


SOS




SLOW DOWN
Take a time out; calm your body; one thought at a time

ORIENT YOURSELF
Bring your mind & body back to the present time and place

SELF-CHECK
Rate your level of personal distress and sense of control here and now

Adapted From Ford & Russo, 2005

Feeling Intensity Thermometer




Personal Distress
Completely Calm 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Right now I feel ...
Most Distressed Ever

Personal Control
In complete control 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Right now I feel ...
Totally out of control

Adapted From Ford & Russo, 2005

SPARCS Overview



- **TRAUMA INFORMED INTERVENTION** (per NCTSN)
- 16 session treatment guide - 60 minutes per group session
- **Strength-based**
 - Identifying adaptive coping strategies
- **Present-focused**
 - No systematic exposure component included
 - How the trauma impacts their lives NOW
 - Increase capacity for present-oriented thinking & behavior – rouse to **MINDFUL** action
- Focus on developmental tasks unique to adolescence

Development of SPARCS

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Adolescents (DBT)
Miller, Rathus & Linehan, 2007
- Trauma Adaptive Recovery Group Education & Therapy (TARGET)
Ford & Russo, 2005
- Trauma/Grief-Focused Intervention
Layne, Saltzman, Pynoos, et al., 2000



SPARCS: Group Members

- Adolescents 12-21 years old
- History of chronic interpersonal trauma
- Living with significant ongoing stressors
- May or may never have met full criteria for PTSD
- Exhibit functional impairment



Why a group for adolescents? Adolescents are Not Mini-Adults

Adolescents are more disrupted by stressors than adults

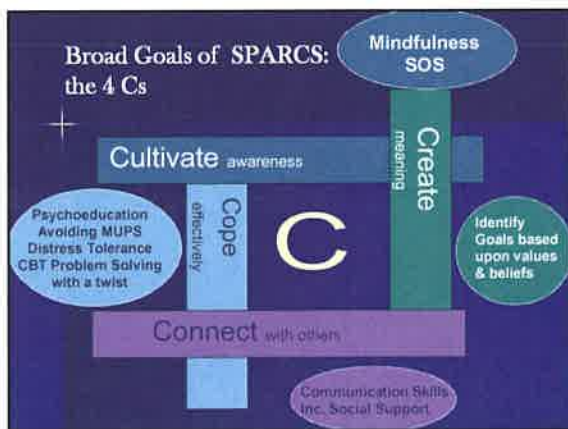
- Significant reorganization of the adolescent brain, "second only to the neonatal period" (Schoore, 2001)
- Physiologically show an increased responsivity to stressors e.g. greater increases in blood pressure and blood flow in response to stress (Spear, 2000)
- Respond with greater negative affect than children and adults (Spear, 2000)
- Difficulties with self-regulation (Spear, 2000)
- Ability to modulate emotions and behaviors while planning and making decisions, does not reach maturity until young adulthood (Dahl, 2004; Steinberg, 2004)

Adolescents as Victims



- Adolescents 12-15 are victims of crime more than any other age group
- Adolescents of any age are victims at twice the national average
- Much of the violence experienced by youths is perpetrated by peers or someone the victim knows well.
- Majority of the time it is not reported

US Dept of Justice (1995) Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious violent and chronic juvenile offenders, & Edgerton (2001), www.ncjrs.org



Core Skills & Key Concepts

- MAKE A LINK** = communication & connecting with others
- Let 'M Go** = problem-solving and creating meaning
- Distress Tolerance** = coping more effectively *in the moment*
- Mindfulness** = cultivating awareness
- MUPS** = ways of coping the mess you up

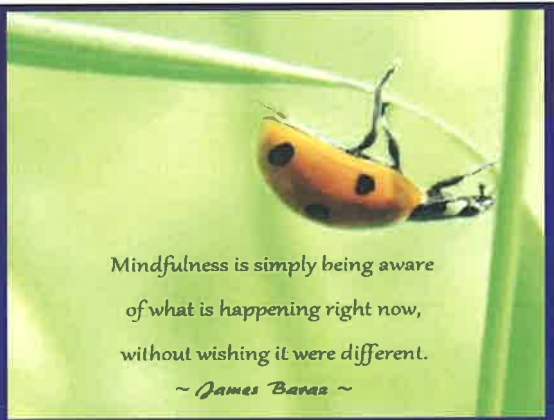
Woven Throughout the Treatment

Mindfulness

Mindfulness



- A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the **present** moment, while **calmly** acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, & bodily sensations



Benefits to Mindfulness

- Stress reduction
- Less emotional reactivity
- Increased focus/cognitive flexibility
- Increased relationship satisfaction
- Enhanced self-insight, morality, intuition,
ALL functions associated with the prefrontal lobe

Benefits to Mindfulness for Therapists

- Increased empathy
- Increased compassion
- Deepen counseling skills
- Decreased stress & anxiety
- Better quality of life



Mindfulness Exercise Balance

Remember---TRY NOT TO JUDGE

- Stand behind chairs & balance
on one foot
- Notice what it feels like when balanced &
when you feel yourself tipping to one side.
- Bring yourself back to a balanced position



Using SPARCS Skills in Different Settings

- Group
- Individual
- Couples



Disclaimer: SPARCS skills were researched only with the group process.

Core Skills & Key Concepts

- **MAKE A LINK** = communication & connecting with others
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Group: Treatment Overview

- Session 1 Welcome and Intro
- Session 2 Stress, trauma & the body
- Session 3 Mindfulness: States of Mind
- Session 4 Mindfulness: Path to Wise Mind
- Session 5 Distress Tolerance: Self-Soothe
- Session 6 Distress Tolerance: Distract
- Session 7 What is Trauma?
- Session 8 LET'M GO

Group: Treatment Overview (cont'd)

- Session 9 LET'M GO, Part 2
- Session 10 MAKE a LINK
- Session 11 MAKE a LINK, Part 2
- Session 12 Anger & Triggers
- Session 13 Portrait of My Life
- Session 14 Expectations & Beliefs
- Session 15 LET'M GO & MAKE a LINK, Revisited
- Session 16 Graduation

Session Structure

- Check In / SOS
- Mindfulness practice
- Review Practice
- Session-specific content
 - Combination of activities and didactic material
- Snack
- Check-out / SOS

Individual Adaption of SPARCS Skills

- Primary modification is replacing group mindfulness exercises with individual exercises.
- For adolescents, identify a support person to reinforce the skills.
- Psychoeducation & Teaching the CORE skills is easily adaptable.


Mindfulness




FOCUS: what I'm doing to
myself




FOCUS: around



FOCUS:



FOCUS: just body



Keep!

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Use of SPARCS Skills with Couples



- **Mindfulness**-increased awareness of what our partner is doing/saying
- **Make A Link**
Enhanced communication skills
- **Let 'M Go**
Improved problem solving with values exercise
- Learning to cope with our own distress

Mindfulness Exercise

- Mindful Eating



VS





Tools for the Road

CORE SKILLS:

- Self Awareness: SOS & States of Mind
- Stress & the Body
- Distress Tolerance: Distract & Self-Soothe
- Relationships: Make A Link
- Problem Solving: Let 'M Go

SOS



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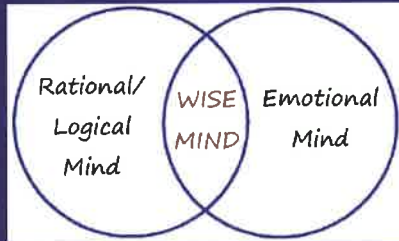
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Mindfulness: States of Mind



Mindfulness: States of Mind

- **Emotion Mind** – emotions are in the driver's seat 
- **Reasonable Mind** – behavior is driven by thoughts & logic 
- **WISE MIND** – it's about balance... paying attention to what you *feel & think* 

Stress & the Body Stress=Body's Alarm System


Normal Stress = dealing with problems **Stress & Trauma=** feeling overwhelmed

Body Signals
Heart pounding
Rapid breathing
Body aches
Fight or flight





Heart feels like bursting
Gasping, feeling smothered
Muscles feel like exploding
Overreacting or freezing

Stress & the Body (2)

<p>Normal Stress</p> <p><u>Feelings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excited or worried Frustrated, determined Angry or scared Some loss of control Worried about yourself 		<p>Stress & Trauma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terrified or panicked Enraged or aggressive Hopeless or doomed Helpless or out of control Worthless, like a failure
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Stress & the Body (3)

<p>Normal Stress</p> <p><u>Thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some clear thinking Some clear memories <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting rapidly Facing problems Taking on challenges Searching for solutions 	 	<p>Stress & Trauma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confused, mentally shut down Memory like a broken puzzle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic reflexes or freezing Avoiding problems Taking risks Making a mess of your life
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Distress Tolerance: (Hanging In)

Distract & Self-Soothe:

- Short term solutions to get through the moment for situations you can't fix right now
- What? Self-Soothe with the 5 senses
Distract- activities to temporarily tolerate feelings
- When? After an SOS
- How? **On purpose & mindfully**

Distress Tolerance: Key Points

Why?

- To keep from doing something that might make the situation worse
- To avoid using a MUP –
(MUP=coping strategies that **MESS YOU UP!**)

When **not** to use

- When you or someone else is in danger
- If it's all you use all the time (avoiding things you can address)
- If you can change the situation

Distress Tolerance: Key Points

– Why is it important to be mindful when you distract or self-soothe?

- More likely to be successful
- Making decision moves you from passive to active

– If distress tolerance does not make the person feel better does that mean it's not working?

- It may not change your mood, but that does not mean it's not working
- Goal is to keep from making things worse, to avoid a MUP

– True or False? If you are doing distress tolerance well it should last all day

- It may only last as long as you are doing it

Distress Tolerance

■ Distract

- Activities
- Contributing to Others
- Opposite Emotions
- Pushing Away
- Other Thoughts
- Intense Other Sensations

Self-Soothe

- Things You See
- What You Hear
- Odors You Smell
- Foods You Taste
- Things You Feel

Mindfulness Exercise: Breathing

WANT TO: CALM YOURSELF? REDUCE STRESS? FALL ASLEEP?

Try the **4-7-8 relaxing breath exercise:**
{ It takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. }

Don't breathe that fast. Breathe at one pace for the full month of practice. If you can breathe that slowly by practicing every day, it will be a lot easier to breathe slower whenever the anxiety starts to feel real and intense. And off it goes.

1. Inhale completely through your mouth, making a "whoosh" sound.
 2. Close your mouth and hold, quietly counting your pulse for a mental count of 4.
 3. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
 4. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a "whoosh" sound.
 5. Place in one breath, repeat again and repeated for eight days more times for a total of four breaths.

Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there during the entire exercise.

CAMPUS HEALTH SERVICE
 UTA Lifework

Communication: Make A Link

WHEN

- When have a clear goal in mind
- When dealing with an immediate problem
- When other person is willing & able to listen
- When what you need involves others

WHY

- To get what you need or say "no"
- To keep the relationship
- To keep your self-respect

Based on interpersonal effectiveness skills in DBT

In order to get what you want and need, you must **"MAKE A LINK"** or connection with the other person

Mindful
Act confident
Keep a calm & gentle manner
Express interest

Ask for what you want

Let them know you get their point of view
Include your feelings
Negotiate – give to get
Keep your self respect

Mindfulness Practice: Listening

(Or Mindfully Ignoring what's going on in your head!)

Not just about you

About others too

Your relationships



Problem Solving: Let 'M Go

What We Don't Mean

- When you've been upset, mad, worried, etc. people may have said to you at one time or another—or maybe you even said to yourself—just let it go. Move on, get a grip.
- That's not what these steps mean. If it were that easy, you would have done that a long time ago.

LET'M GO

When faced with a stressful situation, Let 'M Go is designed to help you figure out

- what is important to you,
- what *you* want to let go of because it's causing you more problems.
- It's about making a **mindful** choice and listening to your **wise mind**.

Purpose of LET'M GO

"The goal is to re-discover the personal ability that has been lost in the symptom.

...to find and rebuild adaptive skills that the survivor possesses and values within her/himself."

Julian Ford, www.advancedtrauma.com

Traumatic Reminders/Triggers: Being in Emotion Mind

"I can't explain it. I see that guy coming up the walkway and I go postal!"



When MUPs are causing problems:

LET'M GO

Losing it	Why am I losing it? What are my triggers?
Emotions	What am I feeling?
Thoughts	What am I thinking?
Meaning	What is really important to me? What are my values?
Goals	What do I want?
Options	What are my choices?

Julian Ford, Ed.D. © 2006

Identifying Your Values

Rate each value as to its importance to you:

■ 1 = very, 2 = somewhat, 3 = not important

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| -good health | -owning a home |
| -many close friendships | -contributing to my community |
| -a family | -abundance of leisure time |
| -a fulfilling career | -ability to move around |
| -a stable marriage/relationship | -a stable life |
| -a financially comfortable life | -a life without stress |
| -independence | -strong religious values |
| -creativity | -a chance to make social chg |
| -a variety of interests & activities | -helping others |

Identifying Your Values (2)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| -time to myself | -freedom to create own lifestyle |
| -a life with many challenges | -to be famous |
| -a life with many changes | -to save lives |
| -opportunity to be a leader | -time for physical activities |
| -a good physical appearance | |
| -an exciting life | |
| -a chance to get into politics | |
| -to live with strong moral values | |
| -to write something memorable | |
| -to make lots of money | |
| -enjoyment of arts & entertainment | |

Identifying Your Values (3)

■ List 5 of your most important values.

■ Ask yourself:

- Does your present life reflect your values?
- Is the way you spend your time consistent with your priorities?
- If not, how can you make it so?
- Are there parts of your life you would like to change but cannot right now?
- Is so, what is your timetable for bringing your lifestyle more into harmony with your values?
- How do you think your most important personal values will affect or have affected your career choice?

Meaning: Beliefs and Values

Underlying beliefs and values:


- Feeling respected
- Feeling cared for, loved
- Feeling valued
- Feeling understood
- Relationships: feeling connected (family, friends), fitting in, being liked
- Trust, honesty
- Justice, Fairness, Equality: Why is life sometimes unfair?
- Loyalty: to friends, family, community, country, etc.
- Independence: Freedom to make choices—being empowered
- Kindness & Helping others: Friends, family, animals, strangers
- Spirituality- higher power, religion, etc.



Let 'M Go Example: Amanda's Story


Amanda is 15 years old. Her father has a drinking problem and has a long history of domestic violence. He would often disappear for days without calling and then come home drunk and start a fight with her mom. This time he's been gone a month and no one's heard from him.

Today Amanda is upset that her boyfriend didn't call her last night as promised. When she does reach him on the phone the next day, she doesn't ask him what happened or where he was. Instead she feels very angry and starts screaming at him.



"That ****!
He is going
to pay for
what he did."

What does she want?



"I'm going to cheat on him so he knows how it feels"

What does she want?

LET'M GO: Amanda's Example

What's the first thing to do?
SOS

Losing it: What upset Amanda—what got her going? Why so intense? Could stuff from the past be a trigger?

Emotions: What else might she be feeling in addition to angry?

Thoughts: What might she be thinking?

LET'M GO: Amanda's Example

Make Meaning

Beliefs and Values: What might be most important to her in this situation?

Future: Six months from now, what might she want in this relationship?

What Went Well: What contribution did she make—what went well?

Reframe: How can she make sense of what happened?

LET'M GO: Amanda's Example



Goals: What might she want in this situation?

Options: What choices does she have to get what she wants?
What are the pros & cons?

(L O O K back as if with binoculars to find something that went well, no matter how small)

LET'M GO Reminders

- Will group members readily identify underlying goals?
 - What questions can you ask? What themes should you listen for? (list 3 possibilities)
- What do you do if they generate an option that is questionable? (e.g. revenge, violence)
 - Write down ALL suggestions for Options
 - GROUP evaluates pros and cons
 - Is adolescent ok with chosen option? Don't choose for them
- Summarize and tie in meaning
- What do you do before ending?
 - SOS



- If there is time, review why we focus on the meaning in the Let 'M Go.
- If out of time, go to last mindfulness exercise

Why Focus on Meaning?

- Power of Information & Perspective
- Chicken Pox example
- Rape Survivor



Making Meaning

“Meaning is the sense that, no matter what is going on in your life, you can hang onto the things that really matter to you. It is the belief that there are elements and people and views that cannot—no matter what—be taken from you.”

-Viktor E. Frankl

“The thing that upsets people is not what happens but what they think it means.”

Epictetus

Remember: Benefits to Mindfulness

- Stress reduction
- Less emotional reactivity
- Increased focus/cognitive flexibility
- Increased relationship satisfaction
- Enhanced self-insight, morality, intuition,
ALL functions associated with the prefrontal lobe

Mindfulness Exercise: Let's Dance: