

The Prison Meditation Movement & The Current State of Mindfulness-Based Programming for Prisoners

Executive Summary

Mindfulness and other forms of meditation- and yoga-based programs have been offered in U.S. correctional facilities primarily by outside volunteers since the late 1960's. Organized efforts to promote meditation and yoga in jails and prisons began in earnest in the 1980's and picked up steam in the 1990's. Today there are mindfulness, meditation and/or yoga based prison programs in all fifty states. Prison Mindfulness Institute, a nonprofit organization founded by a prisoner in 1989, supports a network of prison meditation and yoga organizations, projects and individuals that now includes more than 185 organizations or projects and more than 5,000 individuals.

Programs included both faith based and secular approaches, with even the faith based programs focusing more on the practice of meditation and yoga than on religious teaching. Most programs include time for meditation, some form of contemplative or mindful movement and group dialog or sharing. A few curriculum-based programs add social emotional learning and elements of cognitive behavioral treatment into this mix. Even fewer programs focus primarily on extended, multi-day meditation retreats in prison settings.

Research is as yet preliminary, primarily consisting of quasi-experimental and qualitative research methodologies; however, the data is quite positive, indicating increases in capacity for mindfulness, self-transcendence and in emotional intelligence and decreases in anxiety, negative and/or violent institutional behaviors, positive drug screens, and recidivism.

Training programs have arisen to train primarily volunteer facilitators and teachers to offer meditation and yoga based programming in correctional facilities, while efforts are underway to train professionals and paraprofessional already working in jails, prisons, diversion and reentry programs in the skills needed to deliver secular mindfulness based programming.

Most programs depend on volunteers and receive funding to cover administrative and organizing expenses from private donors and foundations primarily. There has been little government funding budgeted for such programs, but this may be changing in California and a few other states.

The prison mindfulness movement is quite extensive, well established and poised to expand dramatically, given the needed human and financial resources.

I. The Prison Meditation Movement: A Historical Perspective

A. Adult Programs

The now well-established prison mindfulness movement in the United States, known alternatively as the prison meditation movement or in faith-based terms as the prison Dharma movement, began as early as the mid to late 1960's with the efforts of a few individuals who took it upon themselves to visit or correspond with prisoners, in some cases death row prisoners, to offer instruction in meditation or pastoral counseling from a Buddhist or more broadly contemplative spirituality perspective. Early efforts included those of **Reverend Hogen Fugimoto**, a priest in the Japanese Shin Buddhist organization, Buddhist Churches of America, and mindfulness teacher **Steven Levine** visiting death row inmates and other prisoners primarily in California.

A Texas prisoner, Fred Asispe Cruz, began corresponding with Reverend Hogen Fugimoto in the late 1960's and was punished with solitary confinement for his efforts to practice Buddhism. His valiant legal efforts led to the landmark 1972 Cruz vs. Beto U.S. Supreme Court decision affirming that his religious rights had been violated and by default established the legitimacy of the Buddhist religion and granted prisoners wishing to practice Buddhism equal protection under the laws, able to enjoy the same rights as practitioners of at that time commonly accepted U.S. religions, Protestant Christianity, Roman Catholicism and Judaism.

More organized efforts ensued in the early 1970's with the work of **Bo and Sita Lozoff**, who took on the prisoner correspondence of the American spiritual teacher Ram Dass (Richard Alpert) and launched the Prison Ashram Project with funding support from Ram Dass in 1973. In 1987 they founded the Human Kindness Foundation (HKF) to encompass the prison work and other projects. HKF sends its quarterly newsletter to over 40,000 prisoners and supporters. Bo's best-known book, *We're All Doing Time*, now in its 19th printing and perhaps the classic text among contemplative prison literature, has been sent to over 300,000 prisoners around the world over the years. This book, as the title indicates, could apply to any of us, inside prison or out. Bo provides an eclectic mix of practical contemplative practices and teachings from Hindu, Buddhist, Native American and Christian perspectives. The second half of the book includes selections from the voluminous prisoner correspondence maintained by Bo & Sita and their staff over many years. Bo & Sita Lozoff are the true pioneers and elders of this movement. Sita Lozoff and a staff of dedicated volunteers continue the national and international work and prisoner correspondence of HKF from their offices in Durham, North Carolina. Sadly, the movement lost Bo Lozoff when he died in a motorcycle accident in 2012.

In 1980, practitioners of **Transcendental Meditation**, commonly known as "TM," began offering TM style meditation classes at San Quentin, Soledad, Walpole and other high security prisons in California and Massachusetts. Early research on TM asserted many positive benefits, including a 30% reduction in recidivism. Unfortunately, the research methodology used at that time has undermined the credibility of those early findings, but

very credible research on TM prison programs as well as TM programs in K-12 schools is currently underway. While TM differs in methodology from Buddhist inspired mindfulness meditation, it certainly deserves inclusion in any discussion or study of the overall prison meditation movement, which includes Buddhist meditation programs, Buddhist inspired secular mindfulness programs, hatha yoga programs, TM programs and other contemplative meditation traditions including Christian Centering Prayer and Siddha Yoga.

John Daido Looi, Roshi, an American Soto Zen teacher, and his students also began offering regular Zen meditation classes in New York State prisons in 1984 and later formed the National Prison Sangha, a network of Buddhist volunteers who correspond with inmates, visit prisons, and create and lead practice groups. This work began with a court battle that allowed the program to become the first Zen practice group in New York State Correctional Facilities.

In 1985, **Fleet Maull**, an American Buddhist practitioner serving a 14.5 year mandatory minimum sentence for drug smuggling (1985 – 1999), started one of the first Buddhist inspired mindfulness meditation groups in a federal prison, leading an ongoing Buddhist meditation group that met twice weekly in the prison chapel for 14 years. In 1989, Maull founded the Prison Dharma Network (aka Prison Mindfulness Institute) as a nonsectarian Buddhist support network of prisoners and prison volunteers. PDN later broadened its mission to include other contemplative traditions offering meditation and yoga in prisons, like Christian Centering Prayer, Hatha Yoga, Siddha Yoga, TM and so on. PDN/PMI, whose Board of Spiritual Advisors includes most of the best known and preeminent Buddhist teachers in the west, such as **Pema Chodron, Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, Roshi Bernie Glassman, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Roshi Joan Halifax, Stephen Levine, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Thubten Chodron, and Elizabeth-Mattis Namgyel** as well as **Fr. Thomas Keating and Rabbi David Cooper and the late Robert Aitken Roshi and John Daido Looi Roshi**, initially focused on sending books to prisoners and connecting prisoners with correspondent meditation mentors.

Maull, who also founded the National Prison Hospice Association and the first inside prison hospice program, directed the activities of PDN from his prison cell with the help of outside volunteers until his release to a halfway house in Boulder, Colorado in 1999. At that point, Kate Crisp, the current PMI/PDN executive director, joined the team and together they built PMI/PDN into an international network of more than 185 prison projects, large and small, and over 5000 individual members and supporters. In 2001, PMI/PDN began offering an innovative secular mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI) curriculum, Path of Freedom[®], which is now offered in 12 states and five countries for at-risk, incarcerated and reentering youth, women and men. In 2010, the organization's primary name was changed to Prison Mindfulness Institute, reflecting a growing emphasis on establishing secular mindfulness-based interventions and programs as evidence-based practices to be included within the mainstream of rehabilitation and reentry programming in the field of corrections.

Kinloch “KC” Walpole, a former U.S. Army and Special Forces captain and another important pioneer in the prison meditation movement, began his work in Florida state and federal prison in 1995 and at one time provided programs in over 15 different correctional facilities. He recently retired for health reasons and is currently writing a book about the twenty years he spent teaching mindfulness meditation in Florida prisons and a mindfulness-based vision for the future of corrections.

Jacques Verduin, another prison meditation pioneer, an important figure and innovator in the California prison meditation movement, launched the Insight Prison Project in 1997, bringing mindfulness meditation to prisoners at infamous maximum security San Quentin state prison in Marin County, California. Doing innovative mindfulness-based work with long-term prisoners and “lifers,” Verduin developed the GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) program and launched the Insight-Out organization 2011 to deliver this innovative program. Along with yoga teacher James Fox, director of the Prison Yoga Project, he also founded the Prison Mindfulness Initiative, a network of volunteers delivering mindfulness and yoga programs in prisons throughout California. Verduin’s GRIP program is garnering increasing attention from corrections officials and legislators in California seeking innovative rehabilitative programming for one of the largest prison systems in the world.

Also, in 1997, the North American **Vipassana Prison Trust (VPT)**, began offering the S. N. Goenka (an Indian Buddhist teacher of Vipassana mindfulness meditation) style 10-day, silent mindfulness retreats at the King County Jail North Rehabilitation Facility (NRF) near Seattle, Washington, holding twenty 10-day retreats there until the facility closed in 2002 near Seattle, Washington. VPT has also held the Goenka style 10-day prison courses in Alabama state prisons, documented in the groundbreaking film, *Dhamma Brothers*. The intensive 10-day programs follow a strict retreat regimen from 4 am to 9:30 pm and require significant accommodation from any prison facility where they are held. It is not clear from the VPT website if any VPT prison courses are being held currently.

Other important Buddhist meditation prison programs operating since the mid 1990’s have included the **Buddhist Peace Fellowship** and **San Francisco Zen Center**, both operating in the San Francisco Bay Area; the **Upaya Zen Center** in Santa Fe, NM, the **Shambhala Prison Community** and the **Ratna Peace Initiative**, both based in Boulder, Colorado; the American born Tibetan Buddhist nun **Thubten Chodron**; and students of the Buddhist teacher in the Baltimore/Washington, DC area. Most of these programs offer classes locally or in a defined regional area; however, many also maintain prison correspondence on a national level. **For a complete list, see Appendix A.**

B. Juvenile Programs

In the late 1990’s Soren Gordhamer and Andrew Getz, inspired by Jon Kabat-Zinn and his ground breaking secular mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model, started offering mindfulness meditation classes in San Francisco Bay Area juvenile detention facilities, leading to the founding in 1999 of the Youth Horizons project in California by

Getz and the Lineage Project in New York City by Gordhammer, who had migrated east and started offering classes at Rikers Island. Today, the Lineage Project provides services to 1500-2000 youth a year in the metropolitan New York area.

In 2000, Noah Levine (Stephen Levine's son) and creator of Dharma Punks, along with a group of friends, founded the Mind Body Awareness project in Oakland, California, which absorbed Youth Horizons in a 2006 merger. In 2007 MBA absorbed the aftercare program Vision Youthz, founded by Dr. Kyra Bobinet, in another merger designed to create a stronger, more viable organization delivering mindfulness-based programming for at-risk and incarcerated youth in Alameda County and some of the surrounding jurisdictions in the San Francisco Bay Area.

In 2001, Prison Dharma Network (aka Prison Mindfulness Institute) began piloting an innovative mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI) curriculum at the maximum security Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center (LMYSC) in Golden, Colorado, serving thousands of youth at LMYSC between 2001 and 2013. Currently, PMI offers a weekly Path of Freedom class at a juvenile detention facility near Providence, Rhode Island, where PMI is now based.

C. Current Developments and Trends in Prison Mindfulness Programming

The secularization of Buddhist inspired mindfulness and awareness meditation practices and the wide reach of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, or MBSR, training (a program developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn) has helped drive the increasing popularity of teaching mindfulness as an essential life skill in a variety of arenas, including prison. The accessibility and ease with which people are able to complete MBSR programs and others of its kind contributes to its efficacy as a skill set that can be readily taught and shared with a wider audience. This audience includes prisoners and, increasingly, corrections and legal staff, throughout the world.

Many organizations are also now developing similarly accessible curricula specifically targeted to those involved in the correctional system, and creating the infrastructure to train others to teach these interventions.

Advances in neurobiology, which now show that the brain exhibits qualities of neuroplasticity – the ability to restructure itself - suggest that meditative practices can help people who suffer various addictions and compulsions, even those who were long considered to be habitually and chronically criminal. An increase in scientific studies about the health benefits of mindful and awareness practices have shown that it can lead to the reduction of stress, anxiety, and other symptoms of physical and mental illness, making it an ideal activity for those living or working within the stressful confines of prison. Due to these studies, grant funding to utilize mindfulness as a component to mitigate problems, such as substance abuse and PTSD, has increased.

Mindfulness is disseminated within the correctional system in a variety of forms. Most common offerings are in the form of Vipassana (drawn from the Theravada Buddhist tradition of Southeast Asia), Zen meditation (zazen), samatha-vipashyana (drawn from

the Tibetan Buddhist tradition), Transcendental Meditation, Hatha Yoga asanas, and secular mindfulness training or mindfulness-based interventions (MBI's).

Vipassana prison retreats, inspired in part by a positive and widespread reception in prisons in India, are now also offered in states including California, Washington, and Alabama. Transcendental meditation has risen in popularity in the prison system, spurred by The David Lynch Foundation, which maintains an active prison outreach program. Zen sittings and practice remain popular with the prison population, whose austere lifestyle often draws a comparison between the prison and the monastery. Yoga, which has experienced a boom in popularity in the past 30 years, has been embraced within correctional settings as a holistic mind/body approach to the difficulties of prison life. Secular training programs, such as the Path of Freedom program offered by the Prison Mindfulness Institute, appeal to a broad range of the population, as it includes practical guides to awareness techniques and emotional-intelligence skills that are particularly useful in such a challenging and tense environment.

These mindfulness and meditation programs reach into the correctional system in a variety of ways. Many organizations, such as PMI's Path of Freedom program and the Prison Yoga Project, offer weekly in-person classes within prison facilities. These classes are offered at many different levels of correctional control, including Maximum and Minimum Security, Juvenile Detention, Re-Entry and Halfway House Programs, and post-release. Some organizations, such as Ratna Peace Initiative, correspond with prisoners, offering spiritual and secular mindfulness guidance. Prison book programs, including PMI's Books Behind Bars, send Dharma books and/or mindfulness-focused newsletters at the request of incarcerated individuals. There is also an increasing attention to offering mindfulness-based programs to correctional staff and those who work within the justice system. The Center for Mindfulness in Corrections and the Center for Mindfulness & Justice are among the programs that provide mindfulness-based offerings to this population.

There are an estimated 200 programs (at least) that currently offer mindfulness-based assistance within the criminal justice system, predominantly in secular form. PMI's own Path of Freedom program is offered in 12 states in the U.S. and four other countries. With the number of prisoners in the United States alone currently at around two million, the need for such programming is vast - and so the organizations offering correctional mindfulness assistance still only create a ripple in an immense sea. However, increasing popularity, funding and need are helping the movement to flourish and propagate throughout the system.

Overall, the conditions for implementing mindfulness in the prison system are increasingly favorable. Studies suggest that mindfulness-based programs can decrease substance use, decrease recidivism (Himelstein, 2011), and improve self-report measures of hostility, self-esteem and mood disturbance (Samuelson, Carmody, Kabat-Zinn, & Bratt, 2007). Researchers have also found that for adolescents, short mindfulness-based interventions may increase subjective wellbeing, self-regulation, awareness, and an accepting attitude toward the intervention (Himelstein, 2012).

However, some difficulties persist. Difficulties in implementation of mindfulness programs can include problems related to bureaucracy - for example, institutional resistance to getting and keeping a program within a particular prison due to protocol or staff concerns. Another potential issue is attendance. Attendance in classes can be variable - some programs have consistently high attendance rates, while others are intermittently impeded by truancy and/or institutional interruptions. An additional potential hurdle is the question of whether the correctional institution offers incentive-based programs or not. To some degree, an incentive, such as time off a sentence for classes attended, encourages prisoners to attend classes, and therefore be able to benefit from them. On the other hand, it may lessen the students' primary motivation to learn, since an external reward becomes the primary incentive.

II. Mindfulness for Prisoners: Theory and Application

A. Relevance to Prisoners and the Challenges They Face

Prisoners face a host of significant challenges and stressors:

- Internal conflicts involving feelings of guilt, shame, and victimization
- Pain, loss and grief arising from their separation from their loved ones (including spouses or partners, children, parents and siblings), their social support systems and the community
- Loss of their self-identity related to former social roles, e.g. spouse, partner, parent, head of household, business owner, etc
- Fear of bullying and/or physical or sexual assault from other prisoners and in some cases security staff
- Pervasive noise and chaos in jail and prison environments
- Uncertainty about their future... appeals, possibility of parole, release conditions, etc.
- Standardized security procedures that result in de facto "hazing" or ritualized dehumanization and humiliation, e.g., strip and cavity searches, replacing given names with prison numbers, etc.
- PTSD or PTSD-like symptoms related to previous traumatic incidents, the trauma of incarceration or traumatic violations suffered while incarcerated

Mindfulness meditation offers many potential benefits to prisoners coping with the stresses and dangers of incarceration. Extensive neurobiological research with mindfulness meditation practitioners in the outside community has clearly demonstrated the positive impact of mindfulness meditation practice on overall brain function and health, including enhanced attention stabilization, emotion regulation, wellbeing and capacity for effective stress management (cite a meta analysis research article).

Preliminary research points to these same benefits for participants in prison mindfulness programs (cite Himelstein's meta analysis article). Research on various mindfulness-based interventions, especially mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) have demonstrated positive impacts among the general population for sufferers of depression and drug addiction, as well those with a dual diagnosis. Depression, drug addiction and dual diagnosis are highly prevalent conditions among the overall jail and prison population, as well as with youth in juvenile

detention. Thus these interventions show great promise for treating these same conditions in prisoners.

The most important societal goal for prison programming is to reduce the incidence of new criminal offenses or recidivism among released prisoners, which depends on the successful reintegration of released prisoners into the community and law abiding, civil society. It is also important for the efficient management of incarcerated individuals and for the health and safety of those charged with their care and confinement to offer programming that supports prisoners in developing healthy coping mechanisms and pro-social attitudes and behaviors while incarcerated. Ultimately, this author would assert that it is in our society's best interest and inseparable from our moral standards and dignity as a human society to offer all individuals, even those on death row or serving life sentences, the opportunity for healing and transformation and the rediscovery or reclamation of their own dignity as human beings.

From a spiritual perspective, the teachings and practices of the world's great contemplative traditions are renowned vehicles for profound inner healing and transformation. Interventions combining secular mindfulness with some of the most effective modern psychological therapies have also demonstrated great potential for inner healing and transformation (cite). It is reasonable to assume that the kind of behavior change that will lead to successful reintegration of prisoners, especially those who have engaged in harmful criminal behaviors, requires some form of inner transformation; the research, meanwhile, focuses primarily on observable and measurable behaviors and conditions as well as the underlying psychological needs or factors, which have been theorized and to one extent or another validated.

B. Addressing Criminogenic Needs or Risk Factors

The research on recidivism points to a set of "criminogenic" needs or risk factors that appear to be strongly correlated with new criminal behavior and re-arrest rates among released prisoners. They are often referred to as *criminogenic needs*, the idea being that offenders may have many different needs that warrant addressing, but there are certain needs that are more determinative of whether an individual returns to criminal behavior or manages to live lawfully in the community.

There are many of versions of these criminogenic needs in the literature, but they largely agree on the following as important needs or risk factors to address:

- Antisocial peers;
- Antisocial beliefs, values, and attitudes;
- Substance abuse, dependency, or addiction;
- Anger or hostility;
- Poor self-management or emotion regulation skills;
- Inadequate social skills;
- Poor attitude toward work or school;
- Lack of education and/or job skills;

- Lack of family support and poor family dynamics; and
- Mental illness

Of these, the following are often cited as the Big Four criminogenic risk factors:

- An antisocial personality pattern (marked by impulsiveness, aggression, stimulation seeking);
- Pro-criminal attitudes/antisocial cognition (such as negative attitudes towards the law, values, thinking styles, and general attitudes supportive of crime);
- And social supports for crime (criminal friends, isolation from pro-social others).

III. Mindfulness Meditation Based Prison Programs in Practice

Prison meditation programs fall into three broad categories: 1) non-curriculum based weekly classes, 2) curriculum based weekly classes and 3) daylong or multi-day retreats. The vast majority of prison meditation programs fall into the first category. Prison meditation classes are typically offered on a weekly, though sometimes bi-weekly or monthly basis for 60 – 90 minutes in duration and follow some variation of the following structure:

- Opening brief meditation (5 – 10 minutes)
- Opening check-in sharing circle (5 - 10 minutes)
[the order of these first two may be reversed]
- A longer meditation session including instruction (20 – 30 minutes)
- A longer sharing or dialogue session (20 - 30 min)
- A closing meditation session (5 – 10 min)

Curriculum-based prison meditation classes are typically offered with similar frequency and duration. These programs typically embed a curriculum element within a structure similar to the non curriculum-based classes involving presentations, experiential participant exercises and dialog on particular themes. Most of the curriculum-based prison mindfulness programs involve an integration of mindfulness training with social emotional learning or what has become known as mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI)

Here are three of the best known MBEI prison curriculums:

A. Prison Mindfulness Institute's Path of Freedom[®] program (with both youth and adult versions) was one of the first of these mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI) prison curriculums. This 12-unit curriculum, trauma informed and brain research based MBEI curriculum, typically delivered to a cohort of prisoners completing a 12-week, one class per week curriculum, includes sessions on the following topics:

1. **Training the Mind** – introduction to mindfulness meditation
2. **Who Am I?** – exploring roles, identities, core beliefs and discovering innate *basic goodness* or basic okay-ness & transforming limiting core beliefs

3. **Change: Inside Out/Outside In** – Understanding inner (contemplative) and outer (behavioral) approaches to change, identifying obstacles and motivations
4. **Holding Your Seat** – working with emotional triggers, emotion regulation and resilience
5. **Transforming Pain** – employing mindfulness to work with physical and emotional pain
6. **The Drama Triangle** – becoming aware of and learning to unhook from habitual behavior patterns (based on Stephen Karpman’s Drama Triangle)
7. **Radical Responsibility** – discovering the power of choice, moving from projective blame to reflective ownership, self-responsibility and freedom
8. **Empowerment** – choosing healthier and more empowering “power with” roles in relationship
9. **The Art of Communication** – listening, empathy, feelings and needs literacy, Non-Violent Communication (NVC)
10. **Transforming Conflict** – understanding conflict (“ladder of inference”) and developing effective problem solving and conflict management/resolution skills
11. **The Power of Forgiveness** – the challenges, benefits and wisdom in forgiving oneself and others or letting go of past resentments and grievances
12. **Mindfulness In Action: Staying Free Through Mindful Living** – embracing an ongoing mindfulness practice and integrating mindfulness with daily living

Path of Freedom[®] Class Typical Structure:

- Opening brief meditation (5 – 10 minutes)
- Opening check-in sharing circle (5 - 10 minutes)
- A longer meditation session including instruction (10 - 15 minutes)
- Path of Freedom[®] curriculum session topic delivery (20 – 25 minutes)
- Dialog on curriculum topic and related participant experiences (15 - 20 min)
- A closing meditation session (5 – 10 min)

Alternative Delivery: The Path of Freedom has been offered successfully in the following alternative formats:

- An ongoing drop-in class
- A twice a week class for 12 weeks (two classes on each curriculum unit)
- A twice a week class for 6 weeks (one class on each unit)
- A three classes per week pre-release class for four weeks (one class on each unit)

B. Mind Body Awareness (MBA) Project Curriculum: This mindfulness-based emotional intelligence curriculum initially developed in consultation with PDN/PMI founder Fleet Maull includes the following ten modules:

1. **Mindfulness and Mental Training** - defining mindfulness, learning and practicing some introductory mindfulness techniques.
2. **Basic Goodness/True Nature** – exploring the difference between “who we are and what we do.”
3. **Impulse Regulation** – exploring the relationship between impulses/urges, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, techniques for regulating impulsive thinking and behavior.

4. **Emotional Awareness** – exploring how emotions play a critical role in both behavior and psychological wellbeing, becoming mindful of and articulating a wide range of emotions they may experience.
5. **Emotional Intelligence** – learning tangible mindfulness-based emotional intelligence and emotion regulation skills.
6. **Interpersonal Relationship** – learn the difference between, and impact of, healthy vs. unhealthy relationships.
7. **Empathy** – defining the role of empathy in their lives and strategize its relevance, experiential activities geared toward fostering empathy within the group.
8. **Forgiveness** – contemplating the role of forgiveness in their lives, learning how to use forgiveness as a well-being strategy and practicing forgiveness-related exercises directed toward the self and others.
9. **Transforming Negative Core Beliefs** – learning what a core belief is, identifying and challenging their own negative core beliefs, in efforts to develop deeper self-awareness.
10. **Cause & Effect** – learning how their actions, thoughts, decisions, and words, create consequences, exploring personal responsibility, how they want their future to be based on what present moment responsibilities they will take.

C. The Insight/Out: GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) Program at San Quentin

This 1-year program helps participants to comprehend the origins of their violence and develop the skills to track and manage strong impulses before they act out in destructive ways. Students become “emotionally literate” by fully understanding feelings of anger and rage, learning to recognize the body signals that accompany those emotions, and engage in a process to stop and discharge the buildup of tension in a safe manner. This program enables participants to identify and communicate the feelings that are masked by anger (such as sadness, fear and shame) and process them. Students also develop the skills to understand and express the unmet needs that are covered up by the experience of rage.

The GRIP Program has a distinct focus. Most rehabilitation programs singularly zero in on either academic, vocational purposes, or addiction recovery. These are important efforts, yet they could be optimized if the root causes of what leads someone to offend were addressed directly. The GRIP methodology consists of a transformational re-education modality that commits the participants to a process of deep self-inquiry and healing. The program examines the origins of criminogenic conduct and undoes the characteristic destructive behavioral patterns (including addiction) that lead to transgressions.

GRIP participants learn to: 1. Stop their Violent Behavior, 2. Cultivate Mindfulness, 3. Develop Emotional Intelligence and 4. Understand Victim Impact

The program is a trauma treatment-based model that integrates the latest brain research. One of the goals of the program is to heal the unprocessed pain from which people lash out. Participants partake in a process of creating an inventory of ‘unfinished business’ that relates to traumatic experiences that have become formative defense mechanisms

which generate triggered reactions. They also make a personal history of ‘violence suffered’ and ‘violence perpetrated’ to gain insight into origins and patterns of behavior. Students sign a pledge to become a non-violent person and a peacemaker.

GRIP Pledge: "I am a safe person and will not engage in violent behavior. Furthermore, I will utilize my skills to resolve conflict in my community and be a resource for peace."

D. Retreat-Based Prison Programs

The best-known retreat-based prison mindfulness programs are the S. N. Goenka style 10-day Vipassana meditation prison courses or retreats conducted by volunteers from the Vipassana Prison Trust (VPT). VPT has conducted their courses primarily in King County, Washington jails and Alabama state prisons. However, they also conducted one 10-day retreat in the San Francisco County Jail and one in a Massachusetts state prison facility. The considerable accommodations required of correctional facilities to conduct the VPT 10-day retreats, while very conducive to high quality programs, also appear to limit the expansion and scalability of this model.

Many other Buddhist groups from the Zen, Vipassana and Tibetan traditions, as well as the providers of secular mindfulness programs like Prison Mindfulness Institute, have offered day-long and multi-day mindfulness retreats with varying levels on institutional cooperation and success. In general, offering such as retreats in prison facilities requires accommodations that prison authorities are reluctant to grant, such as allowing retreat participants to be counted in the retreat space during institutional counts rather than in their cell, dorm or work station as is the usual practice.

IV. Training Prison Mindfulness Program Facilitators and Teachers

Many of those who deliver meditation, yoga or other mindfulness-based programs in juvenile halls, jails and prisons are volunteers, meditation practitioners and in some cases meditation teachers, who received informal training in the context of community meditation groups and who simply present what they know in prison classes and groups with little or no special training.

Some, however, do receive special training. The Lineage Project has trained over 400 volunteers who deliver mindfulness and yoga based programs in New York City juvenile detention facilities. Prison Mindfulness Institute (PMI) has trained over 600 facilitators to deliver its mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI) based Path of Freedom[®] program, and these facilitators are now proving POF programs for incarcerated youth and adults in 12 states and five countries. The Mind Body Awareness (MBA) Project has also trained a significant number of facilitators to deliver its MBEI-based curriculum in Alameda County and other San Francisco Bay area juvenile detention facilities. The California-based Prison Mindfulness Initiative founded by Jacques Verduin and James Fox has also trained numerous volunteers who are delivering mindfulness and yoga based programs in numerous California prison facilities.

Until now, most prison mindfulness projects and facilitator training programs have relied on a very limited pool of existing Buddhist or secular mindfulness practitioners and teachers who have an interest in prison work. As interest in mindfulness-based programming for prisoners increases among correctional administrators, this traditional pool of potential facilitators and teachers will be increasingly insufficient. In fact, we may already be at that point. For this reason, Prison Mindfulness Institute (PMI), is currently launching a new Mindfulness Teacher Training and Certification program under the umbrella of the Engaged Mindfulness Institute (a division of PMI). This program, which launches in late September 2015 with a cohort of 40 students, is designed to train professionals and paraprofessionals working in the criminal justice and related social services fields who work with at-risk individuals and communities and underserved and marginalized populations, where there is often a great deal of past and present trauma. (See Appendix C for more information)

Training community corrections professionals in mindfulness based or mindfulness compatible evidence-based best practice client interventions like Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Treatment (MBCT), Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence (MBEI), Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment (MBSAT) and Motivational Interviewing (MI) have demonstrated significant results and great promise in reducing recidivism and helping more released prisoners successfully reintegrate into the community (Himmelstein et al. *Mindfulness*, July 2015; Harrison, Clarke & Maull, *CFM Conference* 2013; Samuelson, Carmody, Kabat-Zinn & Bratt, *The Prison Journal*, 2007; Himmelstein, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 2010).

V. Research – Program Outcomes and Impact

To date, research on meditation and mindfulness-based prisoner programs has been limited and has primarily consisted of quasi-experimental and qualitative research designs (as opposed to the so called gold standard of “randomized clinical trials” involving subjects randomly assigned to an intervention group or a control group). Also, the research has depended primarily on self-report psychosocial surveys making use of established scales and/or the collection of qualitative as opposed to research involving biometric research methodologies such as saliva cortisol level testing, blood and/or urine testing, and the so-called gold standard: fMRI brain scans.

Following on earlier, one-off research studies on TM prison programs, a few studies involving the Vipassana Prison Trust’s 10-day retreats at the King County, Washington jail, and one study in Massachusetts employing Kabat-Zinn’s MBSR model, The Mind Body Awareness Project and Prison Mindfulness Institute have been working to formalize the body of research and establish mindfulness-based prisoner programming as evidenced based practice. Both organizations have collected significant amounts of data employing quasi-experimental, pre-post survey and qualitative methodologies, leading to the publication of a number of papers. This preliminary research has generally demonstrated some or all of the following positive program outcomes:

- Increased capacity for mindfulness and self-transcendence
- Increased emotional intelligence
- Increased well-being
- Decreased state and trait anxiety
- Decreased negative and/or violent institutional behavior incidents
- Decreased positive drug screens
- Lowered recidivism (re-arrest) rates

Prison Mindfulness Institute currently has two National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants applications in process for the current round of R-O1 major clinical trial funding through two different research teams, one at Brown University/Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island and the other from the University of Wisconsin (UW). The UW clinical trial, if funded, will employ fMRI brain scans as part of the research methodology.

The ultimate measure of program effectiveness, and perhaps the outcome most important to the general public, is lowered recidivism rates and crime reduction/prevention. Recidivism studies require multi-year, very expensive studies involving pre-release interventions and post-release follow-up and data tracking. The above-mentioned Brown University study will involve a pre-release Path of Freedom intervention provided by Prison Mindfulness Institute in Rhode Island correctional facilities and a one-year follow-up by the Brown U. research team.

See Appendix B: Research References

VI. The State of Mindfulness-Based Prisoner Programming in U.S. Corrections

A. Extent and Geographic Coverage of Mindfulness Programs for Prisoners

Today there are meditation and yoga programs in state and federal prisons, city and county jails and juvenile detention facilities in every state, providing several hundred thousand prisoners (an unofficial estimate) within the overall U.S prison population of 2.3 million prisoners with opportunities and means for healing, rehabilitation, self-transformation and emotional and spiritual growth. The majority of the mindfulness meditation programs are prison chapel based programs offered by volunteer practitioners and teachers from Vipassana, Zen, Tibetan and Pure Land Buddhist traditions and communities in the U.S. Some of these present Buddhist teachings, but most focus on instructing and supporting prisoners in the practice of mindfulness meditation. Other offerings include Transcendental Meditation [TM], Hatha Yoga, Siddha Yoga and Christian Centering Prayer. The typical prison meditation program or class includes three basic components: 1) instruction and practice in meditation; 2) some form of mindful movement like hatha yoga, chi gong or simple mindful stretching; and 3) group dialogue, discussion or sharing. While many prison meditation classes incorporate hatha yoga exercises as part of the program, some prison yoga programs place the primary focus on hatha yoga practice.

Prison Mindfulness Institute (PMI) (aka Prison Dharma Network) continues its efforts to build a robust prison mindfulness/prison Dharma network as one of its strategies for fulfilling its mission of transforming lives, our criminal justice system and society. PMI's network now includes over 185 prison mindfulness organizations and projects and several thousand individual members active in mindfulness-based prison work. **See this list in Appendix A.**

B. Institutional Support and Buy-in

Despite all the successes and broad development of mindfulness-based prisoner programming over the past 45 years, this is still primarily a volunteer-driven movement, which correctional facilities and systems support or tolerate as one of the many religious or educational programs they depend on outside volunteers to deliver. Despite very significant evidence pointing to the importance of prisoner programming to operational security, the corrections field in general still regards prisoner programming a non-essential activity, prioritized far behind regular security operations. There are glimmers of improvement from time to time in particular facilities or particular systems. At present, we are experiencing what looks like the beginning of a pendulum swing back in favor of rehabilitation and educational programming for prisoners. In California, the legislature has recently earmarked significant funding for innovative programs, including the GRIP program, provided by outside contractors. Such state or federally funded prisoner programming provided by outside contractors is a rarity in the field of corrections.

C. Scaling Up Strategies

Developing and scaling up well-recognized and well-funded evidence-based programs is a key strategy. In the past, a few well-established programs, i.e., *Thinking for Change* and *Moral Reconation Therapy* (MRT) led the advance of Cognitive Behavior Treatment as the accepted best practice for prisoner rehabilitation in the corrections field. However, domination by evidence-based practice models can have a stifling impact on program innovation. Thus another important strategy is to encourage a great diversity of programming and program innovation from both the community-based program provider and academic research based sectors. Given the paucity of state and federal funding dedicated to rehabilitation and educational programming for prisoners, it is likely that grassroots efforts by a diverse group of community volunteers and privately funded provider organizations will continue to spur innovation.

D. Funding Models

Unpaid volunteers provide the vast majority of mindfulness-based prisoner programming in the United States. The projects and organizations through which some of these volunteers serve largely depend on private donors and foundations to fund their administrative costs and organizing expenses. A few organizations are able to compensate the facilitators and teachers delivering their programs with modest stipends. There are very few instances of local, state or federal correctional facilities allocating funds to pay for such programming provided by outside individuals or organizations. The

California legislature has recently earmarked funds for such programming as mentioned above, and this is a trend that needs to continue and grow. While philanthropy certainly and properly has a significant role to play in the evolution of the prison mindfulness movement and mindfulness-based transformation in the field of corrections, an ongoing and robust partnership between government, corporate, and philanthropic funding sources will be necessary to scale up mindfulness-based programming to optimal levels in our prison systems.

VII. Conclusion

The efforts of countless prisoners, prison volunteers, meditation teachers, program providers, prison reform advocates, funders and supportive corrections professionals over the past 45 years have led to broad normalization of mindfulness, meditation and yoga in the field of corrections, reflecting an even broader normalization and acceptance in U.S. society at large. A broad expanse of faith-based and secular meditation programs are sustained primarily by dedicated volunteers and a number of organizations whose mission it is to train and support those volunteers. A number of innovative mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI) curricula have been developed, e.g. Path of Freedom[®], GRIP, and MBA, and preliminary research indicates that these programs effectively address basic criminogenic needs/risk factors while producing reductions in anxiety, problematic and/or violent institution behaviors and recidivism rates.

Appendix A: Detention & Reentry Mindfulness-Based Programs

Program Provider	Style	Content	Yoga ?	Locations
Juvenile/Youth Detention Centers				
Prison Mindfulness Institute	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Providence, RI
Centering Youth	secular	yoga & mindfulness in juvenile detention	yes	Atlanta, GA
Clatsop County Juvenile Department	secular	community-based services for delinquent youth	no	Clatsop County, OR
Lineage Project	secular	mindfulness for youth at risk	yes	New York City
Mind Body Awareness Project (MBA)	secular	mindfulness & life skills for at risk youth	no	SAN FRANCISCO Bay Area
POF Lookout Mountain	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Golden, CO
Mindfulness & Meditation for Prisoners				
Prison Mindfulness Institute	secular	Meditation, Mindfulness, MBEI, Yoga	yes	National
PMI - Path of Freedom (POF)	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	National
POF New Hampshire	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	North Haverhill, NH
POF Ohio	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Marysville, OH
POF Pittsburgh	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Pittsburg, PA
POF Los Angeles	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Los Angeles, CA
POF Barnstable MA	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Barnstable, MA
POF Concord MA	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Concord, MA
POF Norfolk MA	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Norfolk, MA
POF Northeastern Correctional	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	MA
POF South Middlesex Correctional	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	MA
POF North Central	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Gardner, MA

Correctional		Freedom		MA
POF MCI Shirley	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	MA
POF Sharon MA	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Sharon, MA
POF Indiana	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Indiana
POF Santa Fe	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	Santa Fe, NM
POF Illinois	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	no	Lincoln, IL
POF Pine Street	secular	Freedom	yes	Boston, MA
Boulder County Jail	secular	meditation	yes	Boulder, CO
Vispassana Meditation Courses for Correction Facilities	vipassana	vipassana meditation for correction facilities	no	Alabama
Winter Feast for the Soul Prison In-Reach	secular	Path of Freedom correspondence course for prisoners	no	Pearland, TX
Insight-Out - Prison Mindfulness Initiative	secular	MBSR, Meditation, Mindfulness, Yoga in CA's prisons & jails	yes	California
Insight -Out GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) program	secular	mindfulness, emotional intelligence & violence prevention	yes	California
Beverly White Outreach	Buddhism, Zen	meditation, non-violence, social justice	no	Minnesota
Boston Prison Dharma	Buddhism	MBSR, Meditation, Mindfulness	yes	Boston, MA
Bridgewater State Hospital Sangha	vipassana, zen	meditation & spiritual study in prison	no	Bridgewater, MA
Freedom Project	secular	Mindfulness, NVC	no	Seattle, WA
Gateless Gate Prison Outreach	zen	Mindfulness, Buddhism, MBSR	no	Gainesville, FL
Heart of the Blue Ridge Sangha	zen			Blue Ridge
Soledad Prison Project	buddhism	Mindfulness, Zen	no	MT, VA
Upaya Zen Center	zen	mindfulness	no	CA
Health For Heroes- Cover Project	zen	mindfulness	yes	NM
Prison Meditation Project	secular	mindfulness for incarcerated veterans	no	Sausalito, CA
	interfaith	meditation, NVC, council	yes	CA
Freedom Behind Bars	TM	Transcendental Meditation, MBSR	no	National
Prison Meditation Class	tibetan	sitting group	no	NH
MCC – Chicago Sitting	secular	meditation, Vipassana	no	Chicago, IL

Group					
Free Heart Sangha	buddhist	meditation, Buddhist study	no	Framingham	
Blue Ridge Prison Project	secular	mindfulness, MBSR	no	, MA	
Inside Meditation	zen	Zen meditation	yes	Afton, VA	
Awake in Action Prison				Texas	
Dharma Project	shambhala	sitting group	no	Vancouver,	
Buddhist Peace Fellowship				BC	
- Tampa Bay Prison Project	secular	meditation	no	Florida	
The Dharma Bums Prison				San Diego,	
Outreach Project	buddhism	meditation & dharma	no	CA	
				Greenfield,	
Dharma Seed Prison Project	vipassana	dharma books, cds by request	no	MA	
Dorjechang Buddhist		meditation, emotional		Abbotsford,	
Centre	Kadampa	intelligence	no	BC	
				West	
Greater Hartford Prison				Hartford,	
Sangha	buddhism	meditation	no	CT	
Human Kindness					
Foundation	buddhism	meditation, spiritual books	yes	Durham, NC	
				Larimer	
Larimer County Jail	secular	meditation, mindfulness	no	County, CO	
Zen Mountain Monastery		meditation in prison, dharma			
Prison Project	zen, buddhism	correspondence	no	NY	
		dharma correspondence &			
San Francisco Zen Center	zen, buddhism	books	no	SF, CA	
	secular/spiritual	mindfulness meditation			
Ratna Prison Initiative		through correspondence	no	CO	
				Nelson	
Ligmicha Institute	secular	meditation	no	County, VA	
				Kansas City,	
Janet Nima Taylor	buddhism	prison dharma	no	MO	
				Washington	
Insight on the Inside	buddhism	meditation, prison dharma	no	DC	
The Lionheart Foundation	secular	emotional literacy	no	Boston, MA	
				New Haven,	
Blue Water Buddhist	zen	mindfulness	no	MI	
		emotional literacy,		San Rafael,	
Insight Prison Project	secular	mindfulness	no	CA	
Yoga for Prisoners					
Prison Mindfulness Institute	secular	mindfulness, yoga	yes	National	
Give Back Yoga	secular	foundation, yoga grants	yes	CO	
Prison Yoga Project	secular	mindfulness, yoga	yes	CA	
Prison Mindfulness					
Initiative	secular	mindfulness, yoga	yes	CA	
Freeing the Human Spirit	secular	mindfulness, yoga	yes	Toronto, ON	

Hancock County Jail Volunteers	secular	MBSR/yoga	yes	Blue Hill, ME
Heart Mountain	secular	meditation, yoga	yes	Santa Fe, NM
Yoga Outreach Network	secular	yoga	yes	FL
Liberation Prison Yoga	secular	trauma-conscious yoga, meditation	yes	NY
Re-Entry Programs				
Prison Mindfulness Institute	secular	Mindfulness - MBEI Path Of Freedom	yes	MA & RI
Upaya Zen Center	secular	mentoring	no	Santa Fe, NM
Bodhi House/ Triple Gem		community living/studying/5		Gettysburg, PA
Prison Ministry	buddhism	precepts	no	
Hancock County Jail Volunteers Post-Release Project	secular	one-on-one mentoring	yes	Blue Hill, ME

Appendix B: Research Articles & Resources

Mindfulness-Based At-Risk & Incarcerated Youth Programs

Himelstein, Sam, Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment for Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed Method Pilot Study

<http://www.transpersonalstudies.org/imagesrepository>

Moore, Ry, UNCOVERING GOLD: UTILIZING MINDFULNESS-BASED APPROACHES TO AFFECT

POSITIVE CHANGE WITHIN A JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

<https://upaya.org/uploads/pdfs/MooreUncoveringGold>

Evans-Chase, Michelle, Internet-Based Mindfulness Meditation and Self-regulation: A Randomized Trial with Juvenile Justice Involved Youth

<http://www.journalofjuvjustice.org/JOJJ0301/article0>

Leonard, Noelle, et al, Mindfulness training improves attentional task performance in incarcerated youth: a group randomized controlled intervention trial

<http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.201>

Milani, A, et al, Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) in Reducing Aggression of Individuals at the Juvenile Correction and Rehabilitation Center.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24971290>

Himelstein, et al, Mindfulness training for self-regulation and stress with incarcerated youth: A pilot

<http://www.uihealthcare.org/uploadedFiles/UIHealthc>

study

Jennings, Jerry, et al, Using Mindfulness in the Treatment of Adolescent Sexual Abusers: Contributing Common Factor or a Primary Modality?

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1017935.pdf>

Murphy, Jason, Mindfulness for Teen Anger: A Workbook to Overcome Anger and Aggression Using Mbsr and Dbt Skills

<https://www.tradebit.com/filedetail.php/274970557v9workbook-to>

Himelstein, Sam, A Mindfulness-Based Approach to Working with High-Risk Adolescents

http://www.amazon.com/dp/0415642450/ref=pdp_ne

Bender, Kimberly, Mindfulness Intervention with Homeless Youth

<https://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2015/webprogram/Pape>

Mendelson, Tamar & Greenberg, Mark, School-Based Mindfulness Intervention to Prevent Substance Use Among Urban Youth

<http://grantome.com/grant/NIH/R34-DA029237-01A>

Zoogman, Sarah, et al, Mindfulness Interventions with Youth: A Meta-Analysis

<http://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2>

Sibinga, Erica, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Urban Youth

<http://jhccchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Mindfu>
<http://jhccchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Mindfu>
[youth.pdf](http://jhccchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Mindfu)

Learning to Breathe Research papers
Article

<http://learning2breathe.org/curriculum/research>

Article

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/mindful_1

<http://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/20>

Meditation & Mindfulness Research in Prisons

- Mindfulness training improves attentional task performance in incarcerated youth: a group randomized controlled intervention trial Leonard NR, Jha AP, Casarjian B, Goolsarran M, Garcia C, Cleland CM, Gwadz MV and Massey Z *Frontiers in Psychology* (2013)
- Exploring an intensive meditation intervention for incarcerated youth. Elizabeth S. Barnert, Samuel Himelstein, Sarah Herbert, Albert Garcia-Romeu, Lisa J. Chamberlain, *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (2013)
- A qualitative investigation of the experience of a mindfulness-based intervention with incarcerated adolescents. Samuel Himelstein, Arthur Hastings, Shauna Shapiro, Myrtle Heery, *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (2012)
- Can adult offenders with intellectual disabilities use mindfulness-based procedures to control their deviant sexual arousal? Nirbhay N. Singha, Giulio E. Lancioni, Alan S.W. Winton, Ashvind N. Singha, Angela D. Adkinse, Judy Singha, *Psychology, Crime & Law* (2011)
- Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment for Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed Method Pilot Study. Samuel Himelstein, *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* (2011)
- Meditation research: The state of the art in correctional settings. Samuel Himelstein, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* (2010).
- The Use of Meditation in Corrections. David W. Orme-Johnson, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* (2010)

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in Massachusetts Correctional Facilities, Marlene Samuelson, James Carmody, Jon Kabat-Zinn and Michael A. Bratt, *The Prison Journal* (2007)
- Mindfulness meditation and substance use in an incarcerated population. Bowen S, Witkiewitz K, Dillworth TM, Chawla N, Simpson TL, Ostafin BD, Larimer ME, Blume AW, Parks GA, Marlatt GA, *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* (2006)
- Programmes in Correctional settings: Innovative State and Local programmes – See page 65 for details of a mindfulness program run for over 100 inmates.
- MBCT applications in correctional settings. Neva Hagedorn
- Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation in a Corrections Setting, James M. Dunn Upaya Chaplaincy Program, 2010
- Path of Freedom Incarcerated Women Study: <http://www.prisonmindfulness.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/APHA-Fall-2013-Final-Oct-24.2013.pdf>

PMI Path of Freedom® Rhode Island Research

Preliminary Research Results – Harrison, J. PhD Clark, J. MD, Maull, F.

A Two-Year Study Conducted on Prison Mindfulness Institute's "Path of Freedom" Curriculum
Transcript of presentation by Dr. Jill Harrison (Rhode Island College), Dr. Jennifer Clarke (Brown University) and Fleet Maull (Prison Mindfulness Institute) at the 11th Annual Center for Mindfulness Scientific Conference on April 20, 2013 in Norwood Massachusetts

Path of Freedom

- Is a 12 – unit Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence (MBEI) curriculum.
- Developed & piloted at maximum security juvenile prison in Colorado, 2003 – 2009.
- Currently six classes per week in four Rhode Island DOC women's & men's facilities.
- POF programs in four countries (U.S., Sweden, Canada, Australia)

Program Goals:

The goal of Prison Mindfulness Institute's *Path of Freedom* program is to provide prisoners with resources and practices for healing & transformation as well as preparing them for eventual successful long-term success in the community. The program is specifically designed to effectively address these criminogenic risk factors:

- anti-social personality
- anti-social attitudes
- negative/criminal values and associates
- poor impulse control
- lack of problem solving skills
- lack of employment skills (indirectly)
- substance abuse and family dysfunction (indirectly)

POF Curriculum Fidelity

- Observer/rater attends all sessions to document curriculum delivery using standardized forms and to collect qualitative data – participant responses and questions, cell practice, etc.

- Overall high rating for curriculum fidelity

Research Objectives

- To evaluate an MBEI-based curriculum, “The Path of Freedom”
- The 13 week program is offered biannually to inmates at minimum and medium level prison facilities.
- n = 132

Method

- Pre-test/Post-test with 4 inventories
- Curriculum offered once per week, 2 hours each session, for three months (total = 13 sessions)
- Inmates are provided a workbook, introduced to a variety of basic, non-secular meditation techniques, and asked to do contemplation exercises out of class.
- Curriculum presents principles of mindfulness and introduces skills to increase emotional intelligence, reduce stress and anxiety
- Mindfulness movement is included, such as yoga and chi kung exercises.

Inventories Used

- 1) Schutte et al's (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale
- 2) Levenson's (2005) Self-Transcendence Inventory
- 3) Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, youth version
- 4) the Criminal Sentiment Scale (not presented, found not significant)

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics:

- Male participants n = 109, female participants n = 23
- Age range 20's – 40's
- < H.S. diploma
- Unemployed
- Most had never practiced or been exposed to meditation prior to this class
- Inmates attended an average of 9 classes out of 13 and were compensated with 2 days of “good time” per month.

Remarks by Researcher Dr. Jill Harrison:

“Prisoners in our Path of Freedom classes attended an average attendance of 9 classes. We found a correlation between the number of classes attended and a reduction in non-violent infractions with prison staff and prison policy.”

“Qualitatively, I had inmates come up & tell me, ‘You know, Jill, I was really just here for the Good Time, but I learned something.’”

“We found a noticeable improvement in emotional intelligence scale ratings in women after completing the Path of Freedom curriculum. We did not find as strong of a correlation with the men, which is leading us to consider customizing the curriculum by gender.”

“For both men and women, the curriculum is doing a nice job of reducing anxiety levels in inmates. Measures of temporary states of anxiety drop significantly in both men and women post curriculum. There is also a significant drop in trait (personality-based) anxiety. As inmates learn to check in with their own feelings of stress & anxiety, impulse control will increase. This will potentially reduce recidivism rates.”

“In two of our three inventories, significant results were shown in correlation to attendance. Increased attendance predicts emotional intelligence and reduces anxiety states and traits.”

“Our most significant data is the Steinberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, which measures state characteristic of anxiety and trait characteristics of anxiety. In other words, it measures temporary characteristics of anxiety and stress and the more permanent or embedded personality traits. This inventory has been used widely with inmates, war veterans, etc. Nationally Inmates have scores that range between 44-50. For the educated general public, averages are between 34-38. Both women & men had scores *reduced* after the Path of Freedom curriculum. Prior to the curriculum, the men we tested had a mean of 42 on the “state anxiety scale” and women had a mean of 51. After the Curriculum, men tested a mean of 36, and the women’s mean was 37. In long-term anxiety traits, which is based more on personality, the men tested dropped from a mean of 44 to 31 after the Curriculum and the women dropped from 48 to 28. So following the Curriculum, they tested in the range of normal adults.”

Summary:

- Encouraging results in stress and anxiety reduction for both males and females.
- Mixed results on increased emotional intelligence – gender difference possible and needs further analysis.
- PoF curriculum appears to have stronger effect on participants above >30 years of age.
- Small correlation between class attendance and reduction in “in-house” nonviolent infractions (not shown).
- PoF curriculum appears to have no effect on Criminal Sentiment Scale (results not shown).

Future Research:

- Instruments to measure mindfulness and impulsivity are introduced in 2012-2013 cycle.
- Explore gender as mediating effect; perhaps curriculum can be tailored based on results.
- Analyze inmate feedback on classes and other qualitative data to modify curriculum.
- Example: Inmates want to incorporate more movement into the program (e.g. yoga, walking meditation)
- Control for social support
- Track recidivism and community continuity upon post release

Levenson's (2005) Self-Transcendence Inventory *selected statements*

Statement:	Males Pre- test	Males Post-Test	t	Females Pre-Test	Females Post-Test	t
1. My peace of mind is not so easily upset as it used to be.	2.87 (.119)	3.40 (.081)	-4.21 **	2.36 (.364)	3.36 (.310)	-1.85 ^
2. Material things mean less to me.	2.91 (.098)	3.32 (.083)	-3.23 **	3.36 (.243)	3.27 (.195)	.23*
3. I do not become angry as easily.	2.64 (.116)	3.35 (.090)	-4.67 *	2.72 (.333)	3.27 (.272)	-2.62*
4. My sense of self is less dependent on other people and things.	3.04 (.099)	3.41 (.080)	-2.26*	3.55 (.207)	3.36 (.279)	.516 N.S
9. I feel that my life is a part of a greater whole.	2.98 (.106)	3.23 (.080)	-2.13*	2.73 (.304)	2.55 (.207)	-2.04^
Summary Scores (10 questions)	28.9 (.680)	33.1 (.486)	-5.24 **	30.45 (1.44)	34.18 (1.57)	-1.61 N.S.

paired t-test significance: (standard errors), $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^{*}$, $p < .10^{^}$, N.S. = not significant

Schutte's (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale, *Selected Statements*

Statement:	Males Pre- test	Males Post- Test	t	Females Pre-Test	Females Post-Test	t
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.	3.90 (.109)	4.02 (.097)	-0.841 N.S.	3.38 (.311)	4.31 (.208)	-2.31*
12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.	3.33 (.144)	3.52 (.116)	-1.01 N.S.	2.77 (.323)	3.69 (.281)	-2.41 *
15. I am aware of the nonverbal messages I send to others.	3.12 (.148)	3.21 (.139)	-0.444 N.S.	3.23 (.257)	3.85 (.154)	-1.76 ^

17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.	3.98 (.087)	4.04 (.113)	-0.375 N.S.	3.77 (.122)	4.31 (.175)	-2.50 *
19. I know why my emotions change.	3.40 (.145)	3.60 (.125)	-1.08 N.S.	3.23 (.166)	3.77 (.201)	-2.21 *
23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.	3.88 (.118)	3.81 (.119)	.4682 N.S.	3.46 (.183)	4.15 (.191)	-3.23 **
Summary Scores	116.86 (1.88)	119.11 (1.53)	-0.957 N.S.	116.07 (2.87)	126.23 (4.74)	-1.719^^

paired t-test significance: (standard errors), $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^{*}$, $p < .10^{\wedge}$, $p = .11^{\wedge\wedge}$, N.S. = not significant

Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Scale, Youth Version Y-1/ Selected Statements

Statement:	Males Pre- test	Males Post- Test	t	Females Pre- Test	Females Post- Test	t
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I feel calm.	2.22 (.113)	1.74 (.080)	3.28 **	2.46 (.268)	1.85 (.222)	1.53 N.S.
2. I feel secure.	2.26 (.123)	2.02 (.102)	.162 N.S.	2.62 (.331)	1.85 (.222)	1.87 ^
5. I feel at ease.	2.49 (.120)	2.14 (.114)	2.04 *	2.54 (.312)	1.85 (.274)	2.00 ^
15. I am relaxed.	2.38 (.117)	1.92 (.088)	3.04 **	2.92 (.178)	2.08 (.265)	2.86 **
19. I feel steady.	2.64 (.110)	2.11 (.089)	3.87 **	3.15 (.191)	2.08 (.265)	3.27 **
20. I feel pleasant.	2.52 (.130)	1.95 (.097)	2.09 *	2.54 (.268)	1.85 (.274)	1.90 ^
Summary Scores	40.96 (1.84)	35.94 (1.34)	2.53 **	49.30 (3.26)	36.70 (.3.44)	2.59 *

Statement:	Males Pre- test	Males Post-Test	t	Females Pre-Test	Females Post-Test	t
21. I feel pleasant.	2.52 (.115)	2.20 (.081)	2.15*	2.69 (.223)	2.37 (.201)	1.58 ^{N.S.}
22. I feel nervous and restless.	2.69 (.099)	1.87 (.085)	2.79**	2.69 (.200)	2.00 (.160)	2.11 ^
24. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.	2.54 (.117)	2.09 (.099)	2.59 **	2.31 (.208)	1.92 (.239)	1.59 ^{N.S.}
29. I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter.	2.33 (.121)	1.95 (.105)	2.27 *	2.15 (.222)	1.92 (.309)	.562 ^{N.S.}
31. I have disturbing thoughts.	1.90 (.111)	1.60 (.092)	2.05 *	1.92 (.265)	1.61 (.213)	.805 ^{N.S.}
36. I am content.	2.59 (.119)	2.27 (.100)	2.27*	2.85 (.222)	2.08 (.211)	2.99**
Summary Scores	40.96 (1.84)	35.94 (1.34)	2.53 **	49.30 (3.26)	36.70 (.3.44)	2.59 *

paired t-test significance: (standard errors), $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^{*}$, $p < .10^{^}$, N.S. = not significant

ANOVA RESULTS

The Effect of Attendance on Post-Test Inventories (n=132)

MALES n = 109

FEMALES = 23

^p
<.10,
*p <
.05,
**p
<
.01,
N.S.
= not
signi
fican
t

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	F statistic	df	Prob > F	Adj. R-Square	F Statistic	df	Prob > F	Adj. R-Square
Self-Transcendence Inventory	1.07	13	.402 ^{n.s.}	.015	1.07	6	.470 ^{n.s.}	.032
State-Trait Anxiety Inventory	2.07	9	.047 [*]	.124	1.02	6	.410 ^{n.s.}	.010
Emotional Intelligence Scale	1.98	9	.056 [^]	.116	1.41	6	.329 ^{n.s.}	.160

Path of Freedom Pre Release Pilot Study, Clark J. MD, Maull F. (Memorial Hospital, Brown University) :

Objectives:

To determine the effect of the *Path of Freedom* intervention on:

- Measures of mindfulness
- Measures of depression
- Drug use behavior

Methods

- Obtained IRB and prison approval for the study
- Recruited 32 inmates from male medium security
- Used drugs prior to incarceration
- Release with 6-12 weeks
- Randomized to PoF or educational videos with sessions ~ 3 times a week
- Questionnaires pre/post intervention, post release:
- FFMQ
- Importance of remaining drug free
- 4 weeks post release – urine drug screen

Issues:

- Only 30% went to 10 or more of the 12 classes
- Many interruptions in the schedule
- “Supper Storm Sandy”
- Flu clinic
- Class rooms booked for different times on different days
- Often classes were cut short
- Despite this there were significant differences between groups
- Other pre-release issues (meetings with discharge planners, outside agencies, housing etc)

Future Steps:

- Test the efficacy of the *Path of Freedom* intervention in large RCT for:
 - *Drug use outcomes
 - *Recidivism/ return to prison
 - Depression/Stress
 - Employment
 - Family / Social well being
- Follow up 1 year post release
- Add MP3 players (guided meditations) for community use

Dr. Jennifer Clarke Remarks:

“Our research study is looking at ‘how does this work improve mindfulness?’, ‘how does this work improve depression?’, & ‘how does it improve behavior when people get out.’”

“We got IRB permission to do a pre-release pilot with 32 inmates. We offered 12 sessions of Path of Freedom to see how it affected behavior after getting out. We had 32 randomized people. They either got Path of Freedom or educational videos on basic health care tips. We did questionnaires at baseline, right after intervention and then 4 weeks later when they were out of prison. We also did a urine test to look at substance use.

We had significant results. People in Path of Freedom marked staying drug-free as a 9 in a 1-10 priority scale. In the 5-Facets of Mindfulness questionnaires we saw significant improvements in all areas except for awareness.

Urine tests showed that ½ of prisoners taking Path of Freedom were drug-free while only 1/3 were drug-free in the control group.

Issues we encountered in the study: participants were not self-selected, they were recruited according to an upcoming release date.

Only 30% of our participants went to 10 or more classes, yet still we saw improvements.

There was some interruption in the class flow due to extreme weather conditions, a flu outbreak and irregularities in classroom availability.

Because results were promising though, we are wanting to follow-up with a longer-term study, for which we will secure a classroom & regular class-time as well as review our material and consider making the initial classes more exciting for new participants.”

Pilot Results		PoF	Control
Importance Drug free	Baseline	7.6	7.9
	Post	9.1*	7.0
Changes in FFMQ higher score better	Describe	0.0**	-1.4
	Nonreact	1.8*	-0.2
	Nonjudge	1.4**	-0.6
	Observe	1.4*	-0.9
	Awareness	1.4	-0.3
	Total	6.0*	-3.4
Drug Free Urine test 4 weeks post release		50%	33%

*p<0.05 **p<0.1

Appendix C: Websites and Resources

www.prisonmindfulness.org
www.engagedmindfulness.org
<http://centeringyouth.org/drydc-class/>
<http://www.co.clatsop.or.us/juvenile>
<http://www.lineageproject.org>
<http://www.mbaproject.org/programs/probation/>
www.prisonmindfulness.org
<http://www.prison.dhamma.org/>
<http://www.winterfeastforthesoul.com/>
<http://insight-out.org>
<http://insight-out.org>
<http://cloudsinwater.org/interest-groups/>
<http://www.prisonmindfulness.org>
<http://freedomprojectseattle.org/programs/>
<http://gatelessgate.org/the-center/about-us/>
<http://heartoftheblueridgesangha.wordpress.com>
<http://www.insightsantacruz.org/prison-project/>
<https://www.upaya.org/social-action/prison-outreach/>
<http://www.healthforheroes.com/about/>
<http://www.prisonmeditation.org/>
<http://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/prisons.html>
<http://blueridgeprisonproject.org/>
<http://austinzencenter.org/outreach/prisonteaching.html>
<http://awakeinaction.org>
<http://floridanastuff.com/BPF/bpfmtg.htm>
<http://www.thedharmabums.org/prison-outreach>
www.Dharmaseed.org
<http://dorjechang.ca>
<http://www.bluecliffmonastery.org>
www.humankindness.org
<http://mro.org/smr/nbps/>
<http://blogs.sfzc.org/blog/2012/08/23/prison-outreach/>
<http://www.ratanapeaceinitiative.org/inmate-project/>
<http://www.ligmincha.org>
<http://www.templebuddhistcenter.org/>
<http://imcw.org/Programs/EngagedBuddhism.aspx>
<http://lionheart.org/prison/project/>
<http://www.bluewaterbuddhist.org/prison.htm>
<http://www.insightprisonproject.org/>
<http://givebackyoga.org/projects/prison-yoga>

<http://www.prisonyoga.com/>
www.prisonmindfulnessinitiative.org
<http://freeingspirit.com/>
<http://www.jailvolunteers.org/Index.html>
<http://www.prisonmindfulness.org>
<http://www.liberationprisonyoga.com/>
<https://www.upaya.org>
<http://www.projectreform.org/bodhihouse>
http://www.jailvolunteers.org/Our_Service.html