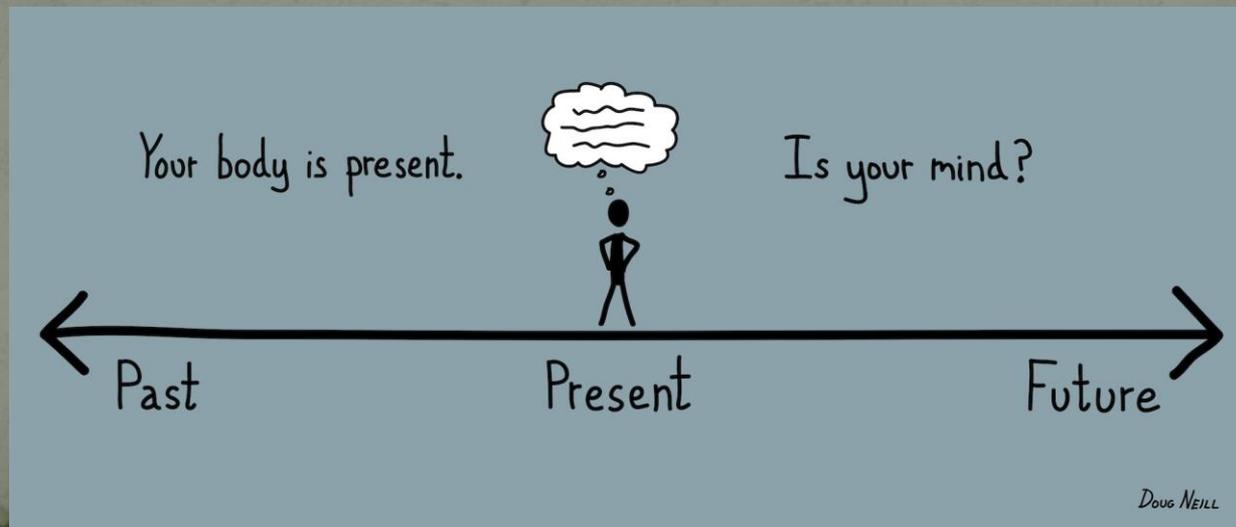
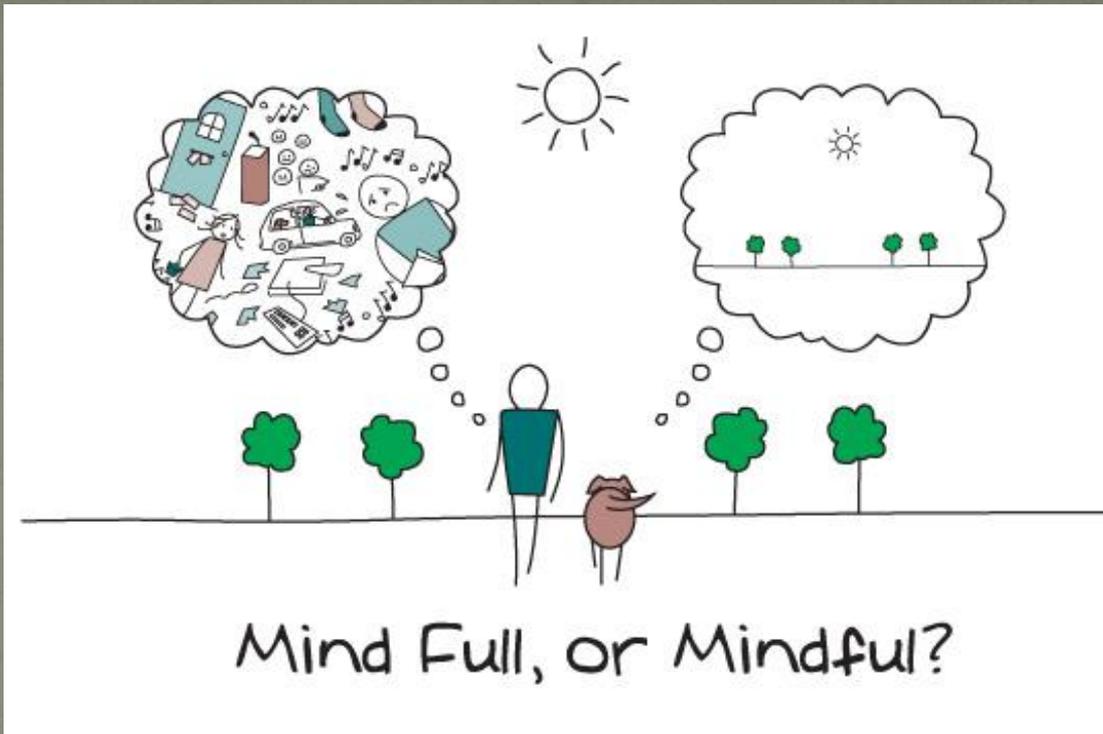


# Developing a Mindfulness Program for Stress Reduction with Native Communities

Jeffrey Proulx PhD  
Oregon Health & Science University

# Mindfulness

- Foundations of Mindfulness Practice
- Non-Judging
- Patience
- Beginner's Mind
- Trusting Ourselves
- Non-Striving
- Acceptance
- Letting Be (Letting Go)



# Mindfulness Community's Pivot to Minority Communities

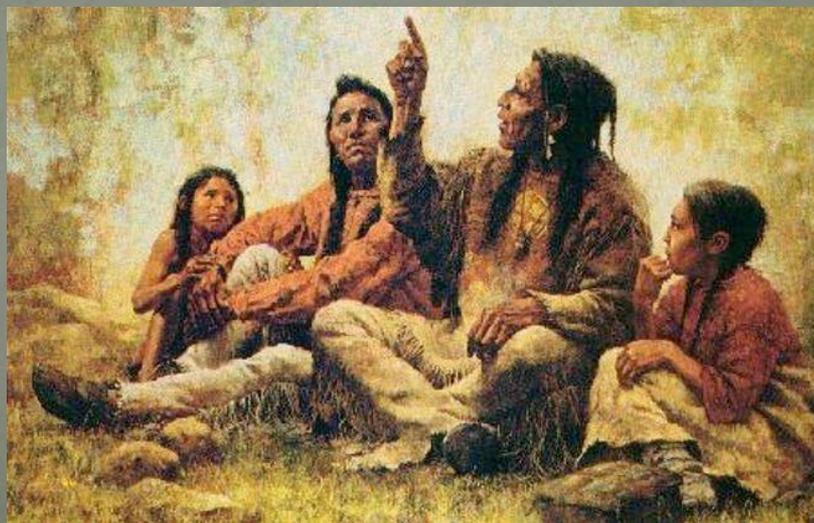
- The expanding influence of mindfulness in America has led researchers to turn their attention to Black and Native American communities
- Increased People of Color (POC) outreach
- Spirit Rock has increased its POC teacher training from 6% in previous cycles to 38% more recently
- “To deepen the understanding and undoing of internalized and institutionalized racism in order that leaders and members throughout Insight Meditation Society (IMS) community can act with wisdom and compassion, informed by sensitivity to racial and cultural realities (IMS 2014).”





# Native American Mindfulness

- Stress and intergenerational trauma
- associated with poor health outcomes, such as diabetes, poor immune health, substance abuse, and increases in social ills (Goins et al., 2011; Gone, 2009).
- Limited interventions suggest that mindfulness may be an effective approach to ameliorating disease associated with stress



# Native American Mindfulness

- Culturally centered research and clinical treatment (Proulx, 2009)
- Foundation for healing because culture provides meaning, purpose, and identity
- Integration of traditional treatments (e.g., medicine wheel, talking circles, medicine men and women)
- Predict the success of securing support from tribal leaders (Witko, 2006)

# Native American Mindfulness

- Proulx (2009) noted that traditional elements of resilience should not be peripheral to mindfulness research and clinical interventions
- Where do mindfulness practices overlap with Native traditional healing practices?
- Awareness of the diversity of attitudes across Native cultures
- Not a one-size-fits-all approach

# Native American Mindfulness

- Le and Gobert (2013): mindfulness and youth suicide prevention
- Elicited elders' blessings and incorporated stories and inputs from native story tellers
- Allowed for access and ease of recruitment
- Facilitated sustainability and continuation after study completion
- Mindfulness continues to be infused and incorporated into many facets of tribal social service

# Native American Mindfulness

- Le and Proulx (2015)
- Mindfulness-based intervention is acceptable to incarcerated mixed-ethnic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth
- Improves youth's stress level and results in more skillful response to stress
- Attenuation of cortisol response and improved SIgA response to stress as well as lower self-report perceived stress ( $p < .05$ )

# Development of Mindfulness at Navajo

- Trust
- One of the key players in the tribe was an early adopter of the mindfulness
- Became a trusted advocate with elders and the tribal council
- Community and IRB support in Interpreting Results
- Navajo Medicine Men
- BE PREPARED



# Development of Mindfulness at Navajo

- Biological Sampling
- Involuntary experimentation (Dula 1994)
- Withholding of treatment (as in the case of the Tuskegee Experiment)
- Misuse of biological sampling materials (Bussey-Jones et al. 2011)
- Destroying samples as soon as assayed
- Strict adherence to community wishes regarding sampling (communicate this again and again)

# Development of Mindfulness at Navajo

- Community Commitment
- be clear that you are an advocate for the privacy of the community
- Visible effort to have a presence at IRB meetings in Window Rock
- Not interested in collecting data and then disappearing
- *Not how mindfulness can inform Native beliefs, but how Native beliefs could inform mindfulness practices*

# Development of Mindfulness at Navajo

- Language in consent forms or research instructions may dissuade gatekeepers from allowing the research to move forward in the first place
- HIPPA
- Be prepared for a long experience
- Keep communication lines open with the tribal council as the ethics process moves forward
- Navajo made it clear they wanted to review and approve of any consent

# Development of Mindfulness Interventions as a community

- “What will you do for us?”
- Be prepared to explain how the mindfulness-based programs may be beneficial
- Star School (Navajo)
- develop programs designed to address high rates of strain in Native youth

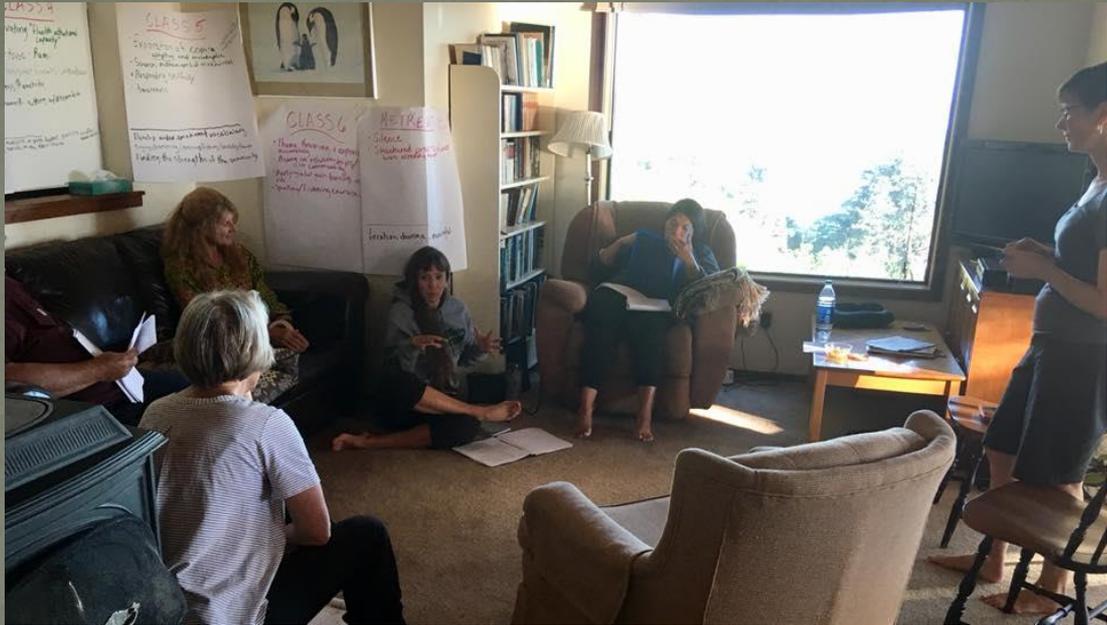


# Development of Mindfulness Interventions as a community

- Incorporate community strengths
- Look to signs from nature
- Walking meditation
- Beading
- Basket Weaving
- Story Telling
- Develop a relationship with a community healer who can co-teach a mindfulness class and has the experience to deliver culturally specific healing

# K99/R00

- NIH/NCCIH K99/R00 1K99AT009570-0. Project Title: Exploring the Adaption of Mindfulness in Native American Communities to Address Diabetes (September 2017-September 2022).
- Klamath Falls, OR/Arcata, CA
- Klamath Tribes/UIHS
- Brown University (Umass) Center for Mindfulness



- Learn about the culture you are studying
- Understand the history of research in the community of interest
- Emphasize what your research will contribute to the community
- Work with a small group of advisors from the community
- Interact often with the community groups who are allies and/or advisors
- Show gratitude

- In Conclusion...
- Encourage researchers to be cognizant and embody trust, gratitude, patience, beginner's mind, curiosity, non-judging, acceptance, and non-attachment in their research ethos
- Am I worthy of receiving valued knowledge from these communities?
- Native people should have a primary and visible role in the research

# Thank you

- Western Carolina University
- Dr. Turner Goins
- Pamela Myers
- United Indian Health Services and Klamath Tribal Health
- NIH (NCCIH...and Lanay)
- NW Indian Health Board (PDX) and California Rural Indian Health Board
- Drs. Carolyn Aldwin, Dessa Bergen-Cico, Barry Oken
- Dr. Susan Gaylord