Mindfulness for the young, and those who care for them
What are we talking about?
My ‘evidence base’

• Teacher/teacher education
• Wellbeing, mental health, social and emotional learning
• Mindfulness
• Parent
What are we talking about?
Mind Full, or Mindful?
I am finding it difficult to concentrate but I am not sure why.
Pay attention!
Attention is like a puppy

- It wanders around, sniffing aimlessly
- It doesn’t stay where you want it to
- It brings back things you didn’t ask for
- It makes messes
We train our attention with kindness, curiosity and patience
RCTs show ‘small to medium’ impact

- Pain
- Emotional regulation
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Stress
- Performance
- Depression
- Relationships
8 weeks of 20 mins a day mindfulness meditation.....

- Cerebral cortex in areas associated with attention and emotional integration.
- In grey-matter density in the hippocampus, important for learning and memory.
- Structures associated with self-awareness, compassion and introspection.
- Decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala, associated with anxiety, vigilance circuits, stress.
Aims/outcomes

Improve performance, learning
Improve behaviour
“Intervention” to reduce mental health problems
Skills for success in life
Kindness, compassion
Values, ethics, happiness
Interconnectedness
Three Components of Change?

- Practices
- Dharma World View/Orientation
- Sangha Community
  - Implicit Norms
  - And Values
Why mindfulness for young people?
HAS TALENT.. 

NEEDS DIRECTION

Mad Equine
* don't be rude
* happy kindness
* don't laugh at other people.
* LISTEN!! TALK
* RESPECT
* helpful
* one person at the time
* encourage and include everybody
* PEACE
* people
* space
What's wrong?
I don't know.
How can I help?
I don't know.

Ok. I made you a nest. Do you want to come?

....ok.

....yes.
Does that help?

....yes.
Are you ever coming out?

....no.
Ok. Hang on.
The evidence base?
Building on adult mindfulness

- 8 week courses
- Self help, on line
- As part of therapy- ACT, DBT
- Workplace/ Leadership
- Schools, colleges, teacher training
- Universities, medical schools
- Parliament
Where is mindfulness?

- Primary, secondary, FE
- Non cognitive e.g. circle time/PSHE/ Tutorial time/ SEAL
- Subjects e.g. RE, PE
- Special needs/ wellbeing – ADHD, anger, anxiety
- Exam preparation – stress reduction
- Staff wellbeing
- Mental health/ therapy depression, anxiety, ADHD
- Parenting- especially ‘sharp end’
Some key programmes for young and adults

Youth Mindfulness

Plum Village

Mindfulness in Schools Project

MINDwithHEART

MiSP

The MINDUP Curriculum

Happy teachers will change the world.
Research is young and still ‘weak’

- Often small numbers
- Wide range of ‘conditions’ and measures
- MFN mixed with other interventions
- Handful of CTs, even less RCTs
- Same teams develop and evaluate
- Little replication
- Little follow up
Best evidence is with young people

- 45 published studies of 35 programmes and interventions
- 10 RCTS, 10 control, rest before-after

7 reviews, 2 meta-analyses

Wide range – ages, groups, universal/targeted, range of ‘problems’, measures

- Mostly self report, some performance
Outcomes

• Small but significant impact of universal work (‘for all’)

• 3 X impact of targeted (medium) over universal

• Popular

• (Relatively) cheap
Performance
Effectiveness of the Mindfulness in Schools Program: A Non-Randomised Controlled Feasibility Study

British Journal of Psychiatry
I enjoyed having a moment in my school schedule to just sit in silence for a bit. It enabled me to focus on the present moment, without worrying about exams, results, homework, etc. It’s helped me to stop doing all that stupid stuff I do. Gave something to do when panicked/stressed. I enjoy having a moment in my school schedule to just sit in silence for a bit.
I think that in the long run it will help my concentration, which needs help.

I get work done a lot faster and to a better standard.

It will help me to go to sleep in lessons.
Mindfulness for the adults
RCTs show ‘small to medium’ impact on:

- Pain
- Emotional regulation
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Stress
- Performance
- Depression
- Relationships
Research on mindfulness for the adults

Less developed than work with the young
Small but promising research bases
  e.g. 5 RCTS for teachers
Mostly short interventions - some integration
Some studies of dispositional mindfulness
Some interventions for adults and young people together
Not connected across the sectors
Impacts for school staff

Wellbeing - stress, burnout, sense of control, days off, illness
Physical health: blood pressure, cortisol
Model/embody mindfulness for others
Performance – ‘working more mindfully’
  • Self understanding, managing feelings
  • Relationships, atunement, compassion
  • Priortising, keeping on task
A Non-Randomised Feasibility Trial Assessing the Efficacy of the “.b Foundation Course”: Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Teachers to Reduce Stress and Improve Well-Being

*In press for ‘Mindfulness’*
I include regular mindfulness sessions at the start of lessons and also meetings.

Since the start of the course I have been able to control my emotions during a time of great stress in my family.

Slowing down and treating life as a gift highlights just how precious time and our relationships with ourselves and others is.

I have been able to use the skills with young people who are struggling with certain aspects of their life.
**Think** about the music...

1. How does it compare with music you usually listen to? What is different? What is similar?
2. Which instruments do you think are playing?
3. Who do you think composed it and when?
4. Where do you think the composer is from?
5. Do you like or dislike the music? Why?
6. Who do you know who might like this music? Why?
7. Who do you know who might dislike it? Why?
Be with/sense the music

Listen and explore the volume, pitch, tone, texture, pitch, rhythm and patterns

Sense how your body feels in response to the music:
- Where do you sense the music?...
- What sensations are around?...
- Is there movement/stillness within your body as you listen?...
- Do any emotions arise?
parenting
Current research

- Challenged families
- Parents/carers and children
- Mindfulness impacting on...
- Stress, self care, compassion, parenting styles, reactivity, attunment, attachment, reprogramming, changing generational patterns, parents’ relationship.....
- How best to support parents?
“Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, & your eyes drop out & you get loose in your joints & very shabby.

But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

– The Velveteen Rabbit
"Does it hurt?" asked the rabbit.
"Sometimes," said the skin horse,
for he was always truthful.
"When you are real you don't mind being hurt."

The Velveteen Rabbit (1922)
Next steps and challenges
too busy to meditate? 
try The Buddha Patch!

I'M ACHIEVING ENLIGHTENMENT... WHILE I CLEAN MY TOILET!

also available in capsule, gel, and suppository
“Nothing happens next. This is it”
Finding ways to engage people and encourage practice
Better pathways
How does it work and for whom?
What does it add to what we are already doing?
Promoting Mental Health in Adolescence

Investigating Mindfulness & Attentional Control

Does it work?

For whom and how does it work?

How can we get it into practice?
Integrating mindfulness

- Leadership & management support
- Policy development
- Curriculum planning and resourcing support
- Teaching and learning support
- School culture and environment
- Pupil voice
- Provision of support services for pupils
- Accessing, recording and reporting pupils achievement
- Partnership with parents/carers and local communities
- Staff development and CPD
• Linking it to worlds of young people
• Linking it world of schools
• Encouraging ongoing practice
• Beyond the beginners course
• Authenticity v. ‘getting it out there’.
• Integration/ whole school
• Implementation quality
Breathe and Smile