SOZF111

Session 1

Holistic Practice and
Mindfulness

Department of Social Science
Holistic Practice and Mindfulness

Session Aims

- To give students the opportunity to explore the use of reflection, knowledge, wisdom, intuition and mindfulness in therapeutic practice.
- Identify, develop and maintain self care strategies
Holistic Practice and Mindfulness

On successful completion of this session, students should be able to:

- Understand the importance of building self-reflection and mindfulness into practice
- Define what is understood by mindfulness, knowledge, wisdom and intuition and their use in practice
- Identify the reasons for ongoing mindfulness and self care in practice
Activity 1.1 Classroom Etiquette
Mindfulness involves learning to direct our attention to our experience as it unfolds, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance. Rather than worrying about what has happened or might happen, it trains us to respond skilfully to what is happening right now, be that good or bad.”

retrieved 17.01.17https://mindfulnessinschools.org/mindfulness/
Mindfulness

- Keeping one’s consciousness alive to the present reality (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
- Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally (Kabat-Zinn, 1994)
- A state of psychological freedom that occurs when attention remains quiet and limber without attachment to any particular point of view (Martin, 1997)
- Bringing one’s complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis (Marlett & Kristeller, 1999)
What is Mindfulness?

The Hand Model of the Brain
What Is Mindfulness About?

• Being present to our experience whatever that may be
• Bringing us closer to difficulties without becoming caught up in our reactions to these difficulties
• A slow gentle coming to know who we are
• Settling in to our current experience in a relaxed, alert, open hearted compassionate way
What Mindfulness is Not

• Not a relaxation exercise
• Not a way to avoid difficulty, spacing out or escaping
• Mindfulness is not about changing difficult thoughts or getting rid of difficult feelings
• Not religious
Mindfulness Benefits
What the Research Tells Us

• Helps manage depression and/or anxiety
• Helps us to be less angry or moody
• Makes us happier and more emotionally stable
• Reduces heart rate and improves circulation and breathing
• Can improve our immunity and help us to cope with pain.
Mindfulness Benefits
What the Research Tells Us

• Helps clear our heads, aids memory and concentration and happiness
• Helps us be more aware of ourselves, our body and the environment
• Helps to slow down our thoughts and our nervous systems
• Helps us sleep, relax and to cope with stress
Mindfulness

- A tool for improving both practitioner and patient health
- It promotes awareness in place of agitation
- Reflection in place of reflexivity
- Humility and compassion in place of hubris
Activity 1:2 Mindfulness Exercise

http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness_thanks/
Activity 1.3 Wisdom Based Practice

In small groups discuss what makes a wisdom based practitioner.

Make a note of the qualities and attributes which are embodied in a wisdom based practitioner and then share with the whole class.
Wisdom - Definition

- Understanding of what is true, right and lasting
- Common sense, good judgment
- Constantly growing - it is not absolute, rather it is accumulated knowledge, learning or enlightenment
- An enlightened perspective and/or support for long term common good
Wisdom - Definition

- The ability to apply or transform knowledge, experience or understanding with common sense and insight
- Often equated with age, however this is not necessarily so
- Wisdom comes from experience, participation, knowledge, being involved with people and the world around you
- Wisdom requires change, moving out of our comfort zone
Wisdom – Definition

- Positive psychology researchers define wisdom as “the coordination of knowledge and experience and its deliberate use to improve well being”
- According to this definition, the following criteria can be used to measure wisdom:
  - A wise person can discern the core of problems
  - A wise person has self-knowledge
  - A wise person seems sincere and direct with others
  - Others ask wise people for advice
  - A wise person’s actions are consistent with his/her ethical beliefs
Acts of Wisdom

Insights and acts that are widely considered wise tend to:

- Arise from a broad (not narrow-minded) perspective
- Serve life in some broad or deep way (not just narrow self-interest)
- Be grounded in but not limited by the past (experience, history, etc.) and the future (likely consequences)
- Be informed by multiple types of intelligence, e.g. reason, intuition, spirit
Wisdom - Quotation

True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.

*Socrates*
“We know more than we can tell.”

Michael Polanyi *The Tacit Dimension*
From Tacit to **Explicit** Knowledge

- My total knowledge
- What I can show or tell
- What I can write record or document
- My knowledge transferred to readers or watchers, listeners

I know more than I can tell. I can tell more than I can write
From Explicit to Tacit Knowledge

Knowledge from reflection and dialogue with peers and mentors

Knowledge I gain from practice

What I can connect to what I already know

What I read from a manual or observe from a practitioner

I know more if I practice more. I know even more if I reflect with other practitioners on what we practice.
Activity 1:3 Exploring Intuition

- Discuss a time when you benefited from a feeling of intuition.
- Discuss a time when you failed to trust your intuition and it had a consequence or near-consequence for you.
- Discuss how you might communicate to others your “feeling” that something isn’t going right when you are lacking proof and evidence.
Intuition

- Intuition is something we all have.
- It is a knowingness, premonition, hunch, gut feeling, inspiration
- Intuition is not done consciously, it comes to us - as a sound, word, picture, inner prompting or insight
- It is the ability to acquire knowledge without inference or the use of reason
- It is based on experience, personal, familial, cultural.
Intuition

“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

Albert Einstein
Developing Intuition

- The brain is constantly gathering and processing many facts, much of which is happening outside of awareness.

- These facts, formed into patterns, are then sent into high brain processing areas and compared to past experiences. When you get that “gut feeling” you are benefiting from intuition – a pattern match.

- Intuition can come by setting up a conducive mental state - meditation, mindfulness, breathing, focusing techniques are good ways of developing intuition.

- Intuition can also arise from information and logic.
Self Reflection/Self Awareness

- The quality of **self-awareness** requires **self-reflection**.
- Self reflection allows us to gain a deeper understanding of how we think, feel, and act so that we can improve our learning, our practices and develop meaningful relationships.
- Research shows that development of self reflection is linked to metacognitive processes of the brain in similar ways to mindfulness practice.
- As metacognitive abilities increase research suggests we also achieve at higher levels.
Developing Self Reflection

- **Ask** others about the way they do things and why
- **Watch** and notice what is going on around you
- **Feel**; pay attention to your emotions, what prompts them, and how you deal with negative ones
- **Talk**; share your views and experiences with others
- **Read** around the topics you are learning about or want to learn about and develop
- **Think**; learn to value time spent thinking about your work
- **Write**; journaling
Activity 1.4 Self Care
Complete Handouts Self Care Assessment and Self Care Plan
Self Care

Remember to pay attention to your own physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual messages

Some strategies

• Set realistic goals
• Be assertive
• Change negative thoughts – “reframe”
• Resolve conflicts in a positive manner
• Be forgiving
• Develop good relationships and communication skills
Care for Self

When dealing with clients who present with stressful issues you need to have:

- Clear awareness and boundaries
- Professionalism and empathy
- Care for yourself such as
  - Monitoring your own self care strategies
  - Self-awareness
  - Debriefing with a colleague
  - Learn from your successes and mistakes
  - Seek assistance when needed
The Tree of Contemplative Practices
www.contemplativemind.org
Revision Questions

- What is mindfulness?
- How might mindfulness benefit you and your patients?
- How do we develop wisdom in practice?
- How does intuition differ from intellect?
- How are self reflection, self awareness and wisdom related?
- What is self care and why is it essential for the practitioner?
References

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References


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