

Mindfulness as a Basis for Psychotherapeutic Rapport

Presented by Jeff Woolley, MSW,
Wassaja Family Services,
Ft. McDowell, Az.

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 Vipassana.
Insight Meditation Center, Barre, Ma.
Co-founders include Joseph Goldstein,
Sharon Salzberg, 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

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
- J. Engler, Therapeutic Aims in Psychotherapy & Meditation. In Transformations of Consciousness, K. Wilber, J. Engler, D. Brown, Eds, Boston: Shambala.
- John Welwood, "Toward a Psychology of Awakening", Shambala Publ., 2001.
- Kathleen Speeth, "On Psychotherapeutic Attention", Journal of Transpersonal Psychology,vol14, #2, 1982.
- Hermann Hesse, "Siddhartha"
