

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: MONDAY 7 MARCH 2011

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Want to be happier and healthier? Live in the moment

Our minds naturally tend to focus on things that have already happened or on planning for the future.

Mindfulness meditation has been used in Theravada Buddhism for more than 25 centuries. Its key goal is to train us to live more fully in the present moment and to look more objectively at our experiences

Marise Fallon, a Master in Clinical Psychology student in the UTAS School of Psychology, is examining the benefits of mindfulness meditation.

“Studies have indicated that the practice can help with emotion regulation, decreasing stress and increasing positivity.

“Other studies have focused on the use of the practice for its physical health benefits, which include lowering blood pressure, helping us get a better night’s sleep and dealing better with physical pain for those suffering from chronic pain,” Marise said.

“There are also a number of cognitive benefits that can arise from regular mindfulness practice, including an increase in working memory capacity and the ability to have more control over our attention.”

Mindfulness is a key part of these different therapies:

- Mindfulness-Integrated Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, used to treat a range of issues including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, chronic pain and post traumatic stress disorder;
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy which has been used to treat anxiety, depression and general life dissatisfaction;
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, used to treat personality disorders; and
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, used to treat disorders related to anxiety and depression, chronic pain and general life stress.

Marise explained that while we know mindfulness has a lot of benefits, researchers have not yet evaluated the outcome differences the various types of mindfulness techniques used by clinicians.

“My study will attempt to find valuable information that we believe will be extremely helpful for teachers and clinicians throughout the world,” she said.

The goal of her study is to take a closer look at three of the most commonly used mindfulness techniques:

- **Mindfulness of Breath** - a formal meditative technique that focuses on the breath.
- **Body-Scan** - a formal meditative technique that focuses on bodily sensations.
- **Everyday Mindfulness** – involves integrating mindfulness and the concept of living in the present moment into our everyday activities.

“All of these techniques are being used more and more frequently by practitioners (including psychologists, doctors and other mindfulness teachers),” she said.

“The information arising from a closer look at these techniques should enable practitioners to tailor their use of mindfulness to better suit each client, providing optimal outcomes.”

Marise is seeking participants to partake in a free course in mindfulness for her study. The eight-week course will start this month and will involve attending one class each week as well as committing to daily mindfulness practice. She will have classes during the day as well as after hours.

To take part, please contact Marise on 0422 635 009.

Information Released by:

**The UTAS Communications and Media Office
Phone: (03) 6226 2691 Mobile: 0447 537 375
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au**