Mindful Moments
In the Middle of Mayhem

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Tip: Start each team meeting, class or group meeting with a mindfulness exercise

The “3 Things Exercise – See, Hear, Feel”
Why?
Because this is the human condition...

• It’s like our brain has too many tabs open
How do student athletes compare to other students on mental health issues?
## Depression and Anxiety
(2008-14 NCHA-ACHA Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>STUDENT-ATHLETES</th>
<th>NON-ATHLETES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever felt so depressed that is was difficult to function? (Yes, in last 12 months)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever felt overwhelming anxiety? (Yes, in last 12 months)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment, Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014 ACHA-NCHA II, ACHA-NCHA IIb]. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; (2016-01-04).
Mental Health Findings from 2008-12 ACHA-NCHA

- Women (student-athletes and non-athletes) were more likely to report feelings of depression and anxiety than men.
- Student-athletes were significantly less likely to report feelings of depression and anxiety than non-athletes.
- Student-athletes were significantly less likely to report suicidal ideation within the last 12 months than non-athletes.
- Even low percentage rates translate to many student-athletes affected.
  - 4,926 student-athletes in the sample reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function
  - 8,186 felt overwhelming anxiety, and
  - 1,005 had seriously considered suicide within the last 12 months.
NCHA-ACHA Mental Health Findings

• After statistically controlling for demographics and other variables related to depression and anxiety, student-athletes were significantly less likely to report problems with depression and anxiety.

• Stress, problems with interpersonal relationships and sleep difficulty were most strongly related to depression.

• All three of these variables, as well as problems with academics were strongly related to anxiety.
We ALL have mental health

The question is…

“What skills are we developing and practicing to constantly grow our mental health?”
The skill of MINDFULNESS is…

“…paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally…”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn
Harvard researcher

“… the ability to know what is going on in your head at any given moment without getting carried away by it.”

-Dan Harris
Anchor on Good Morning America
Radical but true

YOU are NOT your thoughts!

Thoughts & emotions are just neuropeptides.

YOU are the AWARENESS that can step back and choose to notice those thoughts.
Mindfulness concepts are not new to athletics...

– Get your head in the game!

– Keep your eye on the ball!
Mindfulness benefits to student athlete!

- Reduced stress
- Improved focus
- Reduced injuries
- Improved performance
- Increased happiness
- Increased academic success
The Game Changer

How Seattle Seahawks Coach Pete Carroll is Reshaping NFL Culture

HIGH ANXIETY
One woman’s journey to find peace of mind

15 Tips for Better Relationships at Home, at Work & in Love

Magazine articles
(Mindful) Meditation is as important as lifting weights and being out here on the field for practice...It’s about quieting your mind and getting into certain states where everything outside of you doesn’t matter in that moment. There are so many things telling you that you can’t do something, but you take those thoughts captive, take power over them and change them.” – Russell Okung, Offensive Tackel, Seattle Seahawks
Huffington Post article on athletes who meditate

Lebron James

Michael Jordan

Derek Jeter

Misty May-Trainor & Kerri Walsh

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/30/athletes-who-meditate-kobe-bryant_n_3347089.html
Were you taught stress management skills or mindfulness in elementary school?
Please welcome my co-teacher for this session...

Watch “just breathe” by Saltzman

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVVA2N6tX2cg
ANXIETY

YouTube  STRESS RESPONSE: Savior to Killer
by Robert Sapolsky
Freshmen in communal BR halls get weekly SSs

- Alcohol
- Sexual Assault
- Mental Health/ANTs
- Safety
- Vaping/Ecigs
- Nutrition
- Contraception/STIs
- etc

Good YouTuber: Automatic Thoughs by Wellcast
Think about how our bodies developed over millennia.
An observation about stress…

• Hold up an arm....
SHORT BREAKS MAKE YOU MORE RESILIENT!
If you carry baggage from the past and all worries of the future, you can’t function in the NOW.
2 key skills of mindfulness

Presence in the moment
Awareness of your thoughts/feelings

The only place you can be is here

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

Depression
Regrets
Sorrows
Embarrassments

Anxiety
Fears
Worries
Inadequacies

NOW
Our body has many reflex responses
To manage anxiety, manage the body!

CATS 4 part series Stall Seat

C - Caffeine
A - Alcohol
T - Tobacco
S - Sugar

Sleep

To manage anxiety, manage the body!

Herd the C.A.T.S.!

Anxiety is part of the human condition, and is not just mental, but physical too. How we experience stress is unique to each of us, and not just psychological. Asking the right questions about the sources of stress may help you develop coping strategies. If you are feeling anxious, you should understand that there are a number of factors at play. Additionally, there are a number of things you can do to reduce anxiety, whether it be through exercise, natural remedies, or other methods. Understanding what anxiety is, and how it affects you, can help you manage your anxiety better.

C - Caffeine
C - Cannabis
A - Alcohol
T - Tobacco
S - Sugar

Sleep deprivation and Sugar

Learn about anxiety

Be patient

Encourage your furrriend to seek help

Offer your furrriend a different perspective

Do you have a furrriend struggling with anxiety? Mew can help.

Learn about anxiety to better understand what your furrriend is experiencing. There are many types of anxiety such as panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder and social anxiety disorder, but everyone experiences anxiety in different ways.

Learn about the importance of engaging in physical activity to help alleviate anxiety. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, which can help reduce anxiety.

Encourage your furrriend to take advantage of the various resources available to help them, such as VCU University Counseling Services. Anxiety is not something that has to be lived alone.

Offer your furrriend a different perspective on things to help them break out of a negative train of thought.

What do VCU students do?

- 67% of students keep their BAC (blood alcohol concentration) below 0.03%.
- 83% of students who don’t drink alcohol drink between 4 and 6 times per month.
- 73% of students who drink alcohol do so 4 or fewer times per month.

CONCLUSION:

More students are problem drinkers in the United States, but there are effective alternatives to intoxication.
Manage Anxiety, Manage the Body!

Anxiety is part of the human condition, and it is not just mental, but physical too! No matter what your relationship with anxiety, these skills can help EVERYONE!

1. **C A T S**
   - Cigarettes, alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana

2. **Avoid**
   - Many people avoid situations that make them anxious.

Tobacco

Cigarettes, cigars, hookah, or marijuana.

Many depressed people think nicotine increases their creativity; however, in the long run, nicotine withdrawal hurts the brain. Getting off the nicotine-avoidance cycle can help you think more clearly.

**Belly Breathing**

Get out of your head! Practice mindfulness by noticing your heartbeat, breathing, and how your gut feels. Be aware of your environment, sounds around you, and what you’re sitting on. Stay present and don’t get carried away by the thoughts in your head and sensations in your body. Stop, breathe, and notice.

Belly breath for 30 seconds before classes and meetings to reduce anxiety. To do this, lean back in your seat, put your hands behind your head and take deep breaths. As you take slow deep breaths, your diaphragm drops and belly expands.

Reduce stress chemicals by exercising daily. An ideal target should be a resting pulse between 60 and 80. A faster resting heart rate leaves little wiggle room between what your brain interprets as real and what it does not.”

*More students wake up between 7:30 am and 9:30 am on weekdays.*

*Reduce the time it takes to fall asleep by avoiding digital screens 30 min before bed.*

*Don’t mess with your nap time.*

To manage anxiety, manage the body! Herd the C A T S.

Cigarettes, alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana:

- Cigarettes, alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana

**Sleep Deprivation & Sugar**

Sugar and sleep deprivation are associated with the body increasing the amount of autonomic negative thoughts (ANTS). Getting more sleep, limiting sugar, and drinking water can make your body feel better and less anxious.

Want support with nutrition or sleep? Student Health has a Nutritionist, Call (804) 828-4825. The Well can provide a one-time sleep-coaching session. Call (804) 828-9335.

**Learn C B T**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is very helpful for dealing with insomnia, automatic negative thoughts and changing eating patterns.

Check online for resources or consider seeing a counselor if these are issues for you.

*What VCU students do?*

On average, it takes VCU students 28 minutes to fall asleep.

Most students wake up between 7:30 am and 9:30 am on weekdays.

Reduce the time it takes to fall asleep by avoiding digital screens 30 min before bed.

Don’t mess with your nap time.

*Student Affairs*

*VCU Student Affairs*

*Virginia Commonwealth University*
Smile
Breathing reflexively changes things

Chest breathing vs. belly breathing
10% HAPPIER

HOW I TAMED THE VOICE IN MY HEAD, REDUCED STRESS WITHOUT LOSING MY EDGE, AND FOUND SELF-HELP THAT ACTUALLY WORKS —A TRUE STORY

DAN HARRIS
Video’s by Dan Haris
Why mindfulness is a Super power
website Happify
Participating in an eight-week mindfulness meditation program appears to make measurable changes in brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy, and stress. In a study that will appear in the Jan. 30 issue of *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, a team led by Harvard-affiliated researchers at *Massachusetts General Hospital* (MGH) reported the results of their study, the first to document meditation-produced changes over time in the brain’s gray matter.
MRI scans showing 8 weeks of mindfulness based stress reduction changes the brain
Mindful Awareness

Stimulus → Reaction

Stimulus → Mindful Awareness → Response
Mindfulness cue in your day?

Stop. Breathe. Be.
Everything is like shoes!

Mindfulness Practice & Apps
the most important thing is what you feel drawn to practice everyday.
Sorted through hundreds of mindfulness apps
Ranked 23
Used the Mobile Application Rating Scale (MARS), which rates aspects like ease of use, look, and overall satisfaction.

At that point there was one scientific study on the effectiveness of a mindfulness app (Headspace app).

10 day users of the Headspace app showed improvement in mood and fewer symptoms of depression
What Mindfulness App is best for YOU

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marlynn-wei-md-jd/what-mindfulness-app-is-right-for-you_b_8026010.html

For getting started with meditation: Headspace

Smiling Mind App free

iMindfulness App $1.99

Mindfulness Daily $1.99

For meditation in different scenarios and on the move: Buddhify 2
Which app is right for you?

- Like to level up?
- Love social media?
- Reader?
- Visual Learner?
- In touch with emotions?
- Like change?
- Good eye for design?
- Beginner?
Another resource
http://artfulness.vcu.edu/
What relaxes you the most?
3 main types of Meditation Exercises

• Focused awareness
  – Usually on breath (centering prayer)

• Unfocused Awareness
  – Just noticing, not judging and letting go

• Heart Practices
  – Metta meditation
Meditation

The Daisy Pattern is normal!

It is the PRACTICE of being focused on the breath in the present moment, noticing when your mind wanders, not judging and returning to the breath that over time calms the brain.

The Daisy Pattern is normal!
The Minds is like …

a playful puppy
Shall we practice?
Mindfulness helps you keep perspective
Research shows…

Those who practice mindfulness are more likely to be active bystanders.
Do “substances” have a role in stress management?

“It depends!”
Boomerang Stress...

Study hard- Party Hard
Different Genetic Pathways of Risk for Substance Use Disorder

- **Externalizing**: sensation-seeking, impulsivity
- **Internalizing**: anxious, depressed, perfectionistic
- **Physiological**: Low level of response to alcohol

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**Different Genetic Pathways of Risk for Substance Use Disorder**

- **Externalizing**: sensation-seeking, impulsivity
- **Internalizing**: anxious, depressed, perfectionistic
- **Physiological**: Low level of response to alcohol
My "flakes" .....and my ADGO
Why I started Mindfulness Meditation
“You can’t stop the waves... but you can learn to surf.”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn
Awesome TED Talk on Happiness & Positive Psychology
You don't get happy by achieving success.
You achieve success by getting happy.

- Dopamine, which your brain makes when you're happy, has one important side effect: It makes you smarter.
- A positive brain is 31% more productive. It's better at sales, faster and more accurate at diagnosing problems.
So how can you up your dopamine?

• Take two minutes every day and do these things:
  1. Write down 3 new things you are grateful for
  2. Journal about one positive experience you've had in the last 24 hours.
  3. Use the first email/tweet/text or post each day to praise or thank someone you know.

Spread the happy and you will be happier.

AND

• 4. Try meditation, to teach your brain to focus.
• 5. Exercise
Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP)

Treatment for Addictive Behaviors

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

MBRP (Bowen, Chawla and Marlatt, 2010) is a novel treatment approach developed at the Addictive Behaviors Research Center at the University of Washington, for individuals in recovery for addictive behaviors.

The program is designed to bring practices of mindful awareness to individuals suffering from the addictive trappings of the mind. MBRP practices are intended to foster increased awareness of triggers, destructive habitual patterns, and “automatic” reactions that seem to control many of our lives. The mindfulness practices in MBRP are designed to help us pause, observe present experience, and bring awareness to the range of choices before each of us in every moment. We learn to respond in ways that serve us, rather than react in ways that are detrimental to our health and happiness. Ultimately, we are working towards freedom from deeply ingrained and often catastrophic habits.
S.O.B.E.R. –
a mini mindfulness meditation

- **S**top – most important step
- **O**bserve – notice your body, feelings, mind
- **B**reathe- bring your attention to your breath
- **E**xpand awareness
- **R**espond- after observing choices, you have a choice in how you respond
How are you feeling? A little confused?
Any questions?