An Introduction to Mindfulness for the Special Needs Parent

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Education

Counselling

Coaching (ILM)

Teacher of Mindfulness
Growing Awareness and Interest

Mindfulness Journal Publications by Year, 1980-2014

goAMRA.org
Why Do Mindfulness At All??

NOT A CURE ALL BUT RESEARCH FINDINGS INCREASINGLY SUGGESTING:

• Reduces stress, addictive behaviours and chronic physical pain
• Boosts body’s immune system
• Helps coping with difficult emotions and enhances positive emotions
• Improves attention. Concentration and academic performance
• Stimulates and releases creativity
Is it for Me?

KEEP IT REAL

- No right or wrong way
- Use if, how and when suits your own purposes
- Have fun
Is It Needed?

![Bar chart showing the increase in the number of people aged 18-64 years projected to have a common mental health disorder from 2012 to 2020.](chart.png)
Life is not easy

There are only two times I feel stress: Day and Night.
Beyond Education

IBM  Aetna  Google  McDonald's  McKinsey & Company
Religious
Boring
Hippy Dippy
Yoga
Therapy
Magic Bullet
So What Is It?

Paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

- Paying attention to things as they happen
- A life skill
- For some, a way of being (not doing)
- Evidence based (Mindfulness In Schools Project)
Mindfulness?

“Is a balanced way of being using common sense, science and collective wisdom repackaged, but refined over centuries, and made relevant to suit the needs of each individual for peace and contentment.”

(Paul McGuire 2015)
US MindUp Programme

“Mindful attention centres on conscious awareness of the present moment: by focusing our attention and controlling our breath, we can learn to reduce stress and optimise the learning capacity of the brain.”
Why Do the Practices?

“Mindfulness practices empower individuals to **flourish** over time ... by developing a growing capacity to choose to respond to potentially stressful situations rather than automatically reacting.”

*(Paul McGuire 2016)*
The Human Brain – Neuroscience?
Our Complex Brain
Sports
Mindfulness helps the Inner Chimp
Polarities

- Analysing v Sensing
- Striving v Accepting
- Thoughts as being real v Being simply mental events
- Avoidance v Approaching
- Mental time travel v Present moment
- Self defeating v Self-flourishing activities for yourself
How Mindful Are You?

+ Questionnaire
In Mindfulness we learn to take control
Adult Programme - HEADSPACE
Example of a guided practice
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
Mindful eating
Mindful seeing
Mindful Listening - Activates RAS helps sort and screen sounds and aids social awareness and effective communication
Mindful smelling
Mindful moving
Mindful touching