



Reducing Suicide Ideation Through Mindfulness

Missouri Institute of Mental Health

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The loss of life by suicide is heartbreaking, unnecessary and it impacts all of us collectively. While this type of death is multi-dimensional, research shows that mindfulness interventions can contribute to the reduction of suicide ideation. Empowering individuals with skills to mitigate risk factors such as stress, sleep disruptions, unhealthy thought patterns, and self-critical judgment, is essential to cultivating awareness and self-understanding thereby creating lasting change. This, in conjunction with other clinical interventions, can increase the likelihood that individuals can successfully navigate difficult thoughts, emotions and experiences that may lead to suicide ideation.

Staggering Statistics:

- In 2020 45,979 people died by suicide in the US, which equates to 1 death every 11 minutes.
- In 2021:
 - 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide
 - 3.5 million adults made a plan
 - 1.7 million adults attempted suicide
- Racial/ethnic group with highest rates were non Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Natives and non Hispanic Whites
- Males have a 3x higher rate than females
- People aged 85 and older have the highest rates

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to recognize the research and benefits of mindfulness as they relate to reducing suicide ideation.
2. Participants will understand the impact of attention, attitude, and aim in disrupting negative thought patterns while also promoting healthy coping skills.
3. Participants will experience micro practices that can be used for themselves, as well as to share with others, who might be experiencing difficult emotions that may lead to suicide ideation.

Agenda:

1:00 - 1:10 Introduction and Welcome
1:10 - 2:00 **Attention** - micro practice - reflection
2:00 - 2:10 Break
2:10 - 3:00 **Attitude** - micro practice - reflection
3:00 - 3:10 Break
3:10 - 3:55 **Aim** - micro practice - reflection
3:55 - 4:00 Wrap Up

Video: The Science Behind Suicidal Thoughts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJkTEIq8UFM>
4 Components: Biology. Psychology. Social. Spiritual.

Mindfulness:

Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment without judgment.

Research supported benefits:

Concentration	Anxiety	Stress
Emotional Regulation	Depression	Resilience
Engagement	Blood Pressure	Memory
Sense of Well Being	Focus	Positivity
Immune Response	Creativity	Reactivity
Decision Making	Job Satisfaction	Pain Management

Circle the ones that could contribute to suicide ideation.

Key ingredients to living mindfully and creating LASTING CHANGE:

1. Awareness + Self Understanding
2. Find micro moments within the day to practice
3. Take control of the highways in the brain involved with: **Attention. Attitude. Aim.**

Brain Facts:

1. My brain and I work on autopilot more times than not.
Whatever I have done routinely in the past becomes my default response.
My automatic default is my Trigger /Response reaction.
2. My brain is an energy guzzler. When out of energy, I make my poorest decisions.
My brain does not know when it's out of energy.
3. My brain and I assign an emotional tag to everything I experience:
positive.....negative.....or neutral
The most vivid emotion "wins" my attention...and shapes my life.
Warning: My brain naturally gravitates to the **negative!!**

Attention

What is happening both inside and outside of me?
I need to be still to gather good information. Attention is my brain's gatekeeper.
Where I place my attention determines my life.

Spotlight Theory of Attention: "Where is my spotlight?"

Cultivating a **Stable Attention** helps to still self, self soothe, and focus

Micro-Practice:

Just This - Breathe...Focus...Return & Rest

When/how could this information/practice be helpful for YOU?

When/how could this information/practice be helpful to the people you serve?

Insights gained?

Brain Facts:

- 4. My brain is a novelty junkie. When on autopilot, the brain is easily bored. When our brain is bored, it looks for whatever interesting, or novel, regardless of the wisdom involved.
- 5. My brain likes closure. It likes to check things off its list because this saves energy. It is a natural problem solver.
- 6. I can rewire my brain. With practice, I can transform it to help me be who I want to be.

Attitude

How am I reacting? What attitudes am I embodying that aren't serving me well?

Three ingredients to an attitude: 1. Emotional Tag. 2. Belief. 3. Physiological Response.

We only need to shift 1 to change our attitude!!

Write down an attitude you have toward someone or something that isn't serving you well.

Circle which ingredient you could shift to change that attitude. Write how you will shift it.

Emotional Tag

Belief

Physiological Response

Cultivating a **Compassionate Attitude** by searching for what brings ease and relieves suffering. This means we tune into our own critical voice and learn how to become our own best friend.

Three Components of self compassion: 1. Kindness. 2. Common Humanity. 3. Mindful Awareness.

Myths of self compassion includes: It is a form of self pity. It means weakness. It will make me complacent. It will make me self-centered. It is selfish.

Video: The Power of Self Compassion - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTQP7XzDxjI&t=1s>

Micro-Practice:

Light Touch- put your hand on your heart and offer yourself words of encouragement.

When/how could this information/practice be helpful for YOU?

When/how could this information/practice be helpful to the people you serve?

Insights gained?

Brain Facts:

- 7. No brain is an island. I am a social being and others influence my brain.
I am sensitive to inclusion/exclusion and norms. I am also a comparing creature.
- 8. My brain and I like storytelling. My brain takes in information and organizes it into a story.
This saves energy, but my brain is not a reliable narrator!!
- 9. I can free myself from my autopilot brain habits.
I can be in charge, if I'm in the present moment, to override my autopilot and create the life I want to live.

Aim

What pathways do I want to grow?

Being mindful means not only being mindful of this moment, but also in the months and years to come.

Who do I want to be? What is the life I want to create?

Goal vs. Aim – both are important as long as they are aligned.

Cultivating a **Determined Aim** helps us to prune away actions that don't align with our aims, and graft in actions that do.

Micro-Practice: Practice Plan - When x happens, I'll do y.

If _____, then _____.
Trigger Action/Reaction

Aim

If _____, then _____.
(same) Trigger (new) Action/Reaction

When/how could this information/practice be helpful for YOU?

When/how could this information/practice be helpful to the people you serve?

Insights gained?

My hope for you...

- Start investing in your own self care through the practice of mindfulness.
- Circle one micro-practice that you will commit to implementing beginning TODAY!
Just This Light Touch Practice Plan
- Explore ways to integrate this information into your work.

Notes. Thoughts. Reflections.

**I wish you well on your journey toward living mindfully
and serving those who may have suicide ideations!**

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