

AN INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION

How Attention Works and Skills to Calm the Monkey Mind

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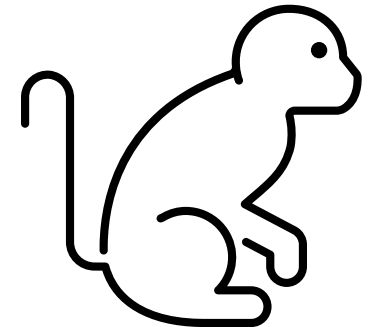
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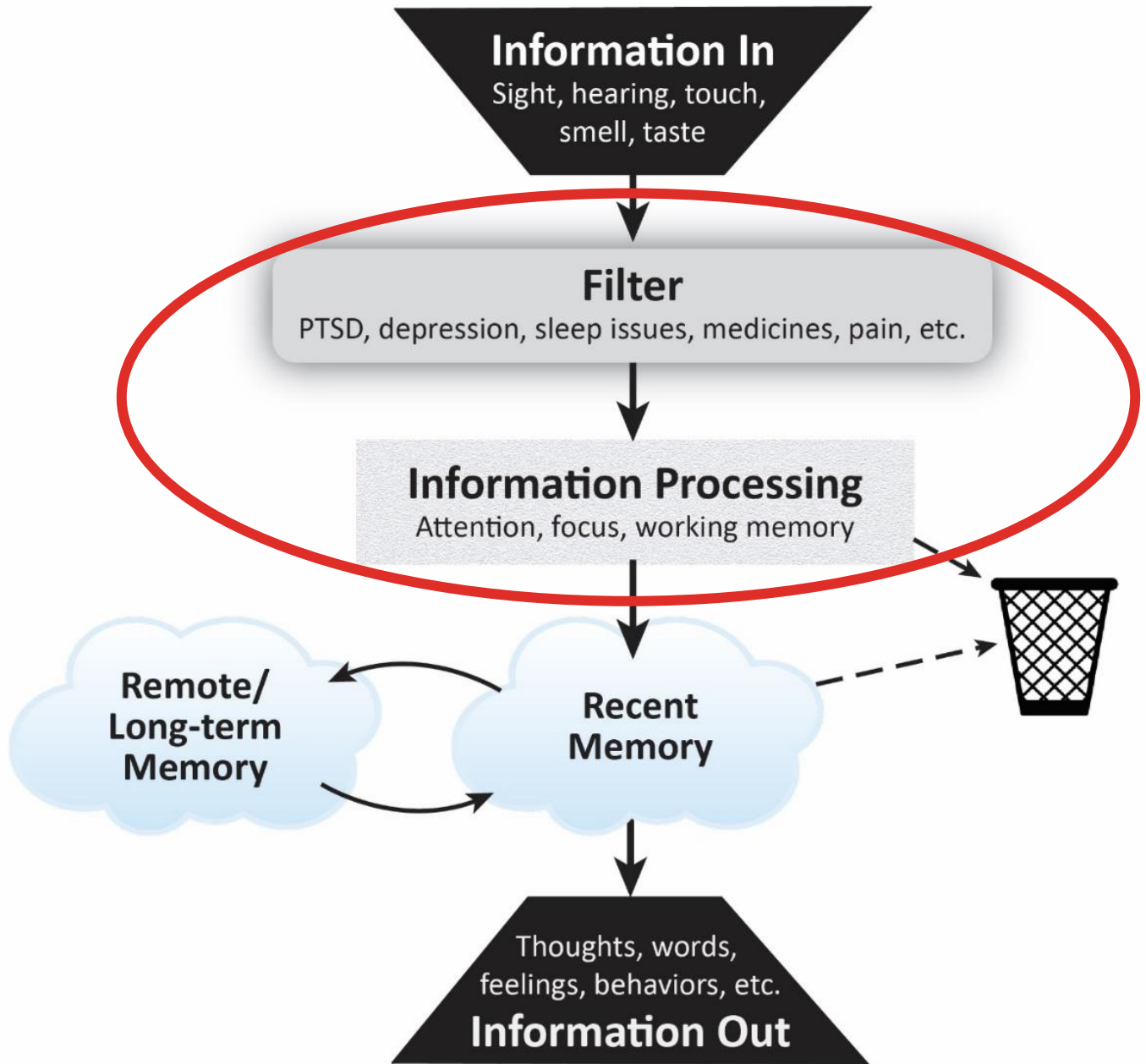


WHAT IS THE MONKEY MIND?

- From Buddhism: unsettled, restless, or confused
- Coming from the part of your brain most connected to the ego, which contends that you can't do anything right.
- It's also the part of you that stifles creativity and prevents you from moving forward with your passions.
- The monkey mind insists on being heard, and sometimes it takes a lot of self-control to shut it down.
- Also the part of your brain that becomes easily distracted, so if you want to get anything done in life, your challenge will be to shut down the monkey mind.



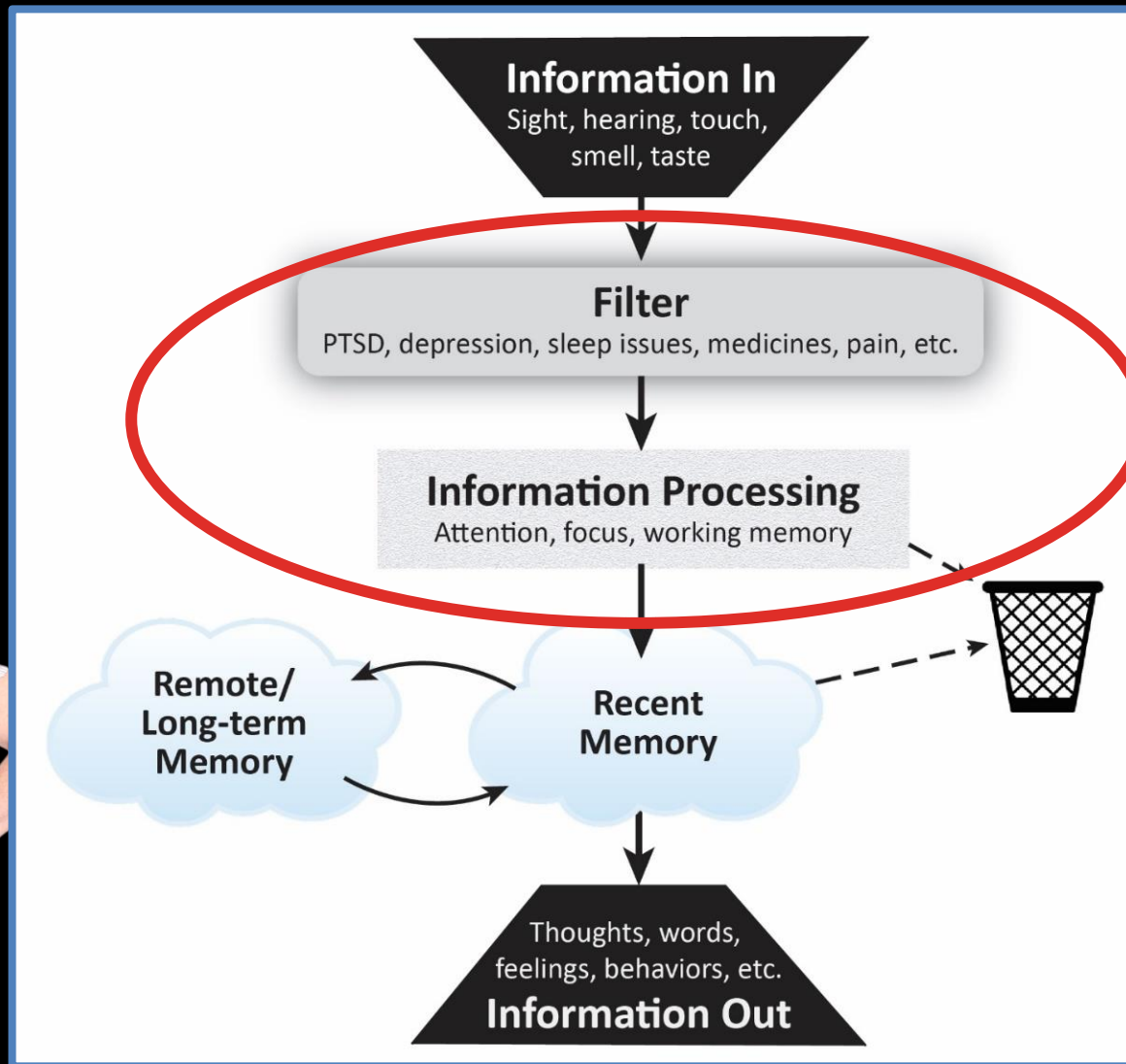
MEMORY MODEL



ATTENTION SYSTEM



- Many types of attention:
 - Sustained attention, divided attention
 - Focused attention, selective attention
- Zoom lens model
- Finite brain resource
- Bandwidth can be consumed by basic needs and higher order thoughts



ATTENTION

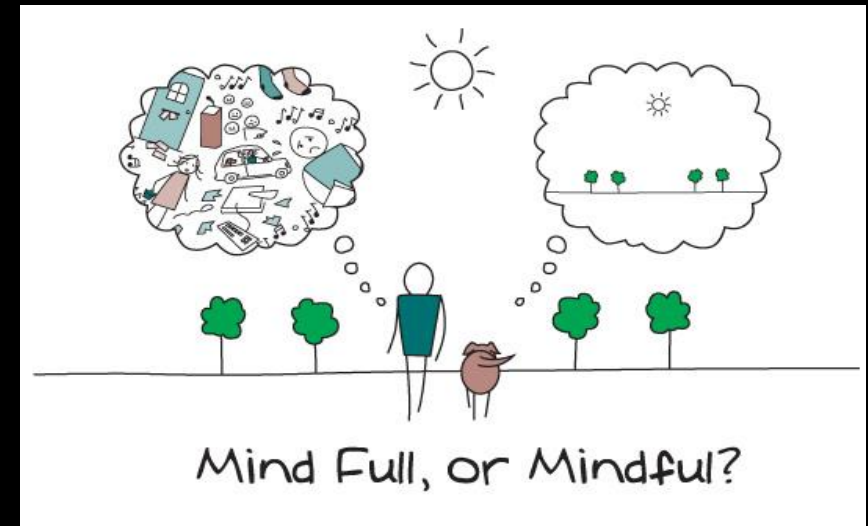
What clogs your filter?

MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION

- While the idea of mindfulness originated in Buddhism, most types of spirituality include some type of meditation technique that helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations, toward being in the moment.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn pushed the practice of mindfulness meditation into the mainstream.
- Practicing mindfulness can improve both physical and mental health.
- MBSR can help relieve stress, reduce depression, lower blood pressure, lessen chronic pain, reduce anxiety, and improve sleep.

MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION

- Mindfulness works, in part, by helping people to accept their experiences and thoughts rather than react to them with aversion and avoidance.
- By focusing on the here and now, many people who practice mindfulness find that they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future and regrets from the past.
- There is **more than one way to practice mindfulness**. The goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment.



MBSR RESEARCH

Mindfulness-based stress reduction for healthy individuals: A meta-analysis.

Khoury B, and colleagues. J Psychosom Res. 2015

- 29 quantitative studies with healthy adults (n=2668)
- Key findings include: Large effects on stress, moderate effects on anxiety, depression, distress, and quality of life, and small effects on burnout.
- Results were maintained at an average of 19 weeks of follow-up.
- However, heterogeneity was high, probably due to differences in the study design, the implemented protocol, and the assessed outcomes.
- Conclusions: MBSR is moderately effective in reducing stress, depression, anxiety and distress and in ameliorating the quality of life of healthy individuals; however, more research is warranted to identify the most effective elements of MBSR.

MINDFULNESS

- Mindfulness practice is hard.
- Not because it is complex or needs high cognitive function, but because it takes practice to tune out everything except what is happening in the moment.
- We are constantly being “hooked” by our judgments, evaluations, and our self-talk, as well as our experiences from the past and our worries about the future.
- Mindfulness is about changing our *relationship* with our thoughts, emotions, and memories – allowing them to be as they are (without judgment).
- This can be even harder when we have spent a lot of time being “hooked” by them.

MBSR EXERCISE # 1

- Bring complete attention to the present on a moment-to-moment basis
- Allow yourself to be where you are without trying to change it or make it go away
- **Let's try it together!**



BREATHE IN

Pretend you
are smelling a
flower.

BREATHE OUT

Pretend you
are blowing a
leaf.



MBSR RESEARCH CONT.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction for family carers of people with dementia.

Liu Z, Sun YY, Zhong BL. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2018

- Five randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of MBSR for family carers of people with dementia. Methods were quite variable.
- Due to low quality of the evidence, “could not be certain of any effects of MBSR on carer burden, the use of positive coping strategies, or dropout rates.”
- No studies looked at quality of life of carers or care-recipients, or out of home placements.
- **AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS:** After accounting for non-specific effects of the intervention (i.e. comparing it with an active control), low-quality evidence suggests that MBSR may reduce carers' depressive symptoms and anxiety, at least in the short term.

MBSR EXERCISE #2



MBSR RESEARCH CONT.

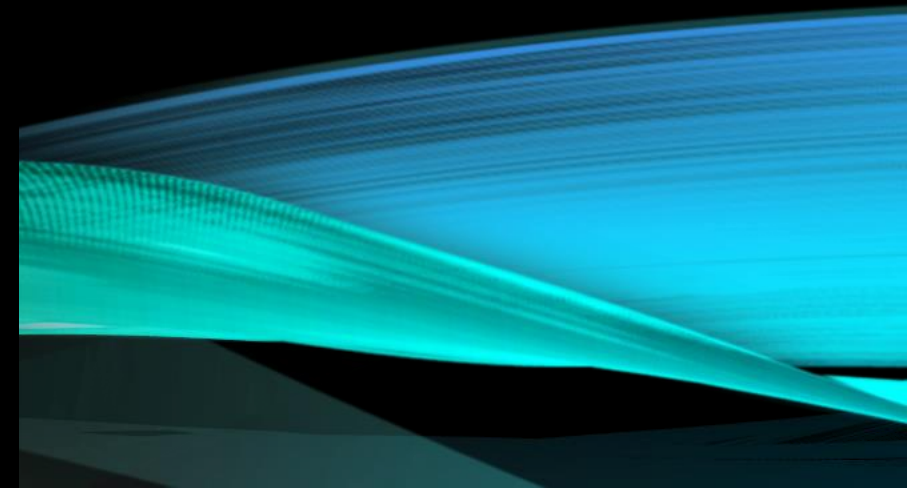
Mindfulness and meditation: treating cognitive impairment and reducing stress in dementia.

Russell-Williams J, and colleagues. Rev Neurosci. 2018

- Narrative review of the literature found 10 papers. There was a broad use of measures across all studies, with cognitive assessment, quality of life and perceived stress being the most common. Three studies used functional magnetic resonance imaging to measure functional changes to brain regions during meditation.
- The interventions fell into the following three categories: mindfulness, most commonly mindfulness-based stress reduction (six studies); Kirtan Kriya meditation (three studies); and mindfulness-based Alzheimer's stimulation (one study). Three studies were RCTs.
- All studies reported significant findings or trends towards significance in a broad range of measures, including a reduction of cognitive decline, reduction in perceived stress, increase in quality of life, as well as increases in functional connectivity, percent volume brain change and cerebral blood flow in areas of the cortex.



MBSR
EXERCISE
#3



SUMMARY



Attention is a limited brain resource



When stress consumes our attention it interferes with important functions



Being mindful involves holding one's attention in the "here and now" and can reduce stress



Our environment rarely promotes Mindfulness



Mindfulness-based stress reduction is a useful skill for anyone at any age



Research has demonstrated significant benefits in many areas

PRACTICE

