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## Mindful Meditation Practice for Imaging Professionals

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# Mindful Meditation Practice for Imaging Professionals

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## Introduction

Although a career in medical imaging is very fulfilling and rewarding, research shows that health care professionals are becoming more prone to burnout. The healthcare environment can be fast-paced, stressful and demanding. Burnout syndrome results from emotional exhaustion that causes depersonalization and decreased professional accomplishment.<sup>1-3</sup> Burnout can have a negative impact not only on the individual, but the environment as well. Decreased patient satisfaction and increased errors are both associated with burnout in the healthcare setting.<sup>2</sup>

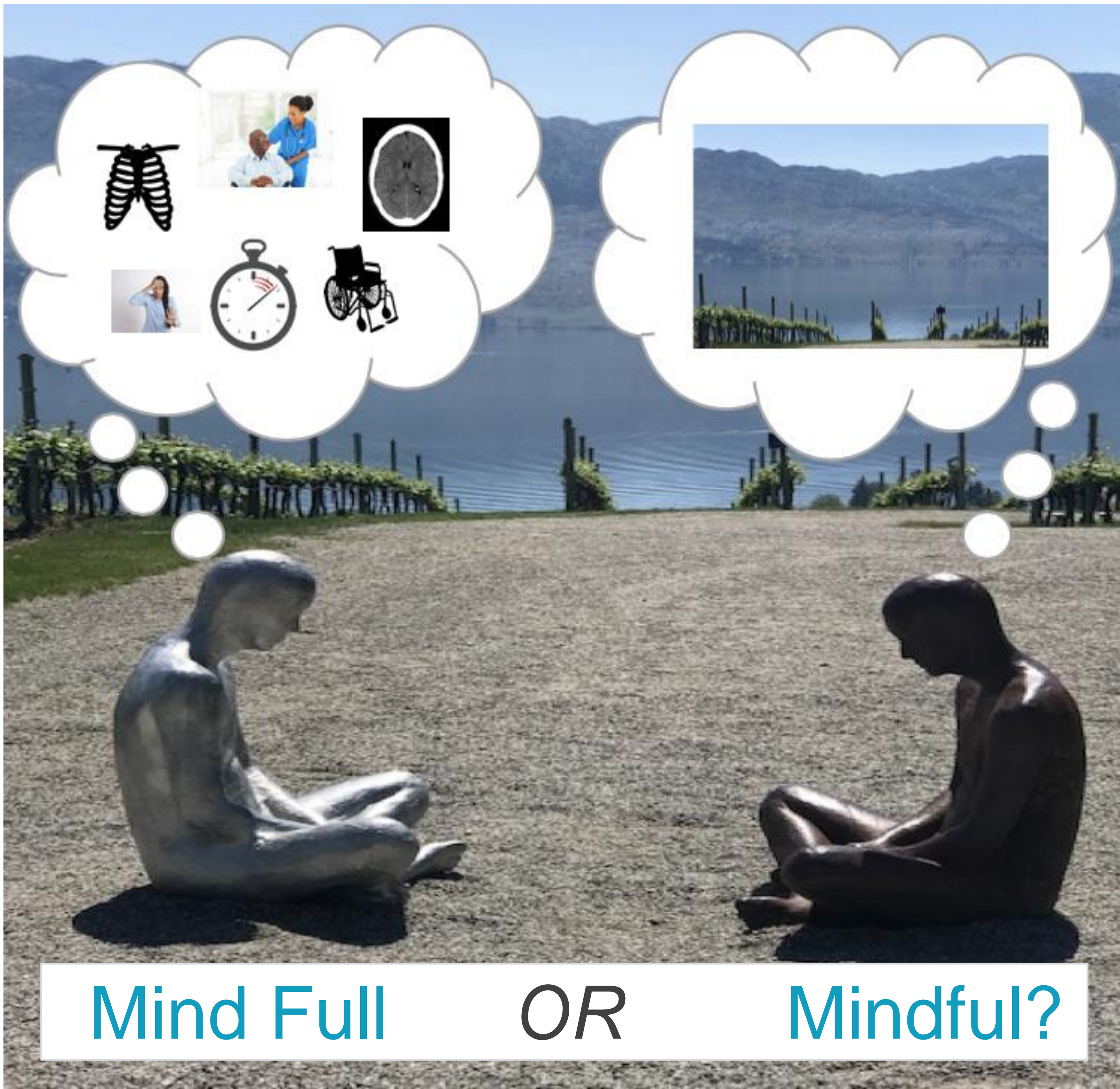
Mindfulness can be defined as the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment.<sup>4</sup> Mindfulness training has been scientifically shown as a method to decrease burnout, improve satisfaction and enhance patient care. Mindful interventions have shown to improve mental, emotional and physical well-being.<sup>2-8</sup> This poster will outline signs of burnout and stress along with information on how to incorporate mindful practice for health care professionals.

## Burnout & Stress<sup>1,3,5,7</sup>

- **Signs of Burnout and Stress:**
  - Emotional Exhaustion
    - Unable to experience emotion related to work
  - Depersonalization
    - Distancing self from patients and others
  - Low level of personal accomplishment when working with others
  - Central Nervous System
    - Imprecise memory, trouble concentrating
  - Musculoskeletal System
    - Tension, clenched jaw
  - Autonomic Nervous System
    - Increased heart rate and blood pressure, digestive issues
  - Anxiety & depression
  - Trouble sleeping
  - Anger/hostility
- **Are you at Risk?**
  - Work Hours: Working > 10 hours per/week of overtime
  - Gender: Risk varies based on the study
  - Profession: Radiographers report lower sense of autonomy than other medical professionals
  - Mentoring: Spending < 10% of time work time mentoring or training students
  - Direct patient contact
  - High patient volume
  - New technology

## How to Practice Mindful Meditation<sup>9</sup>

1. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor.
  2. Relax your eyes, close them if you wish.
  3. Breathe; focus on your breath and take notice of how you are breathing.
  4. Take a deep breath through your nose and then out through your mouth.
  5. Continue to breathe at your own pace.
  6. It is normal for your mind to wander often. Notice where it goes, do not judge it, just bring your focus back to breath.
- \*Meditation time is based on preference; 3-20 minutes daily is recommended.



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## How to be Mindful at Work<sup>10,11</sup>



- Pause before going into a patient's room or before starting an exam.
- Take a few intentional breathes before, during or after a stressful event.
- Stand still and pause when you wash your hands.
- Remove yourself from the situation for 1-2 minutes if there is tension.
- Make it a habit to take a lunch break; get some fresh air if possible.
- Listen intently to your surroundings.

## Benefits of Mindful Meditation<sup>2,3,5-8</sup>

- For individuals
  - Decreased rumination
  - Reduction in anxiety, stress & hostility
  - Boost to working memory
  - Increased ability to focus
  - Improved cognitive flexibility
  - Increased satisfaction in relationships
- In the Healthcare Setting
  - Improved medical decision-making
  - Enhanced patient-centered communication
  - Improved positive emotional tone with patients
  - Increased patient satisfaction
  - Improved work engagement & satisfaction
  - Improved quality & safety
  - Reduced turnover rates

## Conclusion and Future Directions

Mindfulness involves attentiveness, curiosity and presence, which in turn leads to a greater awareness of self and others.<sup>3</sup> A growing body of literature promotes mindful interventions for improving one's mental, emotional and physical well-being.<sup>2-8</sup> Health care professionals are at risk for developing burnout. By adding mindful activities into their daily routines, imaging professionals may reduce their risk of burnout and improve the quality of care they deliver to their patients.