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# EXCLUSIVE WEBINAR PRESENTATION

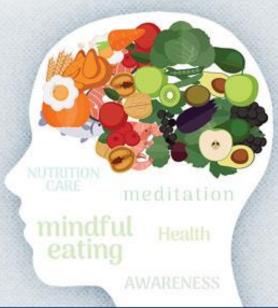
# Meditation for Dietitians:

Applications in Science and Life



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### Jenna Hollenstein, MS, RDN, CDN



- Affiliations: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, AND Behavioral Health Nutritionists, AND SCAN, AND Nutrition Entrepreneurs, IAEDP, Shambhala NYC Meditation Center.
- Disclosures: Jenna works with/for the Open Heart Project.

## Learning Objectives

After completing this continuing education course, nutrition professionals should be able to:

- Provide a simple definition of meditation, including what it is and what it isn't.
- Describe the personal benefits of a meditation practice.
- Describe the professional benefits of a meditation practice for dietitians.
- Describe the benefits of meditation to nutrition therapy clients.

#### Our Plan

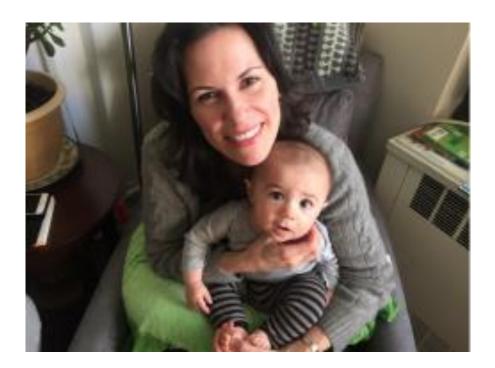
- What meditation is and isn't
- The science of meditation
- Why is meditation important for RDs?\*
  - Personally
  - Professionally
  - For our clients
- Practice together
- Q&A



<sup>\*</sup> don't take my word for it; try this out in your own life

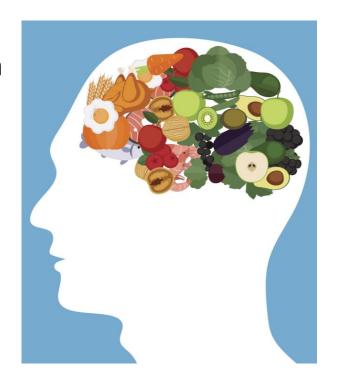
### Who Am I?

- Personally
- Professionally
- Working with clients



# Meditation: Spirituality Meets Science

- "When neurons fire together, they wire together" ~psychologist Donald Hebb on how mental activity creates new neural structures
- Neuroplasticity: "The mind is what the brain does"
- Brain's survival strategies → suffering
- Path to wakefulness = training the mind



#### Definition #1

"Meditation is not a matter of trying to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss, or tranquility, nor is it attempting to be a better person. It is simply the creation of a space in which we are able to expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes."

~Chogyam Trungpa

#### Definition #2

#### Merriam-Webster:

To engage in mental exercise (as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness.



#### Definition #3

"Substituting for our discursive mind another object of attention"

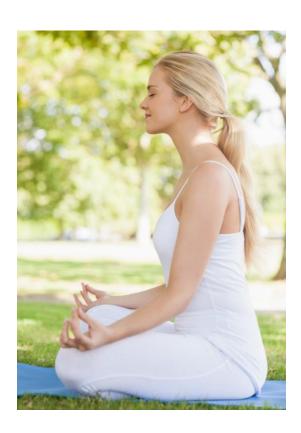
~ My meditation teacher, Susan Piver

## Types of Meditation

- Focused attention
  - Shamatha, Zen, Loving-kindness, Chakra, Kundalini, Sound,
     Mantra, Pranayama, Qigong
- Open monitoring
  - Mindfulness meditation, Vipassana, Taoist
- Effortless presence
  - Self-enquiry, Dzogchen, Mahamudra, Taoist, Raja
- Check out: http://liveanddare.com/types-of-meditation/

#### What Meditation Is

- Synchronizing mind and body
  - Meditation vs. meditative activities
- Meditation = Mindfulness + Awareness
  - Mindfulness technique
  - Awareness insight
- A way to relax (but not in the way you think!)



#### What Meditation Isn't

- Religious
- Self-help
- Doing nothing
- A way to stop thinking/space out/calm down



## What Happens in the Brain

#### Structure:

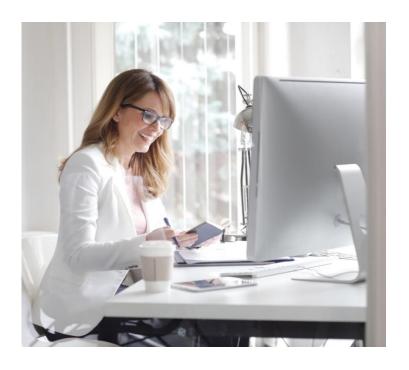
- Increased gray matter in anterior cingulate cortex, prefrontal cortex, and hippocampus
- Decreased brain cell volume in amygdala
- Weakened connections between amygdala and prefrontal cortex

#### • Function:

- Frontal lobe goes "offline"
- Parietal lobe processing slows down
- Thalamus slows down sensory inputs
- Reticular formation decreases arousal

# What Happens in the Body

- Lower cortisol levels
- Decreased symptoms associated with
  - Depression
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Pain
  - Insomnia
- Increased focus and concentration



#### Meditation Has Also Been Studied in:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Coronary heart disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Respiratory disease
- Rheumatic disease
- Alzheimer's disease

- Immune function
- Inflammation
- PTSD
- Bipolar disorder
- Smoking cessation
- Alcoholism
- Binge eating disorder
- and more...



#### Three Marks of Existence

- Impermanence
  - The only constant is change
- Suffering
  - First and second dart
- No self (egolessness)
  - Not so solid, not so separate



# Meditation in the Healthcare Setting

- Review article on mindfulness and meditation interventions among physicians, nurses, and psychologists
  - Overall results indicate improved well-being and ability to cope with stress among clinicians
  - Studies also evaluating patients of clinicians found benefits to patients personally and to the patient-clinician relationship
- Modified MBSR program in pre-med and med students
  - Reduced psychological distress (including depression) and state and trait anxiety
  - Increased empathy and spirituality

# Teaching Self-Care to Mental Health Professionals

- Prospective, cohort-controlled study of a modified MBSR vs. two control courses among 54 graduate psychology students
- MBSR participants had
  - Decreased
    - perceived stress, negative affect, state and trait anxiety, and rumination (self-regulation)
  - Increased
    - positive affect and self-compassion
    - mindfulness
  - Note:
    - relationship between self-compassion and effectiveness in counseling
    - Short duration of practice needed to experience benefits

# Meditation for Those Who Work in Palliative Care Settings

- 27 publications included
- Among informal caregivers there were improvements in mood (depression and anxiety), stress, and self-efficacy at an average of 8 weeks following intervention initiation
- Among health professionals there were improvements in emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction at an average of 8 weeks following intervention initiation

#### Four Immeasurables

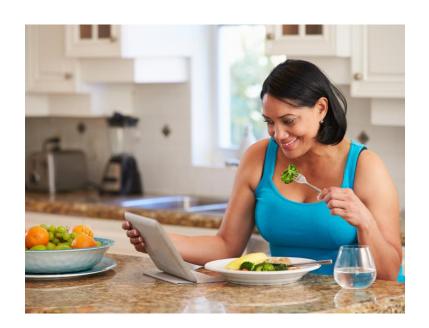
- Loving-kindness wish for others' happiness & recognizing no separation between you and others
- Compassion feeling others' pain in your own heart
- Sympathetic joy feeling others' happiness in your own heart
- Equanimity "the mind of no preference"





# What Meditation Can Teach Our Patients About How to Eat

- Synchronizing body and mind
- Revealing the true nature of our minds and bodies
- Development of non-judgmental curiosity and self-compassion
- Expanding and accommodating a range of physical and emotional states



# A Word of Caution in Using Meditation with Clients

- Meditation is not a panacea
- Meditation is not medication
- Meditation may not be for everyone

## Common Barriers to Meditating

- Not knowing where to begin
- Misconceptions about meditation
- No time (duh!)
- Perfectionism
- Lack of support



### If You Would Like To

- Practice
  - Find a technique that is at least 2500 years old
  - Find a trained MI
  - Pair with study

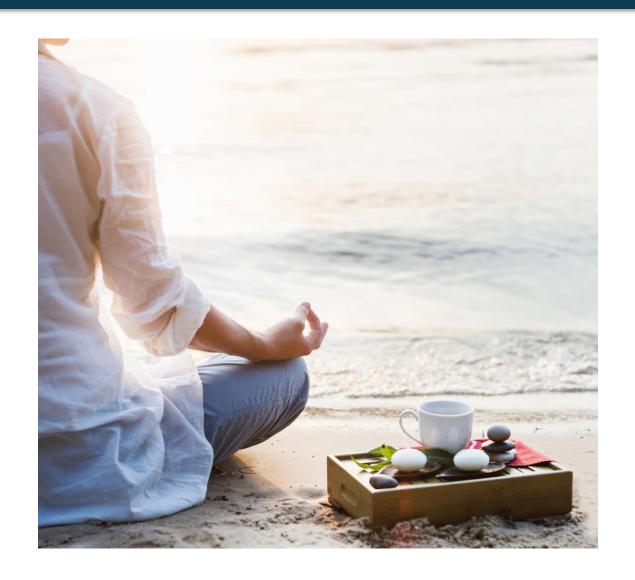
- Teach
  - Learn how
  - Have your own consistent personal practice

#### Breath Awareness Meditation

- Shamatha = the practice of tranquility
- Simplicity, precision, gentleness
- 3 foundations of mindfulness
  - Body
  - Breath
  - Mind



# Let's Try It



# Questions?

Thank You!

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# Open Heart Project Meditation Instructor Training Course

- September 26 November 21, 2017
- Opening registration early to attendees of today's program
- Learn more:
   <a href="http://susanpiver.com/meditation-instructor-training/">http://susanpiver.com/meditation-instructor-training/</a>
- Bonus download: free pdf of "5 mindfulness lessons every coach can use"

### Suggested Scientific Resources

- Sara Lazar, PhD: Publications. Harvard University website.
   <a href="http://scholar.harvard.edu/sara-lazar/publications">http://scholar.harvard.edu/sara-lazar/publications</a>
- The Saron Lab. University of California, Davis website.
   <a href="http://saronlab.ucdavis.edu/shamatha-project.html">http://saronlab.ucdavis.edu/shamatha-project.html</a>
- American Mindfulness Research Association website. www.goAMRA.org

## Additional Resources to Explore

- Chödrön P. Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living.
   Boulder, CO: Shambhala; 2001.
- Hanson R, Mendius R. Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom. 1st ed. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications; 2009.
- Piver S. Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation. 1st ed. Boulder, CO: Shambhala; 2015.
- Insight. Insight Timer website. <a href="https://insighttimer.com/">https://insighttimer.com/</a>
- Open Heart Project. Susan Piver website.
   <a href="http://susanpiver.com/open-heart-project/">http://susanpiver.com/open-heart-project/</a>

# **Credit Claiming**

You must complete a brief evaluation of the program in order to download your certificate. The evaluation survey will be available on <a href="https://www.CE.TodaysDietitian.com">www.CE.TodaysDietitian.com</a> for 1 year following the live presentation.

RDs should list CPE activity type 175 in their professional development portfolio.