



EFAP

THREE TRAILS EFAP

WINTER 2014

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Mindfulness



New Offerings



EFAP Team

THREE TRAILS OFFICE HOURS:

- **Monday** 9:00am to 6:00pm
- **Tuesday** 9:00am to 7:00pm
- **Wednesday** 9:00am to 6:00pm
- **Thursday** 9:00am to 7:00pm
- **Friday** 8:00am to 1:00pm
- **Saturday** Closed
- **Sunday** Closed



Have a Bad Case of the Worries?

By: *Cindy Parrish*

It's common to worry now and then about this or that. Perhaps you're a bit nervous about a social gathering in which you might be called to interact with others, or worried about flying to get to your spring break destination, worried about your family, your health, work... Most of us struggle with worry now and then. However, with the right (or wrong) ingredients, our worry can escalate and move from inconsequential impact-free worry to a constant cycle that wastes mental and emotional energy and affects our well being.

The trick is to keep your worries at bay, intervene when they are small and not let them dictate your actions. Otherwise worry can escalate, take on a life of its own and really put a damper on your emotional, mental and social well being.

When worry grows into anxiety it can

become one of the most distressing emotions that people experience. You may find yourself having fears of specific things or situations, which may be accompanied with intense physical reactions. Some common physical symptoms of anxiety are jitteriness, tension, sweaty palms, light-headedness, difficulty breathing, increased heart rate and flushed cheeks. It often effects your body, your thoughts, your behaviors and your moods.

A common belief is that anxiety is encouraged by a fear-based thought that triggers our "fight or flight" response. Imagine yourself walking down the street and you see a large dog heading your way.

One scenario is you say to yourself "Oh look at that good looking dog, I just love large dogs" and you move slightly out of the dog's way, *(cont. pg. 2)*

Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't mean to do harm - but the harm does not interest them. Or they do not see it, or they justify it. Because they are absorbed in the endless struggle To think well of themselves.

T.S. ELIOT



- **The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that lasts**
- **Tear Soup: Recipe for Healing After Loss**
- **Mind Over Mood: Change the Way You Feel by Changing the Way You Think**
- **The Self-Esteem Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Build Confidence and Achieve Your Goals**
- **The Mind-Body Workbook for Anxiety: Effective Tools for Overcoming Panic, Fear and Worry**

Have a Bad Case of the Worries? *(cont. pg. 1)*

continuing in your planned direction. Your heart rate remains normal and you have little physical or emotional response. Next scenario is that you see the dog coming your way and you say "Oh my! That dog is likely to attack me, I am in danger!" That message is passed to your physiological system (blood pressure, heart rate, etc...) and it gives you the needed energy to fight or flee. Often, but not always, when we are anxious about something we can trace it back to a fear and then that fear causes a flight or fight response which results in a physical reaction. Unfortunately with anxiety the fear is often based in a perceived danger but our body doesn't know if it is an imagined crisis or real, so it responds to help us.

WHAT TO DO

Anxiety can be reduced either by decreasing your perception of danger or increasing your confidence in the ability to cope with the threat.

Examine the evidence by asking yourself...

- 1) *What am I afraid of?*
- 2) *How likely is it to happen?*
- 3) *And if it does happen?*

Often when we examine the evidence, we find the danger is not as bad as we thought. If there is threat or risk present, it is helpful to make a plan. Develop strategies to help you cope or respond and then when that fear based thought comes around, respond by telling yourself "even if that does happen, I have a plan".

• *Learning to relax and slow down* can directly and indirectly lessen anxiety. If you walk around in a greater state of relaxation, you will have more room to respond when something threatening occurs. You are also practicing relaxation rather than rehearsing being uptight. And as they all say - if you want to get good at something - practice it.

• *It may be old, boring news but controlled breathing really works.* In a heightened state of anxiety our breathing tends to become shallow and quick. Stop, take deep breaths and focus on taking just as long to breathe in as to breathe out.

• *Imagery* is another helpful tool. Imagine yourself in the anxiety provoking situation but this time handling it well. See yourself responding the way you want to and rehearse that. Or see yourself in the dreaded situation but remaining relaxed. Sports trainers use this, often referred as Sports Psychology, where you rehearse the event and see yourself performing the way you wish. Often when that worry cycle or anxiety hits, we go over and over in our minds how we don't want things to be (i.e. "I won't be able to handle this") and we train ourselves to be uptight and fail at the task. Fortunately you can also train yourself for the more desired outcomes.

• *Distraction:* Take your attention away from the thoughts or physical sensations that contribute to your anxiety and make yourself become absorbed in other activities or thoughts.

• *Be Active:* Moving and physically releasing your tension can help move it out of your body and increase a state of calmness. Put that excess energy to good use.

• *To overcome anxiety* we need to approach and cope with situations in which we feel anxious. Some people will develop a hierarchy of situations or people they fear and begin approaching the least anxiety provoking situation and slowly work toward the more threatening.

WHAT NOT TO DO

• *Avoidance* is the hallmark of anxiety. When we avoid a difficult situation, we initially experience a decrease in anxiety. Ironically, the more we avoid a situation, the more anxious we become about facing it in the future. Avoidance in the long run actually feeds anxiety, even though it seems to help anxiety in the short run.

Not all worry leads to anxiety, and a small amount of worry now and then can be painless and no problem. The goal is to respond in ways that keep it at bay.



Benefits of Mindfulness

by Bonda Zeller, LPC, NBCC

Take just a moment and clear your mind of any thoughts, lists of things to do, people you are concerned for, stressors that you may have at work or home. I would like you to try to do this for 30 seconds. Okay...Ready, Set, Go!

When I had the opportunity to try this, I found the only way to clear my mind was by counting. Did you focus on something in an attempt to "clear" your mind?

Mindfulness is a turning *TOWARD* rather than *AWAY* from our experience as defined by Corinne Zupka, EDS, LPC, NCC, BCC.

Another definition is "Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4).

Here is an example of an informal mindfulness activity you can try at the office, in the car, in the classroom, or wherever you find yourself during the day.



Notice Five Things

This is a simple exercise to center yourself, and connect with your environment.

Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Pause for a moment
2. Look around, and notice five things you can see.
3. Listen carefully, and notice five things you can hear.
4. Notice five things you can feel in contact with your body.

(E.g. your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air upon your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair, etc.)

Source:

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Introductory Workshop Handout 2007.

Dr Russell Harris, M.B.B.S, M.A.C.
Psych. Med.

The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness

A book review by Jamie Day

Mindfulness is the "intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the motion, thoughts, and sensations occurring in the present moment" (Zgierska, 2009). It has been an influential force within the counseling community since around the 70's. The authors Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, and Jon Kabat-Zinn developed this book as a way to utilize Mindfulness in regards to overcoming depression, an epidemic that is often faced by 80 percent of American Citizens. The book also takes a Cognitive Behavioral focus with looking into thought process and how spiraling negative thoughts feed the continued path of depression.

The book starts by discussing the process of ruminating that often occurs with depression. It also looks at how individuals will often attempt to use their thought process to talk themselves into feeling better and this often leads to increased feelings of melancholy and general decreased self worth. The authors note that individuals get stuck with could, should, and other judgment calls when they attempt to decipher why they are feeling sad or stuck. An example of this may be: "I shouldn't feel this sad. Things are going pretty good for me. What is wrong with me? I should be stronger but now I feel so broken." The authors note that this thinking process starts to spiral and then the individual is left feeling even more depressed, stuck with their negative ruminating routine.

That is when the book takes the turn to introduce mindfulness as an alternative towards ruminating. It describes how mindful practice works in a nonjudgmental way to cultivate attention and focus towards the present moment rather than being future focused. The authors provide mindfulness exercises throughout the book and they start with a simple practice that would work for any beginner: mindfulness with eating. The exercises do increase with difficulty as the reader starts to develop their own mindfulness practice. The book also does come with a CD that contains narrators walking the listener through various practices.

As a counselor, who often uses mindfulness with clients, I found it to be a useful book in my own practice with clients. I have dog eared the book to some of my favorite mindful exercises, made copies to give to clients and walked clients through some of the exercises. I would recommend it to other counselors as a book to use as well. I do note that it appears to be written for those who do have some prior knowledge of Cognitive Based Therapy and some of the language may be difficult to decipher for readers who are new to reading a counseling self help book. However, the exercises on the CD are worth trying and go at an easy pace for anyone, regardless of level, to follow. This book can be found at Three Trails EFAP's vast library, if you are interested in checking it out.

Meet Your Three Trails Team!

by Gayle Schnorenberg, Board Chairman

Your Three Trails Employee and Family Assistance Program Board of Directors is pleased to introduce you to our talented team.

Lynette Cotton is the Executive Director of Three Trails EFAP. She received her Bachelors degree from Adams State University in Heath with a minor in Reading. A Colorado native, Lynette arrived in Casper from Portland, OR where she was the Chief Administrative Officer to Larry Steele (Portland Trailblazer, NBA Champion) and The Hoop USA assisting in the growth and development of a series of high end sports and health facilities throughout the United States.

Lynette joined Three Trails EFAP in July of 2006. She loves to travel with her husband, Todd, being active in her church & spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Wesley Bertagnole is a Counselor who graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Master of Science in Counselor Education and a Bachelor of Science in Human Communication. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor with the state of Wyoming and is also a National Certified Counselor.

Wesley's theoretical background is centered in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Solution Focused Therapy. By using this theoretical background, Wesley is able to give his clients the knowledge and power they need to make positive changes in their lives.

Wesley is currently working full time at Casper College as a Career Counselor where he also teaches a variety of courses. When he is not working, Wesley enjoys baking, photography, and spending time with his family.

Bonda Zeller graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Master of Science in Counselor Education and a Bachelor in Secondary Education. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor with the State of Wyoming and is also a National Certified Counselor. She is fluent in Spanish.

Bonda has worked with youth and their families as a mental health counselor, teacher, and school counselor. She most often uses techniques from solution-focused therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, and play therapy. She enjoys working in cooperation with her clients to find options that best suit their needs.

She treasures spending time with her spouse and their three children. She likes to travel to different places, spend time outdoors, and watch movies with popcorn.

Jamie Day graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Master of Science in Counselor Educator and graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with two Bachelors of Arts in English Secondary Education and Theatre Secondary Education. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor with the state of Wyoming and a National Certified Counselor as well.

Jamie was a Drama/English teacher working at Natrona County High School before she perused her career in counseling. She has worked for Central Wyoming Counseling Center as a school based counselor. Jamie draws from the theories Client Centered Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy and Narrative Therapy when working with clients.

During her spare time Jamie enjoys gardening, learning how to quilt with her mom, helping her fiancé with aquarium jobs, reading, and traveling.

Charles McBride graduated from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois with a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling and from Arizona State University with a Bachelors of Arts in Theater and Special Education. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor with the state of Wyoming, a National Certified Counselor, and a member of the Wyoming Counseling Association.

Prior to joining Three Trails, Charles was a residential therapist at Wyoming Recovery, a substance abuse treatment facility in Casper. Believing that clients' strengths lay in their ability to change, Charles draws from Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Client Centered Therapy to help clients affect that change.

Charles and his wife have lived in Casper since 2009. They have hosted six foreign exchange students and have been fortunate enough to travel to Mexico and Europe to visit them. Along with travel, Charles enjoys attending and acting in theater, cooking, reading and being entertained by the antics of his dog and two cats.

Trish Hussion, is our new Receptionist here at Three Trails EFAP. She has lived in Casper most of her life and is married to Kevin. She has two children and one grandson. Trish has a love of the outdoors including barbecue, camping, hunting and fishing. Her hobbies include crafts, reading books and working with her horses.