

A person is sitting on a wooden bench, seen from behind, under a large, leafless tree. The scene is set against a sunset sky with soft, colorful clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Meditation & Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Suffering & Facilitate Growth

2019 NHPCA Annual Conference, Lincoln, NE

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Mindfulness & Grief Training Institute

Objectives

- Summarize the research and philosophies that support meditation as an effective intervention in the hospice and palliative care setting.
- Differentiate three types of meditation practices and their specific applications.
- Discuss a trauma-sensitive approach for facilitating meditation-based interventions during end-of-life care and grief.



Meditation in The HPC Setting: Patients & Families

- **Effect Of A 12-week Yoga Therapy Program On Mental Health Status In Elderly Women Inmates Of A Hospice** (Ramanathan, Bhavanani & Trakroo, 2017)
- **The Effect of 5 Minutes of Mindful Breathing to the Perception of Distress and Physiological Responses in Palliative Care Cancer Patients: A Randomized Controlled Study** (Ng, Lai, Tan, et al., 2016)
- **Distress Reduction for Palliative Care Patients and Families With 5-Minute Mindful Breathing: A Pilot Study** (Beng, Ahmad, Loong, et al., 2016)
- **Mindfulness Groups In Palliative Care: A Pilot Qualitative Study** (Chadwick, Newell & Skinner, 2008)

Meditation in The HPC Setting: Staff

- **Mindfulness And Compassion-oriented Practices At Work Reduce Distress And Enhance Self-care Of Palliative Care Teams: A Mixed-method Evaluation Of An “On The Job” Program** (Orellana-Rios, Radbruch, Kern, et al, 2018).
- **Hospice and Palliative Care Provider Experiences With Meditation Using Mobile Applications** (Lehto, Heeter, Allbritton, et al, 2018)
- **A Pilot Test Of A Mindfulness-based Communication Training To Enhance Resilience In Palliative Care Professionals** (Gerhart, O’Mahony, Abrams, et al., 2016).

The Mindfulness & Grief System

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



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 Growth or Change

Calhoun & Tedeschi (2006)



3 Types of Meditation Practices for the HPC Setting



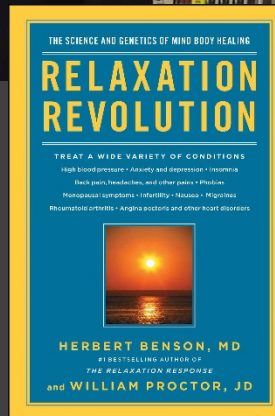
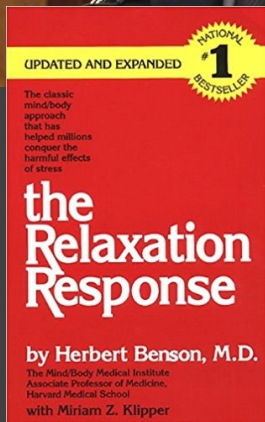
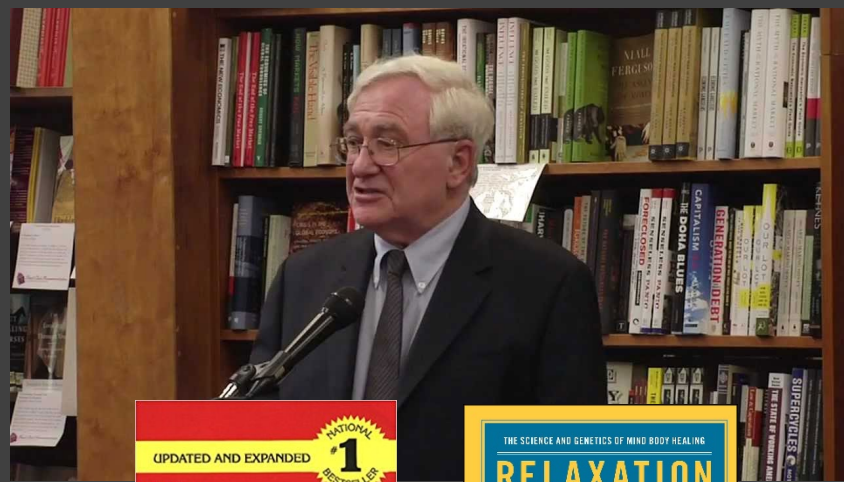
- Focusing
- Compassion
- Mindfulness

Focusing Meditation Benefits

- Decreases Predisposition to Stress-Related Illness (Benson, 2010)
- Improves Executive Attention (Chan & Woollacott, 2007)
- Induces the Relaxation Response (Benson, 1974)



Relaxation Response Benefits



- Angina pectoris
- Cardiac arrhythmias
- Allergic skin reactions
- Anxiety
- Mild & moderate depression
- Bronchial asthma
- Herpes simplex
- Cough
- Constipation
- Diabetes mellitus
- Duodenal ulcers
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Hypertension
- Unexplained infertility
- Insomnia
- Nausea & vomiting during pregnancy
- Nervousness
- Pain (backaches, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain and more)
- Postoperative swelling
- Premenstrual syndrome
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Side effects of cancer
- Side effects of AIDS

Focusing & Relaxation Techniques

- “My Mantra” Meditation
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Counting The Breath
- Three Part Breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Relaxation for Anxiety, Grief & Stress
- *Informal Practice: Good Sleep Hygiene*

Benefits of Compassion Practice

- 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 background of the slide features two hands, one from the left and one from the right, with fingers curled inward to form a heart shape. The hands are positioned against a warm, golden-brown sunset sky with soft, wispy clouds. The overall lighting is soft and evocative, suggesting themes of love, care, and compassion.

Compassion For Yourself & Others

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

Metta Meditation: Cultivating Compassion for Self & Others

1. Visualize the Image of a Specific "Person"
2. Feel Warmth and Kindness in Your Body
3. Silently Offer Words of Compassion

Definition of Mindfulness

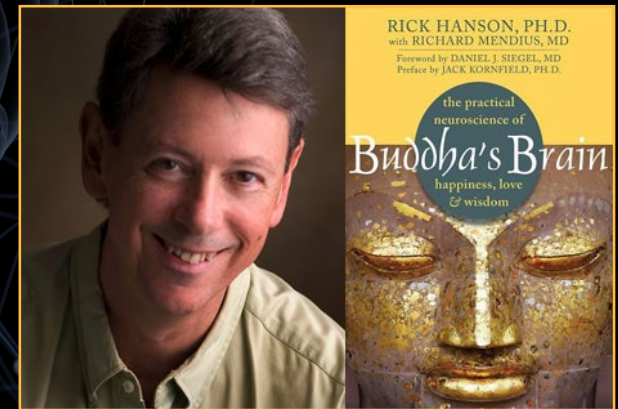
“The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.”

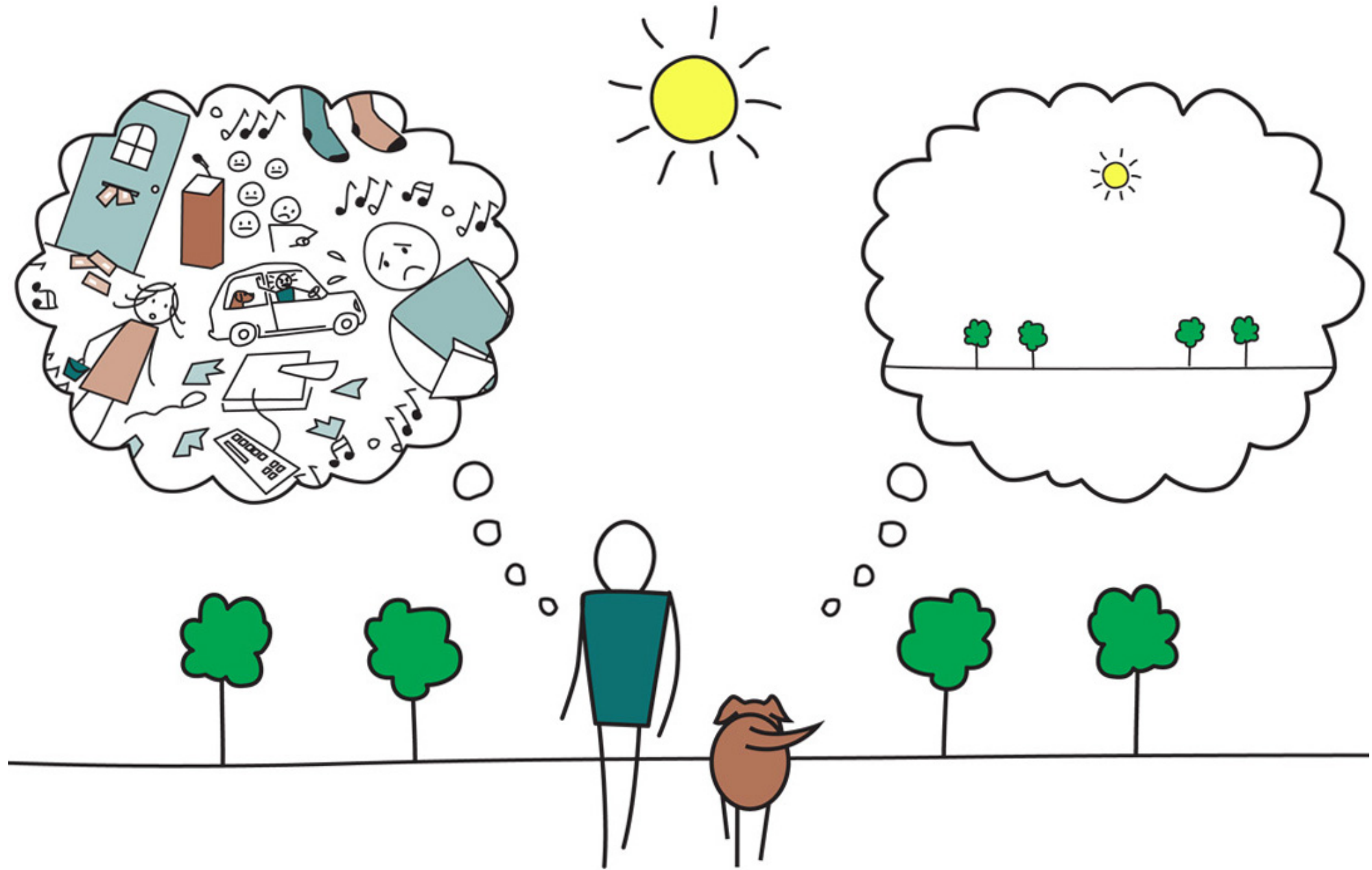
Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003)



The Brain on Mindfulness

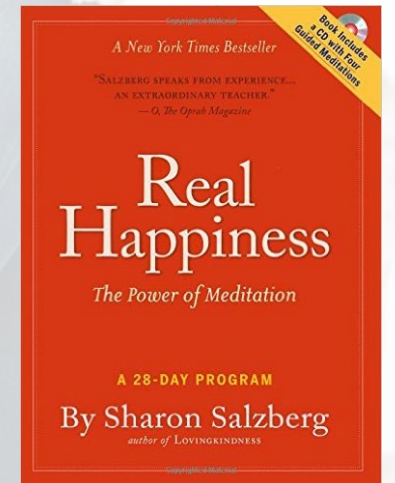
- **Amygdala:** Fear Center Shrinks
- **Neocortex:** Creativity & Cognitive Flexibility
- **Lateral Prefrontal Cortex:** Assessment Center
- **Medial Prefrontal Cortex:** Empathy
- **Insula:** Gut Feelings, Intuition





Mind Full or Mindful?

“Working with emotions during our meditation sessions **sharpens our ability to recognize a feeling just as it begins, not fifteen consequential actions later.** We can then go on to develop a more balanced relationship with it - neither letting it overwhelm us so that we lash out rashly, nor ignoring it because we’re afraid or ashamed of it.”



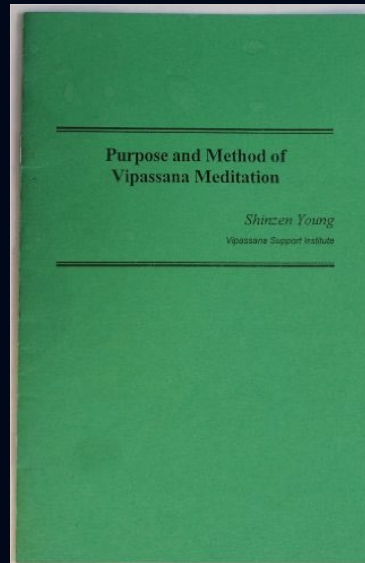
Sharon Salzberg
Real Happiness

Mindfulness Meditation Techniques

- Body Scan
- Breath Meditation
- Sound Meditation
- Walking Meditation
- Mindfulness of Emotions (RAIN)
- *Informal Practice: Awareness Breaks*



Suffering = Pain x Resistance



RAIN Meditation

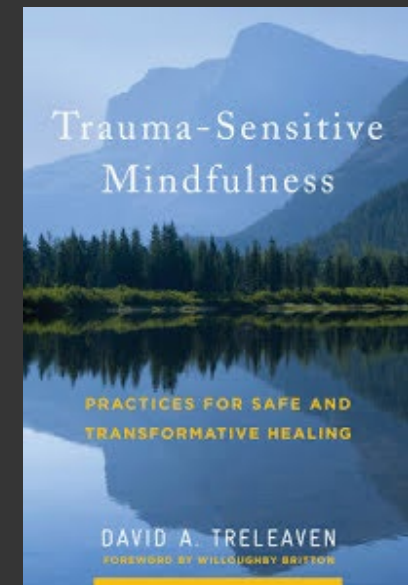
- **Recognize** - Acknowledge what you are feeling. What is happening inside me right now?
- **Allowing (Acceptance)** - Be willing to be present to your experience, no matter how unpleasant.
Whatever you notice, let it be.
- **Investigate** - Unhook yourself from the object or story, so you can witness the emotion with kindness, and from an unbiased perspective. Mindfulness of body is a great technique here, as is asking yourself "what am I believing to be true?"
- **Nurture** – Offer yourself mercy and care as you would an ideal best friend. Words of kindness, a gentle caress, or an acknowledgement of how hard this is are a few ways to practice.

5 Principles of Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness

1. Stay Within The Window Of Tolerance
2. Shift Attention To Support Stability: Avoiding The Fear/Immobility Cycle
3. Keep The Body In Mind: Working With Dissociation
4. Practice In Relationship: Support Safety & Stability In Survivors
5. Understand Social Context: Working Effectively Across Difference

David Treleaven
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness (2018)

<http://bit.ly/mgpodcast1>



Goodies: <http://bit.ly/nhpc2019>

MINDFULNESS & YOGA INTERVENTIONS FOR GRIEF: PRACTICE/SYMPTOM MATRIX

	Relaxation Response/Focus	Mindfulness Meditation	Compassion & Lovingkindness	Walking Meditation	RAIN	Yoga
Physical	Proven to reduce chronic pain, tension, headaches, PMS, and more	Cultivates awareness of sensations as impermanent, changing; opportunity for conscious relaxation	Can reduce physical tension, headaches; Increases sense of well-being which often manifests as physical pleasure.	Offers alternative experience of "body" by focusing on feet and movement of legs	Space to reflect on reaction and "drop the story" associated with unpleasurable sensations; conscious relaxation	Proven to reduce physical tension and pain. Improves flexibility, balance, muscle tone, cardiac health, protects from injury.
Emotional	Proven to reduce anxiety, mild to moderate depression	Deconstruct "feelings" into thoughts & sensations; Cultivates non-identification with feelings	Classically this is taught to reduce fear	Physical activity and focus on the senses can temper anxiety and increase energy	Offers a manageable system for coping with overwhelming feelings	Improves mood, decreases feelings of anxiety and depression as well as anger and PTSD symptoms.
Cognitive	Improves ability to redirect attention away from thoughts to mantra/breath	Creates more "space" between thoughts for direct experience; Cultivates non-identification with thoughts	Can shift negative thoughts and ruminations about self and others.	Infuses mind with new awareness of sensory experience, interrupting habitual thoughts	Directs attention away from the content (thoughts) to physical experience of feeling	Improves concentration and focus, increases mental clarity and sense of presence.
Behavior	Proven to reduce acting out behavior in children. Decreases insomnia	Slows down reactivity; Improves self-regulation	Decreases hostile attitude and behavior, including internal ruminations and external actions	Encourages a new way of "being" in the world or with nature; Is often a new undertaking;	Transforms difficult emotions which can dissolve habitual behaviors and patterns	Sensory regulation combined with emotional regulation fosters impulse control.
Social	Eases anxiety which can decrease social anxiety	Improves self-referential processing and decreases social anxiety	Directly impacts a sense of social connection; Cultivates positive attitude by focusing on shared desire to be happy; Decreases blame/judgement	Cultivates sense of community when practiced in groups; Sense of belonging when practiced in public	Attends to root of suffering which can impede interpersonal relationships	Yoga is often practiced in groups, widening social circles. Can foster a sense of connectedness with self and others.
Spiritual	Mantra may help deepen sense of spiritual connection	Increases "Daily Spiritual Experiences"	Cultivates connection to all sentient beings – something greater than oneself	Cultivates connection to the natural cycle of life, flora, fauna, and other sentient beings	Cultivates connection to one's own inner wisdom and truth	Sense of increased consciousness and awareness may promote spiritual growth.

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Guided Meditations, Slides & Handout

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