The Integration of Compassion-Based Theory with Biofeedback Treatment

Urszula Klich, Ph.D.
Shepherd Pain Institute
Atlanta, Georgia
(678) 310-8228
Overview

- Introduction
  - Experience with complex medical problems
  - Unique considerations

- Compassion and Meditation Protocols
  - Meditation, and compassion protocols
  - How does biofeedback fit in

- Teaching Breath for Life
  - Case study
  - Compassion fatigue
  - Personal Practice

- Global Compassion Movement
  - The What, Why, and How
  - Charter for compassion
Bringing Compassion into Biofeedback Treatment

Biofeedback practitioners are in a prime position to bridge the gap of technology and wellbeing.
What is Compassion?

• Definitions
  – Latin: “suffer with”
  – Merriam Webster: “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it”
  – Paul Gilbert: “Deep awareness of the suffering of oneself and other living beings, coupled with the wish and effort to alleviate it”
  – Kristen Neff: Common humanity, kindness, and mindfulness

• Components
  – The common experience and interdependence
  – Historically strong associations with doing something to help
Why Compassion?

• Technology, consumerism, has radically changed how we live our lives, relate to others, and understand ourselves. It has become, not only de-centering, but rather dehumanizing.

• This generation: self centered or self preserving?

The bottom line:

People are starving for effective ways to live more consciously
Biofeedback, Mindfulness & Compassion: The Overlap

- **Biofeedback**
  - Entrain successive changes in performance
  - Goal is to train self-awareness & skill

- **Mindfulness-Based Meditation**
  - Awareness
  - Non-Judgement
  - Acceptance

- **Compassion**
  - Use of awareness of self and other, interconnected and empathy

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Mindfulness-Based Meditation

- Growing scientific research
  - Reduction in negative mood states
  - Reduction in perceived pain
  - Increased immune response
  - Activation of left prefrontal cortex
  - Reduced thickening of amygdala

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Compassion as a variable?

- Self-compassion has been found to be a major factor in the therapeutic benefit of mindfulness-based techniques.
- Compassion mitigated stress reduction for health care professionals taking MBSR (Shapiro et al., 2005).
- Increased self-compassion reduced the correlation between cognitive reactivity and depression (Kuyken et al., 2010).
Meditation and Compassion Protocols

- **Mindfulness Based:**
  - MBSR (Jon Kabat-Zinn, 1991)
  - MBCT (Zindel Segal, Mark Williams, John Teasdale, 2002)

- **Compassion Based:**
  - CBCT (Geshe Lobsang Tenzin)
  - CFT (Paul Gilbert, 2010)
  - MSC-(Kristin Neff and Chris Germer, 2012)
  - Loving-Kindness (Sharon Salzberg, 1995)
Lutz, Brefczynski found
- Compassion meditation increases concern for others and enhances processing of emotion and response to distress (sounds of distress of others)
- The state of loving-kindness and compassion is described as an “unconditional readiness and availability to help living beings.”

Davidson et al. (2003) found left-sided anterior activation associated with happiness and increased antibody titers to a flu vaccine, translating into a stronger immune system response to vaccine.

Larose et al. (2010) found reduced perceived stress and burnout, nonsig trend in improvement in absenteeism and turnover, in a Heartmath transforming stress curriculum, 6hr training (4hr & 2hr f/u). N=83 (69%completed both training.)

Kupferschmidt, K. (2013). Tania Singer studies compassion and empathy, concentrating on kindness. Empathy does not imply we have the same emotions as others.
CBCT ongoing Research

- Current Projects
  - CBCT in the community - Berkley 3rd round
  - Medical areas such as dermatology, autism
  - Children, woman’s center camp
  - Schools
  - Woman’s prison

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Metta/Loving Kindness Practice
About “relearning loveliness”

The bud
Stands for all things,
Even for those things that don’t flower,
For everything flowers, from within, of self blessing,
Though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
To put a hand on the brow
Of the flower,
And retell it in words and in touch,
It is lovely
Until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing

-Galway Kinnell
Metta/Loving Kindness Practice

• May I accept my pain, without thinking it makes me bad or wrong.
• May I remember my consciousness is much vaster than this body.
• May all those who have helped me be safe, be happy, be peaceful.
• May all beings everywhere be safe, be happy, be peaceful.
• May my love for myself and others flow boundlessly.
• May the power of loving-kindness sustain me.
• May I open to the unknown, like a bird flying free.
• May I be free of danger, may I be peaceful.
• May I be peaceful and happy, at ease in body and mind.
• May I be free from anger, fear and worry.
• May I live and die in ease.
• May I accept my anger, fear and sadness, knowing that my vast heart is not limited by them.
Compassion fits with Core Objectives of MBB

• Increase somatosensory awareness of bodily sensations/feelings/thoughts
• Increase awareness of choice in responding to situations
• Relapse prevention for mood difficulty
• Promote acceptance of change in bodily functioning
• Facilitate integration of all aspects of the physical, cognitive, and emotional being

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Bringing Compassion into the Treatment room

• Language
  – “Isn't it interesting”
  – Open to loving-kindness statements

• Emphasis
  – Understanding the journey
  – Use experiential learning to understand other’s struggles

• Homework
  – Assessment: Neff Self-Compassion Inventory
  – Physical and emotional discomfort is accompanied by thoughts, which in turn often increase the discomfort
  – Observing gut and reactions to self-talk along with biofeedback-driven goals will likely lead to more effective treatment outcome

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Cultivation of Compassionate Attitude

- Acceptance
- Non-judgment
- Non-attachment
- Beginner's Mind
- Letting Go
- Patience: compassion for self and others
- Observation
- Kindness
- Noting of common experience
- Interdependence

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Compassion Fatigue: Signs

- Avoidance of activities or people
- Self-doubt of ability to help
- Secretly wishing clients don’t show up!
- Irritability, anxiety, depression, or lassitude
- Resenting co-workers or other people
- Missing meetings or forgetting ordinary tasks
- In short, not attending to those things you claim are your priorities
- Decline in relationships, job performance or satisfaction,
- Redirecting clients from emotional material to avoid your distress
- Conflict about how much to work and when to call it a day
- Thoughts of quitting or changing career

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Compassion Fatigue: Contributing Factors

- Nature of the Work
  - Case load and type:
  - Stress and pace of environment
  - Perceived level of support by other colleagues or employers
  - Dwindling resources - client’s needs vs system availability

- Nature of the Client
  - Clients often project intense negative feelings onto us
  - They can be demanding and never satisfied
  - Litigious
  - Working with stress emotions

- Nature of the Helper
  - Work Satisfaction
  - Healthy coping strategies
  - Current life stressors
  - Self and mental health, awareness

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Compassion Fatigue to Compassion Growth

• **Assess**
  – Neff (2003) Self-Compassion Inventory
  – Monitor fatigue and resilience- “Provider Resilience”

• **Address**
  – Self-Care VS Other-care balance
  – Engage Self-Compassion Exercises

*RELAX, RELATE, RELEASE*
Simple Starting Points

- Incorporate during temperature checks
- Quieting reflex
- Hourly 3-second diaphragmatic breath break
- Compassionate self-talk
- Mindfulness of self-judgment in everyday tasks
- How would I treat a friend with this issue
- How would ____ treat themselves
- In a sense get to the “yoga” of self care

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Compassion Growth

Love your enemies video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0HhHLHLHaA
Global Compassion Movement-What?

• Karen Armstrong (2008) was awarded the TED Prize for her work which allowed her to carry out her wish for a better world through starting the Charter for Compassion.

• The mission is to foster cultures of compassion locally and globally through diverse initiatives—education, cities, business, religious and spiritual communities, and the arts.
Global Compassion Movement - Why?

- Why Compassion
  - Secular
  - The heart of all spiritual, religious, and ethical practices
Can we track/map compassion?

http://charterforcompassion.org (Urszula Klich, 2014)
Charter for Compassion - Status

• Over 100,000 people have signed the charter
• 12 universities signed, 20 in process
• 40 cities have signed the charter for compassion
• 232 cities in 39 countries are actively organizing to become compassionate cities
• Close to 900 partners in several sectors (business, education, environment, healthcare, peace, religion, science, research, and soon to be announced in arts).
• Botswana- The world's first country to sign 12/12/3

http://charterforcompassion.org
Overall Goal

Help Yourself,
Help Patients
&
Help Patients Help Themselves
And keep breathing...

(Urszula Klich, 2014)
Recommended Reading
Recommended Websites

http://www.compassion-training.org
http://www.compassionatemind.co.uk
http://www.self-compassion.org
http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org
https://www.MyMindfulWayOfLife.com
References


References


References


