

# Weaving Yoga Into Mental Health Treatment:

An Embodied Approach to Mental,  
Physical and Spiritual Wellbeing

Presented by: Whitney Owens, PsyD

---

# Workshop Objectives

- Identify mindfulness and how it is used in behavioral interventions
- Experience how yoga and mindfulness approaches can help create body and mind connection
- How embodiment of skill reinforces skill development and use
- Techniques to increase mindfulness
- Identify resources and programs designed to bring yoga and mindfulness into schools.

# What is Mindfulness?

- A way of being aware of what is happening within us and around us with a clear focus of attention on moment to moment experience that enables us to be fully present for life.

Jennings. (2015) Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom.

# What is Mindfulness?

- Paying attention on purpose in the present moment.

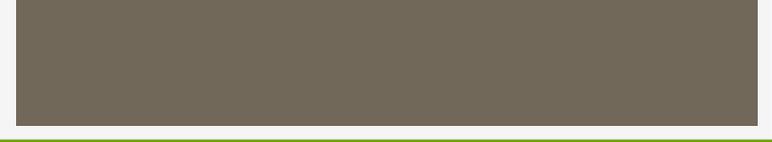
# Mindfulness in Dialectical Behavior Therapy

- Attempts to operationalize mindfulness as a skill and provides ways to practice mindfulness as a skill
- **What Skills**: Observe, Describe, Participate
- **How Skills**: Non-judgmentally, One-Mindfully, Effectively

Linehan, M. (1993)

# Mindfulness Practice

- 5 Senses
- Breath
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Nursery Rhymes



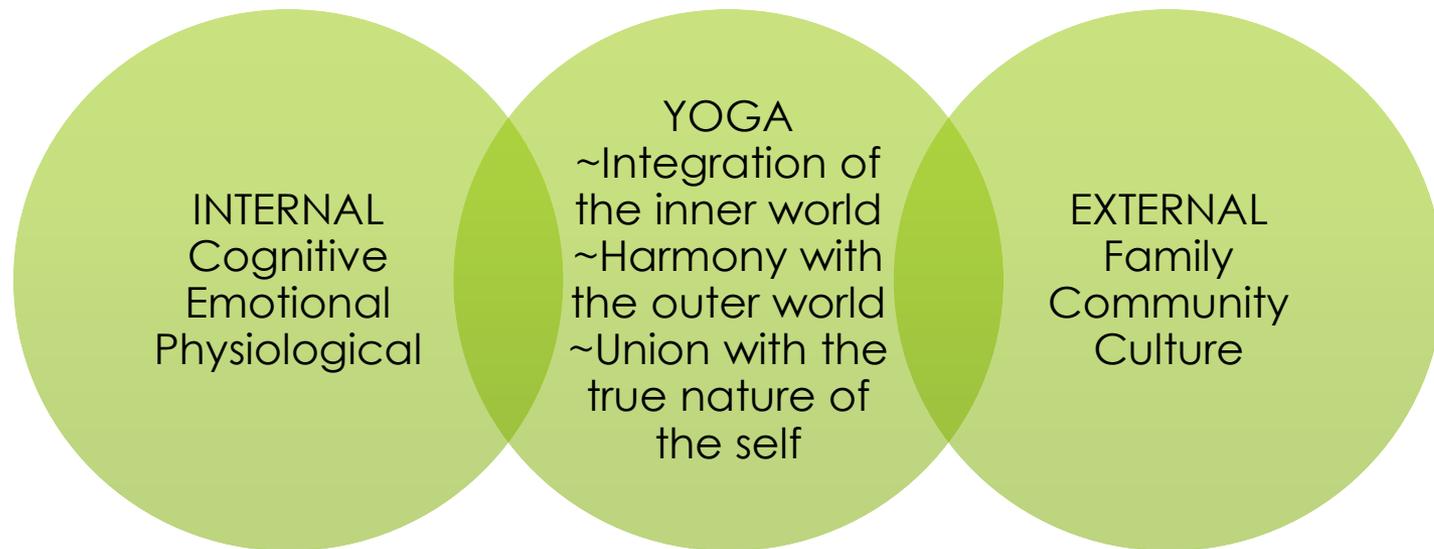
Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece is white as snow, and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go. He followed her to school one day, which was against the rules. It made the children laugh and play, to see a lamb at school.

# What is Yoga?

- A set of practices designed to bring calm, alert awareness to the mind, and health and well-being to the body.
- Can include various practices and techniques including asana, pranayama, relaxation techniques and meditation.

Cook-Cottone (2015)

# The Essential goals of Yoga



Cook-Cottone(2015)

# Pranayama

- Prana – respiration, breath, vitality, life, wind, energy and strength(Iyengar, 1996)
- Ayama – Expansion, stretching out, length, and restraint(Iyengar, 1996)
- The practice of breath work to calm down and energize the body(Simpkins & Simpkins, 2011)

# Pranayama Practice

- Square Breath
- Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Breath of Fire
- Lions Breath

# Dristi - Focus

- Learning to focus on one thing visually can help increase focus and mindfulness.
- Many people suffering with anxiety or depression have some difficulty with eye contact and practicing dristi can help increase ability to make eye contact and increase confidence.

# Tadasana/ Standing Mountain Pose

- There is evidence suggesting that holding power poses has neuroendocrine, behavioral, and social benefits
- Power poses are expansive and open and provide a reduction in cortisol and increased feelings of power.

(Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010)

# Heart Openers

- Reducing rounding in the upper shoulders through heart openers and strengthening the muscles along the spine can create better posture.
- This can result in more confidence and a positive social response, as well as a positive impact on hormones.

# Inversions and Arm Balances

- Confidence!
- When someone lands a headstand, arm balance or other inversion, the result can be exhilarating.

# Savasana – Corpse Pose

- The goal of the physical yoga practice is to exhaust the body so that the mind can meditate.
- Savasana comes at the end of the asana practice and is a time to practice mindfulness of breath, body, thoughts and emotions.

# Svadhyaya

- Sanskrit word referring to the practice of self study or self inquiry.
- “The highest form of human intelligence is to observe yourself without judgment.”  
~Krishnamurti
- Without judgment, curiosity and interest in learning is not only possible, its available.

# Embodiment

- Concept vs Reality
- Self-regulation vs Embodied Self Regulation
- Mindfulness and Yoga help practitioners cultivate a receptive state of mind within which attention is informed by a sensitive awareness of what is occurring at the moment, both internally and externally.  
(Brown & Ryan, 2003; Cook-Cottone, 2006; Schultz & Ryan, 2013)

# Increasing self mindfulness practice

- In what areas of your job as a School Psychologist would mindfulness be necessary or helpful to incorporate?
- How would increasing your own mindfulness practice impact your work as a School Psychologist?
- Tips for daily practice

# Mindfulness and Yoga Practices in the School Setting

- Various programs have been developed in school settings and have incorporated the following elements to one extent or another...
- ✓ Breath Awareness
- ✓ Working with thoughts and emotions
- ✓ Psycho-education
- ✓ Awareness of senses and practices of daily life
- ✓ Group Discussion
- ✓ Body Scan
- ✓ Home Practice
- ✓ Kindness practice
- ✓ Body Practices(i.e. yoga)
- ✓ Mindful movement
- ✓ Additional materials

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

# Mindfulness Based Programs used in Schools

- **Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education(CARE)**
- Developed for teachers to improve teachers performance and reduce stress.
- Incorporates mindfulness, emotional skills, and listening and compassion exercises
- [www.care4teachers.com](http://www.care4teachers.com)

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

## ○ **Inner Kids Program**

- Developed by Susan Kaiser Greenland for students Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Teaches students the ABC's – Attention, Balance and Compassion.
- Helps kids to pay attention to inner and outer experiences with compassion through playing games, activities, instruction and sharing.
- Length of the program varies between 8 weeks for younger children to 10-12 weeks for older children.
- [www.susankaisergreenland.com/inner-kids.html](http://www.susankaisergreenland.com/inner-kids.html)

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

- **Learning to BREATHE (L2B)**
- Mindfulness-based curriculum created for classroom or group settings based on MBSR
- Intended to strengthen attention and emotion regulation, cultivate wholesome emotions and increase stress management skills.
- Can be done in 6-18 sessions
- *Learning to BREATHE: A Mindfulness Curriculum for Adolescents to Cultivate Emotion Regulation, Attention, and Performance (Broderick, 2013)*

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

## ○ **Mindfulness in Schools Program(MiSP)**

- Nine scripted lessons for secondary schools, designed to teach mindfulness or “learning to direct attention to immediate experience, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance”
- .b (dot be) Program teaches both teachers and students ages 11-18 through a 10 week course.
- Paws b is for children 7-11 and includes 6, 1 hour lessons or 12, 30 minute lessons
- Can be taught by school teachers or an external teacher.
- [www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

)

## ○ **Mindful Schools**

- An organization that offers a series of courses and year long certification designed for those who are interested in integrating mindfulness with youth education.
- Offers a K-5 curriculum, a middle and high school curriculum. Its designed to help people who want to be a leader in school systems and play an active role as a mindful leader.
- [www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org)

Cook-Cottone, C. (2017)

# Additional Resources

- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Psychological Well Being*, 84, 822– 848.
- Carney, D. R., Cuddy, A. J., & Yap, A. J. (2010). Power posing: Brief nonverbal displays affect neuroendocrine levels and risk tolerance. *Psychological Science*, 21, 1363– 1368. Cook-Cottone, Catherine P., PhD. *Mindfulness and Yoga in Schools: A Guide for Teachers and Practitioners* (p. 270). Springer Publishing Company. Kindle Edition.
- Cook-Cottone, C. P. (2006). The attune representational model for the primary prevention of eating disorders: An overview for school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43, 223– 230. Cook-Cottone, Catherine P., PhD. *Mindfulness and Yoga in Schools: A Guide for Teachers and Practitioners* (p. 63). Springer Publishing Company. Kindle Edition.

- Cook-Cottone, Catherine P. (2017) *Mindfulness and yoga in schools: A guide for teachers and practitioners*. Springer Publishing Company, LLC.
- Cook-Cottone, Catherine P. (2015) *Mindfulness and yoga for self-regulation: A primer for mental health professionals*. Springer Publishing Company, LLC.
- Iyengar, B. K. S. (1996). *Light on yoga*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Linehan, M. M. (1993). *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Schultz, P. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2005). The “why,” “what,” and “how” of healthy self-regulation: Mindfulness and well-being from a Self-Determination Theory perspective, In B. D. Ostafin, M. D. Robinson, & B. P. Meier (Eds.), *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation* (pp. 81–94). New York, NY.
- Simpkins, A. M., & Simpkins, C. A. (2011). *Meditation and yoga in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Wiley.

- This powerpoint presentation cannot be borrowed, copied, or used in conjunction with any other works without express consent of Whitney Owens, PsyD
- Please contact Dr. Whitney Owens at [drowens@owensps.com](mailto:drowens@owensps.com) for permission to borrow or use this ppt presentation.

Owens Psychological Services, Inc.  
2510 West Horizon Ridge Parkway, Suite 200  
Henderson, NV 89052  
(P) - (702) 508-9181  
(F) – (702) 331-5400