The Art and Science of Paying Attention: Mindfulness for Clinicians Who Can’t Sit Still (FR465)

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Objectives

- Self-assess one’s own mindfulness behaviors using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).
- Assess research on mindfulness among healthcare professionals.
- Demonstrate the “Pause, Presence, Proceed” method of mindfulness meditation.

Currently hospice and palliative care physicians, nurses, social workers, and chaplains are under unprecedented pressure to do more with less and to stretch their time, talents, and resources over larger patient populations with more challenging issues. Added to these pressures are the insistent warnings about burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress. Stories of committed, expert clinicians leaving healthcare abound.

From the cover of Time magazine to professional journals from multiple disciplines, mindfulness and mindfulness meditation are in the press. The body of scientific research on mindfulness is growing exponentially and demonstrating the positive effects of mindfulness practices on a variety of physical and psychological conditions, such as depression, high blood pressure, psoriasis, stress, chronic pain, and more. The newest research on mindfulness and neuroplasticity suggests beneficial brain changes from regular mindfulness practice. Mindfulness-based stress-reduction and other mindfulness meditation courses are being taught and practiced in many types of settings, from schools to prisons to medical schools to Fortune 500 companies. Recently, researchers have been investigating and introducing mindfulness practices in a variety of healthcare settings. The initial findings suggest that mindful clinicians have a lower incidence of burnout, depression, and anxiety and are more focused, efficient, and likely to have satisfied patients.

This concurrent session offers an introduction to the latest mindfulness research along with guided practice in formal and informal mindfulness experiences. Mindfulness is presented as a way of being that can be integrated into every aspect of personal and professional life. Participants will not only learn about mindfulness, but will also practice mindfulness meditation in several accessible forms and create their own personalized action plan for continuing practice in their professional setting. This session is designed to accompany and enhance the daily mindfulness meditation sessions held each day of the conference.