

Mindfulness training and its influence on psychotherapeutic work: A personal and professional perspective

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DESCRIPTION

The integration of mindfulness in psychotherapy is a relatively new and evolving concept. After completing an "Eight Weeks Mindfulness for Stress" training program, the author—both a psychotherapist and a mindfulness practitioner—observed the effects of incorporating mindfulness into therapeutic work with clients as well as in her personal life. The majority of clients expressed interest in mindfulness and successfully incorporated the practice both during sessions and in daily life. This resulted in meaningful therapeutic progress, including healing and resilience. Additionally, the author reports personal and professional benefits gained from practicing psychotherapy mindfully. Mindfulness is a meditation practice that involves focusing on the present moment with awareness and without judgment. It is primarily based on self-awareness. Individuals who practice mindfulness often report reduced stress, improved focus, and enhanced well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Mindfulness centers on observing sensory experiences, thoughts, and emotions without reacting to them (Baer, 2003). In psychotherapy, mindfulness offers dual benefits. First, it can enhance a patient's therapeutic healing by promoting self-awareness. Second, when therapists practice mindfulness, it strengthens the empathic relationship between therapist and patient, fostering a more supportive and effective therapeutic environment (Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2013). The author examines the impact of the "Eight Weeks Mindfulness for Stress" training on her personal and professional development. The personal exploration follows a heuristic method, focusing on the self-inquiry and dialogue process to uncover the meanings and experiences associated with mindfulness (Moustakas, 1990). Insights into clients' journeys were gathered by documenting their self-inquiry (both during and outside sessions) and exploring their lived experiences of mindfulness. After working with seventeen individual clients and three heterosexual couples over a year, the author observed that a majority (70%) of the clients were receptive to the idea of

mindfulness and practiced it outside the therapy room. Of these, 58% reported that mindfulness played a significant role in their therapeutic healing. Interestingly, in couples therapy, only one partner initially expressed interest in mindfulness. However, after more than four months, two of the other partners joined in, illustrating the potential for mindfulness to become a shared practice within relationships. Regarding gender differences, while the individual clients showed no significant gender-based trends in mindfulness engagement, there was a notable pattern in couples therapy. In all three couples, the male partner was more eager to practice mindfulness initially, and their spouses joined in later. Clients who practiced mindfulness—either occasionally or regularly—demonstrated increased self-awareness and emotional regulation (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The results of this small study suggest that mindfulness is a powerful tool in psychotherapy. Most clients (70%) engaged in mindfulness both inside and outside of sessions, and many reported significant therapeutic benefits. Mindfulness contributed to increased self-awareness, reduced stress, and improved emotional regulation. While clients expressed a willingness to practice mindfulness outside of sessions, the lack of structured guidance was initially daunting. However, this absence of rigid structure later became beneficial, as it allowed clients to explore mindfulness in a more creative and flexible manner.

The author also noted personal benefits from practicing psychotherapy mindfully, which enhanced both her therapeutic effectiveness and personal well-being. Given the positive outcomes observed, further structured research is needed to explore how mindfulness contributes to psychotherapeutic healing across various therapeutic frameworks (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2013). While there have been attempts to incorporate mindfulness within the

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) framework (e.g., Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, or MBCT), further research is needed to examine its application in other therapeutic modalities (Bishop et al., 2004). Expanding psychotherapist training in mindfulness, regardless of

therapeutic orientation, could help address the current knowledge gap. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness training into clinical supervision and case discussions could further promote its integration into psychotherapy practice (Dahl, Wilson, & Nilsson, 2004).