

Mindfulness: Managing Seasonal Stress



Carol Churgin, MSW, LSW
COPE Center
Montclair, NJ 07042
973-783-6655 x257
Cchurgin@copecenter.net



Mindfulness Activity

Present Moment Awareness with the Breath, Alice Lash

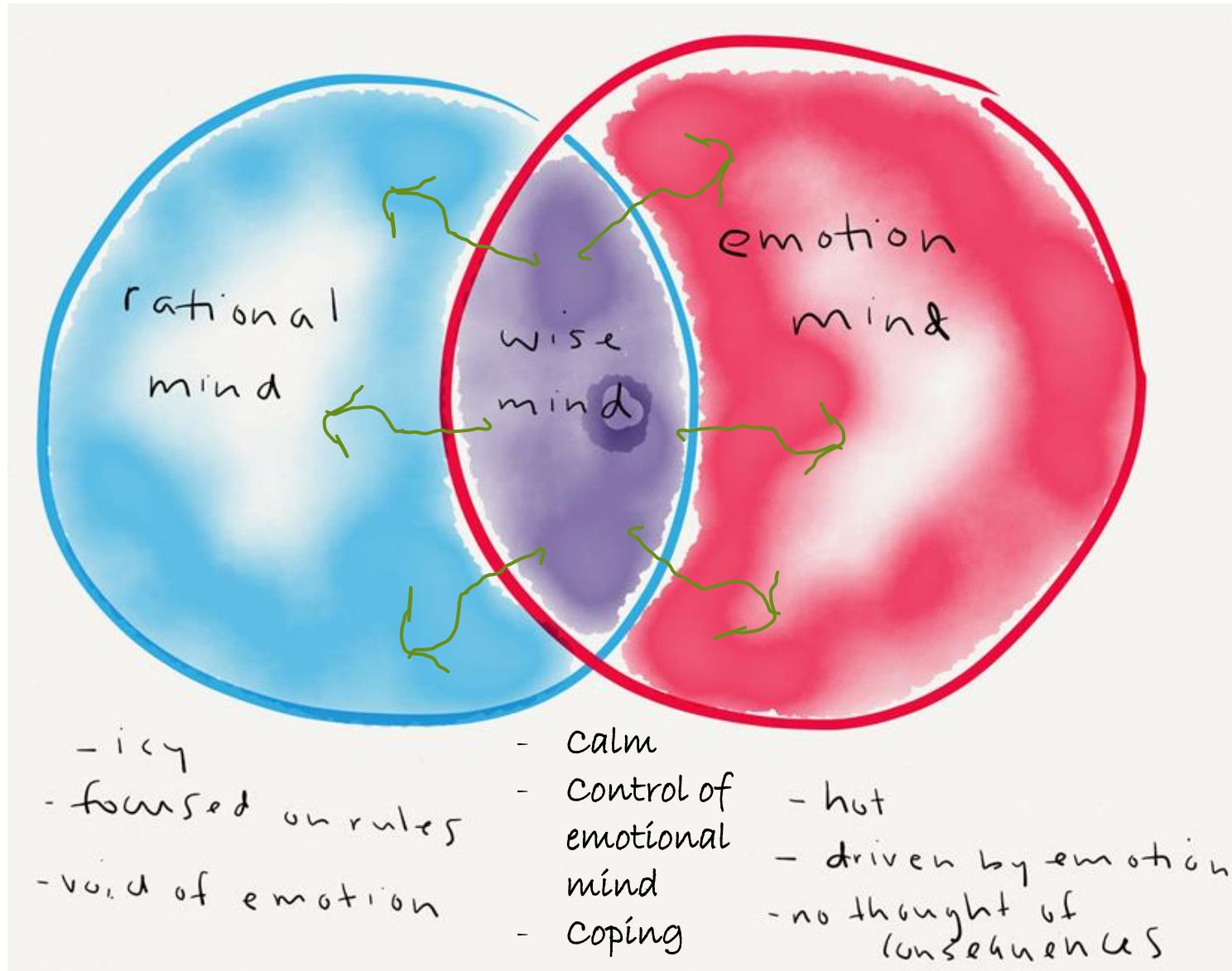


Mindfulness

- ▶ What is mindfulness? What does it mean to be mindful?
- ▶ Mindfulness is nothing new
 - ▶ Buddhist traditions
 - ▶ Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) - Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - ▶ Spiritual practice
 - ▶ Integration into mental health practice (DBT, trauma-informed treatment)



MINDFULNESS crucial to developing the Wise Mind



Core Mindfulness Skills

- ▶ “What” skills:
 - ▶ Observe - your senses
 - ▶ Describe - use words
 - ▶ Participate - be present
- ▶ “How” skills:
 - ▶ Non-judgmentally - accept, acknowledge
 - ▶ One-mindfully - stay focused
 - ▶ Effectively - do what works



Strengthen Wise Mind



Reducing Vulnerability: ABC PLEASE

▶ How to reduce your vulnerability to the emotion mind:

▶ ABC

- ▶ Accumulate positive emotions (pleasant events)
- ▶ Build mastery
- ▶ Cope ahead

▶ PLEASE

- ▶ treat Physical illness
- ▶ balance Eating
- ▶ avoid mood Altering substances
- ▶ balance Sleep
- ▶ Exercise



The more positive experiences we can accumulate, the more likely we will be able to tolerate a setback.

MINDFUL PARENTING

“ A FRAMEWORK WHEREBY PARENTS
INTENTIONALLY BRING
MOMENT-TO-MOMENT AWARENESS TO THE
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP.”

- ▶ 5 Dimensions of mindful parenting:
 - ▶ Listening with full attention
 - ▶ Non-judgmental acceptance of self and child
 - ▶ Emotional awareness of self and child
 - ▶ Self-regulation in the parenting relationship
 - ▶ Compassion for self and child



-DUNCAN, COATSWORTH & GREENBERG (2009)



Mindfulness at Home

WHEN YOU ARE FEELING FRUSTRATED

For parents or caregivers who find themselves upset and out of touch with the present moment, a popular mindfulness exercise known as S.T.O.P. can be helpful.

- ▶ **Stop.** Just take a momentary pause, no matter what you're doing.
- ▶ **Take a breath.** Feel the sensation of your own breathing, which brings you back to the present moment.
- ▶ **Observe.** Acknowledge what is happening, for good or bad, inside you or out. Just note it.
- ▶ **Proceed.** Having briefly checked in with the present moment, continue with whatever it was you were doing.



Gelles, D. The New York Times | Well: Mindfulness for Children





Some holiday-specific stressors

- ❖ Family
- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Children's behavior
- ❖ Overscheduling



Using mindfulness to manage seasonal stress

- ❖ Be present in all activities, even chores (?!)
- ❖ Practice gratitude
- ❖ “Accept the present moment as if you’d chosen it” - Eckhart Tolle
- ❖ Remember you have a choice
- ❖ Exercise
- ❖ Focus on your family as a reason for celebration, think about family traditions you have created over the years
- ❖ Think about what values you would like to teach your children as part of the holiday - donating a gift, wrapping presents for others, volunteering at a soup kitchen, making cards to give to an elderly neighbor



What now?

- ▶ Practice, practice, practice
- ▶ Try using mindfulness in daily activities: washing dishes, showering, raking leaves, decorating, family meals
- ▶ Model self-care and gratitude
- ▶ Take (make!) time everyday to “unplug” yourself and recharge
- ▶ Connect with other parents



Additional Resources:

- Spenj.org
 - Parenting Facebook group
 - COPE Center
- 104 Bloomfield Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042
973.783.6655

THANK
YOU

