The Addition of Biofeedback and Mindfulness Based Training Components To a Psychoeducational Model for Multiple Sclerosis Support Group

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Background

Patients with multiple sclerosis often experience physical and emotional needs which may fluctuate tremendously. The resulting physiological impact is often inadequately resolved with an exclusively medically based program. A truly holistic treatment approach responds to the needs for a integrative model which combines mind-body medicine to more thoroughly address combined physical and psychosocial needs.

Objectives

To add biofeedback and mindfulness meditation training to a traditional MS support group and examine the benefits and challenges in such adaptation.

Methods

Biofeedback and Mindfulness Based Intervention: Session by Session Comparison to Psychoeducational Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Psychoeducational</th>
<th>Mindfulness Biofeedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Managing Mood</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Nutrition &amp; Body Awareness &amp; Movement</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Expanding Recreational Activities</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Balancing Activity Level &amp; Exercise</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Organization, Planning &amp; Time Management</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>MS Education &amp; Self-HELP &amp; Friends</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Prevention of Unpredictability &amp; Lack of Control</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Conclusion: Unpredictability &amp; Lack of Control</td>
<td>Biofeedback: protester training, relaxation, muscle training, biofeedback, mindfulness, breathing, body scan, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation training, visualization, stress reduction, meditation, stress management, thought stopping, mindfulness, movement, and body awareness.</td>
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Results

Patients with MS benefit from mindfulness based biofeedback training in a variety of ways. These treatment modalities facilitate effective coping and stress management training.

- Biofeedback training has been found efficacious in treating a number of health symptoms that individuals with MS face such as anxiety or pain including headaches and myocpical pain.
- Biofeedback facilitates awareness for individuals whose breathing has been compromised physiologically for habitual or medical reasons. Visual and auditory feedback stimulates the process of awareness that is central to mindfulness training.
- Incorporating mindfulness into self-care requirements such as physical therapy home exercise increases the utility of the practice and thereby increases patient adherence.
- Loving kindness mindfulness meditation exercises facilitate acceptance of loss of physical abilities and functioning through cultivation of pleasant associations with the body and mind.
- The combination of biofeedback and mindfulness meditation allows patients to learn to control physiological processes such as respiration, heart rate and muscle use while at the same time learning to accept the unpredictable sometimes waning and warring of MS symptoms.
- The incorporation of biofeedback and mindfulness based training into group therapy results in education-based interventions which are more readily accepted and therefore successfully incorporated into patient care due to their consistency with the medical rehabilitation model requiring active participation in treatment.

Conclusion

A truly holistic treatment approach responds to the necessity for an integrative model which combines mind-body medicine to address both physical and psychosocial needs. Incorporating biofeedback and mindfulness training into group treatment fosters an educational model which achieves this goal.

References