Mindfulness & Grief: Reengaging With Life After Loss

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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.
Mind Full or Mindful?
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.

Mindfulness Is Not Just Seated Meditation…

*Mindfulness is still an option!
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 mindfulness-based bereavement care model. *Death studies, 36*(1), 61-82. (A)ttunement, (T)rust, (T)herapeutic touch, (E)galitarianism (N)uance, and (D)eath education

Relevant Articles & Research


The Mindfulness & Grief System

8 Module Mindfulness & Grief System Overlaid with the Dual Process Model of Bereavement (Strube & Schut).
8 Week Online Course & Alumni Group
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 Overlaid 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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