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## **An Application of the Christ-Centered Mindfulness and Acceptance Based Therapy in a Christian Context**

Authors review the problem of mindfulness and acceptance based interventions (MABI) application in the Christian context. MABIs have become known as the third wave of behavioral therapy for more than a decade now. These interventions have increasingly been used to treat clients with mood, anxiety, attention deficit, psychosis, and substance use disorders. Growing research in this area have often shown positive treatment outcomes, though specific conditions and processes leading to symptom reduction have not been well established and necessitates further research

As an alternative to cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), MABIs have also shown promising outcomes in individuals from diverse cultures and ethnic minority populations. Reviews of empirical studies on patients involved in Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) showed that relapse rates were reduced among individuals with three or more episodes of depression, where both symptomatic and psychosocial outcomes were improved.

At the same time the concern has been expressed amongst Christians in the mental health circle about applying mindfulness in therapy due to the connections that mindfulness courses have with Buddhist teachings and themes.

The authors of this article discuss how mindfulness and acceptance based interventions represent a set of tools that can be helpful in treating Christian clients. Mindfulness pioneers' strived to make mindfulness accessible for individuals from any religious or philosophical worldview including professionals and lay people, and in so doing, their MBCT programs have been removed from the Buddhist context. In this article the authors discuss how therapists can apply MBCT techniques to facilitate clients' dialogue with God, so that they experience forgiveness, and restoration. Christian tradition is full of contemplative, meditative, and centering prayers that contain aspects of mindfulness and acceptance. They are part of a Judeo-Christian heritage and these Christian practices pre-date Buddhism.

It is well noted that prayer becomes central in the situations of suffering and pain. Christians who deal with suffering may experience extreme negative emotions, which they often pour out to God in emotional prayers and lament. Lament sometimes referred to as the "language of the soul," spoken by Christ himself. In such situations MBCT can potentially facilitate clients' present-centered awareness of trauma-related emotions as well as their God-given breath as clients continue their open dialogue with God. In such situations clients can also practice non-judgmental observation of their experience, compassion, and self- and other- forgiveness, which are all natural elements of MBCT, many of which were modelled by Christ himself.

The purpose of this article is to give an overview and definition of mindfulness and its core practice guidelines. The authors also clarify how MABI are amenable to integrating with a Christ-centered perspective. In particular, the authors provide an explanation of how

MABI (a) is consistent with Biblical teaching, (b) can help to facilitate forgiveness and restoration process in the situations of suffering and pain.

**Key words:** mindfulness, acceptance, integration, Christian counselling, Christ-centered therapy.