Stress Reduction: Mindfulness for Personal and Professional Wellbeing

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Steven Rosenzweig, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine.

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This is a for-credit, Professionalism Elective designed specifically for medical students to learn proven methods for lowering stress and reducing stress-related anxiety, depressed mood, physical tension, and for increasing well-being and concentration. (See below for fuller course description.) The course is offered in the fall and again in the winter. See the Professionalism Course calendar for dates and times this year. Pre-registration is required.

Mindfulness meditation for stress reduction is taught at numerous of medical schools. This course teaches various forms of mindfulness meditation, a very accessible practice that calms the mind and relaxes the body. It is based on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, an 8-week program that is offered at hundreds of medical centers nationally and around the world.

Some comments from past DUCoM participants:

"I have learned how to reduce stress in my everyday life. I have gained a sense of relaxation that I found difficult to achieve previously."

"It really helps me sleep."

"I found this class very relaxing and a breath of fresh air compared to all the other craziness going on in medical school. It was an hour I actually anticipated just to get away from everything else and focus on me...Mindfulness has been very helpful at times when I feel stressed and overwhelmed with school."

"I use [mindfulness] to relax when I feel as if I am stressed and unable to focus. I use it to keep myself balanced in the challenges of medical school."

"Gained the knowledge of how to relax my thoughts, ease tension, fall asleep, and decrease stress..."

“I learned how to separate myself from the constant judgment that is present in my life... I learned how to “let go” better than any other time I had tried to let go. I also learned how to accept that, at times it is ok to actually ENJOY myself, or enjoy things in my life.”

All materials and audio files are available on the Blackboard course site. If you have difficulty accessing Blackboard course in the first week, you can access the guided Body Scan audio file through Webcampus, Office of Community Experience --

http://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/communityexperience/bodyscan.html

Class 1.
I. Topics:
- Introduction to mindfulness and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. Working with the breath. Body Scan meditation.

II. Home practice:
- Body Scan using guided meditation audio file on Blackboard course site. Also found at: http://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/CommunityExperience/mindbody.html
- Yellow sticker exercise
• Relaxing sighs or mindful breaths
• Daily practice log

III. Optional readings: *Full Catastrophe Living*¹, chapters 3,5

IV. Making up missed class (for class credit): The main thing is to get practice experience with the Body Scan meditation before Class 2. A brief instruction sheet is available as well as an mp3 file of a guided meditation for home practice. Reading the chapter on body scan will be helpful. You don’t have to complete the full assignment before Class 2 but please practice Body Scan before Class 2:
  - Daily home practice with guided Body Scan meditation audio file.
  - Keep a daily practice log.
  - Read *Full Catastrophe Living*, chapters 3,5. Write 2 paragraphs briefly summarizing content and relating it to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig

Class 2.

I. Topics:
• Awareness of Breath (AOB) meditation. Finding a safe harbor of attention. Attitudinal foundations of mindfulness. Three-minute breathing space.

II. Home Practice:
• Alternate between AOB and Body Scan meditations. Use AOB and Body Scan using guided meditation audio files on Blackboard course site. Also found at: [http://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/CommunityExperience/mindbody.html](http://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/CommunityExperience/mindbody.html)
• Informal practice: mindful breaths; yellow stickers
• Daily practice log

III. Optional readings: *Full Catastrophe Living* chapters 2,4

IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Work with AOB meditation. Contact Dr. Rosenzweig with any questions.
• Read *Full Catastrophe Living*, chapters 2,4. Write 2 paragraphs briefly summarizing content and relating it to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig
• Do home practice assignment

Class 3.

I. Topics:

II. Home practice
• Choose among: Body Scan / AOB / Mindful Yoga or other mindful movement
• Unpleasant events log
• Daily Practice Log

III. Optional readings: *Full Catastrophe Living* chapters 6,7

IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Borrow CD from Dr. Rosenzweig with guided Mindful Yoga. Postures are outlined in *Full Catastrophe Living*. Read *Full Catastrophe Living*, chapters 19, 20. Write 2 paragraphs briefly summarizing content and relating it to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig
• Do home practice assignment

Class 4.

I. Topics:

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¹ Jon Kabat-Zinn. *Full Catastrophe Living*. Available at Library reserve desk.

II. Home practice:
• Choose among Body Scan / Awareness of Breath / Mindful yoga / Formal practice of mindful activity
• Pleasant Events Log
• Daily Practice Log

III. Optional reading: Read *Full Catastrophe Living*, cha 9, 35

IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Speak with Dr. Rosenzweig about instruction in Mindful Activity formal practice.
• Read *Full Catastrophe Living*, cha 9,35. Write 2 paragraphs briefly summarizing content and relating it to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig
• Do home practice assignment

Class 5.
I. Topics: Cultivating kindness, compassion and self-compassion
II. Home practice:
• Formal practice – choose any of these:
  o Jon Kabat-Zinn Series 3 Meditations (CD #4) Lovingkindness Meditation – link through course website
    ▪ Soften, soothe, allow
    ▪ Lovingkindness for yourself
    ▪ Compassionate walking
    ▪ Breathing compassion in and out
    ▪ Mindful self-compassion meditation
  o Mindfulness practice of your choice and bring in kindness or compassion practice
• Daily practice log
III. Optional reading: Chapter on lovingkindness meditation posted on course website.
IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Read chapter on lovingkindness meditation posted on course website. Work with Jon Kabat-Zinn Series 3 Meditations (CD #4) Lovingkindness Meditation – link through course website. Read chapter on lovingkindness meditation posted on course website. Write 2 paragraphs briefly summarizing content and relating it to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig
• Do home practice assignment

Class 6.
I. Topics: Cultivating wholesome states: Kindness, compassion, joy, calm. Working with pain and suffering.
II. Home practice:
• Formal practice of choice but incorporating self-compassion / compassion practice
• Daily practice log
III. Optional reading: Full Catastrophe living chapters 22, 23 on physical pain; 24, 25 on emotional pain.
IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Full Catastrophe living chapters 22, 23 on physical pain; 24, 25 on emotional pain.
• Write 2 paragraphs briefly relating chapter content to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig

Class 7.
I. Topics: Expanding Awareness meditation. Walking meditation.
II. Home practice:
• Expanding awareness meditation (mp3 on website) alternating with any other formal practice of choice
• Daily practice log
III. Optional reading: Full Catastrophe Living, Chapter 7, 35
IV. Making up missed class (for class credit):
• Expanding awareness meditation (mp3 on website)
• Full Catastrophe living chapters 7, 35.
• Write 2 paragraphs briefly relating chapter content to your own experience of the mindfulness practice; email to Dr. Rosenzweig

Class 8.
I. Topics: Mindfulness practice in relation to illness, suffering, healing and doctoring. Mindfulness of thoughts, imagery and choiceless awareness practices
II. Home practice: Your life.
III. Optional reading: A bibliography will be distributed.
IV. Making up missed class (for class credit): Speak with Dr. Rosenzweig

“the mind is the surface of the heart, and
the heart is the depth of the mind.”

Hazrat Inayat Kahan