



WSSFC 2025

Quality of Life/Ethics Track – Session 2

Efficiencies & Mindfulness in the Office, So You Can Leave the Office

Presenter:

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About the Presenter...

Jodi Klagos is an associate in the Estates & Trusts practice at Godfrey & Kahn, S.C. She holds a B.S. in Health Care Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a master's degree in Leadership Studies from Marquette University, and a J.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to law school, Jodi worked in the dental industry for eleven years. Jodi serves as a Board Member of the Mindfulness in Law Society and co-chairs the Wisconsin chapter, and is a member of the Madison Estate Council, State Bar of Wisconsin and American Bar Association. She enjoys volunteering with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, Wills for Heroes, and Rise Above Yoga, and is also a certified yoga and meditation instructor.

Efficiencies and Mindfulness in the Office, So You Can Leave the Office

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The Stress Response

- Stress causes 80% of all illness today.
- Stress is how we respond to not having our needs met.
- The body reacts to stress by preparing to respond aggressively to a perceived obstacle or threat – we experience “fight, flight or freeze,” which is a primitive response grounded in survival instincts.
- Fight-or-Flight = increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, shallow/rapid breathing, increase in stress hormones, decrease in anti-aging hormones, sweating, tension, constriction, weakened immunity, clotting of blood platelets, and/or poor sleep.
- Long term effects = Dis-ease in the body (i.e. stroke, heart attack) due to restriction of flow of energy and information through our systems.
- Stress = Constriction

The Needs of Human Beings

- As humans, we have common essential and emotional needs.
- Beyond our essential needs of food, water, oxygen, shelter and protection, we have four fundamental emotional needs: the four A’s (attention, affection, appreciation, acceptance).
- All of our emotions derive from our essential needs, including the four A’s.
- Humans have two core emotional experiences – comfort and discomfort
 - Comfort = contentment, joy, peace, love, gratitude
 - We feel comfort when our physical and psychological needs are met.
 - Discomfort = frustration, distress, anger, fear, sadness
 - We feel discomfort/stress when our needs are not met.
- Two potential responses to unmet needs: react or respond
 - React: instinctual, conditioned, learned behavior; our “automatic” response
 - Respond: being aware; consciously choosing
- *The more skilled we become at meeting our needs, the more likely we are to feel comfortable, happy, and at peace.*

What is Mindfulness?

“Living attentive to the moment-by-moment experiences of life unfolding allows you greater control of what you are living – here and now.” – Dorothy Ratusny

- Present moment awareness – paying close attention, on purpose, non-judgmentally (not evaluating as positive or negative) to your present moment experience, including your thoughts, sensations, images, and feelings.
 - This allows us to notice and learn more because we are more attentive to ourselves and our surroundings, which means that we will have heightened feedback about the experience.
- Awareness is the starting point for growth and behavioral change – when we are

aware, we can make choices that best serve ourselves and others.

- Shift from reactive, habitual, automatic thinking to making more conscious choices.
- Allows us to respond instead of reacting by asking questions that help us assess our needs and make informed choices in the moment to best provide ourselves with what we need.
 - “What do I need in this moment?”
 - “What would allow me to feel happy now?”

Meeting Your Emotions/Responding to Unmet Needs

- All emotions derive from needs – we feel comfort, happiness and pleasure when our needs are met, and we feel discomfort, distress and pain when our needs are not met.
- Regardless of how our relationship with our emotions has developed over the course of our lives, we can develop a healthy relationship with our emotions and become skilled at expressing our needs and desires.
- Although it may not seem like it in moments of stress, chaos and discomfort, there are several ways to soothe ourselves, and feel protected, safe, cared for, and calm.
- Part of mindfulness is recognizing what you need in moments of discomfort and seeing if you can respond in a way that promotes your well-being and freedom, rather than in a way that perpetuates your pain and suffering.
- Steps for recognizing what you need in moments of discomfort:
 - (1) The first thing to do when you notice that you’re stressed is to simply stop – pause what you are doing and allow yourself to be still.
 - (2) The next step is to breathe and simply notice yourself breathing in and out.
 - (3) Then notice what is going on in your body – what sensations can you feel?
 - (4) Reflect on what is causing this emotion – what unmet need(s) do you have?
 - (5) Consider how you can respond in a way that benefits yourself and others in a compassionate way.
 - (6) Take action by responding – by something you do for yourself, or by asking someone else for help.
 - *By repeating this practice when you feel discomfort, you can decrease stress and anxiety, and your body will also thank you because daily stressors can take their toll on your health over time.*
- When you get clear on what you are feeling and what you need, if anything, you can then take action to get that need met, including asking for help.
 - Consciously communicating to others what you need is much more effective than expecting other people to figure out our needs without us having to ask. It can also reduce stress and enhance well-being.
 - You might also discover that what you need isn’t something from someone else, but rather, something that you need to give to yourself, such as more sleep, better self-care, an outlet for creative expression, or self-acceptance and self-compassion.

What is Meditation?

- A practice of focused attention and awareness.
- The goal of meditation is not to not have thoughts; rather, it is to go beyond the activity of your mind (i.e. thoughts) to access the stillness within you.
 - Change relationship to thoughts – observe them; create space between experience/thoughts and your response.
- A state of restful alertness/awareness (opposite of fight-or-flight).
- Has physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits.
- Can enhance all aspects of your life.

Benefits of Meditation

- Present moment awareness – leads to better being able to be more mindful
- Restfulness awareness = reverses processes experienced in fight-or-flight; counteracts physical manifestations of stress
 - Helps our mind and body settle and experience a deep level of rest
 - Rest is how the body heals itself and releases what is not supposed to be there (i.e., stress, fatigue, toxins, etc.)
 - HR, BP and breathing normalize; reduction of stress hormones
 - Internal functioning returns to homeostasis and we achieve more balance and vitality in our physical body.
- Better sleep
- Increased energy
- Improved mental focus
 - It is the habit of our mind to attend to new thoughts and to be distracted into thinking of the past and the future.
 - When we become aware that our mind is distracted, we can resume our focus of placing our attention deliberately where we wish to hold our attention.
 - The practice of meditation improves our ability to hold attention where we choose (we realize we have control about how we direct our mind).
- Greater physical and emotional well-being
- Improved relationships
- Expanded creativity, compassion, happiness, peace and love
- Respond (conscious choice making) versus reacting (conditioned response, negativity bias) to situations.
- Meditation = Expansion

The Basics of Meditation

- Most importantly, be comfortable.
- You can meditate anywhere – you don't need a special space.
- Find a tool that helps you keep time (i.e. Insight Timer app).
- Establish a daily routine so that meditation becomes a habit.
- You don't have to be "good" at meditation to experience the benefits. We meditate for the benefits we experience outside of meditation, including the ability to respond vs. reacting to stress.

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The Concept of Time

- ▶ Our perception of time changes when we are present.
- ▶ Time expands and contracts according to our ability to be mindful and observant.

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The Stress Response

Epidemic of Stress

What is Stress?

Fight-or-Flight Response

Physical Manifestations

Long-Term Effects

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The Needs of Human Beings

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- ▶ Food
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Oxygen
- ▶ Shelter
- ▶ Protection

4 Fundamental Emotional Needs

- ▶ Attention
- ▶ Affection
- ▶ Appreciation
- ▶ Acceptance

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Core Emotional Experiences

Comfort

- ▶ Contentment
- ▶ Joy
- ▶ Peace
- ▶ Love
- ▶ Gratitude

Discomfort

- ▶ Frustration
- ▶ Distress
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Sadness

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Responses to Unmet Needs

React

- ▶ Instinctual
- ▶ Conditioned
- ▶ Learned Behavior

Respond

- ▶ Being Aware
- ▶ Having a Choice

The more skilled we become at meeting our needs, the more likely we are to feel comfortable, happy and at peace.

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What is Mindfulness?

- ▶ Paying close attention, on purpose, non-judgmentally, to your present moment experience
- ▶ “Present moment awareness”
- ▶ Attitude of curiosity and observation of what you notice
- ▶ Awareness = starting point for growth
 - ▷ When we are aware, we can make choices that serve us best
- ▶ Respond > React

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“Living attentive to the moment-by-moment experiences of life unfolding allows you greater control of what you are living – here and now.”

– Dorothy Ratusny

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Recognizing What You Need

- ▶ When you are stressed:
 - ▷ (1) **Pause** what you are doing and allow yourself to simply be.
 - ▷ (2) **Breathe and notice** what is going on in your body.
 - ▷ (3) **Ask:** What is causing the emotion?
 - ▷ (4) **Ask:** How can I respond in a compassionate way that benefits myself and others?
 - ▷ (5) **Choose a Response:** Do what you feel is kind, responsible, and fair to yourself and others.

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What is Meditation?

- ▶ A practice of focused attention and awareness
- ▶ Going beyond the activity of the mind
- ▶ Restful alertness/awareness

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Benefits of Meditation

- ▶ Present moment awareness → more mindful
- ▶ Release of accumulated stress
- ▶ Better sleep
- ▶ Increased energy
- ▶ Improved mental focus
- ▶ Greater physical and emotional well-being
- ▶ Improved relationships
- ▶ Expanded creativity, compassion, happiness

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Meditation as the Antidote to Stress

- ▶ Mind-body reaction in restful awareness vs. fight-or-flight response
- ▶ Homeostasis/Physical Balance in Body
- ▶ Navigate stressful situations

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Additional Practices

- ▶ Building Resiliency
- ▶ Practicing Gratitude
- ▶ Prioritizing Sleep

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“Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life, which is never not now.”

– Eckhart Tolle

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