

AUT

Mindfulness at Work



Professor Richard Siegert
Psychology

Associate Professor Chris Krägeloh
Psychology

Dr Wendy Wrapson
National Institute for Public Health and
Mental Health Research

Auckland University of Technology
Akoranga campus (90 Akoranga Drive,
Northcote, Auckland 0627)



Road Map

- What is Mindfulness?

Exercise 1

- Applications of Mindfulness
- How do we measure Mindfulness?

Exercise 2

- Research on Mindfulness at AUT
- Case study: Care workers

Exercise 3

- Resources
- Questions

What is Mindfulness?



- Essentially a secular form of centuries old Buddhist technique of meditation
- Involves staying focused on one thing, such as the breath, and gently returning your focus to the sensations of breathing, whenever you become aware that your mind has strayed
- Popularised in Western health professions by American physician Jon Kabat-Zinn in *Full Catastrophe Living* and other self-help books
- Rapidly growing evidence base including systematic reviews and meta-analyses for its helpfulness in wide range of health conditions



Facets of Mindfulness

- Christopher Germer
 - Being in the present moment
 - Nonconceptual – awareness without absorption in our thought processes – thinking about our experience is one step removed
 - Nonjudgemental – seeing things as they are without evaluating them
 - Intentional – bringing our awareness back to the present moment over and over again
 - Nonverbal



What is NOT mindfulness?

- Driving to Taupo you cannot remember anything about the last 20 kms of road
- Eating your lunch while working on your computer and not really tasting or savouring the food fully
- At an important meeting you are going over and over in your mind an argument that you had with your son at breakfast that morning
- You cannot recall the name of the person you were introduced to a few minutes back
- At a concert of beautiful choral music you are busy planning for tomorrow's work team meeting

What is NOT mindfulness?

- You are on 'auto-pilot'



Exercise 1: MAAS

- Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS)
- Take a few minutes to complete the MAAS

Day Experiences

Please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each of the following experiences. Please answer according to what *really reflects* your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from the other items.

1 Almost Always	2 Very Frequently	3 Somewhat Frequently	4 Somewhat Infrequently	5 Very Infrequently	6 Almost Never
I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.					
I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.					
I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.					
I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.					
I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension until they really grab my attention.					
I forget a person's name as soon as I see the first time.					



- How well does it reflect your own moment-to-moment mindfulness?



Applications of Mindfulness

- Christopher Germer notes three separate uses of the term:
 - A theoretical construct e.g. lecturing on mindfulness
 - A practice of cultivating mindfulness e.g. meditation
 - A psychological process – being mindful



Being mindful

- Mindfulness includes:
 - Formal practice of meditation etc.
 - Mindful awareness in everyday life e.g. brushing teeth, showering, ironing, washing dishes
- Mindfulness daily practice can entail:
 - Mindfulness of breath
 - Sounds – hearing meditation
 - Movement e.g. walking meditation
 - Thoughts and feelings



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

- 8-10 week MBSR programme
- 2.5hr sessions (+1 full day)
- Consists of various techniques to improve concentration and awareness
 - Body scan (directing attention around body)
 - Mindful walking
 - Sitting meditation (sustaining attention on 1 thing)
 - Hatha yoga

How do we measure Mindfulness?

- Most studies use MBSR as intervention and measure outcomes in reduced anxiety, reduced depression, increased QoL, etc....
- Mindfulness dimensions
 - Physiological – EEG, HR
 - Cognitive – cognitions
 - Behavioural – daily meditation practice



Exercise 2: Mindful breathing





Mindfulness and Resilience

- Resilience is defined in many different ways but generally means being able to cope and adapt in the face of adversity and to bounce back from stressful situations or events
- A number of studies have investigated the impact of mindfulness on 'resilience' but frequently the outcome being measured is stress or burnout, or 'resilience' is used as a general term to cover different aspects of psychological wellbeing



Mindfulness at the Workplace

- Work-related stress is one of the major causes of work-related illnesses in the West.
- The known beneficial effects of mindfulness on wellbeing and stress reduction make it a suitable intervention at work.
- Short mindfulness courses at workplace settings have resulted in enhanced emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- At the individual level (employee and manager), mindfulness has been linked to increased job satisfaction, engagement, and performance, and reduced emotional exhaustion and stress.
- At the leadership level, mindfulness is associated with enhanced moral awareness and authentic leadership styles.

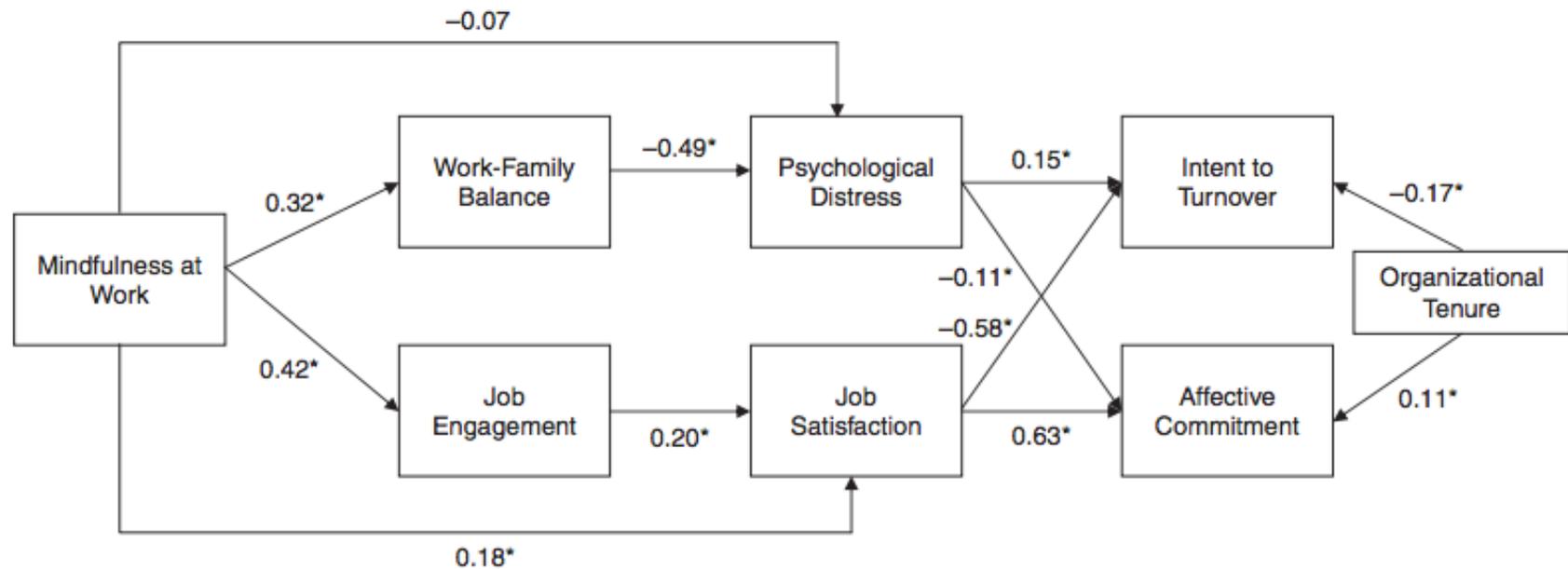
see Vich (2015) and Hyland et al. (2015)
for reviews



Mindfulness at the Workplace

- The relationship between mindfulness and work engagement or mindfulness and wellbeing is mediated by positive affect, hope and optimism (Malinowski & Lim, 2015)
- Mindfulness at work can be used to bring about enhanced awareness of personal goals and how to achieve them.
- Such workplace programmes are thus in line with so-called second-generation mindfulness-based interventions that focus on non-clinical populations.
- The same challenges apply as in clinical programmes, namely the issue of programme validation and accreditation.

Mindfulness at the Workplace



Zivnuska et al. (2016)



Research on Mindfulness at AUT

- Measuring mindfulness – Oleg Medvedev, Joanna Feng
- Mindfulness for people with acquired brain injury
- Mindfulness for university students at AUT
- Mindfulness for care staff employed in a residential aged care facility



Case study: Mindfulness training of care staff in a residential aged care facility

- Caregiving can be stressful and emotionally challenging work
- Some of the benefits of mindfulness training reported for health professionals in other studies have been:
 - A reduction in emotional exhaustion (burnout)
 - Improvement in mood state
 - Reduced reactivity and defensiveness in work and family relationships
 - Higher levels of job-related personal accomplishment



What the care worker study entails

- 6 x 1 hour weekly group sessions, conducted by an experienced Mindfulness facilitator (the final training session for the first group of care staff is taking place this week)
- Pre- and post-training assessments, comprising:
 - **Questionnaires** measuring job satisfaction, burnout, self-compassion and compassion for others, mood, rumination, and mindfulness skills
 - **Blood test** measuring stress, inflammation
 - **EEG recording** to measure any changes in brain activity
- Post-training interview with participants to explore the impact Mindfulness training has had on participants' caregiving role



Emotiv TestBench v1.5.1.2

Application Tools Marker Help

Contact Quality

EBS FFT Gain Data Packets

Channel Spacing: 200 10 uV

Max Amplitude: 0 uV

Min Amplitude: 0 uV

Auto Scale

High-Pass Filter

All Channels

Emotiv EPOC Brain Activity Map

Emotiv EPOC 3D Brain Activity Map

epoc 3D brain activity map

Save Record Load Record

BACK HEADSET SETTINGS MARKER EXIT

3DEPOC VIEW

custom band

GAIN BUFFER

signal

NAME	FREQ.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
Theta	1-7	disturbance in focal cycles	T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8
Alpha	8-12	dominant rhythm* or slow	T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8
Beta	12-30	led with active, busy or ans	T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8
Gamma	30-60	Gamma	T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8

View / Edit Add Delete

60Hz

Exercise 3: Mindful eating



Resources (also on handout)

- Online monthly newsletter MFNS research

<https://goamra.org/publications/mindfulness-research-monthly/>

- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center

<http://marc.ucla.edu/>

- Center for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor Univ

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/>

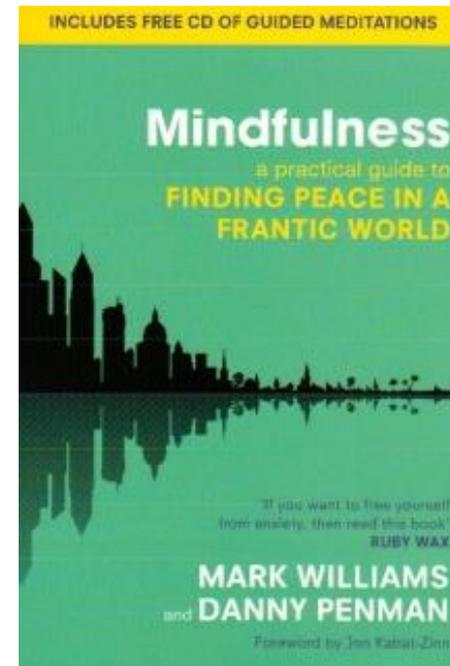
- Oxford Mindfulness Centre

<http://oxfordmindfulness.org/>

- NZ Mental Health Foundation

<http://mindfulaotearoa.nz/>

<http://franticworld.com/>





Thoughts to take away

- A large number of Mindfulness studies have shown positive effects on wellbeing in both clinical and non-clinical populations
- Mindfulness is gaining in popularity as a practice in daily life
- However, Mindfulness is only one tool for building resilience and for influencing wellbeing (there are others)
- It is not a panacea for all contexts and situations:
 - It may not suit everyone
 - Mindfulness requires dedicated practice
 - It is not a quick fix so cannot be turned to only in a crisis

Questions and Comments?





Contact details

- Richard Siegert
 - richard.siegert@aut.ac.nz
- Chris Krägeloh
 - chris.krageloh@aut.ac.nz
- Wendy Wrapson
 - wendy.wrapson@aut.ac.nz