Mindfulness & Grief: Reengaging With Life After Loss

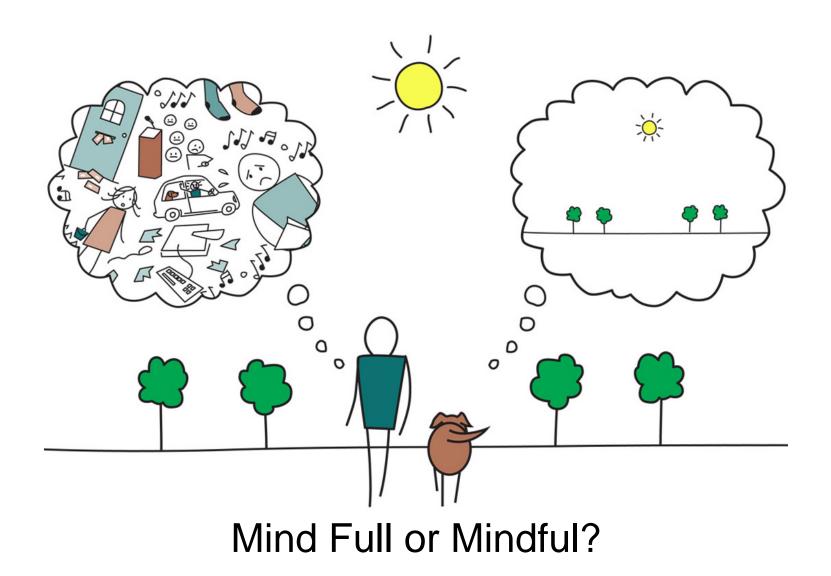
HEATHER STANG, MA, C-IAYT

Author, Mindfulness & Grief Association of Death Education & Counseling 40th Annual Conference Pittsburgh, PA

GET HANDOUTS: http://mindfulnessandgrief.com/adec-2018/

Session Objectives

- Explain how mindfulness practices, including present moment awareness and compassion, can be used to relieve physical and emotional suffering.
- Outline specific meditation, yoga, and guided journaling techniques that enhance the ability to connect with the body's wisdom.
- Review case studies that illustrate how the practice of mindfulness meditation and yoga contributes to meaning making and posttraumatic growth.





MINDFULNESS IS....

...the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united. Mindfulness is the energy that helps us to know what is going on in the present moment.

Thich Nhat Hanh (2008)

https://www.lionsroar.com/the-moment-is-perfect/

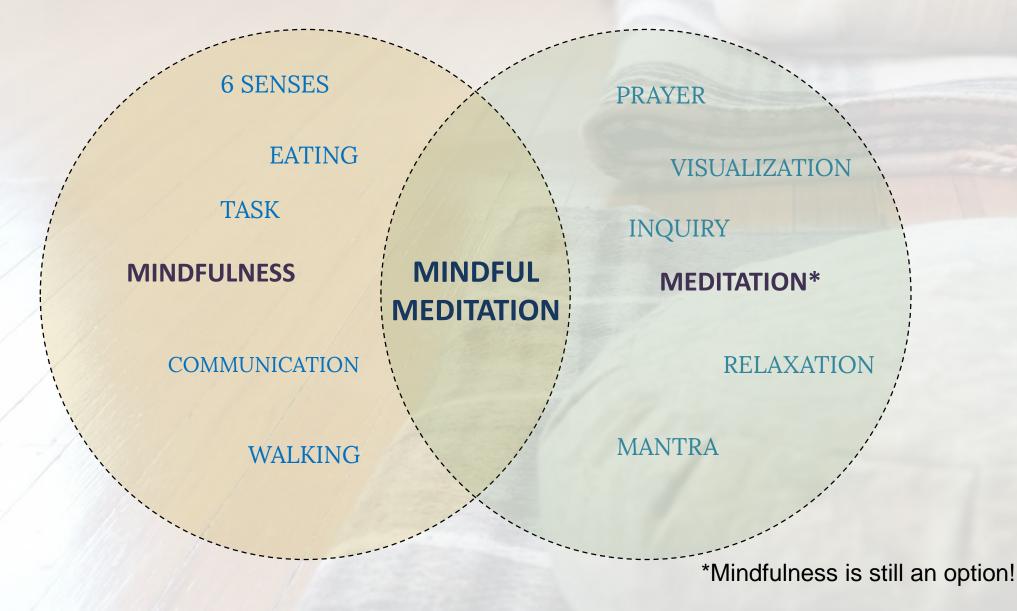
MINDFULNESS IS....

The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003)

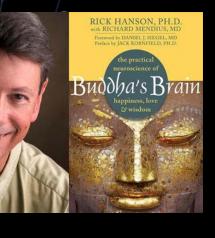


Mindfulness Is Not Just Seated Meditation...



The Brain on Mindfulness

- Lateral Prefrontal Cortex: Assessment Center
- Medial Prefrontal Cortex: Me Center Empathy
- Insula: Gut Feelings
- Amygdala: Fear Center Shrinks
- Neocortex: Creativity



Suffering = Pain x Resistance



Shinzen Young (1994)

5 Domains of Posttraumatic Growth

- Increased Appreciation of Personal Strength
- Sense of New Opportunities & Possibilities
- Deepened Sense of Connection & Compassion
- Appreciation of Life in General
- Spiritual or Religious Change

Calhoun & Tedeschi (2006)

Relevant Articles & Research

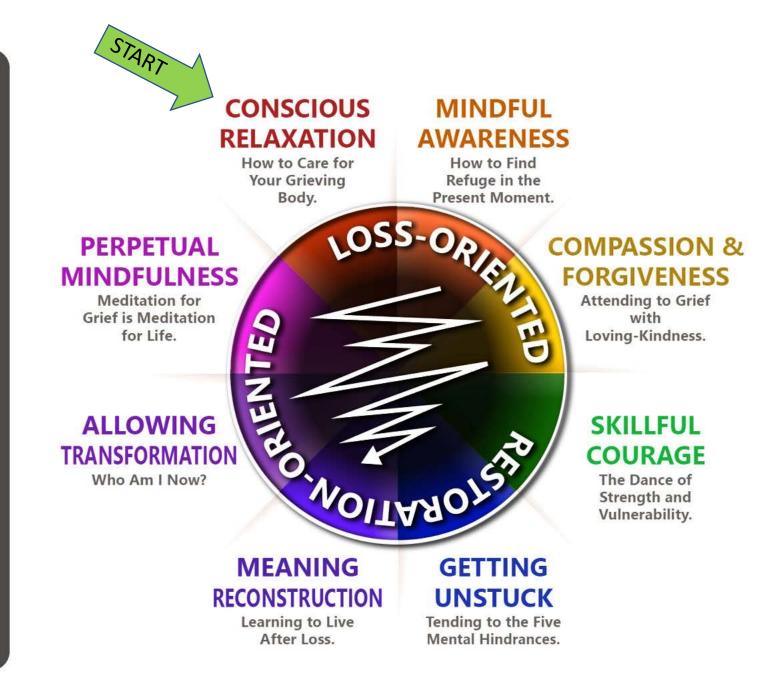
- Cacciatore, J., & Flint, M. (2012). **ATTEND: Toward a mindfulnessbased bereavement care model**. *Death studies*, *36*(1), 61-82. (A)ttunement, (T)rust, (T)herapeutic touch, (E)galitarianism (N)uance, and (D)eath education
- Hofmann, S. G., Sawyer, A. T., Witt, A. A., & Oh, D. (2010). The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, *78*(2), 169. 39 studies, 1,140 participants

Relevant Articles & Research

- Philbin, K. (2009). Transpersonal integrative yoga therapy: a protocol for grief and bereavement. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy, 19*(1), 129-141. Non-significant, however positive leaning, improvement in the Satisfaction with Life Scale
- Telles, S., Naveen, K. V., & Dash, M. (2007). Yoga reduces symptoms of distress in tsunami survivors in the Andaman Islands. *Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine*, 4(4), 503-509. All reported a significant reduction in self-rated fear, anxiety, sadness, and disturbed sleep after the one week program.

The Mindfulness & Grief System

8 Module Mindfulness & Grief System Overlayed with the Dual Process Model of Bereavement (Strube & Schut).



8 Week Online Course & Alumni Group

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Module 1: Focusing & Conscious Relaxation

- Counting The Breath
- My Mantra Meditation
- Breath Focus Meditation
- Three Part Breath
- Relaxation for Anxiety, Grief & Stress
- Informal Practice: Good Sleep Hygiene

Module 2: Mindful Awareness

- Body Scan
- Mindfulness of Breath
- Mindfulness of Breath, Body & Sounds
- Phoenix Rising Therapeutic Yoga
- Mindfulness of Everyday Tasks
- Mindful Awareness Break

Module 3: Compassion For Yourself & Others

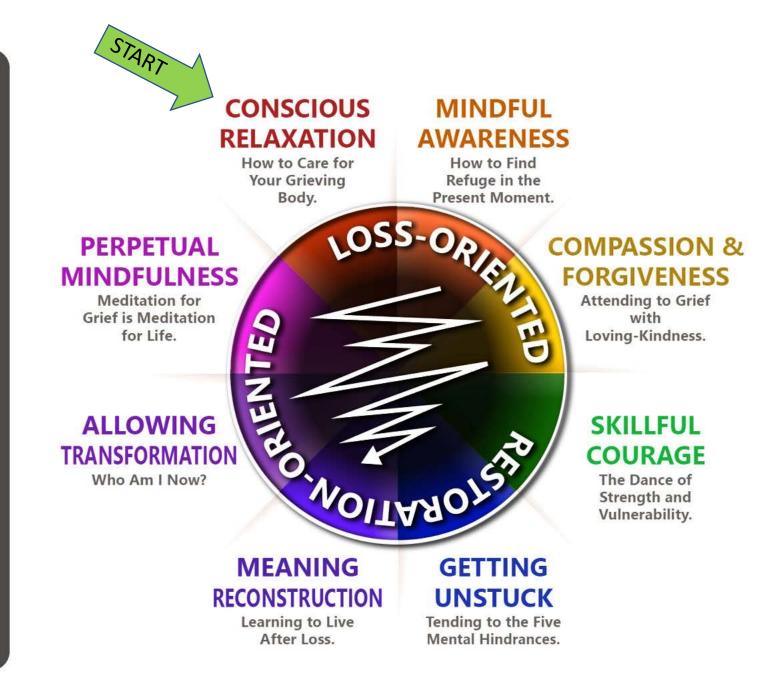
- Metta Meditation
- Affectionate Breathing
- Heart Center Meditation
- Wake Up With Self-Compassion
- Well Wishes on the Spot

Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Less Anxious & Depressed (Neff, 2009)
- Fewer Negative Emotions (Neff, Rude, Kirkpatrick, 2007)
- Higher Emotional Intelligence (Leary, Tate, et al., 2003)
- Emotional Coping Skills (Rockliff, Gilbert, et al. 2008)
- Reduces Avoidance In PTSD (Thompson, Waltz, 2008)
- Less Resistance to Suffering (Neff, 2003)

The Mindfulness & Grief System

8 Module Mindfulness & Grief System Overlayed with the Dual Process Model of Bereavement (Strube & Schut).



Meditation Can Help Bereaved People & Professionals:

- Start Sleeping Again
- Relieve Physical Tension & Increase Immune Functioning
- Self-Soothe to Calm Anxiety, Racing & Worried Thoughts
- Feel More Caring Towards Self & Others
- Establish a Continuing Bond With the Person who Died
- Develop life-long Coping Skills
- Cultivate Posttraumatic Growth



References & Resources

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