practice</li> <li>● Engage class with discussion about what aspect they might find most valuable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 13 – benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage learners in inquiring, exploring, and problem-solving</li> </ul>			
<b>Body</b>	27 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stimulus and response</li> <li>● Instructions: brainstorm in small groups what the quote means</li> <li>● Reminder of Common Agreements</li> <li>● Discussion about the power of pause (small group, 15 minutes)</li> <li>● Break into small groups – discussion of possible impact of the “Pause”</li> <li>● Mindfulness allows for this pause</li> <li>● With continued practice our habits change, and we learn to respond versus react</li> <li>● Continued discussion debrief (large group, 10 minutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 14 – pause</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include multiple kinds of interactions (e.g., whole group, small group, pairs).</li> </ul>			
<b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brainstorming how mindfulness can be brought into everyday activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 15 – Everyday</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</li> </ul>			
<b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wrap up, review of important concepts</li> <li>● The tree being the practice in the forest of self-care</li> <li>● <b>Closing practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 16 – wrap up</li> <li>● <b>Handout</b> – Homework</li> <li>● <b>Handout</b> – Informal Practices</li> <li>● Slide 17 – closing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</li> <li>● Preview the next lesson</li> </ul>			

Other	120 minutes (2 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any Questions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide contact information</li> </ul>
-------	--------------------------	--	---

PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 1



1



2



3



4



5



6

### Some Misconceptions

#### Mindfulness is not

- Tuning out
- Being relaxed
- Stopping your thoughts
- Being passive
- Being calm

#### Mindfulness is

- Being self-aware
- Being perceptive and curious
- Responding instead of reacting
- Staying focused on what's important
- Connecting deeply with others

7

### The intention of Mindfulness in the practice of Meditation

#### When practicing mindfulness, you may find yourself trying to focus on the present, yet you may be worrying about something else.

This is normal, especially when first getting into mindfulness. When your mind begins to wander, don't try to fight it, as this can result in frustration. Instead, let the thoughts flit across your mind without focusing on them. Simply notice them as they enter, and then let them go, envisioning them floating in and then out of your mind with as much neutrality as possible. Continually try to ground yourself in the present by noticing things such as how the ground feels beneath your body or feet, how your clothing feels against your skin, any scents in the air, and so on.

8

### The Basics of Mindfulness and Meditation : the Practice (11 minutes)



9



Discussion

10

**Time for a Break**  
Please come back in 5 minutes



11

### Mindfulness Survey

#### Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

<http://rutgher.com/academics/FFMQ.pdf>

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number in the blank that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

12

Introduction to Mindfulness

### The Benefits of a Mindfulness Practice

 <b>Emotional</b>	 <b>Cognitive</b>	 <b>Physical</b>	 <b>Behavioral</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce stress</li> <li>• Increase resilience</li> <li>• Cultivate self-compassion</li> <li>• Enhance emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Greater empathy and compassion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens focus</li> <li>• Improves memory</li> <li>• Reduces bias</li> <li>• Enhances decision-making</li> <li>• Increases flexible thinking and creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessens blood pressure</li> <li>• Decreases heart rate</li> <li>• Strengthens immune system</li> <li>• Enhances ability to cope with pain</li> <li>• Improves safety and reduces injury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves sleep</li> <li>• Improves listening &amp; communication</li> <li>• Greater patience &amp; persistence</li> <li>• More ethical behavior</li> <li>• Facilitates habit change</li> </ul>

13

Victor Frankl






**“ “ “ “**  
**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.**

Victor Frankl (1907-1997), a Holocaust survivor, was an Austrian psychiatrist who founded logotherapy, a school of psychotherapy that describes a search for a life's meaning as the central human motivational force. Frankl wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* over a nine-day period. The book, originally titled *A Psychologist Experiences the Concentration Camp*, was released in German in 1946. The English translation of *Man's Search for Meaning* was published in 1959, and became an international bestseller.

14


Mindfulness Practices

There are many ways to integrate mindfulness into everyday actions:

-  Mindful Eating
-  Mindful Walking
-  Mindful Communication

15

Seeing the tree for the forest



- Mindfulness versus Meditation
- Mindfulness Practice can be informal
- You can bring mindfulness into your everyday moments
- Focusing your attention on the task at hand is all that mindfulness requires
- If your mind wanders to something other than what you are doing in the present moment, gently bring your attention back to the task without judgement.
- \*Homework for next week

16



Closing Practice

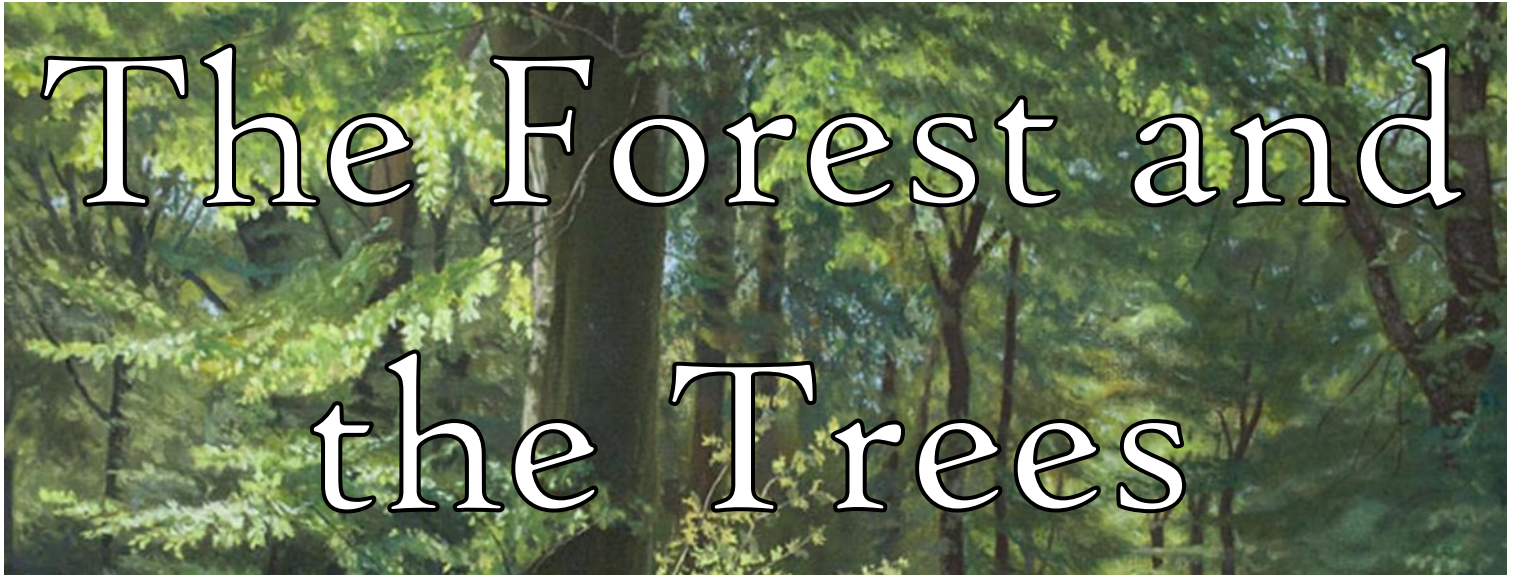
17

Thank you for your presence today. See if you can find ways to carry this practice with you into the rest of your day.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Mindfulness

18





## Informal Mindfulness Practices Handout

### Daily Activity

- Choose an activity to bring your attention to each day. This could be brushing your teeth, walking up the stairs, making your coffee in the morning, walking your dog, doing the dishes, etc.
- The idea is to bring attention to what it feels like as you engage in the activity.
- The idea is that you avoid multitasking - when you are doing the dishes, you are doing the dishes; when you are brushing your teeth, you are brushing your teeth.
- Chances are your mind will wander off or you will forget all together to bring awareness to the activity. This is fine and part of the practice!
- What do you notice when you do bring your attention to the activity?
- Optional: You can read this quote by Thich Nhat Hanh to drive home the idea of presence:

“To my mind, the idea that doing the dishes is unpleasant can occur only when you are not doing them. Once you are standing in front of the sink with your sleeves rolled up and your hands in warm water, it really is not so bad. I enjoy taking my time with each dish, being fully aware of the dish, the water, and each movement of my hands. I know that if I hurry in order to go and have a cup of tea, the time will be unpleasant and not worth living. That would be a pity, for each minute, each second of life is a miracle.

If I am incapable of washing dishes joyfully, if I want to finish them quickly so I can go and have a cup of tea, I will be equally incapable of drinking the tea joyfully. With the cup in my hands, I will be thinking about what to do next, and the fragrance and the flavor of the tea, together with the pleasure of drinking it, will be lost. I will always be dragged into the future, never able to live in the present moment.”

- Contemplation and practice of this habit of mind (presence) will help develop and cultivate your attentive mindfulness.

## Mindful Speaking and Listening

- There are many ways of practicing mindful speaking and listening. The basic idea is to bring awareness to the experience of speaking and listening. This is not as easy as it sounds! Mindfulness can be challenging enough when we're on our own. For many it becomes that much more difficult when in conversation with someone else. We all have found ourselves in a conversation, whereas the other person is speaking, we are formulating our response. In this moment we aren't really listening. If we truly listen to hear, we won't come to the conversation with a preconceived reaction. The point is to hear what the other is saying, pause, consider what they have said, and then authentically respond.
- Some basic suggestions for mindful speaking and listening:
  - Pause
  - Connect with your feet on the floor or sitz bones in the chair
  - Bring your full attention to the conversation by putting down your phone, turning your body toward the speaker, and bringing the attention back when you notice that the mind has wandered off
- The communication agreements that you adopt can be a great way of deepening the practice of mindful speaking and listening. We can practice this concept in our interactions with each other in this course.

Here are some possible Communication Agreements that were adapted from: [Agreements for Multicultural Interactions at EBMC](#)

- **Practice Self Focus:** Attend to and speak about your own direct experiences and responses.
- **Practice Presence:** Agreement to bring full attention to the class (person you are talking with) and to not be doing other things. Bringing awareness to your body can be helpful (I am here, now).
- **Move Up / Move Back:** If you tend to speak often, consider "moving back" and vice versa.
- **Practice Mindful Listening:** Try to avoid planning what you'll say as you listen to others.
- **Confidentiality:** Take home learnings, but don't identify anyone other than yourself, now or later.

## Mindful Emailing and Texting

- Before you pick up your phone to text or are about to send an email, connect with your body. Feel your feet on the floor, your sitz bones on the chair and your breath in your body. Then either read or write your text or email.
- As you continue to text or email, periodically reconnect with your body in a similar way. Feel your feet on the floor, your sitz bones on the chair, and your breath in your body.

## Mindful Eating

Mindful eating can first be introduced to a group as a formal practice. This is an exercise that we may partake in during class time, but you can do this with friends or family too. It is a great interactive way to share what you are learning with others:

- Bring chocolate and dried apricots (could be raisins) to the session.
- Pass a few out one to everyone who wants to participate.
- Invite everyone to look at the chocolate or apricot and popcorn out what they see.
- Invite everyone to touch the object and popcorn out what they feel.
- Invite everyone to bring the object to their nose and popcorn out what they smell.
- Optional: Invite everyone to bring the object to their ear and popcorn out what they hear.
- Invite everyone to bring the object to their lips, pause, and then to place it in their mouths without biting down. Simply feeling the object in their mouth. When they are ready, to take one bite and notice, then another bite, and to continue chewing slowly.
- After a few minutes of chewing, you can ask people what they noticed.
- They can choose to repeat with the remaining pieces if they choose.
- This is a great way to slow down and notice the individual components or nuances of an action that we usually do on autopilot every day, multiple times a day.

**Optional eating practice that invites being with the difficult** (comes from the Mindfulness in Schools Project dot b Curriculum)

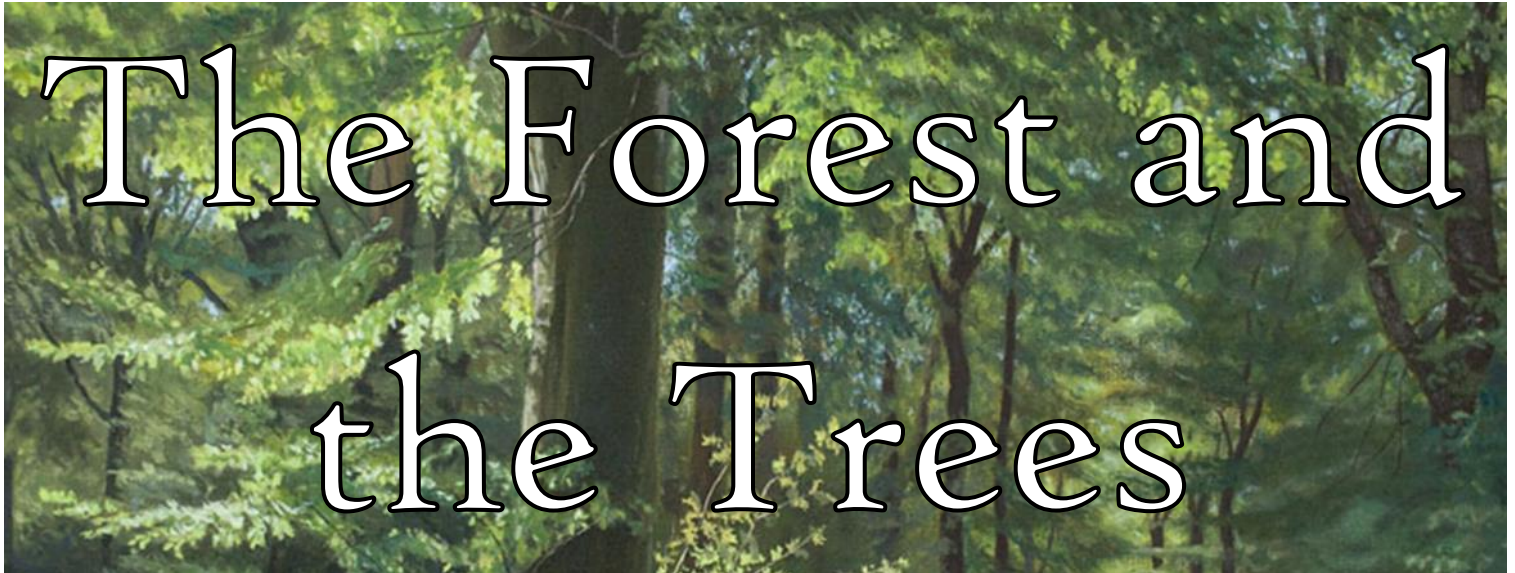
- In advance, slice small pieces of a habanero pepper.
- Invite anyone who wishes to take a small piece in their hand and then follow the steps above in mindful eating.
- Make sure to caution everyone about not touching their eyes after touching the pepper.
- Note that this is a practice of being with the potentially unpleasant. What is it like to notice unpleasant sensations?
- Pass out wet wipes after so that people can wash their hands.
- After everyone has finished, ask what they noticed.

**Eating as an informal practice** (This is suggested as something you can do outside of the mindfulness session):

- Pick a meal to bring your attention to in the same way you did when you ate the apricot or chocolate.
- Note that you don't have to eat your meal as slowly as you did the apricot or chocolate, but what is it like to be present with your food as you eat?
- If eating a meal mindfully isn't workable, you can eat a snack or even the first 3 or 4 bites of a meal.

## Informal Mindful Walking

- After formal walking meditation practice is introduced, you can suggest that participants take on mindful walking as informal practice.
- They might consider bringing awareness to walking as they walk from their car to the store, or from home to the bus stop, or from the front door at work to their desk at the office, etc.
- There are many Apps out there that offer mindful walking practices as guided practice options. If you so choose, you may engage with one of these practices and then spend a short while contemplating what it was like to engage in this practice. How was it different from the walking that you do daily?



## Lesson 1: Intro to Mindfulness Homework and Additional Resources

- Please watch these TED Talk videos and jot down your thoughts, reactions, and takeaways from each one.
- Recommended reading suggestions are books that are great resources on mindfulness
- Take the FFMQ and save your results. You can printout several copies and complete them throughout the year to gauge your growth in this area.

### Videos

[https://youtu.be/6mlk6xD\\_xAQ](https://youtu.be/6mlk6xD_xAQ) **Mindfulness in Schools | Richard Burnett | TEDxWhitechapel.** This video is geared toward teaching mindfulness to students but still applicable to the beginner's mind concept. This video features an explanation of how our attention shapes our happiness. There is an invitation to join in with a mindfulness exercise (Focused Awareness). There is also a good explanation of negativity bias. (about 19.5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Df2JBnqI8lc&t=195s> **Taming Your Wandering Mind | Amishi Jha | TEDxCoconutGrove.** The neuroscience of attention and mind wandering, and how stress exacerbates the habit of mind wandering. (about 19 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/IeblJdB2-Vo> **The Power of Mindfulness: What You Practice Grows Stronger | Shauna Shapiro | TEDxWashingtonSquare.** This may be an emotionally triggering video for some participants. Please approach this video with openness and curiosity. The topics of negativity bias, shame and kind attention are featured. If it is comfortable for you, start the morning practice that Shauna mentions toward the end of the video (This practice could look like 5 or 10 minutes in the morning). (about 14 minutes)

### Mindfulness Survey

**Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)**

Please use the link below to take the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. This is for your own reference. You may choose to take this test now and then take it again at the end of the course to gauge your personal growth in mindfulness.

<http://ruthbaer.com/academics/FFMQ.pdf>

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number in the blank that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

## Mindfulness Meditation

[Insight Timer](https://insighttimer.com) - #1 Free Meditation App for Sleep, Relax & More <https://insighttimer.com>

The best meditation app with the world's largest FREE library of more than 130k guided meditations, 14k teachers & the world's most loved meditation Timer. Explore this app. Choose a meditation of about 10 minutes in length and commit to practicing every morning for a week. We will discuss your practice during the next class session.

## Recommended Reading

[\*Full Catastrophe Living\* \(Revised Edition\): Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness](#), by Jon Kabat-Zinn and Thich Nhat Hanh | Sep 24, 2013

Stress. It can sap our energy, undermine our health if we let it, even shorten our lives. It makes us more vulnerable to anxiety and depression, disconnection and disease. Based on Jon Kabat-Zinn's renowned mindfulness-based stress reduction program, this classic, groundbreaking work—which gave rise to a whole new field in medicine and psychology—shows you how to use medically proven mind-body approaches derived from meditation and yoga to counteract stress, establish greater balance of body and mind, and stimulate well-being and healing. By engaging in these mindfulness practices and integrating them into your life from moment to moment and from day to day, you can learn to manage chronic pain, promote optimal healing, reduce anxiety and feelings of panic, and improve the overall quality of your life, relationships, and social networks. This second edition features results from recent studies on the science of mindfulness, a new Introduction, up-to-date statistics, and an extensive updated reading list. *Full Catastrophe Living* is a book for the young and the old, the well and the ill, and anyone trying to live a healthier and saner life in our fast-paced world.

[\*Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment and Your Life\*](#), by Jon Kabat Zinn | July 1, 2016

We may long for wholeness, suggests Jon Kabat-Zinn, but the truth is that it is already here and already ours. The practice of mindfulness holds the possibility of not just a fleeting sense of contentment, but a true embracing of a deeper unity that envelops and permeates our lives. With *Mindfulness for Beginners*, you are invited to learn how to transform your relationship to the way you think, feel, love, work, and play—and thereby awaken to and embody more completely who you really are. This book you can use in three unique ways: as a collection of reflections and practices to be opened and explored at random; as an illuminating and engaging start-to-finish read; or as an unfolding "lesson-a-day" primer on mindfulness practice.

[\*Mindfulness in Plain English\*](#), by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana | Sep 6, 2011

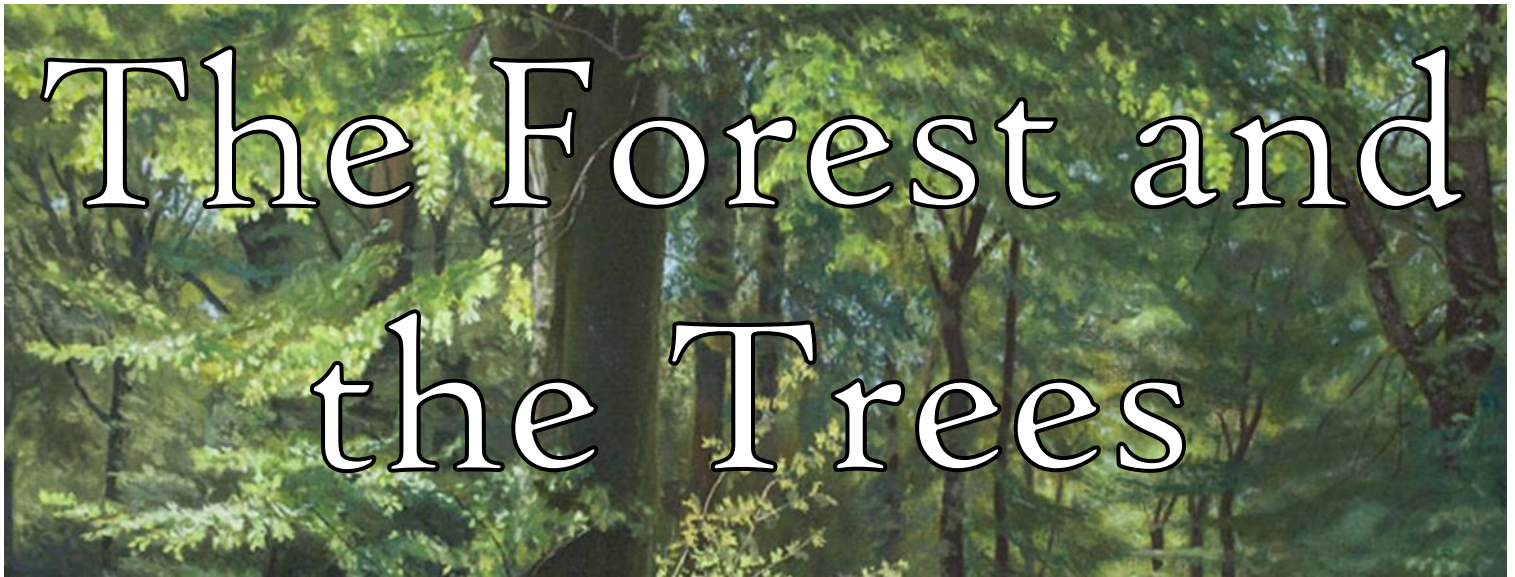
Author Bhante Gunaratana, a renowned meditation master, takes us step by step through the myths, realities, and benefits of meditation and the practice of mindfulness. The book showcases Bhante's trademark clarity and wit, as he explores the tool of meditation, what it does, and how to make it work. This expanded edition includes the complete text of its predecessor along with a new chapter on cultivating loving kindness, an

especially important topic in today's world. For anyone who is new to meditation, this is a great resource for learning how to live a more productive and peaceful life.

[\*Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life\*](#), by Jon Kabat-Zinn | Jan 5, 2005

Warmth, humor, anecdotes, and poems make up this inspirational guide to a revolutionary new way of being, seeing, and living. Exploring principles and practices of mindfulness, Dr. Kabat Zinn has taught this two-thousand-year-old Buddhist method of relaxation to thousands. Learn how to capture the present, to live fully in the moment and reduce anxiety, achieve inner peace, and enrich the quality of life. Let this be your guide to mindfulness meditation in everyday life.

## Lesson Plan 2 – Neuroscience of Mindfulness



## Lesson 2: Neuroscience of Mindfulness [Revised January 2023.]

Social Emotional Competencies	Learning Objectives	Evidence of Learning
<i>Self-awareness through the practice of mindfulness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gain an understanding of how mindfulness meditations affect the brain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants start to practice mindfulness as tool to strengthen attention and awareness</li> <li>Articulate the relevance of mindfulness and which practices enhance which brain systems</li> </ul>
<i>Self-awareness of resources and abilities that can be cultivated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn the four brain systems that are enhanced by mindfulness meditations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are empowered to experience mindfulness practices on their own</li> </ul>
<i>Moving from an understanding of Self-awareness to the action involved in Self-management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To experience how meditation exercises activate or deregulate each system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants make a game plan for how to incorporate one mindfulness practice into daily life to affect change</li> </ul>



		<p>in one personal area of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> <li>• Participants understand the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>
--	--	--

## Preparation for Lesson

- *Familiarize yourself with the material and run through the PowerPoint 2 times to practice timing and content.*
- *Practice delivering the 4 mindfulness practices using the scripts*
- *Communicate with students and make sure you have email addresses for homework assignments to be given after the class*
- *Make sure you have a laser pointer*

### Day of Lesson:

- Arrange room (chairs/tables) for maximum efficiency and appropriateness for mindfulness practices
- Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation
- Cue up the PowerPoint
- Check embedded links in PowerPoint
- Check for sound
- Print out handouts
- Arrange any props needed for meditation practices
- Arrange any other resources

## Lesson Plan

PART OF LESSON	TIME	STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS	MATERIALS/SLIDES
<p><b>Prep/Welcome/Settle In</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Warmly welcoming participants into the space</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring space is prepared for learning</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation</li> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check embedded links in PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check for sound</li> <li>• Arrange any other resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Slide 1 – welcome</li> </ul>

<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review unit goal/cumulative project.</li> <li>• Go over common agreements in order to create a safe space for learning</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient yourself and the participants in the space.</li> <li>• Tribal land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Create a safe container for learning</li> <li>• Review common agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak from your own authentic experience</li> <li>○ Share only what you are comfortable with</li> <li>○ Respect others' opinions and acknowledge that they may be different from your own and that is fine</li> <li>○ Be open and curious about what we are about to learn</li> <li>○ Listen to others fully – this is a form of mindfulness (giving your full attention)</li> <li>○ Try these practices, even if you are uncomfortable – discomfort is where growth happens</li> <li>○ Attend to your own needs – listen to your body</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 2 – tribal acknowledgement</li> <li>• Slide 3 – common agreements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the right mind frame for the material that will be taught in this lesson</li> </ul>	3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Practice</li> <li>• Rest your awareness on the breath as it is. When the mind wanders, and it will, bringing to your attention back to the breath without attachment, judgement, or resistance. Allow your conscious mind to acknowledge the wandering and come back to the breath.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 4 – opening</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review unit goal/cumulative project</li> <li>• Review key learnings from previous lesson(s)</li> <li>• Activate prior knowledge</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Objectives from last class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A reminder of our learning objectives from the last class</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learning Objectives for this class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 5 – last class</li> <li>• Slide 6 – this class</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce the objectives - and address why they are important</i></li> </ul>			
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce content to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	12 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “hand” model of the brain</li> <li>• Get familiar with the different regions of the brain and their functions</li> <li>• Color coding of the brain and visual connections between the regions and this relation – building off Dan Siegel’s hand model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 7 – Dan Siegel</li> <li>• Slide 8 – more brain regions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go over the four different brain systems that we will work with during the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 9 – neuroplasticity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce brain system to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilience System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enables you to recover from distress and not get hijacked by strong emotions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 10 – Resilience system</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce a micro practice to associated with strengthening the specific brain system</i></li> </ul>	1 minute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 11 – Micro practice</li> <li>• Box Breathing Script</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• What connections can you make between the practice and the brain system we are trying to affect?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 12 – discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce brain system to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enables you to focus sustained attention on a task while resisting distractions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 13 – Attention system</li> </ul>

<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce a micro practice to associated with strengthening the specific brain system</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 14 – Micro practice</li> <li>• Awareness of Breath Script</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• Did your mind wander?</li> <li>• What happened when it did?</li> <li>• What connections can you make between the practice and the brain system we are trying to affect?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 15 – discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Break</b></p>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 16</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce brain system to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enables you to form emotional connections, see other perspectives, &amp; tend-and-befriend</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 17 – Connection system</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce a micro practice to associated with strengthening the specific brain system</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 18 – Micro practice</li> <li>• Cultivating Compassion Script</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• Did your mind wander?</li> <li>• What happened when it did?</li> <li>• What connections can you make between the practice and the brain system we are trying to affect?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 19 – discussion</li> </ul>

<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce brain system to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meta-Awareness System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awareness of how your mind weaves your experiences into a narrative and constructs your mental model of your world</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 20 – Meta-Awareness system</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce a micro practice to associated with strengthening the specific brain system</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 21 – Micro practice</li> <li>• Focused Awareness Script</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• Did your mind wander?</li> <li>• What happened when it did?</li> <li>• What connections can you make between the practice and the brain system we are trying to affect?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 22 – discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The brain as a whole – all systems working together</li> <li>• Make connections – “mind map” understanding of what Dan Siegel was talking about</li> <li>• If you can visualize which parts of the brain are being activated by certain stimuli, you can engage in practices that strengthen these systems and connections in order to decrease your reactivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 23 – mind map</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference the chart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 24 – benefits of enhancing each system</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Benefit of Enhancing Brain Systems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lead reflection in what students learned and how</i></li> </ul>	12 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the mindfulness practices that we participated in this session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 25 – wrap up</li> </ul>

<p><i>they might use what they learned in their lives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preview the next lesson</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tree being the individual practices that contribute to the health of the forest – the brain and body</li> <li>• Wrap up of our learning for the class</li> <li>• <b>Closing practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Neuroplasticity in Action</li> <li>• Slide 26 – wrap up of learning</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Homework</li> <li>• Slide 27 – closing</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	150 minutes (2.5 hours)	<b>Any Questions?</b>	Provide contact information

## Mindfulness Practice Scripts for Lesson 2

- *What does the space need? What is the best format for the given practice?*
- *Practice /run through the script and get familiar with delivering to an audience*
- *Include options for different anchors*
- *Try to deliver the practice in a trauma sensitive manner*
- *Monitor your participants and adjust if needed*

### **Box Breathing – for the Resilience System**

Settling into the body, Turing your attention to the breath,

In through the nose – 2, 3, 4.

Hold – 2, 3, 4.

Out through the mouth – 2, 3, 4.

Hold – 2, 3, 4.

Repeat as you like

### **Awareness of Breath – for the Attention System**

This is an awareness of breath meditation. The guidance offered here is just an invitation. If at any point you want to open your eyes, shift your body, modify, or stop the practice, you are welcome to do so.

Begin by finding a comfortable position, one that reflects wakefulness and stability. A posture that reflects your intention to be fully present for this practice.

**(Pause 3 breaths)**

Allowing the hips and lower body to be heavy, supported by the chair. The spine can be straight but not rigid. It helps if the feet are making a solid connection with the floor. Closing your eyes if that's comfortable or just taking a soft downward gaze.

Turning your attention now to the breath. Breathing and aware you are breathing. Simply attending to the breath as it flows in and out of the body.

**(Pause 3 breaths)**

There's no need to control the breath or improve or change it in any way. Just being with your breathing, however it is, and offering a curious and open attention to what arises.

**(Pause 3 breaths)**

Know that thinking about breathing is not the same as feeling the breath. In this practice, we are cultivating the ability to have a direct felt experience of the breath.

**(Pause 3 breaths)**

Beginning to notice where you feel the breath most vividly. . . It might be at the tips of the nostrils (noticing the temperature of the breath; cool as it enters and perhaps slightly warmer as it flows out); . . . the throat (in the comings and goings of the breath); . . . the chest (and the rising and falling of this area of the body as the

lungs fill and empty) . . . the belly (sensing the expanding and releasing of the belly as breath flows in and out); . . . Finding that place where you feel the breath most prominently and resting your attention there.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Settling into just being with your breathing. As you do so, if you find that focusing on the breath is not supportive, feeling free to shift your attention to a more familiar or supportive anchor such as sound, the feet, the hands, or the feeling of the body in the chair.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

When you notice that your mind has wandered, gently but kindly bring your attention back to the breath, over and over again. . . Remembering that this practice is not about stopping thoughts, but about noticing when you've become distracted and returning to your intended focus. This is a moment of mindfulness.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Investigating the breath with curiosity and kindness. . . Is it deep or shallow? . . . Is it slow or fast? . . . Does it stay the same or change?

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Are you aware of the pauses at the start and end of the inbreath, the still point where the breath turns around?

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

You might notice the rhythm and flow of the breath. Perhaps having a sense of riding the wave of the breath.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Knowing that even as you focus on the breath, thoughts will continue to arise, emotions will come and go, sensations will arise in the body. This is normal. As best you can, let any thoughts, emotions, and sensations be in the background of your awareness; and bringing your attention back to the sensation of breathing. No need to force anything. Gently turning the attention toward the breath.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Staying close to the direct experience of breathing. . . What do you notice?

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Gently coming back if you've gotten lost in thought.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

You might notice your mind beginning to wonder if you are doing this right, or thoughts about whether you like or don't like this practice. As best you can, simply observing these thoughts and then gently returning your attention to the breath.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Just this moment..... Just this breath.... In and out.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Now expanding your field of awareness to encompass the entire body from the bottom of the feet to the top of the head. Aware of the whole-body breathing. . . Aware of the subtle movement of the body as the breath comes and goes. . . Being with this moment just as it is.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Simply sitting here. Just breathing.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

As we come to the close of this practice, acknowledging that by doing this practice, you have made time for your own well-being. Knowing that you can return to the anchor of breath or body throughout the day, as needed, to help calm and steady the mind. Gradually opening your eyes when you're ready. Maybe wiggling your fingers and toes, gently stretching if you would like. Moving now into the rest of your day with increased awareness and steadiness.

### **Cultivating Compassion – for the Connection System**

This is a Cultivating Compassion practice. This practice is designed to cultivate feelings of kindness and compassion. Throughout all of our practices, we cultivate a quality of awareness that is characterized by curiosity, kindness, and acceptance. In this practice, we will cultivate these qualities more directly.

As we do this practice, you may experience a range of emotions, from compassion, warmth, and kindness to emotions such as frustration, judgment, and not liking. There's no right way to feel. In addition, if at any time,

the practice feels uncomfortable or not appropriate, you are welcome to disregard the guidance and shift your attention to any anchor that is familiar. Honoring how you are feeling in the moment is an act of compassion and kindness.

Coming now into a posture that offers comfort, ease, and stability. Sensing into the movement of breath and the feeling of the body sitting. And when you're ready, allowing the eyes to close, or simply looking downward with a soft gaze.

Noticing the fact that you're breathing. And tuning in to the sensations of the breath as it moves in and out of the body.

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

If possible, calling to mind someone for whom you have feelings of warmth, kindness, love, or gratitude. It could be anyone. Someone that you are close to, or simply someone that you admire, or even an animal that you care about. Acknowledging the connection that you have with this person or animal. Feeling how you want the best for them and that you wish them well. And in this moment, sending them wishes of love and well-being by repeating the following phrases silently to yourself.

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you be safe

May you live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Noticing what emotions are arising and where in the body you feel these sentiments. Or perhaps there is no particular emotion or sensation at all. Remembering that we are not trying to create any particular experience. Whatever is arising is just as it should be.

Once again repeating these phrases to yourself, or perhaps similar ones that resonate with you more deeply.

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you be safe

May you live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Now allowing the image of this person or animal to fade into the background.

And shifting your focus to offering these very same wishes for well-being to yourself. Beginning to send feelings of warmth, kindness, and acceptance to yourself, to whatever degree you can. Doing so by repeating these phrases.

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Sensing in the body how this feels. You might notice feelings that are comfortable and pleasurable. Or you might find sensations that are uncomfortable. Some people have a difficult time offering compassion to themselves. Knowing that there's no right or wrong way to feel. Whatever your experience, maintaining the intention to send wishes of kindness and well-being to yourself. And repeating these phrases silently.

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

You can extend this kind and generous presence to the people in your community, across your country, and all beings throughout the world.

Allowing your heart to be as wide as possible, sending your good wishes and kindness to others who, like you, simply want to feel safe and healthy, happy, and at peace. And doing so by repeating these phrases to yourself.



May we all be happy  
 May we all be healthy  
 May we all be at peace  
 May we all live with ease

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

And now simply resting in this sense of kindness and compassion for all people and beings, if it's available. Beginning now to shift your awareness to take in once again the body sitting, the breath flowing, and sounds a rising and falling away. Opening the eyes if they have been closed and becoming aware of seeing. Taking a moment to stretch or move in any way that feels supportive as you move into the next moments of the day.

### **Focused Awareness Meditation – for the Meta-Awareness System**

This is a Focused Attention Meditation. The intention of this practice is to strengthen and stabilize attention in the present moment. The guidance offered here is just an invitation. If at any point you want to open your eyes, shift your body, modify, or stop the practice, you are welcome to do so.

Beginning by finding a comfortable posture, one that reflects your intention to be awake and alert during this practice. The body is both upright and relaxed. Closing your eyes if that's comfortable, or just taking a soft downward gaze. Bringing kind gentle attention to how things are right now.

Bringing your attention to what it feels like to be sitting here right now. Noticing the way your body makes contact with the chair beneath you. Maybe you notice a sense of pressure.

In this practice, you will be invited to bring your attention to a variety of different objects to anchor your attention in the present moment. No object of attention is better than any other. The most important thing is to explore which anchor will be most supportive in helping you to stay with the direct experience of the present moment.

We'll begin by using the sensations of the body as an anchor to the present moment. We'll bring attention to what are called the "**touchpoints**" - the places in the body that come in contact with another surface.

Now bringing awareness to your **feet** and the contact they may be making with the floor or other surface.

Perhaps noticing pressure where the feet meet the floor. Or noticing other sensations, coolness, warmth, or the sensations of your socks, shoes, or air around your feet. . . Resting attention on the feet.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Chances are you will notice your mind wanders off. This isn't a problem at all. It's what minds do. You might notice where your mind goes and then gently and kindly, bringing the attention back to the anchor you are working with, in this case, the feet. Each time you do this, you are strengthening the muscle of mindfulness.

Bringing interest and fresh eyes to the sensations in the feet.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Now, shifting attention from the feet to another touchpoint, the **seat** - the place where your body makes contact with the chair or whatever surface is supporting you. You might notice pressure at the back of the legs or the sitz bones. Exploring the sensations of contact that can be discovered here.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

This is a practice of paying attention, noticing when the attention wanders, and kindly bringing it back, over and over again. Remembering that as soon as you become aware that the mind has wandered, you are already back in the present moment.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Now letting go of the seat as an anchor and moving to the **hands**. Becoming aware of the position of the hands. Are they touching one another or resting on your legs or another surface? Bringing friendly interest to the sensations of the hands. Noticing pressure, tingling, warmth, or coolness. Whenever the mind wanders off, kindly bringing attention back to the sensations in the hands.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Noticing if there is any striving or trying to make something happen or even trying to relax. Knowing that we are not trying to make anything special happen in this practice. Simply noticing how things are in this moment just as it is. Holding it all with kindness and curiosity.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

The last anchor we will explore in this practice is that of **sound**. Allowing awareness of the hands to fade into the background and bringing attention to listening, with the intention to receive whatever sounds are here and now. Attending to sounds as they arise, as they linger and dissolve. Noticing sound for the sake of sound.

*(Pause for 5 breaths)*

Noticing the quality of the sounds, high pitch or low pitch, near or far, steady, pulsing, or intermittent. Perhaps noticing that your mind might tell you what the sounds are. If so, noticing this and returning to hearing sound for the sake of sound.

*(Pause for 5 breaths)*

What sounds are here in this moment? The sound of my voice. Sounds in the environment. Perhaps noticing sounds in the room or outside the room or building. Maybe even sounds in your own body, maybe the sound of breathing. Perhaps being aware of the silence between the sounds.

*(Pause for 5 breaths)*

You might imagine your awareness like an open window. Sounds flow in and sounds flow out. The open window doesn't strain to hear sounds, nor does it push away sounds. It doesn't like or judge sounds. It's just an open window, being with whatever sounds arise and fall away.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Now widening the field of your awareness to take in the entire body sitting and breathing. Aware of hearing. Moving from a narrow beam of attention to a wide-angle lens of awareness.

*(Pause for 3 breaths)*

Taking a moment to appreciate yourself for taking this time to practice. For cultivating curiosity and openness to whatever is happening moment by moment in the experience of your life. Knowing that by practicing regularly, you are creating the conditions for living with greater ease and well-being, strengthening focus, and increasing the capacity to live with intention. Allowing the eyes to open if they've been closed and becoming aware of seeing. Wiggling your fingers and toes if you like and stretching if that would feel good. Moving now into the rest of your day with increased awareness and steadiness.

## PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 2



1



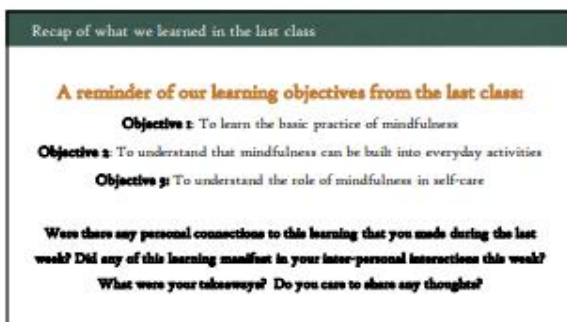
2



3



4



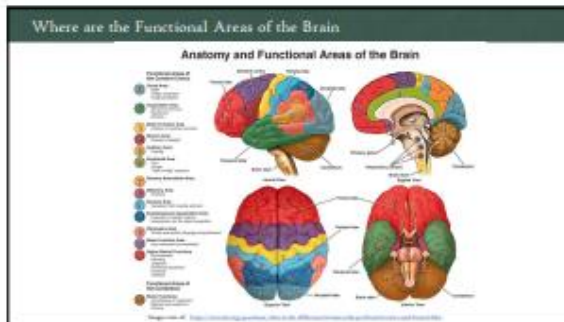
5



6



7



8

### What the science says

Through the process of neuroplasticity, consistent long-term meditation practice has been shown to change the functional connectivity of the brain.

**Meditation in the mindfulness tradition** engages 4 main brain systems

- 1. **The Resilience System** - the networks for stress regulation and equanimity
- 2. **The Attention System** - the networks for attention, focus, and distraction inhibition
- 3. **The Connection System** - the networks for compassion and empathy
- 4. **The "Meta-Awareness" System** - the networks for awareness of one's sense of self, states, and patterns

\*\*Meditation in the Mindfulness tradition\*\* include: Vipassana, Insight, or Transcendental meditation practice, Transcendental practice, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mindful Awareness Training by Shin Young, and non-directed practices such as loving kindness or compassion meditation and Transcendental Meditation. Training by David Lutz and Greg Sheng.

9

### The Resilience System

**Function** Enables you to recover from distress and not get hijacked by strong emotions

**Key Structures**

- 1 Amygdala: key node in the brain's stress circuitry - the main driver for distress if it perceives a threat. It triggers the fight-flight response.
- 2 Prefrontal cortex (PFC): the bridge the connection between the PFC and amygdala, the bridge the ability to regulate stress response and not get "hijacked"
- 3 The vagus nerve: runs on the parasympathetic nervous system

**Impact of Consistent Meditation Practice**

- People who complete MBSR training and other mindfulness practices showed less activity in the amygdala
- Experienced meditators have stronger cognitive connectivity between their prefrontal cortex and their amygdala, which enables a higher baseline level of equanimity than the average person has
  - This trait doesn't go away after MBSR training, more practice over an extended period of time is required to gain lower "reactive"
  - The more hours of lifetime meditation practice, the more quickly the amygdala recovered from distress
  - This is supported by lower levels of cortisol and lowered inflammation in response to stress tests

Functional magnetic imaging (fMRI) showed that in the amygdala, the brain area with the greatest response to negative emotional and interpersonal situations. Amygdala: the emotional center of distress and attention systems.

10

## Micro Practice: Box Breathing

This practice activates the Resilience System, enabling you to recover from distress and not get hijacked by strong emotions. Strengthening this system corresponds to lower stress arousal response and lower inflammation, higher baseline level of equanimity, and compassion in times of crisis.

*Count to 4 for each part of the breath: inbreath, pause, exhalation, pause.*  
*"Breathe in 2 2 4. Pause 2 2 4. Breathe out 2 2 4. Pause 2 2 4."*

11

## Discussion

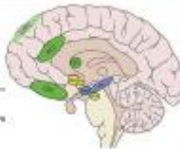
12

### The Attention System

**Function** Enables you to focus sustained attention on a task while resisting distractions

**Key Structures**

- 1) Lateral prefrontal cortex (LPFC) - executive attention, sustained focus, and inhibition of distraction
- 2) Anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) - error detection & awareness of mind-wandering
- 3) Basal ganglia - attentional control (via thalamus)
- 4) Default mode network (DMN) - mind-wandering, self-referential, day-dreaming, rumination
- 5) Amygdala - emotion awareness & emotional inhibition



**Impact of Consistent Meditation Practice**

- Deeper concentration and improved cognitive control in face of distraction; reduced amygdala reactivity
- Reduced mind-wandering; longer sustained attention on "high-level" and without emotional blinks
- Increased mental flexibility corresponding to other subjects who focused on and improved accuracy in detecting specific stimuli

Image credit: <http://www.brainmapping.com/brain/brain-structure/01/>

13



### Micro Practice: Awareness of Breath Meditation

This practice activates the Attention System, enabling you to focus sustained attention on a task while resisting distractions. Strengthening this system corresponds to deeper concentration, longer attention spans, and increased accuracy when detecting details.

*Bring your awareness to the breath as it is, moving in and out of the body.  
Notice when you lose focus and the mind wanders away from the breath.  
Gently guide your awareness back to the breath.*

14



### Discussion

15

## Time for a Break

Please come back in 5 minutes



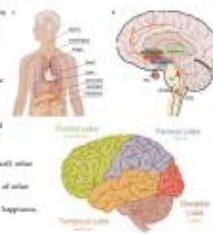
16

### The Connection System

**Function** Enables you to form emotional connections, see other perspectives, & tend-and-befriend

**Key Structures**

- 1) Vagus nerve - ability to feel connected to people & connected with healthy + negative ions
- 2) Temporal parietal junction (TPJ) - enables you to see people as human beings (not as objects or animals) and to realize those their story and perspective(s)
- 3) Mirror neurons - enable you to relate to other people as part of your own self
- 4) High amygdala reactivity to the pain and suffering of others, and willingness to act altruistically
- 5) Neurocels: the power of love - ability to hold unconditional positive regard for another



**Impact of Consistent Meditation Practice**

- Higher vagal tone: increased ability to connect with loved ones, and feel other people plus stronger immune system and resilience to stress
- Enlarged right amygdala to more emotions and access to experiences of other people
- Stronger activity in the neurocels for positivity (increased feelings of happiness, joy, and well-being)
- Reduction in unconscious bias

Image credit: <http://www.brainmapping.com/brain/brain-structure/01/> and <http://www.brainmapping.com/brain/brain-structure/01/>

17



### Micro Practice: Cultivating Compassion

This practice activates the Connection System, enabling you to form emotional connections, see other perspectives, & tend-and-befriend. Strengthening this system corresponds to increased ability to attain to people, plus stronger immune system and resilience to stress, increased sensitivity to emotions and pain of others, increased happiness, joy, and well-being, and reduction in unconscious bias.

*Think of a person you want to connect with. Invite feelings of goodwill towards that person by saying these phrases:  
May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be safe. May you live with peace and ease.*

18



19

**The Meta-Awareness System**

**Function:** Awareness of how your mind stores your experiences into a narrative and constructs your mental model of your world

**Key Structures:**

- Dorsal medial prefrontal cortex (DMPFC) - inner experience (being aware of being aware)
- The "Self-Constructing" System
- Default mode network (DMN) - mental prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and posterior cingulate cortex (PCC), which mediate mind-wandering; they store one's experiences into a self-referenced story
- Medial anterior cingulate to "optimize," affirm, and connect

**Impact of Consistent Meditation Practice:**

- Less often entered by PFC to focus and initiate attention "voluntarily doing"
- Increased connectivity between the DMPFC and the DMN "subconscious" - greater narrative awareness, ability to see & detach from one's stories and patterns
- Lessened connectivity between parts of the DMN (or baseline) less mind-wandering, and rumination
- Enhanced gray matter volume in the medial anterior cingulate (for self-compassion, caring, and attachment)

Image used at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352266670/figure/fig/1/figure-fig1/352266670\\_640px.png](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352266670/figure/fig/1/figure-fig1/352266670_640px.png)

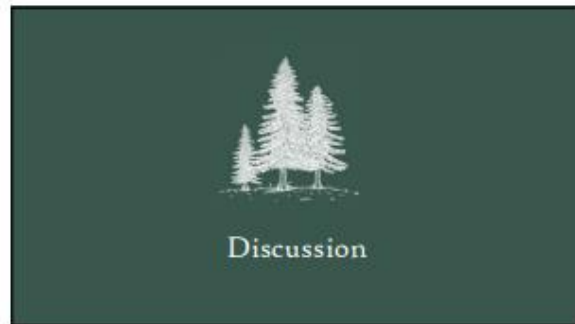
20

**Micro Practice: Focused Awareness Meditation**

This practice activates the Meta-Awareness System, enabling awareness of how your mind stores your experiences into a narrative and constructs your mental model of your world. Strengthening this system corresponds to effortless doing and present-moment awareness, the ability to see & detach from one's stories and patterns, less mind-wandering and rumination, and less impulsive and attachment.

Keep your awareness in the breath as it is. When the mind wanders, see what your default mode network is trying to put attention. Without aversion, judgment, or resistance, allow your attention to be in knowledge to the "thought" or "thought" and gently guide your awareness back to the breath.

21



22

**Understanding the Brain as a Whole System**

**Frontal lobe:** Executive functions, memory planning, organizing and problem solving, emotions and behavioral control, personality

**Motor cortex:** Movement

**Sensory cortex:** Sensations

**Parietal lobe:** Perception, spatial sense of the world, arithmetic, spelling

**Temporal lobe:** Memory, understanding, language

**Cerebellum:** Balance

Image used at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352266670/figure/fig/1/figure-fig1/352266670\\_640px.png](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352266670/figure/fig/1/figure-fig1/352266670_640px.png)

23

**Brain Systems**

Brain System	What it does	Benefits of "enhancing" this system
<b>The Attention System</b>	Enables you to focus on a task while ignoring distractions and control executive functions	Improves your attention span, accuracy, and quality in research, design, your focus and concentration
<b>The Resilience System</b>	Enables you to calm the amygdala, not get hijacked by strong emotions, and recover from distress	Enables you to maintain composure in times of challenge and stress, reduces inflammation, and benefits impact of chronic stress on the body
<b>The Connection System</b>	Enables you to form emotional connections, see other perspectives, and react and behave in other ways than "fight-or-flight" when stressed	Increases your sense of "connectedness," the meaningfulness of your relationships, and your willingness to be vulnerable that benefits others, improves your well-being and parenting
<b>The Meta-Awareness System</b>	Awareness of how the mind stores experiences into a narrative and constructs a mental model of the world	Develops more awareness of your experience as you see that the mind that links you and is equal to you, emotions, and control


24

Neuroplasticity: Mindfulness practices that can affect brain systems

Brain System	Body Scan	Focused Attention	Cultivating Compassion	Mindful Movement
<b>The Attention System</b>	★★★★ reduces mind-wandering	★★★★★ decreases & reorients focus, reduces mind-wandering	★★★ reduces mind-wandering & reorientation	★★★ reduces mind-wandering
<b>The Emotions System</b>	★★★★ reduces prefrontal-cortex activity	★★★ decrease reactivation of amygdala activity	★★★★★ helps stress hormones, heart-vascular fatigue & PTSD	★★★★★ reduces prefrontal-cortex activity
<b>The Connection System</b>	★★ increases mind-body connection & vagal tone	○ decreases stress-related narratives	★★★★★ "switch on" entire connection systems	★★ increases mind-body connection & vagal tone
<b>The Motor Attention System</b>	○ consistent long-term practice	★★★ consistent long-term practice	★★ consistent long-term practice	○ consistent long-term practice

25

### Seeing the trees for the forest



- Parts of the brain responsible for neuroplasticity:
  - Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC)
  - Hippocampus
  - Amygdala
  - Vagus Nerve
- Research conducted on long-term practitioners
- Benefits of using mindfulness practices to affect neuroplasticity
- Benefits of practice, decrease in:
  - Anxiety
  - Addiction
  - Depression
- \*Homework for next week

26



Closing Practice

27

Thank you for your presence today. See if you can find ways to carry these practices into the rest of your week.

Lesson 2: The Neuroscience of Mindfulness

28



## The Possible Benefits of Enhancing Brain Systems

Brain System	What it does	Benefits of “enhancing” this system
<b>The Attention System</b>	Enables you to focus on a task while resisting distractions and sustain attention over time	Improves your attention span, accuracy, and specificity to nuances, deepens your focus and concentration
<b>The Resilience System</b>	Enables you to calm the amygdala, not get hijacked by strong emotions, and recover from distress	Enables you to maintain composure in times of challenge and crisis; reduces inflammation and harmful impact of chronic stress on the body
<b>The Connection System</b>	Enables you to form emotional connections, see other perspectives, and tend-and-befriend rather than fight-or-flee when stressed	Increases your sense of “connectedness,” the meaningfulness of your relationships, and your willingness to take actions that benefit others; improves your well-being and positivity



<p><b>The Meta-Awareness System</b></p>	<p>Awareness of how the mind weaves experiences into a narrative and constructs a mental model of the world</p>	<p>Develops meta-awareness of your narratives so you can shed the ones that limit you and/or spiral into anxiety, rumination, and conflict</p>
---	---	--



## Neuroplasticity in Action: Mindfulness Practices and their effect on our Brain Systems

Brain System	Body Scan	Focused Awareness	Cultivating Compassion	Mindful Movement
<p><b>The Attention System</b></p>	<p>↑↑↑↑ reduce mind-wandering</p>	<p>↑↑↑↑↑ sharpen &amp; sustain focus, reduce mind-wandering</p>	<p>↑↑↑ reduce mind-wandering &amp; rumination</p>	<p>↑↑↑ reduce mind-wandering</p>
<p><b>The Resilience System</b></p>	<p>↑↑↑↑ activate parasympathetic nervous system</p>	<p>↑↑↑ decrease rumination &amp; amygdala reactivity</p>	<p>↑↑↑↑↑ buffer stress hormones, heal empathy fatigue &amp; PTSD</p>	<p>↑↑↑↑↑ restore parasympathetic nervous system</p>

<p><b>The Connection System</b></p>	<p>↑↑ increase mind-body connection &amp; vagal tone</p>	<p>↑ detach from self-centered narratives</p>	<p>↑↑↑↑↑ “work out” entire connection system</p>	<p>↑↑ increase mind-body connection &amp; vagal tone</p>
<p><b>The Meta-Awareness System</b></p>	<p>↑ consistent long-term practice</p>	<p>↑↑↑ consistent long-term practice</p>	<p>↑↑ consistent long-term practice</p>	<p>↑ consistent long-term practice</p>



## Lesson 2: Neuroscience of Mindfulness Homework and Additional Resources

- Please watch these TED Talk videos and jot down your thoughts, reactions, and takeaways from each one.
- Recommended reading suggestions are books that are great resources on the neuroscience of mindfulness

### Videos

<https://youtu.be/7CBfCW67xT8> **How mindfulness changes the emotional life of our brains | Richard J. Davidson | TEDxSanFrancisco.** Neuroplasticity - we can take responsibility for changing the structures in your brain. Why is it that some people are more vulnerable to life's slings and arrows and others more resilient?" In this eye-opening talk, Richard Davidson discusses how mindfulness can improve well-being and outlines strategies to boost four components of a healthy mind: awareness, connection, insight, and purpose. (about 18 minutes)

This [short animation](#), from Harvard's Fundamentals of Neuroscience provides a broad overview of the brain and nervous system. (about 2.5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc> **How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains | Sara Lazar | TEDxCambridge 2011.** Neuroscientist Sara Lazar's amazing brain scans show meditation can actually change the size of key regions of our brain, improving our memory and making us more empathetic, compassionate, and resilient under stress. (about 8.5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GszmHs8qPFE> **The Neuroscience of Mindfulness - What exactly happens to your brain when you meditate.** Good overview of modern neuroscience of mindfulness practices. (about 9 minutes)

### Recommended Reading

[Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom](#), by Rick Hanson | Nov. 1, 2009

By combining breakthroughs in neuroscience with insights from thousands of years of mindfulness practice, you too can use your mind to shape your brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom. Buddha's Brain draws on the latest research to show how to stimulate your brain for more fulfilling relationships, a deeper spiritual life, and a greater sense of inner confidence and worth. Using guided meditations and mindfulness exercises, you'll learn how to activate the brain states of calm, joy, and compassion instead of worry, sorrow, and anger. Most importantly, you will foster positive psychological growth that will literally change the way you live in your day-to-day life. This book presents an unprecedented intersection of psychology, neurology, and contemplative practice, and is filled with practical tools and skills that you can use every day to tap the unused potential of your brain and rewire it over time for greater well-being and peace of mind.

[Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students](#), by Zaretta Hammond | Dec. 1, 2014

In this book, Zaretta Hammond draws on cutting edge neuroscience research to offer an innovative approach for designing and implementing brain compatible culturally responsive instruction.

[Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation](#), by Dan Siegel | Dec. 28, 2010

From a pioneer in the field of mental health comes a groundbreaking book on the healing power of "mindsight," the potent skill that allows you to make positive changes in your brain—and in your life. Through his synthesis of a broad range of scientific research with applications to everyday life, Dr. Siegel has developed novel approaches that have helped hundreds of patients. And now he has written the first book that will help all of us understand the potential we have to create our own lives.

[Neuroscience and Psychology of Meditation in Everyday Life: Searching for the Essence of Mind](#), by Dusana Dorjee | July 18, 2017

This book addresses essential and timely questions about the research and practice of meditation as a path to realization of human potential for health and well-being. Balancing practical content and scientific theory, the book discusses long-term effects of six meditation practices: mindfulness, compassion, visualization-based meditation techniques, dream yoga, insight-based meditation and abiding in the existential ground of experience. Each chapter provides advice on how to embed these techniques into everyday activities, together with considerations about underlying changes in the mind and brain based on latest research evidence. This book is essential reading for professionals applying meditation-based techniques in their work and researchers in the emerging field of contemplative science. The book will also be of value to practitioners of meditation seeking to further their practice and understand associated changes in the mind and brain.

## Meditation Apps

[Calm](#) - The #1 App for Meditation and Sleep <https://www.calm.com>

Calm is the #1 (paid) app for sleep and meditation. Join the millions experiencing better sleep, lower stress, and less anxiety.

[Headspace](#) - Meditation and Sleep Made Simple <https://www.headspace.com>

Live a healthier, happier, more well-rested life in just a few minutes a day with the Headspace app.

[Insight Timer](#) - #1 Free Meditation App for Sleep, Relax & More <https://insighttimer.com>

The best meditation app with the world's largest FREE library of more than 130k guided meditations, 14k teachers & the world's most loved meditation Timer.

## Lesson Plan 3 – The Stress Response and Resilience Training



### Lesson 3: Stress Response and Resilience Training [Revised January 2023.]

Social Emotional Competencies	Learning Objectives	Evidence of Learning
<i>Self-management through the practice of mindfulness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn how our brains react when a stressful stimulus presents itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants familiarize themselves with the autonomic nervous system</li> </ul>
<i>Self-awareness of personal resources and abilities that can be cultivated to affect Self-management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn ways to modify our reactivity using mindfulness practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are empowered to practice responding versus reacting</li> </ul>
<i>Moving from an understanding of Self-awareness to the action involved in Self-management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the relationship between the stress response, burnout and the tools that can combat it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants practice the tools to mitigate burnout such as mindfulness practices</li> </ul>
<i>Actively participating in Self-management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the ways to cultivate resilience in the face of chronic stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants consider their own stressful stimuli and cultivate ways to condition their response to the stress</li> </ul>

- Participants walk away with tools to use in stressful situations

## Preparation for Lesson

- Familiarize yourself with the material and run through the PowerPoint 2 times to practice timing and content.
- Practice delivering the 4 mindfulness practices using the scripts
- Communicate with students and make sure you have email addresses for homework assignments to be given after the class
- Make sure you have a laser pointer

### Day of Lesson:

- Arrange room (chairs/tables) for maximum efficiency and appropriateness for mindfulness practices
- Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation
- Cue up the PowerPoint
- Check embedded links in PowerPoint
- Check for sound
- Print out handouts
- Arrange any props needed for meditation practices
- Arrange any other resources

## Lesson Plan

PART OF LESSON	TIME	STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS	MATERIALS/SLIDES
<b>Prep/Welcome/Settle In</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warmly welcoming participants into the space</li> <li>• Ensuring space is prepared for learning</li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation</li> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check embedded links in PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check for sound</li> <li>• Arrange any other resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Slide 1 – welcome</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review unit goal/cumulative project.</li> <li>• Go over common agreements in order to create a safe space for learning</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient yourself and the participants in the space.</li> <li>• Tribal land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Create a safe container for learning</li> <li>• Review common agreements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak from your own authentic experience</li> <li>○ Share only what you are comfortable with</li> <li>○ Respect others' opinions and acknowledge that</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 2 – tribal acknowledgement</li> <li>• Slide 3 – common agreements</li> </ul>

		<p>they may be different from your own and that is fine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be open and curious about what we are about to learn</li> <li>○ Listen to others fully – this is a form of mindfulness (giving your full attention)</li> <li>○ Try these practices, even if you are uncomfortable – discomfort is where growth happens</li> <li>○ Attend to your own needs – listen to your body</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Set the right mind frame for the material that will be taught in this lesson</i></li> </ul>	2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Settling into the body, turning your attention to the breath,</li> <li>○ In through the nose – 2, 3, 4.</li> <li>○ Hold – 2, 3, 4.</li> <li>○ Out through the mouth – 2, 3, 4.</li> <li>○ Hold – 2, 3, 4.</li> <li>○ Repeat as you like</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 4 – opening</li> <li>• Box Breathing Script</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review unit goal/cumulative project</i></li> <li>• <i>Review key learnings from previous lesson(s)</i></li> <li>• <i>Activate prior knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>Introduce the objectives - and address why they are important</i></li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Objectives from last class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A reminder of our learning objectives from the last class</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learning Objectives for this class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 5 – last class</li> <li>• Slide 6 – this class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce content to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomic Nervous System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 7 – autonomic nervous system</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Autonomic Nervous System</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the Sympathetic and the Parasympathetic Nervous system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 8 – brake and gas</li> </ul>

<b>Body</b>	8 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recall from the last class the structures of the brain</li> <li>Go over what happens during a stress response</li> <li>Check for understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 9 – stress response</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a practice associated with strengthening resilience</li> </ul>	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided meditation</li> <li>If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 10 – practice</li> <li>Body Scan Script</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pose questions that require critical thinking</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion</li> <li>*Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>How do you feel?</li> <li>Did you have any difficulty with this practice?</li> <li>Why do you think this was?</li> <li>What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>What connections can you make between the practice how this could affect your personal resilience?</li> <li>Bring up the concept of embodiment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 11 – discussion</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Break</b></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 12</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the MBI</li> </ul>	2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maslach Burnout Inventory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 13 – MBI</li> <li><b>Handout</b> - Homework</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce content to build upon later in the lesson</li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of chronic stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 14 – chronic stress</li> <li><b>Handout</b> – Physical Impact of Trauma</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the “Window of Tolerance”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 15 – window</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polyvagal theory</li> <li>Continuation of the “Window of Tolerance” model</li> <li>Nervous system interoception of feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 16 – polyvagal</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilience practices involving the vagus nerve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 17 – vagus nerve</li> <li><b>Handout</b> – Resilience Practices</li> </ul>



<b>Body</b>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeper dive into the stress response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 18 – physiologic stress response</li> <li>• Re-reference <b>Handout</b> – Physical Impact of Trauma</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of book and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 19 – relaxation response</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play the video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 20 – relaxation response</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pose questions that require critical thinking</li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• What connections can you make between the practice and when you might use aspects of this practice?</li> </ul>	Slide 21 – discussion
<b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</li> <li>• Preview the next lesson</li> </ul>	12 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the mindfulness practices mentioned in the session</li> <li>• The tree being the individual practices that contribute to the health of the forest – the brain and body</li> <li>• Wrap up of our learning for the class</li> <li>• <b>Closing practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 22 – wrap up</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Homework</li> <li>• Slide 27 – closing</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	150 minutes (2.5 hours)	<b>Any Questions?</b>	Provide contact information

## Mindfulness Practice Scripts for Lesson 3

- What does the space need? What is the best format for the given practice?
- Practice /run through the script and get familiar with delivering to an audience
- Include options for different anchors
- Try to deliver the practice in a trauma sensitive manner
- Monitor your participants and adjust if needed

### **Box Breathing**

Settling into the body, Turing your attention to the breath,

In through the nose – 2, 3, 4.

Hold – 2, 3, 4.

Out through the mouth – 2, 3, 4.

Hold – 2, 3, 4.

Repeat as you like

### **Body Scan Meditation**

This is a guided body scan meditation, where you will be invited to move your attention systematically through your body. Just follow along with this guidance, noticing what's present for you moment to moment. Bringing curiosity and a gentle acceptance to whatever you find. There's no right way to feel in this practice. However you're feeling is just fine. You're not trying to make anything happen or even trying to relax, just simply becoming aware of what you notice as we move through regions of the body.

The guidance offered here is just an invitation. If at any point you want to open your eyes, shift your body, or modify or stop the practice, you are welcome to do so. It is also ok to move your attention to another part of your body or to your breath or stop altogether if you encounter more discomfort than you are ready for. You can return to where we are in the body scan when you are ready.

To begin, finding a position that's comfortable for you. A position that reflects your intention to be alert and awake for this practice. You can do this body scan sitting, lying down, or even standing.

*(Pause 2 breaths)*

If you are sitting, letting the hips settle in the chair. Feeling the feet on the floor. Letting the spine be straight but not rigid. If you are in another posture, letting yourself feel the contact with the surface that is supporting you. Closing the eyes if that's comfortable or taking a soft downward gaze. Beginning by noticing that breath is moving in and out of the body.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Now narrowing your attention and directing it to your **feet**. Exploring sensations in the toes, the soles of the feet and the tops of the feet. . . Becoming aware of any sensations in this area of the body – warmth or coolness, tingling, pressure or the sensations of contact with a sock or shoe or air. . . You may not be aware of any sensations in the feet and that's fine, just noticing that there are no sensations. Simply being interested and curious about this area of the body.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Chances are you will notice that your mind will wander off. This isn't a problem at all. It's what minds do. You might notice where your mind has gone and then gently and kindly bring the attention back to the anchor you are working with, in this case, the feet.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Letting the attention shift to the **ankles . . . the lower legs . . . shin bones . . . the muscle of the calves. . .** Noticing what there is to discover in the **lower legs**.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Now becoming aware of the **knees – kneecaps, tendons and muscles. . .** Perhaps sensing tightness or comfort. Or nothing in particular at all.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Moving attention to the **thighs** – Perhaps sensing the weight of the **strong bones and muscles** here. The contact with a chair or the floor. Simply noticing what's here for you in this moment.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Letting go of attending to the legs and resting attention on the large bones of the **hips, pelvis, tailbone, and sitz bones**. Noticing perhaps the sensations of contact with the surface supporting you.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Moving up into the **lower back** – what's here to be perceived? Maybe tightness or tension, heat or coolness, pain or discomfort. . . This is an area where many people hold tension, so taking your time here and meeting what you find with friendly curiosity and compassion.

*(Pause 6 breaths)*

Moving up now through the **middle and upper back** – the spine, the muscles, and the bones that hold you upright. The **shoulder blades. . .** Sensing the width and length of the back. Learning to be with sensations just as you find them.

*(Pause 6 breaths)*

Moving your attention around now to the **abdomen**. Perhaps sensing the sensations of breathing at the belly or noticing sensations of digestion, of hunger or fullness. . . Noticing if there is any constriction or holding in the abdomen.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Each time the mind wanders off, gently bringing the attention back to wherever we are in the body scan.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Becoming aware of the ribs - the muscles in between the ribs. . . Perhaps sensing the subtle movements of the rib cage as the lungs expand and release with the breath.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Exploring the region of the **heart**, perhaps aware of pulsation or heat, or of the rising and falling of the chest as breath flows in and out. . . Becoming aware of the **chest, sternum, and collarbones**. What do you feel here?

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Moving attention now to the tops of the **shoulders**, taking your time in this area that sometimes holds tension. Bringing curiosity to the shoulder sockets, the joints connecting the sternum to the arm bones.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Letting go now of attending to the shoulders and directing your attention to your **upper arms, elbows, lower arms . . . the back of the hands and palms, fingers and thumbs**. . . Aware of the position of the hands and the sensation of contact with another surface of the body. Sensing into the temperature of the hands. . . What's here to be felt directly?

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Coming now to the region of the **neck, the front and back and sides of the neck**. Sensing the muscles and small bones. . . Noticing any tension, tightness, openness or ease. Perhaps aware of the organs in the **throat**, organs that support digestion, respiration, speech.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Shifting attention up into the **head**, sensing first into the jaw. Maybe being aware of tightness or clenching in the **jaw, chin, or teeth**.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Shifting attention to the mouth - **lips . . . teeth . . . tongue . . . the roof of the mouth . . . the sides and back of the mouth**. Aware of any sensations of warmth or coolness, moisture or dryness.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Becoming aware of the **nose** . . . perhaps sensing the streams of air flowing in and out of the nostrils. . . . Noticing the **cheekbones** and the skin and muscles of the face.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Shifting attention to the region of the **ears**. The ability to hear in this very moment. . . Noticing any sensations in the outer ears and inner ears.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Attending to the **eyes** - the bones around the eyes, the eyes as they rest in the sockets, eye lashes, eyebrows.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Noticing the forehead - spanning across from one temple to the other. Aware of any tension or smoothness.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Bringing awareness now to the head itself. The tiny muscles of the scalp. The bones of the skull, protecting the brain. Aware of the sides of the head, the back and the crown of the head.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Now inviting awareness to the entire body, from the top of the head to the toes. The front of the body . . . the back body . . . the sides of the body. . . sensing the skin.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

Simply resting in the awareness of this breathing body. Not needing to do anything. Just being with the body exactly as it is now.

*(Pause 5 breaths)*

As we come to the close of this practice, appreciating that you have taken the time to pause, to cultivate your capacity to be more fully present for your life, and to replenish yourself in this way.

*(Pause 3 breaths)*

Gently opening your eyes or lifting your gaze as you become ready. Taking a moment to gently move or stretch, as needed. Bringing this awareness into the next moments of your day.

### **4, 7, 8 Breathing**

Settling into the body, Turning your attention to the breath,

In through the nose - 2, 3, 4

Hold - 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Out through the mouth - 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Repeat as you like

PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 3



1



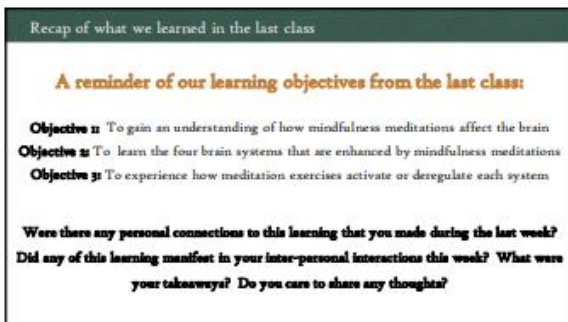
2



3



4



5



6

### The Autonomic System

#### The Autonomic Nervous System

The autonomic nervous system controls specific body processes, such as blood circulation, digestion, breathing, urination, heartbeat, etc.

The autonomic nervous system is named so because it works autonomously, i.e., without a person's conscious effort.

There are two types of the autonomic nervous systems:

1. **Sympathetic** autonomic nervous system
2. **Parasympathetic** autonomic nervous system

The primary function of the autonomic nervous system is homeostasis. Apart from maintaining the body's internal environment, it is also involved in controlling and maintaining the following life processes:

- Digestion
- Metabolism
- Urination
- Defecation
- Blood pressure
- Sexual response
- Body temperature
- Heartbeat
- Breathing rate
- Fluid balance

7

### The Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Nervous Systems

#### The Brake and the Gas

**Sympathetic Autonomic Nervous System (GAS):**  
It is the part of the autonomic nervous system located near the thoracic and lumbar regions in the spinal cord. Its primary function is to stimulate the body's fight-or-flight response. It does this by regulating the heart rate, rate of respiration, pupillary response and more.

**Parasympathetic Autonomic Nervous System (BRAKE):**  
It is located in between the spinal cord and the medulla. It primarily stimulates the body's "rest and digest" and "food and breed" responses.

8

### The Stress Response

#### During a Stress Response

1. First there is a thought or an experience as a catalyst.
2. Second, the catalyst is then are consciously compared to other similar experiences we've stored in our memory. The hippocampus is actively involved in this process of memory retrieval and comparison.
3. Third, once the catalyst gets categorized as "threat" according to this comparison, the amygdala helps us evoke the emotional stress response to this new experience based on what our past experiences are telling us.
4. Fourth, the hypothalamus activates our pituitary and adrenal glands and elevates our stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol.
5. Finally, the body then engages in muscle contraction, elevated heart rate, shallow breaths, and inhibits digestion, salivation, and nutrient absorption.

**The Neuroendocrine Immune**  
A complex system of communication between the brain, endocrine system, and immune system.

Accounting for a resolution model  
<https://www.garlandscience.com/brain-science/>

9

### Meditation: Body Scan

Side note\* - this practice also accomplishes what Dan Siegel talked about in the last class - integration. The body scan can also help tone the vagus nerve for improved control over reactivity to stressful stimuli.

10

### Discussion

11

### Time for a Break

Please come back in 5 minutes

12

Mindfulness Survey

### Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

### Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES)

Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES) - Assessments, Tests | Mind Garden - Mind Garden

The Maslach Burnout Inventory questionnaire (Maslach et al., 1996) consists of 22 items on three scales: emotional exhaustion; depersonalization; and lack of personal accomplishment from the job.

13

Chronic Stress

The long-term activation of the stress response results in physiological and psychological imbalance and strain, which can lead to **Exhaustion, Disengagement, and Burnout.**

- **Mood swings**
- **Headaches**
- **Heart disease**
- **Irritability**
- **Anxiety**
- **Focus and memory impairment**
- **Sleep disturbance**
- **Digestive issues**

**Degrees of Stress**

- Positive**: Brief increases in heart rate; intensified focus; mild elevation in levels of stress hormones
- Tolerable**: Serious but temporary stress responses mitigated by positive, buffering influences in relationships
- Toxic**: Intense prolonged activation of the stress response without positive, buffering influences in relationships

14

Window of Tolerance

Throughout each day, we encounter both stressors and soothing moments that activate an internal accelerator and braking system that dictates our level of arousal, and whether we stay in our window of tolerance - or not.

The more that we understand about our personal systems, patterns, and tendencies, the better that we'll be able to monitor - and modulate - where we are within our window of tolerance. By definition, this process is what it means to be able to regulate oneself. As we do this, we'll be better able to more efficiently manage our energy, rather than having to recover from the further extremes.

(Keep in mind that this window of tolerance framework is a simplified view of the nervous system for the purpose of understanding some of our basic functioning.)

- ZONE OF HYPERAROUSAL**
  - Hyperarousal (high levels of arousal)
  - Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, highly stressed or angry
  - Body reacts in fight/flight
  - Sympathetic Nervous System dominates
  - Heart increases
  - Rapidly releases fear when we perceive a danger
  - Fight/flight/flight process increases
- WINDOW OF TOLERANCE**
  - Optimal arousal zone
  - Calm but alert state
  - Alert, but not anxious
  - Vagal Vagus Pathway
  - Increased ability to manage perceptions and responses of the day without reactivating pathways in excessive disengagement
  - Connected Public Mind
  - Ability to communicate
  - Healthy learning, problem-solving
- ZONE OF HYPOAROUSAL**
  - Hypoarousal (low levels of arousal)
  - Feeling numb and apathetic, bored
  - Body reacts in shut down/freeze/submit
  - Parasympathetic Nervous System dominates
  - Dissociated
  - Disconnected/Disconnected
  - Shut down

15

What Happens in Response to a Stressful Situation

The chart summarizes the typical movement within the human brain as individuals navigate stress arousal and deactivation. The movement is exemplified by the black line moving from left to right.

The chart also shows what is happening within the body on the right-hand side of the graphic as one navigates through these physiological states: social engagement (ventral vagal), fight/flight (sympathetic), and freeze (dorsal vagal). The polyvagal theory is based on the concept of neuroception, a term coined by Dr. Porges. It describes how "the body assesses threats in the environment as determined by our nervous system".

Most individuals with stress attachments and related trauma exist in the ventral vagal day-to-day, but they move up through sympathetic or dorsal vagal when life feels threatening. According to neuroception - anything external (e.g., a difficult phone call) or internal (e.g., a feeling of vulnerability) can initiate a general threat to the body, at which point the body and brain react in fight, flight, or freeze!

16

Resilience Practices

### The Vagus Nerve

### Stimulating the Vagus Nerve

The vagus nerve is the longest and most complex of the cranial nerves. It originates in the brainstem and extends down the length of the spine, branching out to innervate various organs in the chest and abdomen, including the heart, lungs, stomach, and intestines.

Stimulating the vagus nerve can have several benefits, including:
 

- Reducing inflammation
- Improving heart health
- Enhancing digestion
- Promoting relaxation and stress reduction
- Supporting overall well-being and resilience

17

What We Can Do to Mitigate Our Reactivity to Stressful Stimuli

Engaging in daily mindfulness activities can increase our tolerance for occupational stressors. With continued practice we develop the ability to pause and respond versus automatically reacting to a situation. We have seen the effect of chronic repeated stress. The good news is that with daily mindfulness practices we increase our resilience and reverse some of the damaging physiologic and psychologic symptoms of chronic stress.

STRESS RESPONSE	VS	RELAXATION RESPONSE
Brain waves are quicker		Slower brain waves
Blood pressure and heart rate increases		Decreased heart rate and blood pressure
Digestion slows		Digestion normalized
Cortisol and Adrenaline increases		Increase in endorphins
Fast breathing		Slower Breathing
Increased Muscle Tension		Decreased Muscle Tension, Nervous Calmness

18

**Herbert Benson's Relaxation Response**

Understanding the relaxation response starts by understanding the stress response how the relaxation response is our bodies' natural way to counter act the stress response.

It is the ability to deeply relax, deeply rest, something that most people today struggle to do.

The Stress Response is our innate survival response, the fight, flight or freeze response to stress, which was originally our response to life-threatening or life-challenging situations.

Today the stress response is stimulated by many everyday events and thoughts.


The relaxation response helps move the body away from the stress or anxiety response.

**The Relaxation Response**

Slowed heart rate and lower blood pressure  
 Improved gut and vision  
 Decreased muscle tension  
 Slowed brain waves  
 Lower blood pressure and blood sugar levels  
 Improved immune system  
 Improved digestion  
 Better sleep  
 Reduced cholesterol  
 Decreased inflammation

Improved state of health and the ability to communicate effectively and manage life demands

When Dr. Benson introduced this approach to relieving stress over forty years ago, his book became an instant national bestseller. Since that time, millions of people have learned the secret without high priced lectures or prescription medications. The Relaxation Response has become the classic reference recommended by more health care professionals and authorities to ease the harmful effects of stress, anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure.



19

**Herbert Benson's Relaxation Response**

Herbert Benson who pioneered research on the "Relaxation Response" states "The relaxation response is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional responses to stress...and the opposite of the fight or flight response."

Don't worry if other thoughts come up.  
 Just say "oh well" and continue.



The relaxation response is in fact a natural innate response that many of us have lost due to chronic stress, information overload, and overstimulation. That is why most people today have to learn how to properly and deeply relax using relaxation therapy and relaxation techniques.

Herbert Benson [www.relaxationspouse.org](http://www.relaxationspouse.org)


20



Discussion

21

Seeing the tree for the forest



- Autonomic Nervous System
  - Sympathetic
  - Parasympathetic
- What happens in your brain during a stress response
  - Amygdala - emotional response
  - Hypothalamus - stress hormones
- Window of Tolerance
- The effect of chronic stress on our resilience
- Practices to mitigate this effect
  - Practices to tone the vagus nerve
  - The relaxation response

22



Closing Practice  
4, 7, 8

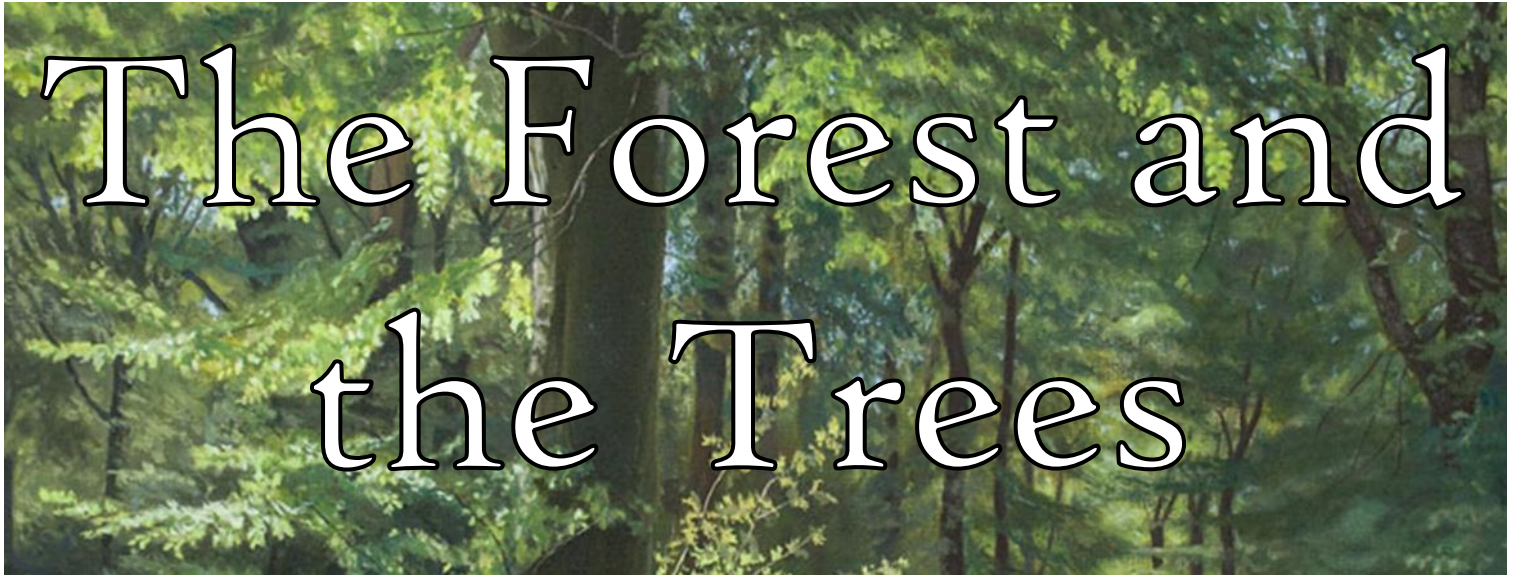
23

Thank you for your presence today. See if you can carry this feeling with you into the rest of your day.

Lesson 3: The Stress Response and Resilience Practices

24

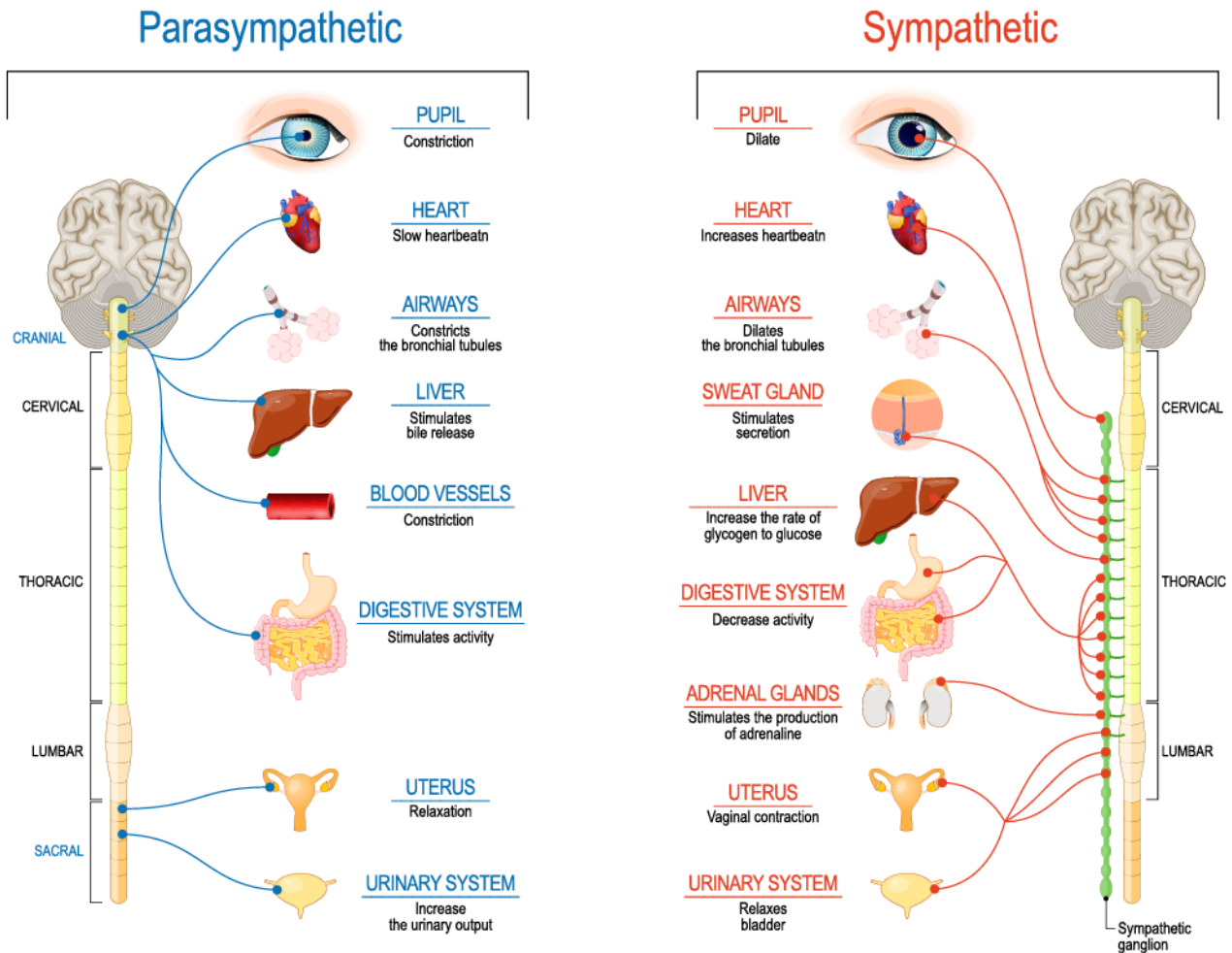


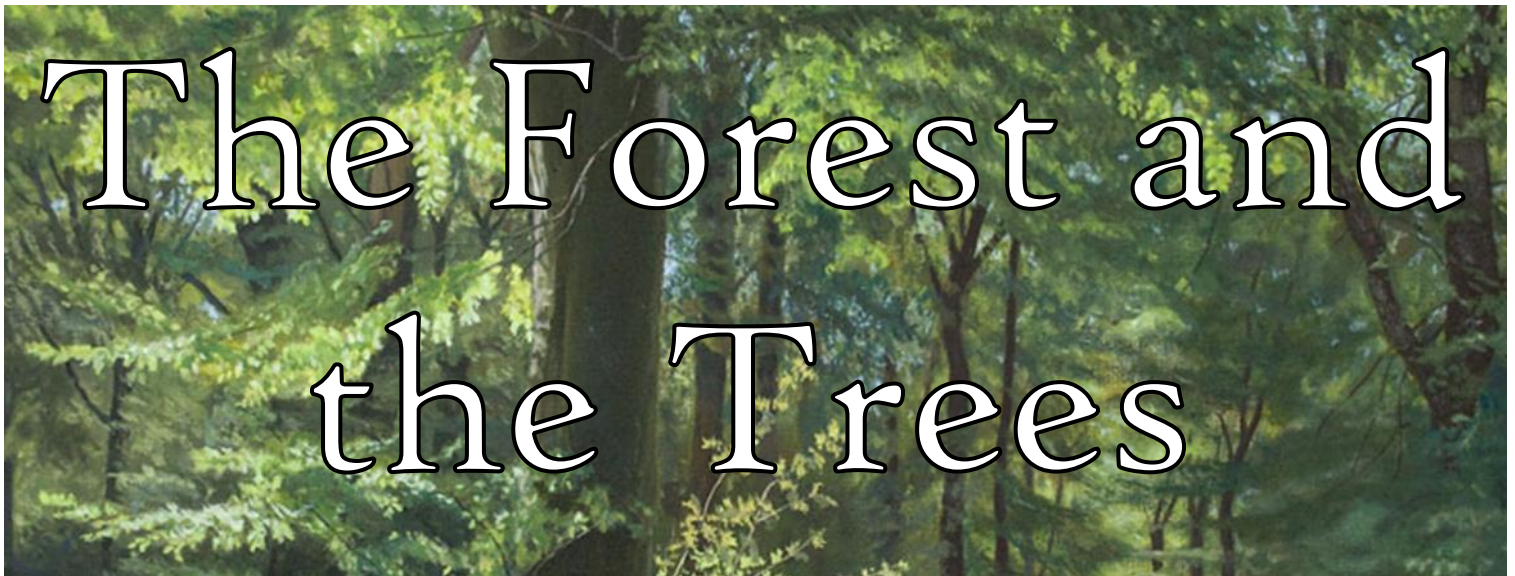


# The Forest and the Trees

## Autonomic Nervous System Handout

What happens in the nervous system when a stimulus presents itself?





## The Physical Impact of Trauma and How to Reverse the Effects

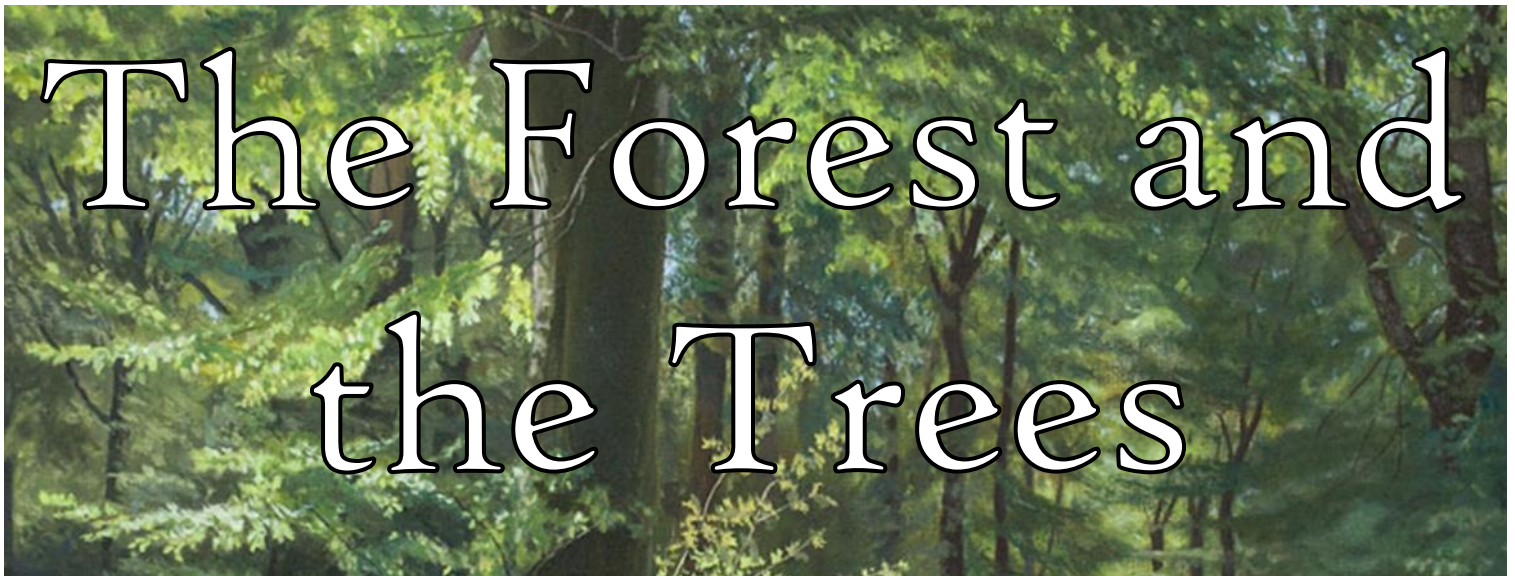
We mostly associate “stress” with hardship and difficulty. Endless workdays, financial struggles, interpersonal conflicts, or devaluing messages are all examples of negative stress. While negative stress can impact our quality of life, it remains distinct from traumatic stress - the most intense form of stress we can experience. Traumatic stress results from being exposed to a traumatic event or series of events. For many, being exposed to a singular traumatic event won't produce long term consequences.

We're impacted, but we can metabolize the experience dash meaning we can process through the thoughts, memories, and emotions without becoming overwhelmed and stuck. Sometimes, however, we develop symptoms that extend past a traumatic event. This can include ongoing flashbacks, agonizing physical sensations, or volatile emotional reactions that emerge without warning. Alarm systems inside of us don't switch off, and the traumatic experience comes to wreak havoc with our body and mind. This is known as post-traumatic stress; an experience where traumatic symptoms live on past the traumatic event.

from *Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness*, by David Treleaven

Element of Impact	What Happens	Resolution
<i>Brain Architecture</i>	Shrinkage in prefrontal cortex, corpus callosum, and hippocampus. Enlarged and more reactive amygdala	Resolution: safe and stable nurturing relationships, walk in nature, touch, exercise
<i>Neural Pathways</i>	Need to 'rewire' our brain from old thought patterns and habits of mind, conscious, and unconscious.	Resolution: neurofeedback, meditation/ mindful action, positive self-talk

<i>Hormones</i>	Prolonged high cortisol and ghrelin creates greater reactivity to stress. Long term damage to cells, structures of the body, and other hormone glands (thyroid).	Resolution: oxytocin
<i>Toxin Elimination</i>	Intestines and kidneys less able to eliminate toxins (slow gut or unbalanced flora).	Resolution: salt baths, sauna
<i>Nervous System</i>	Supercharged sympathetic nervous system. Parasympathetic nervous system not engaged to bring back into balance.	Resolution: yoga, breathing, or other physical/emotional regulation
<i>Immune System</i>	Resistance to cortisol or lower cortisol creates unchecked inflammation. Cause of many diseases: asthma, arthritis, psoriasis, etc.)	Resolution: meditation/mindful action, walking in nature, diet, rest
<i>Cellular Change/Age</i>	Shortens telomeres which prematurely ages and reduces reproduction of cells & can cause cancer.	Resolution: social support
<i>Cellular Change/Ability to Cope with Stress</i>	Epigenetics turns genes on or off in adaptation to dangerous environments. Effect can last generations.	Resolution: Safer environment (perception of)
<i>Brain Waves</i>	Predomination of wrong brain waves in wrong part of the brain leads to anxiety, unable to concentrate, and seizures.	Resolution: neurofeedback
<i>Neurotransmitters</i>	Vulnerable to addiction because dopamine transmitters/receptors not developed or damaged. Reduces motivation & focus, creates fatigue. Low serotonin causes depression.	Resolution: engage in activities that strengthen the synapses that mediate serotonin levels. Repeated practice of these activities can help rebuild neural pathways that were thought to be damaged



## Resilience Practices: Vagus Nerve Toning

**“By developing an understanding of the workings of your vagus nerve, you may find it possible to work with your nervous system rather than feel trapped when it works against you.”**

— Dr. Arielle Schwartz, Clinical Psychologist

What exactly is the vagus nerve? The vagus nerve is the longest nerve in your body. It connects your brain to many important organs throughout the body, including the gut (intestines, stomach), heart and lungs. In fact, the word "vagus" means “wanderer” in Latin, which accurately represents how the nerve wanders all over the body and reaches various organs. The vagus nerve is also a key part of your parasympathetic “rest and digest” nervous system. It influences your breathing, digestive function and heart rate, all of which can have a huge impact on your mental health. But what you really need to pay special attention to is the "tone" of your vagus nerve. Vagal tone is an internal biological process that represents the activity of the vagus nerve. Increasing your vagal tone activates the parasympathetic nervous system, and having higher vagal tone means that your body can relax faster after stress. In 2010, researchers discovered a positive feedback loop between high vagal tone, positive emotions, and good physical health. In other words, the more you increase your vagal tone, the more your physical and mental health will improve, and vice versa.

**“The vagal response reduces stress. It reduces our heart rate and blood pressure. It changes the function of certain parts of the brain, stimulates digestion, all those things that happen when we are relaxed.”**

— Dr. Mladen Golubic, MD, Medical Director of the Cleveland Clinic

What’s interesting is that studies have even shown that vagal tone is passed on from mother to child. Mothers who are depressed, anxious and angry during their pregnancy have lower vagal activity. And once they give birth to their child, the newborn also has low vagal activity and low dopamine and serotonin levels. Your vagal tone can be measured by tracking certain biological processes such as your heart rate, your breathing rate, and your heart rate variability (HRV). When your heart rate variability (HRV) is high, your vagal tone is also high. They are correlated with each other.

If your vagal tone is low, don’t worry - you can take steps to increase it by stimulating your vagus nerve. This will allow you to respond to the emotional and physiological symptoms of your brain and chronic stress more effectively. You can enjoy the benefits of vagus nerve stimulation naturally by following these steps.

Practice	What the research says:
<b>Cold Exposure</b>	Acute cold exposure has been shown to activate the vagus nerve and activate cholinergic neurons through vagus nerve pathways. Researchers have also found that exposing yourself to cold on a regular basis can lower your sympathetic “fight or flight” response and increase parasympathetic activity through the vagus nerve. Try finishing your next shower with at least 30 seconds of cold water and see how you feel. Then work your way up to longer periods of time. You can also ease yourself into it by simply sticking your face in ice-cold water.
<b>Deep and Slow Breathing</b>	Deep and slow breathing is another way to stimulate your vagus nerve. It’s been shown to reduce anxiety and increase the parasympathetic system by activating the vagus nerve. Most people take about 10 to 14 breaths each minute. Taking about 6 breaths over the course of a minute is a great way to relieve stress. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. You should breathe in deeply from your diaphragm. When you do this, your stomach should expand outward. Your exhale should be long and slow. This is key to stimulating the vagus nerve and reaching a state of relaxation.
<b>Meditation</b>	Meditation is a great way to introduce relaxation and it can stimulate the vagus nerve and increase vagal tone. Research shows that meditation increases vagal tone and positive emotions and promotes feelings of goodwill towards yourself. Another study found that meditation reduces sympathetic “fight or flight” activity and increases vagal modulation.
<b>Probiotics</b>	It’s becoming increasingly clear to researchers that gut bacteria improve brain function by affecting the vagus nerve. In one study, animals were given the probiotic <i>Lactobacillus Rhamnosus</i> , and researchers found positive changes to the GABA receptors in their brain, a reduction in stress hormones, and less depression and anxiety-like behavior. The researchers also concluded that these beneficial changes between the gut and the brain were facilitated by the vagus nerve. When the vagus nerve was removed in other mice, the addition of <i>Lactobacillus Rhamnosus</i> to their digestive systems failed to reduce anxiety, stress, and improve mood. Another study found that the probiotic <i>Bifidobacterium Longum</i> normalized anxiety-like behavior in mice by acting through the vagus nerve.

<p><b>Singing, Humming, Chanting and Gargling</b></p>	<p>The vagus nerve is connected to your vocal cords and the muscles at the back of your throat. Singing, humming, chanting, and gargling can activate these muscles and stimulate your vagus nerve. And this has been shown to increase heart-rate variability and vagal tone. Have you ever noticed how you feel better after singing your favorite song?</p>
<p><b>Omega-3 Fatty Acids</b></p>	<p>Omega-3 fatty acids are essential fats that your body cannot produce itself. They are found primarily in fish and are necessary for the normal electrical functioning of your brain and nervous system. They are so critical for brain and mental health and affect so many aspects of wellness. They've been shown to help people overcome addiction, repair a "leaky brain", and even reverse cognitive decline. But researchers have also discovered that omega-3 fatty acids increase vagal tone and vagal activity. Studies have shown that they reduce heart rate and increase heart rate variability, which means they likely stimulate the vagus nerve. And high fish consumption is also associated with "enhanced vagal activity and parasympathetic predominance".</p>
<p><b>Exercise</b></p>	<p>Exercise increases your brain's growth hormone, supports your brain's mitochondria, and helps reverse cognitive decline. But it's also been shown to stimulate the vagus nerve, which may explain its beneficial brain and mental health effects. Many brain health experts recommend exercise as their number one piece of advice for optimal brain health. You should choose a sport or exercise routine that you enjoy, so that you will stick with it consistency.</p>
<p><b>Massage</b></p>	<p>Research shows that massages can stimulate the vagus nerve and increase vagal activity and vagal tone. The vagus nerve can also be stimulated by massaging several specific areas of the body. Foot massages (reflexology) have been shown to increase vagal modulation and heart rate variability and decrease the "fight or flight" sympathetic response. Massaging the carotid sinus, an area located near the right side of your throat, can also stimulate the vagus nerve to reduce seizures.</p>
<p><b>Socializing and Laughing</b></p>	<p>Socializing and laughing can reduce your body's main stress hormone. Researchers have discovered that reflecting on positive social connections improves vagal tone and increases positive emotions. Laughter has been shown to increase heart-rate variability and improve mood. And vagus nerve stimulation often leads to laughter as a side effect, suggesting that the two are connected.</p>



## Lesson 3: Stress Response and Resilience Homework and Additional Resources

### Participants:

- Please watch these TED Talk videos and jot down your thoughts, reactions, and takeaways from each one.
- Recommended reading suggestions are books that are great resources on mindfulness
- Look at the Maslach Burnout Inventory. There is a cost associated with it, but it may be worth the expense if you are serious about quantifying your current burnout level.
- You can printout several copies and complete them throughout the year to gauge your growth in this area.

### Videos

[https://youtu.be/hFcQpNr\\_KA4](https://youtu.be/hFcQpNr_KA4) **Breath -- five minutes can change your life | Stacey Schuerman | TEDxChapmanU.** Stacey Schuerman leads us through an exercise designed to reset, renew, and rejuvenate our energy. Join her as she teaches us about breathing and calming the mind. Stacy shows us how to activate parasympathetic nervous system. (about 9 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTJOAIoUoU> **Change Your Breath, Change Your Life | Lucas Rockwood | TEDxBarcelona.** We do it as long as we live but mostly aren't aware of it: breathing. In his talk Lucas breaks down the fundamentals of yoga breathing in a way that you can easily remember and apply to your practice. Lucas shows us how three breathing practices - water, whiskey, or coffee - can be used as a tool and help us to overcome any situation. (about 12 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIKAFdJ8ZHY> **The powerful secret of your breath -- Romila "Dr. Romie" Mushtaq, MD | Romila Mushtaq | TEDxFargo.** After surviving career burnout and a life-threatening illness, Dr. Romie began her exploration of the medicine behind mindfulness-based therapies as they related

to mindful living and the universal benefits of connecting to the present moment. By combining her expertise and professional experiences in neurology and integrative medicine she was able to translate this knowledge to help clients and corporations cope with their stress-infused lives, taking mindfulness from the meditation mat into a mindful way of living...and breathing. Particularly sensitive to the effects of career burnout, Dr. Romie focuses on healing individuals with her unique “Mindset Matters” program. (disclaimer \* – this video can be dramatic at times – but the message is a good and important one.) (about 15.5 minutes)

## **Maslach Burnout Inventory for Educators**

[Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey \(MBI-ES\) - Assessments, Tests | Mind Garden - Mind Garden](#)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory questionnaire (Maslach et al., 1996) consists of 22 items on three scales: emotional exhaustion; depersonalization; and lack of personal accomplishment from the job.



## Recommended Reading

[The Onward Workbook: Daily Activities to Cultivate Your Emotional Resilience and Thrive](#) (1st Edition)

by Elena Aguilar | May 8, 2018

The Onward Workbook is a collection of tools and strategies that help teachers banish the burnout and cultivate true resilience. Keyed to the framework presented in Onward, this companion piece augments the text with practical exercises, coaching, and step-by-step walkthroughs of beneficial practices. Deep introspection allows you to verbalize your feelings, name your challenges, and identify the tools you have and the tools you need—from there, you'll explore each of the 12 Key Habits and learn how to put them into practice every day. In cultivating resilience within yourself and your teaching practice, you improve your health, your outlook, and your relationships while building an environment in which every child succeeds. This workbook takes you on a journey of specific self-discovery that changes your perspective, renews your confidence, and empowers you to make the much-needed changes that allow you to continue inspiring young minds.

[The Relaxation Response](#) (updated and expanded), by Herbert Benson | Feb. 8, 2000

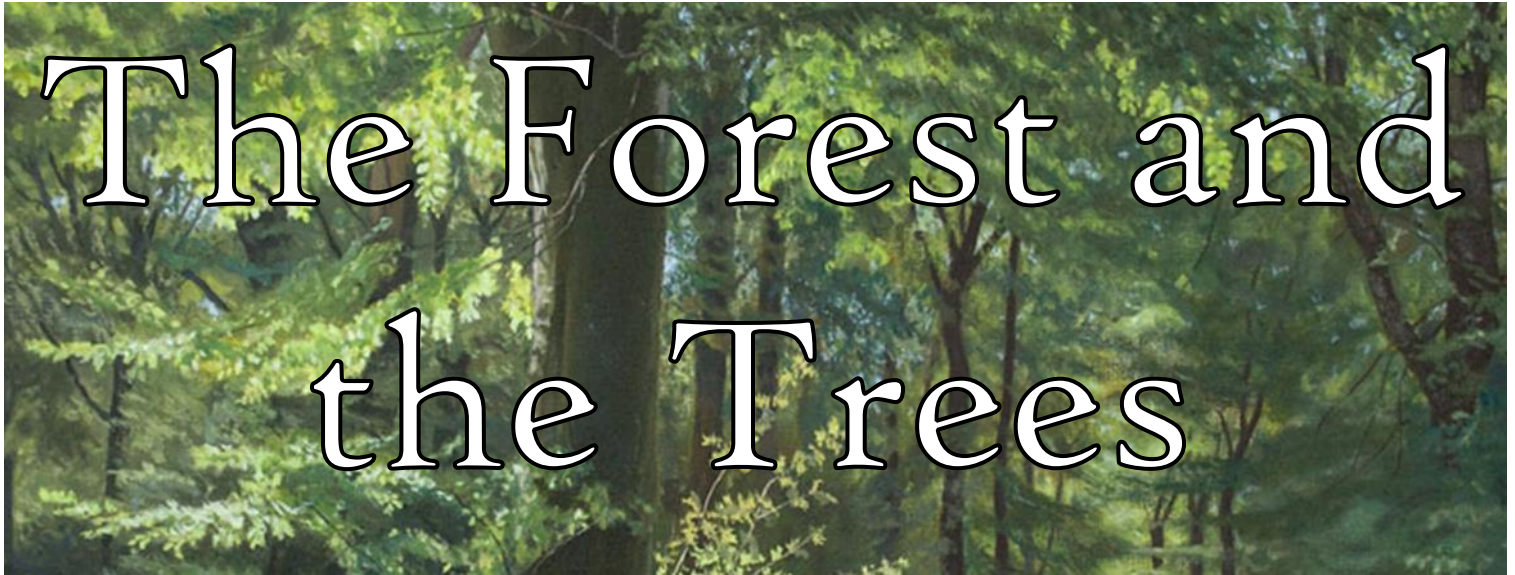
Herbert Benson, M.D., first wrote about a simple, effective mind/body approach to lowering blood pressure in *The Relaxation Response*. When Dr. Benson introduced this approach to relieving stress over forty years ago, his book became an instant national bestseller, which has sold over six million copies. Since that time, millions of people have learned the secret—without high-priced lectures or prescription medicines. The Relaxation Response has become the classic reference recommended by most health care professionals and authorities to treat the harmful effects of stress, anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure.

Rediscovered by Dr. Benson and his colleagues in the laboratories of Harvard Medical School and its teaching hospitals, this revitalizing, therapeutic tack is now routinely recommended to treat patients suffering from stress and anxiety, including heart conditions, high blood pressure, chronic pain, insomnia, and many other physical and psychological ailments. It requires only minutes to learn, and just ten minutes of practice a day.

[Unstressed: How Somatic Awareness Can Transform Your Body's Stress Response and Build Emotional Resilience](#), by Alane K. Daugherty Ph.D. | Oct. 1, 2019

Do you feel stressed out during the day and lie awake at night worrying? You're not alone. In today's hectic, fast-paced world, stress and anxiety have become a default way of being—as natural to us as breathing air. And because stress is an inevitable part of life, one of the most important things you can do for yourself is to learn how to manage and heal it. This book offers proven ways to help you counter the negative effects that stress has on the body and mind. You'll also discover practical skills and clinically proven strategies grounded in mindfulness, neurobiology, and positive psychology to help you cultivate deep sense of emotional resilience. Using the author's innovative HEART tools (Heartful Engagement And Re-focusing Training), you'll learn to manage stress by harnessing the power of positive emotions—such as gratitude, compassion, empathy, and hope—leading to a feeling of expansiveness and possibility, and a lived sense of calm, happiness, and vitality

## Lesson Plan 4 – Empathy and Self-Compassion



### Lesson 4: Empathy and Self-Compassion [Revised January 2023.]

Social Emotional Competencies	Learning Objectives	Evidence of Learning
<i>Self-awareness through the practice of mindfulness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gain self-awareness around thoughts, emotions, and feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants examine their own capacities for empathy</li> </ul>
<i>Self-awareness of resources and mental faculties that one possesses and can cultivate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the difference between Empathy and Compassion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are able to articulate the difference between empathy and compassion</li> </ul>
<i>Moving from an understanding of Self-awareness to the action involved in Self-management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gain familiarity with the practice of Self-Compassion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants set aside concentrated time to pay attention to their individual needs</li> </ul>
<i>Actively cultivating Self-management to benefit personal well-being</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the power of the practice of Self-Compassion for influencing the way we interact with others and how it can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants understand the psychological and physiological benefits of mindfulness practice</li> </ul>

	benefit our overall well-being	
--	--------------------------------	--

## Preparation for Lesson

- *Familiarize yourself with the material and run through the PowerPoint 2 times to practice timing and content.*
- *Practice delivering the 4 mindfulness practices using the scripts*
- *Communicate with students and make sure you have email addresses for homework assignments to be given after the class*
- *Make sure you have a laser pointer*

### Day of Lesson:

- Arrange room (chairs/tables) for maximum efficiency and appropriateness for mindfulness practices
- Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation
- Cue up the PowerPoint
- Check embedded links in PowerPoint
- Check for sound
- Print out handouts
- Arrange any props needed for meditation practices: Blankets, Yoga Mats (maybe ask participant to bring their own)
- Arrange any other resources

## Lesson Plan

PART OF LESSON	TIME	STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS	MATERIALS/SLIDES
<b>Prep/Welcome/Settle In</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Warmly welcoming participants into the space</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring space is prepared for learning</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure computer has enough battery for the entire presentation</li> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check embedded links in PowerPoint</li> <li>• Check for sound</li> <li>• Arrange any other resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cue up the PowerPoint</li> <li>• Slide 1 – welcome</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review unit goal/cumulative project.</i></li> <li>• <i>Go over common agreements in order to create a safe space for learning</i></li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient yourself and the participants in the space.</li> <li>• Tribal land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Create a safe container for learning</li> <li>• Review common agreements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak from your own authentic experience</li> <li>○ Share only what you are comfortable with</li> <li>○ Respect others' opinions and acknowledge that</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 2 – tribal acknowledgement</li> <li>• Slide 3 – common agreements</li> </ul>

		<p>they may be different from your own and that is fine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be open and curious about what we are about to learn</li> <li>○ Listen to others fully – this is a form of mindfulness (giving your full attention)</li> <li>○ Try these practices, even if you are uncomfortable – discomfort is where growth happens</li> <li>○ Attend to your own needs – listen to your body</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Set the right mind frame for the material that will be taught in this lesson</i></li> </ul>	3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Settling into the body, Turing your attention to the breath,</li> <li>○ Placing one hand on your heart, if that is comfortable for you</li> <li>○ With kind intention toward yourself repeat these words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May I be happy</li> <li>○ May I be healthy</li> <li>○ May I be safe</li> <li>○ May I live with peace and ease.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Repeat as you like</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 4 – opening</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-Up/Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review unit goal/cumulative project</i></li> <li>• <i>Review key learnings from previous lesson(s)</i></li> <li>• <i>Activate prior knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>Introduce the objectives - and address why they are important</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Objectives from last class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A reminder of our learning objectives from the last class</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learning Objectives for this class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 5 – last class</li> <li>• Slide 6 – this class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce content to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>	4 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 7 – empathy</li> </ul>

<b>Body</b>	4 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-awareness of our ability to feel empathy for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 8 – building on empathy</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include multiple kinds of interactions (e.g., whole group, small group, pairs).</li> </ul>	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empathy and Compassion</li> <li>Instructions: brainstorm in small groups the connection between empathy and compassion</li> <li>Reminder of Common Agreements</li> <li>Discussion of where in our lives can we see the distinction between empathy and compassion playing out?</li> <li>Why might this distance be important? (still lead to compassionate action – but not becoming numb – compassion fatigue)</li> <li>(small group, 15 minutes)</li> <li>Continued discussion debrief (large group, 10 minutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 9 – Empathy and Compassion</li> <li>Slide 10 – discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a practice to associated with strengthening resilience</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided meditation</li> <li>If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 11 – Cultivating Compassion</li> <li>Cultivating Compassion Script</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pose questions that require critical thinking</li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion</li> <li>*Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>How do you feel?</li> <li>What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>Did you find the practice difficult?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 12 – discussion</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Break</b></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 13</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Compassion Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 14 – self-compassion survey</li> <li><b>Handout</b> - Homework</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Compassion and Kristin Neff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 15 – Self-Compassion</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Components of Self-Compassion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide 16 – more on self-compassion</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce content to build upon later in the lesson</i></li> </ul>			
<b>Body</b>	2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prep for Body Scan</li> <li>• Get situated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 17 – prep</li> <li>• Props: blankets, yoga mats</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce a practice to associated with strengthening self-compassion</i></li> </ul>	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided meditation</li> <li>• If at any time you wish to exit the practice, please feel free to do so</li> <li>• Listen to your body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 18 – body scan</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pose questions that require critical thinking</i></li> </ul>	7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• *Reminder: speak from your own experience, respect what others are saying, and actively listen.</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What thoughts arose for you?</li> <li>• Did your mind wander?</li> <li>• What happened when it did?</li> <li>• Can you see the benefit of the practice in your daily routine?</li> <li>• How do you think it could make a difference?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 19 – discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference research that has taken place studied the effect of Self-Compassion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 20 – benefits of self-compassion</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Self Compassion Practices</li> </ul>
<b>Wrap-Up/Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lead reflection in what students learned and how they might use what they learned in their lives.</i></li> </ul>	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the mindfulness practices that we participated in this session</li> <li>• The tree being the individual practices that contribute to the health of the forest – resilience for the brain and body</li> <li>• Wrap up of our learning for the class</li> <li>• <b>Closing practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide 21 – wrap up</li> <li>• <b>Handout</b> – Homework</li> <li>• Slide 22 – closing</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	150 minutes (2.5 hours)	<i>Any Questions?</i>	Provide contact information

## Mindfulness Practice Scripts for Lesson 4

- *What does the space need? What is the best format for the given practice?*
- *Practice /run through the script and get familiar with delivering to an audience*
- *Include options for different anchors*
- *Try to deliver the practice in a trauma sensitive manner*
- *Monitor your participants and adjust if needed*

### **Short Self-Kindness Meditation**

Settling into the body, Tuning your attention to the breath,  
Placing one hand on your heart, if that is comfortable for you  
With kind intention toward yourself repeat these words:

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I live with peace and ease.

### **Cultivating Compassion**

This is a Cultivating Compassion practice. This practice is designed to cultivate feelings of kindness and compassion. Throughout all of our practices, we cultivate a quality of awareness that is characterized by curiosity, kindness, and acceptance. In this practice, we will cultivate these qualities more directly.

As we do this practice, you may experience a range of emotions, from compassion, warmth, and kindness to emotions such as frustration, judgment, and not liking. There's no right way to feel. In addition, if at any time, the practice feels uncomfortable or not appropriate, you are welcome to disregard the guidance and shift your attention to any anchor that is familiar. Honoring how you are feeling in the moment is an act of compassion and kindness.

Coming now into a posture that offers comfort, ease, and stability. Sensing into the movement of breath and the feeling of the body sitting. And when you're ready, allowing the eyes to close, or simply looking downward with a soft gaze.

Noticing the fact that you're breathing. And tuning in to the sensations of the breath as it moves in and out of the body.

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

If possible, calling to mind someone for whom you have feelings of warmth, kindness, love, or gratitude. It could be anyone. Someone that you are close to, or simply someone that you admire, or even an animal that you care about. Acknowledging the connection that you have with this person or animal. Feeling how you want the best for them and that you wish them well. And in this moment, sending them wishes of love and well-being by repeating the following phrases silently to yourself.

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you be safe

May you live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Noticing what emotions are arising and where in the body you feel these sentiments. Or perhaps there is no particular emotion or sensation at all. Remembering that we are not trying to create any particular experience. Whatever is arising is just as it should be.

Once again repeating these phrases to yourself, or perhaps similar ones that resonate with you more deeply.

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you be safe

May you live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Now allowing the image of this person or animal to fade into the background.

And shifting your focus to offering these very same wishes for well-being to yourself. Beginning to send feelings of warmth, kindness, and acceptance to yourself, to whatever degree you can. Doing so by repeating these phrases.

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

Sensing in the body how this feels. You might notice feelings that are comfortable and pleasurable. Or you might find sensations that are uncomfortable. Some people have a difficult time offering compassion to themselves. Knowing that there's no right or wrong way to feel. Whatever your experience, maintaining the intention to send wishes of kindness and well-being to yourself. And repeating these phrases silently.

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I live with peace and ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

You can extend this kind and generous presence to the people in your community, across your country, and all beings throughout the world.

Allowing your heart to be as wide as possible, sending your good wishes and kindness to others who, like you, simply want to feel safe and healthy, happy, and at peace. And doing so by repeating these phrases to yourself.

May we all be happy

May we all be healthy

May we all be at peace

May we all live with ease

***(Pause for 3 breaths)***

And now simply resting in this sense of kindness and compassion for all people and beings, if it's available. Beginning now to shift your awareness to take in once again the body sitting, the breath flowing, and sounds arising and falling away. Opening the eyes if they have been closed and becoming aware of seeing. Taking a moment to stretch or move in any way that feels supportive as you move into the next moments of the day.

### **Box Breathing**

Settling into the body, Turing your attention to the breath,

In through the nose - 2, 3, 4.

Hold - 2, 3, 4.

Out through the mouth - 2, 3, 4.

Hold - 2, 3, 4.

Repeat as you like



## PowerPoint Slide Deck – Lesson 4



1



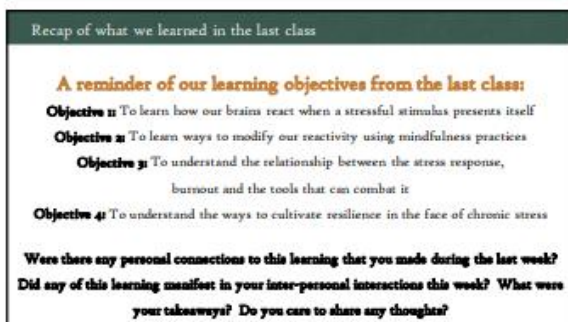
2



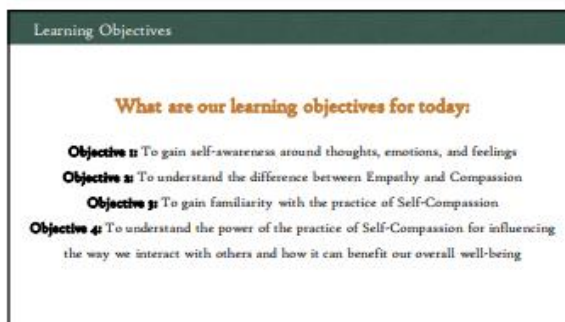
3



4



5



6

Empathy

**Brene Brown on Empathy**

**Four Qualities of Empathy**

- Taking the perspective of another person
- Staying out of judgment
- Recognizing Emotion in other people
- Acknowledging that Emotion



7

Empathy

**Empathy**

There are three types of empathy: **cognitive**, **emotional**, and **compassionate**. Active listening, self-awareness, and curiosity are all important skills that improve empathy. Empathy improves your capacity to communicate with others, to be part of a team and to better your leadership skills.

The reason why empathy is so important is that it helps us better understand how others are feeling, and even feel it in ourselves. It helps us to understand and relate to people from all walks of life. It helps us maintain relationships and plays a role in dictating our success in both personal and professional relationships.

When we empathize with another, we acknowledge that we have had these feelings too. This acknowledgement is the gateway into becoming more self-aware.

8

Empathy and Compassion

Compassion and empathy are fundamentally different but closely related. Consider these definitions:

**Empathy:** our feeling of awareness toward other people's reactions and an attempt to understand how they feel.

**Compassion:** is an emotional response to empathy or sympathy and creates a desire to help.

Empathy is an understanding of one shared humanity. It's the ability to see yourself in another person's shoes.

Compassion adds another dimension of a desire to help.


Empathy is deeply seated in our brains and bodies. It evolves as we desire to understand other people's reactions. It's so rudimentary, it's actually instinctual.

So, what makes compassion different? Unlike empathy, compassion creates emotional distance from the individual and situation and creates a buffer. Not all human reactions are rooted in goodwill and compassion. We often let other people's reactions affect us, or even engage them based on our own biases. But you have the power to rise above that.

By practicing compassion, we can become more resilient and improve our overall well-being.



9




Discussion

10



Meditation  
Cultivating Compassion

11



Discussion

12

# Time for a Break

Please come back in 5 minutes



13

Self-Compassion Survey

## Self-Compassion Test by Dr. Kristin Neff

[Take the Self-Compassion Test](#)

Neff (2016) created a Self-Compassion Scale Survey (SCS) that measures self-compassion. The SCS is comprised of six subsets: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. This survey has been used in interventions to discern the link between self-compassion and well-being.

14

Kristin Neff



**“”** Self-compassion is a way of emotionally recharging our batteries. Rather than becoming drained by helping others, self-compassion allows us to fill up our internal reserves, so that we have more to give to those who need us.

Kristin Neff, Ph.D. is a pioneer in the study of self-compassion, being the first one to operationally define and measure the construct about twenty years ago. She has been recognized as one of the world's most influential research psychologists. In addition to researching self-compassion, she has developed an eight-week program to teach self-compassion skills in daily life, co-created with her colleague Dr. Chris Germer, called Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC).

15


3 Components of Self-Compassion

### 3 Components of Self-Compassion

- **Self-Kindness** - treating ourselves with kindness versus harsh self-judgment
- **Common Humanity** - to be human means to be imperfect - this is the shared human experience.
- **Mindfulness** - being with what is in the present moment




16



## Preparation for the Compassionate Body Scan

17

Compassionate Body Scan



Kristin Neff  
Self-Compassion and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher  
Created by the Mind & Body Institute

18



19

Research on Self-Compassion

**People with self-compassion are less likely to be critical of themselves and less likely to be anxious or depressed, which, in turn, leads to greater life satisfaction.**

The Common Sense book "The Mindful Cure" (and) points out that self-compassion does nothing more than make you feel much, especially if it is being an underlying cause of depression or anxiety. Exploring this kind of developmental and self-compassion with self-compassion allows you to accept that you are flawed in a gentle way that helps to strengthen mental wellness. This important book makes effective skills in compassion, mindfulness, and social and emotional learning, and reveals successful social policy initiatives in equity making plus the future, everything from family life to education to the workplace. Evidence has the experimental power to create relationships and reactions, here we think, feel, and believe in the world.


Dr. Kristin Neff's work is recognized all around the world. Her work on self-compassion makes her an expert in the field. She was one of the very first researchers to define and measure self-compassion. Kristin Neff also talks about the idea that there is a social neuroscience when it comes to self-kindness. In her research, she discusses the neuroscience that it is self-kindness or kindness to practice self-kindness. It is Neff's thought that this neuroscience needs to be changed. In addition to Dr. Neff's work and research on self-compassion, she has also created a program to teach self-compassion to others. The workbook, the Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) workbook and training, was co-created by Dr. Neff and Dr. Chris Germer.

One of the most interesting research findings involves self-compassion and resilience. In the journal article "The Brain: The Logic to Care for Self: The Current Neuroscience of Self-Compassion" (Harris, Charles-Welton and Neff), self-compassion linked in the field of neuroscience and how more research on self-compassion could come into play. These neurobiologists could be assessed both before and after self-compassion, including training according to the article.

EEG studies, for example, could be critical to the understanding of electrocortical changes that may occur during something such as directed meditation or compassion. According to the article, self-processing in the brain is poorly understood at best and future research could be very beneficial.

20

Seeing the tree for the forest



- Empathy is a form of self-awareness
- Empathy and Compassion
  - Similarities and Differences
- Action is the element of compassion that sets it apart from empathy
- Self-compassion is equally important for increasing our resilience
- The research shows that individuals who practice self-compassion are less likely to be critical of themselves and less likely to be anxious or depressed, which, in turn, leads to greater life satisfaction.

21



22



23



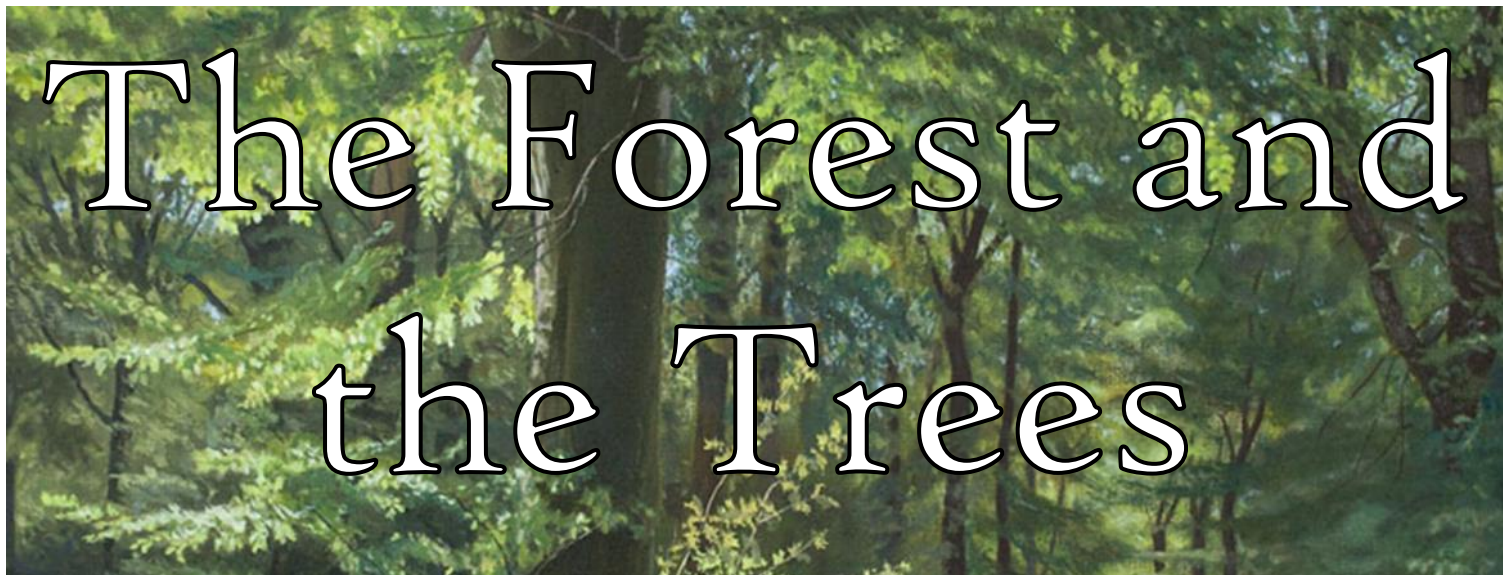
## Self-Compassion Handout

Strategy	Practice:
<b>Take Care of Yourself</b>	Self-soothing is very individualized. Enjoying a delicious meal, listening to your favorite song, sipping tea in fuzzy pajamas, or finding a fun hobby you can commit to weekly are all self-soothing activities.
<b>Engage in Healthy Relationships</b>	Healthy relationships have an equal balance of power. Try to engage with people who make you feel safe and respected, who listen well, and are emotionally available.
<b>Calm Mind, Calm Body</b>	The mind-body connection is real. Studies show that negative thoughts or feelings can create changes in our brain chemistry and even affect our immune, digestive, and other physiological systems. There are a variety of mind-body practices to choose from to calm an anxious mind, including meditation and yoga.
<b>Finding and Coping with Triggers</b>	Everything may be going smoothly and suddenly, you find yourself furious, panicky, or tearful and you don't know why. Your physical body may be reacting to a trigger from your young childhood, even though your current situation is not life-threatening. Connecting with others, using grounding techniques, noticing, and observing feelings without judgment — these are all techniques that can bring you back to the present moment of comfort and safety.
<b>Let Self-Compassion Replace Self-Judgment</b>	As a young child, shame and self-judgment probably protected you when you couldn't protect yourself. Thank your shame for

protecting you and ask it to please step back. Your early childhood was not your fault. It is now safe to love yourself. Go ahead and compassionately do so.

Source: [https://youtalkwa.org/mental-wellness-tips/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4qnGzuW9-wIVFyytBhop5QE5EAAYBCAAEgIU3\\_D\\_BwE](https://youtalkwa.org/mental-wellness-tips/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4qnGzuW9-wIVFyytBhop5QE5EAAYBCAAEgIU3_D_BwE)

## Homework – Lesson 4



## Lesson 4: Empathy and Self-Compassion Homework and Additional Resources

### Participants:

- Please watch these TED Talk videos and jot down your thoughts, reactions, and takeaways from each one.
- Recommended reading suggestions are books that are great resources on mindfulness
- Take the SCS and save your results. You can printout several copies and complete them throughout the year to gauge your growth in this area.

### Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Lb5L-VEm34&t=629s> **Breathe to Heal | Max Strom | TEDxCapeMay.** With anxiety, stress, and sleep dysfunction skyrocketing around the globe, it's time we look at the unspoken reasons why. These debilitating challenges can be meaningfully impacted with ten to twenty minutes of breathing exercises per day. Max Strom, who has taught breath-work for 20 years, reveals his insights into the healing power of the breath. Also, featuring Andrew Weil's 4, 7, 8 practice. Max Strom teaches personal transformation, mindfulness, and yoga worldwide and is known for inspiring and impacting the lives of his students. His Inner Axis method addresses the internal aspects of our life and our potential for physical and

emotional healing. He is the author of "A Life Worth Breathing," and, "There is No App for Happiness." (about 18.5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiEMVA8AIJw> **Dare to Rewire Your Brain for Self-Compassion | Weiyang Xie | TEDxUND** When Weiyang Xie first came to the United States as an international student, she was excited to pursue her dreams, yet filled with overwhelming insecurity and anxiety. In her journey to becoming a psychologist, she dared to be vulnerable and face her fears and shame head-on. These have turned out to be Weiyang's most helpful resources in overcoming challenges. In this talk, she will share her ingredients of self-compassion that can help audience members overcome shame in their own lives, empower them to take risks, and lead them to self-empowerment and authentic living. (about 16 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPh3c8Sa37M> **Everything is Connected -- Here's How: | Tom Chi | TEDxTaipei** Heart, Breath, and Mind: This is a "blow your mind" concept video. Tom Chi has worked in a wide range of roles from astrophysical researcher to Fortune 500 consultant to corporate executive developing new hardware/software products and services. He has played a significant role in established projects with global reach (Microsoft Outlook, Yahoo Search), and scaled new projects from conception to significance (Yahoo Answers from 0 to 90 million users). His current focus is delving into human development issues with social entrepreneurs around the globe and rebooting the fundamental frameworks of entrepreneurship itself. This video posits the connection of everything – your way of being has consequences for those who come afterward. (about 18 minutes)

## Self-Compassion Survey by Dr. Kristin Neff

### [Take the Self-Compassion Survey](#)

Neff (2016) created a Self-Compassion Scale Survey (SCS) that measures self-compassion. The SCS is comprised of six subsets: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. This survey has been used in interventions to discern the link between self-compassion and well-being. Please use the link below to take the Self-Compassion Scale Survey. This is for your own reference. You may choose to take this test now and then take it again 6 months from now to gauge your personal growth in self-compassion.

## Recommended Reading

[Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience](#), by Brené Brown | Nov. 30, 2021

In *Atlas of the Heart*, Brown takes us on a journey through eighty-seven of the emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human. As she maps the necessary skills and an actionable framework for meaningful connection, she gives us the language and tools to access a universe of new choices and second chances—a universe where we can share and steward the stories of our bravest and most heartbreaking moments with one another in a way that builds connection. Over the past two decades, Brown's extensive research into the experiences that make us who we are has shaped the cultural conversation and helped define what it means to be courageous with our lives. *Atlas of the Heart* draws on this research, as well as on Brown's singular skills as a storyteller, to show us how accurately naming an experience doesn't give the experience more power—it gives us the power of understanding, meaning, and choice.

[Fierce Self-Compassion: How Women Can Harness Kindness to Speak Up, Claim Their Power, and Thrive](#), by Kristen Neff | June 15, 2021

Kristin Neff changed how we talk about self-care with her enormously popular first book, *Self-Compassion*. Now, ten years and many studies later, she expands her body of work to explore a brand-new take on self-compassion. Although kindness and self-acceptance allow us to be with ourselves as we are, in all our glorious imperfection, the desire to alleviate suffering at the heart of this mindset isn't always gentle, sometimes it's fierce. We must also act courageously in order to protect ourselves from harm and injustice, say no to others so we can meet our own needs, and motivate necessary change in ourselves and society. Gender roles demand that women be soft and nurturing, not angry or powerful. But like yin and yang, the energies of fierce and tender self-compassion must be balanced for wholeness and wellbeing.

Drawing on a wealth of research, her personal life story and empirically supported practices, Neff demonstrates how women can use fierce and tender self-compassion to succeed in the workplace, engage in caregiving without burning out, be authentic in relationships, and end the silence around sexual harassment and abuse. Most women intuitively recognize fierceness as part of their true nature but have been discouraged from developing it. Women must reclaim their power in order to create a healthier society and find lasting happiness. In this wise, caring, and enlightening book, Neff shows women how to create balance within themselves, so they can help restore balance in the world.

[Loving-Kindness in Plain English: The Practice of Metta](#), by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana | March 14, 2017

With his signature clarity and warmth, Bhante Gunaratana shares with us how we can cultivate loving-kindness to live a life of joyful harmony with others. Through personal anecdotes, step-by-step meditations, conversational renderings of the Buddha's words in the suttas, and transformative insights into how we live in and relate to the world, we learn that peace here and now is possible—within ourselves and in all our relationships. Bhante G speaks directly to how we can cultivate loving-kindness to find emotional clarity, overcome anger, and become more peaceful—both on and off the meditation cushion.

[The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions](#) (1st Edition) by Christopher K. Germer | April 9, 2009

“Buck up.” “Stop feeling sorry for yourself.” “Don't ruin everything.” When you are anxious, sad, angry, or lonely, do you hear this self-critical voice? What would happen if, instead of fighting difficult emotions, we accepted them? Over his decades of experience as a therapist and mindfulness meditation practitioner, Dr. Christopher Germer has learned a paradoxical lesson: We all want to avoid pain but letting it in--and responding compassionately to our own imperfections, without judgment or self-blame--are essential steps on the path to healing. This wise and eloquent book illuminates the power of self-compassion and offers creative, scientifically grounded strategies for putting it into action.

[Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself](#), by Kristen Neff | June 23, 2015

*Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind* offers expert advice on how to limit self-criticism and offset its negative effects, enabling you to achieve your highest potential and a more contented, fulfilled life. More and more, psychologists are turning away from an emphasis on self-esteem and moving toward self-compassion in the treatment of their patients—and Dr. Neff's extraordinary book offers exercises and action plans for dealing with every emotionally debilitating struggle, be it parenting, weight loss, or any of the numerous trials of everyday living.



## Meditations and Resources for Home Use

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlDtTpK-5ZWSd\\_guVpIkHXOqXBCjoTnpg](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlDtTpK-5ZWSd_guVpIkHXOqXBCjoTnpg) this is a link to a playlist of 19 meditations offered by Chris Germer, Ph.D. He is the co-creator to the Mindful Self-Compassion Course with Kristin Neff.

<https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations> this is a link to 18 audio-recorded guided meditations by Kristen Neff. There are also 8 suggested Self-Compassion exercises. Please use these recordings and exercises as you see fit. They are excellent resources to be woven into your daily activities.

## Resources for Educators

[Compassionate School Practices](#), by Christine Y. Mason, Dana Asby, Meghan Wenzel, Katherine T. Volk, & Martha Staeheli | Jan. 13, 2021

Is your school prepared to care for all of the students, staff, and families in your community? Sadly, your school might be the only point of care for many. Be already ready--Establish a compassionate cultural foundation for strong relationships and holistic skills to weather stress, trauma, and promote well-being for your entire school population. Help your school or district use available resources to create a compassionate culture of justice and care for all by leaning into this book's approach to leadership and social emotional learning. Discover a collaborative visioning process to elevate compassion through dialogue, policies, and protocol. Read this and usher in transformational and compassionate change that may be the difference in whatever today, tomorrow, or the next day may bring.

[Cultivating Happiness, Resilience, and Well-Being Through Meditation, Mindfulness, and Movement: A Guide for Educators](#) (1st Edition) by Christine Y. Mason, Jeffrey Donald, Krishna Kaur Khalsa, Michele M. Rivers Murphy, and Valerie Brown | Dec. 21, 2021

As the pandemic recedes and the world gradually returns to "normal," it's more important than ever to make your classroom a place that supports mental health and improves overall wellness. In this book, you'll discover the why and the how of using techniques to reduce stress, improve executive function, and set the stage for increased memory and attention, better self-regulation, and improved cognition and academic learning. With this practical, research-based guide, you'll incorporate age- and grade-appropriate meditation, breathing, mindfulness, and secular yoga activities into your teaching, in ways that work for in-person as well as virtual and hybrid settings. Mindfulness isn't just a buzzword-it's a time-tested, teacher-tested technique for reducing anxiety and improving your students' outcomes. Incorporate it into your classroom and see for yourself how much good a deep breath can do.

[The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive](#), by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer | Aug. 29, 2018

Are you kinder to others than you are to yourself? More than a thousand research studies show the benefits of being a supportive friend to yourself, especially in times of need. This science-based workbook offers a step-by-step approach to breaking free of harsh self-judgments and impossible standards in order to cultivate emotional well-being. In a convenient large-size format, the book is based on the authors' groundbreaking eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) program, which has helped tens of thousands of people worldwide. It is packed with guided meditations (with audio downloads); informal practices to do anytime, anywhere; exercises; and vivid stories of people using the techniques to address relationship stress, weight and

body image issues, health concerns, anxiety, and other common problems. The seeds of self-compassion already lie within you--learn how you can uncover this powerful inner resource and transform your life.

[Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators](#), (1st Edition) by Elena Aguilar | May 18, 2018

Onward tackles the problem of educator stress and provides a practical framework for taking the burnout out of teaching. Stress is part of the job, but when 70 percent of teachers quit within their first five years because the stress is making them physically and mentally ill, things have gone too far. Unsurprisingly, these effects are highest in difficult-to-fill positions such as math, science, and foreign languages, and in urban areas and secondary classrooms—places where we need our teachers to be especially motivated and engaged. This book offers a path to resiliency to help teachers weather the storms and bounce back—and work toward banishing the rain for good. This actionable framework gives you concrete steps toward rediscovering yourself, your energy, and your passion for teaching. You'll learn how a simple shift in mindset can affect your outlook, and how taking care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally is one of the most important things you can do. The companion workbook helps you put the framework into action, streamlining your way toward renewal and strength.

## Evaluations



## Evaluation Surveys

## Personal Evaluations

## Perceived Stress Scale 4 (PSS-4)

**Instructions:** The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during THE LAST MONTH. In each case, please indicate your response by placing an “X” over the square representing HOW OFTEN you felt or thought a certain way.

PSS-4 Questions	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	4	3	2	1	0
3. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	4	3	2	1	0

4. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---	---

#### Scoring for the Perceived Stress Scale 4:

##### Questions 1 and 4

0 = Never

1 = Almost Never

2 = Sometimes

3 = Fairly Often

4 = Very Often

##### Questions 2 and 3

4 = Never

3 = Almost Never

2 = Sometimes

1 = Fairly Often

0 = Very Often

Lowest score: 0

Highest score: 16

Higher scores are correlated to more stress.

Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 385. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136404>

## Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

**Description:** The MAAS is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present. The scale shows strong psychometric properties and has been validated with college, community, and cancer patient samples. Correlational, quasi-experimental, and laboratory studies have shown that the MAAS taps a unique quality of consciousness that is related to, and predictive of, a variety of self-regulation and well-being constructs. The measure takes 10 minutes or less to complete.

### Day-to-Day Experiences

**Instructions:** Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

MAAS Questions	Almost Always	Very Frequently	Somewhat Frequently	Somewhat Infrequently	Very Infrequently	Almost Never
I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.	1	2	3	4	5	6

I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself listening to someone with one	1	2	3	4	5	6

ear, doing something else at the same time.						
I drive places on "automatic pilot" and then wonder I went there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself doing things without paying attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I snack without being aware that I'm eating.	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Scoring information:

To score the scale, simply compute a mean of the 15 items. Higher scores reflect higher levels of dispositional mindfulness.

Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>

\*This section is for your own benefit. Please take this survey and record your answers. You may take this survey again at the end of the course and compare your answers to your previous answers. Feel free to utilize this survey as you would like to gauge your current perceived amount of stress or current measure of mindfulness. Refer to the resilience practices in this course for assistance in lowering your perceived stress score. Refer to the mindfulness exercises in this course to increase your mindful awareness.

## Course Evaluations

Thank you for participating in this course. To help us continue to improve the course, please take these two five-minute surveys (PHLMS and FMI) before the course and then again after the conclusion of the course. We look forward to hearing about your experience. Your feedback will help us to enhance our offerings as well as provide an understanding of your own personal growth. These surveys measure your aptitude for awareness and acceptance, as well as your mindfulness that has been developed through your meditation practice.

### Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS)

**Description:** The PHLMS measures the core constructs of mindfulness as defined by Bishop et al. (2004). In the words of the questionnaire developers, mindfulness is the tendency to be highly aware of one's internal and external experiences in the context of an accepting, nonjudgmental stance toward those experiences. This survey is comprised of 20 items measuring awareness and acceptance.

**Instructions:** We are interested in your day-to-day experiences. Below is a list of things that people sometimes experience. Please read each statement. Please indicate how often you experienced each of the described

items over the past week. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, so please answer in a way that reflects your own experiences.

PHLMS Questions	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. I am aware of what thoughts are passing through my mind.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I try to distract myself when I feel unpleasant emotions.	0	1	2	3	4
3. When talking with other people, I am aware of their facial and body expressions.	0	1	2	3	4
4. There are aspects of myself I don't want to think about.	0	1	2	3	4
5. When I shower, I am aware of how the water is running over my body.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I try to stay busy to keep thoughts or feelings from coming to mind.	0	1	2	3	4
7. When I am startled, I notice what is going on inside my body.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I wish I could control my emotions more easily.	0	1	2	3	4
9. When I walk outside, I am aware of smells or how the air feels against my face.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I tell myself that I shouldn't have certain thoughts.	0	1	2	3	4
11. When someone asks how I am feeling, I can identify my emotions easily.	0	1	2	3	4
12. There are things I try not to think about.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I am aware of thoughts I'm having when my mood changes.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I tell myself that I shouldn't feel sad.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I notice changes inside my body, like my heart beating faster or my muscles getting tense.	0	1	2	3	4

16. If there is something I don't want to think about, I'll try many things to get it out of my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4
17. Whenever my emotions change, I am conscious of them immediately.	<input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4
18. I try to put my problems out of mind.	<input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4
19. When talking with other people, I am aware of the emotions I am experiencing.	<input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4
20. When I have a bad memory, I try to distract myself to make it go away.	<input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4

### Scoring:

All items of the awareness subscale are written in a positively keyed direction, so no reverse scoring is required. All items of the acceptance subscale are written in a negatively keyed direction, thus reverse scoring is required. The items belong to two subscales:

Awareness: All odd items are totaled: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19

Acceptance: All even items are reversed and then totaled: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20

Higher scores reflect higher aptitudes of awareness and acceptance.

Bishop, S.R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N.D., Carmody, J., et al. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 11, 230-241.

Cardaciotto, L., Herbert, J. D., Forman, E. M., Moitra, E., & Farrow, V. (2008). The assessment of present-moment awareness and acceptance: The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale. *Assessment*, 15(2), 204-223.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191107311467>

### Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)

**Description:** First published in 2001, the FMI is one of the best-established mindfulness questionnaires. The FMI was developed to assess mindfulness by integrating Buddhist and secular conceptualizations. Originally, it was designed as 30 item version, but its shorter 13 item version caught on and became widely used. The 13-item version particularly focuses on mindfulness developed through meditation.

**Instructions:** The purpose of this questionnaire is to characterize how often you have certain experiences. Please use the last 14 days as a time frame to consider each item. Provide an answer for every statement as best you can. Please answer as honestly and spontaneously as possible. There are neither 'right' nor 'wrong' answers, nor 'good' or 'bad' responses. What is important is your own personal experience.

FMI Questions	Rarely	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Almost Always
---------------	--------	--------------	--------------	---------------



	0	1	2	3
1. I am open to the experience of the present moment.				
2. I sense my body, whether eating, cooking, cleaning or talking.				
3. When I notice an absence of mind, I gently return to the experience of the here and now.				
4. I am able to appreciate myself.				
5. I pay attention to what's behind my actions.				
6. I see my mistakes and difficulties without judging them.				
7. I feel connected to my experience in the here and now.				
8. I accept unpleasant experiences.				
9. I am friendly to myself when things go wrong.				
10. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.				
11. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.				
12. I experience moments of inner peace and ease, even when things get hectic and stressful.				
13. I am able to smile when I notice how I sometimes make life difficult.				

### Scoring instructions

Sub-Scale Items Presence 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10

Acceptance 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13

Walach, H., Buchheld, N., Buttenmüller, V., Kleinknecht, N., & Schmidt, S. (2006). Measuring mindfulness—the Freiburg mindfulness inventory (FMI). *Personality and individual differences*, 40(8), 1543-1555.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2005.11.025>

**In addition to these surveys, please answer these questions post-course and provide answers to your instructor:**

1. What is your name?
2. How would you rate your overall course experience (1-5-star rating, 1= low, 5=high)?

1

2

3

4

5

3. This program has helped me with my mindfulness and meditation.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Neutral    Agree    Strongly agree

4. Please rank the following aspects of this course:

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Course content					
Resources					
Daily meditations					
Live sessions					
Customer service					

5. How likely are you to recommend this course to others?

Not likely at all    Not likely    Somewhat likely    Very likely    Extremely likely

6. What would you change about the course? How might we improve things?

7. Would you like to provide a testimonial? If so, please provide it below.

8. If you provided a testimonial, please provide your name, title, and company as you would like it to appear.

9. Is there anything else you would like to share with our team?