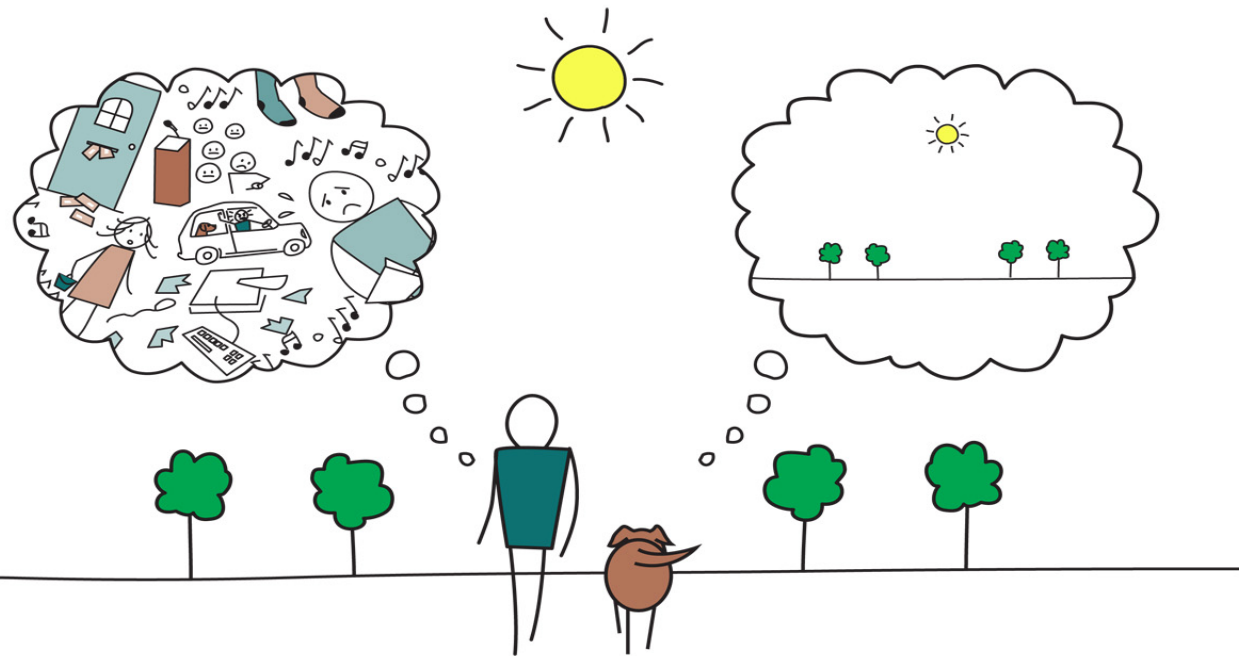




Mindfulness

Presented by Nicole Lloyd
VHS School Counselor



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Introductions

- What is your experience with meditation/mindfulness?
- What interests you about meditation/mindfulness?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kk7IBwuhXWM>

Mindfulness Defined

“the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment”

~Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Most of us spend each day having silent conversations with ourselves. Mindfulness is thus a kind of **listening**.*

It is a kind of mental exercise for the mind much like physical exercise for the body.

What is Mindfulness/Meditation?

- ❖ Formal and informal practice
 - ❖ Silent retreats
 - ❖ Practicing at home
- ❖ Awareness of present moment
 - ❖ Thoughts, Emotions, 5 senses
- ❖ 2 parts
 - ❖ Awareness + Acceptance
- ❖ Allows for CHOICE, not automatic reaction
- ❖ Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
 - ❖ Developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, MBSR uses a combination of mindfulness meditation, body awareness, and yoga to help people become more mindful



Why?

How does it
change the
brain (and us?)

Benefits / Neuroscience findings

- ❖ Research has found that meditators appear to lose less gray matter and that meditating **reduced** the **cognitive decline** associated with normal aging.
- ❖ More gyrification, or “folding,” of the cortex, which is associated with **faster mental processing**
- ❖ Increased thickness in the prefrontal cortex and right anterior insula, areas of the brain associated with attention and **awareness of sensations and emotions** in oneself and others.
- ❖ Meditators who had practiced five years or more had “significantly larger volumes” of gray matter in the hippocampus, an area crucial to **memory** and **learning**.
- ❖ *Much, much more... there are now hundreds of studies on meditation and mindfulness which show that it can help with **addiction, depression and anxiety**.*



How/Why Does it Help? *By Reconnecting the Body*

- ❖ **Mindfulness of the Body:** Any experience we have is rooted in the body and contacting that experience will help us feel more grounded, aware, and alive (i.e., a state of mind expresses itself as a felt sense).
- ❖ It is also a way to “know” ourselves. Who are we? We are partly whatever is going on in our bodies.
- ❖ Signs of dissociation from the body (mind-body split):
- ❖ **Obsessive thinking**
- ❖ **Judgmental thinking or behaving**
- ❖ **Distracting/numbing**
- ❖ **Speeding/Rushing**

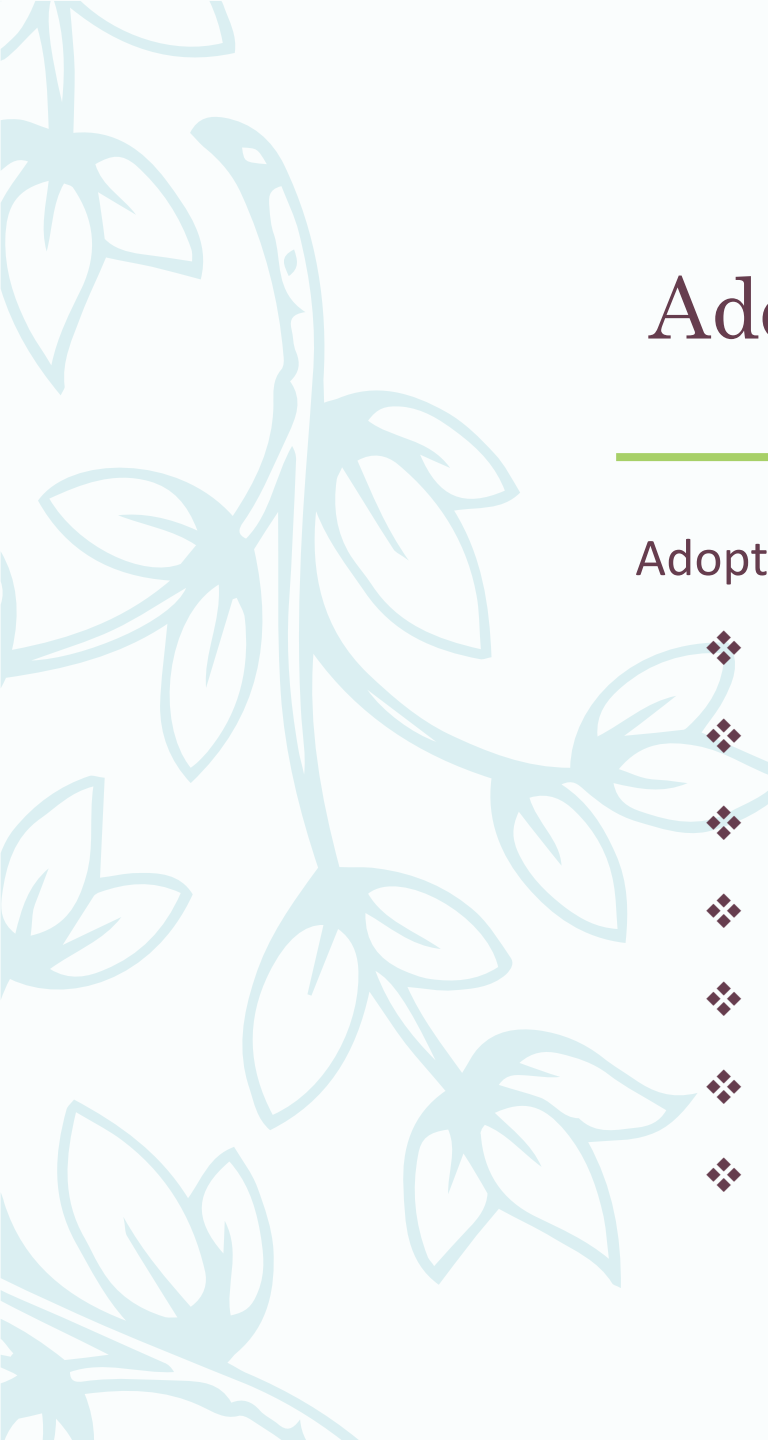
Consequences Disconnection From the Body

- ❖ **Fatigue.** It takes a lot of energy to keep shutting off a part of ourselves.
- ❖ **Chronic anxiety.**
- ❖ **Feeling cut off:** from love, power, & bodily signals.
- ❖ Confined in a **small identity**, a limited sense of self.
- ❖ **Symptoms:** loss of vitality, chronic pain, and stress related conditions (e.g. fibromyalgia, bodily pains).

How to reconnect to the body?

Mindfulness!

- ❖ **Notice** when time-traveling, predicting, mindreading. Come back.
- ❖ **Pause:** Become aware of what is happening in our body instead of getting lost in our reactive thoughts, emotions, and actions. You can then instead relate differently to your experience, and act rather than re-act.
- ❖ **Body Scan** helps to reestablish contact with the body, to reconnect the conscious mind to the feeling states of the body, to feel more relaxed and more at home in our bodies.



How?

Adopt Helpful Attitudes (in our mindfulness practice)

Adopt certain attitudes

- ❖ Non-judging (of ourselves and others)
- ❖ Patience
- ❖ Beginner's Mind
- ❖ Trust
- ❖ Non-striving
- ❖ Acceptance
- ❖ Letting go

Different Methods of Mindfulness

- ❖ Focused attention:
 - ❖ Using your non-dominant hand: notice what it feels like, stay present.
- ❖ Focused attention
 - ❖ Senses
- ❖ Focusing on breath
 - ❖ Count 10 in and out breaths
 - *Notice when your mind goes somewhere else and bring it back to the breath.*
- ❖ Open monitoring
 - ❖ Senses
 - ❖ Body scan



Thank you 😊

Join us next month for a
discussion on Resiliency.