

MINDFULNESS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Kelly Sradeja: Youth advocate

Kelly Sradeja: Youth advocate at the YWCA of Northwest Ohio

- I teach comprehensive sex education in Toledo Public Schools. We are primarily a pregnancy prevention program
- We are working on implementing sex positive, LGBTQ+ inclusive, consent aspects to our lessons
- We also have an after school program called the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) where we have been trained in mindfulness as a calming technique for our students
- I am also a former Outreach Advocate for the YWCA Rape Crisis Center. At the time, we had three staff members and I was in charge of all the Legal advocacy, hospital call follow up, and support groups

What is mindfulness?



Dictionary.com definition: a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.



So what does this mean?

It does not mean forget your problems or don't focus on what is going on in the world. It simply a tool to calm yourself down while acknowledging that yes, those problems exist, yes they are there and I'm going to quietly put them aside and focus on me right now.

We are all dealing with A LOT right now

How can we make sure we are taking care of ourselves mentally and physically?

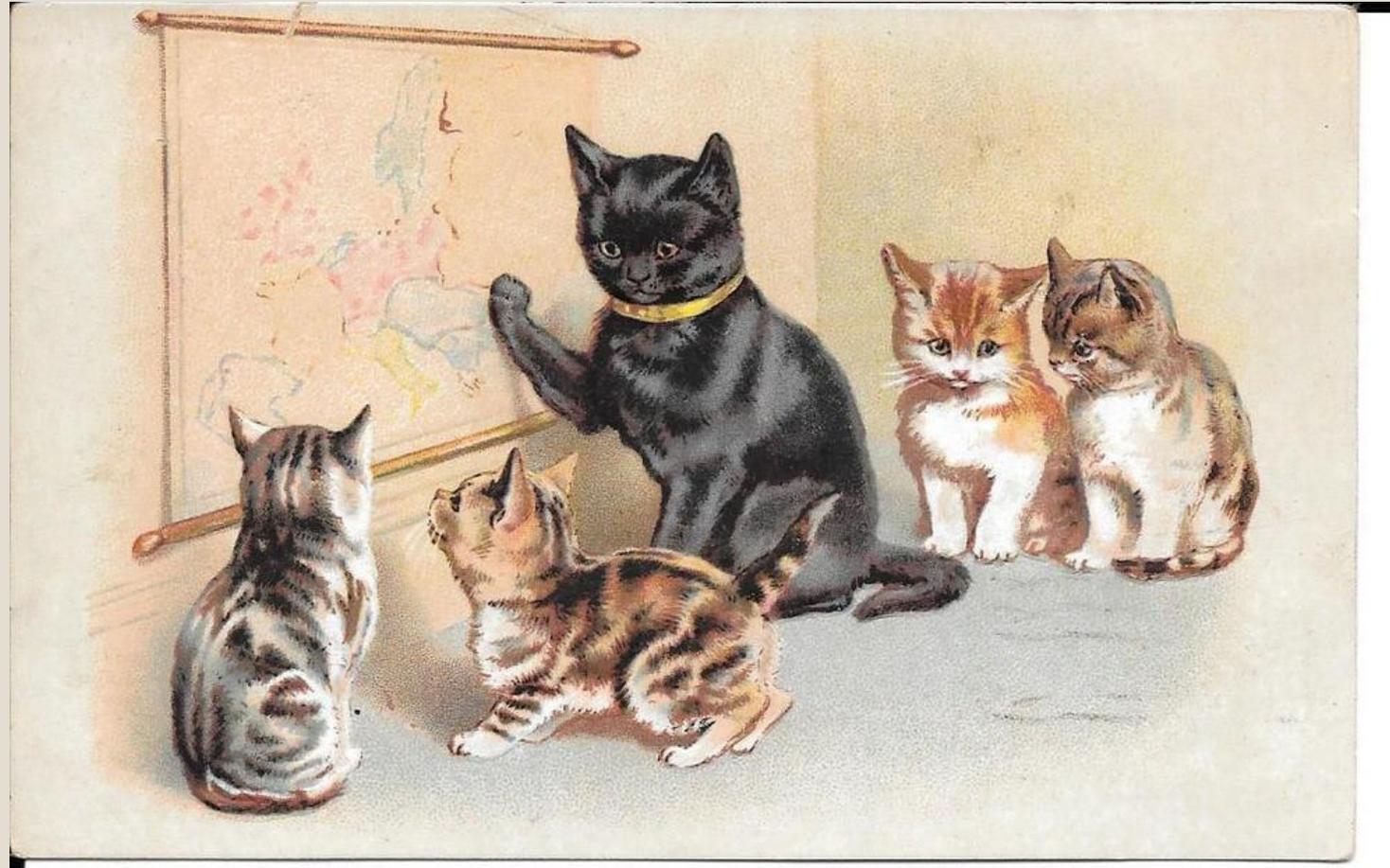


Physical and mental benefits to mindfulness

- Meditation increases the calming hormones of melatonin and serotonin
- Also decreases the stress hormone of cortisol
- Taking a quick 5 minute mindfulness break can increase concentration
- Reduces anxiety
- Reduces blood pressure and lowers heart rate
- Decreased depressive symptoms
- Can help manage chronic pain
- Improve attention span



What are the majority of our concerns right now?



- Concerns about our families. Have to work from home and homeschool our kids, worrying about older family members. (My elderly parents live with me)
- Dealing with the uncertainty of our jobs, adjusting to working at home, worrying about losing our employment or a partner losing their jobs. Maybe some of you have partners or family members that are now unemployed.
- Worrying about money.
- On top of all the stressors personally and professionally, we also have the unique additions of concern for our clients.



What unique stressors do we have as advocates?

- Keeping boundaries with our clients
- How to keep work at work while working from home.
- Survivors thrive on reliability. This is definitely not something they can control.
- Has anyone ever tried mindfulness in a support group or with a survivor?

I will now guide you on a 5 minute meditation that may be helpful for your clients



Can mindfulness help combat vicarious trauma, burnout and compassion fatigue?

Mindfulness activity for newbs:

- The raisin exercise (can be used with almost any kind of food, I like to use a piece of chocolate)
- Pretend like you have never seen a raisin before.
 1. Holding
 2. Seeing
 3. Touching
 4. Smelling
 5. Placing
 6. Tasting
 7. Swallowing
 8. Following



This is a similar exercise commonly used to bring survivors out of a flashback

The purpose is to ground you in the moment. Bring you to the present. Making you take the time to actually notice what is happening right now.

It's an exercise to gently guide you back to what you were doing when your mind starts to wander.



STOP

- S = Stop

Stop

- T = Take

Take a few deep breaths.

- O = Observe

Observe

- P = Proceed

Proceed



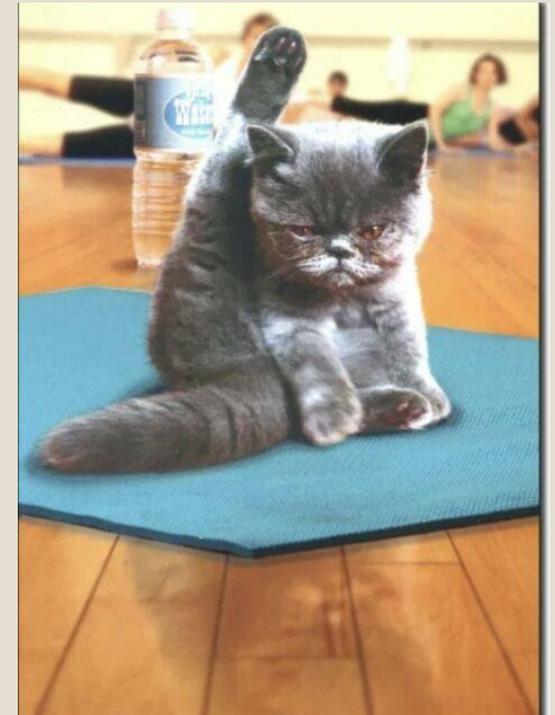
Breathing mindfulness activity

- First thing is to always make sure you are sitting comfortably. You don't have to sit up straight or anything like that, just be comfortable.
- You can close your eyes or keep them open. Whichever you prefer
- Breathe in through your nose for 3 seconds, out through your mouth for 3 seconds. Do this three times in a row.



Other mindfulness activities

- Yoga
 - Taking a walk
 - Sitting still and observing what is around you
 - There are many mindfulness apps that can be downloaded to help you through the day
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- I would like to finish with a 5 min guided meditation for you.



Questions or Comments?
Thank you!!!!

