

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HEALTH CARE TO INCREASE GNH



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BHUTANESE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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- **Rapid development and progress**
- **Selective health indicators**
- **Unique health care system**
- **Influence of Buddhism**

CHALLENGES TO OPTIMIZE CARE

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- **Increased prevalence of disorders**
- **Awareness and attitude**
- **Lack of resources**
- **Social factors**

OPPORTUNITIES TO OPTIMIZE CARE

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- **Education**
- **Democracy**
- **Social support**
- **Complementary medicine**
- **Buddhist concepts & meditation**

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

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- “The heart of Buddhist meditation” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, Thera, 1962)
- “Inherently a state of consciousness” (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
- Meditation practice is a “scaffolding” to develop skills of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005)

EFFECT ON MENTAL DISORDERS

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- Reduce arousal states- ameliorate symptoms of anxiety, panic, phobia and insomnia (Kabat-Zinn, 1992)
- Improve coping skills, reduce emotional distress, alleviate aggression, recidivism in prisoners
- Improved psychological functioning and reduced mortality among individuals living in a nursing home (Alexander et al, 1989)

EFFECT ON PHYSICAL DISORDERS

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- Useful adjunct in long term treatment of hypertension, heart disease, cancer, fibromyalgia, chronic pain syndrome (Schneider et al, 2005)
- Positive response in asthma, stuttering, type 2 diabetes, premenstrual syndrome (Murphy et al, 1997)
- Enhance treatment for psoriasis, prostate cancer, atherosclerosis (Kabat-Zinn et al, 2003)

POSITIVE EFFECT ON WELL-BEING

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- Enhance perceptual sensitivity, processing speed, empathy and synthesis (Walsh, 2005)
- Improve concentration, reaction time, motor skills (Andresen, 2000)
- Improved learning ability, memory recall, academic performance, creativity (So & Orne-Johnson, 2001)

POSITIVE EFFECT ON PERSONALITY

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- **Extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and emotional stability increased (Travis et al, 2004)**
- **Improved self-control & self-esteem (Andresen, 2000)**
- **Interpersonal functioning & marital satisfaction increased (Tlocznski et al, 1998)**
- **Foster maturation (Alexander et al, 1991)**

EFFECT ON ADDICTION DISORDERS

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- Increased dopamine secretion, reduced desire for action (Kjaer et al, 2002)
- Increased alertness, relaxation, attention control (Lazar et al, 2002)
- Cultivation of alternatives to mindless compulsive behaviour (Marlatt, 2002)
- Positive & gratifying “alternative addiction” (Groves & Farmer, 1994)

HOW MEDITATION WORK?

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3 types of explanations proffered:

1. classic metaphors include purifying mind of toxic qualities, healing pathology etc. (Walsh, 1999)
2. Mechanisms include relaxation, exposure, counter-conditioning etc. (Murphy et al, 1997)
1. Process include refining awareness, self-monitoring, self-control etc. (Baer, 2003)

HOW MEDITATION WORK?

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Shapiro et al (2006) using definition of Mindfulness -
"paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994) lead to a significant shift in perspective, which they called *Re-perceiving*.

Re-perceiving simply means that rather than getting immersed in the drama of our personal narrative or life story, we are able to stand back and simply witness it.

WAY FORWARD-PARADIGM SHIFT

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- Collaborative effort & privatization of health care services
- “Medical model” to holistic bio-psychosocial model of health care
- Multidisciplinary team & optimal healing environment & collaboration with traditional healers

WAY FORWARD-PARADIGM SHIFT

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- **Change in Buddhist practice –communal to individual**
- **“socialized Buddhist services” monastic community reaching out to young generation, elderly and poor**
- **Teaching and practising mindfulness meditation**

WHY MINDFULNESS MEDITATION?

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- **Simple, cost-effective, sustainable and life long**
- **No need for any special infrastructure or logistics**
- **Only requirement is a good instructor particularly in the beginning and some dedication**
- **To promote mental and physical well-being, heal and prevent psychological and other disorders**

CONCLUSION

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- **Monastic community need to involve in spreading word of Buddha and meditation practice**
- **Traditional healers need support to provide evidence-based treatment**
- **Private sector can play effective role to improve health care services**
- **Health providers must embrace holistic bio-psycho-social approach to health care**

THANK YOU

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