FINDING HAPPINESS: A WORKSHOP FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON
UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING EMOTIONS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in
Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Roger Moss, a mentor and a spiritual teacher who showed his students true authenticity and embodied a passion for life that will continue to inspire me until the end of my days.
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The purpose of this project was to create a workshop for college students on understanding and managing negative emotions. Depression rates are high among young adults in college and as new stressors are added to their lives that many students are unaware of how to deal with or understand. Stressors including moving away from home for the first time, entering into adult romantic relationships, taking on new responsibilities, and discovering their identities can feel isolating and confusing. This four-hour workshop provides a structured understanding of the emotional issues that are being faced by college students and provides an approach to understanding and managing these unwanted feelings. The Finding Happiness workshop illuminates the role of the power of choice and introduces techniques including mindfulness and meditation to help bring awareness to the present. The Finding Happiness workshop provides a safe container to openly talk about negative and positive feelings and ways to manage the mind. At the end of the workshop participants will have an understanding on how to manage their emotions with new knowledge, interventions, and resources that will be provided to them for additional support.
Chapter I:

Introduction

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own reward." - Amelia Earhart

In 2011, the American College Health Association—National College Health Assessment— a nationwide survey of 2 and 4 year universities- revealed that 30% of college students have felt "so depressed that it was difficult to function" at some point in the past 12 months (ACHA-NCHA, 2012). College is meant to be an exciting avenue for emerging adults to explore themselves and develop a sense of identity, establish relationships with others, and consider future career options. Stressors during emerging adulthood, including finances, family issues, romantic relationships, and academic pressure can be overwhelming for college students. In fact, many students, on their own for the first time may not know how to deal such stressors. Young adulthood is a difficult transition and if not handled with care, long-term physical and mental health issues may become a serious concern (Berg, Ritschel, Swan, An, & Ahluwalia, 2011). Berg et al. (2011) go on to state that this period of development and growth for individuals can include exploration of health-compromising behaviors such as drinking, smoking, low physical activity, and poor dietary habits. With challenging transitions and possible engagement in risk-taking behaviors, college students need to be equipped with the proper tools and resources to manage their emotions and need information about resources to turn to for help. Mindfulness-based interventions have proved to help reduce stress levels, negative behaviors associated with stress, and decrease health problems in college students.
(Roberts & Danoff-Burg, 2010). In 2004 a national survey of over 100,000 college students revealed that college students had high levels of interest in spiritual exploration and the search for meaning and purpose of life (HERI, 2005). In this exciting stage of development, these emerging adults are searching for answers and guidance that will shape their identities. This growth needs to be nurtured and fed properly with knowledge that will help college students to embrace their emotional change and further explore their inner selves. Armed with the knowledge of the power of choice college students possess and the usefulness of mindfulness-based practices these young adults will be able to manage life stressors more effectively.

Statement of Problem

Depression is a serious disorder that can affect college students’ academic achievement, perpetuate loneliness, and is a major risk factor for suicide. In a recent survey of 1,455 college students 53% reported experiencing what they would label as depression since the beginning of college (Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, & Jenkins, 2001). Alongside depression is a high level of stress for college students as they cope with academic, social, and personal challenges. “An important developmental task for college students is learning to manage excess or unnecessary distress while actively engaging in healthy, age-appropriate challenges that promote growth” (Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008, p. 569).

Purpose of Project

The purpose of the Finding Happiness workshop is to increase college students’ awareness of the power they possess to manage their emotions. Additionally, this workshop will teach college students techniques to combat unwanted feelings and emotions and provide helpful resources. This workshop will increase college student’s understanding of their own emotions and how to reshape their mind to manage difficult emotions differently. College students will
also learn mindfulness and meditation techniques that will help to quiet the mind and focus on the here and now. The goal of this workshop is for college students who attend to leave with a sense of ease and calm about dealing with their emotions and to encourage exploration and sharing of feelings with the self or trusted others. The intention of this workshop is to educate participants about the range of emotions and to reduce any fear that surrounding experiences and expressions of emotions so students can manage with them more effectively.

**Terminology**

For the purpose of this project and workshop the following terms will be used, illustrated by the definitions below:

**College students**: Referring to students in a college setting ranging in age from 18- 25 years old.

**Depression**: As defined in the DSM-IV-TR, “The essential feature of a Major Depressive Episode is a period of at least 2 weeks during which there is either depressed mood or the loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities.” (DSM-IV-TR, 2000, p. 349).

**Mindfulness**: “The awareness that arises from paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, to things as they are” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 54).

**Meditation**: “A method by which a person concentrates more and more upon less and less. The aim is to empty the mind while, paradoxically, remaining alert. …Can be described as any discipline that aims at enhancing awareness through the conscious directing of attention” (Feuerstein, 2003, p. 346).

**Happiness**: “There is no single meaning; happiness is relative to the person experiencing it… scientists often refer to it as “subjective well-being” …Implies a positive mood in the present and a positive outlook for the future.” (Achor, 2010, p.39).
Summary

College students’ stress levels have been linked to adverse outcomes including anxiety and depression (Oman et al., 2008). College students are in need of effective approaches and interventions to manage their emotions. The purpose of this project is to create a workshop that will help to equip college students with proper interventions and techniques that will help to lower stress levels and manage their emotions so that they may lead a healthier and happier life while enjoying their college years. To further understand the approaches being used in the workshop a basic background understanding of the terminology and studies conducted that support the theory are needed. The following chapter will provide further knowledge on current depression rates among college students displaying a need for action, what happiness actually is and how one can elevate their emotions with changing their thought patterns, a deeper understanding of the power of choice and the importance of will, and the positive effects of meditation and mindfulness.
Chapter II:

Literature Review

As young adults leave their homes to attend college many stressors begin to emerge in their lives, including financial worry, being alone for the first time, and/or romantic relationship problems. For most students, this transition can be overwhelming. Depression has become a serious issue for college students. This literature review will examine what causes depression and sadness in college students. This literature review will also explore the role happiness has in the lives of college students and also ways to positively reshape and individual’s way of thinking. William Glasser’s choice theory, along with other theorists, will be reviewed to demonstrate the power of choice in an individual’s life. Finally the literature review will end with an in depth review of the importance of mindfulness, being in the here and now, and meditation.

Diagnostic Criteria for Depression

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision* (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2000) includes multiple mood disorders that pertain to depression, including major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, and depressive disorder not otherwise specified. There are other mood disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) that have depression listed as part of the disorder but the “unipolar depression” disorders are the main three that will be discussed.

According to the APA (2000), the DSM-IV defines a Major Depressive Episode as being in a depressed mood or having lost interest or pleasure in nearly all activities for a period of at least 2 weeks. Additional criteria for this diagnosis includes four of the following symptoms: change in appetite or weight, sleep, or psychomotor activity; decreased energy; feelings of
worthlessness or guilt; difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions; or recurrent
thoughts of death or suicidal ideation, plans or attempts (APA, 2000).

Dysthymic disorder is characterized by having a depressed mood for most of the day, for
more days than not, reported by either the individual or observation from another, for at least 2
years (APA, 2000). It has been reported that under clinical surroundings up to 75% of
individuals with Dysthymic Disorder will develop Major Depressive Disorder within 5 years
(APA, 2000). The main difference between the two is based on the severity, chronicity, and
persistence. Depressive disorder not otherwise specified is defined as disorders with depressive
features that do not meet the criteria for any similar mood disorders in the DSM.

**Depression versus Sadness**

To be familiar with the definition of depression requires an understanding the differences
between sadness and depression. Maj (2012) takes three approaches to better understanding the
differences between sadness and depression; (1) contextual, (2) qualitative, and (3) pragmatic.
The first is the “contextual” approach, which assumes sadness is always triggered by a life event,
such as death or a loss, and lasts for a time that is proportionate to the event. The contextual
approach notes that depression is not triggered by any particular event or if it were triggered by
an event the intensity and duration of time is not balanced (Maj, 2012). It is important to be
familiar with what is happening in a person’s life at the onset of the depressed states or periods
of sadness. The next approach in understanding the difference between sadness and depression is
categorized as “qualitative”. This approach states that there is a qualitative difference between
depression and sadness. When working with the qualitative approach a more in-depth
exploration of the subjective experiences the person is going through is necessary. Lastly, Maj
(2012) states that the “pragmatic” approach aims to examine the differences between sadness and
depression on a continuum of depressive states in the general population and that the “boundary between depression and ‘normal’ sadness should be based on pragmatic grounds, i.e. on issues of clinical utility” (p. 45). The DSM-IV and the ICD-10 are working to achieve just that, “regarding depression as a “disorder” when it reaches a given threshold in terms of severity, duration and degree of suffering or functional impairment, thus deserving of clinical attention” (Maj, 2012, p.45). Maj (2012) explains that the threshold needs to be based on the overall severity of the depressive symptoms and not just by the number of symptoms, as the DSM-IV requires in order of determining if an individual has depression. Depression lies on a continuum and can be higher or lower in severity. Maj (2012) states that, “depression should not be conceptualized and presented as an all-or-none disease…The threshold for a depressive state requiring clinical attention may be lower than that fixed by the DSM-IV, but the threshold for a depressive state requiring pharmacological treatment is likely to be higher” (p.46). Depression is a serious disorder and should be thoroughly explored by a helping professional on an individual case-by-case basis so that misdiagnoses do not occur.

Horwitz and Wakefield (2007) describe sadness as humanity’s natural response to the death of loved ones, losses, and reversals of fortune. The argument among professionals is determining when normal sadness turns into depressive disorders. Human emotions are difficult to understand, and what constitutes as within normal limits of the human experience is a challenge to quantify. The DSM does not include conditions that stem from bereavement as sole determinants of major depression because that is a natural emotional reaction to the loss of a loved one (Horwitz & Wakefield, 2007). Horowitz and Wakefield (2007), in their book, The loss of sadness: How psychiatry transformed normal sorrow into a depressive disorder, reported that 42% of bereaved people met the criteria for depressive disorder after a month, but only 16%
remained in that state after a year. Grief can change from healthy emotional state, for example a widower grieving over the loss of a partner for an average period of time. Grief can look widely different on the opposite side of that spectrum, for example overly persistent and extreme leaving a person with psychotic ideation or immobilization.

**Statistics on College Students Rate of Depression**

The American College Health Association- National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) has been collecting research on college student’s health since 2000. This survey has been organized to assist college health service providers, counselors, and administrators in collecting data about their student’s habits and behaviors (ACHA-NCHA II, 2012). The ACHA-NCHA provides the largest known data on college student’s health. The recent revised survey, the ACHA-NCHA-II, has modified a number of questions and added new questions. Some of the revisions included an update of current illegal drugs, contraceptive methods, and vaccines (ACHA-NCHA-II, 2012). The following statistics has been pulled from the ACHA-NCHA-II Fall 2012 survey for a Reference Group comprised of 28,237 respondents with an overall response proportion of 20.00% (ACHA-NCHA-II, 2012). The average age was 21.96 years old, 65.6% were female and 32.1% male, and 71% Caucasian, 6.3% African American, 11.2% Hispanic, 11.2% Asian, 1.9% American Indian, and 4% biracial.

According to the ACHA-NCHA-II (2012), within the course of 12 months 38.1% of males and 47.7% of females answered yes to feeling things were hopeless. When asked if these college students felt overwhelmed with all they had to do, 74.5% of males and 90.7% of females answered yes within the last 12 months. Within the last 12 months, when asked if they felt lonely, 48.8% males and 60.4% females answered yes. In the last 12 months 26.1% of males and 31.1% females answered yes to feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function. 38.9% of
males and 55.4% of females felt overwhelming anxiety and 32.9% of males and 37.2% of females felt overwhelming anger in the last 12 months. Within the last 12 months, 6.2% males and 7.1% females seriously considered suicide and 1.0% of males and 1.2% of females attempted suicide (ACHA-NCHA-II, 2012). Women in college are more likely than men to engage in drinking which could lead to problems with alcohol or participating in unsafe sex (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009). Several researchers have found that levels of depression are twice as high in females when compared to males, beginning in adolescence and continuing into adulthood (Chaplin, 2006).

When depression gets to such an extreme some young adults attempt and commit suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young adults ages 15-24 (NIMH, 2009) According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) (2012) the NSDUH Report on major depressive episode among full-time college students and other young adults ranging in age from 18 to 22 years old, 12% of females were more likely to experience a major depressive episode than males at 4.5%. When examining the different ethnic categories the highest percentage of experiencing major depressive episodes were young adults with two or more races, at 17.6%, followed by Hispanic students with 9.1%, then White students, Black students, and Asian students (NSDUH, 2012). This data demonstrates that depression and sadness are concerning for college students and there are specific stressors that trigger unhappiness in young adults in college.

**Stressors that Trigger Unhappiness**

*Emerging Adulthood*

College begins a new chapter in lives of young adults. Emerging adulthood offers new life directions in love, work, and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is
distinguished by independence from social roles and permanent life decisions, focusing on ages 18-25 (Arnett, 2000). Arnett defines the term emerging to be understood as the “dynamic, changeable, fluid quality of the period” (p. 447). They are out of high school and starting a new “grown-up” lifestyle. This is a period in most people’s life for the greatest exploration of possibilities than any other period. Emerging adults tend to have a larger scope of potential possibilities for their future than other ages groups because they are less likely to be constrained by role requirements. Arnett (2000) explains that the years of emerging adulthood are illustrated by demographic diversity and instability, highlighting on change and exploration. The transition into adulthood for emerging adults is focused on making independent decisions and accepting responsibly for themselves (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults are working towards being self-sufficient. Being self-sufficient for most emerging adults means to be financially independent, this greatly impacts their developmental status as they move into young adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Arnett (2000) addresses three main areas of exploration for identity issues in emerging adolescence; love, work, and worldviews. The explorations of love in emerging adulthood begin to look more serious and intimate, whereas in adolescence dating was more for recreation or for companionship. Romantic relationships for emerging adults, different from adolescence, are more likely to include sexual intercourse, longevity, and living together (Arnett, 2000).

Emerging adults begin to explore possible work environments that look satisfying for their future. While exploring work possibilities emerging adults are also exploring identity issues with questions such as: What kind of work will I be good at? What kind of work would I enjoy doing for a long time? What are my chances at getting that position? The explorations of love and work are not just preparation for adulthood but also to gain life experiences before taking on adult responsibilities and obligations (Arnett, 2000).
Upon entering college, emerging adults have a preconceived idea of what their worldviews are; based on the information they collected throughout childhood and adolescence (Arnett, 2000). College opens emerging adult minds to a variety of different worldviews, which triggers these adults to question their previous worldviews (Arnett, 2000). By graduation, young adults will have most likely determined what their worldview is, often different from earlier ideas (Arnett, 2000). Arnett explains that regardless of education it is common for emerging adults to explore their own religious views and form their own independent views different from their families to attain adult status. Emerging adults engage in more risky behaviors than adolescence, including unprotected sex, most types of substance use, and risky driving behaviors such as driving at high speeds or intoxicated (Arnett, 2000). These risky behaviors can be understood as part of identity exploration and the desire to obtain a range of different experiences (Arnett, 2000).

Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

Along with these changes in emerging adulthood naturally come stressors, which can contribute to unhappiness. During the transition to college multiple life changes are occurring including moving, changing friends, and starting new activities and classes (Chaplin, 2006). Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, and Jenkins (2001) surveyed 1,455 students from four separate colleges and universities to find more information about the reasons for suicide and depression. Of this group 35% were male and 65% female with 82% of the students ranging in age from 18-24 years old. The respondents were asked questions related to whether they had experienced depression, whether they had thought about suicide, what kind of help they had sought out if suicidal or depressed, and what could their college could do to help more effectively with this issue (Furr et al., 2001). The results revealed that 53% of the students indicated that they had
experienced depression, 9% had thought about suicide, and 1% reported that they attempted suicide. The most common cause of depression among the students who reported feeling depressed since coming to school were grade problems (cited by 53%), loneliness (51%), money problems (50%), and relationship problems with boyfriend/ girlfriend (48%) (Furr et al., 2001). Other factors that contributed to feelings of depression included hopelessness (26%), parental problems (25%), helplessness (17%), other (13%), don’t know (5%), and legal problems (5%). Suicide ideation results showed that hopelessness (49%) was cited as the largest contributor followed by loneliness (47%), and helplessness (37%). When asked if the students sought professional help for feelings of depression, 17% reported that they had sought counseling (Furr et al., 2001). It is evident by the statistics above that there is a problem. A large number of college students are feeling lonely and hopeless which can be a dangerous combination. College students need to be educated on the resources available to help them through this hard time and they also need to learn how to use certain skills and tools to combat these isolating feelings.

During college, students are also beginning to adjust and form their views about relationships with others. As noted above, emerging adulthood is a time for increased dating, which in turn means increased possibility for experiencing relationship break ups. University students going through romantic relationship breakups experience what researchers have coined as a form of complicated grief. Breakup distress is defined as an intense and prolonged period of grief following a loss (Field, Diego, Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2009). Complicated grief is identified as intrusive thoughts, painful yearnings, feelings of isolation, and severe emotional distress related to loss. Complicated, when talking about complicated grief, is a term to reflect the unresolved compilations of normal functioning (Field et al., 2009). Complicated grief is tied with experiences related to anxiety, depression, social functioning, and health issues. Over 90%
of college students have reported rejecting someone who was in love with them and having also been rejected by someone they were in love with (Field et al., 2009). Many of these college students are experiencing grief feelings for the first time and can become overwhelmed by the feelings of heartache and loss. These young adults are at the age when emotional development is still evolving to serve an important function in their lives. Relationships develop and strengthen over time with age and maturity. Young adults are just beginning to understand the complexities of their own relationship patterns while still working on establishing their sense of self within and independent of unhealthy relationships with others.

As college aged individuals experience complicated grief, students often explore another emotion: anger. Researchers have stated that anger helps mobilize energy to assert one’s self, happiness helps to form social bonds, and sadness allows a person to let go of unattainable goals (Chaplin, 2006). Chaplin suggests that unexpressed anger can build up internally and create feelings of low self-worth and guilt, which are commonly associated with depression. Chaplin (2006) conducted a research study consisting of 100 (49 female, 51 male) first- and second-year students at a university in the northeastern United States with ages ranging from 18 years, 1 month to 20 years, 2 months with a mean of 19 years. The ethnicity of the sample was representative of the university population with 80 Caucasian, 15 Asian, one African-American, two Latino, and two biracial students (Chaplin, 2006). Chaplin (2006) found that feeling unhappy over a month’s time was related to greater depressive symptoms in older adolescents. Chaplin (2006) also found that high levels of happiness were often related to high levels of depression, meaning that adolescents who portrayed cheerful emotion during frustrating situations may actually not be functional. An individual who limits negative affect may also limit his or her ability to assert an independent identity, which could lead to depression (Chaplin,
According to this data, one conclusion drawn is individuals who constructively express emotions when they arise and do not suppress them can prevent future depression.

As emerging adults begin their journey into becoming independent it is clear through research that they may stumble upon various and unfamiliar emotional states. Some of these emotions, experienced for the first time, may seem unmanageable. Normal sadness could feel like depression and feelings of isolation may feel more prominent that ever before. College students could benefit from psychoeducation regarding their emotional experiences so that they can be better equipped to regulate their emotions in healthier and more productive ways, which may also reduce or even prevent depressive states.

What is Happiness?

According to the English language, “happy” is an adjective that has three broad meanings: (1) fortunate; lucky, (2) pleased, and (3) well-suited to the situation (Lu, 2001). Western psychology uses the term happiness to be described as a psychological state following the gratification of a need or desire (Lu, 2000). In North America and Europe, there is a strong sense of independence and autonomy. It is said for these countries that the self is the center of all thought and action (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). Happiness is constructed as personal achievement. In other cultures, such as the Chinese culture, they view happiness through health, virtue, and peaceful deaths (Lu, 2000). Traditional Confucian philosophy proclaims that happiness lies in maintaining a harmonious family and keeping world peace, not about material abundance (Lu, 2000). According to Taoism, happiness is personal freedom from all human desires; it is not an emotional feeling of joy but rather an intellectual insight and transcendence (Lu, 2000). Lu conducted a study of 142 undergraduate students with ages ranging from 19-25. They were all enrolled in a health psychology course at a medical university in
Taiwan. The participants were given an open-ended question, “what is happiness?” and had to write an essay. A total of 67 distinct definitions of happiness were drawn from this study and all tied back to five underlying themes (Lu, 2000). Lu’s five themes included: (1) happiness as a mental state of satisfaction and contentment, (2) happiness as positive feelings/ emotions, (3) happiness as a harmonious homeostasis, (4) happiness as achievement and hope, and (5) happiness from ill being. As cited in Lyubomirsky, Tkach, and Dimatteo (2005): Howard Mumford Jones once said, “Happiness belongs to that category of words, the meaning of which everybody knows but the definition of which nobody can give” (p. 365). Anchor (2010) states that there is no one single meaning of happiness as it is relative to the person experiencing it. Anchor goes on to further state that scientists often refer to happiness as “subjective well-being” as it is based on how we feel about our own lives. Happiness may carry many different definitions and meanings across the world, though it seems the overall theme of all definitions is the person experiencing an elevated emotion, filled with inner peace and a positive outlook.

**Positive Psychology**

In recent years, researchers in the field of positive psychology have produced more studies that focus on individuals making life more rewarding and enhancing positive emotions, such as happiness. The goal of positive psychology is to identify and nurture strengths in individuals so they may overcome weaknesses versus other theoretical frameworks that focus on fixing what is wrong (Senf & Liau, 2012). Because happiness has many benefits for individuals such as improved health and higher success rates, developing more interventions that increase individuals’ happiness levels and the individuals’ ability to sustain these levels over time has remained an underlying goal of the field (Schiffrin & Nelson, 2008). Interventions for individuals that target the level of stress and happiness, such as exercise, meditation, and written expression
have been shown to decrease stress and increase happiness (Schiffrin & Nelson, 2008). Happiness is difficult to study due to its subjective nature; however scales have been developed to address this subjective experience.

**Measuring Subjective Happiness**

Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) created a 4-item measure of global subjective happiness that was developed and validated in 14 studies with a total of 2,732 participants. The data was collected from students in college, high school, community adults, and older adults. The SHS 4-item scale was derived from an original pool of 13 self-report items. The range of scores on the SHS falls on a likert-scale from 1.0 to 7.0 with the higher scores reflecting greater happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Some example questions from the SHS include: *In general I consider myself not very happy to very happy* and *Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?* The purpose of this particular study was to test the validity and stability of the Subjective Happiness Scale, which compared to most other scales, has more of a focus on happiness from the respondents’ perspective. A separate study conducted by Warner and Vroman (2011) examined 903 university students using a similar scale to the SHS called the Happiness Inducing Behavior method, which examined personality traits and happiness. Results showed the largest correlation with happiness was cultivating optimism and savoring. This particular study highlighted the importance of an optimistic outlook.

Happiness is a subjective experience and it is personal to whoever is experiencing it. Aristotle used the term, *eudaimonia*, which translates to “human flourishing” (Achor, 2010). Author Shawn Achor (2010) creates his own definition stating “happiness is the joy we feel striving after our potential” (p.40). Positive psychology has opened up the research field for
further exploration of this positive emotion and scales have been developed to acquire deeper knowledge on what creates and feeds happiness. Research shows that the shift of attitude can have a large impact on overall emotional states.

**Optimism vs. Pessimism**

Optimism comes from the Latin word *optimum*, which means “the best possible” which refers to the idea that the world is already the best is could possibly be and couldn’t get any better (Fox, 2012). Optimism has a lot to do with accepting the world as it is, with the good and the bad. Pessimism derives from the Latin word *pessimus*, the philosophical viewpoint of a pessimist assumes the worst possible and that everything gravitates toward evil. Pessimists are convinced their problems will never be fixed. Fox (2012) says that optimists usually have great enthusiasm and energy and are eager for all that life has to offer. Optimism has been linked to better health and well-being. Fox also states that optimists tend to keep up momentum even when the world seems to be against them. Fox quotes Winston Churchill, “Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm” (Fox, 2012, p. 61). Fox also follows up this quote with one from Thomas Edison, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work” (Fox, 2012, p. 61). With an optimistic outlook on life’s tasks, failures will not seem so heavy and with a persistent positive attitude and determination toward reaching a goal, the more chances an individual might have at succeeding. Fox (2012) eases the minds of pessimists by stating that individual’s minds are malleable and continuously changing. Individual’s interpretations of the world can be reshaped inside the brain to think differently; therefore pessimistic people can become optimistic people if they wanted. With the discovery of neuroplasticity, science has shown that the brain holds the capacity to respond to new things and to continue to learn and change (Fox, 2012).
As cited in Ellen Fox’s book, *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain*, a psychologist from the University of North Carolina named Barbara Fredrickson found that resilient people use optimistic thoughts and positive emotions as a way to cope with difficult situations. She developed a concept called “broaden and build” theory, which claims that positive emotions broaden the range of ideas individuals create for dealing with adverse situations (Fox, 2012).

“Instead of narrowing our actions down to fight or flight as negative emotions do, positive ones broaden the amount of possibilities we process, making us more thoughtful, creative, and open to new ideas” (Anchor, 2010, p. 44). Fox (2012) discusses using the broadening affect on students in laboratory classes. She was able to raise and lower the students’ moods by showing short clips of either comedy or scary movies. In her research following the clips, Fox found that students in more positive moods were able to solve puzzles and problems better than those in negative moods. Negative emotions narrow an individual’s attention to a potential threat. This part of the brain is activated when danger seems to be near though it dampens down all other processes in the brain (Fox, 2012). The fear brain, pessimism, can help the self from dangerous situations however overacting in the fear brain can cut off opportunities to act from the pleasure brain, optimism.

Anchor (2010) claims that “happiness and optimism fuel performance and achievement” which gave him the competitive edge for writing his book and developing what he calls The Happiness Advantage (p. 4). Anchor (2010) states that when individuals are happy the mindset and mood are positive thus making individuals smarter, more creative, and more successful. Anchor claims that happiness is the center and success rotates around it.
Happiness and Well-Being

Happiness is linked to improving physical health and well-being, which in turn leads to higher success rates (Anchor, 2010). Positive emotions fill human brains with dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that correlate with making individuals feel good and improve higher cognitive functioning (Anchor, 2010). Happiness and self-esteem are closely related, if not dependant on one another. However, some researchers have also suggested that happiness and self-esteem are quite distinct from one another (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). Lyubomirsky et al. (2006) conducted a study with 621 older adults ranging from 51-95 years old to look more closely at the relationship between happiness and self-esteem. Lyubomirsky et al. (2006) addresses happiness for this study by using global, subjective assessments of whether one is happy or unhappy. Lyubomirsky et al. (2006) defined self-esteem is defined as a global feeling of self-worth, self-acceptance, goodness, and self-respect (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). To further understand the similarities and differences between happiness and self-esteem the researcher team examined the attributes of the two constructs. The attributes that correlate to happiness are as follows for this study: traits and dispositions, social affiliation, positive moods, satisfaction with life, satisfaction of psychological needs, demographics, and life events. The team also examined attributes that correlate to self-esteem for this study are as follows: agency, competence, and positive expectations (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). Results showed three measured variables most uniquely related to happiness being: mood and temperament, global satisfaction with life, and social relationships. Measured variables that were most related to self-esteem included, optimism, lack of hopelessness, a sense of mastery, and satisfaction with one’s education (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). Happiness and self-esteem may differ in slight ways but both elevate emotions in a positive direction and are vital for overall well-being.
The Effects of Hope

Partaking in unhealthy behaviors such as drinking, smoking, and drug use during emerging adulthood and transition could interrupt the successful mastery of development, increase stress, and hinder success (Berg, Ritschel, Swan, An, & Ahluwalia, 2011). According to the ACHA- National College Health Assessment II (ACHA- NCHA- II) (2012), in the past month 62% of college students drank alcohol, 13.2% smoked cigarettes, 15.3% smoked marijuana, and 12.7% used all other drugs combined including cocaine, amphetamines, hallucinogens, inhalants, and ecstasy. These behaviors illustrate a need for effective behavioral interventions. Berg et al. (2011) looked at the relationship between risky behaviors and the construct of hope in college students, hypothesizing hope might be a potential factor in the health behaviors among college students. Berg et al. (2011) define hope as the perception of having both the routes to reach one’s goals (pathways) and the motivation (agency) to use those routes. Berg et al. states that pathway thinking reflects the ability to generate multiple routes to goals and to choose new routes when others are blocked. Agency thinking reflects the ability keep motivation in forward motion toward active goals. Berg et al. (2011) claims that higher hope is due to higher self-efficacy, which is defined as an individual’s evaluation of whether they can carry out an achieving action. Hope helps to maintain and promote good health and is also known for preventing and treating illness (Berg et al., 2011). Berg et al. (2011) developed a study that looked at the relationship between hope levels to past 30-day drinking, smoking, exercising, and eating among college students. The prediction was that higher hope would result in lower rates of risky health behaviors. The study focused on 2,265 students aged 18-25 years. The study was given online in the form of a survey containing 108 questions assessing health
Hope was assessed using a 6-item State Hope Scale, which reflected agency and pathways thinking. Results showed that higher hope was related to less drinking and less likelihood of smoking. Higher levels of hope were associated with having exercised and eating less dietary fat. Berg et al. (2011) found that higher hope implies greater goal-directed thinking, increased self-efficacy, motivation, and increased ability to plan and strategize to reach goals. Hope, just like optimism, plays a key role in the success and overall health of college students.

Adams, Bezner, Drabbs, Zambarano, and Steinhardt (2000) adapted an educational model of wellness founded on principles common to most understandings of wellness. The model and measure include the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of wellness (Adams et al., 2000). The spiritual dimension is defined as a positive sense of meaning and purpose in life and the psychological dimension is defined as the perception that one will experience positive outcomes to the events and circumstances of life (Adams et al., 2000). Adams et al. (2000) developed a study that would evaluate the relationship between the spiritual and psychological dimensions and how they relate to each other and to the overall model of perceived wellness in college students. The sample was comprised of 112 undergraduate students with an average age of 23 years old. Students were given a survey, which included four different scales, life purpose subscale, life orientation test, sense of coherence scale, and perceived wellness survey. Results of Adams et al. (2000) study showed that elements of the spiritual and psychological dimensions including life purpose, optimism, and sense of coherence were related to perceived wellness and health. Optimism and a sense of coherence can help guide college students to fulfill their true nature or life purpose.
Senf and Liau (2012) produced a separate study to examine the effects of positive interventions on happiness and depressive symptoms with 146 participants/undergraduates. Senf and Liau (2012) attribute positive psychology to the development of positive qualities that improve individual’s well-being. Within positive psychology strengths are identified and nurtured to overcome weaknesses. The mere identification of an individual’s strengths can help them to develop a strength-based identity. Similar to the present project, Senf and Liau (2012) look more closely at positive interventions including a gratitude-based exercise and a strengths-based exercise. Senf and Liau (2012) examine gratitude as it has been linked to host a range of positive emotions including contentment, happiness, pride, and hope. The study had a total of 146 participants with a mean age of 20 years old. The study consisted of four questionnaires, instructions for the gratitude-based and strength-based interventions based on research, and two manipulation checks. The results showed that gratitude-based and strength-based interventions served to increase happiness and decreased depressive symptoms and also might have served as a buffer against negative affect of stress or anxiety, which affected the control group (Senf & Liau, 2012). The previous studies provide evidence supporting the role of positive psychology on the overall well-being of young college adults.

Happiness has proven to increase well-being and overall health. Shifting consciousness from pessimism to optimism can almost guarantee higher success and maintaining hope helps to keep positive emotions flowing into an individual’s life. The next section takes a closer look at the power of the mind and the choices that individuals have over modes of thinking.

**Choice Theory and Existential Psychology**

Psychological theories have been developed that center around the power of choice and the inward journey of an individual. When it is understood that the individual holds the power to
make life choices, then he or she can begin to inwardly explore the self and a greater sense of peace and happiness can stream in.

William Glasser developed choice theory and it is known as an internal control psychology; it explains why and how we make the choices that determine the course of our lives (Glasser, 1998). With an understanding of internal control, Glasser guides people in understanding what is wrong with external control psychology. External control can be defined as an outside source or person placing control on an individual in attempts to force them to do what they may not want to do. This can lead people into believing that other people made them feel the way they do. It takes away personal freedom that everyone needs and wants. Choice theory dares to explore the idea that individuals create their realities based on the choices they make in life. The question Glasser poses to his readers is: *Will what I am about to do bring me closer to these people or move us further apart?*

External control psychology can be described in one or more of the following four variations of situations. (1) You wanted someone else to do what he or she refuses to do; you were trying to force him or her to do what you wanted. (2) Someone else was trying to make you do something you didn’t want to do. (3) Both you and someone else were trying to make each other do what neither wanted to do. (4) You were trying to force yourself to do something you found very painful or even impossible to do. (Glasser, 1998, pp. 13-14)

As long as people believe that they own others, then they will not hesitate to use force to get their way (Glasser, 1998). There are people in our lives that we try and control and others we do not. An example of this control might look like a spouse trying to control their partner by dictating where they can or cannot go. On the opposite, employees are less likely to try and control their
manager’s behavior. The word control in this context is being defined as an individual pushing their ideas of what is best onto another. Glasser (1998) proclaims that if people understood choice theory, remembering that “the one thing no one can take away from you is the freedom to control your own quality world” (p.55), people would then make and keep more friends and their happiness would be dramatically increased by simply being more connected to the self. Glasser (1998) believes that everyone, from birth to death, is behaving and that all behaviors that have anything to do with satisfying basic needs are chosen (Glasser, 1998).

“We are not machines. We are not, as machines are, designed to respond in a specific way to external control. When we do as we are told, it is because we choose to do it on the basis of the information we have” (Glasser, 1998, p. 17). Implementing choice theory into your life, says Glasser (1998), will help free undeserved guilt that floods in from the external control world we live in. An example is a mother who uses external control to make her child feel guilty about something he did wrong as a form of punishment. However, Glasser would argue, it is an individual’s choice to feel guilty or not. No one person can make individuals feel a certain way, it is how those individuals choose to allow themselves to feel. Understanding choice theory and external control of the world can help release pressures and instill a sense of peace and happiness inside an individual. Glasser (1998) says that, “To be happy, I believe we need to be close to other happy people” (p.22).

William Glasser developed a basic understanding of human’s psychological needs: love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998). Glasser stated that all of our behavior is always our best choice; at the time we make the choice, to satisfy one or more of these needs (Glasser, 1998). Using choice theory and steering away from the external control of others individuals can start to meet these needs to help increase their happiness and inner peace. Glasser
believed that individuals never give up the search for happiness, and despite that some people may not be easy to get along with, they are needed. The earlier people realize that they are different from others and that the only persons they can own are themselves, the freer everyone can become.

Don Miguel Ruiz (1997) wrote a book called, *The Four Agreements*, which was called a practical guide to personal freedom. Similar to William Glasser, Ruiz believes that we have control over our minds. He explains that individuals can actually perceive millions of things at the same time, and by using their attention, they can hold whatever they want to perceive in the foreground of their minds (Ruiz, 1997). Ruiz continues on to say that the adults around in children’s lives hooked their attention and put information into their minds through repetition and that is how children learned everything they know today and into adulthood (Ruiz, 1997). It is important to remember that although individuals all live in the same world, everyone perceives it differently, in his or her own ways. No two people will see the world the same, choice theory explains this reality as our quality world (Glasser, 1998). The quality world can be defined as a small, personal world where each individual creates in their own memory starting from birth and continuing to create and re-create throughout life, with pictures and knowledge on how to satisfy their basic needs (Glasser, 1998). At some point in early development individuals are domesticated by their parents and by teachers and as they grow older they become their own domesticators (Ruiz, 1997). Individuals punish themselves when they do not follow rules according to the belief system they were taught and call himself or herself “bad girl” or “bad boy” (Ruiz, 1997).

“The more self-love we have, the less we will experience self-abuse” (Ruiz, 1997, p. 20). Self-abuse derives from self-rejection, and self-rejection comes from having an idealized image of what perfection should look like and never measuring up to that false image.
(Ruiz, 1997). Ruiz summarized these false ideas that pollute the mind as agreements individuals have made with themselves. Ruiz believed that with courage those fear-based agreements could be changed into agreements individuals can make for themselves that come from love, not fear. Ruiz and Glasser are both stressing that individuals have ultimate control of their minds, which means we control our emotions and our attitudes, not the outside world.

A well-known theorist, Viktor Frankl, also believed that individuals hold control over their minds. He stated in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, that “man was not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them” (Frankl, 1959, p. 131). Frankl (1959) believed that every human being has the freedom to change at any point in his or her life. Frankl is known in the psychology world for developing *logotherapy*, which is derived from the Greek term *logos*, which denoted “meaning”. This theory focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man’s search for such a meaning (Frankl, 1959). Frankl stresses that the goal of logotherapy is not to teach or preach, but rather helping a person by widening and broadening the visual field so that the whole spectrum of potential meaning becomes conscious and visible to him or her (Frankl, 1959). Having been a survivor of the Holocaust, Frankl came to create an agreement for himself that he theorized might be an important point of focus for all humans, the importance of every human searching for their meaning to life. Frankl expressed that it did not matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us (Frankl, 1959). Frankl believed that life ultimately meant taking responsibility to find the right answers to its problems and to achieve the tasks that it assigns each individual. These tasks differ from one person to another, making it difficult to summarize what the meaning of life exactly is.
Thus far we have shown that the meaning of life always changes, but never ceases to be. According to logotherapy, we can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering (Frankl, 1959, p. 111).

The first way simply states that an act of kindness and selflessness can help an individual discover the meaning of life. The second refers to finding meaning to life through truth and beauty, by experiencing nature, culture or by loving another human being (Frankl, 1959). “Love is the only way to grasp another human being in the innermost core of his personality” (Frankl, 1959, p. 111). The third way of finding meaning in life, Frankl states, is through suffering. Suffering offers a challenge for an individual to change him or herself, to turn a personal tragedy into a triumph (Frankl, 1959). Frankl states, “No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny” (Frankl, 1959, pp. 77). Each person is on their own journey, facing their own unique challenges and choosing which path to take.

In 2004, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) conducted a national study of 112,232 college students from 236 colleges and universities in attempts to better understand the spiritual beliefs and spiritual development of the young adults (HERI, 2005). The studies results revealed that college students are actively engaged in a spiritual search and are exploring to find the meaning in life. The results for the indicators of students’ spirituality showed that 76% of students were searching for meaning/ purpose in life, 74% have discussions with friends about the meaning of life, 64% stated that their spirituality is a source of joy, and 83% believe in the sacredness of life (HERI, 2005). Students who had strong spiritual orientations were able to find meaning during hard times (55%) and feel at peace and centered (58%), compared to students
with lower spiritual affiliation, 11 percent and 18 percent (HERI, 2005). Spirituality shows mostly positive associations with physical well-being, compassionate self-concept, charitable involvement, ethic of caring, and ecumenical worldview (HERI, 2005). This study was thorough in its findings and goes into depth about various religions and practices of spirituality. The overall theme displaying that campuses today hold diverse groups of ethnically, religiously, politically, and socio-economically students. They are searching for deeper meaning in their lives, looking for ways to connect deeper to their inner selves, seeking to be more giving to others, and determined to think globally about issues that confront society and the community (HERI, 2005). This study validates Frankl’s theory that people are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives and it helps to direct them in life.

Choice theory and existentialist ideas demonstrate the control that human kind has over their brains and in turn, their thoughts. Happiness is an emotion that an individual can choose to feel; it is something people often welcome into their realities. When individuals learn the power they have to guide their brains, they can consciously make the effort to change the way they think to a more positive, optimistic outlook. The next section will cover more about the use of meditation and mindfulness to quiet the mind and to focus the attention on one concept.

**Mindfulness and Meditation**

Mindfulness originated from a Buddhist practice and has found its way into present-day lives expanding outside of the Buddhist religion itself. Mindfulness does not mean one has to be a Buddhist; it has everything to do with being in harmony with oneself and with the world (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness has to do with examining who we are, with questioning our view of the world and our place in it, and obtaining appreciation for the fullness of each breath we draw. Kabat-Zinn (1994) states that mindfulness simply means to pay attention in a certain
way, without judgment and with full awareness of the present moment. Awareness can be
defined as a tool that monitors the consciousness by exploring the inner and outer environment
and consciousness bridges awareness and attention (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Attention is viewed
as the process of focusing conscious awareness to an experience. Mindfulness can be considered
an enhanced attention and awareness to a present reality (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness
helps to nurture a greater sense of clarity and inner peace. Brown and Ryan (2003) stated,
“Mindfulness captures a quality of consciousness that is characterized by clarity and vividness of
current experience and functioning and thus stands in contrast to the mindless, less “awake”
states of habitual or automatic functioning that may be chronic for many individuals” (p. 823).

It may be simple to practice mindfulness but it is not always easy. For most humans, the
unconscious mind has been programmed on automaticity and people have gotten tangled up in
habitual unawareness (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). An example of this automaticity might be driving
from one destination to another and upon arrival questioning how you even got there. Another
might be sitting through class and not hearing a single word the professor said because you were
thinking about all the other things you had to do. Being mindful is to be in the here and now,
fully aware of all that is happening inside and outside the self. To practice mindfulness is
enlightening in that is allows an individual to see more clearly and understand on a deeper level
areas in their lives that they may be out of touch (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness can help an
individual come face to face with hidden emotions such as grief, sadness, and anger- emotions
that might not otherwise be looked at consciously. Mindfulness also includes a chance to sit with
positive feelings of elation, joy, and happiness which are often overlooked and unacknowledged
(Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness has been reported to be associated with mental health benefits
including happiness, well-being, and physical health (Wayment, Wiist, Sullivan, & Warren, 2010).

Mindfulness is often paired alongside meditation. The mind can feel like it goes a million miles a minute with concurrent thoughts about the past, present, and future. Kabat-Zinn (1994) describes it as an incessant stream of thoughts flowing through the mind that leaves very little time for inner peace and quiet. Meditation provides a way to take control of that current, to sit and learn from it, and guide your own way through it (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Meditation has been a part of spiritual and healing practice for more than 5,000 years (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Meditation derives from the Latin word “meditari”, which means, “to engage in contemplation or reflection” (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011, p. 407). Meditation is both a process and a state. This is one of many definitions of mediation and can vary slightly from Yoga Sutras, Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan terms (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Meditation takes energy and focus. There is more to meditation than just sitting, it is about stopping and being present (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). The breath is a powerful aid in meditation. The attention can be turned toward the breath, in and out, to help your mind focus and release other thoughts. Thich Nhat Hanh, a popular Buddhist monk, wrote in his book Happiness that the breath should never be forced, it just needs to be made aware of as it is and after time the awareness will begin to improve the quality of breath naturally. Kabat-Zinn (1994) suggests doing a meditation throughout the day for as long as an individual has time to but dedicating themselves to stopping, sitting down, and becoming aware of the breath and allowing oneself to be exactly where they are, fully present. Individuals can alter an experience just by changing the way they pay attention, by choosing where and how that attention will be paid. It is important to have motivation and intentionality during meditation so the mind does not retract into old habits of reactivity (Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-
Williams et al. (2007) stated that “In the being mode of mind we learn we can inhabit the present with a sense of spaciousness; there is no place we need to be in this very moment and nothing to do other than what is required in this moment” (p. 59).

When things are slowed down in a meditative state, individuals are able to pay attention to each aspect of their sensory experience, the senses are awakened and the experience of tasting, touching, seeing, feeling, and hearing is transformed (Williams et al., 2007). Kabat-Zinn (1994) explains that during a meditation an individual can expand their awareness to observe all surroundings of things coming and going and your own body adjusting to the position, it may take some time for concentration and mindfulness to become strong enough to hold so many objects in awareness without getting lost in them or attached to certain thoughts. Kabat-Zinn goes on to say that for most people, it takes years and weighs on motivation and intensity of the practice to master it. The beginnings of practice are directed at staying with the breath and to use breath as an anchor to bring the individual back to when they are taken away from the practice (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Meditation does not have to be just in a sitting form as is commonly imagined. Mediation can be done through walking, standing, or lying down as well. Kabat-Zinn (1994) states, “The walking is just as good as the sitting. What is important is how you keep your mind” (p. 145). Just as awareness can focus on the breath, the awareness can focus on the footprints being made. Standing meditation models that of a tree, finding roots beneath the feet, feeling the body standing and being, moment to moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

Meditation can positively restructure the neural patterns of the brain and strengthen areas of the brain that are associated with attention and sensory processing and heightened empathic response (Wayment et al., 2010). Meditation can produce increased positive affect, better immune system responses, and healthier responses to stress and negative emotions (Wayment et
al., 2010). Wayment et al. (2010) research suggests that individuals who practice meditation on a regular basis are more likely to possess the ability to orient themselves to the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude.

There are a variety of mindfulness-based approaches including Buddhist meditations, modern standardized group-based meditation practices, and psychological interventions (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Mindfulness meditations such as Vipassana and Zen meditations are deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy based of the development of mindfulness (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). This practice uses mindfulness for concentration and introspective awareness. The aim of these Buddhist meditations is to reach an insight about the true nature of the self and of the world to achieve freedom from suffering. Also, to avoid old habits that stands in the way of happiness (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). More recently mindfulness-based interventions have been created for stress reduction (MBSR).

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

MBSR was developed in 1979 as an effort to merge ancient Buddhist philosophy and practice with current psychological and medical practice (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Kabat-Zinn, the creator of MBSR, explains that there is no need to change one’s own religion to participate in MBSR programs (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). MBSR had played an important role in introducing mindfulness into the field of psychology and medicine (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). MBSR studies with varied populations have found significant decreased in anxiety/ depression, mood disturbance, somatic symptoms of stress, and present- moment pain (Schure, Christopher, & Christopher, 2008). Schure et al. conducted a research study on 33 graduate students over the span of 4 years who where in a mental health counseling program. The ages of participants ranged from early 20s to mid-50s, 27 females and 6 male students; 30
were white, 2 were Japanese, and 1 was Native American. The study was presented as a course that the students would take twice a week for 75 minutes. The class consisted of using Hatha Yoga, sitting meditation, qiqog (ancient Chinese practice combining gentle physical movement with meditation), and relaxation techniques (Schure et al., 2008). It was a qualitative design to gain insight into the influence of MBSR-based techniques on counseling graduate students. Findings from the study are similar to most MBSR studies in showing lower levels of anxiety and depression in the participants (Schure et al., 2008). The findings also showed an increase in the participants’ clarity of thought and changes in attitudes and perceptions (Schure et al., 2008). Students reported effects on their belief and value system as well (Schure et al., 2008). Some students believed their future professional lives would greatly benefit by continuing their own personal meditation practice (Schure et al., 2008).

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy

Mindfulness based cognitive therapy (MBCT) was developed in the 1990s as a method to help prevent relapses of major depression (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Similar to MBSR, MBCT was created as a secular, clinical intervention and does not require any specific spiritual orientation or belief system (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). MBSR and MBCT use brief meditation programs based on three different techniques: body scans, sitting meditation, and Hatha Yoga practice (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). A body scan is described as a slow process of mentally scanning the body from head to feet and opening the senses to become attuned to whatever messages the body is wanting to send, all the while using breath awareness and relaxation. During sitting meditation the attention begins to focus on the breath, slow inhales and exhales, with the rise and fall of the abdomen. Ending with Hatha Yoga, which includes breathing exercises and simple stretches, designed to relax the musculoskeletal system (Chiesa &
Mindfulness has become a large field with various purposes and meanings and ultimately all leading to the same end point, which is inner peace.

*Outcome-Based Research on Meditation with College Students*

Meditation has been linked to a wide array of positive outcomes including higher achievement in academia, concentration, memory, reaction time, self-control, empathy, and self-esteem (Oman et al., 2008). A study was conducted by Oman et al. to examine the impact of meditational practices and interventions on college student’s stress and well-being. The study consisted of 44 college students ranging in age from 18 to 24 years and took place in 8 weekly meetings of 90 minutes each (Oman et al., 2008). Each group’s weekly meeting included practicing sitting meditation and informal discussions. Stress and well-being outcomes were measured through a pretest, posttest, and an 8-week follow-up. Compared to the control group, participants receiving treatment with meditation and awareness techniques displayed significantly larger decreases in perceived stress. This study’s hypothesis was supported in that training college students in integrated meditational programs can decrease their stress levels (Oman et al., 2008). A separate study conducted by Roberts and Danoff-Burg (2007) looked to examine the relationship between mindfulness and health behaviors in college students. The participants were 553 undergraduate students and they all completed questionnaires that assessed mindfulness, perceived health, health behaviors, and were partially mediated by stress. The results suggested that mindfulness is related to decreased levels of stress and increased perceptions of positive health and health behaviors (Roberts & Danoff-Burg, 2007). These studies support the effectiveness of meditation and mindfulness on the well-being of college students.
Mindfulness serves as a tool for individuals of all ages to slow down their thought process and hold awareness for things in the here and now, further reducing stress levels and tuning into body sensations and feelings. “Mindfulness can be brought to intervene in every physical and mental event, bringing recognition and relief” (Hanh, 2009, p. 7) Meditation can be a source of reflection and introspection to reflect on a day or upon an emotional feeling. Together, mindfulness and meditation bring an individual to the present moment and brings them in touch with emotional and physical sensations. Interventions, such as MBSR and meditation, have been effective for increasing college student’s perceptions of positive health and decreasing stress levels. The current project will be drawing upon mindfulness and mediation to educate college students about the benefits of these two phenomena’s.

“An essential part of discipline is the development of an awareness of our responsibility and power of choice” (Peck, 1978, p. 280). This well-known author, M. Scott Peck, was highlighting the importance of awareness, ultimately giving the power fully over to an individual, power of choice and power of ownership for ones actions. As college students explore their new emerging adult lives they begin to see new roles of responsibilities. These responsibilities might include living on their own, holding a job while going to school, or maintaining an adult relationship for the first time can feel overwhelming and increase levels of stress and sadness. Growing research in the field of positive psychology and mindfulness has proven that daily mindfulness practices can reawaken an individual’s sense of well-being and eradicate undesirable feelings that lead to stress and depression.

The Finding Happiness Workshop is a brief 4-hour workshop designed to capture college students’ attention for a short time, providing valuable information and tools to help these emerging adults in their everyday lives. I believe a group environment is the best way to deliver
this content to students. A four-hour workshop is an appropriate amount of time to capture their attention and not too long to lose their interest. A workshop offers an intimate short group study that gives students a sense of comradery and cohesiveness. I do not feel the material would be as effective if it were given to individuals in a pamphlet or guidebook. It is important that an educated, enthusiastic presenter be the one to deliver the content and work with the energy of the students in the room. This collective relationship will help to create a greater sense of ease and openness about the topics being discussed. According to the famous theorist, Irvin D. Yalom, there are 11 key reasons why therapeutic group work is so effective. Yalom categorizes the 11 elemental factors as follows, instillation of hope, universality, imparting information, altruism, the corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of socializing techniques, imitative behavior, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, catharsis, and existential factors (Yalom, 1995). Each one of these factors adds to the group dynamic and enhances awareness for psychoeducation. The Finding Happiness Workshop will integrate aspects of instillation of hope, universality, imparting information, interpersonal learning, and establish a sense of group cohesiveness. The concept behind instillation of hope is to get the group excited before the start of the workshop, to reinforce positive expectations and remove any negative preconceptions (Yalom, 1995). The Finding Happiness Workshop will integrate universality into the group by helping the students to become aware they are sharing space with other students who are struggling to understand how to manage their emotions and deal with stressors, therefore breaking down their sense of uniqueness and isolation to their particular problem. The presenter has the special role of imparting information onto the group educating them about the stressors experienced by college students and solutions that are available. Interpersonal learning is also a supporting factor that makes The Happiness Workshop effective. Interpersonal learning
highlights the importance of peer support that creates a safe environment for learning and sharing. A safe environment helps to instill a sense of group cohesiveness, feelings of trust and belongingness to the group. The Finding Happiness Workshop will be an interactive workshop that will include activities that explore that the five senses, breath work, and meditation. There will be opportunities for group discussions and thoughts or questions about the material being presented. By the end of the workshop there should be a sense of cohesiveness, togetherness, for the short-term group having shared intimate space for four hours. This interpersonal learning experience should equip college students with strategies to further explore their inner emotional worlds so that they can better deal with college life stressors.

Summary

College students are facing an assortment of emotions, in particular feelings of depression and sadness. These isolating feelings can become overwhelming and some students are unaware of the resources or knowledge available to help them manage these unsettling emotions. For college students it begins with an understanding of negative emotions and the stressors that precipitate them. Understanding life events and stressors that cause these emotions can help college students find commonality with other students and grasp an understanding of what is happening to them. Understanding happiness and the power of choice can help an individual manage their attitude and perceptions. With the introduction of positive psychology, researchers are beginning to see the positive outcomes that come with recognizing and nurturing strengths in individuals versus old theoretical frameworks that aim to fix what is wrong with an individual (Senf & Liau, 2012). Optimism plays a key role in shifting perceptions from negative to positive thoughts and increasing an individuals’ overall well-being. Happiness embodies many elements including hope, self-esteem, optimism, and a connection to life’s purpose or meaning.
Theorists including William Glasser, Don Miguel Ruiz, and Viktor Frankl all discuss the power that individuals have on creating their realities. Glasser focuses on the power of choice individuals have over decisions in their life while Ruiz supports this with explaining the control individuals have on their minds and emotions, not the outside world. Frankl believed that individuals are driven by their life purpose or their search for lives meaning. It is with an understanding of the power individuals have over their choices and minds, and in the purpose in life that helps develop a greater sense of wholeness, making negative emotions more manageable and understandable. Mindfulness-based practices have been introduced to the Western world recently, which has served as a tool that helps an individual become aware of their internal processes. Mindfulness meditation practices help individuals to align with their emotions and become attune with the here and now. Researchers have shown a correlation between college students practicing mindfulness and decreased stress levels and an increase of positive health behaviors (Oman et al., 2008). The Finding Happiness Workshop will help to educate college students about the power of choice and mindfulness and how implementing these practices into their lives will help to decrease and regulate negative emotions. The next chapter will discuss The Finding Happiness Workshop in greater length, what inspired its development, and the resources needed for a presenter to conduct the workshop.
Chapter III:
Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to create a workshop to provide psychoeducation to college-aged students regarding the power they have over their emotions. With the assistance of mindfulness and meditation and an overview of the definition of happiness, college aged students will leave this workshop with the tools they need to regulate their emotions and target more positive responses to problems. The project is designed as a 4-hour workshop on happiness/emotion regulation. This workshop will include handouts for at home exercises for breath work and meditations, case study examples, statistics on college students and risky behavior/ depression, activities focusing on mindfulness, and information centered on the power of control of the mind over emotion.

Development of Project

I have personal attachment to happiness and our control over our emotions. In my own life I have experienced depression and once equipped with proper tools, such as meditation and breathing techniques and the guidance of teachers that helped show me that I was the creator of my own reality, I was able to manage my emotions and identify my negative feelings when they began to surface. I also learned to describe my own emotional states as the Tigger/ Eeyore complex, in which some people are jolly and bouncy while others always complained about something. My ideas about managing my emotions better and the Tigger/ Eeyore complex grew into a workshop for college students. As I have studied and began training as a clinician, I learned that depression rates are high in the college student population, which led to my desire to provide education on emotions and interventions which might help lower depression and balance
emotions. This project came together through consultation with my professors and instructors in my marital and family therapy program, in discussion with clinicians in the field, yoga instructors, and through an extant literature review on the topic of depression rates among college students and mindfulness and meditation practices.

**Intended Audience**

The intended audience for the Finding Happiness Workshop is college-aged students between the ages of 18 to 25 years old. It will be for students starting college who have not yet begun their careers and are still in the process of emerging into adulthood.

**Personal qualifications**

The person leading this workshop must have a background in psychology, sociology, or health services. The person leading this workshop must have a basic understanding of the human mind and its functions in emotions. It would be useful if the person facilitating the workshop had training in counseling or a related mental health field.

**Environment and Equipment**

The environment for the workshop should be a room large enough to seat at least 60 students comfortably. There should be a white board and/or overhead projector to show PowerPoint/ video/ audio clips that pertain to the workshop. It would also be useful if chairs could be moveable for participation in the activities during the workshop. A sound bowl bell would be helpful to have to end meditation practices with, but it is not necessary. An example of what a sound bowl looks like can be found in the Appendix in the slides on page 103. One of the mindfulness practices will need a small food to explore the senses with, can include the following or something similar: popcorn, grape, cherry, cherry tomato, orange, or blueberry. The workshop is intended to last 4-hours so access to a bathroom and a water fountain is necessary
for comfort. Handouts with resources will be available and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation should be given to each student to follow along.

Formative Evaluation

I received feedback regarding the research and the layout of my project from professors in the Marriage Family Therapy program and from psychologists working in the field. I also received feedback from graduate level students completing their Masters in Counseling. Once my project was completed, my goal was to implement the workshop with the targeted audience and give out questionnaires before and after the workshop to attain feedback and suggestions for ways to improve the workshop.

Project Outline

I. Introduction

II. Depression Statistics and Stressors

III. What is Happiness?

IV. Optimism versus Pessimism- The power of our attitude, +/- self-talk

V. Video Exercise- The Malleable Mind- power of the mind

VI. Happiness Exercise: gratitude video clip, self-esteem, strengths

VII. Mindfulness and Meditation- Understanding the here and now

VIII. Sensory Exercise- exploring the senses, practicing mindfulness

IX. Breathing Exercise- Understanding and working with the breath
Chapter IV:

Conclusion

Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a workshop for college students to help create deeper understanding of and skills for managing their emotions. The Finding Happiness Workshop focuses on the problems that college students are facing in this emerging adult phase and the ways college students could effectively work with and understand their own negative emotions. The Finding Happiness Workshop helps to educate college students on the power of their mind and control over their thoughts and emotions. The workshop introduces the art of mindfulness and meditation as a powerful tool to help bring college students to a calmer state of consciousness and to tune into their present senses. Overall, it serves as a psychoeducational resource aid for college students on understanding and working with negative feelings and to promote well-being during these formative years of adult development.

Discussion

Throughout the development of my project I wanted to be careful never to disregard negative feelings and that this framework never implied a cure to depression. My aim was to highlight the power of control individuals can have over their decisions and thought patterns that can in turn help them to manage their emotions. I was inspired to incorporate William Glasser’s Choice Theory into the project because I agreed with the idea that as individuals we tend to place much of our happiness onto how other individuals view us. Glasser proclaims that individuals punish themselves when they do not live up to the expectations of the external world. Don Miguel Ruiz also agrees with Glasser claiming that the personal hell individuals place themselves in is created by the individual themselves, often in their own effort to please the
external world. These theorists discuss the importance of individual thought and mindfulness, distinct and separate from the wants and needs of people outside the self. Frankl supports a similar view, his theory focusing on humans beings searching for their purpose in life and the meaning of their existence and the search for life’s meaning and purpose can be an overwhelming experience for individuals, which is why I incorporate mindfulness and meditation.

I focus my project on college students because this is a fragile and important stage of development for these emerging adults. This is a time for self-exploration and curiosity. In high school, students are not fully matured and still live under their parent’s roof, which makes it difficult to establish an independent identity. I drew upon my own life experience of finding my identity and self, which was around the age of 22. Arguably we are all growing all the time, but from ages 18-25 a significant amount of growth is occurring. In American culture, young adulthood is a time period before major responsibilities, before marriage, and before children (for most). It is powerful, it is frightening, it is exciting, and it is confusing. For all these reasons I chose to work with this demographic. I feel this age group would be open to hearing new age solutions for discussing, processing, and managing emotions.

The books and research on positive psychology and managing positive emotions are emerging all over the world. It is my hope that my workshop will be integrated into this growing field of mindfulness and will help college students in understanding and managing negative emotions with ease and grace.

*Future Work*

There is growing research in the field of positive psychology and mindfulness. However there is not much information on mindfulness for college students and managing stress levels or
negative emotions. There is a need for more research on these topics so that helping professionals can guide troubled college students on better ways to help them in times of need. Also, students and friends need a better understanding of their emotions, what to expect and ways to manage unwanted feelings.

In the future I would like to have my project evaluated by other professionals and by the students so that I may refine my workshop and further help college-aged students. Feedback would give me an opportunity to see my workshop through another lens and to edit it accordingly. After working with this subject for a good amount of time, I would one day like to write a self-help book for college students and possibly adults on how to bring happiness into their lives with techniques like mindfulness and meditation. There are many books already available on this subject matter and the ones I have read are all very well written and support many of my own thoughts, however I have not found many that specifically caters to emerging adults and I would like to help add to the demographics’ psychoeducation. This world can feel overwhelming to many individuals and without direction might seem hopeless, but with an understanding of our mind and daily practice of mindfulness it is my belief that negative emotions can be managed and positive emotions can have an opportunity to flourish.
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APPENDIX

Finding Happiness: A Workshop for College Students on Understanding and Managing Emotions

Gina Gratza

California State University, Northridge

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DETAIL OF WORKSHOP CONTENT

Introduction

The introduction section of the workshop is the presenter’s opportunity to set the mood for the duration of the workshop. Since this is a workshop centered on promoting positive attitudes and mindfulness the presenter needs to present himself/herself as eager to share this temporary space with the college students. The presenter should first ask everyone to take a couple minutes of silence and just focus on sensing the breath, flowing in and out of the nostrils. As the group is silently breathing the presenter should be walking the students through a small mindfulness practice that helps them get present. The presenter would guide them with words similar to this: “I would like it if everyone could please close their eyes, if you do not feel comfortable with that then you may leave them open. I would like everyone to sense to their breath as it comes through the nostrils, down the throat, and out of the nostrils. I would like you to just become aware of the natural flow of your breath, however slow or fast it may be. I want you to try and release any tension you had before coming in the room today, at least for the next four hours if you can. Feel your belly rise and fall with each inhalation and exhalation. Take a few more cycles of breath…(ring a sound bowl to awaken if presenter has one) you may open your eyes now.” Next, the presenter should introduce him or herself including credentials that make them qualified to deliver this workshop and a personal story that attaches them to the topic of mindfulness and the power of choice in emotion regulation. This will take 20 approximately minutes.

Purpose of workshop: The presenter will take about 10 minutes to present the purpose and objective of the workshop. In a short amount of time the presenter will discuss the problems that emerging adults have with depression and sadness and how with more education on
mindfulness practices and becoming familiar with the power of choice that these college aged students may be better equipped to deal with emotions that may have been confusing to them before. The goal of the workshop is provide participants with more resources inside and outside the self so they will no longer be overwhelmed by negative emotions. Note: the slides presented in this project are basic slides, the presenter should add creativity (i.e. color, pictures, background layouts) to make the presentation brighter. Slide #2 will be shown.

Terminology: For the participants to have a clearer understanding of the topics and words being discussed the presenter will define and explain the following words: college students, depression, mindfulness, meditation, and happiness. This will take the presenter approximately 20 minutes. Slides #3-6 will be shown.

**Depression and Sadness**

This portion of the workshop will look at the definition of depression and the difference between depression and sadness. Most importantly the presenter will highlight statistics among college-aged students. This section of the workshop will also examine the stressors that trigger unhappiness for young adults. The presenter should present this material with ease as to not overwhelm the participants with sadness. This in depth discussion on sadness is aimed at helping the participants to understand the reason for intervention and change within the demographic. This portion of the workshop will take about 45 minutes. Slides #7-20 will be shown during this part of the workshop.

*Depression vs. sadness:* Depression will be explained by the DSM-IV definition. Sadness will be defined and contrasted from depression for further understanding. Slides #7-8 will be shown on the screen.
Statistics on college student rate of depression: Data from the American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health will be given. Slides # 9-13 will be shown on the screen.

Stressors that trigger unhappiness: The presenter will discuss the stage of emerging adulthood and the stressors that can follow. The presenter can engage the participants here by asking if by a show of hands they have experienced any of these said stressors. A study will be presented with the results of a survey from college students on reasons for depression. The presenter will discuss complicated grief and anger often associated with depression. Slides #14-20 will be shown on the screen.

Summary: At this point in the workshop the presenter should have given the audience enough information about the problems of depression in college students and the lack of knowledge and resources to manage their emotions. The goal is to present the problem in the beginning and then provide solutions. The next section will look at happiness and its different subsections. The transition to this topic should be done with ease, paying respect to the problem at hand and migrating into what happiness is.

What is Happiness?

Cue song on audio “Don’t Worry Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin

Engage audience by a raise of hands if that song makes them smile. Speak for a moment about the power music can have over our emotions. The presenter will have a shift in mood while presenting the rest of the material from here on out. The mood should be optimistic/enthusiastic; it should be clear that the presenter believes in this work and outlook on life. It should not sound rehearsed; it should sound like it comes from the heart. This section will take about 45 minutes.
Understanding happiness: The presenter will introduce the various definitions of happiness and talk about the subjective experience of happiness. The presenter will also talk about positive psychology and the benefits it provides people based on research from Schiffrin & Nelson (2008). The presenter will briefly discuss the ways researchers are measuring happiness and the growing interest in the study of positive psychology. Slides #21-23 will be shown.

Optimism vs. Pessimism: The presenter will educate the audience on the power that each of these states of mind can have on the overall affect of the human being. The presenter will define optimism and pessimism and go into description of the effect they can have on a person as adapted from Ellen Fox (2012). The presenter will then deliver the Video Exercise. Next, the presenter will discuss Barbra Fredrickson’s Broaden and Build Theory. The presenter will also lead the participants in the Happiness Exercise. Slides # 24- 28 will be shown.

Happiness and Well-Being: The presenter will talk about the positive effects that happiness has on the body and mind. The presenter will open up the topic to discuss self-esteem and the power behind loving oneself. The presenter will show a short love and gratitude video clip. Slides # 29-30 will be shown.

The Effects of Hope: The presenter will deliver statistics from the ACHA-NCHA-II (2012) on unhealthy behaviors that college age students partake in. The presenter will talk about Berg et al. (2011) research on the relationship between hope and risky behaviors. Hope will be linked to optimism further showing evidence for the power of positive thinking. The presenter will present another study from Adams, Bezner, Drabbs, Zambarano, and Steinhardt (2000) illustrating the relationship between spiritual and psychological dimensions and its relation to the overall perceived wellness in college students. The presenter will close this section with a
summary of the positive effects that happiness has. Introduce the next sections before offering a short break. Slides # 31-36 will be shown.

At this point a 10-15 minute break will be given to the participants.

**Choice Theory and Existential Psychology**

The presenter will introduce the next section and its purpose in the workshop, relating it the happiness and how this framework looks at the person being the user of their own brain. The presenter will define and discuss William Glasser’s theory, choice theory. The presenter will also introduce and discuss about the theorist Victor Frankl and a well-known author Don Miguel Ruiz. The presenter at the end will link all of these men together and tie it back to the power of choice an individual possesses. Slides # 37-42 will be shown on the screen. This section should take about 30 minutes.

*Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)(2005):* The presenter will offer information on the results from this national study on college students and spiritual development. The presenter will tie this research back to Victor Frankl’s theory. Slides # 43- 46 will be shown.

**Mindfulness and Meditation**

The presenter will move into the final part of the workshop and begin with a mindfulness exercise. The audience will be asked to silently tune into their senses. The presenter will help them explore what they may smell, hear, feel, taste, and see. This exercise will take just a few minutes. The presenter will simply ask participants to tune into all senses silently for a few minutes. After this exercise the presenter will introduce what mindfulness is and connect the exercises purpose with mindfulness. After the audience receives knowledge about mindfulness the participants will be given *Sensory Exercise* (exploring the food with mouth). The presenter will also present psychoeducation on meditation. The presenter will also lead a *Breathing*
**Exercise.** Next, the presenter will provide research and studies that prove the effectiveness of mindfulness. The presenter will link the benefits to college students. This section is the longest and most powerful, it is important that the presenter stays attuned to the audience participants and checks in with them along the way as to assure there is not any confusion. This section should take about 1 hour and 20 minutes. Slides # 46-57 will be shown. To close the presenter will lead the participants in a final mindful meditation.

The presenter will summarize all that was addressed in the workshop and open up the room for questions or comments.
Before introducing, the presenter will ask the participants to participate in a short breathing exercise before getting started. The presenter will ask everyone to please silence phones and take a few minutes of silence. The presenter will direct the participant’s attention to their breath. Simply sense the breath without trying to control it; feel is flow in the nostrils and out. It should sound natural, here is a guide to help: “I would like it if everyone could please close their eyes, if you do not feel comfortable with that then you may leave them open. I would like everyone to sense to their breath as it comes through the nostrils, down the throat, and out of the nostrils. I would like you to just become present to the natural flow of your breath, however slow or fast it may be. I want you to try and release any tension you had before coming in the room today, at least for the next four hours if you can. Feel your belly rise and fall with each inhalation and exhalation. Take a few more cycles of breath…(ring a sound bowl to awaken if presenter has) you may open your eyes now.”

The presenter will take the time to introduce themselves and their qualifications. It is important for the presenter to talk about their connection to the material being presented, including mindfulness and the power of choice. This will take 20 minutes.
Purpose of Workshop

- Depression rates in college students
- Stressors
- Negative emotions (i.e. sadness, anger, fear)
- Positive emotions
- Choice Theory/ here and now
- Mindfulness/ meditation
- Resources

The presenter will take about 5-8 minutes to help situate the participants with the order and purpose of the workshop. Briefly discuss each bullet point. Depression affects over a third of college students brought on by various stressors including new romantic relationships and leaving home for the first time. Negative feelings including sadness, anger, and fear are sometimes frightening to experience and young adults might not be aware of ways to cope with struggling emotions. Understanding negative and positive emotions can help a person to feel grounded. Choice theory offers a new way of understanding the power of choice that one has in their life. With the practice of mindfulness and meditation negative emotional states can be understood and managed. Resources for outreach programs, call numbers, and references for books will be provided.
The review of terminology should take about 15 minutes.
Review the demographic of which the focus is on, briefly including problems they are faced with. The age range for the intended audience is 18-25 years old. The participants will also be attending college. This is a pivotal age for self-exploration and transition from childhood to adulthood. College students at this time are no longer children and yet are not quite adults. Physical development in the brain is still forming at this age, as is emotional development as the young adults are facing emotional romantic relationships for the first time. Stressors including leaving home, taking on new financial burdens, and searching for an identity can be overwhelming for some students.

**Terminology**

- **College students:**
  - 18-25 years old students attending college
  - Transition from childhood to adulthood
  - Physical/ emotional development
  - Experiencing stressors for the first time
Review depression with participants and note further explanation will be discussed.
To prepare for section on depression:
The presenter will help the participants to understand the definition of depression as defined by
the APA in the DSM-IV-TR. Major Depressive Episode is a depressed mood or having lost
interest or pleasure in nearly all activities for a period of at least 2 weeks. Additional criteria
includes four of the following symptoms: change in appetite or weight, sleep, or psychomotor
activity; decreased energy; feelings of worthlessness of guilt; difficulty thinking, concentrating,
or making decisions; or recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation, plans, or attempts (APA,
2000). It is important that the presenter explains to the participants the need to reach out if
anyone is triggered by anything that is talked about in the workshop. The goal is to help students
reach out if they feel this way and know the available resources. It is also important for students
to realize the seriousness of this word, depression, and that it should not be thrown around freely
as it is a serious disorder.
The presenter will also be discussing the difference between normal sadness and depression and
the stressors that accompany sadness at this stage of development for emerging adulthood.
Terminology

- **Mindfulness**: “The awareness that arises from paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, to all things as they are” *(Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 54).*

- **Meditation**: “A method by which a person concentrates more and more upon less and less. The aim is to empty the mind while, paradoxically, remaining alert... Can be described as any discipline that aims at enhancing awareness through the conscious directing of attention” *(Feuerstein, 2003, p. 346).*

Review terms with participants and note further explanation will be discussed.
Review terms with participants. Be sure to explain the complexity of defining happiness as it is a personal experience. The terminology should take about 15 minutes.

The presenter should be prepared to discuss happiness in depth, about the positive effects it can have on overall well-being, academic achievement, focus and attention, and success. Happiness is a subjective experience that no one can truly define as it’s personal to everyone. It is understood that happiness is filled with positive, uplifting emotions that bring peace and a positive outlook. The presenter will need to understand positive psychology as an emerging field of psychology, which focuses on strengths instead of fixing weaknesses. The presenter will also need to understand the optimism/pessimism paradox and how a positive attitude can fuel success and improve well-being.

### Terminology

- **Happiness:** “There is no single meaning; happiness is relative to the person experiencing it... scientists often refer to it as “subjective well-being”.... Implies a positive mood in the present and a positive outlook for the future” (Achor, 2010, p.39).
Depression vs. Sadness

- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision*
  - Mood disorder: Major Depressive Disorder
  - Loss of interest/pleasure in nearly all activities for at least 2 weeks and at least 4 of the following symptoms:
    - Change in appetite or weight, sleep, or psychomotor activity
    - Decreased energy; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
    - Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide ideation, plans or attempts

(APA, 2000)

The presenter should introduce the material lightly as to not overwhelm the participants and explain that this information is being presented to understand the need for intervention. It is important to explain that depression can only be determined by a clinician and note how commonly it is thrown around. This portion of the workshop will take 25-30 minutes.
Depression vs. Sadness

• Sadness:
  – Described as humanity’s natural response to the death of loved ones, losses, and reversals of fortune
  – Human emotions are difficult to understand thus difficult to quantify what is within normal limits of the human experience

(Horowitz & Wakefield, 2007)
Statistics on College Rates of Depression

- American College Health Association- National College Health Assessment-II (ACHA-NCHA-II) (2012)
  - Survey made to assist college health service providers, counselors, and administrators in collecting data about their students habits and behaviors
Statistics on College Rates of Depression

- Fall 2012 – 28,237 respondents
- Average age 21.96 years old
- 65.6% female
- 32.1% male
- 71% Caucasian, 6.3% African American, 11.2% Hispanic, 11.2% Asian, 1.9% American Indian, and 4% biracial
The presenter will explain to the participants each of these feelings for further clarification. This may also be an opportunity to invite the participants to offer their understanding of the definitions of feeling: hopeless, overwhelmed, lonely, and depressed/anxious. Ask the participants how they might define these terms as college students.

**Statistics on College Rates of Depression**

- Within the course of 12 months:
  - *Feeling things were hopeless*: 38% males/ 48% females
  - *Feeling overwhelmed*: 75% males/ 91% females
  - *Felt lonely*: 49% males/ 60% females
  - *Feeling so depressed difficult to function*:
    - 26% males/ 31% females
  - *Overwhelming anxiety*: 39% males/ 55% females

(ACHA-NCHA-II, 2012)
Statistics on College Rates of Depression

- *Overwhelming anger*: 33% males/ 37% females
- *Seriously considered suicide*: 6% males/ 7% females
- *Attempted suicide*: 1% males and 1% females

(ACHA-NCHA-II, 2012)

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young adults ages 15-24 (NIMH, 2009)

The presenter should prepare the students beforehand about the seriousness and heaviness of the following statistics on depression and suicide. Suicide is a heavy topic for anyone to hear, it is important that the presenter discuss this section with fragility and open up the room for discussion and check in with the participants to see how they are all doing with this information. At the end of discussing this slide, the presenter should offer himself or herself available to talk to during break if anyone needs to speak about this.
Statistics on College Rates of Depression

- National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that major depressive episode among full-time students and other young adults ranges in age from 18-22 years old,
  - 12% females/ 5% males
  - Ethnic groups, highest percentage young adults with two or more races at 18%, followed by 9% Hispanic, then White, Black, and Asian students

(NSDUH, 2012)
Highlight the role of freedom that the emerging adult phase offers. Discuss in length each identity role described by Arnett: love, work, and worldviews.

At this age young adults are out of high school and exploring the “grown-up” lifestyle. These emerging adults have a larger scope of potential possibilities than other age groups as they are less held back by role requirements. These emerging adults are working towards being self-sufficient which means to be financially independent which impacts their developmental status as they move into young adulthood. Arnett (2000) describes exploration of identity in three ways: through love, work, and worldviews. Emerging adults begin to look at romance through a new lens as it becomes more intimate and serious, a search for companionship. This stage also looks at work differently as they explore questions such as: What kind of work will I be good at? What kind of work would I want for a long time? This stage of development also evokes questioning about their worldviews, politics, religion, and social responsibilities (Arnett, 2000).
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

- Life changes: moving, changing friends, starting new activities and classes (Chaplin, 2006)

- Reasons for suicide/ depression → In a study, 1,455 students surveyed from 4 separate colleges
  - 53% of students indicated that they had experienced depression
  - 9% thought about suicide
  - 1% attempted suicide

  (Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, and Jenkins, 2001)
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

- Most common cause of depression among students reporting feeling depressed:
  - 53% grade problems
  - 51% loneliness
  - 50% money problems
  - 48% relationship problems with boyfriend/girlfriend

(Fur et al., 2001)
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

- Other factors that contributed to feelings of depression:
  - 26% hopelessness
  - 25% parental problems
  - 17% helplessness
  - 13% other
  - 5% does not know
  - 5% legal problems

(Fur et al., 2001)

After all stressors are discussed, the presenter will engage the participants by a show of hands how many have experienced any of the following stressors. Ask the participants if there were any missing stressors they might add to the list.
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

- When asked if the students sought professional help for feelings of depression only 17% reported they had sought counseling.

(Fur et al., 2001)

The presenter will address this issue as a point of concern for college students to think about. Explore possible reasons why students may not seek help and end with the need for more knowledge and resources for college students on how to manage their emotions.
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

- Romantic relationships
  - Breakup distress = complicated grief
  - Complicated grief: identified as intrusive thoughts, painful yearnings, feelings of isolation, and severe emotional distress related to loss
    - Tied with experiences related to anxiety, depression, social functioning, and health issues
    - Over 90% of college students reported rejecting someone who was in love with them and also having been rejected by someone they loved.

(Field, Diego, Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2009)

The presenter will explain how emotional development is still evolving and that these feelings are natural.
Unhappiness in Emerging Adulthood

• ANGER
  – Unexpressed can build up inside and create feelings of low self-worth and guilt which are associated with depression.
  – Individuals who can express their emotions when they arise and do not suppress them can prevent future depression.

(Chaplin, 2006)

Summarize depression and sadness and the importance of seeking ways to deal with negative emotions.
The presenter will play the song, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin on the speakers. The presenter will smile and wait for the entire song to play. After the song ends the presenter will ask the participants how that song made them feel. The speaker will engage the participants to talk about the song. The presenter will talk briefly about the power music can have on our moods.
Understanding Happiness

• A study of 142 undergraduate students in Taiwan defined happiness as follows:
  – Happiness as a mental state of satisfaction and contentment
  – Happiness as positive feelings/ emotions
  – Happiness as a harmonious homeostasis
  – Happiness as achievement and hope
  – Happiness from ill being

  \[(\text{Lu, 2000})\]

• It’s personal
  – Happiness is a subjective experience, often referred to as “subjective well-being”
The presenter will explain that positive psychology is a growing field that is still in its early years of research but that it is quickly picking up speed and catching on to many researchers and clinicians.

Positive psychology is a growing field that focuses on the positive things in people and not the negative. The Subjective Happiness Scale is one measure that helps to understand and study subjective happiness, which helps to further understand this emotion. Although happiness is a subjective experience this measure helps to obtain a deeper understanding of specific categories of happiness that can be identified (i.e. optimism, savoring).
Optimism vs. Pessimism

• Optimism
  – From the Latin word optimum, which means “the best possible” which refers to the idea that the world is already the best is could be and couldn’t get any better
  – Linked to better health, well-being, and live longer
  – Enthusiastic, energetic, and eager for all that life has to offer
  – Keep momentum even when the world seems to be against them

(Fox, 2012)
The presenter will talk about the power optimism has on individuals life.

Each of these quotes is powerful and stated by successful, well-intentioned men in history. The presenter should open to the participants and ask how they interpret the following quotes.

- “Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm” ~Winston Churchill

- “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work” ~Thomas Edison

(Fox, 2012)
Optimism vs. Pessimism

- Pessimism
  - From Latin word *pessimus*, the philosophical viewpoint of a pessimist assumed the worst possible and that everything pulls towards evil
  - Convince their problems will never be fixed
  - Drawn towards negative things and avoid positive scenes.
  - Pulled from the fear part of the brain (amygdala) that acts to protect against danger begins to take over all thinking

(Fox, 2012)
The presenter will ask the participants to discuss things they do or might think to do that would increase their positive levels to be more optimistic. The presenter will present on the projector two short videos displaying something happy and something scary or sad. The purpose of this VIDEO EXERCISE is to show the ways in which our minds and moods can be shifted. The presenter can choose a video clip or something from the Internet. The scary or sad video clip should not be too overwhelming and this should be shown first and the happy clip last as to leave a last impression with. Examples could be similar to the following:
Sad video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ9nbv1VK0s
Happy video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmCpOKtN8ME

After the VIDEO EXERCISE the presenter will ask the participants how each of those clips made them feel and then tie it back to the power that the mind has on emotions.
The presenter will explain the **Broaden and Build Theory** and talk about the power of positive emotions. Positive feelings create more motivation and energy to complete tasks and broaden individual’s range of potential.

After slide the presenter will deliver the **Happiness Activity** and ask the participants to remember a time when they were happy. Maybe they will want to close their eyes, maybe not. Perhaps it was the day they had their first kiss, their first A in a class, the plane trip to a new city, the summer vacation, a special sunrise, or a new experience. Think of every single detail of this happy memory, how did you feel? The presenter will help guide them through this happy memory. After about 5 minutes the presenter will bring them out of the vision and ask everyone how that felt to think of a happy memory, did it uplift their mood? The **Happiness Activity** was adapted by Elaine Fox from her book, *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain* (Fox, 2012, p. 24). The presenter will highlight the power that the mind has on affecting mood, further showing the control we can have over our emotions.
Happiness & Well-Being

• Positive emotions fill the human brain with dopamine and serotonin, feel good neurotransmitters (Achor, 2010)
  — Benefits of happiness
    • Improved health and higher success rates
    • Decreased stress levels and increase happiness with interventions such as exercise, meditation, and written expression (Schiffrin & Nelson, 2008)

The presenter will show a short video about gratitude; a video that shows love and appreciation to invoke connectedness and warmth. After showing this video, follow-up with participants to see how it made them feel. The presenter should talk about the power that love has on being positive and spreading positivity.

Gratitude video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=oHv6vTKD6lg
The presenter will talk about the importance of loving oneself and how that acts as a foundation for life in relationships, in the workplace, and in life goals. Confidence and happiness are linked to one another.

Happiness & Well-Being

• Self esteem
  – Loving oneself sets the stage for happiness
  – Self confidence, self worth, self love
    • Without this foundation other areas in life begin to have problems (i.e. relationships, work, etc)
The Effects of Hope

• Emerging adults partaking in unhealthy behaviors could offset natural development, increase stress, and hinder success (Berg, Ritschel, Swan, An, & Ahluwalia, 2011)

• Within a month college students:
  – 62% drank alcohol
  – 13.2% smoked cigarettes
  – 15.3% smoked marijuana
  – 12.7% used other drugs (cocaine, amphetamines, hallucinogens, inhalants, and ecstasy)

(ACHA-NCHA-II, 2011)
The Effects of Hope

• Hope, as define by Berg et al. (2011), is the perception of having both the routes to reach one’s goals (pathways) and the motivation (agency) to use those routes.

• What does hope do?
  – Maintains and promotes good health
  – Prevents and treats illness
Berg et al. (2011) conducted a study on hope in college students and its affect on unhealthy behaviors. Results from the study showed that college students with higher hope had greater goal-directed thinking, increased self-efficacy, increased motivation, and increased ability to plan and strategize to reach goals. The results showed that the more hope a college student has the more likely they would succeed in their goals. Hope, just like optimism, plays a key role in the success and overall health of college students.
A model was created by Adams et al (2000) called an educational model of wellness founded on principles most common to the understandings of wellness. The model and measure included the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of wellness. As the slide shows, the spiritual dimensions are defined as a positive sense of meaning and purpose in life. The psychological dimension is defined as the perception that one will experience positive outcomes to life events.

(Adams, Bezner, Drabbs, Zambarano, & Steinhardt, 2000)

The presenter should note that these two dimensions play a key role in a person’s overall happiness and well-being.
The presenter should note that the study between the spiritual and psychological dimensions showed that elements of the spiritual and psychological dimensions including life purpose, optimism, and a sense of coherence were related to wellness and overall health. Optimism and a sense of coherence can help guide college students to fulfill their true nature or life’s purpose.
This is a quick summary of the topics talked about in the happiness section of the presentation. The presenter will speak about each bullet point as they spoke about it during the slide. Our perceptions and attitudes can affect our happiness. It is better to be positive than negative. Loving yourself increases levels of happiness and holding onto hope can help motivate and bring a person closer to their goals.
After summary, break for 10-15 minutes.
The presenter will emphasize Glasser’s intention of explaining that everything individuals do is based on choices. Internal control is choices controlled by the individual and external control is another person outside the individual placing control on another. This can lead people into believing that other people made them feel the way they do. It takes away personal freedom that everyone needs and wants.
Glasser uses this question to make people think about the choices they make. If this question is thought about before making a choice then perhaps it will save the individual from pain. The instructor should pose the question to the participants and ask for any examples of when not thinking about this question might be harmful to a relationship. An example might be one friend making another friend feel peer pressured into doing something they did not want to do. That act might push you further away from your friend because you do not want to feel manipulated or controlled.

Choice Theory & Existential Psychology

- Choice theory explores the idea that individuals create their own realities based upon the choices they make.
- Glasser poses this question to readers to think about when making decisions:
  “Will what I am about to do bring me closer to these people or move us further apart?”

(Glasser, 1998)
Choice Theory & Existential Psychology

• “We are not machines. We are not, as machines are, designed to respond in a specific way to external control. When we do as we are told, it is because we choose to do it on the basis of the information we have.” (Glasser, 1998, p. 17)

• Understanding choice theory and external control of the world can help to release pressures and instill a sense of peace in knowing we hold the control of our own lives.

The presenter will read aloud this quote and take comments from the participants about their reaction to the quote. The presenter should talk about the personal freedom that can come from understanding choice theory and how much more control you can have over your own life when you are not allowing others to hold control over your choices.
Choice Theory & Existential Psychology

• Don Miguel Ruiz (1997)
  – Believes individuals punish themselves when they
do not follow rules according to someone else’s
belief system, calling himself or herself “bad boy”
or “bad girl”
  – “The more self-love we have, the less we will
experience self-abuse” (Ruiz, 1997, p. 20)

The presenter will connect the similarity between Glasser and Ruiz and how they both stress the
control that individuals have over their minds, which means control over emotions and attitudes.
Choice Theory & Existential Psychology

- Viktor Frankl
  - “Man was not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them” (Frankl, 1959, p. 131)
  - Believed every human being has the freedom to change at any point in his or her life
  - Survivor of the Holocaust, Frankl created a theory that an important point of focus for all humans is the search for meaning in their life.

The presenter should introduce Viktor Frankl as a famous psychologist, survivor of the Holocaust, and the creator of logotherapy, which is the idea that all man is in search of the meaning of life. Frankl believed that the motivation that keeps individuals working toward their goal is fueled by their desire to find the meaning of their life. The meaning of life, he said, is different for every person.
The presenter should explain that the meaning of life will be different for every person but it can be discovered in similar ways. Frankl stated that doing an act of kindness for someone as an act of selflessness can help bring an individual closer to finding the meaning of life. Frankl also claimed that experiencing beauty, truth, nature, culture or loving another human being can also bring an individual closer to this meaning. Finally, Frankl stated that the attitude an individual takes towards unavoidable suffering and having the ability to change a tragedy into a triumph will bring that person closer to finding life’s meaning. Frankl states, “No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny” (Frankl, 1959, pp. 77). Each person is on their own journey, facing their own unique challenges and choosing which path to take.
Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)

- Study on 112,232 college students from 236 colleges and universities to better understand the spiritual beliefs and spiritual development of young adults
- Results revealed that college students are engaged in a spiritual search and exploring to find the meaning of life

(HERI, 2005)

The presenter will discuss a study conducted by HERI on spiritual beliefs and developments in young adults. The presenter will state the difference between spirituality and religious for clarification of study and participants. Spirituality understood as an individual experience, a connection to something larger than self, an individualistic journey.
Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)

- Results for college students:
  - 76% searching for meaning/purpose in life
  - 74% have discussions with friends about the meaning of life
  - 64% stated that their spirituality is a source of joy
  - 83% believe in the sacredness of life
The presenter will link this study to Frankl’s theory that people are searching for the meaning and purpose in their lives. The results of the college students who had strong spiritual orientations match Frankl’s theory that individuals who know suffering and who have experienced truth and beauty are closer to finding their purpose in life. This study showed a correlation between spirituality (however defined by any one person) and positive well-being, compassionate self-concept, charitable involvement, ethic of caring, and ecumenical worldview.

(HERI, 2005)

The presenter will explain to the participants that with control over choices and thoughts that control over happiness can be strived for with shifting to an optimistic viewpoint of life.
The presenter will begin this section with a mindfulness practice. This practice will be focused on connecting to all senses, hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. The presenter will guide the audience through their senses with drawing awareness. Example as follows:

I would like everyone to now close your eyes if it is comfortable to do so. Find a comfortable position in your chair with both feet on the floor. Place your hands gently open upon your legs and allow the breath to flow in and out of your nostrils effortlessly. You may notice that you are breathing heavy, or slowly, any way is right for you. As you are breathing become aware of the inhalation and exhalation of air, feel the stomach rise and fall, and notice where your mind wanders. I would like you to now turn your attention to your ears, what sounds are you hearing? Is there a faint sound in the distance or is there a sound closer to you? Have you heard this sound before? Take a few breaths and listen to the sounds around you. I would like you to now focus your attention to the scent of the room. Can you smell any particular aroma? Is there a familiar scent around you or is it new? Is it strong or is it comforting? Take a few breaths and explore your sense of smell. I would like to now draw your attention to taste. Can you taste anything in your mouth right now; are you hungry or thirsty? Is your mouth dry or wet? Spend a few breaths exploring the mouth and the tastes. I would like to now draw your attention to touch. How does it feel to have your feet rooted to the floor, your sit bones to your chair, and your hands on your lap? What else can you sense through your touch right now? Spend a few breaths exploring your touch. Finally, I would like you to open your eyes. What do you see around you? What colors are
sticking out for you? Does anything look new or familiar? Spend a few moments exploring the sense of sight. Now I would like you to draw in your awareness to all of your senses and take a few moments exploring what is capturing your attention. (The presenter will ring the bell if they have to bring out of meditation, if presenter does not have a bell then simply bring them out of meditation with moving on to responses of the meditation). Ask the participants to share their experience.

### Mindfulness & Meditation

- **What is mindfulness?**
  - Originating from Buddhist practice, it has expanded outside the religion itself and into present-day lives
  - Mindfulness does not mean you have to be Buddhist
  - Mindfulness means to pay attention in a particular way, without judgment, and with full awareness of the present moment *(Kabat-Zinn, 1994)*

The presenter will go into detail about mindfulness and what it means to be fully aware in the here and now. The presenter will have done research on mindfulness as to present it professionally and embody it.

Helpful resources include attending a local workshop on meditation and mindfulness, attending a Hatha yoga class, or researching books by authors Thich Nhat Hanh and Jon Kabat-Zinn for understanding and practicing meditation. Some include the following:

- *Happiness* by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Being Peace* by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Wherever You Go There You Are* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz
The presenter will explain to the participants the various ways in which being mindful can help in daily life. Each of these points is an example of the benefits of mindfulness. Mindfulness helps nurture a greater sense of clarity and inner peace because it draws attention to the present moment and allows for introspection. Mindfulness enhances attention because the act of being mindful is to hold awareness for a specific act, which heightens attention. Mindfulness has been found to correlate with happiness, well-being, and physical health.
The presenter will deliver the **Sensory Activity**. In this exercise the audience will each be given a piece of food by presenter (either grape, popcorn, cherry, or something that presents an opportunity for sensation). The presenter will talk the participants through the exercise and help them explore senses.

**Seeing**: Take a moment to really look at the object. Try and notice things about this object that you have never seen before

**Touching**: Try closing your eyes and explore the texture of the object. Hold the food as if you have never seen it before, between thumb and finger and in palm to feel its weight

**Smelling**: Does the object have a scent, raise it to the nose and sense the smell. Pay attention to how you raise the object to your mouth, your arm posture and your lip opening.

**Tasting**: Explore the sensations of what it feels like to have this object in your mouth, what are you tasting? Begin to chew, what flavors or sensations are filling your mouth? Explore this sense of taste. Now swallow, what does it feel like to swallow? How long can you sense the object going down your throat?

Talk about the exercise with the participants and their reactions to it.
The presenter will explain how practicing awareness can be done with many different activities. The act of being mindful is to be fully present with whatever task that is being done. The goal is to keep focus on one thing and not to let the mind wander to the past or future, but rather to keep it directed on the one thing at hand. This focused attention will help to make living in the moment much more enjoyable and relaxing.

**Mindfulness & Meditation**

- This type of awareness can be done with everything!
  - Washing the dishes
  - Loading the dishwasher
  - Driving a car
  - Brushing your teeth
  - Leaving the house
  - Walking to the grocery store
  - Taking a shower
  - Holding hands with someone
  - Listening to music
  - Putting on your socks
Mindfulness & Meditation

• What is meditation?
  – A process and a state of contemplation or reflection
  – Takes energy and focus to intentionality and motivation
  – The breath is a power aid

• Attention toward the breath, in and out, helps the mind focus and release other thoughts

The presenter will explain what meditation is and how mindfulness is used during meditation.

The presenter will guide the participants in the **Breathing Exercise**, which should serve as a tool to help them outside of the workshop. This exercise can be done anywhere of their choosing and can help them to reduce stress, feel centered, or for relaxation.

This exercise is adapted from Thich Nhat Hanh from *Happiness.*

Have the participants find a comfortable seated position, both feet on floor, and eyes closed. The presenter will say the following or something similar, speaking slowing and allowing the participants to breathe with each statement.

“Breathing in and breathing out... you may follow the breath with counting 1-3, maybe in another language. Breathing in, 1-2-3... and breathing out, 1-2-3. [Presenter repeat 3 times] Breathing in I am aware of my body, breathing out I release the stress. I am becoming aware of the present. Breathing in I inhale new energy, breathing out I exhale old energy. I let go of the blocks. Breathing in I welcome life, breathing out I smile with joy. I am at peace. Breathing in I sense my strength, breathing out I welcome new beginnings.” (Ring the bell if the presenter has one)

Ask the participants how that felt.
Mindfulness & Meditation

- Thich Nhat Hanh, a popular Buddhist monk, said to never force the breath
  - “The present moment is the moment that is real. Your most important task is to be here and now and enjoy the present moment” (Hanh, 2009)

The presenter will explain the importance of allowing your breath to flow naturally, whether its fast or slow or shallow, you cannot force your breath to be another way. With enough practice the breath will improve on its own.
The presenter will state that meditation does not always mean sitting but can be done while standing, walking, or lying down. Kabat-Zinn (1994) states, “The walking is just as good as the sitting. What is important is how you keep your mind” (p. 145). Just as awareness can focus on the breath, the awareness can focus on the footprints being made. Standing meditation models that of a tree, finding roots beneath the feet, feeling the body standing and being, moment to moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).
Mindfulness & Meditation

• What does meditation do?
  – Positively restructure neural patterns in the brain
  – Strengthens attention
  – Strengthens sensory processing
  – Heightens empathic response
  – Increase positive affect
  – Better immune system responses
  – Healthier responses to stress and negative emotions
  – More likely to possess the ability to orient self to present moment without judgment

(Wayment, Wist, Sullivan, & Warren, 2010)
The presenter will discuss that both MBSR and MBCT use brief meditation programs based on three techniques: body scans, sitting meditation, and Hatha Yoga practice. The presenter will explain each technique. A body scan is described as a slow process of mentally scanning the body from head to feet and opening the senses to become attuned to whatever messages the body is wanting to send, all the while using breath awareness and relaxation. During sitting meditation the attention begins to focus on the breath, slow inhales and exhales, with the rise and fall of the abdomen. Ending with Hatha Yoga, which includes breathing exercises and simple stretches, designed to relax the musculoskeletal system (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011).
The presenter will discuss the various ways in which mindfulness and meditation positively affect college students. Meditation has been studied and shown that college students who meditate have higher achievement in academia, concentration, memory, reaction time, self-control, empathy, and self-esteem.

**Mindfulness & Meditation**

- SO... how does this tie to college students?

- Meditation has been linked to a wide array of positive outcomes for college students:
  - Higher achievement in academia
  - Concentration
  - Memory
  - Reaction time
  - Self-control
  - Empathy
  - Self-esteem

(Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008)
Mindfulness & Meditation

- Mindfulness is a tool for individuals of all ages to slow down thought process, reducing stress, and tuning into the bodies sensations and feelings.
- Meditation is a source for reflection and introspection to reflect on a day or emotional feeling.
- Together, mindfulness and meditation can overcome many problems an individual may be experiencing, internally or externally.
The presenter will lead the participants in a meditation on loving awareness. The presenter will ask the participants to find a comfortable seated position with both feet on the floor and eyes closed. The presenter will lead the group to explore their breath, feelings, and acknowledge any thoughts without judgment. Each time a thought arises recognize the thought with loving awareness and return back to the breath. The presenter will guide the breath for a few minutes and then allow silence for a few more minutes to allow the group to practice on their own. Ring the bell to awaken the participants and ask the participants to share their experience.
Summary

The presenter will summarize everything discussed including the problems college students face, idea positive effects of optimism, the power of choice, and the power of mindfulness and meditation. The presenter will open up the room for questions, comments, or concerns.
The presenter will include referrals here of any help services offered at the school or city where they are presenting the workshop.

Some examples of references:

1. If presenting at a university, such as California State University, Northridge, the school has a helpline and counseling services:
   - HELPLINE: (818) 349-HELP -- http://www.csun.edu/helpline/
   - COUNSELING SERVICES: (818) 677-2366 -- http://www.csun.edu/counseling

2. National Suicide Hotlines
   - 1-800- SUICIDE
   - 1-800- 273- TALK
   - http://suicidehotlines.com/california.html

3. Find websites that have a variety of helplines

4. Emergency 9-1-1
References

References

References

- Substance abuse and mental health services administration, center for behavioral health statistics and quality. *The NSDUH Report: Major Depressive Episode among Full-Time College Students and Other Young Adults, Aged 18 to 22, (Publication No. NSDUH_060)*. Retrieved from http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k12/NSDUH060/SP060CollegeStudentsMDE2012.htm
HANDOUT

Practice mindfulness at home!
• This can be as simple as spending 5 minutes a day sitting quietly and allowing whatever thoughts to flow in, or using the breath and focusing on the inhalation and exhalation. This short daily exercise can start your day off with a sense of centeredness and awareness. You can also do this at the end of your day to reflect upon the day’s activities or to help wind down.

Music, videos, social outings!
• Remember music can be a powerful tool for emotions, what kind of music are you listening to? What kind of movies do you enjoy watching? What makes your heart happy! Explore new hobbies or social gatherings to find what brings a smile to your face and invoke positivity to your life!

Doing good for others...
• How can you give back to someone or something? Feed the homeless? Donating clothes to a country struck by a natural disaster? What calls to you, tune in to your heart!

Tap in and talk
• Spend time getting to feel and understand the emotions that are inside of you. What are you feeling? Where is this coming from? Why am I feeling this way? Explore you inner self and if you are confused or scared, reach out and talk to a friend, a guardian, a teacher, or a counselor.

Resources:
• Explore on campus resources including helplines and counseling services.
• Educate yourself more on mindfulness and meditation!
  o Happiness by Thich Nhat Hanh
  o Being Peace by Thich Nhat Hanh
  o Wherever You Go There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn
  o The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz
  o Attend workshops or yoga for a live experience