

Mindfulness and
Prevention in
Western Medicine:
Focus on Physician
Assistant

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Why I Chose This

- Eastern practices often get overlooked
- Help individuals live fuller, happier, healthier lives
- As a PA I want to integrate this into my practice

Mindfulness History

- Eastern culture has recognized the importance of the mind and body connection for thousands of years
- Renaissance and Enlightenment eras
- The 20th century
- Thich Nhat Hanh
 - “through mindfulness we can learn to live happily in the present moment- the only way to truly develop peace, both in ones self and in the world”
- Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society
 - Stress Reduction Clinic
 - MBSR

Mindfulness Definition

- “Mindfulness is a simple concept in which one pays attention on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 2014, p. 4).
- Attentiveness, curiosity, presence, and the ability to adopt multiple perspectives. All these qualities promote greater awareness of self and others (Beach et al)
- Noticing what is happening in our body, our thoughts, our emotions, as well as the world around us (Halliwell, 2012).
- Involves an elemental and spontaneous openness to experiences, grounded in the body, in the timeless, in not expecting anything to happen, a befriending of this present moment for its own sake (Goldstein, 2010).

Practicing Mindfulness

- Process: mindful practice
 - Intention
 - Setting an intention for the day reminds you why you are practicing in the first place
 - Attention
 - Observing moment-to-moment experiences
 - Attitude
 - Keep certain attitudes in mind while practicing mindfulness such as acceptance, openness, caring, curiosity, patience, or compassion.
- Outcome: mindful awareness

Practicing Mindfulness

- Mindful breathing, listening, eating, walking, etc.
- Mindfulness Meditation and yoga
- Avoiding past-future thinking
- As awareness increases through practicing mindfulness, we notice how we become stuck on autopilot

Healthcare Statistics

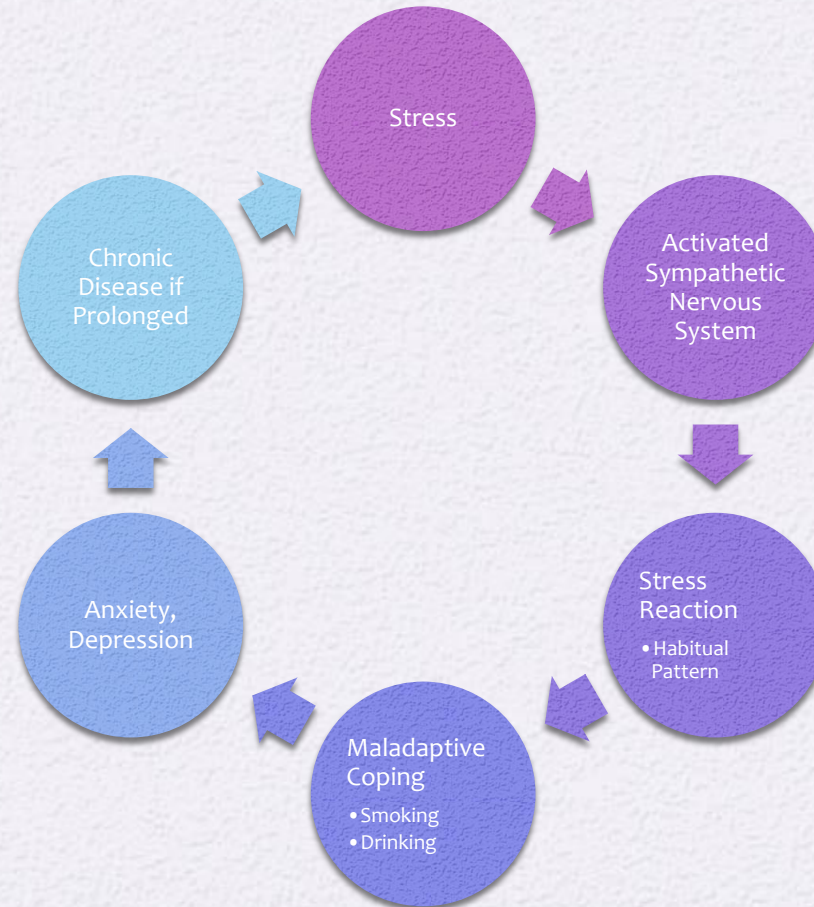
- The majority of healthcare costs can be attributed to preventable chronic diseases (APHA)
- Annual healthcare costs in the US are above \$320 billion (Greenwell, 2015)
- Seven in ten deaths in the US are related to preventable diseases and three quarters of healthcare dollars are spent on treating the diseases (APHA)
- Only 3 cents of each dollar spent on healthcare go toward prevention (APHA)

Stress

- High stress society
- Accumulation of minor stress
 - Headache, insomnia, GI upset
- Long term stress leads to chronic disease
 - Cancer, heart disease, dementia



Stress Reaction



Stress Response



Chronic Pain

- MBSR
- Decrease in pharmaceuticals that were normally taken for pain
- Significant reduction in present-moment pain, negative body image, anxiety, depression, mood disturbance, and inhibition of activity by pain



Overview of PA Profession

- Nationally certified and state licensed
- Mid-level providers that work underneath physicians
- Educated and trained in 2-3 year program
- Complete over 2,000 hours of clinical rotations in several areas of medicine

PA Challenges to Incorporating Prevention

- Lack of time
- Lack of training
- Lack of patient interest
- Inadequate reimbursement
- Characteristics of the physician including age, specialization, their own health habits
- Pessimism of clinicians towards patients ability to change

Mindfulness and Pessimistic Clinicians

- Studies show that if doctors take preventative medicine more seriously they can double the number of patients who change their habits at the end of the year (Diclemente, Norcross, & Prochaska, 2006)
- Mindfulness can help reduce pessimism and increase positive thoughts and emotions
- Experienced Tibetan monks to employees at a high tech company

Mindfulness Reducing Burnout

- More focused, more empathetic, and less exhausted
- Make less errors and improve quality of care to patients
- Effective and efficient appointments
- Decreased levels of burnout, anxiety, depression, when compared to other doctors
- Significant improvement in quality of life and increased personal accomplishment
- Maintained over an additional nine months

Prevention Model and Implementation for PA's

- Incentives given to PA's that refer patients to Wellness Coaches, as well as seeing one themselves
- Lack of time barrier and inadequate reimbursement

Implementation Continued

- Continuing medical education- requiring or incorporating a class/program on:
 - Integrative health
 - MBSR training
- Educating patients on MBSR and offering MBSR as additional treatment
- Lack of training barrier

Implementation Continued

- Integration of western and eastern professions in the same health office

Implementation Continued

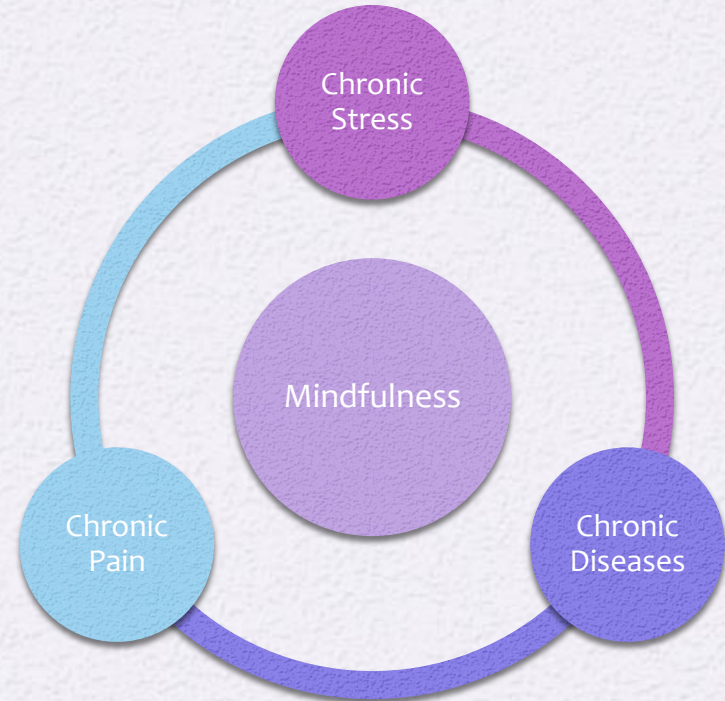
- Incorporating self-care and mindfulness into the program while becoming a PA or through training in the hiring process.

Improved Quality of Life and Successful Preventative Change

Physician Assistants



Patients



Questions?

Thank You!

- Special Thank You to:
- Michele McGrady & Lori Gray

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