

Research in Mindfulness: Select References

Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies.

Keng, Shian-Ling, Smoski, Moria J., Robins, Clive J.
Clinical Psychology Review, Vol 31(6), Aug, 2011. pp. 1041-1056.

Within the past few decades, there has been a surge of interest in the investigation of mindfulness as a psychological construct and as a form of clinical intervention. This article reviews the empirical literature on the effects of mindfulness on psychological health. We begin with a discussion of the construct of mindfulness, differences between Buddhist and Western psychological conceptualizations of mindfulness, and how mindfulness has been integrated into Western medicine and psychology, before reviewing three areas of empirical research: cross-sectional, correlational research on the associations between mindfulness and various indicators of psychological health; intervention research on the effects of mindfulness-oriented interventions on psychological health; and laboratory-based, experimental research on the immediate effects of mindfulness inductions on emotional and behavioral functioning. We conclude that mindfulness brings about various positive psychological effects, including increased subjective well-being, reduced psychological symptoms and emotional reactivity, and improved behavioral regulation. The review ends with a discussion on mechanisms of change of mindfulness interventions and suggested directions for future research.

Mindfulness and self-compassion as predictors of psychological wellbeing in long-term meditators and matched nonmeditators.

Baer, Ruth A., Lykins, Emily L. B., Peters, Jessica R.,
The Journal of Positive Psychology, Vol 7(3), May, 2012. pp. 230-238.

Mindfulness training has well-documented effects on psychological health. Recent findings suggest that increases in both mindfulness and self-compassion may mediate these outcomes; however, their separate and combined effects are rarely examined in the same participants. This study investigated cross-sectional relationships between self-reported mindfulness, self-compassion, meditation experience, and psychological wellbeing in 77 experienced meditators and 75 demographically matched nonmeditators. Most mindfulness and self-compassion scores were significantly correlated with meditation experience and psychological wellbeing. Mindfulness and self-compassion accounted for significant independent variance in wellbeing. A significant relationship between meditation experience and wellbeing was completely accounted for by a combination of mindfulness and self-compassion scores. Findings suggest that both mindfulness and self-compassion skills may play important roles in the improved wellbeing associated with mindfulness training; however, longitudinal studies are needed to confirm these findings.

A Christian model of mindfulness: Using mindfulness principles to support psychological wellbeing, value-based behavior, and the Christian spiritual journey.

Symington, Scott H., Symington, Melissa F.
Journal of Psychology and Christianity, Vol 31(1), Spr, 2012. pp. 71-77.

Mindfulness was first introduced into health psychology at the Massachusetts Medical Center in the late 1970s by Jon Kabat-Zinn. At the hospital's Stress Reduction Clinic, Kabat-Zinn originally developed mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) to treat those suffering from chronic pain. Due to the early success of MBSR, other mindfulness therapies emerged and the application of

mindfulness expanded to other symptoms and disorders, including depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder, cancer side-effects, eating disorders, and sexual dysfunction. This presupposition of 'self as an illusion' within Buddhist philosophy is not maintained within the psychological practice of mindfulness. The developers of mindfulness-based treatments speak of the "wise mind" and the "I" behind sensory experience. We contend that mindfulness principles are not only compatible with Christianity but they also can empower the Christian to more fully live out deeply held values and beliefs. The client is guided into a new relationship with internal sensations, where he or she is less controlled by intense feeling states. The proposed model of mindfulness is supported by three pillars-Presence of Mind, Acceptance, and Internal Observation. These three pillars create a platform for a strengthened sense of self and increased value-based behavior. Overall, the model is designed to support and enrich the Christian spiritual journey. With presence of mind skills Christians have an increased capacity to be aware of God's presence and leading. Mindfulness skills can also help Christians become more aware of the miraculous in the ordinary. This comes from an increased ability to make novel distinctions in their environment, much like the child with awestruck sensibilities.

The happy face of mindfulness: Mindfulness meditation is associated with perceptions of happiness as rated by outside observers.

Choi, Yowon, Karremans, Johan C., Barendregt, Henk,
The Journal of Positive Psychology, Vol 7(1), Jan, 2012. pp. 30-35.

The last decade has witnessed an enormous increase in research examining the effects of mindfulness meditation. One of the basic assumptions guiding this research is that meditation ultimately makes people happier. In this article, in two studies we tested whether meditators actually look happier. To address this question, outside raters judged the happiness of meditators and non-meditators based on a 15-s video clip of their behaviour. Study 1 demonstrated that novice meditators looked happier after an intensive 9-day meditation retreat (as compared to before the retreat), while Study 2 demonstrated that experienced mindfulness meditators looked happier as compared to controls. The interpersonal implications of these findings are discussed.

Mindfulness meditation counteracts self-control depletion.

Friese, Malte, Messner, Claude, Schaffner, Yves,
Consciousness and Cognition: An International Journal, Vol 21(2), Jun, 2012. pp. 1016-1022.

Mindfulness meditation describes a set of different mental techniques to train attention and awareness. Trait mindfulness and extended mindfulness interventions can benefit self-control. The present study investigated the short-term consequences of mindfulness meditation under conditions of limited self-control resources. Specifically, we hypothesized that a brief period of mindfulness meditation would counteract the deleterious effect that the exertion of self-control has on subsequent self-control performance. Participants who had been depleted of self-control resources by an emotion suppression task showed decrements in self-control performance as compared to participants who had not suppressed emotions. However, participants who had meditated after emotion suppression performed equally well on the subsequent self-control task as participants who had not exerted self-control previously. This finding suggests that a brief period of mindfulness meditation may serve as a quick and efficient strategy to foster self-control under conditions of low resources.

Mindfulness for the next generation: Helping emerging adults manage stress and lead healthier lives.

Rogers, Holly, Maytan, Margaret,
New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press, 2012. xvi, 165 pp.

(from the cover) College students and other young adults today are experiencing high levels of stress as they pursue personal, educational, and career goals. In recent years, there has been increased awareness of the seriousness of these struggles, which may increase the risk of psychological distress and mental illness among this age group now commonly referred to as "emerging adults." Scientific research has shown that practicing mindfulness can help manage stress and enhance quality of life, but traditional methods of teaching mindfulness and meditation are not always effective for this developmental stage. Mindfulness for the Next Generation is an easy-to-use guide that details a four-session mindfulness-based program, called "Koru," aimed at helping young adults cope with anxiety, navigate the tasks they face, and achieve meaningful personal growth. Authors Holly Rogers and Margaret Maytan, Duke University psychiatrists and the developers of the Koru program, discuss the unique challenges this group faces, identify effective teaching techniques for working with them, and review the research supporting mindfulness for stress reduction in a scientifically rigorous yet reader-friendly way. The book explains the specific model created by the authors and describes each session in a "mini-manual" format.

The effects of brief mindfulness training on caregivers' well-being.

Hoppes, Steve, Bryce, Helen, Hellman, Chan, Finlay, Ellen,
Activities, Adaptation & Aging, Vol 36(2), Apr, 2012. pp. 147-166.

This study investigated the effects of brief mindfulness training on caregivers for family members with dementia. Eleven caregivers completed 4 hours of mindfulness training. Using mixed methods in a parallel model, survey data were gathered preintervention, postintervention, and 1 month postintervention; qualitative interviews were conducted 1 month postintervention. Findings include increased acceptance, presence, peace, and hope, and decreased reactivity and caregiver burden resulting from brief mindfulness training. Activity professionals working with dementia caregivers can be of service through delivery of or referrals for mindfulness training. This intervention appeared to balance caregivers' doing, being, and becoming.

Mindfulness training and teachers' professional development: An emerging area of research and practice.

Roeser, Robert W., Skinner, Ellen, Beers, Jeffrey, Jennings, Patricia A.,
Child Development Perspectives, Vol 6(2), Jun, 2012. pp. 167-173.

This article focuses on how mindfulness training (MT) programs for teachers, by cultivating mindfulness and its application to stress management and the social-emotional demands of teaching, represent emerging forms of teacher professional development (PD) aimed at improving teaching in public schools. MT is hypothesized to promote teachers' "habits of mind," and thereby their occupational health, well-being, and capacities to create and sustain both supportive relationships with students and classroom climates conducive to student engagement and learning. After defining mindfulness and its potential applications in teacher education and PD, this article discusses emerging MT programs for teachers, a logic model outlining potential MT program effects in educational settings, and directions for future research.