

# Dancing Mindfulness: Bridging the Mind and the Body in Aging

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## Define

Define the benefits of mindfulness in the Older Adult Population

## Understand

Understand the salience of the physical and mental component in aging

## Learn

Learn techniques to develop a mindfulness practice through experiential practice

# Objectives

# The Art of Being With

- ▶ Eastern practices believe using mindfulness for freeing the mind of “unwholesome habits”
- ▶ Western beliefs cultivate mindfulness as a way to clear the mind
- ▶ Mindfulness means “awareness,” or “to come back to awareness”
- ▶ In Western healthcare, John Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as, “paying attention in a particular way *on purpose* in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”
  - ▶ **To be a witness, not a judge.**



# Guide to Mindfulness

**Non-  
judgment**

**Beginner's  
mind**

**Non-striving**

**Trust**

**Patience**

**Acceptance**

**Letting Go**

# Growing Young into Older Age

- ▶ Increased motivation toward emotional well-being and effects cognitive functioning from broad to specific processes
- ▶ Reduces emotional distress and allows them to flourish
- ▶ Lowers depression, anxiety, stress, sleep problems, and rumination
- ▶ Increases connection to others



# Growing Young into Older Age



Those 70 and older reported greatest improvement in positive affect



Improved emotional regulation abilities



Significant improvements in pain acceptance, activity engagement and physical functioning



Increase in self-efficacy

# Growing Young into Older Age



**Dance promotes the building of community, physical exercise, serves as a powerful communication medium**



**Expressive movement acts as a coping skills: relieving stress, used for talking and healing**



**Recover  
and  
Rediscover!**

# Dancing Mindfulness

- ▶ Builds strong connections with others
- ▶ Stimulates range of motion, balance, and coordination
- ▶ Builds better health!
- ▶ Promotes relaxation
- ▶ Evokes memories and storytelling
- ▶ Increases play (connecting with inner child)
- ▶ Releases tension
- ▶ Enhances self-awareness
- ▶ Provides purpose and hope



# Guide to *Dancing* Mindfulness

Non-  
judgment:  
**Breath**

Beginner's  
mind:  
**Mind**

Non-striving:  
**Body**

Trust:  
**Spirit**

Patience:  
**Sound**

Acceptance:  
**Story**

Letting Go:  
**Fusion**



Experiment. Explore.  
Be in the moment with your movement!

## For Your Reading Pleasure...

- ▶ Fountain-Zaragoza, S. & Sharuya Prakash, R. (2017). Mindfulness training for healthy aging. *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, 9(11). 1-15.
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- ▶ Siegel, R.D. (2010). *The mindfulness solution: Everyday practices for everyday problems*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.