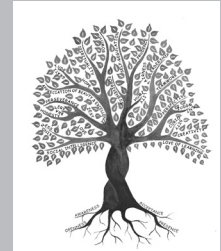


MBSP Handout 1.1

Session 1:

Overview of Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP)



Overview

MBSP is an 8-session program that brings the practice of mindfulness and the practice of character strengths together. It includes discussions, meditations, strengths practices, lecture/input, and homework exercises. There are two general categories of integration:

1. Strong mindfulness: improving mindfulness practices by weaving in character strengths.
2. Mindful strengths use: improving character strength use by weaving in mindfulness.

Description

This 8-week workshop/program is about engaging more deeply with life. The crux is self-awareness and self-discovery. It combines two powerful and popular approaches that are being used in schools, clinics, universities, scientific labs, and businesses worldwide: mindfulness meditation and character strengths. Emphasis is placed on exercises that are discussed and practiced each week. This course teaches the basics of mindfulness and of character strengths, and offers more advanced, practical ways to integrate the two. It presents a unique angle to living one's best life, re-discovering happiness, achieving goals, finding deeper meaning and life engagement, and coping with problems.

Mindfulness Practices

Participants practice mindful breathing, listening, speaking, eating, walking, mindfulness of problems, loving-kindness meditation, brief mindfulness, and many other practices.

Character Strength Practices

Participants practice strengths-spotting, use of signature strengths, character strengths 360, strengths branding, strengths interview, valuing strengths in others, best possible self, strengths goal-setting, strengths-activity mapping, strengths gathas, and many others.

Core Topics

The following are the eight core themes by session:

Session 1: Mindfulness and Autopilot

- Autopilot is pervasive; everything starts with awareness

Session 2: Your Signature Strengths

- Identify what is best in you; this can unlock potential to engage more in work and relationships and reach higher personal potential.

Session 3: Obstacles are Opportunities

- The practice of mindfulness and of strengths exploration leads immediately to two things – obstacles/barriers to the practice and a deeper awareness of the little things in life.

Session 4: Strengthening Mindfulness in Everyday Life (Strong Mindfulness)

- Mindfulness helps us attend to and nourish the best, innermost qualities in ourselves and others; conscious use of strengths can help us deepen and maintain a mindfulness practice.

Session 5: Valuing Your Relationships

- How we relate to ourselves is an important element of self-growth. This has an immediate impact on how we connect with others.

Session 6: Mindfulness of the Golden Mean (Mindful Strengths Use)

- Mindfulness helps to focus on problems directly and character strengths help to reframe and find different perspectives not immediately apparent.

Session 7: Authenticity and Goodness

- It takes character (e.g., courage) to be a more authentic “you” and it takes character (e.g., hope) to create a strong future that benefits both oneself and others.

Session 8: Your Engagement with Life

- Stick with those practices that have been working well and watch for the mind’s tendency to revert back to automatic habits that are deficit-based, unproductive, or that prioritize what’s wrong in you and others. Engage in an approach that fosters awareness and celebration of what is strongest in you and others.

Benefits

- Builds deeper knowledge of the best qualities in people.
- Cultivates strengths awareness and strengths use.
- Boosts mindfulness as an always-available approach to use in life.
- Offers several concrete practices to boost happiness and manage stress and difficulties.
- Previous participants have experienced increases in happiness, flourishing, engagement, meaning, purpose, better relationships, and improved stress and problem management.

Purposes of MBSP

- Despite the many benefits of mindfulness, most people who start a mindfulness practice do not keep it up. Character strengths offer ways for individuals to better deal with obstacles and barriers that naturally emerge.
- Character strengths work offers a common language to capture positive qualities individuals can learn and bring their mindful attention more closely to.
- Mindfulness and character strengths are interdependent and can create a virtuous circle of mutual benefit.
- Mindfulness facilitates increased self-awareness and potential for change activation by bringing one’s character strengths more clearly into view.
- Offers a path for individuals to use their best strengths more, and be more attuned to a balanced expression that is sensitive to the situation and to potential overuse/underuse.