Mindfulness For Stress, Burnout & Vicarious Trauma Prevention

Positive Strategies to Address Challenging Student Behavior
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Mindfulness For Teacher Stress, Burnout & Vicarious Trauma Prevention

**Stress Response: For the most part to day to day stressors.**
- Psychologically stress responses range from being in control, striving to be in control and losing a sense of control.
- Correspondence with short term and long term bodily responses
- High outbursts of adrenaline or continuous cortisol (neurochemical and hormonal outputs)
- Heavy cost even when outcome is positive and in-control: Exhaustion and mal-effects on memory and immune based disorders (Sapolsky, 2004)
- Emotional and physical tolls

**Burnout: Happens over time.**
- A stress reaction developed by persons working in an area of unrelenting occupational stress, resulting in decreased work performance, fatigue, insomnia, depression, increased susceptibility to physical illness, and alcohol or drug abuse for temporary relief

**Vicarious Trauma or Compassion Fatigue: Traumatic reaction**
- Vicarious trauma is a state of tension and preoccupation with traumatic experiences described by students or clients Symptoms of arousal and avoidance mimic post traumatic stress disorder (Figley, 1982; Fact Sheet).
Teacher Stressors

- **External Factors**
  - Systems: Lack of support from administrators
  - Lack of resources / Large classroom size
  - High attention and concentration- no downtime in the classroom
  - High emotional, cognitive and social demands
  - Serving children with challenging behaviors
  - **Rephrase?** children with high unmet needs & low SES
  - Idiosyncratic local setting factors.

- **Internal Factors**
  - Multi tasking – societal norm
  - Lack of feelings of success and control – societal norms
  - Negative appraisals – life experiences and belief systems
  - Idiosyncratic individual factors – grief, trauma, SES...
From Stressors to Stress

Human Responses

Stressors ➔ Stress

Mindfulness & Compassion
Benefits of a Mindfulness & Compassions Based Training (Roeser, et al., 2013)

**Increased Resiliency**
- Resources to cope more effectively with and recover back more easily from school-based (and personal) stressors.
- Increased physical and mental resources which can assist in effectively managing, relating to, motivating, and teaching children-students.
- Sense of success through role modeling

**Feasibility**
- Teachers found a 8 week mindfulness training acceptable

**Results**
- Teachers randomized to MT showed greater mindfulness, focused attention and working memory capacity, and occupational self-compassion, as well as lower levels of occupational stress and burnout at post-program and follow-up, than did those in the control condition.
- Teachers in the intervention condition reported large declines in occupational stress and symptoms of burnout, anxiety, and depression.

- Sharma & Rush, 2014. review of MBSR research
- Raab, 2014. review of mindfulness, self-compassion and empathy research
- Kim, Schneider, Kravitz, Mermier, Burge. Review of multi modal stress reduction practices for PTSD
What is mindfulness? What is your practice?

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction-MBSR

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)
Neff, 2011.

Metta, Loving Kindness Practices
Thich Nhat Hanh
Mindful Based Stress Reduction, MBSR.
- Retrain one's relationship to events, such as emotions and thoughts.
- paying nonjudgmental attention on purpose, in the here and now present moment.
- Using the body and sense to PRACTICE
- Training the Mind NOT Relaxation
- Many trained or certified teachers.

Mindful Self-Compassion, MSC.
- Self, and other compassion emerges from mindfulness.
- Compassion seems to involve three conditions: kindness, universality, and mindfulness.
- a self-compassion response is that of kindness rather than self- or other criticism– difficult for the analyzing mind
- Compassionate response must include the motivation to relieve suffering.
- Practices similar to Loving Kindness Meditation.
- Teacher Certification in process
**Formal Practice:** Sitting, standing, walking, lying down, meditation, yoga, Pilates, Ti-Chi

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**Informal Practices**

- Walking
- 5 minute breath or breaks
- Mindful day to day activities
  Such as showering, brushing your teeth, getting dressed and so on.
- One thing at a time.
SOAK
Training the Mind vs Relaxation

- **Settling**: Stillness, relaxation, bare effort and knowledge
- **Observation**: Recognizing, noting
- **Awareness**: Acknowledging, accepting
- **Kindness**: Gentleness and compassion towards self and others
FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS AND COMPASSION

• Awareness of Body
  – Mindfulness of the body, including the breath, postures, activities, and physical characteristics. Hand experiential

• Awareness of Feelings
  – Pleasant, neutral, unpleasant

• Awareness of Mind States / Consciousness
  – Contracted Mind States: Pulling In or Pushing Away
    • Narrow, bound, contracted avoidant mind states.
  – Distracted Mind States: Running Around In Circles
    • Not concentrated, distracted, agitated mind states.
  – Spacious Mind States: At Ease
    • Expanded, concentrated mind states

• Awareness of Experiences
  – Loving-kindness
    • The wish that all sentient beings, without any exception, be happy. Loving-kindness counters ill will.
    • Compassion
    • The wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. It counters cruelty.
  – Appreciative Joy
    • rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of all things alive.
  – Equanimity
    • An attitude of regarding all sentient beings as equals, irrespective of their present relationship to oneself.
Three Minute Breathing

3 steps

Noticing

Breathing

Body Expansion

Image
Resources

MBSR 8 Week Course
- Insight LA. Groups /
- Noah Hass-Cohen. Individuals and sitting groups / noahhasscohen@gmail.com

Share & Care Therapists Who Incorporate Mindfulness
Tabitha Fronk, LPCC, ATR-BC, CCLS / (310) 403.9317
Hillary Lipstein, LMFT / (310) 853-0085 / www.TherapywithHillary.com

Reading

