Anxiety and Mindfulness

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What is Anxiety?

• A state of fear resulting from a realistic or imaginary threatening situation
• May have emotional, cognitive and physical components
• Anxiety can be a normal and healthy response to a situation
Anxiety vs. Anxiety Disorders

- Difficulty functioning in daily life
  - Occupational, academic, social/relationships
- Feel frequently overwhelmed or unable to cope with the anxiety
- Anxiety is excessive
- Using drugs/alcohol to deal with anxiety
Common Anxiety Disorders

- Panic Disorder (with Agoraphobia)
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Anxiety Disorders are Treatable...
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

• Short-term (6 to 20 sessions)
• Present-focused
• Can be equally effective as medication for anxiety disorders
• Combination Meds + CBT often used
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Thoughts

Behaviors  Feelings
1) Thoughts
   – Challenging Automatic Thoughts:
     • Am I 100% sure that _______________?
     • What evidence do I have that _______________?
     • What is the worst that could happen? How could I cope with that?
2) Behaviors
   - Exposure-based Interventions
   - Relaxation or Mindfulness Exercises
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

2) Behaviors
   – Exposure-based Interventions
   – Relaxation or Mindfulness Exercises
What is Mindfulness?
What is Mindfulness?

• Bringing attention to the present moment
• Not focusing on what things should or could be like
• Turning towards our experiences, even if they are difficult
• The opposite of mindfulness? → Mindlessness and Auto-pilot
What gets in the way of mindfulness?

• Thinking
  – To do list
  – Worrying
  – “Stories”
  – Catastrophizing
• Multi-tasking
• Technology (CELL PHONES)
• COVID-19…
When can we practice mindfulness?

- In every moment…
- **Formal mindfulness**
  - Using an “anchor” to bring attention to the present
- **Informal mindfulness**
  - Noticing when you are on “autopilot”
  - Bringing awareness to the present
Why Practice Mindfulness?
## Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>• Decreased stress, <em>anxiety, depression</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved focus and memory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved quality of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychiatric (Brain)</td>
<td>• Changes in brain structure and function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological (Chronic Pain)</td>
<td>• Decreased <em>pain</em> severity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decreased disability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increased pain acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>• Decreased blood pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immune</td>
<td>• Improved immune function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive</td>
<td>• Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metabolic</td>
<td>• Sustained weight loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diabetes—mixed findings</td>
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Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

• Tunes us into the present
• Makes it easier to be mindful during activities
• Allows us to listen to our bodies
  – e.g., noticing stress, tension
• Allows us to be more open and flexible
• Increases our ability to tolerate discomfort and uncertainty
• Allows us to notice thoughts without reacting to them
How to incorporate mindfulness into your day...

• Take a 3-breath break
• Label your emotion
• Accept your emotions without judgement
  – “What we resist, persists”
Label your thoughts (e.g., catastrophizing)
• Bring attention to your senses
Reground Yourself
Connect with the present moment.
Identify:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste
“Drop the Story”

1) **State the facts** of an event in one sentence

2) **Notice “add-on thoughts”** that take you away from the facts

3) **Return to the facts**
Welcome to Calm Hopkins

Reduce anxiety, sleep better and feel happier

Go to calm.com/jhu
Daily Mindfulness Sessions

Daily Mindfulness with Dr. Neda Gould

- 12 PM Wednesdays

https://jhjhm.zoom.us/j/747490420
Meeting ID: 747 490 420
Let’s Practice...