

MINDFULNESS AS A GATEWAY TO SHUN DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE, VIOLENCE, FAILURE TO SUCCEED IN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE PRESSURES OF 24-HOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING.

Mindfulness is the psychological activity or process of purposely bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment without judgment. It is a moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judging them as good or bad.

In this sense, mindfulness is a state and not a trait. Mindfulness practice has been employed to reduce symptoms of depression, to reduce stress, anxiety, and in the treatment of drug addiction and abuse

It involves awareness, which is to me the most powerful self-help tool, Because you can not change what you are not aware of, and impartiality about what we gain from this awareness. In an age of social media, where opinions, likes, and commentary are more than forthcoming, it's easy to see how non-judgmental reflection can be a welcome change.

Research studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between trait (behavior) mindfulness and psychological health. The practice of mindfulness appears to provide therapeutic benefits to people with emotional problems including those with psychosis. Studies also indicate that rumination and worry contribute to the onset of a variety of mental disorders, and that mindfulness-based interventions significantly reduce both rumination and worry. Further, the practice of mindfulness and awareness can be a preventive strategy to halt the development of mental-health problems induced by drugs and alcohol abuse, school violence, Failure, and the pressures of 24-hour social networking amongst others.

Mindfulness is more than just hype. Evidence shows it's a powerful tool for lasting mental and behavioral health change.

"When we become more 'knowing' about our thoughts, feelings, and motivations, amongst other things, we can explore ways to be "kinder, more forgiving, more loving, and spacious with ourselves" (Fronsdal, 2006).

The practice of mindfulness can be utilized to gradually develop self-knowledge and wisdom. To live mindfully is to live in the moment and reawaken oneself to the present, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. Mindfulness is also a healthy way to identify and manage latent emotions that are causing problems in personal or in academic situations. Mindfulness is frequently used in meditation and certain kinds of therapy. It has many positive benefits, including lowering stress levels, reducing harmful ruminating, and protecting against depression and anxiety. Research even suggests that mindfulness can help people better cope with rejection and social isolation.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

Consumption of drugs is said to be abusive if users use them for recreational motives rather than for

their medical benefits. It is also when you use alcohol and other legal substances too much or in the wrong way. Drugs that are consumed for recreational reasons contain psychoactive substances which stimulate feelings and give pleasure or excitement. Statistics show that a large number of youths are involved in this illicit abuse of substances. In 2010 alone, around 210 million people according to world statistics of illicit drug intake, youth inclusive, were predicted to take illicit substances at least once. Youth are at both ends of the drug trade, they are involved from the manufacturing to the consumption, their main positions being traffickers, dealers, and consumers. Study shows that youth within the ages of 18 to 35 years are the most vulnerable to substance abuse in Nigeria, they are the core wall for nation-building and drug is consuming them. So, it is a huge problem and there is need to find a way to deal with it.

Drug abusing youths are vulnerable to horrible health issues that may spiral to death. Due to consumption of illegal substance, youth face various challenges like school dropout, which then later affects their employment chances since they lack adequate education. These young people, most of them turn to the world of crime so that they can be able to maintain their addiction, some become vulnerable to human trafficking. Not only abusers face hardships due to drugs, those that are involved in trafficking and dealing with these substances are prone to jail time because the fight against drugs is at large worldwide, with some countries going to the extent of exercising capital punishment for possession of drugs.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The World Health Organization defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (WHO 2011).

while on the other hand School violence is any activity that can create a disturbance in an educational system. It is not just school shootings and property destruction. It encompasses verbal and physical altercations, bullying through electronic means or social media, threats, victimization, weapon use, or gang activity. School violence can also be seen as a physical or verbal altercation on the way to school, on the way home from school, or at a school-sponsored event that can cause physical or psychological harm to another individual, school, or community. School violence can have an effect on individuals as well, it may result in homicide like school shootings. Also students who are continually bullied may commit suicide, as a result of the pressure and helplessness. School violence is also not limited to the students alone, teachers and non academic staff can be assaulted. Many people involved in school violence suffer from mental anguish and emotional disorder after going through something traumatic. Drug abuse, personality problems, psychological deficiencies created by dysfunctional homes and weak school policies are causes of violence in schools among others.

These issues (violence) have decayed almost every strata of the campus and society, nonetheless the need to adopt mindfulness practices to combat the harm these social vices are causing both to our psychological and physical well-being can not be over said. However The need to engage students in

awareness and mindfulness campaigns is paramount. Students should be counselled and enlightened on anger-management, conflict resolution, character development and a host of other topics that will help to deal with the psychological issues associated with school violence.

FAILURE TO SUCCEED IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

When the late Nelson Mandela, said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" and when Allan Bloom opined "Education is the movement from darkness to light", they surely were not making a jest of words. The fact that the well educated parts of the world are the most updated and developed in virtually all spheres of life cannot be disputed. For these reasons students in tertiary institutions have been striving hard to attain success by all means in order to change their world and society,

They had lofty dreams about life and looked into the future with great expectations. They never thought life could defeat them, so they worked hard and hoped they would win all life's battles. They loved and were loved by others in return and life was indeed good and joyful.

But at a point their dreams began to fade and depression crawled in; situations became tough as academic and life commitments increases, hope gave way to despair while sadness took the place of joy in their hearts. Then came the chiming of suicide; they raced unto it due to their vulnerability, and that was the end of it all. But they left sore notes in their biographies, pains in the hearts of those that loved them and loads of questions for those who didn't even know them but heard about their horrid ends.

Such are the accounts of some Nigerian youths who took their own lives in the recent past in a final effort to escape from life's struggles.

Also in recent times the media have been awashed with stories of suicide in Nigeria's tertiary institutions where students end their precious lives as a result of exam failure, inability to pay bills, unaccomplishment and so on... But regardless of the hurdles and challenges of these presents times, there is room for mindfulness and careful observation of what these acts can cause to people around you. You must be able to adapt to these stressors and remain strong inspite of all. When things get tough and static as they some times do, be mindful and careful not to judge the moment too good or too bad, find an opportunity to speak with a professional and certified counselor / behavior modification therapist to enable you get back up again and help you cope and reduce your stress levels.

THE PRESSURES OF 24-HOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING

Using social media Web sites is among the most common activity of today's youths. Social media Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, snap chat, Instagram, whatsapp, telegram and virtual sites like YouTube and the likes offer youths a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years. As a result of the many advantages and entertainment that it offers, youths are becoming addicted and overburdened by the Pressures of what it offers. For this reason, it is important that individuals become aware and mindful of the nature of social media sites and the effects they can wreak on your psychological well-being given that not all of them are healthy environments for youths. The

verdict is still out on whether social media is damaging to the mental health of youths or not. The fact is a 24-hour social media networking can increase stress levels and is likely to lead one into cyber depression.

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