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MINDFULNESS AND PROBLEM GAMBLING
“This is called implicit memory, and it includes your expectations, models of relationships, emotional tendencies, and general outlook. Implicit memory establishes the interior landscape of your mind – what it feels like to be you – based on the slowly accumulating residues of lived experiences.

Hanson and Mendius, p. 67, (2009)
FORMATION OF SELF CONCEPT

This mind (ego) is a program system of our reality – it is placed on a disc – inserted in the computer.

1) All we can do at this point is review the past &/or project it into the future.

2) When we use this level of mind for self reflection or to solve self issues we will only reproduce a new version of the old self.
“Egocentrism comes naturally to us because of the way our brains process information, yet none of us feels that our perspective contains biases. The way we see things simply seems correct. The problem with this belief is that our vision of reality and sense of conscious control are mere illusions.”

Louis Cozolino – *The Making of a Therapist*
“It is the afflictions of our own minds that lie at the root of our mental troubles, not the material world, not other people, not our bodies, not intangible spirits or demons, and not God.”

B. Alan Wallace – *Balancing the Mind*
“In both the pre-modern and modern eras, the gambling experience can result in a distorted perception of space-time, which is the result of an altered state of consciousness and even a loss of sense of self. In addition, in both periods, gambling takes place in designated spaces, where the gambling sphere is separated from the real world”.

› P. 163, Zangeneh, Blaszczynski, Turner.
“But here’s the problem: your brain preferentially scans for, registers, stores, recalls, and reacts to unpleasant experiences; as we’ve said, it’s like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones.”

Hanson and Mendius, p. 68, (2009)
A living art of being present while living from a place of connection to that which makes us alive.
With addicts, we often talk about impaired ability to use the pre-frontal cortex brain; lack of reason, logic and consequence.
MINDFULNESS

- Developing your own practice
  - Mindfulness of Breathing
  - Settling the Mind in it’s natural state
  - Maintaining Awareness of Awareness itself

- Alan Wallace – “The Attention Revolution”
“Mindfulness in everyday life is the ultimate challenge and practice.”

McCown, Reibel, Micozzi – Teaching Mindfulness
QUALITIES OF PRACTICE

- Loving-kindness
- Compassion
- Empathetic joy
- Equanimity
GOAL OF MINDFULNESS

- Bodhisattva – training to become a Buddha

- “The structure of this training is embodied in the six perfections, namely generosity, ethical discipline, patience, enthusiasm, meditative stabilization, and wisdom.”

- B. Alan Wallace – Balancing the Mind
9 middle pre-frontal functions:
1. Regulating our bodies
2. Attuning to others (attuned communication)
3. Having emotional balance
4. Calming fear (fear modulation)
5. Pausing before acting (flexibility of response)
6. Having insight
7. Having empathy
8. Being moral in our thinking and actions
9. More access to intuition
“The functions of the middle prefrontal cortex are found as outcome measures for both mindfulness practice and for (the first eight of the nine) secure parent-child attachment”. P. 6-4

Addiction hijacks the prefrontal brain and heightens the lower brain or limbic brain.
“These nine middle prefrontal functions are a result of neural integration- and so these findings suggest that mindfulness, secure attachment, mental health, and living a wise and kind life may each be the result of and also cultivate neural integration”. P. 6-5
LEFT VMPFC IMPLICATED DURING STROOP PERFORMANCE IN PG
MINDFULNESS:

- The practice of being present with self, others, and creation because there is no real separation.
- “Mindfulness involves the skillful use of attention to both your inner and outer worlds. Since your brain learns mainly from what you attend to, mindfulness is the doorway to taking in good experiences and making them a part of yourself...”
- Hanson and Mendius, p. 13, (2009)
Mindful Awareness: “Awareness of present-moment experience, with intention and purpose, without grasping on to judgments. Traits of being mindful are having an open stance toward oneself and others, emotional equanimity, and the ability to describe the inner world of the mind”.

+ P. AI-51.
FLOW

- Refers to the state of being immersed in an activity and losing one’s sense of self-consciousness as the boundaries of self and activity become permeable and one gets lost in an experience. P. Al-32

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – “FLOW”
Our effort as helpers is to help clients find the True Self, thus developing the observer self that lives in connection with life, the life energy, and in relationship with all people and things.
TRUE SELF

Traits we develop to overcome normal suffering:
- Virtue
- Mindfulness
- Selection

By following the fundamental functions of:
- Regulation
- Learning
- Selection
Mindfulness is harmony and balance practiced by the therapist in the counseling session, producing an environment of:

1. nonjudgmental.
2. equanimity (evenness of temper even under stress).
3. awareness of what is happening as it is happening.
4. ability to describe with words our internal world.
MINDFULNESS

In turn, our clients develop:

- 1. Flexibility
- 2. Adaptive
- 3. Coherence
- 4. Energized
- 5. Stability
PEOPLE CHANGE BECAUSE OF CONNECTION


  “Those of us who study interpersonal neurobiology believe that friendships, marriage, psychotherapy, in fact, any meaningful relationship can reactivate neuroplastic processes and actually change the structure of the brain”.

“Instead, the brain has a property called neuroplasticity, the ability to change its structure and patterns of activity in significant ways not only in childhood, which is not very surprising, but also in adulthood and throughout life.”
Philip Flores – *Addiction as Attachment Disorder*

+ “Addiction hijacks the attachment system”.
+ “Long term recovery requires ongoing attachment relationships to ensure Central Nervous System homeostasis”.
DOPAMINE VS. OXYTOCIN

Philip Flores

“Addiction is a disease of isolation”.

We find our clients who are willing to take the “dopamine effect” and ignore the experience of relationships/connection which is the natural experience of Oxytocin.

Where is my son, daughter, husband, wife, etc.
Philip Flores

“Until an addict, alcoholic, or gambler, develops the capacity to establish mutually satisfying relationships, they will remain vulnerable to relapse and to the continual substitution of one addiction to another”.

P. Ornstein

“Being understood as an adult has the same effect as being held as a child”.
Drugs/Alcohol/Gambling hijacks the individual’s ability to have genuine relationships. With conditioning – the addict will choose the “dopamine” effect over the oxytocin until the pain of the addiction is greater than the chase.

Dopamine and Oxytocin flow along the same brain pathways. If we substitute dopamine it prohibits oxytocin and actually prefers the dopamine.
IV. THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

Based on the simple formula of:

Recognition
Acceptance
Letting Go
Anonymity
Compassion
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