

***Mindful Families, Schools and Communities:
Contemplative Practices to Promote Child & Family Well-Being***

April 28-29, 2017

Seattle, Washington

Presentation Abstracts

Keynote Addresses

Well-being is a Skill

Richard J. Davidson, Ph.D., Founding Director of the Center for Healthy Minds, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This talk will consider scientific evidence that suggests that we can change our brains by transforming our minds and cultivate habits of mind that will improve well-being. These mental training strategies can be used to improve the well-being of children, teachers, parents and ultimately communities. The talk will provide an overview of neuroscientifically validated constituents of well-being and will illustrate how each of these is rooted in specific brain circuits that exhibit plasticity and thus can be modified through training. These practices can be applied in a wide range of contexts and have the potential to positively impact social change.

Watering the Seeds of Compassion: Current Knowledge and Future Challenges

Mark T. Greenberg, Ph.D., Bennett Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Penn State

In this talk I will elaborate a broad agenda for creating comprehensive models and research on the development and promotion of caring and compassion. My hope is that such research can lead to new level of developmental/ecological understanding of the growth of compassion as well as effective policies and practices and interventions that nurture caring, compassion, and service to others in our schools and communities. I will define empathy and compassion, briefly discuss the outline of early developmental processes, and call for basic research on these essential aspects of human development. I will conclude by discussing the need to develop new ways to promote caring and compassion in families, schools and communities.

On Human Plasticity: A Developmental Contemplative Science Perspective

Robert W. Roeser, Penn State University

The papers at this meeting focus on the possibility/reality of developmental plasticity in the fundamental psychological/neurophysiological systems of information-processing, motivation and regulation that underpin cognition, social-emotional functioning, and behavior. They also point to some key theoretical insights in the emerging domain of Developmental Contemplative Science (DCS), in which the instigative role of contemplative practices on development are fundamentally understood in relation to activity and social interaction, context and culture, and embeddedness within developmental and historical time scales. Of what use might a DCS perspective be in our efforts to holistically understand the findings presented at this conference; and to advance the three overarching aims of developmental science more generally: (1) a more elegant description of human development; (2) a more truthful explanation of the factors that produce human development; and (3) a more just and compassionate use of the insights of the descriptions and explanations so-gained, for the alleviation of suffering and the cultivation of flourishing across the lifespan through prevention and enrichment efforts?

Cultural Diversity and Mindfulness

Using Mindfulness Approaches to Reduce Mental Health Disparities among Latina Immigrant Women

India J. Ornelas, PhD, MPH, Serena Maurer, PhD, Daron Ryan, MPH, Katie Querna, Bonnie Duran, DrPH, Liliana Lengua, PhD

Latina immigrants are at increased risk for poor mental health due to stressors associated with immigration, socioeconomic status and gender roles. Amigas Latinas Motivando el Alma (ALMA) is a group-based intervention to reduce symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety among Latina immigrants. Based on growing evidence that mindfulness approaches can reduce stress and improve mental health, we developed and pilot tested additional sessions of the ALMA intervention that teach women to use mindfulness as a coping strategy. We evaluated the feasibility and potential efficacy among a community sample of Latina immigrants using a mixed methods study design (N =24). Findings suggested that participants were satisfied with the sessions and were able to use mindfulness strategies they learned in their daily lives. The program was also successful in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety (19% reduction in mean depression scores and 26% reduction in mean anxiety scores). This presentation will focus on findings and lessons learned from our pilot work with Latina immigrants, as well as our more recent work teaching mindfulness strategies to social service providers working with Latino immigrants.

Mindful Prenatal Programs

Mindfulness childbirth education adapted for women with a history of sexual trauma

Cynthia Price, PhD, Ira Kantrowitz-Gordon, PhD, CNM, Becca Calhoun, MPH

The embodied experiences of pregnancy and childbirth may be especially challenging for women with histories of sexual trauma. In this pilot study we tested the feasibility of offering a mindfulness-based childbirth education intervention adapted for pregnant women who have a history of sexual trauma. The intervention program included a six-week mindfulness-based childbirth group class plus three individual coaching sessions. The individual sessions were designed to facilitate learning and practicing mindfulness skills, specifically addressing any trauma-related challenges; these sessions were scheduled prior to the beginning of class, mid-way through the class, and 6 weeks post-partum. Participants completed psychological assessments at baseline, post-intervention, and at 6 weeks postpartum. A total of 12 pregnant women with self-reported histories of sexual trauma were recruited into two class cohorts. Participants attended a mean of 7 classes and individual sessions. At baseline participants reported a mean 4.4 number of adverse childhood experiences and approximately 50% of participants screened positive for anxiety and depression. Participant feedback reflected how the classes provided participants with the knowledge and tools to handle pain, emotions, labor, and birth. The coaching sessions provided individualized attention to develop emotional regulation skills. Findings will inform intervention refinement for further testing and clinical application.

Mindfulness in Parenting

The impact of parental mindfulness on family health and child well-being: A focus on mechanism

Justin Parent, University of Vermont; Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Hayley Pomerantz, University of Vermont

Laura G. McKee, Georgia State University

Rex Forehand, University of Vermont

Substantial empirical research and several meta-analytic reviews have demonstrated that mindfulness fosters self-efficacy, coping, emotion regulation, and motivation and enhances physical and psychological health. However, mindfulness research has primarily focused on outcomes for the adult individual and has only recently begun to measure effects for children and families. Research is starting to demonstrate that mindfulness in parenting is linked with higher levels of adaptive parenting practices and lower levels of youth problem behavior. Although initial findings substantiate the association of mindfulness to parent and family outcomes, significant empirical gaps and limitations significantly constrain our understanding of how parental mindfulness influences family health and child psychosocial well-being. Most problematic is the primary use of cross-sectional research designs and a focus on main effects, which

has limited the scope and understanding of how mindfulness may affect family and child health over time. Thus, research utilizing longitudinal designs focused on mechanisms is required to clarify the functional effects of mindfulness on parent, family, and child development. The current presentation will present a review of the literature as well as three prospective longitudinal studies examining the impact of parental mindfulness on family health and child psychosocial well-being. A focus of the studies presented will be on exploring three distinct mechanisms: adaptive parenting practices, emotion socialization, and coparenting. Finally, future directions for mechanism-focused research and clinical work on mindfulness and family health will be discussed.

Mindfulness in Parenting, Infant Temperament and Parenting Stress

Sydney Iverson, M.S., Washington State University

Maria A. Gartstein, Ph.D., Washington State University

Mindfulness has been proposed as a mechanism for improving parent-child interactions and reducing parenting stress by improving a parent's ability to tune in to cues, engage non-reactively, and examine situations with their child objectively. Temperament, or individual differences in reactivity and regulation, is also closely linked with parenting behaviors, with different temperament profiles eliciting variable parenting response patterns. Mindful parenting has not been studied widely to date, likely in part due to the fact that few scales for measuring mindfulness in the parenting context exist, especially for the early childhood period. To address this gap in research, we designed a 10 question Parenting Mindfulness Scale (PMS), developed to evaluate mindfulness specifically in the context of the parental role in infancy. Description of the scale will be provided, along with information concerning its psychometric properties. Additionally, preliminary results regarding the relationship between mindful parenting, infant temperament, and parenting stress will be discussed.

Mindfulness in Parenting to Promote Self-Regulation and Social-emotional Competence in Parents and Children

Liliana J. Lengua, Erika Ruberry, University of Washington, & Corina McEntire, Educational Service District 112

Children growing up in low-income households tend to be less academically, socially and emotionally ready at school entry. Self-regulation, particularly executive function (EF), has been identified as a key factor underlying children's school readiness. Although classroom-based programs that promote EF exist, it is not clear that such programs are sufficient given the critical role that parents play in developing EF in early childhood (Lengua et al., 2014). Parenting programs are needed to complement school-based interventions. Further, parent engagement or involvement leads to sustained gains from early learning programs, and high-quality parent engagement that supports academic readiness is needed. However, of the few empirically supported parenting programs that exist, most are long, time- and resource-intensive, and require significant training investments to implement (Office of Head Start, 2015).

In this study, we conducted preliminary evaluations of an innovative parenting program, SEACAP (Social, Emotional and Academic Competence for Children and Parents), which is intended for low-income families with preschool-age children. SEACAP promotes children's executive function by simultaneously enhancing parent self-regulation and effective parenting skills, with the ultimate goal of promoting children's school readiness. The program targets parenting practices identified from prior research to promote children's EF: scaffolding, warmth, consistent limit-setting and decreased negativity. These are complemented with mindfulness and emotion-regulation practices which are included to enhance parental self-regulation to support effective parenting. Mindfulness and emotion regulation practices included in SECAP are paired with and designed to support specific parenting practices. For example, present moment awareness practices are integrated into child-led time, a common parenting practice designed to promote a positive parent-child relationship. Stress and emotion awareness practices are paired with validation, and wise-mind practices are paired with scaffolding and consistent limit setting. A combination of 6 group-based sessions and 2-4 individual visits with video-based coaching are employed, and an "educational advocacy" component that supports parents as advocates for their children's school readiness is included. The program addresses early-learning programs' challenges with implementing longer, more time- and resource-intensive programs. Of critical importance for broader implementation, it readily integrates within the infrastructure of existing programs aimed at promoting school readiness (e.g., Head Start).

Preliminary evaluations were conducted in two early learning programs targeting low-income families. The first was conducted with 33 families in a Grow-and-Learn program preschool socialization program, and the second was conducted with 17 families in a Head Start program. In both settings, SEACAP was delivered by the parenting educator

or mental-health specialist at the sites. Staff received 2 days' training and on-going supervision. Pre-test, post-test and 3-month follow up assessments were conducted and included observational ratings and parent report of parenting, child behaviors, executive function. These evaluations demonstrated that it was feasible to integrate the program into preschool programs' schedule and space, could be delivered by existing parent-engagement staff with brief additional training, was well-received by parents who reported benefitting from the practices taught and demonstrated improvements on objective measures of parenting and child behaviors. There were significant improvements in observed scaffolding and child negative affect. Parents self-reported improved executive function, consistency, reduced rejection, and increased child social competence and academic readiness.

In sum, this promising program brings the best evidence-based practices to bear by focusing on parenting strategies demonstrated to promote EF in children, integrating mindfulness and emotion regulation skills to promote parents' self-regulation, and utilizing a delivery model that is expected to enhance effectiveness through a combination of group sessions, individual video-based coaching, and educational advocacy approaches. It fits readily into early learning program structures and demonstrates promising early results.

Compassion and Self-Compassion: Insights and Interventions for Youth and Parents

Surfing the waves of adolescence: Findings from a mindful self-compassion program for teens

Karen Bluth, Ph.D., Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

As adolescence can be a stressful developmental stage, the purpose of this study was to determine if a novel mindful self-compassion program would decrease stress, depression, anxiety and increase resilience, gratitude, and curiosity/exploration (positive risk-taking), and to ascertain if mindfulness or self-compassion covaried with these outcomes over time. Forty-seven adolescents age 11-17 were enrolled in an 8-week mindful self-compassion course in five cohorts over 18 months. Measures were assessed pre-intervention, post-intervention, and at 6-week follow-up. Multilevel growth analyses revealed main effects of time on perceived stress, resilience, curiosity/exploration and gratitude. Additionally, mindfulness covaried with perceived stress, depression, and anxiety, and self-compassion covaried with perceived stress, depression, resilience, and curiosity/exploration. An exploratory analysis of demographic factors found that high school students and females (marginally) increased more in self-compassion than middle school students and males, and students taking the program in the fall decreased more in perceived stress than those in the spring. Implications of these findings indicate that this mindful self-compassion program for adolescents has potential in facilitating a decrease in stress and increase resilience and positive risk-taking. Future studies with a control group need to be conducted to confirm these findings.

Does self-compassion facilitate resilience to stigma? A school-based study of sexual and gender minority youth

Abra Vigna, Ph.D., Human Development & Family Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mental health disparities that have been documented in sexual and gender minority youth likely reflect their attempts at (maladaptive) coping with contexts rife with stigma and discrimination. Identifying adaptive coping responses to stigma is thus a critical step in reducing the significant mental health disparities that manifest in adolescence. Guided by the minority stress hypothesis, this secondary data analysis of high school youth (N=1821) examined self-compassion (SC) as a potential resilience-promoting response to stigma resulting from bias-bullying. High school students reported on their experiences of being bullied for sexual and gender minority status, general victimization, adverse childhood experiences, and self-compassion. Multiple regression analyses were used to examine moderator and mediator models, with mental health outcomes including suicidality and depressive symptoms. Self-compassion accounted for more variation in adolescent mental health outcomes than bias-bullying, general victimization, and adverse childhood experiences combined. In addition, inclusion of SC in the models dramatically attenuated the impact of bias-bullying. Whereas deficits in self-compassion are important correlates of mental health difficulties, high self-compassion appears to be protective for sexual and gender minority high school students. However, high rates of bias-bullying erode its protective effects. The findings highlight the importance of universal school-based programs designed to decrease bullying and also support the need to develop and evaluate programs designed to facilitate self-compassion in sexual and gender minority youth.

Cultivating mindfulness and compassion among trans youth and their caregiver(s): Preliminary findings from a pilot study

Russell Toomey, Ph.D., Family Studies & Human Development, University of Arizona

Transgender adolescents report high levels of compromised mental health compared to cisgender adolescents. A growing number of studies suggest that mindfulness-based interventions may reduce internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents; this coping strategy may be particularly effective for transgender adolescents given that marginalized populations may experience inferiority and shame because of encountered minority stress. Similarly, compassion has been noted in the scientific literature as an important factor in physical and psychological health. Cognitively-Based Compassion Training® (CBCT) is an evidence-based intervention based on a secularized meditation protocol that leads participants through a systematic process of cultivating mindfulness and compassion aimed at improving well-being. This pilot study adapted the CBCT protocol to be family-based and tested the feasibility and acceptability of CBCT in a sample of transgender youth and their caregiver(s). Transgender youth (n = 5) and their caregiver(s) (n = 7) participated in a 6-week CBCT course and were assessed daily, weekly, and at three-months following the last group session. Adolescents and their caregivers reported decreases in depressive symptoms and anxiety, and increases in mindfulness and self-compassion. Moreover, increases in parent-adolescent relationship warmth were reported by adolescents and their caregivers. Taken together, these findings provide preliminary evidence that a compassion-based intervention can promote healthy behaviors and outcomes.

Compassionate parenting: Effects of Cognitively-Based Compassion Training for parents of young children

Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Ph.D., Human Development & Family Studies, Center for Child & Family Well-being, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Few evidence-based secular contemplative practice interventions designed to reduce stress and enhance well-being focus on parents with young children, even though parenting stress is ubiquitous. This pilot study evaluated a 10-week Cognitively-Based Compassion Training® (CBCT) program with 38 parents of children aged birth to 5 years using a randomized controlled design (n=25 intervention offered in 2 cohorts, n=13 wait list control). CBCT deliberately and systematically works to cultivate compassion through progressive exercises beginning with the development of attentional stability and progressing through analytical meditations. Participants gain insight into how their attitudes and behaviors support or hinder compassionate responding, intensifying their desire to help others, allowing compassion to become more natural and spontaneous in their everyday life, and grounding them in realistic expectations of self and others. Parents and their children were assessed at pre- and post-intervention using measures of cumulative physiological stress (hair cortisol), observed parent-child interactions (coded with the Parent Child Early Relational Assessment), and parent reports of perceived stress and self-compassion (Calgary Symptoms of Stress Inventory, Self-Compassion Scale, Parenting Daily Hassles). Repeated measures MANOVAs were used to explore Group X Time interactions. Parents in the CBCT intervention experienced decreases in depressive symptoms at post-intervention and their children's cortisol also decreased (while control children's cortisol rose). Although parental social isolation decreased, it did so more slowly than the control group, and parent-child interaction did not differ between groups. Most parents reported that participating in CBCT was a positive, even life-changing, experience. These findings provide preliminary evidence that CBCT may be an important new way to intervene with parents of young children.

Supporting Self-regulation in Youth

Mindful Coping Power: A preventive intervention to improve emotional and behavioral self-regulation in high-risk, reactive aggressive children

Shari Miller, Ph.D., RTI International

Caroline Boxmeyer, Ph.D., University of Alabama

There is rapidly growing interest in the use of mindfulness to prevent negative youth outcomes, such as substance use, aggression, and delinquency. However, studies are sparse in this area and more research is needed to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of these approaches. This presentation will describe the Mindful Coping Power (MCP) program, an integrated mindfulness, yoga, and cognitive behavioral intervention for preadolescent children with

elevated emotional reactivity and aggressive behavior. The theoretical basis for MCP will be described, as well as the formative process undertaken to integrate mindfulness and yoga practices with the Coping Power (CP) program, an existing evidence-based indicated preventive intervention. We will present preliminary results from a school-based pilot randomized trial comparing MCP with the standard CP cognitive behavioral intervention, to determine whether MCP enhances program effects on children's emotional and behavioral self-regulation. This randomized trial includes 100 high-risk, preadolescent children with elevated levels of emotional reactivity and aggressive behavior. Results will emphasize the comparative effects of MCP versus CP on children's emotional and behavioral self-regulation. The presentation will also highlight lessons learned about implementing group-based mindfulness practices with emotionally and behaviorally dysregulated youth. Finally, we will highlight future directions for research on integrated mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral interventions to improve children's emotional and behavioral self-regulation.

Ecological Momentary Assessment of Mindfulness Practices in Adolescents

Kevin King, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Washington

Research on mindfulness interventions hypothesizes that the degree to which individuals engage in home practice of mindfulness (both formal and informal meditation practices) is related to the efficacy of interventions, and to improvements in cognitive and behavioral regulation. However, the majority of research that has assessed home practice has utilized retrospective recall of practice, which can introduce biases and may over-estimate the true degree to which participants actually engage in practice at home. The current study reports on ecological momentary assessment (EMA) of home mindfulness practice among 47 adolescents participating in a school wide mindfulness curriculum. Participants completed 3 surveys per day for up to 10 days on web enabled smart phones at random times within three intervals (mid-day, afternoon and evenings). Results indicated a modest prevalence of use of mindfulness practices, with participants reporting the use of at least one mindfulness practice at any time point more often than not. Moreover, participants who reported, on average, using more mindfulness practices also reported higher anxiety and positive emotions in general, and greater use of adaptive coping, and some reductions in maladaptive coping such as avoidance and distraction. EMA studies have become increasingly feasible due to the widespread adoption of smartphones by youth, and provide a cost effective and efficient way to study in detail the micro-mechanisms by which mindfulness treatments may be effective.

Practice Workshops

Interoceptive Awareness Skills and Practice: Facilitating Emotion Regulation for Individuals with a History of Sexual Trauma

Cynthia Price, PhD MA LMT, University of Washington

Interoceptive awareness is awareness of inner body sensations, and is integral to mindfulness-based practice. Neuroscience models and research on interoceptive sensory pathways in the brain highlights the relationship between awareness of inner body sensations (i.e., interoception) and emotion regulation. For individuals who are disconnected from their bodies due to trauma, accessing interoceptive awareness can be challenging due to well-developed dissociative and avoidant coping patterns. This workshop will combine didactic and experiential components, and will focus on interoceptive awareness for individuals with a history of sexual trauma. The concept and measurement of interoceptive awareness will be introduced, and research highlights from studies of Mindful Awareness in Body-oriented Therapy (MABT), a mind-body approach that teaches fundamental interoceptive awareness skills will be presented. Experiential practice will be included, as will discussion of the application of interoceptive awareness to trauma-informed care.

Poster Abstracts

Flint's Children: Narratives on Hope

Carotta, Christin L., Ph.D., M.Ed.: Counseling and Human Development, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, Bonomi, Amy E., Ph.D., M.P.H: Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, Knox, Karleigh: Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, Blain, Morgan C.: Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, Dines, Brianna F.: Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, Cotton, Jaquan: Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Purpose: The adversity faced by children in low-income environments is widely studied with attention to numerous risk factors and the development of behavioral and emotional difficulties. Literature on resilience and positive psychology, however, has been instrumental in moving beyond the study of maladaptive behavioral patterns, turning instead to an investigation of adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity. Hope is identified as one central factor that contributes to resiliency, well-being, and buffering against adversity, including linkages to greater problem-solving and higher academic performance. The bulk of existing literature, however, examines hope among adults. Literature is also limited with regard to diverse samples and critical contextual factors such as socio-economic status. Our study expands existing literature by further exploring diverse children's personal experiences with hope while developing in low-income communities.

Methods: We conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-one children (11 African American; 7 Mixed Race; 3 Caucasian) residing in Flint, Michigan who were 9-12 years of age. Children were first asked to complete a short drawing/writing activity where they drew or wrote about their hopes. Children were then asked eleven semi-structured questions—focused on the specific hopes they had, the importance they place on certain hopes, and their experiences of feeling hopeful or less hopeful about desired outcomes.

Findings: Children expressed interrelated hopes across multiple social-ecological domains, including hopes for themselves (i.e., career, money/ basic needs, leisure, academic achievement, and a desire to be above average); hopes for their interpersonal relationships (i.e., supporting their families and having positive relationships); and hopes for the community at large (i.e., community improvement, helping others, and relocating). Children placed importance on their hopes of helping others, which included providing for their families and aiding others in the community, namely the poor and the homeless. Children also highlighted their career hopes and hope for financial stability, explaining that these were the avenues through which they would have the means to provide for others. Children, however, expressed some uncertainty regarding their career hopes; this concern coincided with uncertainty regarding academic achievement, financial stability, and obtaining basic needs.

Conclusions: Our findings provide insight into children's personal hope narratives while developing in low-income communities. These findings can be used to enrich community and school-based programming so they further align with the specific hopes that inner-city children have, attune to children's internal dialogues with regard to feeling hopeful or less hopeful about desired outcomes, and target areas in which children are most in need of hope-engendering strategies. These findings also advance existing literature by further exploring how hope occurs during childhood, in the context of poverty and among diverse youth.

Promoting Emotional Well-Being in Children and Adolescents Post Disaster

Cathy Smey Carston, Michelle Briegel, Paxton Bruce, Robyn Bolink, Mount Royal University

Statement of the Problem: Mount Royal University has been an evacuation location for families after a natural disaster two times within the past five years. Throughout each event, Mount Royal, along with Alberta Health Services, and emergency/disaster serving agencies provided the basic necessities of life to evacuees (food, shelter, and financial aid). Faculty and staff observed that during each evacuation event, there were numerous children who seemed disoriented by the experience and had no appropriate place to play. Although the Mount Royal University Centre for Child Well-Being and Child Development Lab was offered as an appropriate location, there were a number of mitigating factors and policies that limited access to this type of support.

We know that trauma, stress of disaster, and the sheltering experience can impact children very differently than adults. New and stressful experiences can include; isolation and quarantine, being in a group living situation with thousands of strangers, standing in line to get meals, or trying to find clothing. Play opportunities, games and recreation, including psychological first aid, can help to alleviate some of the stress and trauma for these children.

Evacuation sites can help to meet the immediate needs of children and assists family members who may be overwhelmed as they attempt to deal with the effects of the disaster, and play an important role in fostering resiliency among children and youth. Therefore, the Centre for Child Well-Being examined existing policy, protocol and practices through a comprehensive literature review and interview process in order to develop a policy case that defines and prepares us for the implementation of best practice for supporting children and families while hosted at an evacuation site. We believe this work will be informative and beneficial for other post-secondary evacuation sites and disaster response teams, but also to those who may be practitioners within a post disaster context.

The Development of Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation and Their Effects on Academic Achievement in Childhood

Ashenafi K. Edossa, Bamberg Graduate School of Social Science (BAGSS), University of Bamberg; Ulrich Schroeders, Department of Educational Research, University of Bamberg; Sabine Weinert, Department of Developmental Psychology, University of Bamberg; Cordula Artelt, Department of Educational Research, University of Bamberg

Self-regulation is an essential ability of children to cope with various developmental challenges. This study examines the developmental interplay between emotional and behavioral self-regulation during childhood and the relationship with academic achievement using data from the longitudinal Millennium Cohort Study (UK). Using cross-lagged panel analyses, we found that emotional and behavioral self-regulation were separate and stable constructs. In addition, both emotional and behavioral self-regulation had positive cross-lagged effects from ages 3 to 7. At an early developmental stage (ages 3 to 5), emotional regulation affected behavioral regulation more strongly than later developmental stages. However, the difference between the reciprocal effects was small from ages 5 to 7. Moreover, behavioral regulation during the third year of primary education (age 7) had a substantial and positive effect on teachers' evaluations of educational achievement during the last year of primary school (age 11). In contrast, emotional self-regulation only had a small indirect and positive effect via behavioral self-regulation. The current study suggests the structure of self-regulation was multi-dimensional and its facets are mutually dependent in the child's development. In order to gain a complete picture of the development of self-regulation and its effect on educational achievement, both facets emotional and behavioral regulation should be studied in concert.

Mindfulness and self-care training for Head Start parents: A curriculum development and feasibility pilot

Lisa Flook, Laura Pinger, Heather Williams, Kunchoe Sadutshang, Larissa G. Duncan, & Richard J. Davidson
University of Wisconsin-Madison

A training program for parents/caregivers focusing on mindfulness practice with an emphasis on self-care was developed at the Center for Healthy Minds (CHM). The parenting program was designed to help address stressors and demands of parenting and promote positive parent-child interactions. To pilot the program, in February and March 2015, 8 parents with children between the ages of 0-5 enrolled in Head Start attended four sessions, offered every other week over the course of 8 weeks. The program was offered for English and Spanish speaking parents in a single group with a bilingual instructor co-facilitating. At the end of the program participants completed a class evaluation form and attended a focus group to share their experiences. Participants described experiencing decreased levels of stress and enhanced quality of interaction with their children by being able to listen attentively and being more responsive to their children's needs and less reactive in stressful situations. Results suggested the program was generally feasible to deliver and we learned important strategies for ensuring feasibility (e.g., transportation, meal, and childcare supports) in a Head Start setting. The program is undergoing revision based on the feedback gathered to inform future examinations of its efficacy.

Effects of Cognitively-Based Compassion Training on Parent-Child Interaction and Young Children's Empathy Responses

Ashleigh Grendziak, Kerrie Fanning, Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison

Through a growing number of studies, mindfulness has been shown to promote well-being and compassionate behaviors in children and adults. This pilot study evaluated a 10-week Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) program. Through foundational attention stability activities and increasingly more complex meditations, CBCT aims to deliberately and systematically cultivate compassion in one's everyday life. Participants develop insight into how their attitudes and behaviors support or hinder compassionate responding. This increases their desire to help, grounds them in realistic expectations of self and others, and allows compassion to become more natural and spontaneous in their everyday life. Including 38 parents and their children, aged birth through 5 years, this study utilizes a randomized controlled design (n=25 intervention, 2 cohorts; n=13 wait list control) to evaluate the effectiveness of the CBCT program. This analysis focuses on parent interaction variables during an observed parent-child interaction session (coded with the Parent Child Early Relational Assessment) and their child's response to a simulated distress test (coded with Coding Empathic Response to Simulated Distress). Preliminary results will be presented.

Mindful and Reflective Leaders: Enhancing a Management Training for Childcare Directors

Hatton-Bowers, H., PhD, Foged, J. M.Ed, & Gottschalk, C., LMHP, MS, University of Nebraska

Objective: Early childhood education is a critical context for fostering stimulating, responsive, and sensitive caregiving as a substantial number of children under the age of 5 years spend time in child care settings, with 64% of children aged 3 to 5 years enrolled in non-relative care outside the home. While many of these child care environments are of high quality, research continues to find early childhood educators experience high levels of distress, concerning levels of burnout, turnover, and implementing decisions without intentional thinking. What is arguably a very exciting and growing area of research is the emerging benefits of using contemplative practices, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and reflective practices as promising and feasible ways to prevent and mitigate the stress of teachers and directors, improve decision-making, and improve early childhood environments. This pilot project examines the effectiveness of integrating mindfulness-based strategies and reflective practices into a mandatory management training in achieving positive changes in stress reduction, improving reflective practices, facilitate and deepen relationships among staff, and adopting best practices for early care environments. The mindfulness and reflective activities specifically aim to 1) engage and enhance the learning experiences of childcare directors, 2) support and encourage opportunities to review experiences, discuss feelings, describe frustrations and check perceptions, 3) give time and encouragement with facilitated reflections to analyze practices and decision making, 4) support the ability to adapt or generalize behaviors by considering what is needed to facilitate particular outcomes, 5) how to modify the behavior to better fit interactions with specific teachers and their own child care settings, and 6) equip directors with stress reducing skills and increase their ability to connect reflective practices to practical childcare applications.

Depression, Anxiety, and Perceived Social Support as Potential Mediators for Disparities in Stress-Hormonal Regulation in Transgender Youth

Hernandez Ainza, Astrid, Toomey, Russell B., Ph.D., Walsh, Michele, Ph.D., University of Arizona

Previous studies conducted on the prevalence of mental health outcomes among transgender populations have generally indicated an elevated risk for psychiatric illnesses such as depression and anxiety. The adapted minority stress model proposes that transgender populations exhibit poorer mental and physical health outcomes as a result of the increased likelihood of experiencing stigmatization, discrimination, and victimization (Meyer, 2003). With this framework in mind, transgender youth are hypothesized to be more likely to exhibit physiological differences in the activity of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary Adrenal (HPA) axis, a biological system responsible for mediating whole-body responses to stress via hormonal regulation (Juster et al., 2015). However, few studies have examined the hormonal stress profiles of the transgender population specifically, with disparities in HPA axis activity as a potential mediator for mental health outcomes.

To address this gap in the literature, the purpose of the current study was to analyze potential differences in the diurnal cortisol patterns and C-Reactive Protein (CRP) profiles of trans youth, according to the variables of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and parental warmth. By doing so, the current study presents an examination of how mental health and parental upbringing influence neurobiological stress responses in trans youth. The two primary objectives for this study were: (1) To evaluate average daily change in cortisol levels (Δy), average evening cortisol levels, and average morning CRP levels in transgender youth, measured from daily salivary samples, and (2) To determine whether there is any distinction in cortisol and CRP levels between transgender youth with greater parental warmth and those with lower parental warmth.

Data for this study was drawn from the Pilot Study of a Family-Focused Intervention to Support Transgender and Gender Creative Youth and Their Families, which consisted of five families comprising of a trans youth. Within this study, trans youth and their families participated in a 6-week Cognitively Based Compassion Training (CBCT) program, which is a meditation and mindfulness-based program that helps families develop coping skills to improve mental health as well as quality of relationships. Each participant was asked to provide four salivary samples over the course of two consecutive days at the beginning of the study, with two samples per day (i.e. awakening and evening samples). The samples were then assayed for their cortisol and CRP content. At baseline, self- and parent-report survey measures were also employed in order to measure depressive symptoms, anxiety, and parental warmth.

As anticipated, a blunted diurnal cortisol slope was strongly correlated with higher depressive scores, as well as moderately correlated with lower parental warmth. In addition, greater average evening cortisol levels were strongly correlated with decreased self-reported and parent-reported parental warmth. Finally, greater average AM CRP levels were also strongly associated with decreased individual and parental warmth scores. Overall, these findings provide new preliminary evidence that transgender youth with greater perceived caregiver social support, as indicated by greater warmth scores, tend to exhibit healthier hormonal regulation patterns as well as fewer depressive and anxiety symptoms.

The Role of Mindfulness in Interrupting the Intergenerational Transmission of Child Maltreatment

Robin Hertz, University of Oregon

Secure attachment is a crucial factor contributing to the trajectory of optimal human development. Child maltreatment makes secure attachment impossible and contributes to a wide variety of physical, psychological, and interpersonal problems, including increased risk of maltreating or suboptimal parenting of the next generation. Secure attachment and mindfulness have been shown to be associated with the same midline prefrontal brain regions implicated in social-emotional functioning and other processes and outcomes. This poster reviews and integrates findings from the diverse literatures on attachment, child maltreatment, mindfulness, and mindful parenting, supporting a model of the intergenerational child maltreatment process in which mindfulness may play a significant role in interrupting the intergenerational transmission process.

A Systematic Review of Mixed Methods Designs Used in Mindfulness Research: 2006-2016

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Over the past ten years, researchers from numerous fields and disciplines have started to recognize the efficacy of mindfulness at enhancing well-being (e.g., Nyklicek and Kuijpers 2008; Zhang, Howell, and Iyer 2014; Mackenzie, Carlson, Munoz, and Speca 2007; Shonin, Van Gordon, and Griffiths 2013). Mindfulness is defined as one's "self-regulation of awareness towards present mental states and processes [and] a nonevaluation openness and acceptance towards moment-to-moment experiences" (Branstrom, Kvillemo, Brandberg, and Moskowitz 2010, p.151). With a Buddhist-based background, mindfulness is considered an attribute of attention (Brown and Ryan 2003). Scholars have examined the construct of mindfulness both empirically and qualitatively. However, rarely have both strands been mixed into a single research study. Mixed methods (MM) methodology embodies the combination of a qualitative strand and a quantitative strand. Mindfulness researchers have started to employ this methodology because one single strand of qualitative or quantitative research may be insufficient to address their question. Mixed methods research (MMR) is gaining wide recognition and implementation across the multidisciplinary fields of mindfulness research. With

that growing trend, we conducted a content analysis to examine mixed methods articles on mindfulness over the past decade (2006-2016).

Our purpose is to evaluate whether each article embodies key components common agreed upon by mixed methods scholars: (1) providing a clear statement of design selection, (2) referencing key mixed methods scholars, (3) explicitly stating research questions, and (4) offering a rationale for a mixed methods approach. We examined 16 articles, which many employed an explanatory design (52.9%; N=9), embedded (17.6%; N=3), and convergent design (29.4%; N=5). No studies used an exploratory design. Only 29.4% (N=5) mentioned their mixed methods design, 64.7% (N=11) provided a rationale, and only 29.4% (N=5) cited mixed methods research scholars. Overall, only 11.7% (N=2) of the articles contain all the components of a mixed methods research study. We encourage researchers to consider using mixed methods designs to better understand mindfulness because mindfulness is a complex construct consisting of multiple underlying mechanisms and processes that has yet to be understood. Implementing both a qualitative strand and quantitative strand will help researchers better understand mindfulness. Therefore, we offer recommendations for future mixed methods studies on mindfulness in our study.

Mindfulness through Movement, Music & the Arts

Constance Mollerstuen, Positively Linked

Klatt, M., et al. (2013). Feasibility and preliminary outcomes for Move-into-Learning: An arts-based mindfulness classroom intervention. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8(3), 233-241.

What did they study?

The feasibility of an eight-week mindfulness-based program called Move-into-Learning (MIL), administered to two classrooms of third graders at a low-income, urban elementary school in the Midwest. The MIL program involved a weekly 45-minute session, led by an outside trainer, that included mindfulness meditation, yoga and breathing exercises set to music, and positive self-expression through writing and visual arts. In addition, the two classroom teachers led shorter, daily practice sessions that reinforced those skills.

What did they find?

At the end of the eight weeks, teachers observed significantly less hyperactive behavior, ADHD symptoms, and inattentiveness among their students; these improvements were maintained two months later. In fact, students continued to show improvements in their attentiveness even after the program had ended. What's more, interviews with the participating teachers revealed that they found the program to be feasible to implement, appropriate and enjoyable for their classrooms, and beneficial for students' attendance and behavior. These promising preliminary results seem to warrant larger, more rigorous studies of the program.

A School-Based Yoga Intervention for Young Children

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Yoga-based practices (YPs) generally integrate breath awareness, movement sequences, and relaxation techniques to enhance overall well-being. Modern day YPs tend to be synonymous with exercise. Nevertheless, yoga is a growing interest among caregivers and psychologists, as research suggests that YPs improve self-regulation (SR) and emotional regulation (ER) and improves social and emotional learning outcomes (Shapiro, et al., 2016). Given that SR is strongly associated with behavioral school readiness (Pontiz et al., 2009), yoga is being implemented in educational settings as interventions to help foster the SR skills essential for academic success and emotional well-being (Ferreira-Vorkapic et al., 2015). Yoga for children includes movement, breathing, and song. Yet, there is a paucity of literature that examines the function of these parts to qualitatively discern what is feasible in schools and constitutes developmentally appropriate yoga practice (Greenberg & Harris, 2012). Extant literature has not outlined ways to design sustainable yoga for schools (Davidson et al., 2012). For example, teachers are seldom involved in the implementation of yoga. This is a problem, as children's behavioral difficulties may initially have their greatest negative impacts in challenges faced by teachers in the classroom.

This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the impact yoga may have on children's SR and ER and uses yoga videos for teachers to use during classroom instruction. This randomized wait-list controlled trial proposes training teachers to implement eight weeks of yoga in high poverty schools with 200, five to six-year-olds. SR and ER outcomes will be assessed through direct assessments and parent and teacher reports.

This is also a mixed methods study and qualitatively explores student engagement in yoga before, during, and after instruction; feasibility of implementation; and teacher-student relationship quality. This presentation focuses on an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data, which consists of video recordings of yoga, and interview data with teachers and students.

Due to the paucity of qualitative research regarding the level of student engagement and developmental appropriateness of yoga-based practices, this study uses a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) when analyzing and presenting the results of the qualitative data. Analysis of qualitative data will elucidate the following: a) the impact of yoga on teachers' perceptions of teaching quality; b) students' abilities to transition from one activity to the next; c) the ways children engage in yoga over the course of the eight weeks. The iterative analytical process of the qualitative data will contribute to developing a conceptual framework of feasible age appropriate yoga practices for young children in school settings.

Using a grounded theory approach, this presentation documents the impact of yoga on teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and the ways children engage in yoga over the course of the eight weeks. This study contributes to developing a conceptual framework of age appropriate yoga for young children.

Parent-Child Mindfulness Based Training: Preliminary results from a pilot study examining the impact of mindfulness practices on children's executive functions and working memory

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Background: Mindfulness practices have been purported to have a positive influence on executive functions. The primary aims of the Mindfulness and Memory Study are to pilot a Parent-Child Mindfulness Based Training (PC-MBT) program and to examine whether exposure to mindfulness practices prior to completing a memory training program will improve children's subsequent gains in working memory capacity.

Methods: Participants were typically developing children ages 8-10 years of age (N = 19) who were randomly assigned to PC-MBT (n = 11, 3 males) or wait-list control (n = 9, 5 males) groups. Measures of brain (structural and functional MRI) and behavior (cognitive assessments and questionnaires) were collected at 3 time points, each 7 weeks apart at: baseline, post PC-MBT (or wait period), and post working memory training.

The PC-MBT curriculum materials and training sequence were based on two established mindfulness programs (i.e., Mindful Schools and A Still Quiet Place) with modifications specific to training individual families in their home setting. Parents and children met with a mindfulness instructor for weekly 1hr in-home training and weekly 15min online sessions. Participants also completed daily independent practices over the 6-week training period. Children from both groups then completed a computerized, empirically supported, working memory training for 45mins/day, 5 days/week for 6 weeks.

Results: Preliminary findings from the subset of participants who have already completed the entire study protocol (n = 8 training, n = 2 controls) support the feasibility of study adherence and the completion of both the mindfulness and working memory training programs. PC-MBT participants scores of well-being from the CAMM, MAAS, or the FFMQ were not significantly different from pre- to post-mindfulness training. However, measures of participation and weekly questionnaires from families suggest overall enjoyment of the PC-MBT program. As expected, significant improvements in children's working memory scores were observed from pre- to post-working memory training, on 5 of 8 standardized assessments of verbal and visuospatial working memory (p values < 0.05). Results of all participants cognitive/behavioral data will be presented and analyses will examine whether working memory gains are greater for children with prior mindfulness training.

Discussion: Results from our pilot program and preliminary analysis from the subset of participants for which data has been collected indicate that the programs and study protocol are feasible and that families are satisfied with the PC-MBT training experience. Working memory capacity improved for all participants, as expected. Analyses of the full sample will examine whether gains are greater for PC-MBT children and results will be presented at the 2017 Mindful Families, Schools and Communities Conference.

Future Directions: An additional aim of this study is to examine structural and functional neural plasticity associated with these cognitive and behavioral training programs. We will investigate white matter tracts connecting areas of the brain associated with working memory, attention and emotional regulation. The sustainability of working

memory improvements and potential long term benefits of exposure to mindfulness training practices will also be examined 6 months post training.

Mindfulness and Awareness of Common Humanity as the Conditions for the Co-existence of Compassion and Self-Compassion

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The significance of compassion and self-compassion is well documented but little is known about their associations. There are four possibilities of their co-existence: (1) people who have compassion both to others and themselves, (2) people who have compassion to others but not themselves, (3) people who have compassion to themselves but not others, and (4) people who have compassion neither to others nor themselves. The first possibility is of most interest because it is pertinent to the promotion of psychological well-being. It is worthwhile to investigate under what conditions compassion and self-compassion are likely to co-exist. The knowledge of their common basis will inform psychological interventions to promote compassion and self-compassion. A major goal of the current project is to identify the conditions for the co-existence of compassion and self-compassion. With insights from Buddhist philosophy, we hypothesize that mindfulness and awareness of common humanity are two conditions for the co-existence of compassion and self-compassion. Specifically, we hypothesize that compassion and self-compassion are highly correlated only for the people who are mindful and have awareness of common humanity (H1). We also hypothesize that people who are mindful and aware of common humanity exhibited the positive psychological outcomes of self-compassion found in past studies. The participants of the current project were 227 Chinese college students in Hong Kong with an average age of 19.39 (SD= 1.36) and 65% as female. They participated in the project for the credits of a psychology course and completed a questionnaire in a small group of three or four in a laboratory. The questionnaire consisted of scales that measured compassion, self-compassion, mindfulness, satisfaction with life, emotional management, self-esteem, and social connectedness. The results were consistent with both hypotheses. By median split, the participants were divided into four groups: (1) participants with low mindfulness and low awareness of common humanity, (2) participants with low mindfulness and high awareness of common humanity, (3) participants with high mindfulness and low awareness of common humanity, (4) participants with high mindfulness and high awareness of common humanity. The correlation between compassion and self-compassion was only significant ($r = .427, p < .001$) for the participants who were high in both mindfulness and awareness of common humanity. This group of participants also reported highest level of satisfaction with life, emotional management, self-esteem, and social connectedness. The results of the project have both theoretical and practical significance. They fill a lacuna in the existing body of knowledge about the co-existence of compassion and self-compassion. They also inform the development of interventions that enhance compassion and self-compassion.

College student mind-set: Does student-parental relationship influence the student's mind-set?

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Recent studies have shown that student who have the support of their parents have a better chance of acquiring a growth mindset attitude towards learning (Fitzakerley, Michlin, Paton & Dubinsky, 2013). It has shown that a growth mindset is a crucial aspect for an individual to believe that the ability to learn is not fixed. Growth mindset is a key component in successful learning because the individual believes that learning and success are associated with hard work, practice, and determination (Elish-Piper, 2014). There is substantial evidence to support the argument that greater parental involvement yields benefits for children's academic performance (Parcel, Dufur & Zito, 2010). The family resources which children can use are regarded more influential in affecting academic performance (Furstenberg, 2004). Even the frequency of parent-child discussions about school issues such as homework, teachers and student relations have shown to significantly affect children's academic performance (Hill et al., 2004). Research has shown greater involvement on the part of parents appears to have substantial benefits for children's performance academically (Blair, 2014).

Parental participation has a long-lasting effect upon children's performance, and can even positively influence ultimate levels of educational achievement (Parcel et al., 2010). Even students who may be performing poorly show that higher levels of parental involvement can bring about substantial improvement over time (Galla et al., 2014).

Although such influence can vary by the age and grade level of the child, previous studies have suggested that parental involvement may have its greatest impact among elementary school children (Blair, 2014).

The first context children experience is their home; investments that parents make have significant and long-term consequences for children and the researchers have often proposed that parental involvement is best understood through the perspective of social capital theory (Parcel et al., 2010). Parents can help children cultivate a growth mindset and grit in their child/children. It just requires that parents model, encourage, and reinforce a growth mindset and when parents encourage their children they will begin to take on these ideas and incorporate them into the way they approach their schoolwork and goals for life (Furstenberg, 2004).

The purpose of this current study is to examine the relationships between parents and students on aspects of college student's mindset in their post-secondary education. The study examines the influence of mother and father nurturance on college students fixed and growth mindset. This study have shown that students who have support of their parents have a better chance of acquiring a growth mindset and attitudes in order to succeed in post-secondary education. Data for the study was collected among 167 adult college students, representing 137 (82%) female and 30 (18%) male participants. The participants completed a demographic survey, the Parental (Father) Nurturance Scale with 24 items, Parental (Mother) Nurturance Scale with 24 items and the Mindset Scale with 20 items. A One-Way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in a student's growth mindset that showed high social supports and life satisfaction for both traditional and non-traditional students.

A model of mindful communication: Implications for romantic relationships and intimate partner violence prevention

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Although healthy romantic relationships bring many benefits, conflict and violence in these relationships affect people's physical and mental health, resulting in injury, chronic physical problems, depression, suicide, and negative sexual health problems. This paper introduces a model of mindful communication in the context of interpersonal relationships, which is particularly beneficial in enhancing relationship quality and reducing or preventing intimate partner violence.

Kabat-Zinn (1990) defined mindfulness as nonjudgmental, nonreactive attention to present-moment experiences. Bishop et al. (2004) suggested a two-factor model of mindfulness, in which one's attention is regulated with an orientation of curiosity and acceptance to one's experience. Bodhi (2011) emphasized the evaluative aspect of mindfulness in which the practitioner make judgements about the mental qualities and behaviors and engage in purposeful actions. Our conceptualization of mindful communication draws from Eastern and Western literatures mentioned above on mindfulness. Mindful communication represents the capacity to remain moment-to-moment aware when interacting with others, and consciously choose purposeful communicative actions that are appropriate to any given situation.

Intimate partners intentionally bring awareness to the interaction with their partners, discern their mental processes, regulate negative engagement or disengagement and consciously choose purposeful communicative actions. Mindful communication comprises three core processes, namely (a) applying conscious attention to one's own bodily sensations, thoughts, and feelings to promote awareness of verbal and nonverbal communication when interacting with other people, (b) bring awareness to emotional reactions and cognitive appraisal that arises in the interaction, and (c) discerning these experiences and consciously choose ways of communicating that are likely to lead to beneficial outcomes, rather than habitually reacting in interacting processes.

Mindfulness in this model emphasizes discernment and engagement of purposeful actions, which expands the popular definition of mindfulness as nonjudgmental awareness in the present moment. Mindfulness practice helps people develop skills of attentive listening, which is of vital importance to successful communication. Mindful individuals develop a capacity to view emotional and cognitive phenomena as merely mental events to come and go without self-identification. This capacity nurtures an attitude of acceptance in challenging situations, regulating stress by allowing people neither suppressing nor brooding unpleasant thoughts and emotions. As mindful communication occurs, negative engagement (i.e., hostility, rumination, aggressive impulses) and disengagement (i.e., avoidance, withdrawal, suppression) were reduced. Meanwhile, a number of positive qualities such as forgiveness, compassion, relatedness, and openness emerge, enhancing the relationship quality and satisfaction, and ultimately leading to less couple conflicts and aggression.

This model of mindful communication has practical implications for IPV prevention and interventions aimed at couples. Finally, we recommend practice techniques of mindful communication that could be incorporated in mindfulness-based interventions.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program in Youth Detention Center in Hong Kong-a Random Control Trail Research Implementation Plan

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Background: In Hong Kong (HK), young male offenders (age 14-24) may be referred by the court and sent to detention centers. In these detention centers, young male offenders may receive strict discipline, strenuous training and hard work to prepare for their future life. Although they may receive counseling and psychological services in these centers, these services are mostly pointed to specific areas, such as violence prevention to decrease offending behaviors. No specific services pay attention to the stressed emotions of youth nor teach them how to release their emotions in a safe place rather than oppressing their feelings or expressing their feelings in outrageous ways. Evidence-based Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program may offer youth a new perspective to be in the present moment and to be non-judge to their feelings, and further help youth to control their emotions.

Objective: This research aims at discussing the implementation of MBSR program in detention centers in HK and evaluating the effectiveness of MBSR in promoting psychological well-being of youth offenders in detention centers.

Study Design: This study will adopt the Random Control Trail (RCT) procedure. 80 participants will be equally administered to one intervention group and one control group, Male youth (age 14-24) in local detention centers who are currently receiving counseling services in HK will be recruited. The intervention group will receive evidence-based MBSR services following the manual created by The Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society in The University of Massachusetts Medical School. The control group will receive regular group counseling therapy. MBSR program will last for 8 weeks and the content may be modified to fit for the setting of detention centers and the needs of youth offenders.

Expected Results: This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of evidence-based MBSR program in youth detention centers. Results from the implementation of this RCT program may show that youth in detention centers in Hong Kong will experienced decreased level of emotional level and increased level of emotional control after practicing mindfulness for 8 weeks compared with control group.

Discussion and Implications: In Hong Kong, there lacks evidence to support the effectiveness of MBSR in youth detention centers. This RCT study may offer valid evidence that MBSR can decrease youth stress level and increase youth emotional control, which skills they can apply in their future life after leaving the detention center. Mindfulness can be a tool for youth to apply in their future life when they facing difficulty times. This research may also fulfill the gap that there is no research conducted in HK to examine the effectiveness of MBSR in the setting of detention centers.

Limitations and Future Research: Future follow-up research can be conducted to see whether the implementation of MBSR program can decrease the re-entry rate of these youth offenders. Mindfulness may be the entry point for youth to further pursuing spiritual growth. Therefore, future research can also investigate the spirituality development of youth who practiced MBSR.