

**Mindfulness, Meditation & Wellbeing:
A Brief Review of Current Evidence**

By

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Mindfulness is a state of mind in which one focuses attention on the present moment, in a non-judgmental or accepting way. There has been an explosion in the interest into the therapeutic potential of mindfulness within recent years (Didonna, 2009). Thirty years of peer-reviewed research has revealed a robust association between mindfulness and good psychological health (Keng, 2011). Training in mindfulness meditation has been associated in changes in the function and structure of the brain (Lazar, 2005), enhanced immune system functioning (Davidson, 2003), decreased psychological symptoms (Baer, 2006), and greater levels empathy and interpersonal skills (Dekeyser and Colleagues, 2007). Of note, psychotherapists trained in mindfulness meditation have achieved better client outcomes compared to controls (Grepmair and Colleagues, 2007).

Amongst patient groups, mindfulness has been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression, bipolar disorder, trauma, anxiety, eating disorders, and an array of other clinical conditions (see Davis & Hayes, 2011 for review). Research with standardized protocols has seen Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) designated as one of two indicated treatments for patients that have experienced three or more depressive episodes (NICE, 2004; 2009). Similarly, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), is widely regarded as a gold standard treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder (Linehan, 2006). Mechanisms of change associated with Mindfulness-Based treatments include; Relaxation, enhanced cognitive flexibility, decreased rumination, increased self-compassion, and improved attention-regulation skills (Davis and Hayes, 2011).

Meditation is a very good, but not only way of cultivating skills in mindfulness (Shapiro and Carlson, 2009). Teaching meditation to patients assists them to reduce the patterns of rumination and worry that often spiral into low mood and anxiety (Nolen-Hoeksema and colleagues, 2008). According to Siegel (2007), meditation can

be thought of a mechanism for developing a more resilient ‘psychological immune system’. For more information about our ‘Learn to Meditate’ program and its role in transferring core skills in mindfulness please contact us.

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