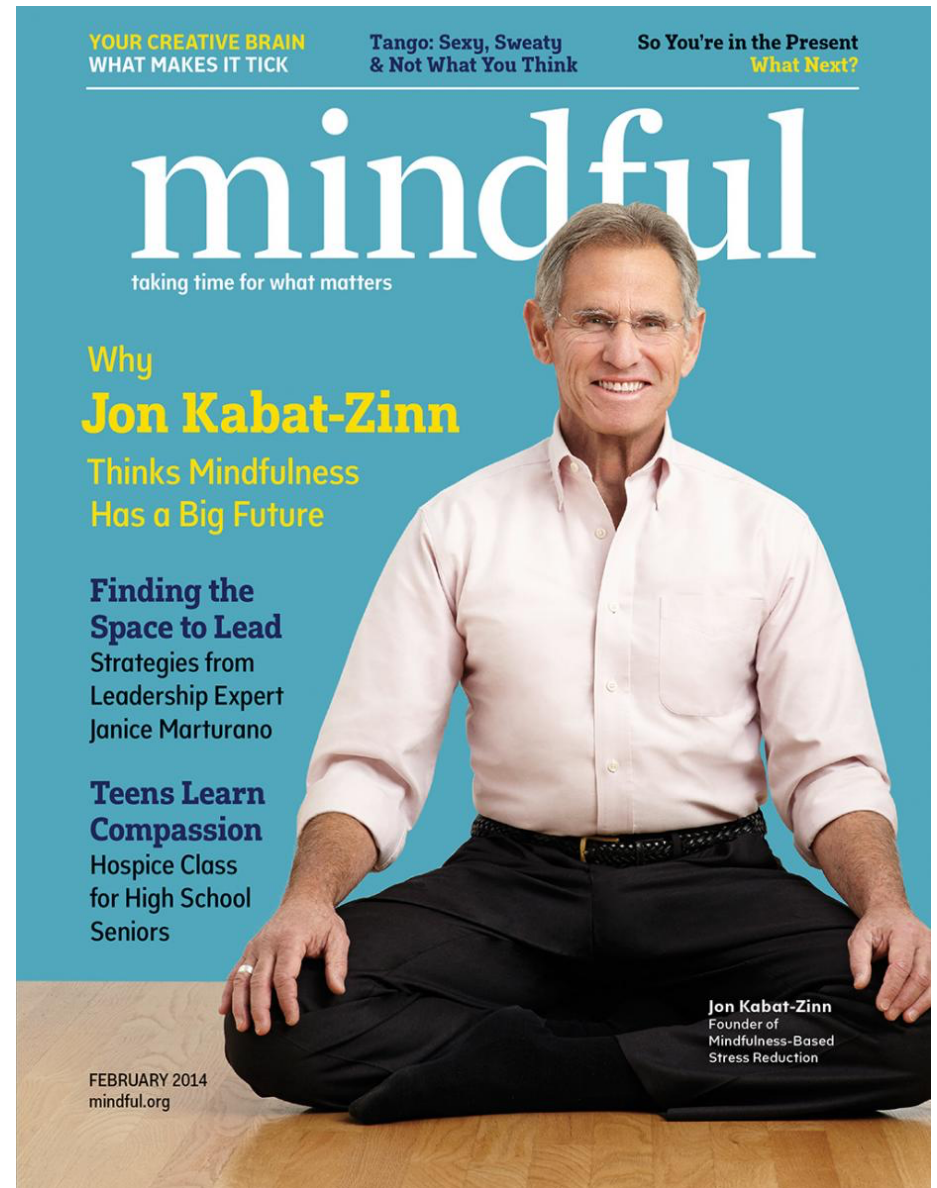
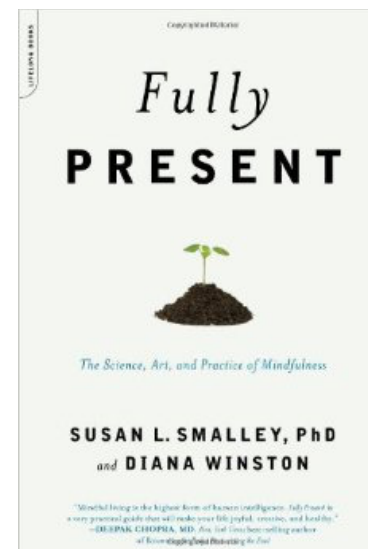
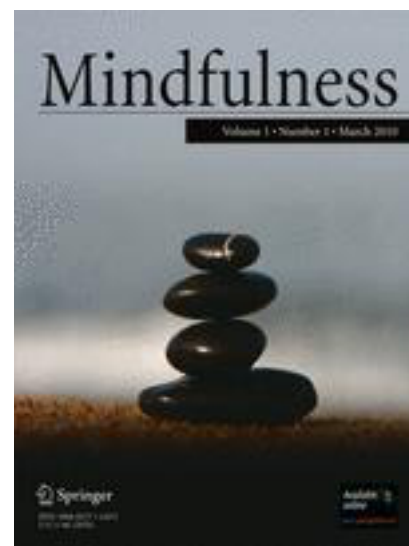


# Using Mindfulness in Schools:

## Promoting Psychological Flexibility to Improve Outcomes

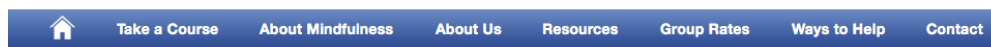
Tyler L. Renshaw, Ph.D., NCSP  
Louisiana State University





# HUFF POST MINDFULNESS RESEARCH

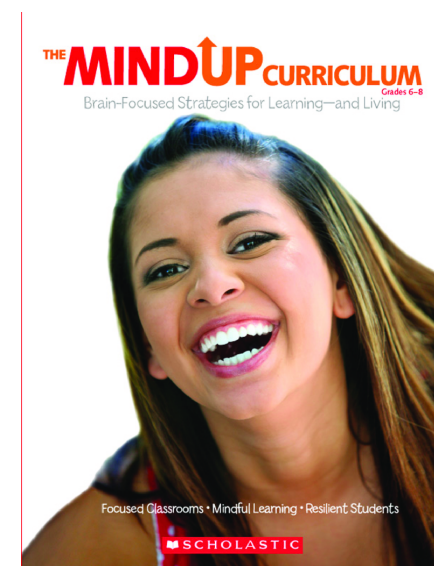
## Mindful Schools



### Training the world's educators in mindfulness

Online and in-person courses for adults to learn mindfulness and use it with youth.

Join graduates from 60 countries who have reached over 200,000 youth.



Mindfulness  $\neq$



Mindfulness =



# Take Home Messages

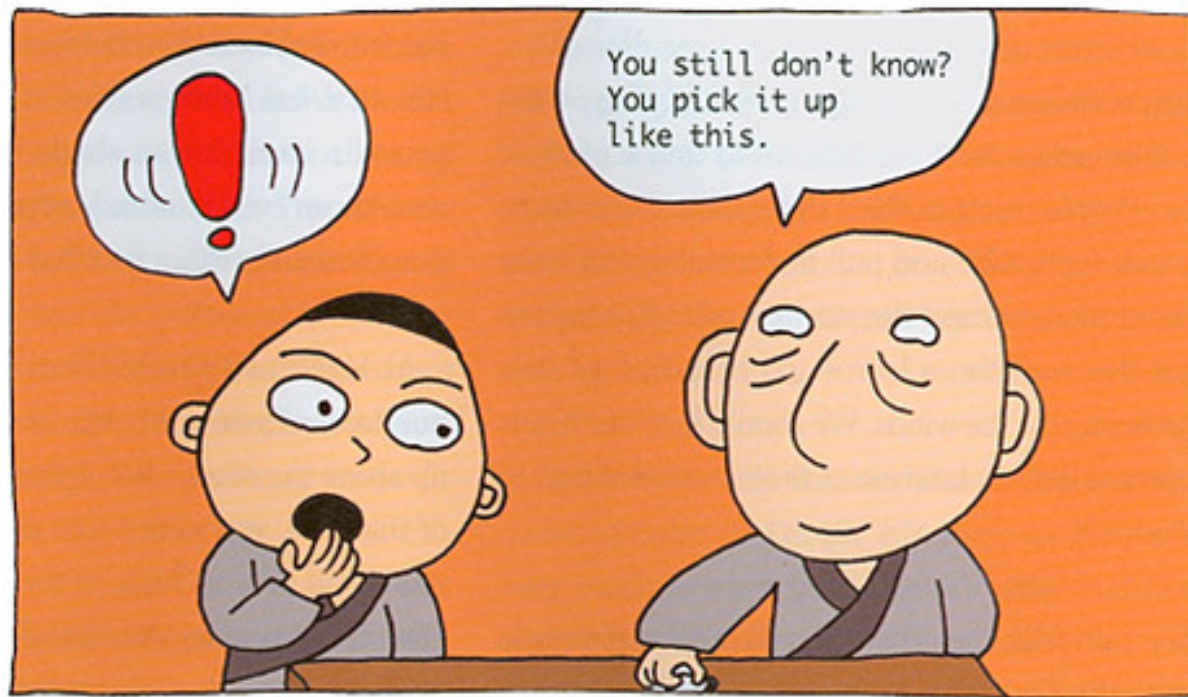
1. Mindfulness is behavior—and, thus, a skillset that can be learned like any other skill.
2. Mindfulness is made up of three sub-skills—(a) contact with the present moment, (b) acceptance, and (c) defusion
3. Mindfulness training is a multi-purpose intervention—reducing a variety of problem behaviors and increasing several wellbeing behaviors
4. Mindfulness works by promoting psychological flexibility—disrupting inflexible and habitual avoidance responding
5. Mindfulness meshes well with school psychology—having utility within the problem-solving model and multitiered systems of supports

# Mindfulness is Behavior

- Cognitive/neuroscientific perspective:
  - The mind is “**a process that regulates the flow of energy and information**” within an individual person as well as between a person and his or her environment (Siegel, 2007, p. 5).
  - Mind is located in the brain.
- \*Functional/behavioral perspective:
  - “Cognitive psychologists like to say that ‘the mind is what the brain does,’ but surely the rest of the body plays a part. The mind is what the body does. It is what the person does. **In other words, it is behavior**, and that is what behaviorists have been saying for more than half a century” (Skinner, 1987, p. 784).
  - Mind is located in the person-environment interaction



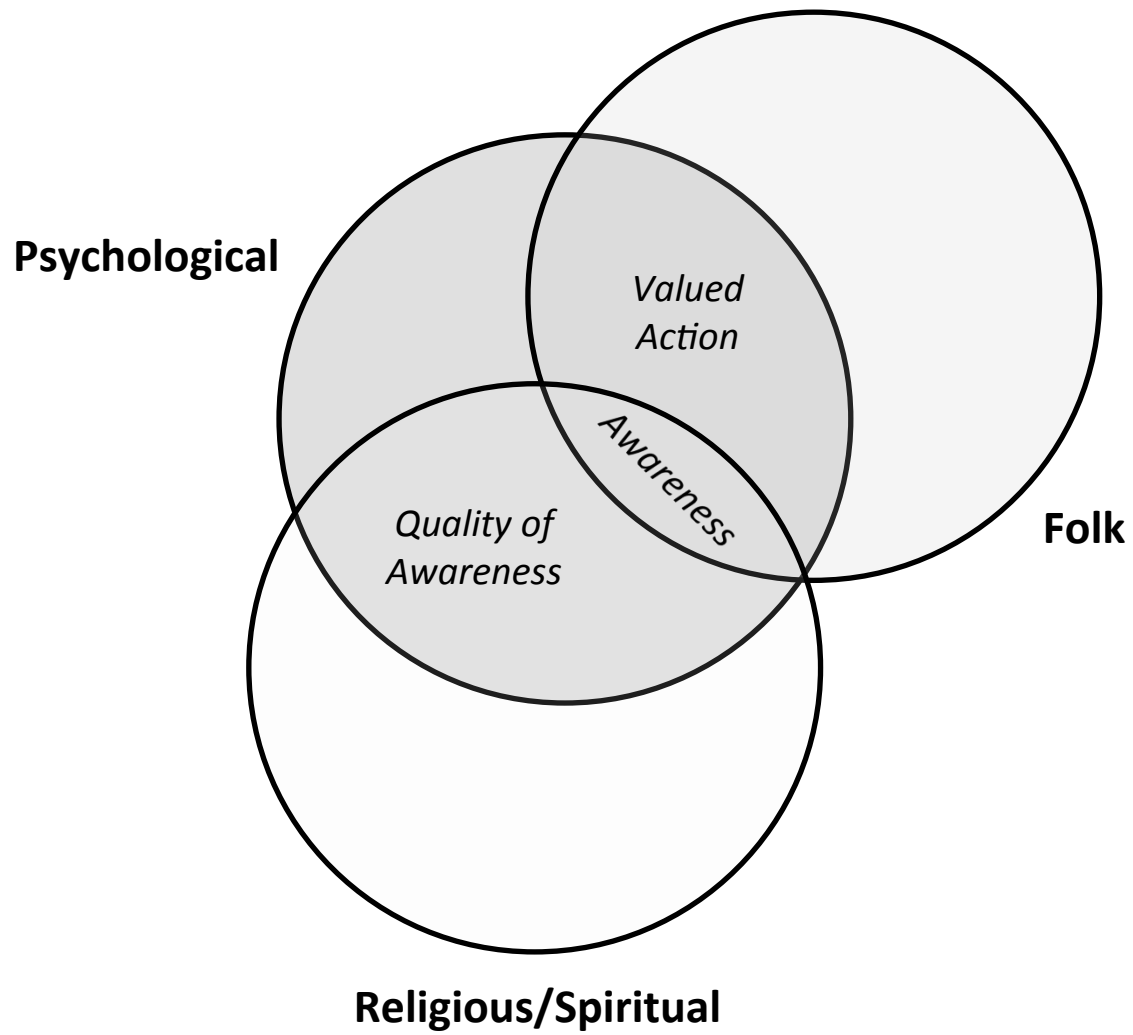






# Mindfulness is Behavior

- “Mindfulness” as behavior has three cultural conceptualizations
  - Folk
  - Religious/spiritual
  - \*Psychological
- 3 core features
  - Awareness: F, R/S, \*P
  - Quality of awareness: R/S, \*P
  - Function of awareness: F, \*P



# Mindfulness is Made Up of Three Sub-Skills

- To be learned, features must be operationalized into skills
  1. Contact with the present moment
  2. Acceptance of internal experience
  3. Defusion with internal experience
- In lay-person language:
  1. Noticing the little things happening right now
  2. Being friendly to your thoughts and feelings
  3. Watching your thoughts and feelings come-and-go

# Mindfulness is Made Up of Three Sub-Skills

- All sub-skills can be trained using literal exercises
  1. Mindful check-in
  2. Mindful breathing
  3. Mindful listening/seeing/movement etc.
- Acceptance and defusion can be trained using metaphorical exercises (training wheels)
  1. Thoughts-and-feelings snowball fight
  2. Taking your mind for a walk
  3. “Milk-milk-milk-milk-milk!”
  4. Don’t do what Simon says

# Mindfulness Training is a Multi-Purpose Intervention

- Group-design studies with youth (mostly classrooms)
  - Mindfulness ( $n = .34, g = .34$ )
  - Emotional regulation ( $n = 17, g = .27$ )
  - Attention ( $n = 11, g = .37$ )
  - Cognitive skills ( $n = 18, g = .29$ )
  - Depression ( $n = 14, g = .27$ )
  - Anxiety ( $n = 15, g = .20$ )
  - Stress ( $n = 11, g = .34$ )
  - Subjective wellbeing ( $n = 17, g = .27$ )
  - Prosocial behavior ( $n = 15, g = .23$ )
  - Externalizing problems ( $n = 14, g = .15$ )
  - Physical health ( $n = 13, g = .26$ )
  - Total problems ( $n = 18, g = .46$ )
  - Follow-up ( $n = 19, g = .40$ )
  - Overall ( $N = 53, g = .29$ )

(Renshaw, Klingbeil, et al., 2015)



# Mindfulness Training is a Multi-Purpose Intervention

- Singe-case-design studies with youth (at-risk/clinical-level individuals)
  - Overall disruptive behavior, post-treatment ( $N = 10, g = 1.06$ )
  - Overall disruptive behavior, follow-up ( $N = 10, g = 2.61$ )

(Klingbeil, Fischer, Renshaw, et al., 2015)

# Mindfulness Training is a Multi-Purpose Intervention

- Group-design studies with caregivers
  - Mindfulness ( $n = 9, g = .55$ )
  - Stress ( $n = 14, g = .44$ )
  - Caregiving roles ( $n = 9, g = .18$ )
  - Follow-up ( $n = 14, g = .44$ )
  - Overall ( $N = 17, g = .45$ )

(Renshaw, Klingbeil, et al., 2015)

# Mindfulness Training is a Multi-Purpose Intervention

- All group-design studies were treatment packages
  - MindUP
  - Learning to Breathe
  - A Still Quiet Place
  - Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
  - Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
- Single-case-design studies were a mix of basic practices and treatment packages
  - Mindful breathing
  - “Soles of the feet”
  - Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

(Renshaw, Klingbeil, et al., 2015)

# Mindfulness Works by Promoting Psychological Flexibility

- “Behavior problems” are characterized by *inflexible habits of responding* to certain antecedent conditions
  - Narrow → same thing every time
  - Automatic → just happen, aren’t chosen
  - Rigid → not easily changed
  - Short-term pay-off → immediately useful, but not helpful in the long-run
- Applies to both *escape/avoid* and *approach/engage* problems
- Applies to both *internalizing* and *externalizing* problems

(Hayes et al., 2014)

# Mindfulness Works by Promoting Psychological Flexibility



**Antecedent**

What happens before  
the person does it?

**Behavior**

What is the  
person doing?

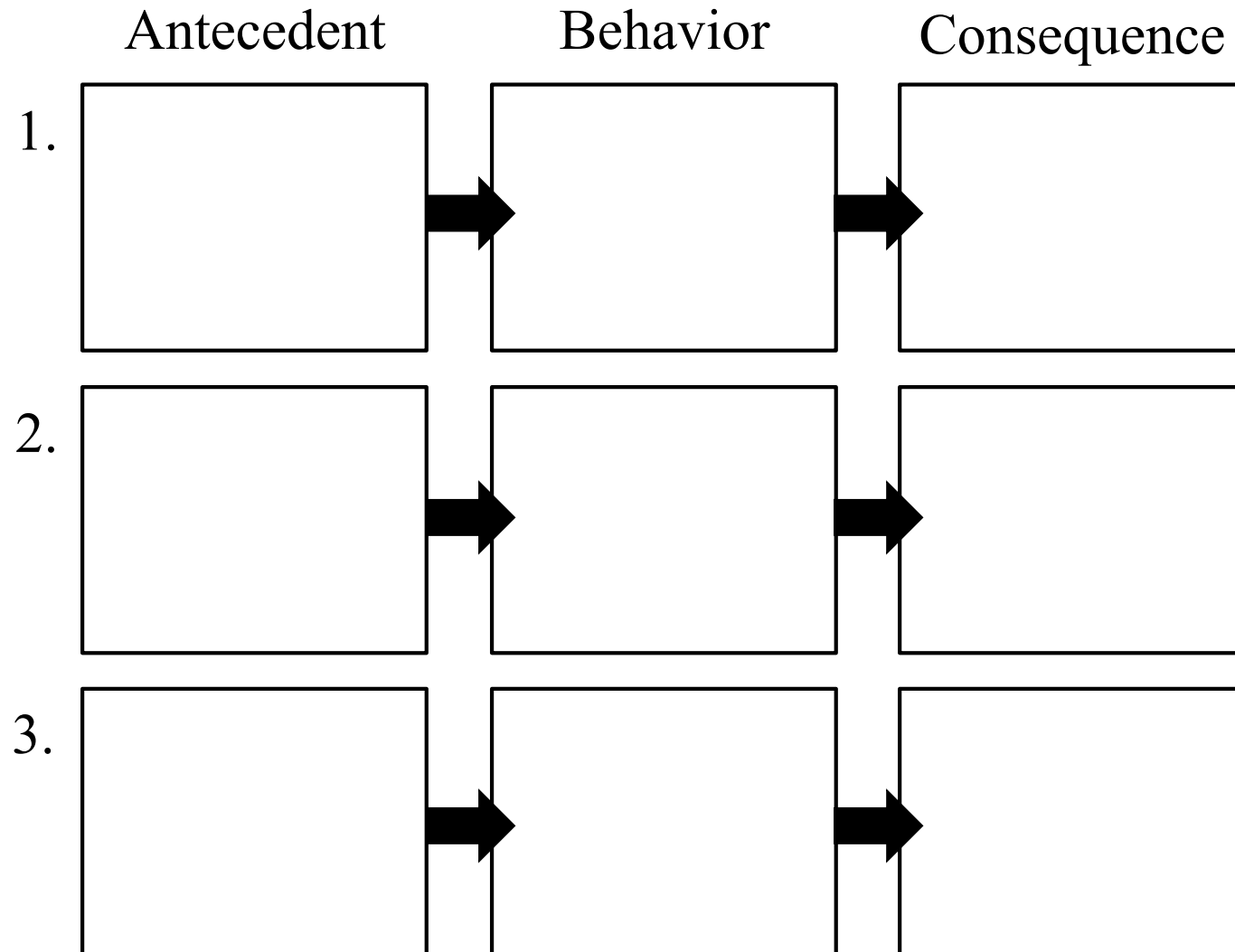
**Consequence**

What happens after  
the person does it?



# Mindfulness Works by Promoting Psychological Flexibility

- Undermines behavioral inflexibility by targeting the relationship between antecedents and problem behaviors
- Does not directly target the relationship between problem behaviors and consequences
- Appropriateness of mindfulness training should be determined by use of *functional behavioral assessment*
- Mindfulness training is especially useful when . . .
  1. Influential antecedents/consequences cannot be feasibly adjusted
  2. Multiple antecedents/consequences occasion/maintain the problem behavior
  3. There is performance deficit that cannot be influenced by altering consequences
  4. Performance deficits interfere with the acquisition of new skills



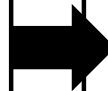
## Analytic Hypothesis

## Intervention Hypothesis



1.



2.

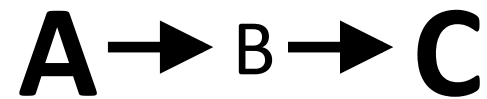


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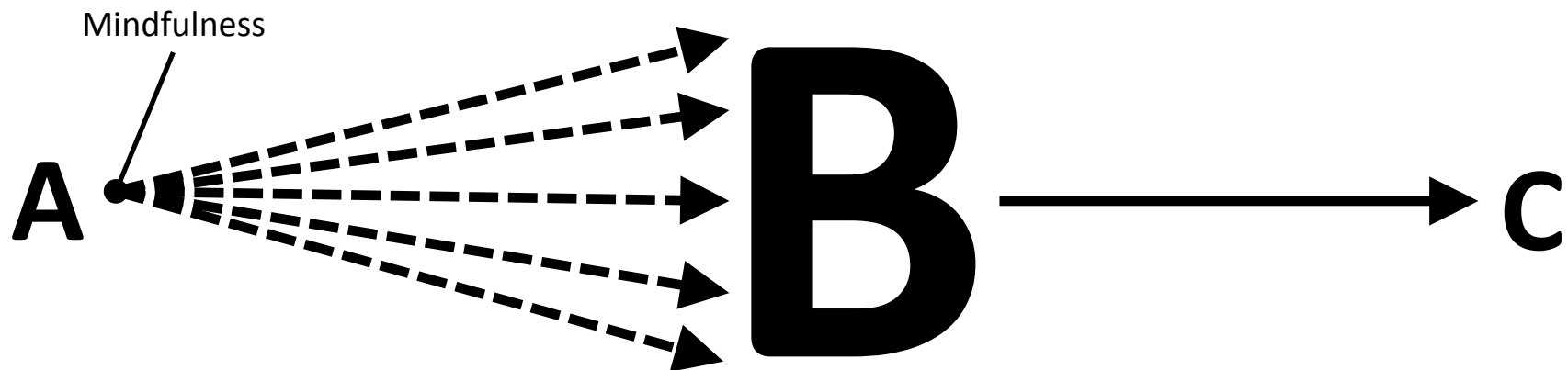


# Mindfulness Works by Promoting Psychological Flexibility

*From this . . .*

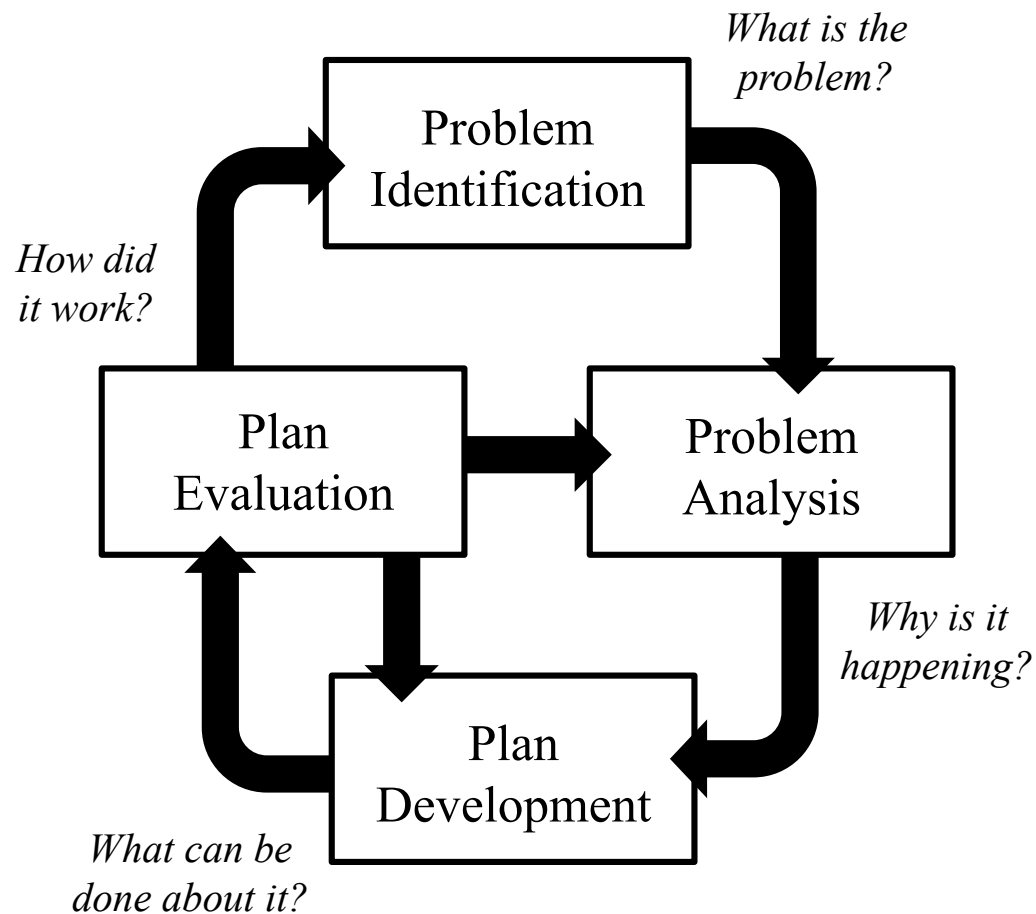


*To this . . .*



# Mindfulness Meshes Well with School Psychology

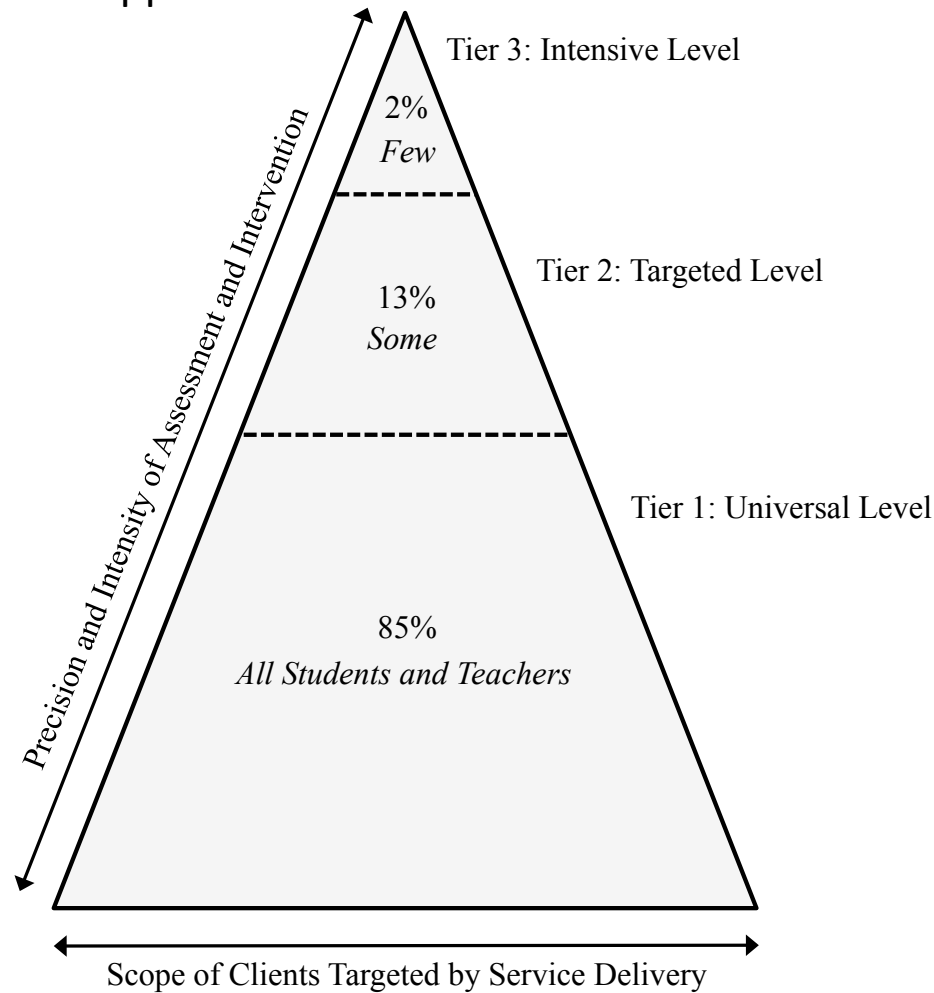
- Problem-Solving Model





# Mindfulness Meshes Well with School Psychology

- Multitiered System of Supports



# Take Home Messages

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Mindfulness  $\neq$



Mindfulness =



# Questions?

trenshaw@lsu.edu



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