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MINDFULNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Physiological motivations (pain, hunger, thirst, lust, the need for sleep) are placed in the hierarchy of needs before emotions (anger, disgust, disgust, sadness, joy.). The components of suffering demand to be reduced first. When we experience severe pain, everything else fades into the background. Similarly, fear was most often indicated (by fourteen outstanding researchers in this field) as the basic emotion. We can see that during a panic attack, it is difficult to meet higher needs. Physical and mental suffering overlap. Being open to the entire internal human resource and the external context allows for taking more adequate action. In clinical work, the combination of neurobiological and psychological analysis provides a very good basis for planning psychotherapeutic interventions (Maruszewski, Doliński, Łukaszewski, Marszał-Wiśniewska, 2011). Research indicate the importance of a holistic approach to the body and psyche. Recently, science has been investigating concepts such as well-being and happiness. With help of salutogenesis model, health and its determinants in relation to stress are analysed (Heszen, Sęk, 2011). It is characteristic that the very belief that stress is a positive and developmental phenomenon helps a lot in dealing with adversities (McGonigal, 2016). Moreover, the absorbing work on the health of other people places significant demands for one's own condition.

Clinical and research work of the team led by prof. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the Medical University of Massachusetts aimed at alleviating pain and suffering experienced by terminally ill people resulted in the publication of the MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) program in 1979 (Zinn, 2018). Following this method, programs supporting treatment and psychotherapy have been and are still being developed and

evaluated (Germer, Siegel, Fulton, 2015). They are generally called Mindfulness-Based Intervention (MBI). The field of application of mindfulness is expanding dynamically. Currently, it is the most researched and published in scientific journals field, covering health, well-being, efficiency and human development. Mindfulness is the material of the third wave of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

Resulting from this trend, noteworthy MBI programs and therapies having their own training and supervision systems are:

1. MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy) is a concept for the prevention of depression relapses. Used during the period of remission of the illness, it can reduce the strength and duration of recurrence of depression in its most severe form to almost fifty percent (Segal et al., 2009; Teasdale et al., 2016).
2. MBRP (Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention). Modelled, like MBCT, on an eight-week stress relief program, MBSR is based like other MBIs on secular meditation, psychoeducation, elements of behavioural psychotherapy, and psychological training. The most important change-inducing factor is the use of four formal mindfulness practices (body scanning, mindful gymnastics, mindful walking, and mindfulness meditation) and informal (e.g., raisin exercise, mindfulness of seeing). As research results show, this therapy helps patients better cope with the functioning and relapse of addiction in the future (Bowen, Chawla, Marlatt, 2011).
3. ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, taking into account the theory of relational frames and clinical needs, presented a model of psychological flexibility consisting of six factors: acceptance of reality, open and flexible attention directed to the present moment, defusion (separating from engulfing thoughts, emotions and body sensations), awareness of one's values, commitment to acting for these values, and Self - as a context. The authors of this model claim that deficits in the elements of psychological flexibility are the most important indicators of human suffering and lack of adaptability (Hayes, Strosahl, Wilson, 2013; Harris, 2018).
4. DBT (*Dialectical Behavior Therapy*). Dialectical Behavioral Psychotherapy turned out to be a good answer to the needs of patients with personality disorders. It is especially helpful in the treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) (McKay et al., 2015; Linehan, 2016) .

Mindfulness is a method that is imparted by a properly trained person. This is probably the only type of therapy where it is believed that the leader/ trainer should be a meditation practitioner himself. The basic requirement here is to complete the MBSR training. Mindfulness consists of four meditation techniques.

1. Focused attention meditation. It consists in intentionally and gently directing attention to one object at a time (e.g. breath, body sensation, sound, etc.)
2. Open monitoring. It is a kind and accepting opening to experiencing what appears in the field of attention at a given moment. Numerous studies and meta-analyses show that this technique is more effective than others (Radoń, 2020).
3. Mindfulness movement. It is based on a gentle exercise in becoming aware of experiences accompanying and directly related to the movement of the body - gentle gymnastics, walking, running, etc.
4. Compassion meditation. The use of this technique builds care, empathy and taking care of oneself and the surrounding world.

An important element of mindfulness training is not judging what appears in the field of consciousness at a given moment. The natural phenomenon of distraction is regarded with approval. Noticing one's own inattention is greeted with enthusiasm and taken as evidence of conscious presence - mindfulness. Allowing what is currently being experienced and observing judgment as a typical tendency of every mind - releases tension. Acceptance of the current experience (mindfulness as a state) induces greater acceptance of the emerging reality (mindfulness as a trait). It is one of the key ingredients of psychological flexibility (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2013; Harris, 2018).

"Meditation means developing a non-judgmental attitude towards whatever arises in the mind, whatever it may be. If you don't have this attitude, you don't practice meditation" (Kabat-Zinn, 2014, p. 67). In other words, "Mindfulness is the conscious intention to observe mental activity in a non-judgmental way - to distance yourself and notice everything that arises in the mind, and not react to it" (Gilbert, Choden, 2019, p.225). The complex and multi-layered human brain has developed over millions of years. It has a great ability to coordinate such abilities as: attention, reasoning, regulation of emotions, initiation and inhibition of behaviour. Moreover, it is aware that it is aware. It can automate processes on various levels. We can simultaneously drive a car and work mentally on solving a few complicated problems, talk while looking at the navigation, watching the road and beautiful views, breathing in fresh air, smiling to

calm down. Skills located in the neocortex (thinking, imagining, planning, remembering) can also cause problems (Gilbert, Choden, 2019). Zebra recovers quickly after being chased by a lion. A person can experience a difficult event for a long time by remembering it (Sapolsky, 2019). Mindful, compassionate and accepting observation of what is happening in the body and mind - the actual experience, not the analysis of the experience - allows for a faster return to balance.

Thinking fuelled by emotions provokes behaviours aimed at coping with an unpleasant internal state. Operating mode is mobilized automatically, because it is perfect for carrying out tasks. It forces you to come up with solutions, ask questions, why did it happen?, what now? This causes an increase in tension and, paradoxically, a deterioration of the mood. Focusing on ways of doing things is often counterproductive in dealing with emotional problems. There is often a tendency, called rumination, to concentrate on dwelling on a painful issue, resulting in an increase in unpleasant emotions. It is characterized by a self-perpetuating preoccupation in the search for causes, meanings, consequences and solutions (Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn, 2013). The ruminative style of reacting to suffering is characteristic for people experiencing depression, neurosis and addictions. Mindfulness training can allow to learn to replace the mode of action with the mode of being, thus breaking the chain of rumination (Segal et al. 2009).

The results of numerous studies and meta-analyses show that the use of mindfulness:

1. Causes the coexistence of states of deep relaxation with high quality mental and cognitive processes.
2. Significantly increases the efficiency of the brain system with a simultaneous decrease in energy demand.
3. Increases the acceptance of experience by increasing the level of decentration from internal sensations (cognitive defusion) and the ability to monitor internal states.
4. Increases sensitivity and reduces reactivity, which is manifested by the specific dynamics of changes in the activation of the amygdala.
5. Reduces the perception of pain and suffering.
6. Increases emotional control and resistance to stress.
7. Improves the immunity.
8. Results in better task performance along with an increase in the efficiency of

- conceptual reasoning and the quality of imagination functions.
9. Induces positive neuroplastic changes in the prefrontal cortex.
 10. Affects the optimization of the functioning of the entire brain system.
 11. Improves metacognition skills and the level of empathy, which correlates positively with increased activation of the insula (a factor indicating mental health and well-being).
 12. Increases efficiency when performing difficult tasks.
 13. Intensifies positive affectivity.
 14. Reduces the level of anxiety as a state and as a trait.
 15. Improves receptivity and openness to experience.
 16. Increases openness to meeting other person (Radoń, 2020).

To sum up, it can be said that intentional, open, conscious, accepting, non-judgmental observation of current impressions significantly supports well-being and is sometimes helpful in treatment and therapy. It can be useful in learning, maintaining professional and personal well-being and dealing with crises.

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