

Wellness Seminar for PGY-4 Psychiatry Residents

Applied Mindfulness Course Syllabus

Nov. 14 – Dec. 19, 2018

3:15-4:15 p.m. (Nov. 14-28)

4:15-5:15 p.m. (Dec. 5-19)

VCF: Denise G. Dempsey, M.Ed.

Course Description:

This is a practical, experiential, and participatory class designed to explore the depth and breadth of mindfulness in the life of a medical professional.

Course materials will include excerpts from books, research articles, videotapes, and guided meditation practice.

Home practice will entail daily brief meditations (1-5 minutes).

Formative assessment will occur through ongoing clarification of knowledge, discussion, and self-assessment via personal reflection.

Mindfulness refers to a quality of attention and presence, in which you are monitoring and directing your attention and focus and are being present in the moment. There are other definitions, but all definitions of mindfulness have to do with it being purposeful and nonjudgmental, and with being present. – Ron Epstein, MD.

Goals and Objectives:

- To teach the theory and practice of mindfulness that apply to both personal resilience and professional skills related to doctoring.
- To explore mindfulness through both formal meditation practice and high yield practical real-life applications.

I. Knowledge:

- a) Increased knowledge of the science of mindfulness and how mindfulness relates to clinician well-being and performance. (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Professionalism; Interpersonal and Communication Skills).
- b) Increased understanding of the interpersonal aspects of mindfulness such as forging meaningful connections, harmonious communication and conflict resolution (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement). (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Professionalism; Interpersonal and Communication Skills).

II. Skills:

- a) Develop or refine the skill of “informal” mindfulness in a variety of settings, including professional and personal applications (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement.)

- b) Learn four “formal” forms of mindfulness meditation, including mindful breathing, walking, embodiment, and self-compassion. (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement.)
- c) Learn and refine methods of mindful communication. (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Interpersonal and Communication Skills.)
- d) Acquire skills relevant to empathic connection with colleagues and patients. (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Interpersonal and Communication Skills).
- a) Develop an appreciation of nuanced applications for mindfulness that may be relevant to clinical practice. (Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Patient Care.)
- b) Understanding the application of mindfulness for burnout prevention (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement.)
- c) Develop a deeper understanding of patterns of cognition, especially related to distractions, inner narratives, and mental states. (Practice-Based Learning and Improvement.)

III. Attitudes:

- a. Develop an appreciation for the flexibility of mindfulness practice and the universality of many of its aspects. (Patient Care; Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Practice-based Learning.)
- b. Develop appreciation of the ethical aspects of mindfulness, including in the realms of personal bias and blind spots. (Patient Care; Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Practice-based Learning.)

Course Dates:

Session One Nov. 14- 3:15-4:15

Introduction to course

The science of mindfulness. Real world applications, and interpersonal mindfulness.

Instruction: Experiential Mindfulness Practice.

- Review research article: [Outcomes of MBSR or MBSR-based interventions in health care providers: A systematic review with a focus on empathy and emotional competencies](#)
- Listen before next session: Podcast [Episode Healthcare Communication: Effective Techniques for Clinicians "Mindfulness and Reflection for Clinicians"](#)
- **Homework:** Meditate daily (1 min. or 5 min.) with recording provided. Text your course buddy when you complete the daily meditation practice; describe what you did. Alternately, write how you were mindful in daily life. Just one sentence is encouraged.

Applying focused attention is a moral choice, not just a skill. We pay attention to what we consider important, and by paying attention to something, we make it important. - Ron Epstein, MD

Nov. 21: Session Two - 3:15-4:15

Stress Reduction, Resilience and Mindfulness in Daily Life. Experiential Mindfulness Practice.

- [Brené Brown on Empathy \(2:54\)](#)
- [Opportunities for Pausing \(1:53\)](#)
- Before next session, listen: [Interview with Dr. Ron Epstein, Connections: Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity](#)
- **Homework:** Meditate daily (1 min. or 5 min.) with recording provided. Text your course buddy when you complete the daily meditation practice; describe what you did. Alternately, write how you were mindful in daily life. Just one sentence is encouraged.

NOTE: This session is the day before Thanksgiving. If you are not able to come to class, please continue with the assignments from both Session One and Session Two.

The little things, they're not so little. They're life. – Jon Kabat-Zinn

Nov. 28: Session Three- 3:15-4:15

We all have habitual patterns of communication that can come to light with mindfulness practice. Mindfulness and conflict resolution. Experiential Mindfulness Practice. Through dyads and group discussion, we will explore these possibilities experientially. Please make your very best effort to come to this particular class on time. Text the teacher if you will be late: 530-304-4341

- [Difficult Communication Self-Reflection](#)
- [Review Needs and Feelings Inventory](#)
- **Homework:** Meditate daily (1 min. or 5 min.) with recording provided. Text your course buddy when you complete the daily meditation practice; describe what you did. Alternately, write how you were mindful in daily life. Just one sentence is encouraged.

Dec. 5: Session Four- 4:15-5:15

We strive for happiness, peace and well-being, yet how do we actually recognize it when it's happening? Mindful embodiment will be explored. The challenges of mindfulness, stress, mental reactivity and distractions. Experiential Mindfulness Practice.

- [Pleasant/Unpleasant Events Worksheet](#)
- [Poem](#)
- **Homework:** Meditate daily (1 min. or 5 min.) with recording provided. Text your course buddy when you complete the daily meditation practice; describe what you did. Alternately, write how you were mindful in daily life. Just one sentence is encouraged.

Dec. 12: Session Five- 4:15-5:15

Untangling the knots of suffering through mindfulness and self-compassion. Avoiding burnout. Experiential Mindfulness Practice.

- [Article: Self-Compassion Break by Kristin Neff, Ph.D.](#)
or [Greater Good Article: Self-Compassion Break](#)
- [Worksheet: Burnout Scale](#)
- **Homework:** Meditate daily (1 min. or 5 min.) with recording provided. Text your course buddy when you complete the daily meditation practice; describe what you did. Alternately, write how you were mindful in daily life. Just one sentence is encouraged.

Dec. 19: Session Six- 4:15-5:15

The boundaries and scope of mindfulness practice. Perils on the path. The limitations of mindfulness. Experiential Mindfulness Practice.

- Read: [Mindfulness in Medicine: Healing the Healer](#), Martina Stippler, MD

When practicing mindfully, clinicians are attentive, present, curious, present and adopt a "beginner's mind" when confronting challenging situations. These qualities of mindful practitioners transcend clinical specialty and clinical experience.

– Ron Epstein, MD