Minding the Healers: Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care

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• Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
Minding the Healers:
Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care

• Demands on mental health professionals include
  • “heavy caseloads,
  • limited control over their work environment, and
  • organizational structures and systems in transition;

• these demands have been directly linked to symptoms of increased stress and burnout in health care professionals (Irving, Dobkin & Park, 2009, p. 16).”
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- Mindfulness may yield benefits for mental health care professionals in the domains of physical and mental health (Irving, Dobkin & Park, 2009) that in turn
- may reduce burnout and
- increase capacity for compassion in patient care activities.
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• Does mindfulness instruction reduce self-reported burnout in mental health professionals?
• Does mindfulness instruction increase self-reported compassion in mental health professionals?
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• A pilot study at the Royal Ottawa Hospital in Ottawa, CANADA

• Evaluated the impact of 8 weeks of mindfulness training on mental health professionals’ perceived burnout and self-compassion x 2
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Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care Pilot Study Participants

• Study n=18 mental health professionals
• 16 women; 2 men
• Ages 23-60
• Professions: psychiatrists, psychologists, OTs, PTs, addictions counsellors, social workers, child & youth counsellors
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Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care Intervention

- Two different 8 week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction classes for professionals
- 8 MBSR sessions of 2-2.5 hours each +1 day silent mindfulness retreat
- Courses taught by 1 doctoral-level psychologist and 1 co-teacher (either chaplain or another psychologist)
- Teacher training in MBSR teaching, long term Zen practices, and Upaya Institute Buddhist chaplaincy training
Minding the Healers:
Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care Measures

- Approved by ROHCG Research Ethics Board
- Administered pre and post intervention
- Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli & Schwab, 1986)
- Self Compassion Scale (Neff)
- Quality of Life Inventory (Frisch)*
  - *data not yet available for QOLI
Maslach Burnout Inventory
(Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli & Schwab, 1986)

• MBI - Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS)

• “Burnout is a syndrom of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach et al, 1986).

• 3 subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment
# Maslach Burnout Inventory Scoring

(Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli & Schwab, 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MBI Mental Health Sample</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>&lt;13</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>&gt;21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Personalization</td>
<td>&lt;4</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>&gt;8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>&gt;34</td>
<td>33-29</td>
<td>&lt;28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Self Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)

- Self Kindness
- Self Judgment
- Common Humanity
- Isolation
- Mindfulness
- Over-Identification
- Overall Self Compassion (Grand Average)
Self Compassion Scale Scoring (Neff, 2003)

- Average Scores = 3.00
- Low Score = 1-2.5
- Moderate Score = 2.5-3.5
- High Score = 3.5 - 5.0
- Higher scores for Self Judgment, Isolation & Overidentification = less self compassion before reverse coding and more self compassion after reverse coding
Pilot Results: Burnout

Minding the Healers Pilot Study

• Group 1 Burnout Scores Overall
  • Average EE & DP scores; Low PA scores

• Group 1 - Burnout
  • No difference pre-post in Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization; slight increase in Personal Accomplishment

• Group 2 - Burnout
  • Slight increase pre-post in Emotional Exhaustion; slight decrease pre-post in Depersonalization; decrease pre-post in Personal Accomplishment
Group 1 - Burnout
MBSR for Mental Health Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Group 11 - Burnout
MBSR for Mental Health Professionals

![Graph showing the comparison between pre and post MBSR for emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment.](graph)
Pilot Results: Self Compassion

Minding the Healers Pilot Study

Group 1 - Self Compassion
Most subscale scores in Low-Moderate to Moderate range pre-post; Mindfulness was High range both pre-post;
No difference pre-post in Self-Kindness, Common Humanity, Mindfulness, Over-Identification, Overall Self Compassion;
slight decrease in Self-Judgment, Isolation.

Group 2 - Self Compassion
All subscale scores in Moderate range pre-intervention;
Mindfulness & Common Humanity changed from Moderate range to High range pre-post;
No difference pre-post in Self-Judgment, Isolation, Over-Identification;
Difference pre-post in Self-Kindness & Mindfulness; slight increase in Overall Self Compassion.
Group I Self Compassion
MBSR for Mental Health Professionals

- Self Kindness
- Self Judgement
- Common Humanity
- Isolation
- Mindfulness
- Over-Identification
- Self Compassion

Pre vs. Post comparison for different aspects of self-compassion.
Group II Self Compassion
MBSR for Mental Health Professionals

Pre  Post

Self Kindness  Self Judgement  Common Humanity  Isolation  Mindfulness  OverIdentification  Self Compassion
Minding the Healers: Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care Discussion

• ACT processes at core of minding the healers

• Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization & Personal Accomplishment may have little to do with ability to enact mindfulness & self-compassion

• Self-Kindness, Common Humanity, Mindfulness & Self Compassion may be cultivated through systematic practice
Minding the Healers: Mindfulness, Burnout & Self Compassion in Mental Health Care Challenges

- Safety
- Trust
- Professional Boundaries/Roles
- High functionality, therefore measures may be inaccurate
- Small n
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Further Considerations

• Consider use of narrative data to elucidate shifts in values & flexibility;

• Consider using “outside” teachers for mindfulness training for professionals;

• Consider mindfulness training as resilience-building measure for professionals;

• Low-moderate burnout may respond to mindfulness interventions
• Special thanks to:

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• Clinical staff of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA

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