


MINDFULNESS AND SELF-COMPASSION FOR ADDICTION

Powerful Practices to Strengthen Recovery

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ABOUT THE PRESENTER




Dr. Rebecca Williams is a psychologist, award-winning author, yoga teacher, and leader in the field of wellness and recovery from mental illness and addiction. She is co-author of 2 books on integrating mindfulness and addiction recovery for a balanced life.

- The Mindfulness Workbook for Addiction: A Guide to Coping with the Grief, Stress, and Anger that Trigger Addictive Behaviors
- The Gift of Recovery: 52 Mindful Ways to Live Joyfully Beyond Addiction


Credited by Dr. Rebecca Williams mindfulnessworkbook.com

WELCOME



One Minute Centering Exercise


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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓1. Provide a checklist on addiction: Five key questions to ask when the puzzle pieces don't fit together.
- ✓2. Explore how mindfulness and self-compassion can be applied to addiction treatment.
- ✓3. How to incorporate mindfulness and self-compassion *skills* into treatment with clients.

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TRICKY ADDICTION THINKING

What are some thoughts your patients may be having about alcohol and drug use?

- My problem is not as bad as other people's problem.
- I don't like groups, AA/NA is not for me.
- My family is making too big of a deal about my use.
- My boss is being a jerk when I come to work late.
- If I relapse, I'll never recover from my addiction.
- That police officer was out to get me.
- Other thoughts you have heard: _____.

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ADDICTION SIGNS CHECKLIST PART 1

- ___ Trying to quit or cut down but can't
- ___ Increase in amount of alcohol/drugs needed to feel buzzed (tolerance)
- ___ Urgency in obtaining first drink or drug (feeling itchy)
- ___ Blackout, memory lapses, during or after using
- ___ Sneaking to use
- ___ Making excuses for drug or alcohol use
- ___ Using while alone, or hiding all evidence of using

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ADDICTION SIGNS CHECKLIST PART 2

8. ___ Avoiding family and friends if they express concern about your use

9. ___ Drinking or using more than other others at social events

10. ___ Using alcohol or drugs to "forget" your problems

11. ___ Financial, legal, medical, family and/or work problems due to alcohol or drug use

12. ___ Loss of interest in activities and increase desire to get "high"

13. ___ Doing things under the influence of drugs or alcohol that cause shame or regret later

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ADDICTION SIGNS CHECKLIST PART 3

14. ___ Neglecting important responsibilities in order to use

15. ___ Unable to talk about the problem with others

16. ___ Denial about the seriousness of the addiction problem

17. ___ Not eating properly

18. ___ Not sleeping well

19. ___ Not taking care of yourself or your hygiene

20. ___ Taking risks that may be harmful to yourself and others (unsafe sex, driving while high)

(score 10 or more checked boxes should be discussed with the provider)

Adapted from The Mindfulness Workbook for Addiction, page 110.

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ADDICTION SIGNS

- Can you ask your patients to fill out this Addiction Signs Questionnaire prior to the visit?
- Use Questionnaire as a *conversation starter*.
- "Tell me about: #4 (*memory lapses*), #10 (*forget your problems*), or #18 (*sleep problems*)"


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OBJECTIVE #1:

U.N.I.T.E. YOUR 5 QUESTIONS

- Unite means to bring together for a common purpose or action.
- These 5 questions are designed help you and the patient work together to make sense of the health concerns they are having.



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FIVE KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN THE PUZZLE PIECES DON'T FIT TOGETHER

Question 1: U

Are you having difficulty **calming yourself down**? (UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS)

Question 2: N

Are you **beating yourself up** due to certain behaviors? (NEGATIVE THOUGHTS)

Question 3: I

What ways might alcohol or drugs be getting **IN THE WAY** of your mental health?

Question 4: T

Have you experienced a **TRAUMA OR LOSS** within the past year?

Question 5: E

What **ENRICHING RELATIONSHIPS** are available for you right now?

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UNITE: QUESTION 1

1. Are you having difficulty calming yourself down? (Uncomfortable Feelings)

- Do you use drugs or alcohol to **"take the edge off"**?
- Is it easy for you to get and stay **angry**?
- Are you **stressed** more days out of the week?
- Do you have days of **sadness** or depressed mood?
- Have you stopped your yoga or meditation practice or **stopped exercising**?

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UNITE: QUESTION 2

2. Are you beating yourself up because of certain behaviors? (Negative Thoughts)

- Do you have an **inner critic** that is constantly judging you?
- Is your mind filled with **destructive thoughts**?
- Do you wake up in the **morning** thinking harsh things about yourself?
- Do you think you should be **punished**?

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UNITE: QUESTION 3

3. What ways might alcohol or drugs be getting in the way of your health and mental health?

- Are you having **sleep** problems?
- Are you **eating** too much or too little, or unhealthy food choices?
- Are you **anxious** or worried most of the time?
- Are you **sad** or depressed most of the time?
- Do you have **more than usual stress** at work or home?
- Are you unable to have fun or **joyful moments**?

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UNITE: QUESTION 4

4. Have you experienced Trauma or Loss within the past year?

- Have you noticed you **drank more/used drugs** after this trauma or loss?
- Do you reach for alcohol or drugs to **cope** with your feelings around the loss?
- Do you feel you have **grieved this loss**?
- Do you have someone to **talk** to about this trauma or loss?

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UNIT 5: QUESTION 5

5. What relationships are Enriching for you *right now*?

- Who are the **supportive people** in your life?
- Is there **someone you can call** when things feel out of balance?
- Are you attending a **support group**, in person or on line?
- Do you know **anyone else** who has gone through something similar?
- Is there a **mental health professional** you can contact for support?
- Are you connected to a **spiritual or religious** group/church?

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OBJECTIVE #2

EXPLORE HOW MINDFULNESS & SELF-COMPASSION CAN BE APPLIED TO ADDICTION TREATMENT?



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WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Being aware, in the present moment,
without judgment. Kabat-Zinn

- ✓ A way to **calm the mind**
- ✓ A way to **decrease distracting thoughts** and feelings
- ✓ A way to **focus attention** on the present moment
- ✓ A way to **decrease the critical mind**
- ✓ A way to **loosen control** over our experiences

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS?

- Better mental health
- Better physical health
- Better performance on intellectual tasks
- Better performance on physical tasks
- Better recovery time from illnesses
- Better productivity with lower stress



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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS ON ADDICTION?

Practicing mindfulness has been shown to:

- 1. Decrease **craving**
- 2. Improve mental health – **decrease anxiety and depressive mood**
- 3. Increase **self-compassion**
- 4. Improve ability to **cope**
- 5. Decrease **post-traumatic symptoms**
- 6. Decrease **drug and alcohol use** overall
- 7. Reduce the **risk for relapse**

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RESEARCH ON MINDFULNESS

- ✓ "Targeted mindfulness practices may support long-term outcomes by **strengthening the ability to monitor and skillfully cope with the discomfort associated with craving or negative effect**, thus supporting long-term outcomes." ¹
- ✓ "Current evidence suggests **that mindfulness-based interventions can reduce the consumption of several substances** including alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, marijuana, cigarettes, and opiates to a greater extent than waitlist controls, educational support groups, and control groups." ³
- ✓ "Large effect associated to levels of **perceived craving, negative affectivity, and post-traumatic symptoms**." ²
- ✓ "Mindfulness-based relapse prevention may affect numerous brain systems and may **reverse, repair, or compensate for neuroadaptive changes** associated with addictive-behavior relapse." ⁴

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NEUROLOGICAL BASIS FOR MINDFULNESS

- People with substance use problems experience problems in 3 areas of the brain responsible for **Attention, Emotion, and Behavioral Regulation**.¹⁰
- They **react to cues** by resorting to using rather than *waiting or coping* with the problem.
- Training in Mindfulness helps the person:
 - **be aware** in the moment
 - **detach** from thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are bothersome
 - **perceive** the world as it is

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F.I.O.A.T. EXERCISE

Simple Steps to Pause, Reflect, Re-center when Triggered

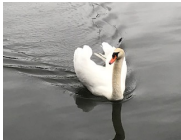
F = Find Your Silent Place

L = Let Go of Judgment

O = Observe Your Thoughts

A = Awareness of Your Environment


T = Thankful for the Experience



adapted from The Mindfulness Workbook for Addiction, pages 80-81

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If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.



Dalai Lama XIV

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COMPASSION: 5 ELEMENTS

Compassion composed of five elements:

1. recognizing **suffering**
2. understanding the **universality of human suffering**
3. **feeling for the person suffering**
4. **tolerating** uncomfortable feelings
5. **motivation to act** to alleviate suffering ⁽⁶⁾

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SELF-COMPASSION STARTERS

"Self-compassion is compassion directed inward. We care about ourselves when faced with suffering or pain."

Kristin Neff

"If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete."

Jack Kornfield

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SELF-COMPASSION

Originates from Buddhist teachings

- Three main elements

1. **self-kindness** – be understanding and supportive to yourself
2. **common humanity** – all of us make wrong decisions and struggle
3. **mindfulness** – awareness of our negativity without judgment



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SELF-COMPASSION: BEST FRIEND



- Be as kind to yourself as your **best friend** would be to you.
- Acknowledge that challenges and setbacks are a **normal part of life**.
- **Coach yourself** through difficult times with kindness and acceptance.

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RESEARCH ON SELF-COMPASSION

"Substance use disorder risk has an inverse relationship to self-compassion. Raising self-compassion may be a **useful addition to substance use disorder prevention** and treatment interventions." ⁷

"Self-compassion is **negatively related to PTSD severity** and to emotion dysregulation. And is positively related to resilience in people who have experienced trauma." ⁸

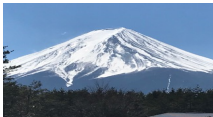
"Positive components of self-compassion are strongly positively correlated with **health-promoting behaviors**." ⁵

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OBJECTIVE #3

HOW DO WE INCORPORATE MINDFULNESS AND SELF COMPASSION SKILLS INTO TREATMENT?



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EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS

"There is no end to the opening up that is possible for a human being."

Charlotte Joko Beck

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BENEFITS OF SELF-COMPASSION: 1

1. less **anxiety and depression**
2. less **rumination**
3. activates **self-soothing system** – lowers stress hormone cortisol
4. better **perspective** on problems 9

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BENEFITS OF SELF-COMPASSION: 2

5. associated with **positive psychological strengths** - emotional intelligence, wisdom, life satisfaction, and feelings of social connectedness
6. more **optimistic and enthusiastic**
7. better **coping** with emotional challenges
8. improves **interpersonal functioning**

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EASY SKILLS TO RECOMMEND TO CLIENTS 1

- Daily **Affirmations**: on phone, write it down, post it notes
 - (The Gift of Recovery has 365 affirmations!)
- 10 minute **meditations**
- Focus on your breath, take a "**breath break**"
- Notice a thought and **label it** "thought"
- Use **imagery** to let go of thought:
 - Leaf down a stream
 - Clouds in windy sky

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EASY SKILLS TO RECOMMEND TO CLIENTS 2

- Create a **sanctuary** at home just for sitting quietly
- Connect** with others from a compassionate heart
- Loving-kindness** meditation
- Read **books** that cultivate quiet and stillness
- Use **apps** that guide you through meditation
- Get back in **nature**

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EASY SKILLS TO RECOMMEND TO CLIENTS 3


- Music** as a soothing background to stillness
- Physical practice **yoga, Tai chi**
- Mindful **walking**
- Daily **journaling**
- Be present with **children**
- Spend time with **animals**
- Volunteer**

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LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

- May I be happy
- May I be safe
- May I be healthy, peaceful, and strong
- May I give and receive appreciation today
- _____
- May you be happy
- May you be safe
- May you be healthy, peaceful, and strong
- May you give and receive appreciation today




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B

Breath Break



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RESOURCES ON MINDFULNESS & RECOVERY

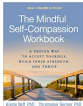

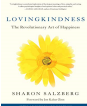
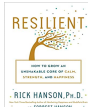
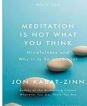




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RESOURCES FOR YOUR PATIENTS


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QUESTIONS




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