Self-Care in the Rise of the Pandemic

Part II: Teaching Mindful Self-Care at a Distance

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Ruth Colón-Wagner currently works with NYAPRS as the Director of Training & Development and has over 30 years of experience in the fields of Child Welfare, Homeless Services, Employment, and Mental Health Care working with children, adults, and families. For the last 25 of those years Ruth has worked in a variety of leadership positions. Prior to joining NYAPRS, Ruth served as Director of Rehabilitation and Treatment of adult mental health services in the Hudson Valley region of New York. Through a systematic culture change process, Ruth brought recovery-based, person-centered and culturally competent approaches to increase staff competency and increase client outcomes.

Ruth also works to bring various trainings, webinars and conferences on Cultural Competency issues that includes the cultural construct in America, racism, systemic oppression, the racial divide, realities of power and white privilege, micro aggressions and solutions for community transformation. Ruth was trained in Undoing Racism® by The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond.

As Director of Training & Development, Ruth manages various System Transformation initiatives which includes individualized technical assistance to organizations around the nation on Organizational Culture Change from traditional care to a recovery-oriented system of care; organizational capacity building and sustainability, board development, succession planning and strategic planning. Ruth’s other specialties include Group Facilitation, Program Management and Compassion Fatigue. Ruth is also certified as a Dialectical Behavioral Therapist, a Functional Family Therapist and a Life Skills Educator. Ruth received her MSW from Hunter College School of Social Work and is licensed as a social worker in New York State.
Michael Ballester is the NYAPRS Training & Technical Assistance Facilitator for the Hudson River and Northern Region. He is an experienced trainer and clinician, with over 30 years’ experience of working with addictions and co-occurring disorders. Michael has worked as a Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor, administrator, manager and advocate serving those who have been touched by substance use and mental health.

Michael has always had a passion assisting providers to improve their ability to support and help others through supervision and training. His training experience includes developing and delivering trainings relating to Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders, Working with Children and Family Members affected by Addiction and Prevention. He has participated in developing and presenting training for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) through the Addiction Technology and Transfer Center (ATTC), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). He has presented and provided training across New York State, the U.S. and internationally.

Michael has a personal passion and commitment to Mindfulness and Compassion. He has completed Compassionate Integrity Training offered through the Charter for Compassion and Life University’s Center for Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics, which has been adopted by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and a Master of Arts Degree in Community Psychology from Russel Sage College in Troy, NY.
NYAPRS is a change agent dedicated to improving services, public policies and social conditions for people with mental health, substance use and trauma-related challenges, by promoting health, wellness and recovery, with full community inclusion, so that all may achieve maximum potential in communities of choice.

**Advocate, Educate, Demonstrate & Innovate**
Free Mindful Moments available on www.nyaprs.org
a new meditation available every weekday

Start Your Workday Mindfully
a daily NYAPRS 5-minute retreat

Follow us on Twitter #MindfullyNYAPRS
NYAPRS May 2020 Webinars Clarify Impact of COVID-19 on Public Benefits & Promote Self-Care and Employment

May 27 - Providing Employment Services in a Virtual World

June 16 - Empowerment in Crisis: Providing Skills to Individuals in Reclaiming their Voice and Making their Choice
Learning Objectives

• Identify aspects of Mindfulness as self-care strategies.

• Become knowledgeable of the skills needed to teach and engage people in Mindfulness and Self-Care

• Identify strategies for assisting individuals to engage in Mindful Self-Care through traditional and tele-health means
“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn
The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mind Full, or Mindful?
Mindfulness as a Self-Care Strategy

World-wide & thousand-year history

- Roots in Eastern religious and spiritual traditions
- Universal applicability - can be practiced in a secular way
- Importance of person-centered, culturally sensitive approach
- Offers extensive benefits for a variety of populations
Why Mindfulness?

improvements in:

• Brain Structure
• Cardiovascular Health
• Immune Functioning
• Trauma Informed Care
• Positive Change in Feelings
“Mindfulness is so powerful that the fact that it comes out of Buddhism is irrelevant.”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn
Important to Remember

- Mindfulness is a person-centered practice
- No “one size fits all” so choose what works
- Inherent in any working definition of Mindfulness is “non-judgment”
- Take a “beginner’s mind” perspective
Cultivating Awareness

Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.
- Eckhart Tolle

BE
HERE
NOW

Nothing is more precious than being in the present moment.
Fully alive, fully aware.
- Thich Nhat Hanh
What Do You Need to Introduce Mindfulness

• Knowledge
• Self-Practice is ideal, however...
• Openness
I don't believe in this mumbo jumbo.

Isn't this some kind of religion?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When You Hear…</th>
<th>What You can SAY &amp; Do …</th>
<th>(Practitioner)</th>
<th>What They can Do …</th>
<th>(Person you’re working with)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>“I don’t believe in this mumbo jumbo.” “Isn’t this some kind of religion?”</td>
<td>SAY – “While it may have started out being a spiritual practice, because of the scientific research and benefits, it has grown to be a part of things like yoga or used by sports teams.”</td>
<td>Do some research yourself on the benefits of mindfulness exercises. Who, might you already know practice this (i.e. a famous actor/actress, your favorite sports star or team, a musician)?</td>
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<td>“This goes against my faith.”</td>
<td>SAY – “Most faiths engage in activities that are mindful, like praying or singing. “What are you doing now for your faith that helps you to feel better or let go of negative feelings.”</td>
<td>Mindfulness is a way to exercise your mind and lean how to strengthen those things that make you feel better or let go of troubles. Think about what you do now that helps you. Talk to others about what helps them.</td>
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Finding THEIR Practice
• Non-Judgment
• Patience
• A Beginner’s Mind
• Trust
• Non-Striving
• Acceptance
• Letting Go
• Ahimsa (do no harm)
• Self-Compassion

Foundational Attitudes for Practice

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
The Mindful Yoga Academy
The Foundation for Compassion
Basic Rules of Any Mindfulness Practice

1. Focus your mind on the present
2. Once you notice your attention has wandered off, gently and nonjudgmentally redirect your attention back to the present moment.
Formal Practice

- Traditional meditation. Setting aside time to do nothing but meditate
- 1 minute to hours
- Sitting standing, walking or lying down

Informal Practice

- Apply mindfulness or compassion to something you already do in normal life
- Become aware of your thoughts or emotions
Guiding Others Through Meditation

- Take your time to choose the right guided meditation script.
- Read the script a few times in advance.
- Create a comfortable environment.
- Practice what you preach.
- Speak slowly and clearly, taking longer pauses where necessary.

https://mindfulnessexercises.com/free-guided-meditation-scripts
No matter how you connect with people, what is the **Goal of Teaching Self-Care?**

- Resilience
- Empowerment
- Develop/Maintain Healthy Self-Relationship
Start Your Workday Mindfully

a daily NYAPRS 5-minute retreat

Breathing Meditation Practice

#MindfullyNYAPRS

Ruth Colón-Wagner, LMSW
People may have questions
# Teaching Mindfulness - Meeting People Where they Are

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<td><strong>“I find it hard to make the time.”</strong></td>
<td>SAY – “Starting something can be hard.”  &lt;br&gt;DO – Provide worksheets, help set up a schedule, find out if they started something that was hard but later became a habit.</td>
<td>Start small, recognize that even 1 to 5 minutes a day can show results. Practice for one week at the same time and same place each day.</td>
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<td><strong>“Every time I try, I feel overwhelmed.”</strong></td>
<td>SAY – “Would you be willing to do a very brief exercise with me now?”  &lt;br&gt;DO – A brief body scan or breathing exercise.</td>
<td>Become aware of how you feel before you practice and how you feel afterward.</td>
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<td><strong>“This is so boring!”</strong></td>
<td>SAY – “What do you do know that is not boring?”  &lt;br&gt;DO – Suggest they do the exercise along with things they may like. Music, walking, exercise, cooking or even eating a cookie.</td>
<td>Mindful activities can be done almost anywhere and any way. Play music, walk, sing or even dance. Try to focus on just the activity and when ever you have a stray thought or feeling. Recognize it and let it be.</td>
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<td><strong>“I am not making any progress”</strong></td>
<td>SAY –“What you will be doing is just like exercising any muscle. What do body builders, swimmers or runners do to get better?”</td>
<td>Remember any new skill takes time. No one can wake up one morning and decide to be good at something without practice.</td>
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<td><strong>DO – Identify with the client what they have done to get better at something. This could be something physical (i.e. lifting weights, riding a bike, swimming), a skill (i.e. drawing, building models, or cooking)</strong></td>
<td><strong>DO – A brief body scan or breathing exercise.</strong></td>
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Strategies to Support Self-Care Remotely

• Daily outreach calls, conducting an informal needs assessment and making referrals
• Mailing out resources and/or posting on Facebook and your websites
• Send out a newsletter with information keeping recipients informed about transition to tele-delivered services
• Check in with individuals who may struggle with technology.
• Send links for free cognitive games that can be accessed through mobile play stores
• Developing a mobile support network that includes Zoom, group conferences, Facetime calls, Facebook messaging, social media, texting and direct phone contact.
• Update websites and social media pages with new or updated services.
• Identify challenges related to income, loss of job, food, shelter and assist in identifying/sharing resources.
• Identify virtual open self/mutual help groups.
• Create 24/7 access to counselors, peer mentors, recovery specialists, psychiatry

• Self-disclosure (normalize/validate) – We are all dealing with the same issue.

• **Positive affirmations**

• Support the person to identify and reach out to people in their social network who can provide social support

• Ensure easy access to all staff
Key Takeaways of Teaching Mindfulness

- Skepticism is natural and healthy, but can limit openness
- Shift misunderstanding and resistance into curiosity. Create an “Aha moment”
- Consider their Religious/Spiritual Background
- Use secular language, creating safety and inclusivity
- Discuss science demonstrating benefits on health/wellbeing
- Shift to an exercise approach
- Introduce in terms of potential and offer in voluntary or exploratory way
- Emphasize adaptability, person-centered practice
- Introduce practice gradually. Start small and exercise.
- Normalize it!
- Person Centered/Adaptable
Resources


Peter Bostellman. Mindfulness - The unexpected organizational revolution. TEDxBerlinSalon. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdqbSAWl2xM


Coco Bee – Art as Therapy. Coco Bee Art. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCECjGa6g96XNLduQtUYdCMw.


Diane R. Gehart, Ph.D. - Chocolate Meditation #1 - https://youtu.be/pfyWfBVQBEs
“You are the sky. Everything else is just the weather.”

– Pema Chödrön
Sign–Out & Evaluation
In order to receive credit for attendance please sign-out electronically and complete the evaluation. Use your smartphone’s camera or you can click on the link that is available in the Chat box.

Please complete the evaluation to help us improve our training.

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