INTP 790: Advanced Topics in Interpersonal Practice  
Section 004: Mindfulness as a Tool to Enhance Social Work Practice  
February 16, 24th and March 9, 16, 23rd 2010  
5:30 – 8:30pm  

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Office Hours: by appt.  

Course Description  
The goal of this Mindfulness workshop is to lay the foundation for future learning about complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) generally and mindfulness in particular. Instruction will focus on examining and experiencing therapeutic techniques (e.g., breathing for stress reduction, mindfulness meditation, yoga) that are useful when addressing problem solving, creative brainstorming, lifestyle, health-risk factors and pain management. Students will also learn perspectives on referral to and application of mind-body therapies from a social work and community health perspective. Both clinical and macro-relevant examples will be highlighted.  

Course Content  
According to our primary text mindfulness is “moment-to-moment awareness,” being fully engaged in our lives with emotional and mental balance. In this course, students will be exposed to the theory and research specific to the field and practice of mind-body techniques for use in self-care, pain management and clinical application. Instruction will focus on examining and experiencing therapeutic techniques (e.g., biofeedback, guided imagery, meditation, yoga) that are useful in stress and pain management (personal, professional and clinical) and addressing lifestyle, holistic health factors and behavioral health issues. Discussion will include various approaches to the training and credentialing of mind-body medicine practitioners and an overview of scientific evidence linked to specific treatments. Students will also learn perspectives on referral of mind-body therapies from the perspectives of many disciplines, primarily social work. Yet, even though the practice will be primarily individual, the principles will also be applied to community and macro-contexts. This builds upon the perspective that personal transformation radiates outward and affects peace on every level from the intra-personal to the international world of peace building and conflict resolution.
Course Objectives: Students will be able to:
1. Describe the theory and research behind the practice of mind body skills.
2. Become particularly knowledgeable in the theory and practice of mindfulness.
3. Describe the application of mindfulness for both personal and professional use.
4. Identify mind-body techniques that may be helpful for specific health and wellness conditions.
5. Identify mind-body techniques that may be helpful in a community context.

Course Design

In-class activities and discussion, readings, guest speakers and course assignments will be coordinated to enhance course objectives. The course will mix lecture and experiential group formats. Students will be expected to practice assigned mind-body techniques between sessions and will discuss their learning experiences both in reflective essays and in small groups.

Grading and Assignments
The course is graded as satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Grading will be based on attendance, participation and class assignments. In addition, students are expected to develop their own daily ‘practice’ devoting 15 minutes/day for at least 5 of 7 days each week between classes in practicing the skills presented in class. Students will also be expected to keep – and submit at the end of the minicourse (March 23, 2010) – a simple log of home practice sessions. (I will provide a basic template of a practice log for your use at the beginning of the course.) Based upon their experience, students will complete and submit a simple 2-3 page plan (narrative or in visual graphic form (e.g. tables, charts, storyboards) for incorporating mindfulness techniques into self-care or (if relevant) as a part of professional practice (clinical or community). Papers are due at the beginning of the final class session (March 23, 2010).

Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes

Diversity and multiculturalism are addressed by examining the range of mind body healing traditions that exist in sub-cultures of the US, and by examining certain points [e.g. allopathic, Ayurvedic, and Traditional Chinese Medicine] on a multivariate continuum of systems of medicine, health and wellness that exist throughout the world.

Social justice and social change are examined in the recent utilization of many mind body approaches that are comparable to but less resource intensive (and less costly) than conventional comparable care. There is historical evidence that the dominant health paradigm in the US has suppressed the development,
popularization, access and availability of lower cost, alternative mind body approaches.

Promotion/prevention/treatment and rehabilitation are expressed in the way many mind body approaches focus on chronic illnesses and conditions that are not easily remedied by allopathic (e.g. US western bio-) medicine. This approach also acknowledges the benefit of allopathic medicine particularly in remediation of immediate physical health related problems. Some of the mind body approaches (e.g. wellness nutrition) focus specifically on disease prevention.

Social science and behavioral research is reflected in the flurry of recent studies on the effectiveness of alternative remedies, the biological mechanism through which they work, and in the growing number of clinical trials comparing mind body to comparable allopathic remedies.

Social Work Values and Ethics:
An underlying theme in the course is that knowledge of mind body approaches and a general knowledge of indigenous healing systems will enhance the cultural sensitivity of social work practitioners when they are working with themselves and with clients who come from sub-cultures with a different healing cosmology than the practitioner. What may be considered "superstitious behavior" will be understood and accepted as alternative ways of healing, which may in many case situations be incorporated into successful treatment planning. Social workers will also appreciate the legal and professional limitations and challenges to the use of mind body skills that they may encounter now and in the future.

Required Text:


(Get the paperback version – new, it’s about $20.00.)

Session 1: February 16, 2010
Skill/Concept to be learned: An introduction to mind-body and contemplative practices. Focus on the breath and breathing techniques.

Guest Speaker: Dennis Chernin

Skill Practice for 5-7 days:

Kabat-Zinn, Chapters 1-5 (pp 1-93)
Chernin, D. Breathing and Meditation: An Overview (electronic version available on C-Tools site).

**Session 2: February 23, 2010**

Skill/Concept to be learned: Describe the theory and research behind the practice of mind body skills. Biofeedback.

**Skill Practice for 5-7 days:**


**Read any ONE of the following:**


**Session 3: March 9, 2010**

Skill/Concept to be learned: Introduction to acupuncture and trigger points.

**Guest Speaker: Richard Harris**

**Skill Practice for 5-7 days:**

Kabat-Zinn, Chapters 11-14 (p. 149-198).

Read any ONE of the following:


Session 4: March 16, 2010  
Skill/Concept to be learned: Identify mind-body techniques that may be helpful for specific health and wellness conditions, clinical mindfulness approaches.

Guest Speaker: Glenn Burdick

Skill Practice for 5-7 days:  
Kabat-Zinn, Chapters 21-32 (read whatever you find useful).

Read any TWO of the following:


Session 5: March 23, 2010  
Skill/Concept to be learned: Describe the application of mind-body techniques in your own social work practice, yoga session.

Guest Speaker: Leigh Ann Knope

Skill Practice for 5-7 days:
Kabat-Zinn: Chapters 6, 35-36


**Read any ONE of the following:**


Other readings of Interest (Optional)


NIH Technology Assessment Panel on Integration of Behavioral and Relaxation Approaches Into the Treatment of Chronic Pain and
Insomnia. Integration of behavioral and relaxation approaches into the treatment of chronic pain and insomnia. JAMA. 1996;276(4):313-318,


The Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy resource website: http://www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org/resources.html