SVPA Conference
Sacramento, May 19, 2023

Interweaving Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Practices: Application to ADHD

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Experiential Mindfulness Meditation

What is Mindfulness?

- Paying attention, on purpose, to moment-to-moment experience, in a non-judgmental way (Jon Kabit-Zinn, 2013).
- Attitude of brought to an experience
  - Beginner's Mind
  - Acceptance
  - Gratitude
  - Patience
  - Allowing
  - Non-identification
  - Non-striving
  - Trust

Outline

- Brief Mindfulness Meditation
- Our own Stories of Mindfulness Practice
- Third Wave Therapies
- Experiential Self-compassion Practice
- Application to Clinical Population
  - Why focus on ADHD?
  - ADHD Workshop for law students
  - ADHD with Medical Conditions and Research Report
- Q & A

Our Journeys to Mindfulness

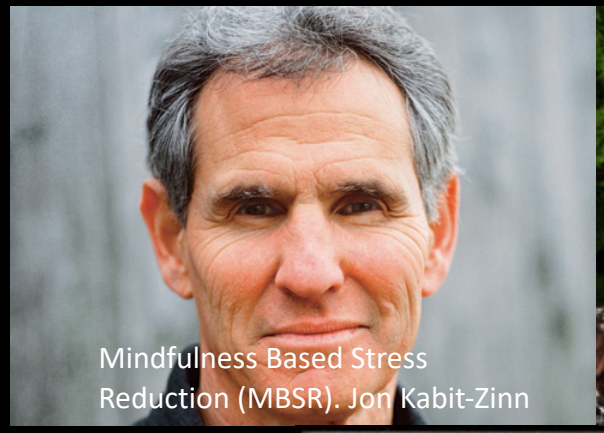
Dr. Margaret Lee

Dr. Amir Ramezani

Third Wave

- First Wave: Behavior, Reinforcement, Environment
  - Behavioral Therapy
- Second Wave: Thoughts and Interpretation
  - Cognitive Therapy
- Third Wave: Observing, Acceptance, Values in Context, and Compassion

Third Wave Therapies



What is Mindful Self-Compassion

- How do I treat a loved one?
- How can I treat myself with kindness?
- How can I be kind to myself in a moment of suffering?
  - De-identification (mindfulness)
  - Common Humanity
  - Kindness

Experiential Self-compassion Practice

Application of mindfulness and self-compassion practices to ADHD

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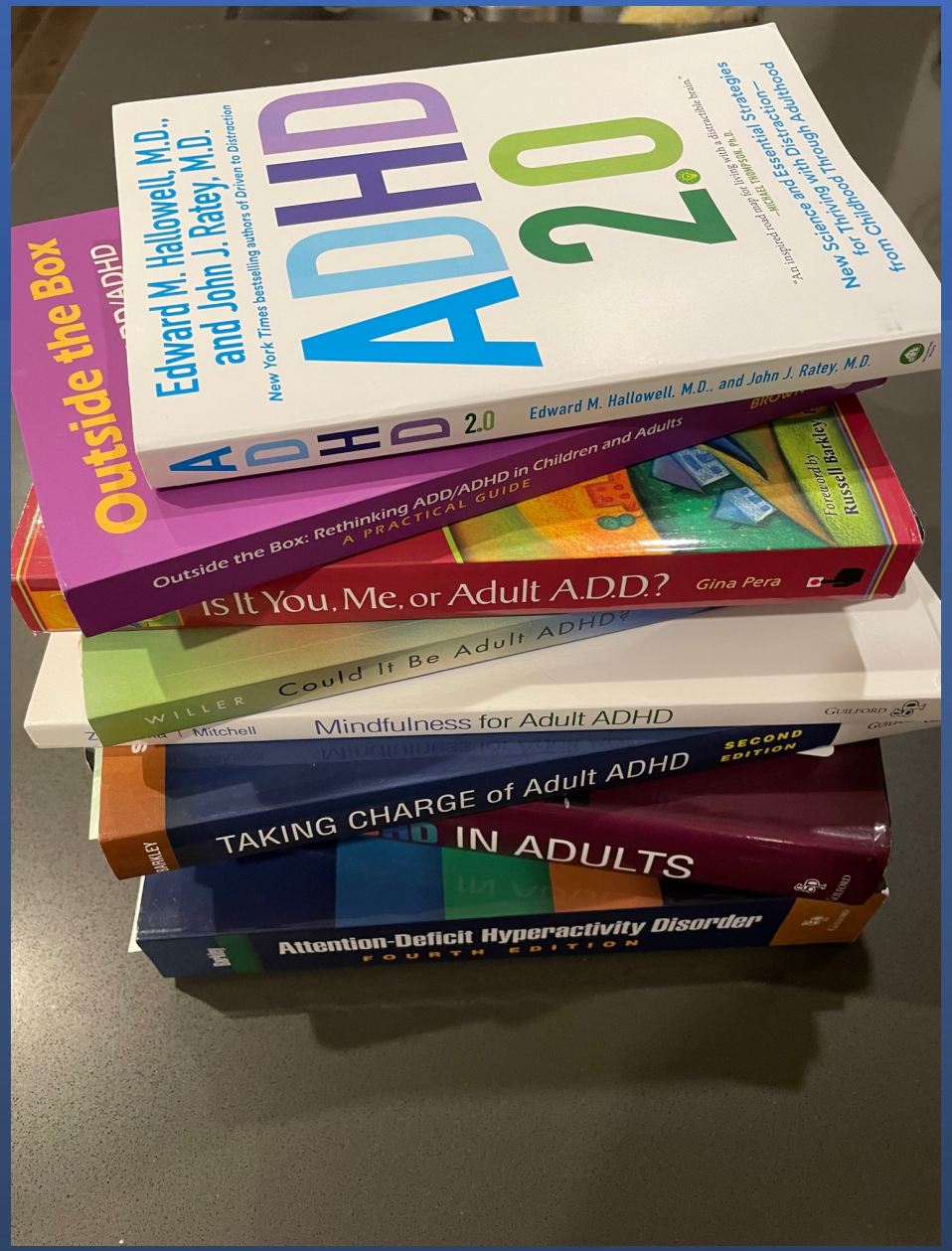

Outside the Box
ADHD 2.0
Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., and John J. Ratey, M.D.
New York Times bestselling authors of Driven to Distraction
New Science and Essential Strategies for Thriving with Distraction—from Childhood Through Adulthood
ADHD 2.0
Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., and John J. Ratey, M.D.
Outside the Box: Rethinking ADD/ADHD in Children and Adults
A PRACTICAL GUIDE
Foreword by Russell Barkley
Is It You, Me, or Adult A.D.D.?
Gina Pera
Could It Be Adult ADHD?
WILLER
Mindfulness for Adult ADHD
Mitchell
GUILFORD
TAKING CHARGE of Adult ADHD
SECOND EDITION
IN ADULTS
Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
FOURTH EDITION

Did you know . . .?

- 75% of kids diagnosed with ADHD continue to have symptoms as adults.
- Manifestation of ADHD symptoms can vary across the life span.
- There is strong, objective scientific evidence that ADHD is highly heritable.
- Individuals with ADHD experience delays of 2-5 years or more in development of specific areas of the brain that support executive functions.
- Boys are 3X more likely than girls to be diagnosed with ADHD. However, in adults the gender gap narrows closer to 1:1. Many women may have suffered undiagnosed for years.
- An adult with ADHD has 6X the risk of having at least 1 co-occurring disorder.
- Most medical and mental health practitioners have had very little or no formal training in the assessment and treatment of ADHD, especially in adults and adolescents.
- DSM 5 diagnostic criteria is based on research on children ages 4-17 and is inadequate in describing ADHD in adults. DSM does not address executive function impairments

(Brown, 2017)

ADHD in the DSM-5

Inattention

- Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes
- Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish homework, chores, or workplace duties
- Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
- Is often forgetful in daily activities

Hyperactivity and Impulsivity

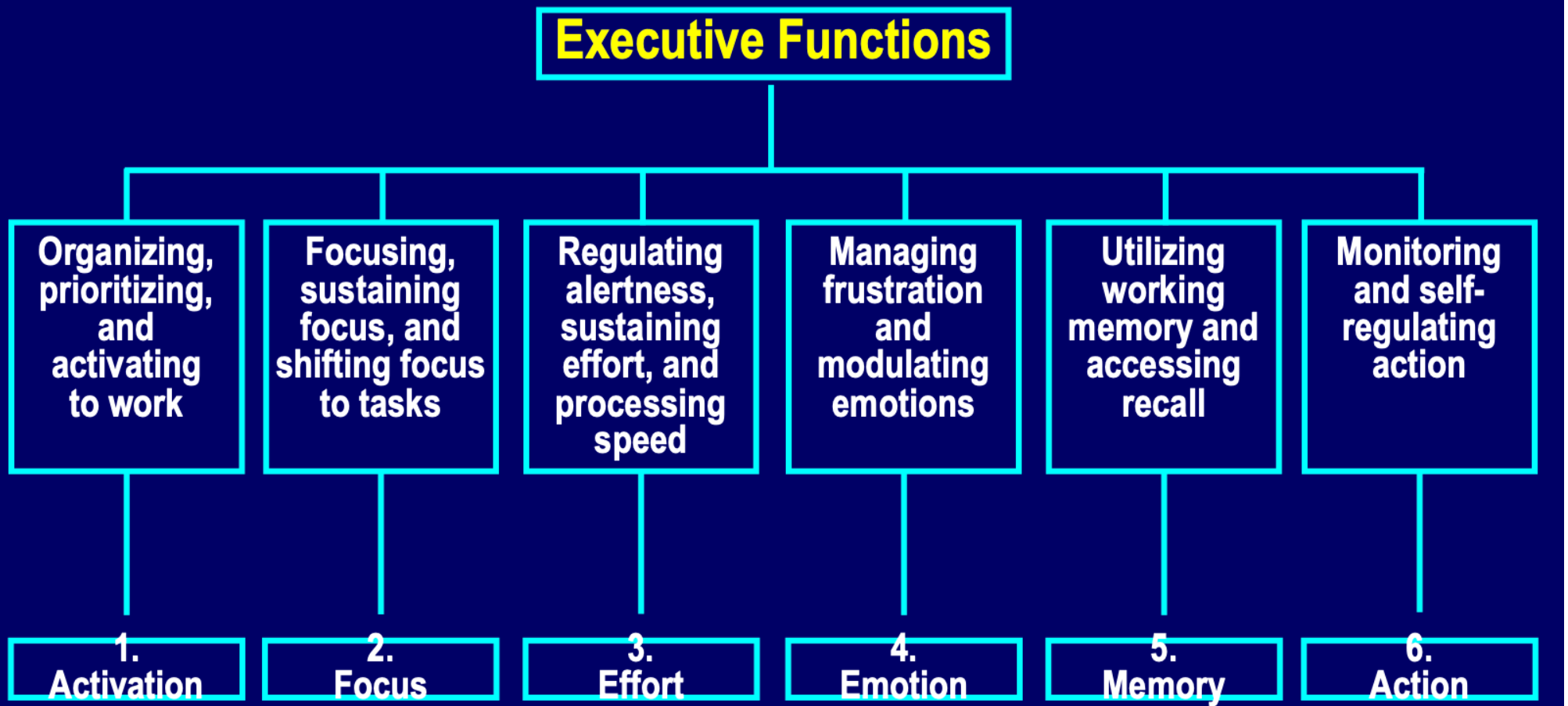
- Often figets with or taps hands and feet or squirms in seat
- Oten leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected
- Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate
- Often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly
- Is often "on the go," acting as if "driven by a motor"
- Often talks excessively
- Often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed
- Often has difficulty waiting his or her turn
- Often interrupts

ADHD is a condition of executive functioning

"Executive functions are those capacities of the brain that allow a person to recognize the tasks that they need to do, to be motivated adequately for doing those necessary tasks, to plan for and organize how to accomplish the tasks, to initiate the various components of the task without excessive delay and to sustain effort and actions needed to complete the essential tasks."

(Brown, 2017)

Brown's Model of Executive Functions Impaired in ADHD



Brown TE. *Manual for Attention Deficit Disorder Scales for Children and Adolescents;* 2001.

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)

RSD is a heightened sensitivity to rejection, teasing, criticism, perceived failure or falling short of one's expectations.

RSD is . . .

- Genetically hardwired in the nervous system
- Endorsed by 98% of ADHDers
- The most impairing symptom in 30% of ADHDers
- Feels unbearable but hard to describe
- Some react by becoming people pleasers or by distancing from others

(William Dodson, MD)

"A person with ADHD has the power of a Ferrari engine with bicycle-strength brakes."

(Hallowell & Ratey, 2022)

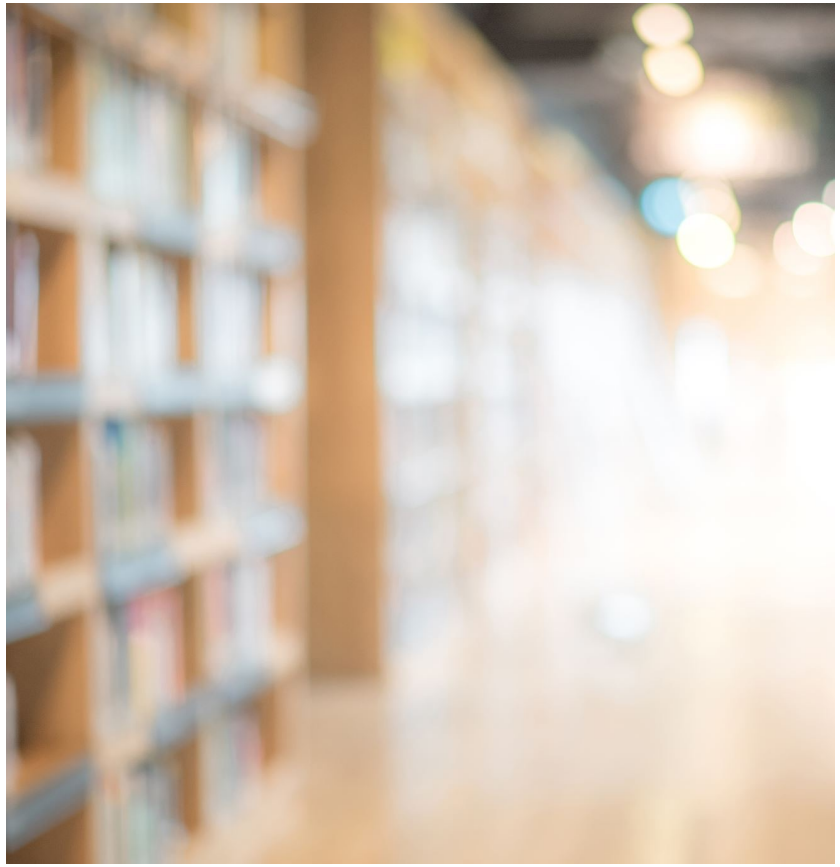
ADHD superpowers

- Creativity and innovation
- Thinking outside the box
- Ability to hyperfocus
- Ability to power through a large task in a short time (when motivated)
- Passion and dedication
- Emotional sensitivity
- Adaptability and resilience

- (Willer, 2017)

Stay focused:
A workshop for managing ADHD in law school

- 6-weeks; 1-hour each meeting
- Designed for law students
- Purpose of the workshop: sharing information, strategies, support
- ADHD diagnosis not needed to attend



Workshop Format

Agenda:

- Ice breaker
- Didactic session
- Discussion
- Sharing Resources
- Brief mindfulness meditation

Weekly topics:

- Facts and myths about ADHD
- Time management, task initiation
- Organizing your space, managing your environment
- Study tools & exam strategies
- Managing emotions
- Sleep

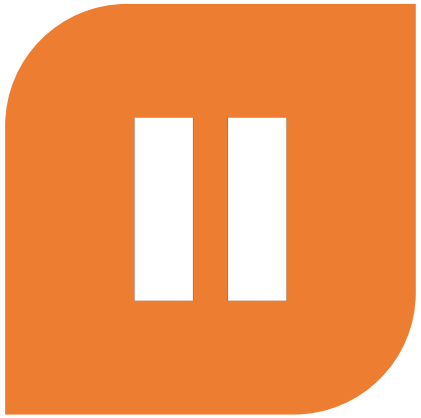
Mindfulness practices for emotion regulation in ADHD

Meditation

Mindfulness in daily activities

Mindfulness in interpersonal interactions

Practicing meditation helps you



PAUSE

LISTEN

STAY

Mindfulness for ADHD for Children and Adults

- Meta-analysis (Oliva et al., 2021)
  - “Adults
    - Highest efficacy of MBIs was detected on attention symptoms and total ADHD symptoms (medium effect size).
    - The small effect on hyperactivity-impulsivity disappeared when publication bias adjustment was applied as well as sensitivity analysis greatly
  - reduced the effect size on hyperactivity-impulsivity and even that on
  - total ADHD. Overall, MBIs confirmed their efficacy on ADHD symptoms
  - regardless of the different adjustments, though its effect seems to be higher on attention symptoms.”
  - “Mindfulness Awareness Practice (MAP) and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) were the most used protocols in adult studies,
  - combination of MBCT and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was more preferred for children and adolescent patients. ”
  - Compared to Psychoeducation and Skills Training, MBI did not outperform
  - Large effect size compared to inactive control on ADHD sxs, depression, and anxiety
  - Improvements in executive functioning

Self-Compassion in ADHD associated with better or poorer Mental Health (Beaton, et al. 2022)

- The role of self-compassion in the mental health of adults with ADHD.
- Method:
  - A total of 543 adults with ADHD and 313 adults without ADHD.
  - Mediating effect of self-compassion on the relationships between ADHD and well-being (psychological, emotional, and social), and ADHD and ill-being (depression, anxiety, and stress).
- Results:
  - Findings suggest that low self-compassion contributes to poorer mental health in adults with ADHD compared to adults without ADHD.

ADHD has high Psychiatric and Medical Comorbidity (Jameson et al, 2016)

Table 2. Associations of Lifetime Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

	1. aOR (95% CI)
Medical condition	
Allergies or hay fever[c,p]	1.39 (1.01-1.91)*
Asthma[c,p]	1.49 (1.04-2.14)*
Chronic pain[c]	1.38 (0.75-2.55)
Enuresis[p]	2.04 (1.41-2.95)***
Epilepsy or seizure disorder[c,p]	1.62 (0.68-3.87)
Headaches or migraine[c,p]	1.46 (1.07-1.98)*
Heart problems[c,p]	1.44 (0.71-2.89)
Obesity[c]	1.39 (0.92-2.09)
Serious stomach or bowel problems[c,p]	2.06 (1.33-3.19)***
Severe acne or other skin problems[c,p]	1.23 (0.91-1.67)

1st Report of ADHD with a Rare Comorbid Medical Condition using Mindfulness and Self-Compassion during Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) Recording

Volatile GSR Recording of Paroxysmal Attack and Unfocused Attention without Mindfulness Practice in a Case with ADHD

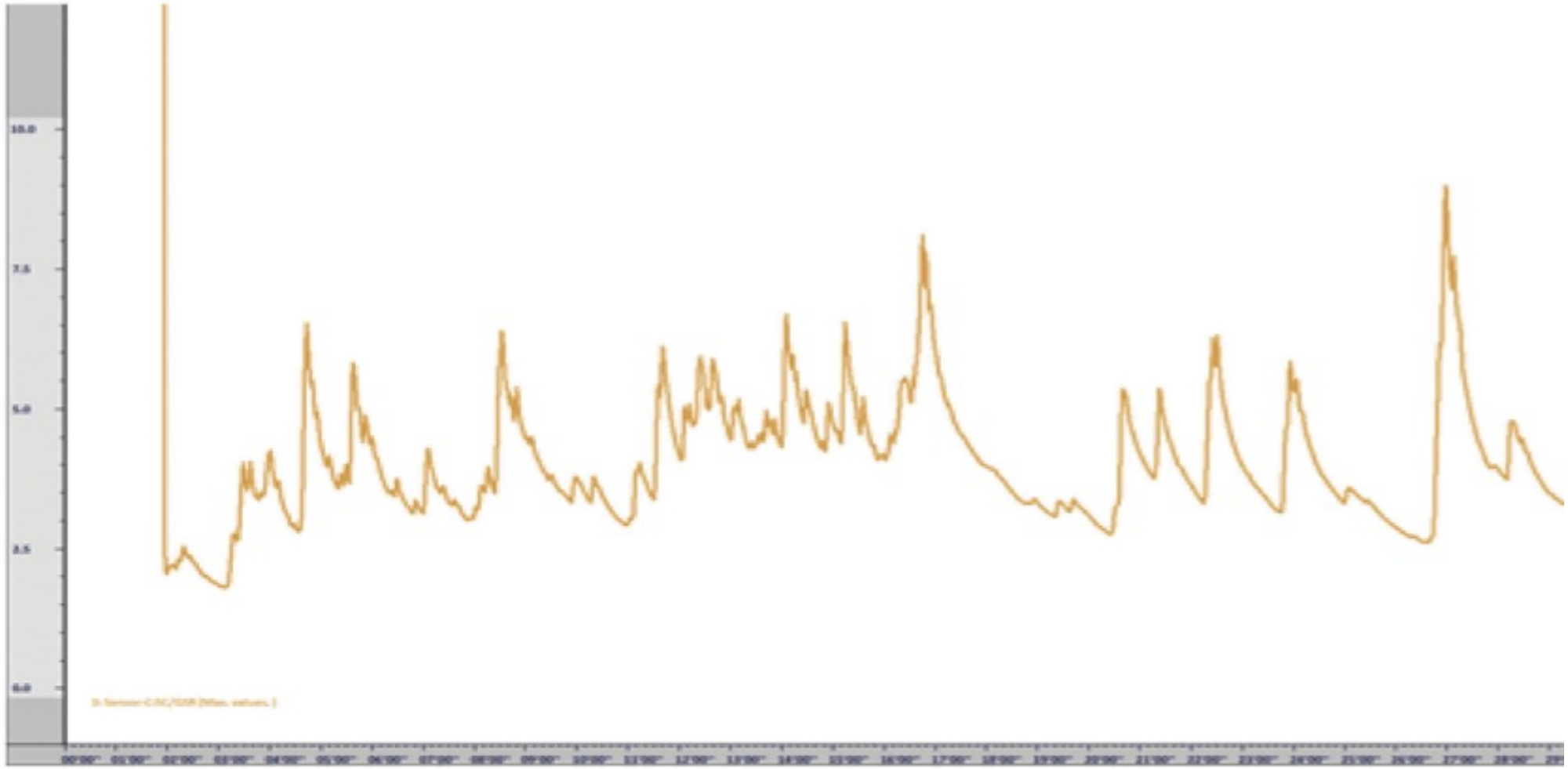
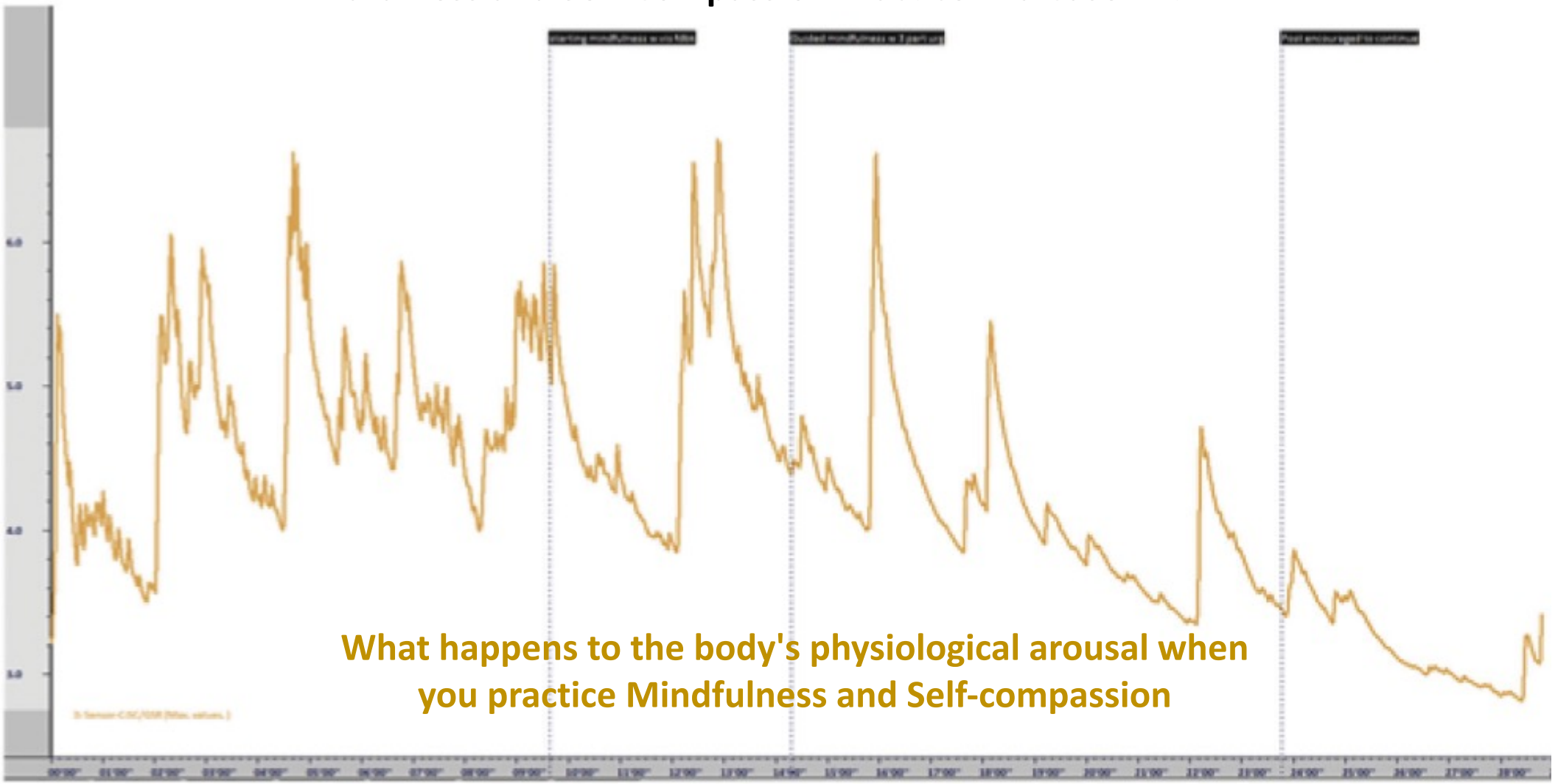


Figure 1. Session 9/8; PD episode; 35 minute recording with 2.5–8.5 microsiemens amplitude range.

Paroxysmal dyskinesia and electrodermal volatility: The role of mindfulness, self-compassion and psychophysiological interventions

Reduced GSR Volatility Recording of Moderate Paroxysmal Attack During Focused Attention with Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Practice in a Case with ADHD



What happens to the body's physiological arousal when you practice Mindfulness and Self-compassion

Figure 4. Session 4/5: Moderate PD episode: 29 minute recording with 3–6.8 microsiemens amplitude range.

Reduced GSR Volatility Recording of Mild Paroxysmal Attack During Focused Attention with Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Practice in a Case with ADHD

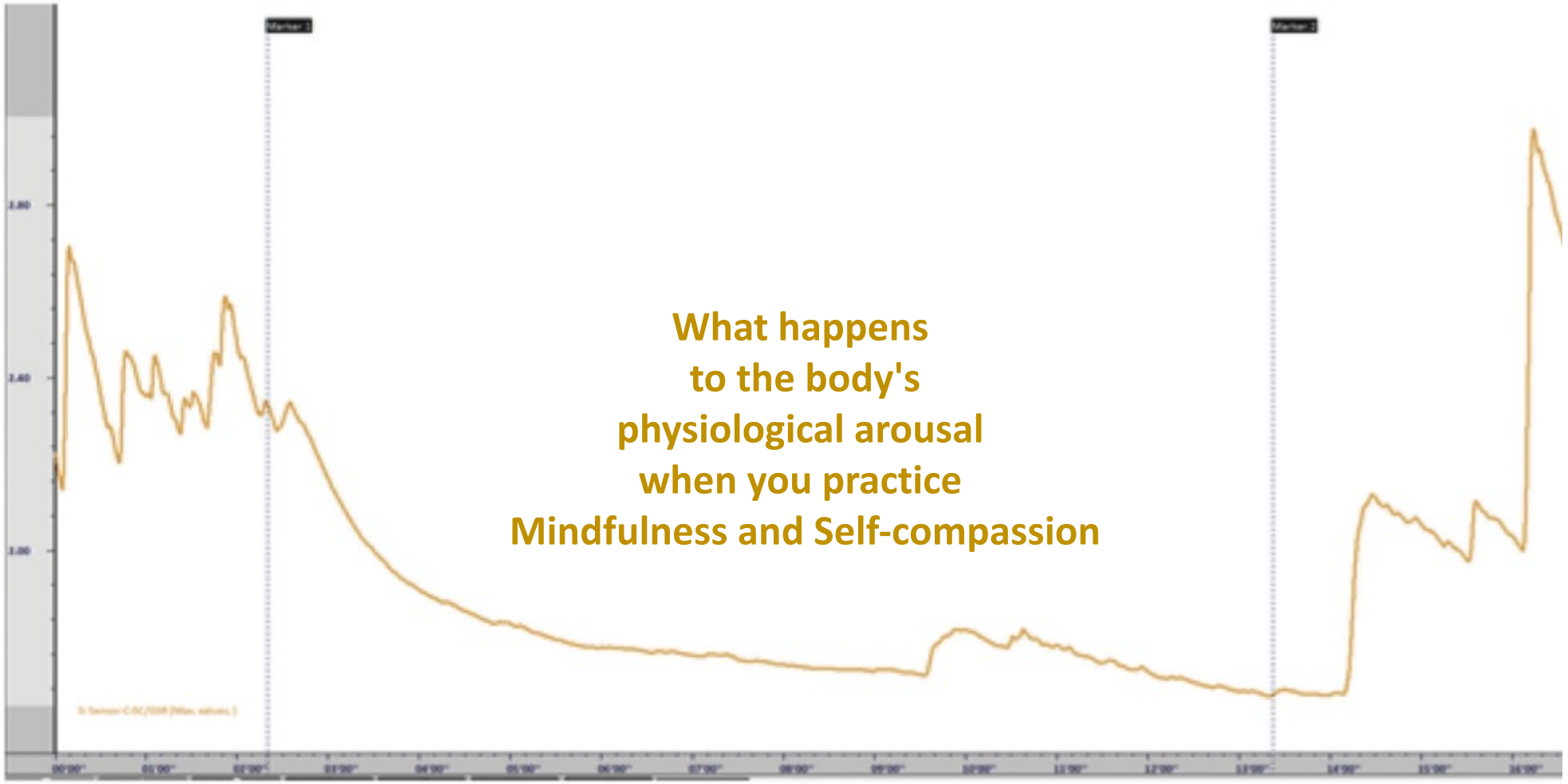


Figure 5. Session 6/7; Mild PD episode; 17 minute recording with 1.6–2.9 microsiemens amplitude range.

Paroxysmal dyskinesia and electrodermal volatility: The role of mindfulness, self-compassion and psychophysiological interventions

Mindfulness & self-compassion Resources

- Apps:
  - Ten Percent Happier
  - Insight Timer
  - CALM
  - Headspace
- Books
  - Mindful Path to Self-Compassion by Christopher Germer
  - Full Catastrophe Living by J.K. Zinn
- Websites:
  - https://centerformsc.org
  - https://cih.ucsd.edu/mindfulness

Margaret's favorite books on Adult ADHD

- *ADHD 2.0* (Hallowell & Ratey, 2021)
- *Outside the Box: Rethinking ADD/ADHD in children and adults, a practical guide* (Brown, 2017)
- *Could it be adult ADHD? A clinician's guide to recognition, assessment and treatment* (Willer, 2017)
- *Taking charge of Adult ADHD: Proven strategies to succeed at work, at home and in relationships* (Barkely & Benton, 2022)
- *Is it you, me or Adult ADD?* (Pera, 2008)
- *Smart but scattered guide to success* (Dawson & Guare, 2016)
- *Mindfulness for Adult ADHD* (Zylowska & Mitchell, 2021)
- *A radical guide for women with ADHD* (Solden, etal., 2021)

ADHD Online Resources

Websites:

- CHAAD Children & Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

  https://chadd.org/

- ADDitude

  https://www.additudemag.com/

YouTube:

- ADDitude Magazine
- Understood
- Help for ADHD
- How to ADHD

Q and A

Thanks for attending!

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