The graduate project of Ryuji Yoneyama is approved:

_________________________________________________  
Dr. Jessica ChenFeng, Ph.D.                          Date

_________________________________________________  
Dr. Bruce Burnam, Ph.D.                              Date

_________________________________________________  
Dr. Dana Stone, Ph.D., Chair                         Date

California State University, Northridge
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my Aikido Master, Mutsuko Minegishi, whose teaching has helped me through hardships in life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to show my appreciation for my chair, Dr. Stone, and my readers, Dr. ChenFeng and Dr. Burnam. I feel that I would have given up on myself without their encouragement and support throughout the development of this project.

Secondly, I want to show my appreciation to my girlfriend who has lovingly supported me and helped edit my project without hesitation. I can’t ask for a better partner who understands the stress and struggles of pursuing a better education. You are the person I can always count on to be by my side when I feel stressed and doubtful of myself.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my friends and family for understanding how time consuming the project and graduate school can be. Without their support I would be stressed beyond belief.

Last, but definitely not least, a special thanks to my Aikido sensei, Mitsuko Minegishi. Her guidance through my training has made me into the person I am today. Through her mix of gentle and arduous training she has taught me to be strong physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. I will be eternally grateful to you and hope that this project will make you proud.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page ii
Dedication iii
Acknowledgements iv
Abstract viii
Chapter One: Introduction 1
  Background of Problem 2
  Purpose and Significance 3
  Definition of Terms 3
Chapter Two: Literature Review 6
  The Mindful Therapist 6
    The Marriage and Family Therapist 6
  MFT Trainee and Intern 7
    The self of the therapist 8
    Using the self of the therapist 10
      Self-care 11
    Burnout and compassion fatigue 12
  Aikido 14
    History of Aikido 14
    Philosophy of Aikido 16
    Aikido Stance and Movements 18
      Stance 18
      Irimi 18
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenkan</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irimi-tenkan: joining and blending</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikido and the Therapist</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body-Awareness</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feldenkrais Method</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind and body</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikido comparisons</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind and body</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikido comparisons</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms of Mindfulness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Group Work</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting it All Together</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Project Development and Procedure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Project</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Audience</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Qualifications</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and Equipment</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Outline</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Conclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Project</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Implementation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING MINDFULNESS SKILLS OF MFT TRAINEES THROUGH AIKIDO

By
Ryuji Yoneyama
Master of Science in Counseling,
Marriage and Family Therapy

Marriage and family therapist (MFT) trainees encounter numerous stressors such as work overload, social conflict and lack of support in the work place, client related issues, personal relational issues, and much more during their graduate program enrollment (Maslach, 2003; Negash & Sahin, 2011). As a result, burnout and compassion fatigue can develop as a consequence of continual exposure to such stressors leading to possible mental and/or physical exhaustion, feelings of cynicism towards a job, and a loss of empathy (Maslach, 2003; O’Brien & Haaga, 2015). The purpose of this project was to develop a group curriculum in which the group leader will educate new MFT trainees about burnout and develop mindfulness skills through the teachings of a Japanese martial art of Aikido. Group sessions provide a psychoeducational portion which provides information on the topics of burnout, self of the therapist, and Aikido, while the experiential portion allows trainees to physically practice Aikido movements. The goal is to develop body-awareness through Aikido movement practice which will lead to a better understanding and growth of mindfulness (Caplan, Portillo, & Seely, 2013; Mehling, Gopisetty, Daubenmier, Price, Hecht, & Stewart, 2009).
Chapter One: Introduction

The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art to all that you encounter. – Ueshiba Morihei (Ueshiba, 1992, p. 3).

Ueshiba was the founder of a martial art known as Aikido and a well renowned spiritual philosopher in Japan. He believed that through consistent training of mind and body, an individual would be able to maintain a healthy state of mind and physical shape. Ueshiba taught his students that each Aikido technique should be used as a tool to observe the world within oneself just as much as a tool to interact with one’s surroundings. Dobson and Miller (1978) describe Aikido as a meditation in motion due to the emphasis on heightening one’s awareness during training. The training in one’s awareness of self-emotions and surrounding environments result in development of mindfulness, or according to Lothes, Hakan, and Kassab (2013), the ability to problem solve practically and accept present circumstances in a calm manner.

In their meta-analysis across multiple mental health services, Morse, Salyers, Rollins, Monroe-De Vita, and Pfahler (2012) found that 21 – 67% of mental health service providers experience high levels of burnout. Maslach (2003) defines burnout as a chronic strain from prolonged responses to stressors in the environment, which can lead to work fatigue and loss of passion for one’s job.
The passion and desire to help others is what drives a therapist to work diligently with each client. Without the passion to work within the field, the therapist can negatively affect the quality of care provided for the client due to impaired job performance (Morse et al., 2012). Burnout creates a rift between the client and therapist, making it difficult for further therapeutic progression. It is as important for the therapist to learn how to cope and resolve issues within the self in order to be an effective therapist. As Virginia Satir stated, “While therapists facilitate and enhance patient’s ability and need to grow, they should at the same time be aware that they have the same ability and need.” (Baldwin & Satir, 1987, p. 22). The goal of this project is to help guide therapist trainees to develop or enhance mindfulness skills in order to delay and/or negate the effects of burnout within the field.

**Background of Problem**

Therapy is an overwhelming process for both client and therapist and it is the duty of the therapist to stay present during therapy sessions without interfering feelings in order to resolve issues presented to them by the client. Therapist trainees as well as experienced therapists come across clients who may have experienced a traumatic or life changing event which falls upon the therapist to resolve damaging responses caused by such events. Exposure to client stories of negatively impactful events can cause psychological and physiological strain to therapists of any experience level, which can result in therapists feeling burnout (Collins & Long, 2003; Gilstrap, 1999). Fatigue from listening to clients’ stories can leave a powerful impression which may manifest in many forms such as lack of energy and motivation, periods of physical illness, decline of
empathy, and therapists feeling burnt-out in extreme cases may decide to drop out from the field (Gilstrap, 1999; O’Brien & Haaga, 2015).

**Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this project is to develop a psychoeducational group primarily focused on therapist trainees in order to cultivate or improve coping skills against burnout and compassion fatigue by analyzing martial arts and mindfulness techniques literature. The paper will focus on the effectiveness of mindfulness training in the development of therapeutic coping skills.

The purpose of this project is to prepare up-and-coming therapists for emotional and possibly physical hardships from exposure to negatively impactful experiences shared by a client. This project focuses on Aikido philosophy as well as other psychosomatic methods of achieving a mindfulness state-of-being to nurture the self of the therapist. The ultimate goal for the psychoeducational group is for new therapists to develop skill sets in which they can protect their physical and mental well-being in order to be an effective therapist in the field.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms will be defined to clarify descriptions within this paper:

Self of the therapist: Therapist’s ability to stay in the present moment through the resolutions of personal issues (Lum, 2002). Similarly, the self of the therapist within this paper is the therapist’s development of mindfulness and coping skills in order to become an effective therapist in session.

Mindfulness: A state, trait, process, and intervention which is defined as a temporary state of non-judgment and increased awareness, as well as acceptance of internal and
external changes in the present reality of an individual (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Marriage and Family Therapist [MFT]: A mental health professional trained in psychotherapy and family systems, and licensed to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage, couples and family systems (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2016.). The term MFT and therapist will be used interchangeably throughout the course of this paper.

MFT trainee: Individual enrolled in a graduate marriage and family therapy program studying clinical therapy which also includes individuals enrolled in a placement to receive clinical hours (Board of Behavioral Sciences, 2016). The term MFT trainee, therapist trainee, and trainee will be used interchangeably through the course of this paper.

MFT intern: Individual accumulating required experience under licensed supervision after graduating an accredited MFT program. The MFT intern is eligible to take a state or national exam after state defined experience is accrued (AAMFT, 2016).

Burnout: Commonly characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from continuous exposure to stressful work factors. (Maslach, 2003).

Compassion fatigue: A form of burnout which may lead to emotional and physical exhaustion, depersonalization, and irritability. Manifests after an individual is exposed to secondary trauma (Negash & Sahin, 2011).

Aikido: A defensive martial art originated from Japan which translates to “the way of harmony.” Created by Ueshiba Morihei, Aikido embodies the philosophy of peace through harmony which is physically represented through the technical movements and
techniques of the practice (Stevens, 2001). The main use of Aikido will also yield Japanese phrases which will be translated and defined as the paper continues.

In the following chapter, the significance of developing the self of the therapist will be discussed as well as the ramifications of burnout and compassion fatigue. The importance of Aikido as a possible method of developing the self of the therapist will be explored in the latter portion of the chapter through the examination of Aikido techniques and similar developmental outcomes of other somatic psychotherapeutic methods.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Therapists would benefit from gaining a thorough method of introspection in order to establish a better sense of self of the therapist. Davis, Thwaites, Freeston, and Bennett-Levy (2015) reported that both therapist trainees and experienced therapists were able to further develop their therapeutic skills as a result of self-reflection practices. Through proper forms of self-reflection the therapist can also develop a more effective coping mechanism for anxiety and distress as well as enhance their empathic skills (Ganzer & Zauderer, 2013; Joireman, 2004). Brawdy (2001), Mendenhall (2006) and Prince (1996) agree that one possible approach to improving the self is through the practice of martial arts. Out of the numerous styles of martial arts practiced across the globe, the goals for Aikido training and philosophy closely resembles that of a self-actualized therapist (Brawdy, 2001; Lothes, Hakan & Kassab, 2013).

In the following sections this paper will explore the definition and role of an MFT as well as the effects of client outcome in therapy as a result of the development of the therapist. The latter portion of the paper will discuss the significance of Aikido and the potential positive effects it may hold for the therapist.

The Mindful Therapist

The marriage and family therapist. According to the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy [AAMFT] (2016), an MFT is a mental health professional who evaluates and treats mental and emotional disorders, behavioral problems, and relational issues within the context of an individual’s relational system. MFTs have the ability to treat couples, families, and individuals primarily focusing on relational influences regarding all participating individuals in therapy. Some examples of issues
MFTs are trained to treat include depression, anxiety, drug abuse, and partner/family relational conflict. Prior to licensure, students are required to graduate from a master’s degree, doctoral, or post-graduate clinical training program. Supervised clinical experience is attained during and after completion of a degree program through direct client contact hours; after concluding the supervision period, the individual can take a state or national licensing examination to obtain their license (AAMFT, 2016.).

In a survey of North American MFT practitioners, Bradley, Bergen, Ginter, Williams, and Scalise (2010) found that 48% of clinical work is devoted to individual client treatment while 25% are spent on couples, 21% on families, and 6% with groups. According to Karam, Sprenkle and Davis (2015), even while working with individuals, MFTs view the client through a relational and contextual lens. MFTs assess the key members of the client or clients’ systems who may participate in maintaining or resolving the presenting problem in order to sustain or improve overall wellness of the client/s present in session (Karam et al., 2015).

**MFT Trainee and Intern**

Depending on the program an MFT degree can take two to five years to complete (AAMFT, 2016.). During this time, an MFT is required to go through two stages of training prior to taking the licensing exam. When a student is accepted into a graduate program, he/she becomes an MFT trainee. An MFT trainee gains hours through school approved clinical sites while attending their degree program’s required courses (Board of Behavioral Sciences, 2016.). The MFT trainee will then register as an intern after graduating from the program to complete a state-dependent post-degree supervised clinical experience which is necessary to take the state licensing exam (AAMFT, 2016).
MFT training differs from many other non-psychotherapy graduate programs as it emphasizes developing theoretical and conceptual knowledge as well as clinical skills (Polson & Nida, 1998). Negash and Sahin (2011) contend that the training period during the MFT program is highly demanding and stressful for all MFT trainees. Oftentimes trainees are required to manage their jobs, traineeships, and personal relationships all while completing required coursework (Negash & Sahin, 2011). Trainees can experience a lifestyle that is perpetually imbalanced and consuming as a result of the demanding schedule they are expected to endure (Valente & Marotta, 2005). Howes (2008) indicates that MFT trainees are also commonly known to over exert their energy by emotionally investing in a client’s progress beyond healthy limits, exceeding the agreed upon session time, and ruminating about client issues during their free time due to their desire to help. Similarly, Howes (2008) also stated that trainees become hyperaware of clinical successes and failures, resulting in their self-esteem being affected by client progress. MFT trainees are in danger of experiencing an early onset of burnout and compassion fatigue resulting from the constant feeling of stress which can have a negative impact towards their personal well-being as well as their clinical work (Negash & Sahin, 2011; Rosenberg & Pace; 2006).

In the following section, the importance of MFT trainees developing awareness and self-care will be explored in order to discuss possible preventative measures of burnout and compassion fatigue.

The self of the therapist. During a session with a client, the therapist’s ability to stay in the present moment is a major factor to progress with the therapeutic process. Developing the self of the therapist allows the therapist to be able to keep personal issues
absent from the therapy session. According to Lum (2002), Virginia Satir strongly advocated the development of the self of the therapist which according to her theory of therapy, is a significant aspect of becoming an effective MFT. Rober (1999) described the self of the therapist as the experiencing process of the therapist in regards to his/her feelings, intuitions, fears, and ideas. He stated further that the self does not refer to a permanent, true core of the person nor is is it a continually changing self-definition.

The MFT’s well-being and the continual development of self is commonly attributed as an effective therapeutic tool in therapy; by doing so, therapists are better able to stay in the present moment of the session in order to fully attend to the needs of the client without distractions of personal issues (Blow, Sprenkle, & Davis, 2007; Sprenkle, Davis, & Lebow, 2009). Lum (2002) and Sprenkle, Davis, and Lebow (2009) both agreed that, like clients, therapists carry negative experiences from the past which may affect the outcome of the therapy, therefore it is important that the therapist resolve past issues in order to prepare to be therapeutically congruent. If therapists hold unresolved issues, there is a strong possibility that they will have adverse reactions, such as getting stuck, avoiding the issue, skewing the information, or losing focus, towards clients’ problems (Lum, 2002).

MFTs may also encounter distressing materials presented by clients which can take a psychological toll on therapists and potentially result in burnout or compassion fatigue (O’Brien & Haaga, 2015). Collins and Long (2003) describe burnout as a gradual accumulation of emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from a long exposure to stressful experiences at one’s work which can cause a loss of job motivation or satisfaction. Negash and Sahin (2011) indicate that compassion fatigue, compared to
burnout, occurs suddenly and mainly results from caring for clients whom have suffered or is suffering from a traumatic experience. These undesirable effects lead to losing the self in the present moment during a therapy session which can cause harm to both therapist and client (O’Brien & Haaga, 2015).

Continual work on the self of the therapist by acquiring appropriate supervision, attending personal therapy, and/or reflecting on one’s personal experiences is desirable for new and experienced therapists in order to support the emotional well-being of the therapist. Through development of the self, the therapist is able to regulate the effects of internal and external forces on the self and allows for a productive therapy session (Rober, 1999).

**Using the self of the therapist.** In the Satir model of therapy, the use of the self of the therapist becomes an effective tool during a therapy session (Satir, Banmen, Gomori, & Gerber, 1991). Rober (1999) clarified that using the self does not equate to self-disclosure of opinions or experiences unless it serves as a teaching purpose. This researcher referred to the self as the therapist’s observations of his/her emotions, thoughts, and associations that are conjured by observations during session. The therapist uses the emotive or cognitive reactions from the observations in order to facilitate a conversation with the client and possibly develop hypotheses to progress the treatment (Rober, 1999).

Issues arise when therapists are unable to separate their own emotions and cognitive reactions from the stories of clients, leading to countertransference (Lum, 2002). According to Gehlert, Pinke, and Segal (2014), countertransference is, “the therapist’s reactions to and experiences of the client .... [which] manifests during an interaction with the client” (p. 8) in which the therapist’s emotions may be entangled with the client’s.
According to Lum (2002), Satir proposes that congruence allows the therapist to lessen the chances of countertransference by being able to relate to the client without projecting personal issues/meanings onto the client. The Satir model promotes congruence as an important aspect of therapeutic work with the client (Lum, 2002). The levels of congruence established in the Satir model closely resembles mindful awareness which Satir et al. (1991) described as acceptance of feelings as they are, harmony within oneself, with others, and with the world, and to be in harmony with the self. Mindful awareness or mindfulness is a method to bring one’s complete attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental manner (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). Through a congruent lens, the therapist is able to use the self as an effective tool as a result of solely focusing on the present moment rather than focusing on internal and external distractions (Lum, 2002).

**Self-care.** It is not uncommon for MFTs and especially MFT trainees to neglect their own wellbeing to serve the needs of clients or the program (Howes, 2008; Valente & Marotta, 2005). Thus the proper use of self-care in stressful careers such as a MFT is an essential tool for all aspiring therapists to attain. Richards, Compenni and Muse-Burke (2010) defines self-care as activities to promote physical, psychological and spiritual well-being as well as creating and/or maintaining a strong support network. Examples of self-care activities may include sports, personal therapy, attending religious functions, or spending time with loved ones. Protinsky and Coward (2001) state that the ability to develop a sense of professional motivation and personal need is an important process of maturation in an MFT. A study of resilient and expert MFTs conducted by Clark (2009) attributed their longevity of their career to separating oneself from clinical work at the
conclusion of a work period in order to enjoy other aspects of life. Self-care comes in multiple forms depending on the individual, but the primary purpose it to find a form of relaxation in order to escape personal stressors (Negash & Sahin, 2011). Some examples of self-care include exercising, periodic vacations, periodic consultation, utilizing a social-support network, and participating in non-work related activities (Polson & Nida, 1998; Protinsky & Coward, 2001). Without the release or separation from continual stressors, therapists can experience burnout or compassion fatigue (O’Brien & Haaga, 2015).

**Burnout and compassion fatigue.** According to Franco (2015), mental health professionals experience some form of burnout and compassion fatigue during their time in the profession and MFTs are not exempt from this struggle. Burnout and compassion fatigue, which is a form of burnout, from a MFT standpoint is a mental and physical exhaustion of the working with clients and/or in a clinical setting (Franco, 2015). Maslach (2003) characterized burnout as overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and lack of accomplishment. He clarified cynicism and detachment as negative criticism of oneself as well as detached responses to other people and aspects of the job (Maslach, 2003). Similarly, Negash and Sahin (2011) characterize compassion fatigue by emotional exhaustion, loss of empathy, depersonalization, and growing inequity between therapist and client. Depersonalization is defined as a process in which a therapist develops a critical attitude toward the client or views the client as less than human. These researchers define growing inequity as the therapist’s feeling of imbalance within the client-therapist relationship; this is characterized by the therapist’s
expectation of client outcome and the therapist’s reliance on client reaction and/or relationship for personal gain (Negash & Sahin, 2011).

Burnout and Compassion fatigue stem from stressors the therapist experiences from client contact and the clinical work setting. According to O’Brein and Haaga (2015), compassion fatigue is generally believed to be the result of trauma transference from a client in which the therapist experiences trauma or trauma-like symptoms following an exposure to traumatizing material presented by the client. The therapist may also display avoidant behaviors and/or numbness to the traumatic reminders as well as experience physiological arousal such as higher heart rate (O’Brien & Haaga, 2015). Burnout is the individual’s feeling of diminished well-being from emotional and physical health impairment as a result of prolonged periods of stress within the clinical and work setting (Morse et al., 2012; van Dam, Keijsers, Eling, & Becker, 2011). Morse et al. (2012) posits that emotional symptoms of burnout include depression and anxiety while physical symptoms include exhaustion, sleepiness, and, in some cases, bodily discomfort. These stressors include work overload, social conflict and lack of support in the work place, client related issues such as appointment cancellations and lack of client progress, and personal relational issues (Gilstrap 1999; Maslach, 2003). Through the negative effects of burnout and compassion fatigue, the well-being of the therapist diminishes as well as slowing or halting the progression in therapy with the client. Negash and Sahin (2011) explain the detrimental effects in therapy, stating that burnt-out MFTs may have difficulty examining a client’s subjective experience, thoughts and feelings without bias, incorrectly interpreting information, provide inappropriate responses, and provide lacking ethical/legal care of the client such as accurate documentation.
MFT trainees are in danger of experiencing early onset of burnout and compassion fatigue during their training period resulting from clinical, personal, and academic stressors (Negash & Sahin, 2011). In a study of 327 MFT trainees, Polson and Nida (1998) found 27.7% of the surveyed trainees considered dropping out of the program due to the demanding work. Preventative measures should continuously be applied in the MFT trainee’s career to counteract negative effects of burnout and compassion fatigue. Self-care is a key component to all MFTs in order to avoid stress and promote relaxation. Developing self-awareness and self-monitoring are also essential as an MFT to recognize when one is experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue in order to begin self-care (Clark, 2009; Rosenberg & Pace, 2006). The following section will explore one possible path of developing self-awareness through the training of Aikido.

**Aikido**

A self-disciplinary training structure, built upon the teachings of Aikido, will be used in this project to aid therapists to develop their reflective skills. On a basic level of understanding, Aikido students are taught to use their opponent’s momentum and balance to overcome attacks and protect themselves and their opponent from harm. According to Gleason (1995), Aikido is a defensive martial art in which an individual “[uses their] partner’s strength against him/her”, but it is important to note that the learned techniques are only a part of what is taught to the students who study this art (p.24). Before further exploration of the possible influence of Aikido over self-actualization of the therapist, the history and philosophical backbone of this martial art must be understood.

**History of Aikido.** According to his son, Kisshomaru Ueshiba (2008), Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, was born to a wealthy fishing and farming family on
December 14, 1883 in the Wakayama prefecture of Japan, Ueshiba. Morihei was physically weak and emotionally frail during his younger years and spent the majority of his youth indoors reading traditional Chinese and Japanese books of philosophy and religion (Ueshiba, 2008). He educated himself in Eastern religions such as Ryobu Shinto (a combination of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs), Omoto-kyo, Zen Buddhism, Shinto, and Taoism, all of which heavily influenced Aikido philosophy later on in his life (Olliges, 2008; Ueno, 1995). Ueshiba (2008) indicates that his interest in martial arts training began during early adulthood, practicing jujutsu and increased his training to prepare for the imminent Russo-Japanese War in 1904. After the war, Ueshiba further educated himself in Judo (the way of being gentle) and Kendo (the way of the sword). Ueshiba also met and trained with a master Daito-ryu Jujutsu instructor, Sakaku Takeda, who became a major figure in influencing the development of Aikido. Ueshiba was inspired by the fluidity and practicality of each Jujutsu technique which he later incorporated into his own art (Ueshiba, 2008). Thus through the late 1920’s and mid 1930’s, Ueshiba’s form of martial art, known as Aiki-jujutsu at the time, was similar to the Daito-ryu Jujutsu style (Ueshiba, 1984).

The modern philosophy of Aikido did not form until 1925 when Ueshiba was challenged to a duel by a naval master swordsman. According to Kisshomaru Ueshiba (2008), Ueshiba accepted the challenge with no weapon in hand and effortlessly dodged all his opponent’s sword strikes until the swordsman resigned with exhaustion. After concluding the challenge, Ueshiba stepped out onto his garden where he had a moment of enlightenment in which he recalls:
…I felt that the universe suddenly quaked, and that a golden spirit sprang up from the ground, veiled my body, and changed my body into a golden one….

At that moment I was enlightened: the source of *budo* is God’s love – the spirit of loving protection for all beings… I understood “*Budo* is not felling the opponent by our force; nor is it a tool to lead the world into destructions with arms. True *budo* is to accept the spirit of the universe, keep the peace of the world, correctly produce, protect and cultivate all beings in nature … and assimilate and utilize it in our own mind and body. (Ueshiba, 1985, pp. 154-155)

According to Olliges (2008) and Kisshomaru Ueshiba (2008), this experience became the turning point in time in which Ueshiba decided to mold Aikido into an art of peace. By 1936, Ueshiba decided to clarify his martial art from others by focusing on the philosophical and spiritual elements as well as the physical components. He abandoned the name Aiki-jujutsu, which connoted an older style of forcefulness, and renamed his art as Aiki-budo which was later shortened to Aikido (Ueshiba 1984).

**Philosophy of Aikido.** The translation of the name Aikido has a direct connection to its philosophical foundation. Stevens (2001) indicates that Aikido is a combination of three separate kanji (one of three Japanese lettering systems) and is written as Ai-ki-do. Ai translates to harmony or love. Ki has numerous meanings such as spiritual energy, life energy, spirit, and awareness. And lastly, do translates to pathway or a way of life. When all three letters are combined it is most commonly translated as “the way of harmony” or bringing peace through harmony, the underlying core philosophy of Aikido (Stevens, 2001). Harmony in this instance holds a specific meaning which Schalge (2014) defined as “not a goal that is eventually reached as an outcome, nor is it an event, rather it is
better understood as an ideal that can guide one’s actions in the present moment of an ongoing dynamic process” (p. 10). Ueshiba believed that the practice of Aikido, both physically and philosophically, is a never ending process to which there was no measurable goal and should be continually practiced (Ueshiba, 2008).

Aikido is based on its founder’s life experiences and grounded in the philosophy of peace and non-violence and is more than a teaching instrument for self-defense (Brawdy, 2001). Techniques are not only taught to defend against superior opponents, but also used as a symbolic tool to portray relationships beyond the dojo, a place of training (O’Connor, 1993; Ueshiba, 1984). Brawdy (2001) stated that through the practice of physical confrontation scenarios, the student is able to participate in a self-study of intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions by confronting the opponent’s force, blending in, and redirecting that force in order to preserve peace between the two individuals. Saposnek (1980) defines “blending in” as acceptance or joining with the opponent’s force and movements rather than clashing against him/her, therefore making it possible to guide the opponent’s energy towards a different direction.

In order for students to retain the philosophical teachings of Aikido, movements and techniques taught during the lessons consistently reflect the harmony each individual strives to attain (Reinhardt, 1985). Therefore Aikido students are taught to be mindful of every movement they make during a technique in order to keep both the attacker and defender safe from injury (Brawdy, 2001). Rather than creating a martial art which teaches destructive techniques in order to partially or permanently subdue the opponent, Ueshiba spent most of his adult life designing techniques to protect both the practitioner
and the attacker simultaneously (Schalge, 2014). In the following section basic Aikido movements and the philosophical representation of each movement will be explored.

**The Aikido stance and movements.**

**Stance.** Before basic techniques can be learned, the practitioner initially learns to have a basic stance. According to Ueshiba (2008), most martial arts stances are represented by a “fighting stance” which is characterized by clenched fists with the practitioner on the tips of his/her toes in order to prepare for possible attacks. In an Aikido stance, the practitioner stands with one foot forward, arms slightly above the waist, and palms open. This not only creates a well-balanced stance, but also presents the practitioner as a non-aggressive entity who is able to maneuver through attacks if the need arises (Ueshiba, 2008). This stance teaches the practitioner to break his/her habit of assuming and interjecting one’s own beliefs into an unknown situation without first observing and analyzing his/her surroundings (Kroll, 2008).

**Irimi.** According to Stevens (2001), the first move in any Aikido technique is the movement of stepping forward. In this martial art, the typical response to an attack is not to retreat from an attack, but to step forward and face the attack. Kroll (2008) described *Irimi* as stepping forward in a lateral motion to intercept the attack near its point of origin in order to neutralize it rather than responding reflexively into a counterattack. Ueshiba (1984) also mentions that the movement allows the defender to enter the attacker’s blind spot, which creates an opportunity to control the situation.

It is important to note that moving towards the opponent does not equate to clashing against him/her. According to Saposnek (1980), *Irimi* symbolizes the defender’s acceptance of the attacker’s energy rather than a challenge to it. The attack is viewed as a
learning opportunity to increase insight of the technique as well as of the self, and the transaction is viewed as a joining process. By transitioning the perspective of the attack, the defender is able to reframe a negative action into a positive one. By adapting the movement into a social context, the acceptance of a given situation and reframing of ideas or assumptions allows the practitioner to be emotionally balanced. Through this balance, the practitioner is allowed to self-reflect as well as gain an appreciation for previously experienced negative outcomes by reframing them, resulting in positive experiences of the present (Saposnek, 1980).

**Tenkan.** The next action most commonly followed by *irimi is tenkan*, which is one of the most essential characteristic movements of Aikido because all following techniques are dependent upon this movement (Ueshiba, 1984). Kroll (2008) describes *Tenkan* as a spherical turn that allows the practitioner to step outside of the attack radius in order to face the same direction the opponent is facing. The movement was developed in order for the practitioner to overcome and control the strength of the opponent. In contrast to the linear motions of many other martial arts styles, which teach students to overcome attacks through strength or speed, the spherical motions in Aikido allows for smoother movements to be performed while granting the ability to control stronger adversaries (Kroll, 2008). The spherical motion allows the practitioner to be “centered,” or well-balanced, while having the ability to disturb the opponent’s center of gravity, at which point the defender has the opportunity to control his/her opponent (Ueshiba, 1984). Foster (2015) and Ueshiba (1984) agree that *tenkan* uses the properties of inertia and centripetal force to create an overwhelming amount of power in order to neutralize an attack and redirect the force elsewhere.
By standing with the opponent, the defender blends with him/her, giving the practitioner the ability to perceive the opponent’s worldview from which the defender may decide to promote positive change through understanding. *Tenkan* symbolizes the ability to empathize and share perspectives by moving into a position which allows the defender and attacker to share the same point of view (Kroll, 2008). By empathizing with the opponent, the defender is able to understand and guide the attacker into a more productive exertion of energy (Saposnek, 1980). Similar to *irimi*, *tenkan* allows the practitioner to accept the opponent’s views of the world around him/her, and by doing so, guide the opponent away from the possible harm he/she has manifested within his/herself.

**Irimi-tenkan: joining and blending.** The two basic movements of *irimi* and *tenkan* are combined to form *irimi-tenkan* which allows for vast forms of movements and numerous combinations of techniques. Gleason (1995) indicates that the Aikido student practices the combination of movements repeatedly until it becomes difficult to discern which movement is *irimi* and which is *tankan* as each movement contains and depends on the other to properly execute a technique. The melding of the movements is synonymous to an encounter with an opponent. Through successful joining and blending, the movements of the defender and attacker are synchronized to the point at which it becomes difficult to discern the difference between who is attacking and who is defending (Gleason, 1995; Ueshiba, 1984). This synchronization is the ultimate goal for *irimi-tenkan* which allows the defender to control any situation he/she may encounter (Ueshiba, 1984).

Through rigorous training of *irimi-tenkan*, each practitioner becomes naturally adept at self-reflection and empathy by means of leading or following the opponent
during practice. As training continues, the defender and attacker increasingly gain consciousness of one’s own body in order to better synchronize the movements of both parties (Foster, 2015). The synchronized movements allows the defender to control the attacker’s energy without interrupting the energy flow, ultimately leading to a harmless neutralization of the attack (Foster, 2015; Ueshiba, 1984). As Ueshiba (1984) stated, Aikido is the path through harmony and peace, therefore joining and blending allows the practitioner to promote peace through his/her movements as well as through the symbolisms each movement portrays.

**Aikido and the therapist.** Therapists or therapists-in-training are capable of enhancing their skills of coping and empathic skills through the metaphorical movements practiced in Aikido. By accepting the philosophy of the basic movements of *irimi-tenkan*, an individual is capable of neutralizing negative situations thrust upon him/her by accepting, observing, and understanding. The physical aspect of the learning process of these movements are not a requirement in order to realize Aikido philosophy. Saposnek (1986) and Kroll (2008) agree that a continual physical practice is not a necessity, but the willingness to make the connection between the physical and rhetorical movements will allow the individual to gain a new perspective on how to approach others and understanding the self.

**Body-awareness.** In the following sections, connections between Aikido’s development of self will be compared to other well researched somatic psychotherapeutic approaches such as the Feldenkrais Method and yoga. Aikido will be the channel through which body-awareness/mindfulness will be taught for the purpose of the group.
According to Mehling et al. (2011), a variety of methods including yoga, Feldenkrais Method, and martial arts have been studied on the enhancement of body-awareness. Body-awareness is defined as the individual’s focus on internal body perceptions which can be modified by the individual’s mental processes including interpretation, beliefs, memories, attitudes, and affect (Mehling et al, 2009, 2011). In the field of medicine and psychology, the heightened sense of body-awareness has been traditionally linked to concerns of somatosensory amplification, worsening cases of anxiety and panic disorders, and the increased awareness of physical pain (Cioffi, 1991). However, there are now more studies that contradict these traditional beliefs regarding body-awareness regarding chronic diseases and improvement in mental functioning (Baas, Beery, Allen, Wizer, & Wagoner, 2004; Schmalzl, Crane-Godreau, & Payne, 2014). For the purposes of this project, body-awareness enhancement pertaining to improvement of the self will be emphasized and will be intertwined with Aikido’s development of self.

Improvements in body-awareness are also correlated with mindfulness (Caplan, Portillo, & Seely, 2013; Mehling et al., 2009). Mindfulness is defined by Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, and Toney (2006) as a method to bring one’s complete attention to experiences in the present moment in a non-judgmental manner. Damasio (2003) stated that increased awareness of physical responses within oneself improves self-regulation and one’s sense of self. According to Baer et al. (2006), mindfulness is measured by the five following labels: Non-reactivity to inner experience, observing to sensations/perceptions/feelings, acting with awareness/concentration, describing/labeling with words, and non-judging of experience. Some of these mindfulness measurements, such as concentration, non-reactivity, and non-judging of experience are major facets of
body-awareness, allow both forms of perceptions to complement each other (Mehling et al. 2009). Integrating the improvements of body-awareness and mindfulness, therapists will be able to enhance his/her coping and empathic skills using Aikido movements as a conduit to further increase awareness of both perceptions.

Research pertaining to Aikido as a developmental therapeutic tool is limited, therefore parallels will be drawn from other well researched somatic psychotherapeutic approaches such as the Feldenkrais Method and yoga.

Feldenkrais Method

Moshe Feldenkrais was a physicist and engineer who developed his method for the enhancement of learning and performance through nonhabitual movements (Schuyler, 2010). Nonhabitual movements in the Feldenkrais Method are described as incongruent representations of patterns of actions the individual has been accustomed to for the majority of his/her life (Rywerant, 1983). Feldenkrais used touch and verbal instructions to facilitate nonhabitual movement patterns in order to guide and reorganize the individual’s habitual solutions for motor problems, such as neck and shoulder pains, in order to change the way he/she moved and learned (Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001; Feldenkrais, 1990; Schuyler, 2010). Payne and Crane-Godreau (2015) stated that the objective for the Feldenkrais Method is to offer the motor nervous system a wider range of alternative movements in order to remove constraints on habitual behavioral patterns. It is then assumed that the nervous system will automatically choose the most efficient alternative behaviors for his/her respective motor problems such as chronic pain. Feldenkrais (1984) and Lake (1985) both believed that these positive behavioral changes facilitated new patterns of learning, reduced anxiety and increased clarity of thought.
**Mind and body.** Cheever (2000) states that through repetition of nonhabitual movements, individuals develop an awareness of the environment. This allows the individual to become mindful of his/her body’s position within the environment. With the development of his/her environmental awareness, the individual cultivates a kinesthetically attuned “inner eye” or body-awareness, allowing for the development of a neurologically based sensory-motor self-image (Cheever, 2000). As body-awareness improves, there is a shift of how one perceives the physical self. Hanna (1988) contends that the individual’s perception of one’s body changes from an objective third-person view which is congruent to a medical approach of perceiving the body, to a subjective first-person viewpoint which allows the individual to view and personally define his/her state of the body within the environment. The first-person viewpoint also empowers the individual to rely on his/her own strengths rather than seeking answers from others (Hanna, 1988).

Payne and Crane-Godreau (2015) and Rywerant (1983) state that as the body becomes accustomed to the nonhabitual movements, it naturally modifies body functions in order to move comfortably with the least amount of effort. As body-awareness increases, the individual becomes mindful of these modifications in a nonjudgmental approach that provides an effective means for self-care and self-empathy, which in turn, develops nonjudgmental empathy towards others (Cheever, 2000).

**Aikido comparisons.** The development of the self in the Feldenkrais Method shows similar characteristics to an individual’s development through the practice of Aikido. Both somatic approaches of development use physical movements of the body to amplify the individual’s body-awareness in order to foster abilities of empathy towards
others and the self (Brawdy, 2001; Cheever, 2000). Although both methods have different approaches to teaching, Aikido and the Feldenkrais Method ultimately promote self-growth through the use of physical movements. Both teaching methods primarily focus on the physical touch between two or more partners to practice learned movements (Ueshiba, 1984).

Aikido uses movements from various defensive techniques within the art that embody the symbolic portrayal of harmony in each action (Reinhardt, 1985). According to Saposnek (1986), each technique was designed to protect both the defender and attacker. Saposnek (1980) indicates that through repetition, the techniques allow the individual to develop an awareness of his/her bodily movements and safety as well as enhance the ability to empathize with the attacking individual. Through consistent practice of these techniques, the individual will be able to apply the symbolic lessons each movement portrays into life events outside of practice (Saposnek, 1980).

The standard structure during a lesson in the Feldenkrais Method consists of a student and teacher, in which the teacher is physically guiding the student’s body movements into positions the student is not accustomed to (Feldenkrais, 1981, 1984). Through these new positions, the student is able to reflect on his/her own body’s level of comfort, which promotes the development of body-awareness (Cheever, 2000). By repeating these positions and practicing body-awareness, the individual begins to create connections between his/her experiences with others in order create a knowledge base of body-awareness (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). As the eagerness to expand one’s knowledge through others’ experiences grows, empathic skills develop alongside as a byproduct (Belenky et al., 1986).
Yoga

Gard, Noggle, Park, Vago, and Wilson (2014) describe yoga as an ancient contemplative practice originating in India over 3,500 years. The goal of yoga is to alleviate suffering and promote optimal physical and mental well-being. Yoga is a well-practiced form of physical discipline in Western society due to the proclaimed propensity of physical, mental, and spiritual benefits (Caplan, Porillo, & Seely, 2013). According to Gard et al. (2014), research supporting the beneficial effects of yoga on psychological health has been increasing in recent years. Benefits regarding personal well-being and self-regulation as a result of yoga will be the focus of this section.

**Mind and body.** Gard et al. (2014) assert that yoga improves on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation through the Top-Down and Bottom-Up mechanisms of self-regulation. These mechanisms allow for the interpretation and learning of the self through different processes of gathering information (Mehling et al., 2009). The Top-Down strategy includes the use of higher brain regions to force attention to the physical body in order to create a sense of body-awareness and promote self-regulation (Chambers, Gullone, & Allen, 2009). Gard et al. (2014) contend that meditation is the primary source for this particular strategy. As the individual’s body-awareness increases, a shift towards the Bottom-Up strategy takes place Bottom-Up strategies are described by the researchers as a “modulation of emotion-generative brain regions (i.e. limbic) without requirement of ‘higher’ brain regions (i.e., frontal) that are responsible for cognitive forms of regulation” (Gard et al., 2014, p. 2). The Bottom-Up strategy resembles the primary teaching method of the Feldenkrais Method in that it develops adaptive mental capacities such as new patterns of learning, self-regulation and empathic skills (Belenky et al., 1986).
**Aikido comparisons.** Research by Gard et al. (2014) supports the Top-Down and Bottom-Up strategies of regulations and parallels can be seen in Aikido philosophy and teaching methodology. The Top-Down strategy of regulation in yoga is comparably similar to the philosophical lessons learned in Aikido. The ideal concept of harmony is a recurrent guiding principle during Aikido practice wherein students regularly monitor his/her bodily movements and ideations of harmony between the self and the opponent (O’Connor, 1993; Ueshiba, 1984). In yoga, Gard et al. (2014) indicate that the individual is cognizant of the stress within the body during practice, which traditionally symbolizes the experienced stress of ethical dilemmas within the individual’s life. In both practices, the individual shifts from the Top-Down to Bottom-Up strategy as body-awareness begins to improve (Brawdy, 2001; Caplan, Portillo, & Seely, 2013).

The Bottom-Up strategy becomes a more prominent means of self-development in Aikido practice as the individual’s body-awareness increases through the repetition of the movements. This allows the individual to reflect and embody the symbolic representations of each movement (Saposnek, 1980; Foster, 2015). Gard et al. (2014) propose that as sensory and perceptual abilities improve during yoga practice, the individual integrates the bodily actions affected by and from the environment into emotional representations. Therefore, Bzdok et al. (2012) posits that the continuous observance of bodily actions perpetuates a connection of mind and body which ultimately leads the individual to self-regulate within the given environment as well as control actions and emotions during social interactions with others.

Gard et al. (2014) reports that both Top-Down and Bottom-Up strategies are required to promote efficient self-regulation and building of empathic skills. Yoga and
Aikido promote this type of self-development through the continual practice of both their respective movements; constant repetition creates a feedback loop through which the ideals of each practice is consistently experienced (Gard et al., 2014).

**Mindfulness**

The following sections explore the history and the composition of mindfulness. Lastly, the structure and effectiveness of mindful group work will be discussed for the implications of a group focused on aiding therapist trainees through the teachings of Aikido.

According to Baer et al. (2006), mindfulness originally derived from Eastern Buddhist practice of meditation in which regular practice brought forth results of awareness, insight, wisdom, and compassion. Vago and Silbersweig (2012) postulate that mindfulness is a state, trait, process, and intervention which is defined as a temporary state of non-judgment and increased awareness, as well as acceptance, of internal and external changes in the present reality of an individual. The contemporary model of mindfulness called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, and the traditional Buddhist mindfulness has similar goals of reducing suffering, enhancing positive emotions, and improving quality of life (Vago & Silberweig, 2012).

According to Thera (1962), suffering in the traditional Buddhist context is characterized by the lack of awareness in habitual yearning of sensory/mental objects one likes and/or aversion of sensory/mental objects one dislikes. There is also the lack of awareness that all phenomena, including the concept of self, are temporary. These two characteristics of suffering is believed to be established on a magnified sense of self-
importance or self-loathing (Kang, Gruber, & Gray, 2013). In order to reduce stress, Buddhist meditative methods place an emphasis on developing four skills which include: a balanced intensity of effort and diligence, wisdom of clear discernment or phenomenal clarity, mindful awareness, and freedom from desire and discontent (Thera, 1962; Voga & Silbersweig, 2012). Thera (1962) points out that by developing the four skills, the individual is better able to perceive objects without cognitive distortions or biases and Voga and Silbersweig (2012) contend that this then enables the development of an advanced self-monitoring system.

The contemporary model of mindfulness was created by Kabat-Zinn (2011) through associating traditional Buddhist vocabulary and practice to established clinical terminology and practices. Mainstream clinical literature describes mindfulness as a form of attention that is purposeful, non-reactive, non-judgmental, and in the present (Bishop et al., 2004). In his reflection of the origins of MBSR, Kabat-Zinn (2011) clarifies that the non-judgmental stance is not an ideal state which judgments are absent. Judgements and opinions arise continually within the self, but having the option to not judge or react and the ability to recognize the positive, negative, or neutral judgements is the basis of the non-judgmental stance. Becoming aware of such experiences enables the individual to discover that the choice to attach or detach to a judgement or opinion is available, thus forming one’s responsibility to choose whether to be effected (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). According to Vago and Silbersweig (2012), the contemporary definition of suffering is similar to the traditional definition that biases and distortions of the self, others, and the external world cause suffering within the individual. The authors further state that:
When these maladaptive scripts and schemas are active repeatedly throughout one’s daily life, it can lead to rumination or mental proliferation, in which a stream of mental events feed off each other with no connection to the original sense impression that initiated the stream of thought. (2012, p. 6)

Joireman (2004) defines rumination as a continual focus on the self. Unlike self-reflection which aids in understanding motives, goals, and behaviors, rumination’s focus on negative perceptions is associated with higher levels of depression and negative affect due to reduced information processing capacity (Yiend, 2010). The goal in the contemporary model is to alleviate the impact on these reinforcing negative thought patterns of the self and one’s relation to the world (Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Mechanisms of Mindfulness

In their meta-analysis of mindfulness, Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) theorize three essential components of mindfulness to further understand the underlying mechanisms through a clinical lens. The components, intention, attention, and attitude, are not separate processes or stages but should be considered as a singular recurring process which occurs simultaneously.

Intention. Kabat-Zinn (1990) states that intention guides and drives the individual to attain a personal goal and reminds oneself the reasons of practicing in a moment to moment basis. According to Shapiro (1992), intentions shift along a continuum from self-regulation, to self-exploration, and self-liberation. Shapiro et al. (2006) define self-liberation as the experience of dis-identifying from the sense of being a separate self from the world around the individual. Shapiro (1992) also indicates that
desired outcomes are correlated with intentions; the study implies that intentions create motivation to move toward the desired goal.

**Attention.** Shapiro et al. (2006) describes attention in the context of mindfulness as involving observations of procedures of one’s moment-to-moment internal and external experiences, as well as the suspension of interpreting one’s experience and attending to the experience in the present moment. They also draw similar definitions of attention from established psychotherapeutic methods, stating that Gestalt and cognitive-behavioral therapy emphasize present moment awareness and is considers attention as a critical component to the healing process (Shapiro et al., 2006).

**Attitude.** Kabat-Zinn (1990) defines the component of attitude as the qualities one brings to attention, i.e. how we attend. The majority of literature pertaining to mindfulness focuses on attention or awareness, but the quality of awareness is not examined (Shapiro et al., 2006). One’s attitude towards awareness creates a different quality of experience in the attention given. Shapiro et al. (2006) gives an example using a quote from Kabat-Zinn of different attitudes when attending the present moment, “attention can have a cold, critical quality, or it can include an ‘affectionate, compassionate quality… a sense of openhearted, friendly presence and interests’” (p. 145). In this way, the quality of one’s experience, and possibly others’ experiences, can differ drastically depending on attitudinal awareness. This clarification of attitude does not equate to the suggestion of neutrality in attention. Shapiro et al. (2006) suggests intentional training of bringing positive attitudes, such as patience and compassion, towards awareness assists in developing the ability to obstruct the habitual need for pleasant experiences and/or to distance oneself from aversive experiences. The
understanding and implementation of mindfulness contributes to the development of the 
self of the therapist.

Mindfulness Group Work

Group work in regards to mindfulness has been shown to be beneficial for both 
clients and mental health professionals alike (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & 
Davidson, 2013; Newsome, Waldo, & Gruszka, 2012). Numerous studies have shown 
that mindfulness training in a group setting has helped lower the occurrence of depression, 
anxiety, and stress as well as increasing awareness and acting of self-care (Byrne, Bond 
and self-compassion of teachers conducted by Flook et al. (2013) revealed that 
mindfulness group training, which was adapted for educators, reduced amounts of 
psychological distress and burnout while increasing self-compassion and effective 
teaching behavior. Flook et al. (2013) also conducted a study which affirmed that 
mindfulness groups can be structured specific to the target population to educate and 
promote well-being.

For the purpose of this paper, the target population for a mindfulness group would 
be MFT trainees. The group will be structured as a psychoeducational/experiential group 
in order to educate and promote self-care among therapist trainees. The 
psychoeducational portion of a group provides explicit definitions and instructions as 
well as the participant’s misconceptions on the group topic (Yalom & Leszcz, 2008). 
Yalom and Leszcz (2008) describe an experiential group as focusing on exploring 
personal experiences in order to create some form of change – in behavior, attitude, value, 
life-style, or in self-actualization. The combination of a psychoeducational and
experiential group will provide group participants with the knowledge and experience of applying mindfulness techniques into general life and clinical experience.

**Putting it All Together**

Through continual practice of Aikido philosophy and movements, one can become an effective therapist by developing body and mind awareness which in turn allows the growth of the self of the therapist. The course of developing the self is a continual process due to exposure of positive and negative experiences from clients and from daily life. Therefore, work on the self of the therapist is a never ending procedure in order to sustain the therapist’s emotional well-being in order to be an effective therapeutic tool for the client (Sprenkle, Davis, & Lebow, 2009).

**Summary**

The above literature review indicates the significance of the self of the therapist and the beneficial results of improving introspection and mindful coping skills. Through the development of self of the therapist, MFT trainees are better able to recognize burnout and compassion fatigue within themselves and respond accordingly to stabilize the amount of stress that they are experiencing in the moment (Clark, 2009; Rosenberg & Pace, 2006). Aikido was introduced as a somatic psychotherapeutic method of addressing self-awareness and improving mindfulness through the exploration of symbolic Aikido movements (Brawdy, 2001; Reinhardt, 1985). The Feldenkrais method and yoga, two well researched somatic psychotherapeutic methods, were then compared to Aikido in order to substantiate the improvements of awareness and mindfulness through Aikido movements.
Chapter Three: Project Development and Procedure

Introduction

When individuals take their first step into the field of marriage and family therapy many are excited for pursuing their passion of helping others in need or are anxious of the license requirements set by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (2016). Most therapist trainees are eager to begin therapy with real clients and overlook the emotional strain one can experience as the therapist during session. Howes (2008) states that new therapists over exert their energy when meeting with clients due to their desire to help. Over exertion in this manner can include the therapist trainee to emotionally invest beyond healthy limits, going past the agreed upon session period and ruminating about client issues during their free time. Howes (2008) further states that during the training period, therapist trainees become hypervigilant to signs of clinical success or failure, resulting in their self-esteem becoming dependent on client progress. Therapist trainees will also come across clients with difficult cases on top of the feelings of obligation they have towards their clients, which can lead to an endless cycle of stress and possibly lead an individual to burnout.

The purpose of this project is to create a psychoeducational/experiential group in which the primary objective is to develop or further enhance coping mechanisms for therapist trainees. Additionally, therapist trainees can apply learned skills from the group in their therapy sessions with clients to provide psychoeducation and increase the client’s coping skills as well. The following sections will examine the development of the project, intended audience, personal qualifications for group leaders, and the environment and equipment required to run the group.
Development of Project

The idea of using mindfulness in order to manage internal turmoil can be traced to Eastern traditions of introspection, most notably known as mindfulness meditation (Shapiro et al., 2006). Mindfulness has become a staple in marriage and family therapy work for both client and therapist alike in order to experience and process day-to-day situations from a clear perspective which is not distorted by expectations and beliefs. The concept of using Aikido as a means to reach such a state of mind derived from personal experience of mindfulness development through a decade of martial arts training. By practicing defensive techniques and the rationale behind each movement I was taught the ability to regulate emotions as well as cope and process stressful life experiences. There are other variables such as a healthy family and school environments which has shaped the person I am but I account Aikido as the major factor for managing my emotional self-regulation. The purpose of this project is to promote the well-being of MFT trainees by developing their introspective skills to be aware and react accordingly to burnout and/or compassion fatigue.

The group will be handled in a similar fashion as a traditional training style of Aikido (excluding the rigorous practice of harmful techniques) and combined with a portion for participants to process as a group. Participants will be introduced to the history and philosophy of Aikido as well as the culture of respect through ritualistic acknowledgement of past and present instructors. Each group session will be 2 hours in length and will consist of information pertaining to Aikido philosophy and movement, burnout, self of the therapist, and mindfulness for the first hour and a process group
among the participants for the second hour. The psychoeducational portion will emphasize Aikido teachings and provide connections between mindfulness development of the Feldenkrais Method and yoga, as well as Satir’s development and use of the self of the therapist. During the processing group portion, participants are free to discuss experiences and concerns with members, including the group leader, in order to further gain an understanding of their level of mindfulness and to structure their own path of self-care development.

**Intended Audience**

The group is primarily targeted towards MFT trainees who are beginning their graduate program or individuals who have just been accepted to their training placement. The main focus for the group is the development or enhancement of coping mechanisms to reduce burnout and compassion fatigue among new individuals within the field, hence the focus on trainees. Burnout and compassion fatigue is a serious issue for therapists of all experience level, therefore experienced therapists are also welcome to attend the group.

**Personal Qualifications**

The psychoeducational group was created to be led by an experienced marriage and family therapist intern or licensed marriage and family therapist. The group leader or leaders also require a minimal experience of 3 years of martial arts or other mindfulness developing somatic practices (i.e. yoga). Additionally, basic understanding of bodily functions as well as ability to provide appropriate medical assistance is required to ensure safety of the participants and group leader(s).
Environment and Equipment

The location for the group will take place on a school campus within a small gym classroom. The classroom will include gym mats to demonstrate and practice Aikido movements as well as chairs to use during the process portion of the group. Group leaders will be prepared with necessary handouts outlining weekly topics. Participants will be advised to wear comfortable clothes in order to practice light physical movements during group. Furthermore, consent forms for participant confidentiality and injury waivers in case of bodily harm must be prepared.

Project Outline

Group Outline

Week 1. Introduction

- Review and sign consent and injury waiver.
- Ice breaker – light introduction of group leader and each participant.
- Aikido history and philosophical aspect of martial art.
- Practice of entrance and exit ritual for each session.
- Conclusion with questions/concerns.

Week 2. Effects of Burnout

- Review of entrance ritual.
- Research presentation of burnout and compassion fatigue within the mental health profession.
- Process: personal experience with burnout.
- Review of exit ritual.
Week 3. Using the Self of the Therapist in Session

- Review of entrance ritual.
- Brief introduction to Virginia Satir.
- Define self of the therapist and effectiveness in therapeutic environment.
- Discuss connection between development of mindfulness and self of the therapist.
- Process group.
- Review of exit ritual.

Week 4. Significance of Movement

- Entrance ritual.
- Introduce Irimi, Tenkan, and Irimi-Tenkan by physical representation of movements and derived meaning of each movement used.
- Participant practice of movements on mats.
- Group process.
- Exit ritual.

Week 5. Mindfulness

- Entrance ritual
- Introduction to mindfulness.
- Discuss the use and significance of mindfulness as a therapist.
- Group process.
- Exit ritual.

Week 6. Developing Coping and Empathic Skills through Movement

- Entrance ritual.
• Practice Aikido movements as group on mats – close eyes to become aware of one’s own subtle movements/breath.

• (Continuing) Be aware of others’ movements on the mats (eyes open or closed).

• Group process.

• Exit ritual.

Week 7 & 8. Reinforcement of Therapeutic Skills

• Entrance ritual.

• Introduce two basic techniques and repeat practicing techniques.

• Have participants switch partners every 5 minutes.

• Slow down technique and have participants close eyes to sense uncomfortableness/pain in oneself and be aware of partner’s position and movements.

• Group process.

• Exit ritual.
Chapter Four: Conclusion

Summary of Project

Burnout is a common problem in the field of mental health services with 21 – 67% of mental health service providers experiencing high levels of burnout within their career (Morse et al., 2012). Individuals experiencing burnout often feel exhausted and are less motivated to continue their line of work (Gilsrap, 1999). For therapists, burnout can result in lower levels of empathy and dropping out of the field entirely (O’Brien & Haaga, 2015). MFT trainees are just as likely to encounter burnout as a result of encountering difficult clients, personal issues, academic stressors, and overall clinical environment (Negash & Sahin, 2011).

The purpose of this project was to create a group curriculum focused on developing mindfulness skills for MFT trainees to improve their coping capabilities against burnout and compassion fatigue. Using Aikido as a teaching medium, trainees will learn to heighten body-awareness through Aikido movements which will then help to improve mindful awareness (Caplan, Portillo, & Seely, 2013; Mehling et al., 2009). Through the development of mindfulness skills MFT trainees will be better able to recognize and use coping mechanisms to respond appropriately against burnout symptoms. It is important for therapist trainees to have a repertoire of skills to manage burnout throughout the graduate program and onward to be an effective therapist for the client.

Recommendations for Implementation

It is recommended that anyone facilitating the group is an experienced MFT intern or licensed MFT and has a minimal experience of three years in Aikido or similar
mindfulness developing somatic practices. This group curriculum is designed to help MFT trainees recognize the implications of untreated burnout and one possible solution to develop a coping mechanism for up-and-coming therapists, therefore groups are intended to run within a school setting which the MFT graduate program is offered.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Aikido is a relatively new form of martial art that pursues philosophical goals which are similar to modern beliefs of MFT. I believe Aikido and similar martial arts/sports which build characteristics of mindfulness should be further researched in order to promote the benefits of these activities. Quantitative research was difficult to find in regards to Aikido and mindfulness development, therefore future research may focus on such topics as mindfulness development and burnout rates between Aikido practitioners and non-practitioners in order to further determine if Aikido is an effective strategy to improve mindfulness. Furthermore, more longitudinal studies of developmental effects of mindfulness on reducing burnout among therapists would benefit professionals in the field of mental health.

**Conclusion**

The development of my own mindfulness skills has allowed me to persevere through burnout within my duration of the MFT program. I have created this project in the hopes of sharing my personal experience of the benefits I received from over a decade’s worth of practicing Aikido. I have observed many of my colleagues experience burnout, as well as myself, in one form or another during the two and a half years of enrollment in this program. Some of my colleagues have even questioned their decision on continuing their education in the MFT program as a result of burnout. After I realized
the amount of stress MFT trainees have to endure in order to attain their goal I knew there was something that could be done to lessen the impact of burnout. Supervisors and more experienced colleagues consistently reminded every trainee to self-care by means of disconnecting oneself from school related stressors, but it has proven, at least to me, difficult to do so when there is a daily reminder of program related stressors from academic work and daily school or clinic obligations. This realization prompted me to create a group curriculum to teach MFT trainees to be able to self-regulate through the awareness of their inner and outer self. I am not discounting self-care from others means such as supervision or social supports, but I believe it is important to have the ability to care for oneself independently in case of absences of other self-care strategies.

It is important to learn coping skills early on in the MFT program in order to solidify these skills to handle burnout appropriately in the trainee’s future as a licensed MFT. I believe the group curriculum sets a helpful guide on how to develop mindfulness through body-awareness training. My ultimate goal with this project is to bring more awareness of burnout, and by doing so prevent trainees from over exhausting their energy early within their career. I have a great sense of pride completing this project and hope that trainees in the future will be better equipped with skills to manage academic, career and life stressors with this group.
References


Mendenhall, M. (2006). *An investigation of the impact of buddhist martial arts as a rehabilitation intervention program to remedy emotional problems, curb*
aggressive tendencies, develop self-awareness, and cultivate a strong moral foundation with incarcerated juvenile delinquents (Doctoral dissertation).

Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI No. 3222044)


*Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 39*, 341-352. doi: 10.1007/s10488-011-0352-1


cognitive performance in burnout can be reversed by a motivational intervention.


of emotional information. *Cognition and Emotion, 24*(1), 3-47. doi:
10.1080/02699930903205698
Group Curriculum for Aikido Mindfulness Development

By: Ryuji Yoneyama
Session 1: Introduction

Goals:

- Build rapport with group leader and amongst participants.
- Discuss confidentiality, physical requirements for the group, possibility of injury, purpose, and goals of the group.

Group Leader Requirements:

- The initial three sessions of the group do not require gym mats but the group leader should keep in mind the space for movement practice for upcoming sessions.
- It is preferred that the groups are run with foldable chairs in order to make room for matts in the future.
- Print out attached consent forms and injury waivers for participating group members.
- Prepare personal experience with Aikido. If group leader has minimal training in Aikido, use video link provided to introduce history and philosophy of Aikido.
- If possible, have a picture of Ueshiba (O-sensei) framed on the opposite wall of the entrance door as part of the entrance/exit ritual.

Group Activity:

- Ice breaker
  - Brief introduction of the group leader credentials and experience in therapeutic setting.
  - Have each group member introduce themselves:
    - Name.
    - Graduate program year or experience level as a therapist.
    - Share clinical experience (if any).
    - Where he/she sees him/herself five years from now.

- Aikido video
  - Introduce Aikido – begin with group leader’s understanding of Aikido and what it means to him/her.
  - Share group leader’s experience training in Aikido.
  - Present video.
  - Have group leader’s experience of applying Aikido teachings to his/herself as a therapist.

- Introduce rituals
  - Group leader will briefly explain entrance and exit rituals performed in traditional Aikido training.
- The group leader will have a set instruction which can either be distributed to each group member or displayed on a projector.
- The group leader will demonstrate the rituals in front of all group members.
- Have group members perform the exit ritual at the end of group session.

End Session 1:

- Questions and concerns:
  - Open floor for any questions regarding Aikido or concerns of group.
Session 2: Effects of Burnout

Goals:

- Expand knowledge of burnout in the field of therapy.
- Negative effects of burnout on the individual and the community.
- Learn to catch and become self-aware of burnout within self.

Group Leader Requirements:

- Prepare computer for presentation on burnout before group members arrive. The group leader may choose to create a custom PowerPoint presentation using the information provided.
- Print copy of information provided in presentation for group members.
- Print out burnout self-test and pass out before session ends.

Group Activity:

- Review entrance ritual
  - Before group session begins, remind all members to practice bowing when entering the room and bowing a second time toward the picture of O-sensei.
- Burnout presentation
  - Hand out presentation information to group members.
  - Provide personal examples of burnout within field of therapy.
  - Answer questions regarding burnout in mental health profession.
- Process group
  - Have group members make a circle in order to discuss burnout experience and solutions amongst each other.
  - Group leader may begin topic of discussion and will lead until group organically processes topic with minimal encouragement of group leader.
  - Questions to facilitate group:
    - Has anyone experienced burnout during their program and would you like to share your experience?
    - How do you manage burnout?

End Session 2:

- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Hand out burnout self-test.
- Lightly introduce next group topic and relation to burnout.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Session 3: Using the Self of the Therapist in Session

Goals:

- Introduce or refresh memory of Virginia Satir’s belief of using self of the therapist.
- Identifying self-issues which may inhibit therapeutic process.

Group Leader Requirements:

- Before group members arrive, set up computer for presentation on Satir.
  - Use attached biography and philosophy on self of the therapist.
- Prepare handout copies of presentation for group members.

Group Activity:

- Entrance ritual
  - Remind any members forgetting to practice rituals.
- Check-in on burnout self-test.
- Satir presentation
  - Begin by asking members of their knowledge of Virginia Satir and her method of therapy.
  - Provide brief history of Satir.
  - Introduce and define self of the therapist.
  - Relate self of the therapist and burnout.
  - Open floor for questions.
- Process group
  - Have group members form a circle to discuss their views on using self of the therapist in therapeutic settings.
  - Discuss topic of therapists resolving personal issues and its effectiveness in therapeutic setting with clients.

End Session 3:

- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Lightly introduce next group topic.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Session 4: Significance of Movement

Goals:

- Introduce Aikido movements and the reasoning/philosophy behind each movement.
- Create a group setting which group members are comfortable moving their bodies in new ways.
- Have members apply movement philosophy to therapeutic encounters.

Group Leader Requirements:

- Before group members arrive, place gym mats in front of the picture of O-sensei.
- If possible, have enough mats for all group members to be able to participate together.
  - Each individual requires 2 or 3 mats to practice their movements.
- Use information provided to follow movement positioning.
- Prepare emergency aid kit in the case of injury.

Group Activity:

- Entrance ritual
  - Inform group members that entrance ritual is repeated on the mats.
- Aikido movements
  - Discuss the importance of movement in Aikido.
  - Define *Irими, Tenkan*, and *Irими-Tенkan*.
    - Introduce philosophical reasoning for each movement and the combination of movements.
    - Demonstrate each movement while defining them.
  - Have group members enter the mats to practice movements.
    - Group members must take their shoes off and repeat the entrance ritual when entering the mats.
    - Have group members shadow the group leader for each movement.
    - Allow group members to practice on their own while group leader walks around to check each individual.
    - In addition to practicing, group members can close their eyes in order to become aware of their own movements.
    - When finished, have members perform exit ritual on the mats before collecting their shoes.
- Process group
  - Have group members form a circle to discuss their views of experiencing Aikido movements
  - Introduce topic of applying philosophy of movements to benefit the therapist in therapeutic setting.
End Session 4:

- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Lightly introduce next group topic in relation to Aikido movements.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Session 5: Mindfulness

Goals:

- Expand knowledge of group members’ understanding of mindfulness.
- Group members able to make a connection between Aikido movements and mindfulness.

Group Leader Requirements:

- Before group members arrive, prepare gym mats in the same fashion as session 4.
- A computer is not required for this presentation due to the mat placements.
- Prepare handouts of presentation for group members.

Group Activity:

- Entrance ritual
- Mindfulness presentation
  - Group members will be allowed to sit or stand on the gym mats during the presentation.
  - Define mindfulness.
  - Introduce concept of developing mindfulness through body movement and awareness.
  - Connect Aikido movements to mindfulness development.
- Process group
  - Have group members form a circle to discuss their experience with mindfulness in personal life as well as in their field.

End Session 5:

- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Prepare group members for next session by informing them of the physical aspect of upcoming sessions.
- Inform group members to bring gym clothing.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Session 6: Developing Coping and Empathic Skills through Movement

Goals:

- Cultivate skills in order to resolve issues or maintain self-homeostasis within self.
- Gain ability to apply figurative teachings of physical movements into life experiences.

Group Leader Requirements:

- Before group members arrive, prepare gym mats in the same fashion as session 4.
- Prepare emergency aid kit in the case of injury.
- Use basic Aikido techniques in order to increase group members’ awareness of the body and of others.
  - It is suggested that the group leader introduces two similar ground pinning techniques for the current session.
  - A list of techniques is provided if the group leader requires it.

Group Activity:

- Entrance ritual
- Developing therapeutic skills through movement
  - The group will begin on the mats.
  - The group leader will review *Irimi, Tenkan*, and *Irimi-Tenkan*.
    - The group leader will instruct group members to move around the mats using the movements without bumping into one another.
    - The group leader will introduce two basic techniques.
      - **Warn group members to practice each technique slowly.**
      - Group members will be instructed to pair up with a partner to practice the technique slowly.
        - Group members will switch the attacker and defender role every four turns.
        - The group leader will ask to switch partners every 10 minutes.
      - With the group leader’s supervision:
        - Group members who are defending can close their eyes in order to increase awareness of the body when maneuvering the attacker.
        - Group members who are attacking can close their eyes near the end of the technique in order to increase awareness of body placement and discomfort they experience.
- Process group
- Have group members form a circle to discuss their views of practicing techniques on each other, feelings of discomfort and/or sense of body awareness.
- Introduce topic of practicing focused awareness on the self in order to develop useful therapeutic skills and mindfulness skills.

End Session 6:

- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Prepare group members for next session by informing them of the similar curriculum with new techniques.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Session 7 & 8: Reinforcement of Therapeutic Skills

Goals:
- Practice Aikido techniques to reinforce developing therapeutic skills.

Group Leader Requirements:
- Before group members arrive, prepare gym mats in the same fashion as session 4.
- Prepare emergency aid kit in the case of injury.
- Use basic Aikido techniques in order to increase group members’ awareness of the body and of others.
  - Introduce a mix of pinning and throwing techniques (do not let group members complete techniques which include throwing).
  - A list of techniques is provided if the group leader requires them.

Group Activity:
- Entrance ritual
- Reinforcing therapeutic skills through movement
  - The group will begin on the mats.
  - Begin by reviewing *Irimi, Tenkan*, and *Irimi-Tenkan*.
  - The group leader will introduce two basic techniques.
    - Warn group members to practice each technique slowly.
    - When demonstrating a throwing technique, the group leader should slowly execute the technique to ensure there is no momentum building for the throw. Stop the technique before the attacker is thrown.
    - Group members will be instructed to pair up with a partner to practice the technique slowly.
      - Group members will switch the attacker and defender role every four turns.
      - The group leader will ask to switch partners every 10 minutes.
    - With the group leader’s supervision:
      - Group members who are defending can close their eyes in order to increase awareness of the body when maneuvering the attacker.
      - Group members who are attacking can close their eyes near the end of the technique in order to increase awareness of body placement and discomfort they experience.
- Process group
  - Have group members form a circle to discuss their views of practicing different techniques and compare experiences of discomfort/awareness.

End of Session 7 & 8:
- Provide group with 5 minute warning to end process group.
- Practice exit ritual with group members before concluding session.
Handouts and Presentations

Session 1
ACCIDENT WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM

I HEREBY ASSUME ALL OF THE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN ANY/ALL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS EVENT, including by way of example and not limitation, any risks that may arise from negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons or entities being released, from dangerous or defective equipment or property owned, maintained, or controlled by them, or because of their possible liability without fault.

I certify that I am physically fit, have sufficiently prepared or trained for participation in this activity, and have not been advised to not participate by a qualified medical professional. I certify that there are no health-related reasons or problems which preclude my participation in this activity.

I acknowledge that this Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form will be used by the event holders, sponsors, and organizers of the activity in which I may participate, and that it will govern my actions and responsibilities at said activity.

In consideration of my application and permitting me to participate in this activity, I hereby take action for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, next of kin, successors, and assigns as follows:

(A) I WAIVE, RELEASE, AND DISCHARGE from any and all liability, including but not limited to, liability arising from the negligence or fault of the entities or persons released, for my death, disability, personal injury, property damage, property theft, or actions of any kind which may hereafter occur to me including my traveling to and from this activity, THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OR PERSONS:
The Soil Ecology Society, (SES) and/or their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, representatives, and agents, and the activity holders, sponsors, and volunteers;

(B) INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS, AND PROMISE NOT TO SUE the entities or persons mentioned in this paragraph from any and all liabilities or claims made as a result of participation in this activity, whether caused by the negligence of release or otherwise.

I acknowledge that SES and their directors, officers, volunteers, representatives, and agents are NOT responsible for the errors, omissions, acts, or failures to act of any party or entity conducting a specific activity on their behalf.

I acknowledge that this activity may involve a test of a person's physical and mental limits and carries with it the potential for death, serious injury, and property loss. The risks include, but are not limited to, those caused by terrain, facilities, temperature, weather, condition of participants, equipment, vehicular traffic, lack of hydration, and actions of other people including, but not limited to, participants, volunteers, monitors, and/or producers of the activity. These risks are not only inherent to participants, but are also present for volunteers.

I hereby consent to receive medical treatment which may be deemed advisable in the event of injury, accident, and/or illness during this activity.

I understand while participating in this activity, I may be photographed. I agree to allow my photo, video, or film likeness to be used for any legitimate purpose by the activity holders, producers, sponsors, organizers, and assigns.

The Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form shall be construed broadly to provide a release and waiver to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT AND I FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND A CONTRACT AND I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participant’s Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Please print legibly.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If under 18 years old, Parent or Guardian must also sign.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Connecticut State University
http://www.wcsu.edu/ses/meeting07/Accident_Waiver_and_Release_of_Liability_Form.doc.
Picture of Ueshiba (O-sensei)

Source: http://kumakai.com/chief-instructor-denise-barry-sensei/lineage/
Aikido Video

Brief history and philosophy: *Aikido Explained: The History & Purpose*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_nSKo34S5Y
Entrance and Exit Ritual

The entrance and exit ritual in Aikido is done so for each individual to show respect to the head instructor and the creator of Aikido, Ueshiba Morihei (O-sensei). The group will use a simplified version of the ritual due to the strict requirements of the traditional method. The ritual the group will be focusing on is displaying respect through bowing.

The Japanese etiquette to bowing while standing upright is generally believed that an individual should bow at a 45 degree angle. During this motion, the spine is kept straight while the arms are closely set next to the sides of the body.

The following is the process by which group members will enter the location of the group:

1. Open and close door.
2. Take one step into the room and bow towards the image of O-sensei and then bow to the group leader (which he/she will reciprocate).

After the session has ended group members will do as follows:

1. Head toward the door.
2. Turn around and bow towards O-sensei and then again to the group leader. Traditionally students will thank the instructor but group members are allowed to express appreciation/depreciation in any form they please.
3. Open door and exit the room.

Bowing when entering the mats are slightly changed. The individual kneels on both knees, putting the knees parallel to the shoulders, and places both hands on the knees in preparation of the bow. When bowing, the individual places the left hand out approximately 8 inches in front of the left knee and repeats the same movement with the right hand. The hands and knee placement should resemble a shape of a triangle. The individual then lowers his/her head towards the ground without hitting it. Once the bowing is complete the individual slowly reverses his/her actions and stands up.

When entering the mats to practice the group members will follow a similar ritual of bowing:

1. Take shoes and place to the side.
2. (If possible) Kneel on both knees with both hands on knees.
3. Look straight to the image of O-sensei and bow.
4. Once the bowing is done, the group member can move on the mats freely.

When exiting the mats the group members will do the following:

1. Walk towards the edge of the mats and turn towards the image of O-sensei.
2. Kneel on both knees with both hands on knees.
4. Step of the mats.
Session 2

Burnout

What is burnout?

It is a state of emotional or physical exhaustion which occurs when an individual experiences long term stress in the environment. This state of exhaustion can lead to work fatigue and loss of passion in a career. As therapists, the passion and desire to help others drives us to keep working diligently for each individual client. When the passion to help others begin to dissipate, the one who suffers the most is the client. Prolonged burnout can negatively affect the quality of care provided for the client which will stunt further therapeutic progression.

Some causes of burnout:

- Lack of control – an inability to influence decisions that affect your job.
- Vicarious trauma – partially/fully experiencing a client’s traumatic experience through listening to a client’s story.
- Lack of social support – feeling of isolation at work and/or personal life.

Signs of burnout:

- Cynical of work or easily irritable/impatient towards co-workers or clients.
- Feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities.
- Irregular sleeping habits or appetite change.
- Dissatisfaction of job or achievements.
- Experiencing physical pains such as chest, neck, and/or back pain.
Burnout Self-Test


- I feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I have negative thoughts about my job.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I am harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I am easily irritated by small problems, or by my co-workers and team.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel misunderstood or unappreciated by my co-workers.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that I have no one to talk to.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that I am achieving less than I should.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel under an unpleasant level of pressure of succeed.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that I am not getting what I want out of my job.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that I am in the wrong organization or the wrong profession.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I am frustrated with parts of my job.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate my ability to do a good job.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that there is more work to do than I practically have the ability to do.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I feel that I do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- I find that I do not have the time to plan as much as I would like to.
  ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Total score:__________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>No sign of burnout here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-32</td>
<td>Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-49</td>
<td>Be careful – you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>You are at severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-75</td>
<td>You are at very severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm)
Who is Virginia Satir?

- Known as “the mother of family therapy”
- Approached therapy from a different perspective compared to other forms of therapy during the 1960s.
- Believed client’s presenting problems were masking deeper issues which were the product of negative family experiences.
Contributions to the Field

- Conjoint family therapy
  - Validation process model which emphasize communication and emotional experiencing.
  - Emphasized the importance of individual self-worth.

Satir Philosophy

- Believed congruency is key to better communication not only for clients but for therapists as well.
  - Being congruent allows an individual to be emotionally honest which can lead to lower-stressed communication.

- The therapist must work on his/her own issues before helping others.

- Be who you are in the therapy session.
Self of the Therapist

- The ability to stay in the present moment through the resolution of personal issues.
- By developing self of the therapist the more congruent he/she is.

Burnout

- Resolving personal issues and handling client issues can bring upon burnout.
- Burnout can hinder the development of the self of the therapist.

Why are you here today?
Session 4

Introduction of *Irimi, Tenkan, and Irimi-tenkan*.

- *Irimi*- a forward stepping motion toward the opponent which symbolizes the acceptance of the attacking opponent’s energy. By accepting the opponent, the attack received is viewed as a learning opportunity and a chance to join with the opponent.

- *Tenkan*- a spherical turn after the *irimi* to step away from the opponent’s attack. By stepping away from the attack the opponent will lose his/her center of balance, allowing the defender to gain a better control of the situation. *Tenkan* symbolizes the ability to empathize and share perspectives by moving behind and facing where the opponent is facing.

- *Irimi-tenkan*- a combination of both movements which is the basis of most Aikido techniques. The movement symbolizes the joining and blending of the defender and attacker. Through the successful joining and blending of both individuals, it becomes difficult to discern the difference between who is attacking and who is defending.
Foot work sample: *Irimi-tenkan*
Session 5

Mindfulness presentation
What is Mindfulness?

- A temporary state of non-judgement and increased awareness of internal and external changes.
- Acceptance of the individual's internal and external changes.
- Originally derived from Eastern Buddhist practice of meditation and believed to result in increased awareness, insight, wisdom, and compassion through regular practice.

Developing Mindfulness

- Several ways of developing mindfulness:
  - Meditation
  - Self-reflection
  - Yoga
  - Martial Arts
Body-Awareness

- One possible way to develop mindfulness.
- Focuses on current body state, training you to stay in the present moment.
- Through body-awareness focused activities such as martial arts and yoga, one can further develop mindfulness skills.

Aikido

- Techniques and movements were created to regulate/control the body of another individual as well as one’s own body.
- Aikido teachings attach meaning to each movement.
- Continuous practice develops body-awareness and therefore increases mindfulness.

Recommended Reading

*Mindfulness: Diverse Perspectives on its Meaning, Origins and Applications*
- Edited by J. Mark G. Williams and Jon Kabat-Zinn

*The Open Hand: Arguing as an Art of Peace*
- By Barry M. Kroll

*The Way of Aikido: Life Lessons from an American Sensei*
- By George Leonard
Session 6

Ikkyo and Nikyo immobilization
Session 7

Possible throwing techniques to use:

Kotegaeshi
Another possible technique:

Irimi nage
Throw/pin technique:

Shiho nage