Mindfulness as a Basis for Psychotherapeutic Rapport

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Professional Identity

• Are you a psychotherapist?

Being present

• How about right now,
• breath
• Slide
• body
The Roots of Mindfulness

- Popular examples: DBT; EMDR; Mindfulness; etc.

- The wave of Mindfulness in therapy:
  Jon Kabat-Zinn, PHD, U. Mass. Medical Pain Clinic
  “Full Catastrophe Living”, 1991

Roots

- “Mindfulness” is the English translation from the Pali language in Southeast Asia for – Vapassana
  also known as “insight meditation”

  Vapassana is a formal meditation tradition

Yoga

  Yoga

  Buddha

  Theravadan  Mahayana

  Vapassana
Lineage

- Yoga: yoke; union; the art and science of spiritual development
- Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, 563BC-483 BCE, reached full enlightenment age 33
- Theravadan: “The Way of the Elders”; intensive monastic silent meditation

Connection to Psychotherapy

- The common denominator of successful therapy is rapport
  - Listening
  - Unconditional Positive Regard, “Rogers”
  - Quality of Therapeutic Attention
  - Present to self, present to another
  - IS very similar to formal meditation!

Rapport

- Connection
- Deeply attentive, receptive
- Open, present, “tabla rasa”
- Empathy
- Authenticity
- Therapeutic frame
Psychotherapeutic attention

- Awareness of self: holistic – thoughts, emotions, body sensations, spirit, breathing

Formal vs. Informal meditation

- Informal: guided imagery, relaxation, etc.
- Formal: a Tradition, such as Vapassana. Insight Meditation Center, Barre, Ma. Co-founders include Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzburg, Jack Kornfield Spirit Rock, Woodacre, Ca. Tucson Community Meditation Center

Goal of meditation

- Stillness of the mind, “A Still Forest Pool”, Thich Nhat Hanh
Opposite of Cognitive Therapy

- The thinking self, thinking solutions
- Meditation: not to think
- Cognition is contained within awareness. Initial & intermediate meditators observe thoughts, cognition, sensations and emotions. As awareness deepens, intuitive, unitive, and process level experiences occur.

Simplistic Developmental Theory of Reality

- Sensation
- Feelings/emotions
- Thoughts
- What comes before sensation/feeling/thoughts?
- What is beyond thought/feeling/sensation?

What is Meditation?

- The great secret –
  
  CONCENTRATION
Formal meditation

- A profound wisdom teaching
- Initial benefits include stress release and relaxation
- Deeper awareness eventually develops, “Meditation as a relaxation response is a joke. Genuine meditation involves a whole series of deaths and rebirths, this is accompanied by a growth in equanimity, compassion and understanding”, Ken Wilber.

Definition of Enlightenment

- Individuals who become enlightened report a marked and permanent shift in their orientation to the world which is characterized by the following: personal identity shifts from an individual sense to a universal one; release from primary identification to mental attachments and suffering; free and awakened, fully present; a deep sense of peace; spiritual love and joy, clarity and insight.

Meditation & Mindfulness

- Is it
- Religion ?, or
- Spirituality ?, or
- Or ?
Psychotherapy

- Good psychotherapy skills come from clinical supervision facilitating the capacity for rapport. This eventually develops awareness of the process level.
- Presence
- Observer self

Rapport and Meditation

- Rapport awareness
- Self
- Observer self
- Client
- Meditation awareness
- Self
- Observer self
- Breath

Process Level

- Attentional awareness of emotions in the client
The Doorway to healing

- Is presence
- Via rapport
- And empathy, empathy is not a cognition, it is an experience
- An epistemology that is an Art of the Heart, and it's values
- Love (unconditional), is full attentional acceptance in the moment- and the basis for psychotherapeutic presence

Presence

- Presence is naturally healing

“A System of Qualities”, J.W.

- My Psychotherapy Theory, simplified
- Qualities: unconditional positive regard, empathy, honesty, compassion, being present, love
- Supported by Transpersonal Psychology, including psychodynamic, Humanistic and cognitive.
- Emphasis on bare bones qualities - a way to reemphasize the primacy of rapport in tx
Some references

- Being: ‘I and Thou”, by Martin Buber
- Clinical rapport: “Focusing”, by Eugene Gendlin
- Self Growth: ‘Power of Now”, by Eckhart Tolle

Gestalt Therapy

- Fritz Perls, a psychoanalyst, took elements of Zen,(Japanese Buddhist Meditation), to create his theory.
- Gestalt,(whole): basic presence multiple techniques /but, techniques should occur naturally

Presence based therapy

- Hydrolytics: emotion in equals emotion out, from feelings to symbolism
- Trust the process, as observed in awareness, AKA, be here where you are.
- Cultivate an awareness that is deeper, and of the process level
- The Frame: belief in the client and in healing,(the intent), plus presence
Putting it All Together

• Social Worker rapport is enhanced by the development of meditative presence
• Ultimately, a spiritual, transpersonal approach, (belief in client, healing, love)
• Therapeutic Frame guides the quality of attention in the healing process
• Moments of authenticity, insight and healing

Professional Growth

• Clinical effectiveness
• Intuition
• Existential
• Spiritual
• Supervision
• Mindfulness support groups or training

Book List

• Any books by Ken Wilber, can start with “No Boundary”
• Already mentioned, Martin Buber, Eugene Gendlin, Fritz Perls
• Hermann Hesse, “Siddhartha”