

MINDFULNESS FOR LIFE

ICMA Session



**September 25, 2016
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Member of Cigna's Mindfulness
Orientated Stress Solutions Committee**

Together, all the way.®



MINDFULNESS FOR LIFE AGENDA

Definition and benefits

How to practice

Practical applications

Practice exercises





What is mindfulness?

"Paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, as if your life depends on it."

*Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD University of Massachusetts
Founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction*

"A flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context."

Ellen Langer, PhD Harvard University



ORGANIZATIONS WITH MINDFULNESS PROGRAMS





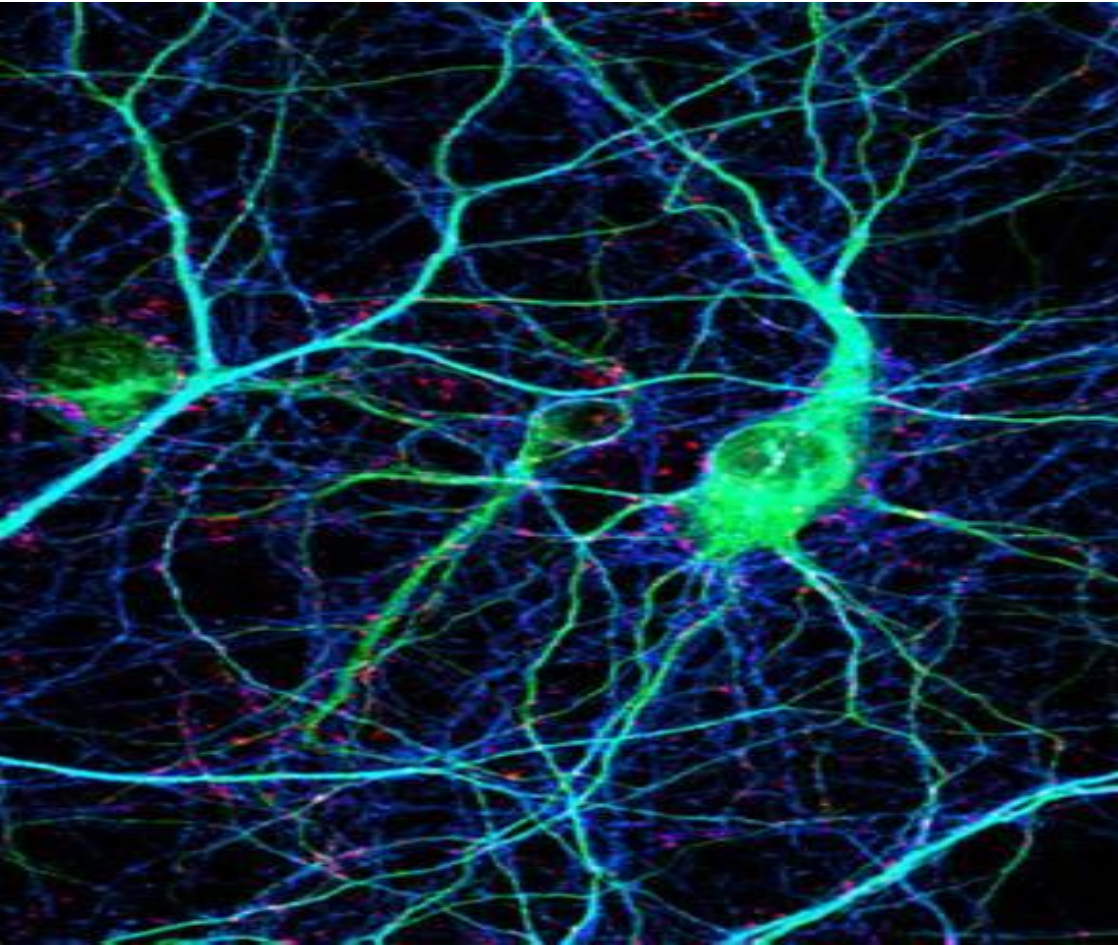
Mindfulness practice improves ...

- Leadership presence and charisma
- Decision making
- Resiliency and change agility
- Ability to stay calm and cool under pressure
- Relationships via enhanced listening, engagement, empathy and compassion
- Innovation
- Many physical and mental health conditions
- Enjoyment of life!

The Langer Mindfulness Institute, Harvard University



8 weeks of mindfulness practice



Increased thickening of brain for memory, learning, attention, emotional regulation, and sense of self

Massachusetts General Hospital & Harvard U

Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density, *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging* (2011), Holzel et al
Brain changes over 8 week mindfulness training - <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/01/eight-weeks-to-a-better-brain>



Meditation research and positive brain changes



Networks and connections

Concentration
Attention



Amygdala size

Stress/fear response



Gray matter

Emotional regulation
Self-awareness



“Me” center activity

Impulsivity



Dr. Richard Davidson, University of WI - Center for Healthy Minds, 2015



Mindfulness at work research



- 32% decrease in medical symptoms
- 29% decrease in perceived stress symptoms
- 26% increase in acting with self-awareness
- 26% increase in observational skills
- 25% increase in non-reactivity
- 22% increase in non-judgment

UMASS Medical School/Center for Mindfulness - 2016 research data collected from MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) workplace programs



Organizational mindfulness



“Our findings suggested that the exemplary local governments we interviewed demonstrated characteristics consistent with organizational mindfulness.”

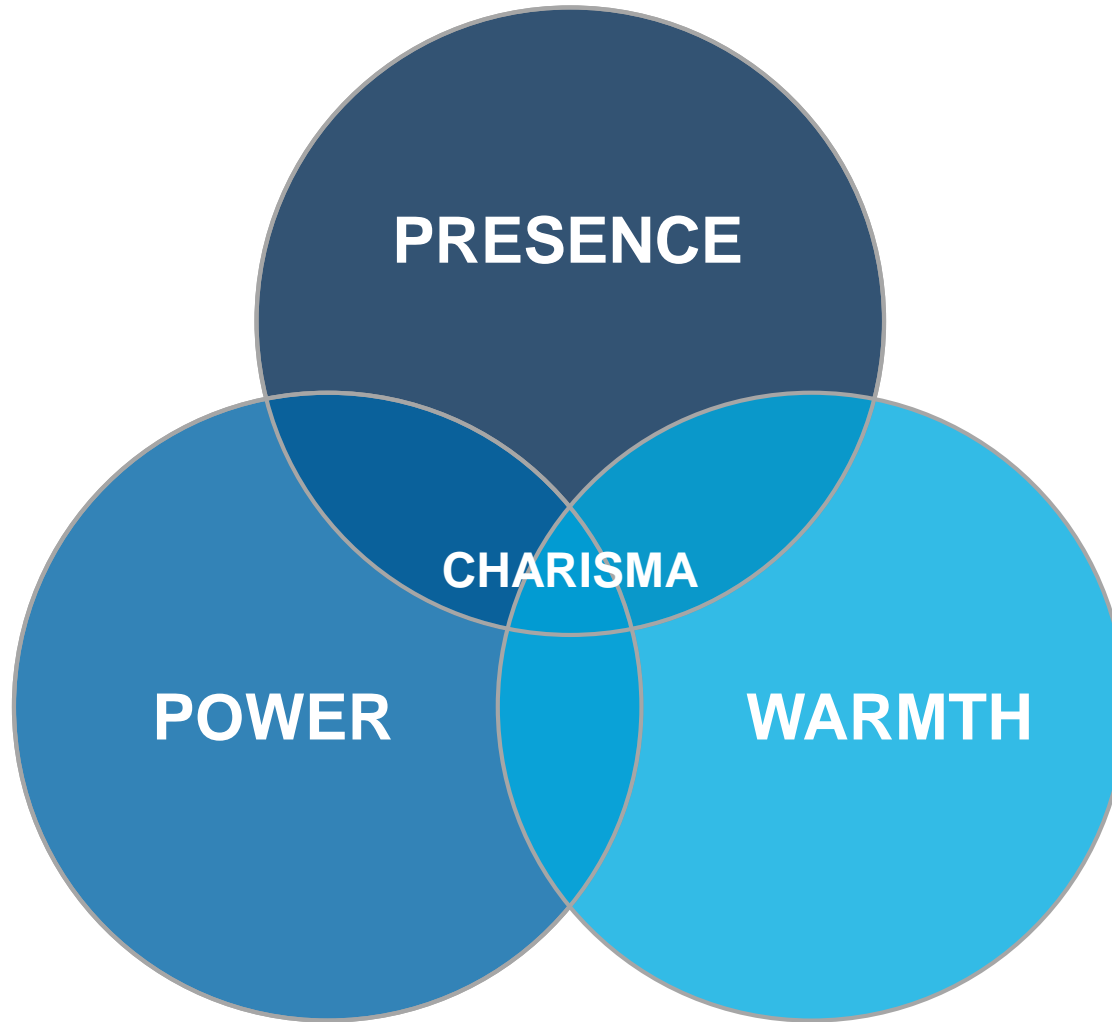
Exploring Organizational Mindfulness in Local Governments, Gorman, LinkedIn SlideShare, April 2016

“Our work shows that the application of mindfulness principles can dramatically enhance organizational success.”

<http://langermindfulnessinstitute.com/mindfulness-at-work/>



Charisma behaviors



The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master The Art and Science of Personal Magnetism by Olivia Fox Cabane



Cultivating charisma

Practicing mindfulness will naturally up your charisma factor by helping to increase your presence and warmth.

Increase the power factor with

Dress

Title

Intelligence

**Mindful
visualization**





ABC MINDFUL EXERCISE



Mindful practices

FORMAL



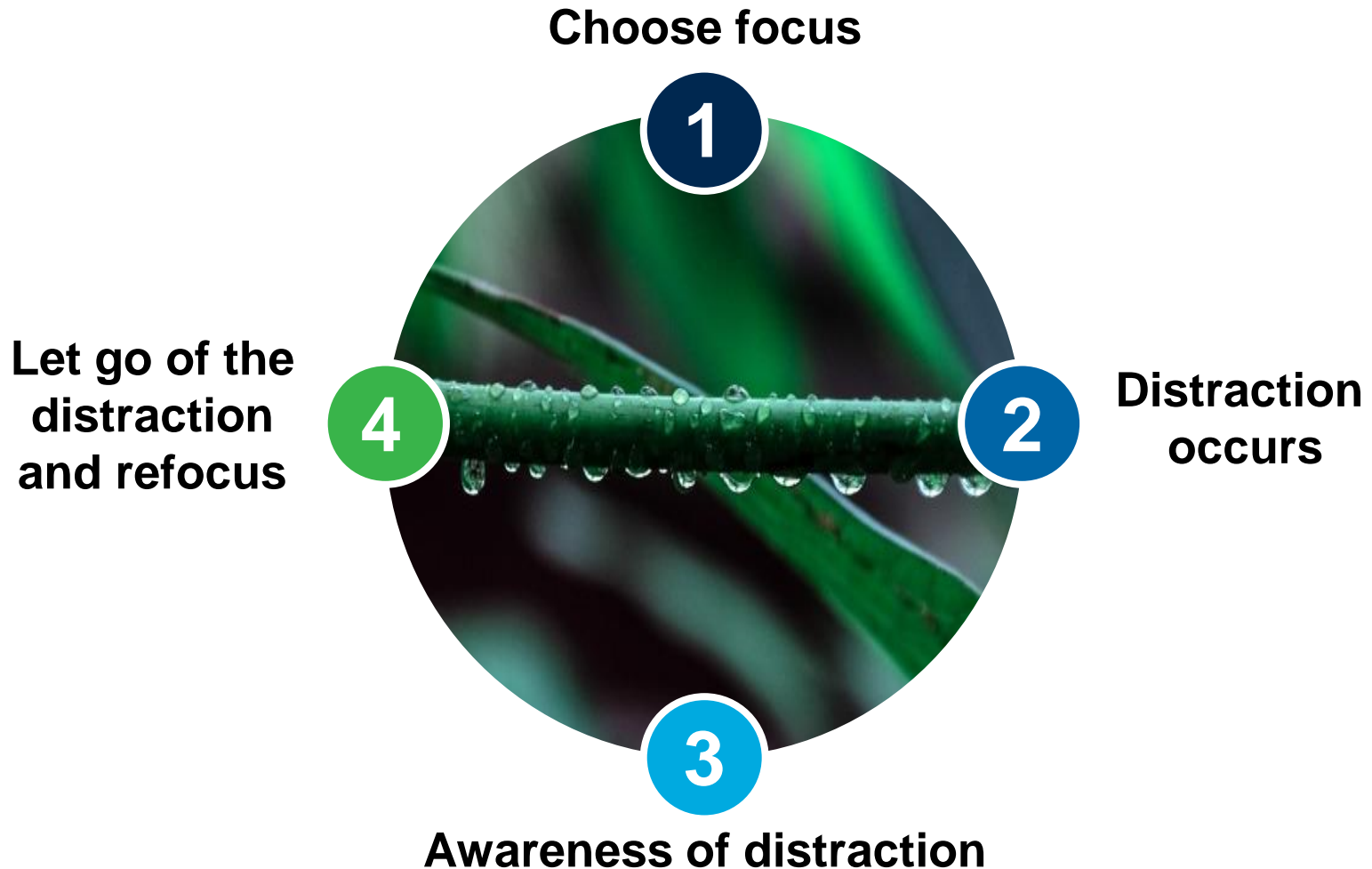
INFORMAL





Mindfulness practice loop

Each step cultivates kindness, curiosity, acceptance and non-judgment







Practice tips

- Set a clear intention
- Use the breath as an anchor
- Commit to and schedule a consistent practice time
- Cultivate an attitude of curiosity, kindness, and acceptance
- Be gentle and kind to yourself!





PARTNER EXERCISE: MINDFUL LISTENING



PARTNER EXERCISE: MINDFUL LISTENING

1. Find a partner
2. Partner A will take 2 minutes to share one of the topics listed below:
 - What personal attribute (honesty, humor, flexibility, etc.) do you most value and why?
 - Who has been the most influential person in your life and why?
 - What interests you the most regarding mindfulness?
3. Partner B will mindfully listen with the following guidelines:
 - Active silence
 - Offer your full attention and listen deeply
 - Cultivate an attitude of compassionate curiosity
 - Let go of interpretations, reactions, or a desire to respond
 - Notice any distractions that arise and gently refocus on what is being shared
4. Once partner A is finished sharing, go ahead and switch on your own and partner B share while partner A mindfully listens.
5. Once both partners have shared, each partner take 1 minute to share what you experienced while sharing and while mindfully listening.





MINDFUL MOVEMENT



On average, what percentage of the time are we lost in thought?

47%

Wandering Mind Not a Happy Mind, Killingsworth & Gilbert, Harvard Gazette, November 2010



Simple mindful actions

- Be intentional about choosing the next activity when switching to a new activity
- Complete a self check-in before any important decision or meeting
- Do daily activities mindfully – eating, driving, walking, listening, etc.
- Use STOP – Stop, take a breath, observe and proceed
- Enjoy a few minutes of daily quiet time
- Take a few mindful deep breaths
- Do something different in a routine
- Do the mini ABC mindful exercise

**These help switch you from
autopilot to present moment!**



Mindful workplace applications

Starting the work day:

- Conduct a two minute mindful exercise – ABC exercise, breath awareness, etc.
- Acknowledge three things you are grateful for
- Mindful movement – walking, stretching, yoga
- Mini meditation on the focus for the day
- Drink your coffee mindfully

Attending a meeting:

- Take a mindful pause before sharing or making any decisions
- Commit to no multitasking
- Listen mindfully
- Acknowledge and express gratitude for others
- Maintain an open, curious, and non-judgmental attitude

Dealing with challenging and difficult situations:

- Take a mindful walk
- Meditation reflection on the challenge
- Compassion meditation for oneself, others, and the situation
- Minimize reactive responses or actions
- Acknowledge three things you are grateful for regarding the situation





Expressing gratitude improves:

- Feelings of joy and happiness
- Generosity, altruism and compassion
- Resiliency
- Relationships
- Anxiety and depression
- Physical health
- Sleep

7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude That Will Motivate You To Give Thanks Year-Round,
Morin, Forbes , Nov. 2014



Myth of multi-tasking

Stanford Research: “Those who consider themselves to be great multitaskers are in fact the worst multitaskers. Those who rated themselves as chronic multitaskers made more mistakes, could remember fewer items, and took longer to complete a variety of focusing tasks analogous to multitasking.”

- You are not multi-tasking, you are switching
- 40% reduction in productivity



Cognitive control in media multitaskers; Ophir, Nass & Wagner;
PNAS 2009 106 (37) 15583-15587; August 24, 2009



Tips to reduce multi-tasking

- If possible, do one thing at a time with full attention.
- Don't start a new task without consciously deciding it's the right one.
- Switch off potential distractions or move away from them.
- Show up when interacting with others.



Remember, your brain is not hard-wired to multi-task!

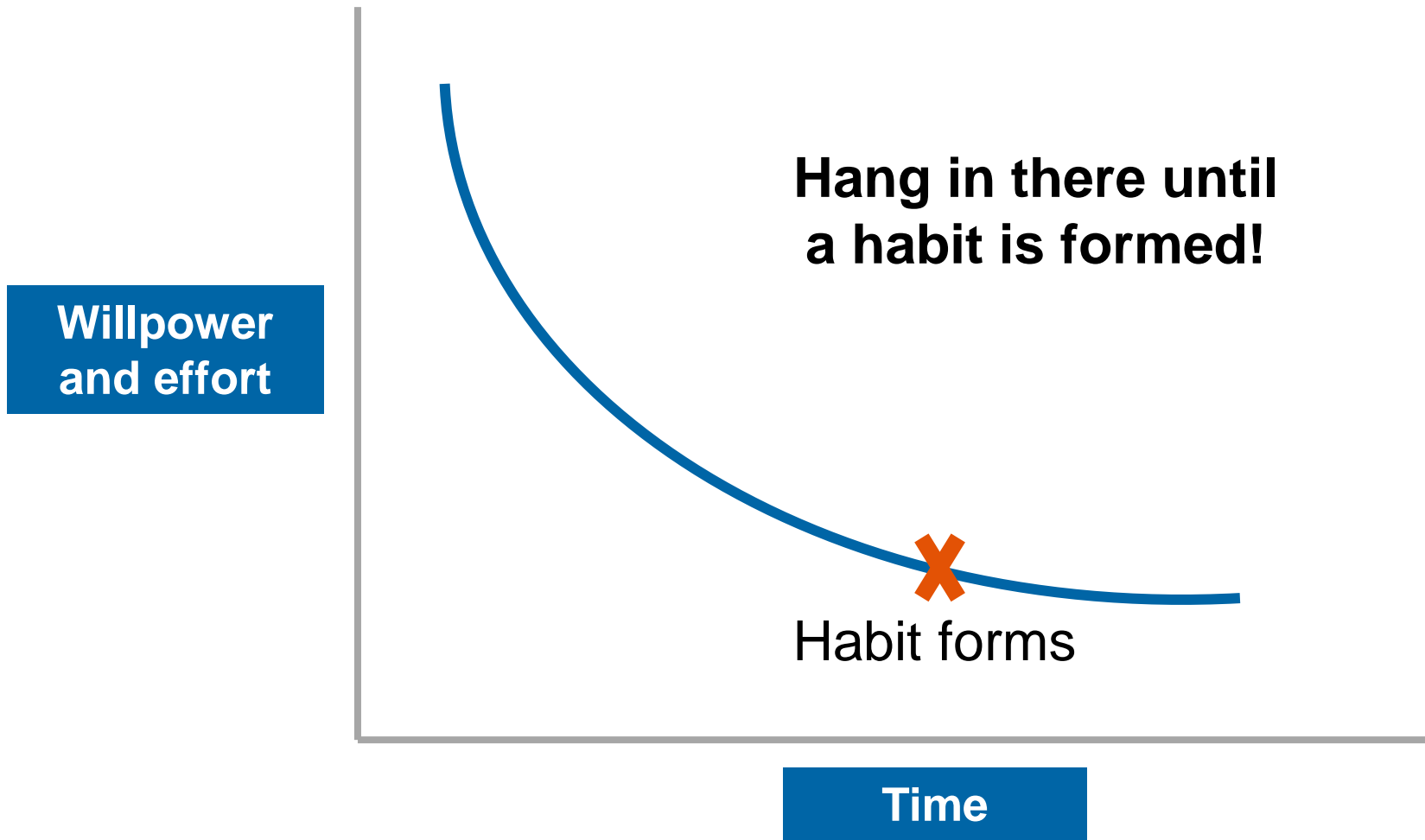


“People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their future.”

– *F.M. Alexander*



Learning and practicing something new





MINDFUL MUSIC EXERCISE





Getting started

- Incorporate a few of the practical tips into your routine each week.
- Become more familiar with mindfulness – take a class or read a book.
- Do daily:
One routine activity mindfully – eating, walking, cleaning, driving, etc.
10 minutes of mindful practice – starting out with 5 minutes and guided
- If you like movement, take a yoga or tai chi class (consult your physician first).



Resources

Organizations

- Mindful.org/at-work
- Umassmed.edu/cfm/stress-reduction

Guided meditations

- Jon Kabat-Zinn: www.mindfulnesscds.com
- Free audio: www.marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22
- Coach by Cigna: Download from app store or goggle play store

Books

- *Mindfulness for beginners: Reclaiming the present moment and your life* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *The miracle of mindfulness: An introduction to the practice of meditation* by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Finding the space to lead: A practical guide to mindful leadership* by Janice Marturano

Youtube videos

- *Mindfulness as an approach to improving performance* by Dr. Jutta Tobias
- *What is mindfulness?* By John Kabat-Zinn
- *Mindfulness over matter* by Dr. Ellen Langer



Questions & Comments



MINDFULNESS

Definition

Benefits

Applications

Practice



THANK YOU!



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