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Integrating Mindfulness Techniques into Pediatric Speech-Language Pathology

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Financial Disclosures

Jennifer Llado
- Founder of Bright Side Therapy, LLC which produces SLP treatment products
- Author of Mindful Healthcare: 20 Brief Exercises to Get in the Zone with Your Patients

Brenda Lovette
- Founder of Healthy Expression, which provides coaching, nutrition education, products and holistic SLP services to clinicians and clients.

Jennifer & Brenda
- Webinar: Meditation & Breath Work for Clinicians
- Received stipend for courses on speechpathology.com
- Co-Authored and receive royalties for Relaxation & Mindfulness after Brain Injury tip card by Lash & Associates

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Learning Objectives

- Describe the positive effects of mindfulness that relate to behavior, self-regulation and cognitive performance.

- Describe potential methods for integrating mindfulness practices into traditional speech therapy sessions, in order to improve client outcomes.

- Identify and describe various mindfulness and breath work practices relevant to enhancing the treatment of pediatric speech-language deficits.
Course Outline

- Mindfulness Exercise
- Intention
- Mindfulness Defined
- Making Mindfulness Kid-Friendly
- Mindfulness Literature Review
  - General Population
  - ADD/ADHD
  - Autism
  - Mindful Parenting
- Clinical Application
- Therapeutic Presence
- Resources
- Questions

Mindfulness Exercise & Intention

“Intention creates your reality.”

-Wayne Dyer
Body Scan

Begin at your toes.
Bring awareness:
  ▪ Notice sensations
  ▪ Notice thoughts
Continue traveling up the body.

Our Intention: To provide the knowledge to empower pediatric SLPs and anyone effecting the life of a child to explore the benefits of mindfulness.

What is yours? Consciously decide what is important to you with regard to this course.
Mindfulness Defined

Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgementally.

~Jon Kabat-Zinn

This presentation will give you the science and tools to describe and utilize meditation in an evidence-based way.
Making Mindfulness Kid-Friendly

Silent, seated meditation for kids is totally unrealistic!

- Props
- Stories or narratives
- Metaphors
- Active engagement
- Building it into routines
Impact of Mindfulness

MEDITATION/MINDFULNESS

Attention

Self-Regulation (executive function)

Following Directions

Processing emotions of others

Planning, organizing, Sequencing

Communication (expressive/receptive)

Processing emotions of self

Pragmatics

Mindfulness Literature Review
Effects of Mindfulness for School Children

- **Improved cognition**
  (executive function, memory, attention)
- **Improved academic performance**
  (standardized tests, measures of content mastery, grades)
- **Improved behavior**
  (aggression, disciplinary referrals, compliance, attendance)
- **Improved socioemotional skills**
  (anxiety, stress, engagement, social skills, self-esteem, grit)
- **Improved physiological function**
  (cortisol, heart rate, brain activity)

Stress in Adolescents

- “Impact of mental health with this population is often minimized”
- 30% of adolescents surveyed reported feeling overwhelmed, depressed or sad due to stress
- Mental health problems reported in 49.5% of sample of 10,000
- 40% met criteria for more than one disorder
- In 2015, 12.5% of teens had at least 1 major depressive episode
Mindfulness Intervention for Stress

Participants: 45 children ages 7-9 divided into 2 groups: a single 10 minute mindfulness practice or quiet play

Frequency/Duration: 1 session

Measures: Self-reported measures of calmness, mood and social dominance pre and post-session.

Results: Only children who practiced mindfulness showed a significant increase in calmness (p<.05).

Mindfulness & Cognition

Participants: 102 children divided into 2 groups: yoga/meditation & control

Measures: Paced Auditory Serial Test, Work Recognition Test, Letter Digit Substitution Test

Results: Yoga group had higher scores in cognitive functions than age-matched peers
Mindfulness & Cognition

Participants: 60 males aged 12-15 years randomly assigned to experimental group and control

Frequency/Duration: 45 minutes/day for 6 days a week for 45 days

Measures: tests of attentional fluctuating, sentence completion and general intelligence where completed pre-, mid-yoga training and post-test

Results:
• Yoga group had a reduction in attention fluctuation
• Improvement in sentence completion ability and general intelligence
• Yoga group maintained performance after detraining phase of 45 days

Mindfulness & Attention

Participants: teens

Frequency/Duration: 20-30 minutes daily x 2 weeks

Results:
• Increased connectivity between the executive center in the prefrontal cortex and the circuitry for focused attention
Mindfulness & Attention

Method: Literature review of 13 randomized control trials

Results:
- 5 of 13 studies showed statistically significant effects in attention and/or executive functions with a medium to large effect size.

ADHD Classifications

- Primarily Inattentive (20-30%)
- Primarily Hyperactive (less than 15%)
- Combined (50-75%)
**ADHD Symptoms**

- Poor attention
- Disorganization
- Decreased ability to remember and follow directions
- Struggle to perform and concentrate in the classroom
- Impulsivity
- Poor executive functioning

---

**Amen ADD Classifications**

- Classic ADD (low PFC/cerebellum)
  - Inattentive, distractible, disorganized, hyperactive, restless, impulsive
- Inattentive ADD (low PFC/cerebellum)
  - Easily distracted, disorganized, often described as spacey, daydreamers, or coach potatoes (not hyper)
- Overfocused ADD (low PFC and high ACG)
  - Trouble shifting attention, frequently get stuck in loops of negative thoughts or behavior, obsessive, excessive worrying, inflexible, frequently oppositional and argumentative, may or may not be hyperactive
Amen ADD Classifications

- **Temporal Lobe ADD**
  - Irritable, short fuse, dark thoughts, mood instability, struggle with learning disabilities
- **Limbic ADD** (low PFC and high limbic activity)
  - Chronic low-grade sadness or negativity, low energy, tends to be more isolated socially, frequent feeling of hopelessness or worthlessness
- **Ring of Fire ADD** (High brain activity)
  - Irritable, overly sensitive, cyclic moodiness or oppositional
- **Anxious ADD** (Low PFC and high BG)
  - Anxious, tense, nervous, predicts the worsts, gets anxious in timed tests, social anxiety, physical symptoms


Implications of ADD

- 35% of ADD students never finish high school
- 43% of untreated boys are arrested
- 50% of prison population has ADD or a learning disability
- 52% of ADD adults abuse alcohol
- 75% have interpersonal issues
Mindfulness & ADHD

- Increases awareness helping us to act consciously without being drawn into thoughts, emotions, sensations
- Reducing autopilot responses


Participants: 5 children aged 7-12 years newly diagnosed with ADHD

Frequency/Duration: one 75-minute session per week x 8 weeks with daily homework

Measures: self-reporting tools for psychopathology and ADHD clinical symptoms and testing for executive functions (Stroop Test, Continuous Performance Test-3, Coding, Digit Span, Arithmetic subtests of Wechsler for Children)
Mindfulness & ADHD

Results:
- 90% of participants liked participating in the program
- Reduction in scores were observed for all core ADHD symptoms
- Significant reduction of total ADHD symptoms
- Statistically significant differences in hyperactivity/impulsivity on parent-rated assessment
- Statistically significant improvements in scores for anxiety symptoms
- Significant improvements found for cognitive flexibility, automatic response inhibition, attentional capacity and processing speed

Mindfulness & ADHD
- Recognizing the present moment
- Meditation Bell
- Walking meditation
- Breathing meditation
- Mindful listening
- Body scan
- Sensory awareness exercises
- Mindful eating
- Exploring unpleasant and pleasant events
- Working with thoughts and emotions
- Integrating mindfulness into daily life
- Awareness exercise

Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Prevalence
  - 2.25% in 2014
  - 2.41% in 2015
  - 2.76% in 2016
  - 3.63% in boys
  - 1.25% in girls
  - 1.82% in Hispanic children
  - 2.76% in non Hispanic white children
  - 2.24% in non Hispanic black children

Yoga Training for Autism

- **Participants:** 29 children aged 7-15 years randomly assigned to either yoga or control group
- **Frequency/Duration:** 8 weeks (24 sessions) of yoga
- **Measures:** Parents completed Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) at baseline and the end of the intervention
- **Results:**
  - Decreased severity of disease in children with autism
  - Significant effect on cognitive and awareness sub-scores of ATEC
  - Significant effect on sociability sub-scores of ATEC
  - Significant effect on health and physical sub-scores of ATEC
  - No significant effect on speech and language sub-scores of ATEC
Yoga Training for Autism

Participants: 5 males with ASD (8-13 years old)

Frequency/Duration: 1 yoga session, twice a week for 4 weeks

Measures: Modified Facial Mood Scale & ASD Social Skills Assessment (TSSA)

Results:
• Significant improvement from pre- to post test in overall TSSA
• Significant improvement on initiation and initiating interaction, and affective understanding and perspective taking subscales
• MFMS scores increased from 80% to 100%
• Thematic analysis of narratives note enhanced mood and emotional expression, increased empathy towards others, and improved teamwork skills

Gratitude

Think about 3 things you are truly grateful for...
ASD & Mom’s Gratitude

Participants: mothers of children with ASD were divided into 2 groups and instructed to write gratitude letters (either a general gratitude letter or a letter to their child).

Method: thematic analysis of narratives were conducted using ATLAS computer software

Results:
• The most prominent theme is social support in the general group
• Child-specific group was primarily grateful for their child making progress
• Inspiration was the overlapping theme expressed by both groups

Mindful Parenting

• Be deliberately and fully present in the here and now with your child in a non-judgmental way
• Take care of yourself as this is the basis for parenting
• Accept difficulties of your child
• Answer rather than react to difficult behavior of your child
• Practice meditation exercises for yourself
• Practice meditation exercises with your child
## Mindful Parenting Exercises

- Raisin exercise
- Breathing meditation
- Body awareness exercise
- Body scan
- Yoga
- Distraction awareness
- Awareness of automatic responding
- Breathing space
- Repetition learned skills
- Breathing space in difficult situations
- Meditation bell
- Looking meditation

### Mindful Parenting Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Results of Mindful Parenting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Van der Oord, S. et al. (2011) | ADHD | 22 families | 8-weeks of one 90-minute mindfulness training sessions for children and parallel MBSR for parents | • Significant increase in mindful awareness  
• Significant reduction in parental stress and over reactivity  
• No significant effects in teacher rating |
| Behbahani, M et al. (2018) | ADHD | 60 mothers | 8 weeks of one 90-minute session/week | • Reduction in parental stress, negative parent-child interactions and child behaviors at post-test and follow-up  
• Significant improvement in ADHD symptoms |
| Singh, N. et al. (2006) | ASD | 3 parents | 12-week course for mothers | • Decreased child’s aggression, noncompliance, and self-injury  
• Increased mothers’ satisfaction with parenting skills |
| Singh, N. et al. (2007) | DD | 4 parents | 12-week training for parents | • Decreased aggressive behavior in children  
• Increased social skills  
• Increased satisfaction with parenting  
• Decreased parental stress |
| Neece, C. (2013) | DD | 46 parents | MBSR training for parents | • Significantly less stress and depression in parents  
• Greater life satisfaction  
• Children experienced fewer behavior problems (specifically in area of attention) |
| Rayan, A. (2017) | ASD | 104 parents | 5-week training for parents | • Mindful group had better outcomes on measures of psychological well-being and mindfulness  
• Significant improvement in stress, anxiety, depression scores with medium to large effect size |
| Ribberinkhof, A. (2017) | ASD | 45 families | 9-week Mymind parent program | • Child's social communication problems decreased  
• Child's emotional/behavioral function improved  
• Improved parenting, emotional functioning and increased mindful awareness for parents. |

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Clinical Application

Bell Meditation

- Use a singing bowl, mindfulness bell or tuning fork

- Have the children listen to the bell and raise their hand when they can no longer hear it
The Raisin

- Give everyone a raisin
- Guide the child through a description of the raisin using their 5 senses:
  - Sight
  - Smell
  - Touch
  - Hearing
  - Taste
Yoga

- Use animal and nature metaphors for different postures (tree, frog, camel, cat, cow)
- Focus on the way the poses feel in your body.
- Breathe during each posture
- Link the breath with the movement

Walking Meditation

- Begin standing tall with a still body
- Put one foot out in front and feel your weight in the heel, rolling through the bottom of your foot
- Feel your weight shifting into opposite foot as you take the next step
- Notice your breath
- Continue taking steps this way, either using a timer or reaching a certain destination
Glitter Jar

- Fill a jar with water and glitter
- Invite the child to shake the jar and watch as the glitter swirls and settles
- Imagine the glitter is your thoughts settling down just like the glitter
The Star

- The star is always with you
- Imagine the stars light on your toes and move up the body like a body scan
- Use a flashlight with younger children to make the exercise more concrete

APPLICATION FOR FLUENCY: Freezing the body during moments of stuttering or clear speech to examine where there is tension ("Has your star light found places of tension or relaxation?")
Breathing Buddies / The Jewel

- Have the child choose a stuffed animal
- Place the stuffed animal on the child’s belly
- Have the child move the stuffed animal up and down with the breath

Addresses attention and self-regulation

Breathing Buddies
Bubbles

- Begin by blowing bubbles and watch what happens:
  - Do they float, pop immediately or get stuck together?
  - Are some bubbles bigger, smaller, slower, faster?

- We can watch our thoughts like the bubbles.

The Weather Report

- The weather outside is like the weather inside ("Sometimes you feel sunny and sometimes you feel cloudy.")
- What is your weather like when you talk?
- Look at your weather with curiosity.
- The weather outside changes just like your weather inside.
- "You are not a rain storm, that’s just the kind of weather you are experiencing."
The Thought Parade

- Imagine your thoughts as participants on the parade
- Imagine you are sitting in a chair and watching from the sidewalk
  - Notice how some thoughts are noisy and colorful
  - Some may be quiet and like to hang back
  - Some thoughts are fast and some are slow
  - Other thoughts go around and around in the parade
  - You may notice you are following some thoughts. When you notice this imagine walking back to your chair to watch the thoughts go by again.

Automatic Negative Thoughts

1. Write down your ANTs when you feel sad, stressed, anxious or out of control.
2. Label them.
3. Talk back to the thoughts.
4. Don’t believe them.
Categories of ANTs

1. Fortune telling
2. Mind reading
3. Blame
4. Guilt
5. Labeling
6. Thinking with feeling
7. Focusing on negative
8. Always thinking
9. All or none

Targeted Therapy Goals

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<tr>
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<th>Bell</th>
<th>Raisin</th>
<th>Yoga</th>
<th>Glitter</th>
<th>Star</th>
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<th>Bubble</th>
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Documentation

- Discuss the specific speech-language-cognitive goal addressed by the mindfulness technique
- Describe the clients status pre and post identify the degree of functional impact
- Communicate about education provided with clients and the families

Therapeutic Presence

- What are you thinking when you are treating?
- What is your surface intention for the session vs. deeper intention

- Regular meditation practice or simply mindful attention to your thinking can ground your practice.
Resources

VIDEOS
- Belly Breathe with Elmo
- Breathing Buddies (Daniel Goleman)

BOOKS
- Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda
- Peaceful Piggy Meditates
- Moody Cow Meditates
- Mindful Kids
- The Conscious Parent

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WEBSITES
• www.breatheforchange.com

PROPS
• Meddy Teddy
• Anteater

REFERRALS
• Yoga classes
• Meditation Groups

Questions & Comments...

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Jen: jen@brightsidetherapy.com

Holistic SLP Mastermind Group