



Rhea Plosker MASc, MC, RSW, RP
Engineer, Social Worker, Psychotherapist, Leadership Coach

Mindfulness as a Brief Intervention

Oct 1, 2021

Facilitator, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Cancer

Faculty and Mentor, Centre for Mindfulness Studies in Toronto

www.inspirationsolutions.com
rplosker@inspirationsolutions.com



INSPIRATION



Workshop Structure

1. Experiential learning about mindfulness through practice and structured reflection;
2. Using brief techniques that can be quickly incorporated into your own work and practice;
3. Supported by an overview of theory and the research supporting mindfulness as an intervention (and brief intervention), with;
4. Options for next steps in training and practice, for you and for your clients.



Eastern traditions of working with mental and physical suffering (2500 years old)



Western mental health treatments (primarily CBT) (<150 years old)

Evidence-Based Mindfulness Interventions

MBSR
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
8-week group program
1979

ACT
Acceptance and Commitment therapy
1982
1:1, self-help, groups

DBT
Dialectical behaviour therapy
Late 1970s
Group & individual

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy & Mindful Self Compassion grew from MBSR
>75K peer reviewed papers
8 week group programs
*Manualized, facilitator certification

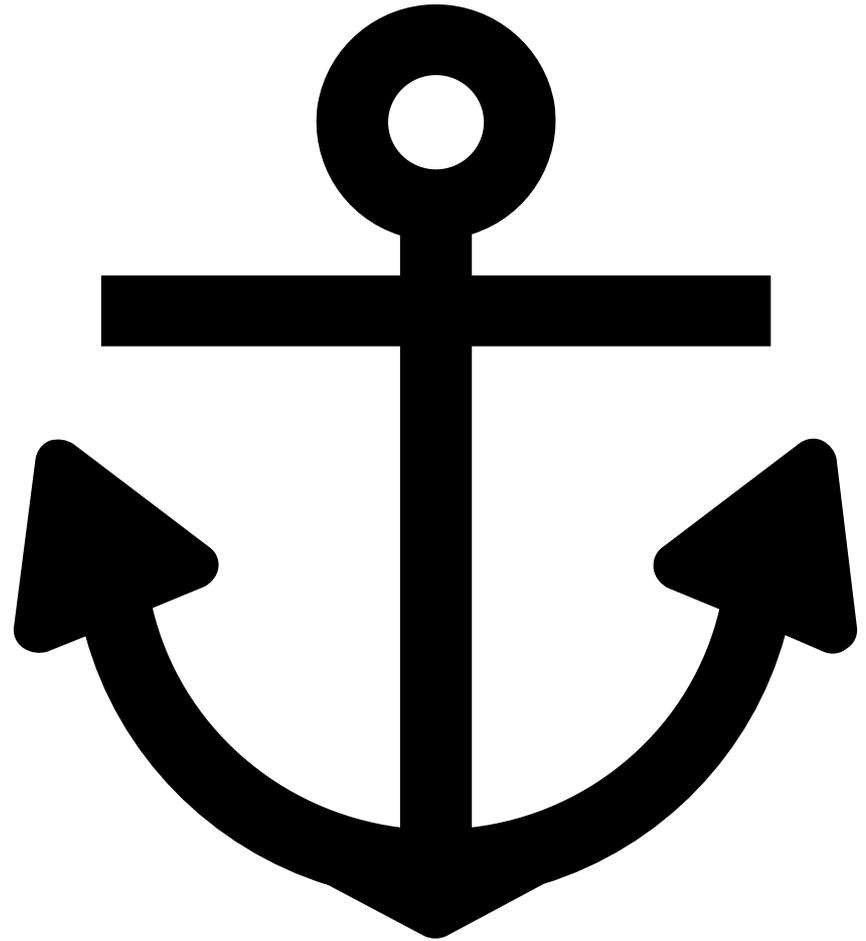
Transdiagnostic, flexible
Used in 1:1 therapy and coaching, group, and self-help
>48K peer reviewed papers
*Extensive training options, no therapist certification

Borderline personality disorder, suicidality and self-harm
Group, 1:1 , and self-help
>21K peer reviewed papers
*Manualized, therapist certification

Changing your relationship with problematic experiences



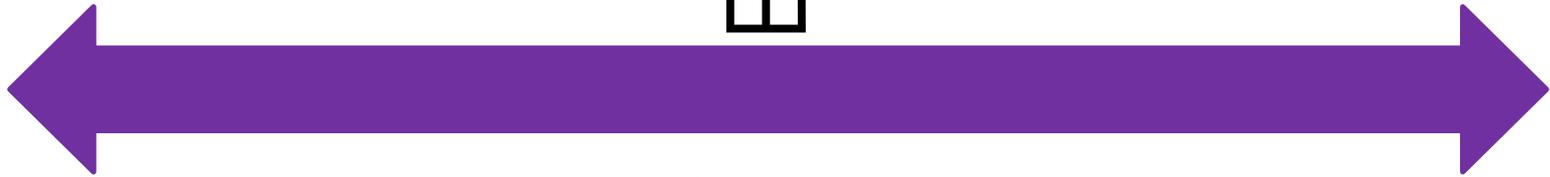
Practice
Dropping
Anchor





Mindfulness Defined

Your body is present. Do you know where your mind is?



Past

Present

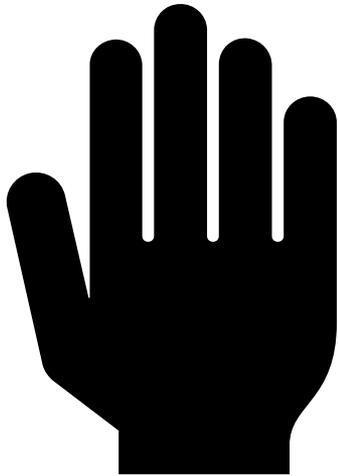
Future



Knowing something like the back of your hand

Means to be extremely familiar with that thing.

This expression is noted in the Oxford English dictionary, and came into popular use in the 1940s.



What is something you can say you know “like the back of your hand”

Now, let’s do a “back of the hand” practice.



Stationary Practice

Body sensations

Breath (or sight or sound)

Noticing how the mind moves

Mindfulness is Being Open to Experience



Mindfulness interventions are “exposure-based”. We are learning to be with all experience, whether pleasant or unpleasant.



Mindfulness is using our senses to explore direct experience

In mindfulness, we use our available senses to explore experience:

- Sight
- Sound
- Touch
- Taste
- Smell

We also take an “observer’s view” of thoughts and emotions, treating mental objects like sensations of the mind that come and go.

*Remember that not all senses are available or accessible to all people at all times. Adjust according to individuals and situations.



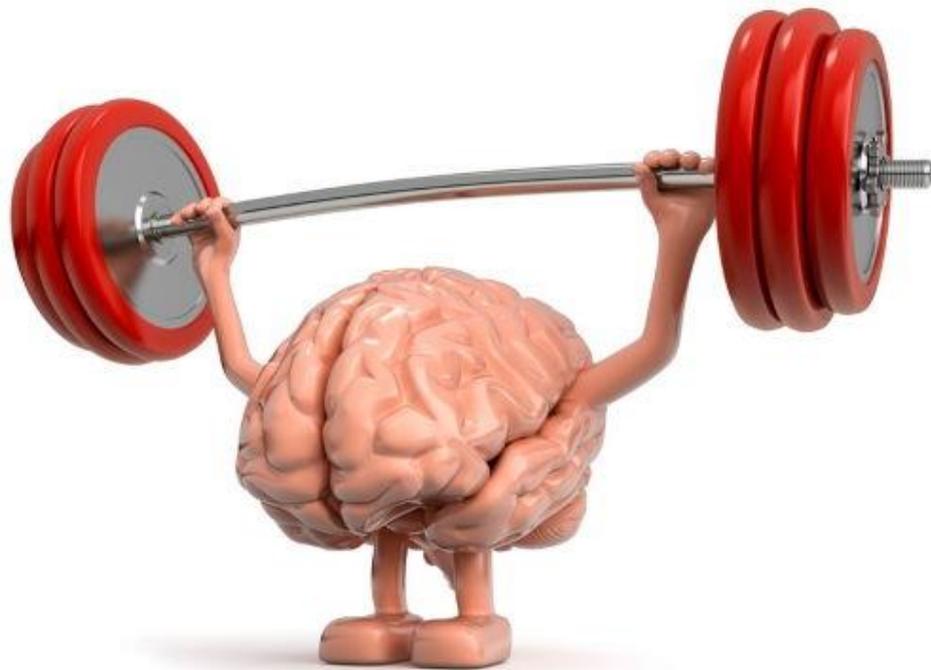


Mindfulness is training attention

Noticing what is going on right now (using the senses and by being willing to be with all experience).

Acknowledging your experience as your (valid and human) experience.

Taking action in service of what's important to you.





Mindfulness Defined

Common Western Definition

Awareness that emerges from **paying attention**:

- *on purpose*
- *in the present moment*
- *non-judgmentally, to things just as they are*
- *In the service of greater self-understanding, wisdom, and well-being.*

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2013



INSPIRATION



Mindfulness Common Misperceptions

- Being with things as they are does not mean accepting unjust or unfair experiences. **It does mean accepting and honouring our reactions to those experiences rather than shutting out or discounting our experiences.**
- You may or may not find mindfulness relaxing. Relaxation is not the purpose.

Mindfulness is a way of determining a mental “My Location”. Once we know where we are, we can explore possibilities around what to do next.



Break

Pick an activity that you would normally do on automatic pilot and bring mindful attention to it, even if just for a few seconds. See if it's possible to use the senses to explore your experience.



The Weather Practice

Observe, Describe, Participate

- 1. Observe:** the weather inside or outside the room you are in.
- 2. Describe:** describe the weather in words
- 3. Participate fully (and in a particular way):**
 - use only words that describe direct sensorial experience (e.g. sight, sound, taste, smell, touch)
 - do not use words that describe thoughts or emotions or any preferences or judgements



Our Minds are Highly Skilled Judging Machines



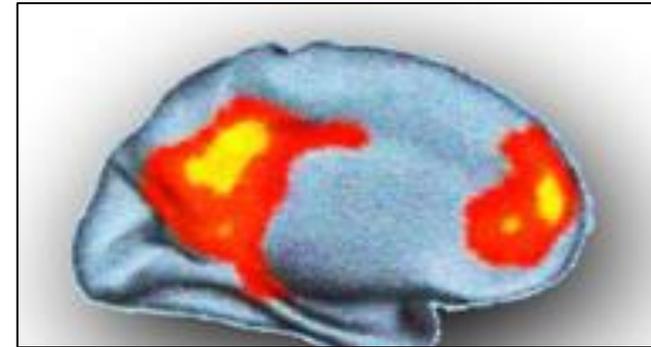


Automatic Pilot Mode/Doing Mode

Some Theory

When we do things without conscious intention we activate areas of the brain correlated with:

- **Enduring and stable** stories, meanings, beliefs
- Memory & future planning
- Self-reflection and judgement
- Self-referential inner dialogue (“Me/Not Me” thinking)



The Default Mode Network of the brain is activated when we are automatic pilot

These areas of the brain are crucial to the experience of being human, and... They play a role in rumination, depression, and other mental health and addictions concerns through links to the limbic system.



Direct Experience or Being Mode Some Theory

**When we do things with
conscious intention we activate
areas of the brain correlated with:**

- Direct sensorial experience
- Attention and focus
- Arising and passing (not enduring)
- Discernment-evaluating importance
- Higher order thinking/problem solving

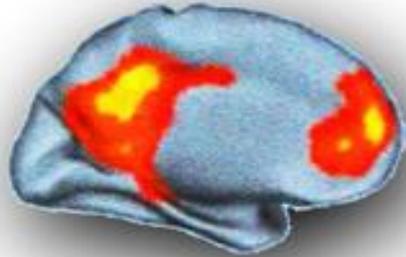


**The Task Positive Network
of the brain is activated
when we are in Being Mode**

These areas of the brain do not eliminate our stories, judgements or me/not me thinking. However, activating “being mode” supports recovery and resilience.

Doing Mode and Being Mode

Why are both helpful



Doing Mode



Being Mode

Being able to access to modes of mind offer:

- Multiple perspectives on any given situation
- The opportunity to learn from experience (doing mode)
- The opportunity to know things can change (being mode)
- Possibilities and choice



Practice-Defusion from Difficult Thoughts and Emotions

Example-Perfectionism

1. Anything less than perfection is a failure
2. I should be able to do this without help.
3. It's not ok for me to make a mistake.
4. I should have been able to predict this.
5. I can't handle it if they are upset with me.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!!!!!!!!!!!!

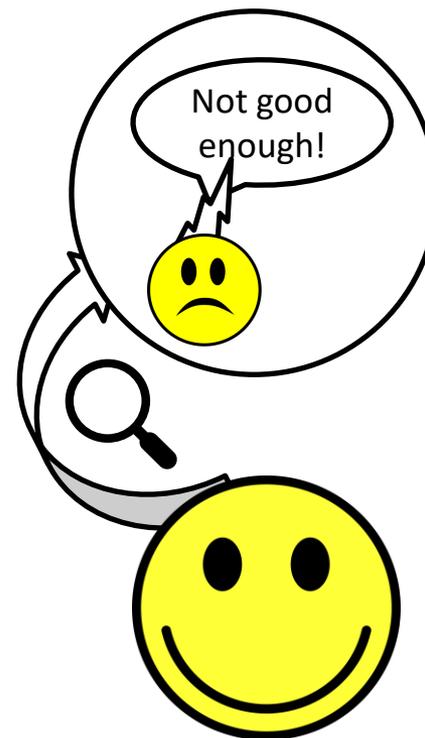
Mindfully working with thoughts and emotions using Defusion



I am not good enough!!



I am having the thought that I'm not good enough



I am noticing that I'm having the thought that I'm not good enough



How does mindfulness work?

The research tells us mindfulness practice helps improve:

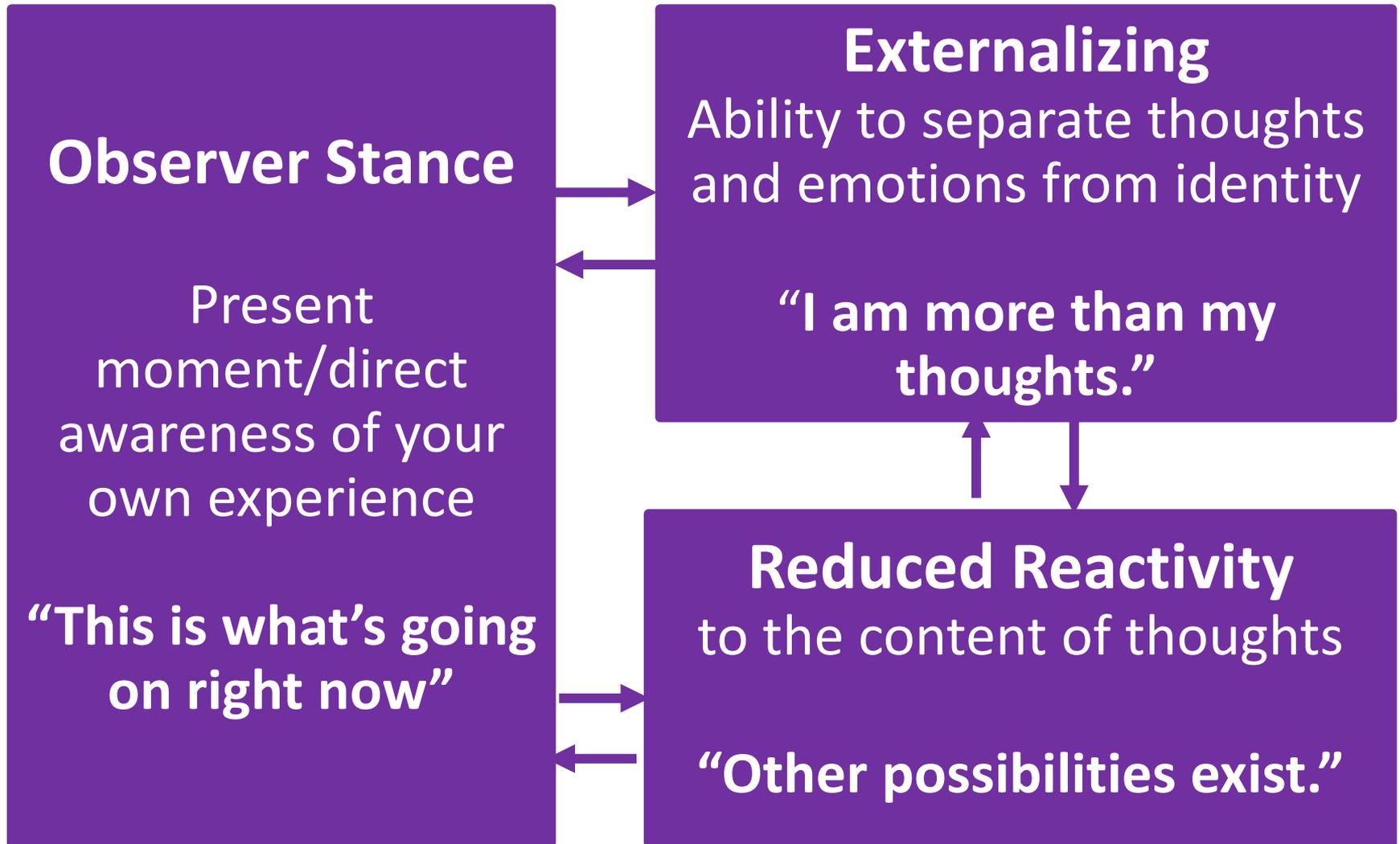
- Incidence and severity of depression relapse
- Anxiety and stress levels
- Concentration, focus, and memory
- Emotional regulation
- Social connection & emotional intelligence
- Perception of pain severity
- Immune function and inflammation levels



*Mindfulness isn't magic. It works through a measurable construct called decentering. Research also indicates other approaches ranging from CBT to psychedelics can provide similar outcomes.



Decentering Definition





Willingness

Practice-Holding a Cactus Gently



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)



Resources

1. I have some recordings and scripts available on my web site for download, including the practices we did today. You are free to use them but please do reference me.

<https://www.inspirationsolutions.com/MindfulnessOASW>

**These scripts and recordings will be available for downloading until October 31, 2021.

2. Two of my passion projects are:

i) Mindfulness for Anxiety and Uncertainty: This is an 8-week course I designed based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. It uses a broad range of brief mindfulness practices and exercises. The next course starts Tuesday Oct 12, 2021.

<https://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/personal/mindfulness-for-anxiety-and-transition/>

i) Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Cancer: This is an 8-week course for those living with a cancer diagnosis, treatment, or the aftermath. It's a pay-what-you-can program offered by myself and a family physician. The next program starts Friday, October 15, 2021 and again in January, 2022

<https://www.inspirationsolutions.com/mindfulnesscancer.html>

3. I am proud to be on faculty at the Centre for Mindfulness Studies in Toronto. The Centre is a registered charity that delivers Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, and Mindful Self-Compassion programs. The Centre is also a world leader in professional development training for mindfulness facilitators.

<https://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/>

<https://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/resources/>