

Introduction to Mindfulness & Meditation



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<https://web.calpoly.edu/~vbennert/mindfulness/>





Student Mindfulness Club



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Top 10 Impediments to Academic Achievement

According to the American College Health Association (ACHA), students reported the following factors affected their individual academic performance. Please note: 9 of the 10 factors are mental health and/or coping skills related, and areas where Student Counseling Services can help.

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Percentage of Students Affected</u>
Stress	30.6%
Anxiety	24.2%
Sleep Trouble	19.7%
Depression	15.9%
Cold / Flu /Sore Throat	14.6%
Work	13.0%
Concern for Troubled Friend or Family Member	10.3%
Extracurricular Activities	9.7%
Internet/Computer Games	9.6%
Relationship Difficulties	9.1%

Today's workshop



- The benefits of mindfulness and meditation as stress-relieving practices
- Group discussion, Q&A



Patient: Doctor,
I don't feel well and
I'm not sure why.

David Avocado Wolfe

Doctor: I want you to meditate for 20 minutes, twice a day, exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, avoid processed foods, eat plenty of organic fruit and veg, spend more time in nature and less indoors, stop worrying about things you can't control and ditch your TV. Come back in 3 weeks.

Confidentiality!



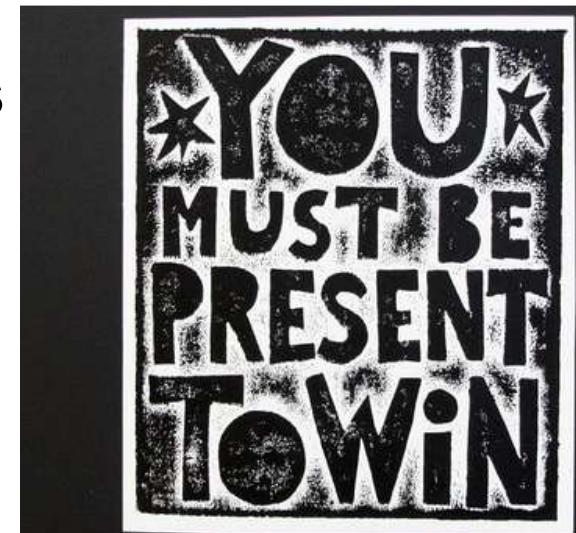
- **What you can share** with others after this workshop
 - Anything that I said
 - Anything that you learned
 - Your own experience
- **What you cannot share** with others after this workshop
 - Anything anyone else said
- Important to create safe container here



Warnings



- No magic trick or magic pill...
- I am not an expert in anything that we will talk about today
- Not my area of research
- Based on my experiences and practices
- You have to find out what works for you
- We are here together as human beings
(and not the roles we play at work)





- (Some) Important traits of a Scientist:
 - Curiosity
 - Openness
 - Observant
 - Reflection
 - Commitment
 - Discipline
 - Patience
 - Persistence
- Also important for meditation, personal growth and finding a healthy work-life balance

How about you?



- What is challenging in your life?
- What is helpful for you in dealing with these challenges?

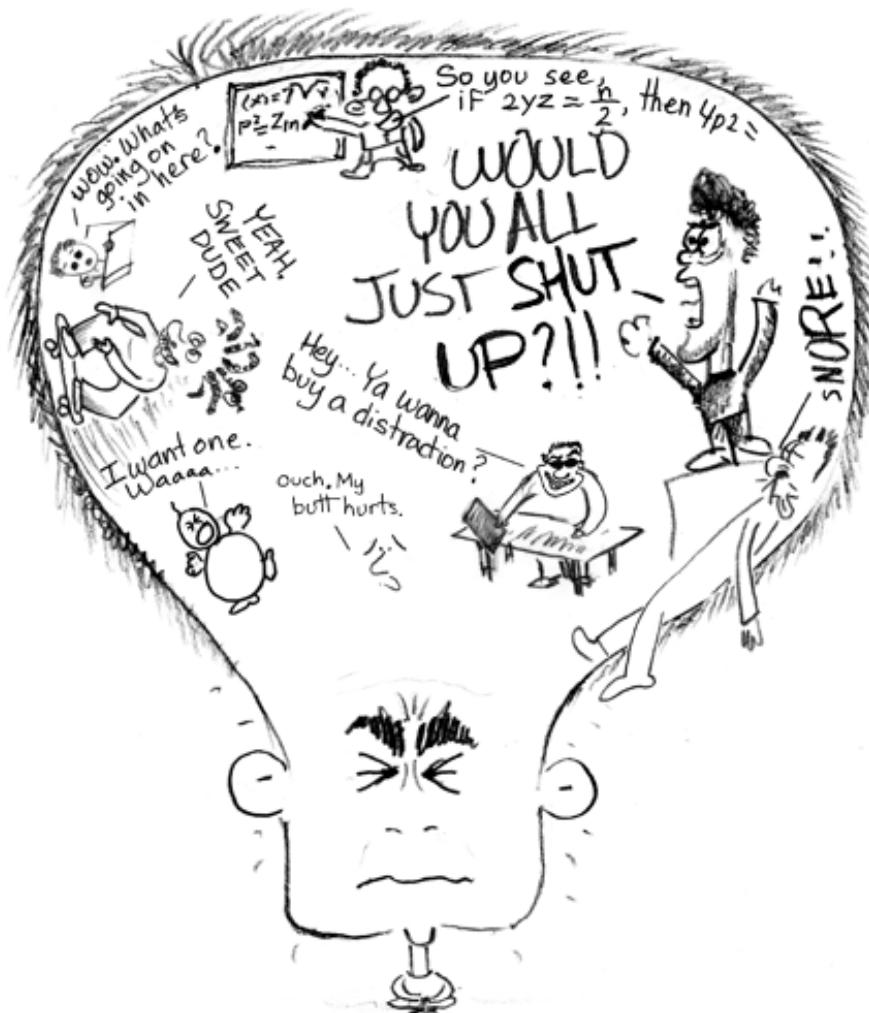
Meditation



- Meditation: a state of deep peace that occurs when the mind is calm and silent, a state of no-mind



Often, in reality...



What you practice grows stronger



- Are you practicing meditation or judgement & frustration?

Mindfulness



- Mindfulness: paying attention with loving kindness, practicing awareness in a non-judgemental way



Meditation & Mindfulness



- Many different techniques!
- E.g., silent sitting
- Guided meditations
- Watching or counting the breath
- Walking meditation
- Active meditations (e.g. first dancing or shaking or jumping, then silent sitting)
- Body scan
- ...
- Everything can become a meditation (washing dishes, driving car, exercising etc.)!

Myths about Meditation



- You can't meditate because you think too much.



Myths about Meditation



- You can't meditate because you don't have time.



Myths about Meditation



- Meditation has to be religious or spiritual.



Myths about Meditation



- You must sit in an uncomfortable cross-legged position in order to meditate.



Myths about Meditation



- Meditation takes years to learn.





- Thousands of research studies show that mindfulness works!
- Mind:
 - Increases mental strength & focus
 - Increases memory retention & recall
 - Better cognitive skills & creative thinking
 - Better decision making & problem solving
 - Better information processing
 - Helps ignore distractions
 - Helps manage ADHD



- Thousands of research studies show that mindfulness works!
- Emotional Well-being:
 - Lessens worry, anxiety & impulsivity
 - Lessens stress, fear, loneliness & depression
 - Enhances self-esteem & self-acceptance
 - Improves resilience against pain & adversity
 - Increases optimism, relaxation & adversity
 - Helps prevent emotional eating & smoking
 - Helps develop positive social connections
 - Improves your mood & emotional intelligence



- Thousands of research studies show that mindfulness works!
- Healthier Body:
 - Improves immune system & energy level
 - Improves breathing & heart rates
 - Helps sleep better
 - Reduces blood pressure
 - More longevity
 - Plus many other benefits

Resources



- See website:
- <https://web.calpoly.edu/~vbennert/mindfulness/>



- Acknowledge students' struggles
- Acknowledge own struggles
- Share with students what helps us to nourish ourselves
- Invite students explicitly to come talk to us about non-course-content related issues
- Include a blurb in syllabus to this effect (I am happy to share an example with you)
- Include a list of on-campus resources for health & wellbeing on PolyLearn/Canvas (I am happy to share examples with you)
- Avoid midnight and weekend deadlines
- Other suggestions?



Discussion/Q&A



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- Questions/Comments/Feedback?

IT takes
Courage
TO SAY YES TO
REST AND Play
IN A CULTURE WHERE EXHAUSTION
IS SEEN AS A STATUS SYMBOL.

- BRENE BROWN