

THE ISSUE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA – THE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS ON PEOPLE SUFFERED BY COVID-19

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Received: 06/12/2024; Reviewed: 14/12/2024; Revised: 18/12/2024; Accepted: 03/01/2025; Released: 28/02/2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54163/ncdt/410>

Humans always question whether their lives can exist in the existing world and the non-existing world. Among the myriad of things to know, there is the issue of mindfulness. Among the myriad of things to know, there is the issue of mindfulness. Whether or not mindfulness will heal all the wounds and helplessness of humans in the struggle with nature and society. Due to lack of information and science, humans are subjected to pressure from events and traumas that often lead to fear, despair and loss of self. Mindfulness practice can support individuals to reconnect with and recover from losses related to Covid-19. Depending on factors such as historical, geographical and cultural context, interventions may vary in content, but mindfulness may help increase stress resilience and improve psychosocial health in globally stressful situations such as pandemics. First of all, to improve oneself and then to contribute to the general awareness of the worldview and philosophy of life in a scientific dialectical way, the article “The issue of psychological trauma - The effects of mindfulness on humans who have suffered loss after Covid-19” with the desire to accumulate and fully and correctly perceive the nature of mindfulness and the role of mindfulness in social life. At the same time, accumulating and building for yourself a suitable intellectual style and a determination to respond to the liberal education in Vietnam in the current era of globalization.

Keywords: *Mindfulness; Covid-19; Outlook on life; Psychological trauma.*

1. Introduction

Psychological trauma and the effects of mindfulness on people who have suffered loss after Covid-19 have been issues of concern to scientists, researchers and the whole society in recent times. Therefore, correctly understanding the nature and role of mindfulness in social life is a very necessary issue, accordingly, mindfulness following the Covid-19 pandemic has been shown to be effective for both health professionals and the general population in creating health, reducing psychological distress and improving immune function, in addition to reducing the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms and preventing the onset of chronic mental disorders. Furthermore, implementing mindfulness through technological means will also be an effective alternative in expanding accessibility to the general population in the context of social distancing. Mindfulness practice can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress in both people in general and health professionals, thus promoting positive effects on the quality of life of these individuals.

2. Research overview

According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), from December 2019 to April 2023, more than 762 million confirmed cases of Covid-19 and more than 6.8 million deaths were reported globally (World Health Organization, 2024). In Vietnam, since the beginning of the epidemic, there have been 11,624,114 infections, ranking 13th out of 231 countries and territories, while with the rate of infections per 1 million

people, Vietnam ranks 120th out of 231 countries and territories (on average, there are 117,470 infections per 1 million people) (Ministry of Health, 2022).

Experts and researchers have affirmed that the Covid-19 crisis will last for a long time, possibly a century, the damage in society may not be fully recovered. Covid-19 has caused a devastating public health crisis. The coronavirus disease has taken many lives, leaving behind physical injuries and psychological suffering not only for infected patients but also seriously affecting individuals who are subject to social distancing or those responsible for it, leading to symptoms such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, stress and changes in circadian rhythms. In this stressful situation, mindfulness-based interventions (MBI - Interventions based on mindfulness) have been shown to be a potentially powerful tool in reducing psychological distress and promoting well-being during and after the stress period (J. Hum. Growth Dev, 2022).

The use of mindfulness techniques in people with impaired mental health due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been shown to be beneficial, with improvements in emotional stress scores and reductions in anxiety symptoms, through formal mindfulness meditation practices such as mindful breathing, body scanning and application of the mindfulness-based stress reduction strategy (MBSR - Application of the mindfulness - based stress reduction strategy). Strategies are also applied through smartphone applications with the goal of promoting increased mindfulness and developing non-judgmental acceptance of traumatic

experiences. In addition to integrated internet-based interventions or practices using electronic Health with the use of mindfulness, respiratory relaxation training, shelter skills, healing of psychological trauma (Matiz A, Fabbro F, Paschetto A, Cantone D, Paolone AR, Crescentini C, 2020).

3. Research method

Psychological trauma and mindfulness are social phenomena that are not simple and decentralized. Such diversity, multi-facetedness and multi-function have led some people to equate mindfulness in religion with politics, ethics, philosophy, culture, medicine..., this makes it impossible for us to use any specific method to study mindfulness. From identifying the research object of mindfulness, the article analyzes, synthesizes and systematically evaluates through the main methods of philosophy, religious researchs and some specific scientific fields as follows:

(1) Dialectical materialist methodology on the relationship between social existence and social consciousness. This method allows understanding the origin and nature of mindfulness.

(2) The specific historical method helps to understand the role and existence of mindfulness in each specific period; thereby having objective and scientific assessments of mindfulness.

(3) Structural and functional methods to help us see the position of each type of function (main, specific, ...) of mindfulness.

(4) The method of considering mindfulness comes from the need for belief: Mindfulness is an inevitable product of social history. The birth of mindfulness is to meet the need for religious beliefs or the need to compensate for human losses and injuries. The consideration of the need for mindfulness is placed in relation to human activities and benefits.

(5) The unity in the analysis of mindfulness from a philosophical and sociological perspective helps to fully explain and see the role of mindfulness in social values.

In addition to the above methods of religious research, mindfulness also uses other methods, such as: logical and historical methods, causal methods...

4. Research result

4.1. The issue of psychological trauma after Covid-19 and the concept of mindfulness

4.1.1. Psychological trauma

Psychological trauma comes from injury, which is the result of experiencing a stressful situation to the point that the individual is emotionally and physically overwhelmed and leave lasting effects and consequences. According to John W. Barnhill, a psychiatrist from New York - Presbyterian Hospital, when people experience a traumatic event or loss, it will cause stress disorder, a developmental disability disorder. Stress makes people susceptible

to anxiety, depression, disconnection, illness, drains human energy, weakens health and maybe shorten life (John W. Barnhill, 2023).

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented social and health challenges globally. Unusual symptoms in normal people often infected with the virus (Ho Chi Minh City Department of Health, 2023) such as:

(1) Startled by the sound of the ambulance siren.

(2) Suddenly feel pain with invisible, unstructured pain.

(3) Often feel short of breath, air hunger, difficulty breathing, prolonged insomnia, fatigue, irritability, irritation, discomfort.

(4) Neurological sequelae such as anxiety disorders, depression, forgetfulness and lack of concentration appear.

According to the report of the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Health in 2023, psychological trauma causes many physical and mental consequences (Ho Chi Minh City Department of Health, 2023), such as:

First, the impact on the central nervous system: Changes can cause brain atrophy, brain degeneration, memory loss and reduced cognitive and learning abilities.

Second, impact on the immune system: Weakening the immune system, people with psychological trauma lose resistance and to be susceptible to other diseases.

Third, effecting on the cardiovascular system: Hypotension, tachycardia, increased blood pressure. Psychological trauma can affect coronary artery spasm, causing chest pain, and even myocardial infarction, cerebral congestion, or hypoxia.

Fourth, it affects the digestive system: Disrupting secretion and acid in the digestive tract, leading to stomach ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome...

Fifth, the impact on the endocrine system: The pituitary gland, adrenal gland, thyroid gland, pancreas, adrenaline system in the body are all negatively affected by psychological trauma.

Other common symptoms include decreased sexual ability, stomach pain, nightmares, anxiety, restlessness, panic attacks, depression, irritability, errors in speech and writing, loss of appetite, changes in appetite, craving for stimulants and lack of physical activity (Barbara O'Brien, 2024).

People with serious mental illness are at particular risk during this period, as the public mental health system will be central to providing care for them. However, human resources are inadequate to provide constructive peer support, supportive therapy and early mental health interventions to improve the quality of their care, both for themselves and their patients. It is important to remember that mass chaos and panic caused by uncertainty about

the disease and maybe cause more damage than the virus itself. With the growing fear of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is time for psychiatrists to try to integrate health care services to keep mental health at the epicenter (Kabat-Zinn J, 2013).

Early identification of distress and timely psychological intervention can not only prevent crises at the time of a pandemic but also help prevent its spread. Specific responses to emotional distress in isolated adults and children also need to be reconsidered when designing psychological intervention strategies to respond to Covid-19 pandemic. Being vigilant about the health of older adults in long-term care facilities is essential not only for their own health but also to protect the health care system from being overwhelmed by a resurgence of severe Covid-19 cases.

4.1.2. Concepts of mindfulness

Mindfulness, in modern psychology, to be commonly understood in English as Mindfulness. Many scientists support the hypothesis that mindfulness (defined by a two-factor structure consisting of present-focused attention and acceptance of experience) contributes to clarifying one's experiences, which improves the ability to manage negative emotions. On the other hand, a person's inner life, the ability to manage negative emotions, non-attachment (or the degree to which a person's happiness is not dependent on specific outcomes and events) and reflection in the relationship between mindfulness and two aspects of mental health, psychological distress and flourishing mental health. The results confirmed the importance of these mediators in the relationship between mindfulness and mental health.

Mindfulness (Pali: "sati", Sanskrit: "smriti") is an important Buddhist concept (Barbara O'Brien, 2024). According to Buddhism, "chanh" means true and "niem" means to remember, which means "chanh" means to remember true things. For the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, mindfulness means maintaining awareness of every task that we are experiencing and living with in every present moment. Mindfulness is specifically understood as when a person focuses all of his or her emotions, feelings and thoughts on an object or event without any judgment. Mindfulness is the ability to focus and generate electricity within a person to continue living and being fully aware of the present, including thoughts, emotions, body states and surroundings.

In the Satipatthana Bible, Satipatthana is often translated as "the foundation of mindfulness", as "the way of establishing mindfulness". Traditionally, there are four mindfulnesses of body, feelings, mind and mental objects. There is one element in the Satipatthana Bible that stands out because of its frequent repetition. It is a refrain that appears thirteen different times in the discourse, following each specific meditation instruction

related to the four foundations of mindfulness. In this way, with regard to the body (feelings, mind, phenomena) one lives contemplating the body (feelings, mind, phenomena) internally, or one lives contemplating (each) externally, or one lives contemplating (each) both internally and externally. One lives contemplating the nature of arising in the body (feelings, mind, mental objects)... the nature of passing away in (each)... or the nature of both arising and passing away in (each). Mindfulness that "there is body" (feelings, mind, mental objects) is established in one to the extent necessary for bare perception and continuous mindfulness. And one lives independently, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how one lives, contemplating (each) one with regard to the body (feelings, mind and phenomena) (Barbara O'Brien, 2024).

In order to make it easier to understand, Vietnamese Buddhism explains that the Body includes breathing, posture, movement and sensations in the body, belonging to the four elements: earth (hard or heavy), water (liquid or cohesive), wind (movement, tension, pressure) and fire (hot or cold); Feeling includes pleasant, unpleasant or neutral experiences; Mind includes thoughts, emotions and consciousness (the "knowing"); Dharma includes all other objects, usually seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.

Mindfulness is concerned only with reality and not with form and concept. For example, "my arm hurts", instead of getting stuck in the pain with our arm, we simply slow down and perceive the pain from a different perspective so that we can overcome that pain threshold. Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways through actions in life, including sitting meditation or walking meditation. Through mindfulness, we see the true nature of all phenomena, practicing walking meditation in our lives will help us reduce stress and anxiety and bring us back to a more peaceful and joyful reality.

Mindfulness researchers have estimated that 40% to 50% of adults experience psychological distress following the Covid-19 outbreak and 30% of adults and children are at risk of post-traumatic stress (Matiz A, Fabbro F, Paschetto A, Cantone D, Paolone AR, Crescentini C, 2020). On the other hand, psychological distress that develops during the pandemic can cause negative changes in individuals' psychological health throughout their lives, so interventions become necessary to promote effective psychological support. Given this stressful situation, mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) have proven to be potentially suitable tools in alleviating psychological distress and create welfare for the people in general associated with mindfulness meditation practice, adapted from the Buddhist tradition and incorporated into modern psychotherapy programs, which is considered an emerging psychotherapeutic approach today that deals with specific qualities of attention and

awareness. Mindfulness is defined as an individual being aware in a specific way, with consciousness and purpose in the present experience. It is a state of awareness and attention that sees reality with open, tolerant and non-judgmental experience, adjusting the relationship with experience, experiencing it as it is, with generosity and kindness.

There are many ways to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of relaxed, alert, focused awareness by intentionally paying attention to thoughts and feelings without judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment. All mindfulness techniques are a form of meditation. (Jill Emanuele, Joanna Stern, Dave Anderson, 2024).

4.2. Overview of mindfulness practice techniques

4.2.1. "Mindfulness is not complicated", trying to focus our thoughts and live in the present moment

Focusing our thoughts and being present in the present moment can bring a sense of clarity and calm. It allows us to fully engage with the world around us and appreciate the beauty of life. Now let's take a moment to quiet our minds and focus on our breathing. We may be surprised at how peaceful it is to be present in the present moment.

"Mindfulness is not complicated" is suggested by Dr. Jill Emanuele, Senior Director of the Mood Disorders Center at the Child Mind Institute with some simple activities (Jill Emanuele et al., 2024):

(1) Muscle Tightening: Starting at your toes, choose a muscle and tighten it. Count to five. Relax and notice how your body changes. Repeat the exercise moving up your body.

(2) Belly breathing: Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Slowly inhale from your belly (inflating like a balloon) and slowly exhale from your belly (deflating).

(3) Mindful eating: Pay attention to the smell, taste and appearance of your food. No multitasking.

(4) Meditate: Sit in a comfortable, relaxed position. Choose something to focus on, such as your breathing. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breathing.

(5) Blow bubbles: Notice their shape, texture and color.

(6) Color: Color something. Focus on color and pattern.

(7) Listen to music: Focus on the entire song or listen specifically to a voice or instrument.

4.2.2. Mindfulness becomes a natural reflex of the body

Remembering and taking time for mindfulness becomes a habit. This helps us feel more grounded and focused, allowing us to tackle challenges with a clear mind. This means it's even more important to intentionally create space to recharge. Dr. Emanuele (clinical expert) said deciding to set aside

time each day to practice mindfulness activities is a great place to start. "Morning, before everyone else is awake, can be a great time to really work on yourself". Morning mindfulness can help set the tone for the rest of the day and recommends: "Do some deep breathing, meditation, exercise, whatever mindfulness activity works for you". Mindfulness doesn't have to be complicated: "You can try mindful eating or mindful drinking with a cup of coffee. Just sit there and enjoy the present moment. That's mindfulness. Taking five minutes to do it before the day starts is even more important because this is not our normal routine and we will feel very uncomfortable."

4.2.3. Limit multitasking at the same time

Nowadays, we may feel like trying to do ten things at once is the only way to get anything done. However, Dr. Joanna Stern explains that multitasking is rarely effective and can actually increase stress. For example, schedule work calls during naptime, allow your toddler a little extra screen time while you prepare dinner or have your older child help fold laundry while you finish cleaning.

4.2.4. Making mindfulness a family practice

It can be helpful to incorporate mindfulness exercises into our family routines. Practicing mindfulness as a family can help improve emotional regulation and promote feelings of connectedness. Taking time to practice mindfulness activities as a family can help everyone feel less anxious. It could be a daily family yoga session or a quiet group walk in the forest, taking time to focus on the feel of the air, the sounds of the birds and the smells of the trees. Another great idea for family mindfulness is to ask everyone to mention one good thing they heard or saw at dinner that day.

4.2.5. Learn to accept and be at peace with an uncertain future

Embracing the power, making room for uncertainty. The uncertain future is infinite. The unknown can be difficult, but it has great potential. Choosing to let go of fear and doubt and allowing yourself to flow with life. Making peace with uncertainty and discovering the magic that lies within. More specifically, situations where we are faced with extreme uncertainty, where we don't know what will happen, how long it will last or what will happen when it's over. However, one thing we do know is that worrying about it won't change the outcome. Learning to tolerate uncertainty is an important part of building healthy coping skills for ourselves, which we then want to model for our children. Dr. Anderson warned that "Right now, it's easy to let your brain spin with scary possibilities". "Mindfulness practice helps bring us back to the present and away from the brink" (Jill Emanuele, Joanna Stern, Dave Anderson, 2024).

Mindfulness is cultivated through mindfulness meditation, a systematic method of focusing our

attention. We can learn meditation by ourselves by following instructions in books or on the internet. However, we can benefit from the support of a science mentor or specialized team to answer questions and help us stay motivated. Finding someone who uses meditation in a way that fits your beliefs and goals.

If someone has a medical condition, he or she may prefer a medically oriented program combined with meditation. Asking your doctor or hospital about local community health groups.

4.3. The impact of mindfulness measures

Of the 104 references screened, 52 were read by title and abstract. Nineteen articles were read in full, leaving a total of 14 articles for analysis to assess the benefits of mindfulness for people directly or indirectly affected by Covid-19 (Bergomi. C. et al, 2013) as:

(1) Stabilizing psychology, restoring health after psychological trauma.

(2) Mindfulness training helps working memory.

(3) Greater attention ability. Efficiency comes from focus, selective attention.

(4) Improving mental health, helping avoid depression relapse. Mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy has been shown to have positive effects on symptoms of anxiety disorders. One can observe one's own emotions and mental processes, step back from oneself and perceive them as fleeting events. Don't get caught up in emotions and thoughts and forget the present and surroundings (John W. Barnhill, 2023).

(5) Reducing stress, emotional regulation. People are able to focus more on the present even when there are unpleasant emotional stimulations.

(6) Experience the present moment with more balanced and accepting thoughts and emotions. This helps balance brain activity, which helps: Reducing life stress, working burnout; Improving sleep; Supporting life improvement with chronic diseases: diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic pain... (Karmel W. Choi, K. Nishimi, 2022).

5. Discussion

This article approaches a complex and decentralized problem, so the quality and method of analysis, evaluation and systematization vary greatly. Reviews based on hundreds of previous researchs, screening, application across researchs still make it difficult to synthesize and interpret the results.

The quality of researchs needs to continue to improve in the future, especially regarding the standardization of the constructs, assumptions and actual outcomes of mindfulness-based healing practices with utility modeling with common outcome measures of quality-adjusted life years and social assessment perspectives.

However, research has only captured some

aspects of mindfulness with the ability to recover from psychological trauma in adulthood under the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss many new issues in the new context of promoting recovery and supporting mental health after traumatic exposure for healthy and long-lived young adults.

Mindfulness is needed as an effective capacity development method in the workplace with human resources and employees who are under pressure and stress by bringing Mindfulness courses to the organization. However, overusing mindfulness practice risks reducing our ability to experience reality. Many researchs also show that in rare cases, mindfulness can aggravate underlying psychiatric symptoms such as hallucinations, derealization and depersonalization.

It is also important that we stay away from misinformation and take responsibility for what we share on social media platforms. Information from media and social networks needs to be tightly controlled and community-supportive psychological interventions promoted globally. Psychological support for those on the front lines and affected by Covid-19 needs to be prioritised and made more accessible.

6. Conclusion

Mindfulness following the Covid-19 pandemic has been shown to be effective for both health experts and the population in general in creating health, reducing psychological distress, and improving immune function, in addition to reducing the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms and preventing the onset of chronic mental disorders. Furthermore, implementing mindfulness through technological means will also be an effective alternative in expanding accessibility to the general population in the context of social distancing. Mindfulness practice can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress in both the population in general and health experts, thus promoting positive effects on the quality of life of these individuals.

It is important to realize that mindfulness is not a core practice, a religious tenet, or a progressive science, but it is only simply awareness. There are many religious or medical traditions that do not use this technique. But it's worth experimenting, even for a short time, in order to see if it's actually helpful for our practice. We should also understand its limitations. Noting is not to be used as an intellectual reflection and should be kept to a single, silent word. Researchers also recommend that mindfulness concepts and practices used and should only be pursued to the extent that they generate knowledge that is beneficial to life and it is not exceeded, as notions that exceed their limits can lead to metaphysics of substance. Taking concepts too far simply reinforces our view of reality and we are bound by mental constructs of our own making.

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VẤN ĐỀ SANG CHẨN TÂM LÝ - TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA CHÁNH NIỆM VỚI NHỮNG NGƯỜI BỊ MẤT MÁT SAU COVID-19

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Nhận bài: 06/12/2024; Phân biên: 14/12/2024; Tác giả sửa: 18/12/2024; Duyệt đăng: 03/01/2025; Phát hành: 28/02/2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54163/ncdt/410>

Con người luôn tự vấn về sự sống của mình là có thể hay không thể tồn tại thế giới hiện hữu và thế giới phi hiện hữu. Con người thường hướng tới nhận thức chân thật về sự sống và chất lượng cuộc sống. Trong vô vàn những điều cần biết đó, có vấn đề chánh niệm. Có hay không sự chánh niệm sẽ chữa lành hết những vết thương, những sự bất lực của con người trong cuộc đấu tranh với tự nhiên và xã hội. Do thiếu hụt thông tin và khoa học, con người phải chịu áp lực từ những sự kiện và tổn thương thường dẫn đến sợ hãi, tuyệt vọng và đánh mất bản thân. Thực hành chánh niệm có thể hỗ trợ các cá nhân tự kết nối và phục hồi sau những mất mát liên quan đến Covid-19. Tùy thuộc vào các yếu tố như bối cảnh lịch sử, địa lý và văn hóa, các biện pháp can thiệp có thể khác nhau về nội dung, nhưng chánh niệm có thể giúp tăng khả năng phục hồi căng thẳng và cải thiện sức khỏe tâm lý xã hội trong các tình huống căng thẳng toàn cầu như đại dịch. Trước hết là hoàn thiện bản thân và kể đến là để góp thêm nhận thức chung về thế giới quan, nhân sinh quan một cách biện chứng khoa học, bài viết "Vấn đề sang chẩn tâm lý - Những tác động của chánh niệm với những người bị mất mát sau Covid-19" với mong muốn tích lũy và nhận thức đủ và đúng bản chất của chánh niệm, vai trò của chánh niệm trong đời sống xã hội. Đồng thời, tích lũy, xây dựng cho mình một phong tri thức phù hợp, một nghị lực để đáp ứng cho nền giáo dục khai phóng ở Việt Nam trong thời kỳ toàn cầu hóa hiện nay.

Từ khóa: Chánh niệm; Covid-19; Nhân sinh quan; Sang chẩn tâm lý.