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The role of Mindfulness in reducing the risk of Neurological Disorders

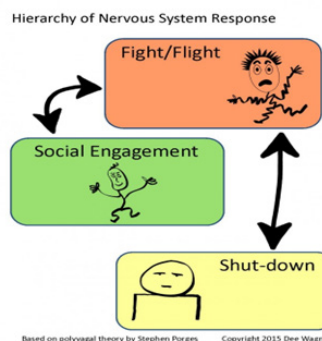
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Statement of problem: Exposure to adverse experiences during the growth and development of an individual has a great potential to damage an individual's mental functioning. Example is exposure to violence. This factor has the potential to reduce the quality of life of an individual and in addition to the psychological toll, a toxic stress situation may effect in the body through increased allostatic load, the physiologic burden of such stress that may manifest as neuroanatomical changes, increased levels of inflammation, and dysfunction of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. With these changes effected, the quality of life is reduced and the individual is left with a struggling mental health.

Methodology and theoretical orientation: More recent findings have been able to prove that mindfulness and polyvagal theories might be useful in saving the quality of our health and improve the health of our mind. Polyvagal theories founded by Stephen Porges are based on the functionality of the Vagus nerve. He called it our social engagement system. The ventral branch of the vagus nerve controls the happy playful feeling we have but the other branch controls fight and flight, and the shutting down process of the body. The ventral vagal nerve affects the middle ear (filters out background noises to make it easier to hear the human voice, affects facial muscles and thus the ability to make communicative facial expressions, affects the larynx and thus vocal tone and vocal patterning-helping humans create sounds that soothe one another).

Conclusion and Significance: Since mindfulness, Yoga and other forms of art therapy can tap into the vagal power; it should be considered a way to improve the quality of our minds and life as a whole. An example of its application is the use of Yoga and Tai chi in the management of a patient with Parkinson's disease.



Recent Publications

1. Mindfulness-based movement; a polyvagal perspective. (Dec. 2016).
2. The science behind mindfulness (from a polyvagal junkie).
3. The role of mindfulness in Reducing the Adverse Effects of Childhood Stress and Trauma.

Biography

Michael Kojo Onaolapo is a student at the university of Ilorin, Nigeria and is currently an intern in the clinical psychology of the school's teaching hospital. Mike is a curious and passionate individual who reads and often writes about mental health and well-being. He has a growing desire to improve mental health, wellbeing and management in Africa. His openness to learning drove him to find his paths in the world of psychology, by making researches on mindfulness and how well psychotherapy can help reduce the alarming rate of mental illnesses He made this research after months of learning about ways to improve mental health in research, learning, and observation in the hospital. The foundation is based on the use of mindfulness and other art therapy to reduce the risk of mental illness in Africa.

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