Explorations in Mindfulness

The science and research supporting mindfulness

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

This session explores the effects of physiological and psychological stress. By having a mindfulness and meditation practice, your body is trained to protect you from stressors. Mindfulness and meditation can positively impact specific areas of the brain, especially the anterior cingulate cortex, the hippocampus and the posterior insula. Therefore, developing a mindfulness and meditation practice reduces stress and offers a variety of health benefits.

“Meditation is like a gym in which you develop the powerful mental muscles of calm and insight.”

-Ajahn Brahm

# NOTES:

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Impacts of Stress

Types of Meditation

**Session Lexicon:**

 **Anterior Cingulate Cortex** – A portion of the brain located in the forehead behind the frontal lobe. It’s associated with self-regulation and the ability to purposely direct attention and behavior as well as suppress inappropriate responses.

**Hippocampus –** The hippocampus is located inside the temple on each side of the brain. There are two because human brains are lateralized and symmetrical. This area of the brain is associated with memory and emotion and is covered with stress hormone receptors.

**Meditation** – Stillness; the entire process of quieting your mind and retaining mindful awareness for a length of time.

**Mindfulness** – Awareness; being aware of your thoughts and sensations without judging them and a heightened awareness of the things happening around us.

**Posterior Insula** – A portion of the brain associated with processing bodily sensations which may be used in decision-making.

**Stress** (the silent killer): The non-specific response of the organism to any pressure or demand.

**Stressors**: Internal (thoughts) and external (nearly getting hit by a bus) experiences in which your body responds the same way.

# Reflections from your meditation practice:

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