

Selected Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Resources and Evidence

Compiled by Allison Sullivan, DOT, MSOT, OTR/L from items in
AOTA's Mental Health Special Interest Section Library
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These resources are just a few of the items located in AOTA's MHSIS Library on CoomunOT. You can find them in the **Mindfulness, Meditation, & Progressive Relaxation** subfolder, located in the **Therapeutic Approaches** file tab on the Main Menu. Although these resources live in the MHSIS library, many are applicable across a wide range of OT practice settings.

Knowledge Translation

Re: Everyday practice & seasonal stress, a short, accessible piece that translates mindfulness into everyday contexts:

- [Three Simple Mindfulness Practices to Manage Holiday Stress](#) offers practical strategies (mindful walking, breathing, and reflection) that align well with OT approaches to routines, self-care, and participation-particularly during high-stress seasons.

I wanted to start with this article, given its timeliness and universal message. It's useful for client handouts, staff wellness discussions, or student learning.

Scope of OT Evidence Across Settings

Mindfulness in physical rehabilitation (OT scoping review)

To broaden beyond mental health-specific settings:

- [Hardison & Roll \(2016\)](#) provide a scoping review of mindfulness interventions in physical rehabilitation. This is a helpful "bridge" resource for OTPs who want to understand the range of mindfulness applications, common outcomes, and how mindfulness shows up in rehab-oriented OT contexts.

Intervention Resources

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

For those seeking structured intervention materials:

- The [Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Handbook](#) by Helena M. Ahearn provides an 8-lesson guide grounded in the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues. While not OT-specific, it offers a clearly sequenced program that OTPs may adapt thoughtfully within occupation-based, client-centered practice.
- **Relaxation skill resource (JPMR)**
For those looking for a highly concrete, teachable skill that pairs well with mindfulness and stress management plans, Bushra & Ajaz (2018) outline the [Jacobson Progressive Muscle Relaxation \(JPMR\)](#) technique (20 minutes), which can be useful as a structured relaxation option for clients who benefit from body-based regulation strategies

Outcomes & Effectiveness Research

Mindfulness-informed OT intervention

For those looking for outcome data:

- [Yamamoto et al. \(2023\)](#) report results from a randomized controlled trial examining an OT program incorporating mindfulness for outpatients with anxiety and depression. In addition to clinical outcomes, this study explores changes in brain function, offering a compelling link between occupation-based intervention, mindfulness, and neurobiological mechanisms.

This article is helpful when discussing mindfulness with interdisciplinary teams or justifying OT's role in evidence-based mental health care.

Occupational Therapy–Specific Perspectives

Mindfulness and OT with young adults

An OT-focused contribution in this folder is a Critically Appraised Topic that speaks directly to emerging mental health needs:

- [Haiby, Reimann, & Quinley \(2024\)](#) examine the role of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for young adults experiencing mental health symptoms associated with social media use. Using MOHO as a guiding framework, the authors link anxiety, depression, disrupted routines, and diminished occupational participation to challenges in volition, habituation, and performance capacity.

This paper is especially useful for OTPs working in college health, community mental health, or emerging adult populations, and it highlights both the promise of MBIs *and* the need for more OT-led research in this area.

Evidence Base & Conceptual Foundations

Interoception and self-regulation

One foundational conceptual piece in this folder is a paper that has strongly influenced how mindfulness is discussed in contemporary OT mental health scholarship:

- [Price & Hooven \(2018\)](#) present a psychologically and neurobiologically informed framework explaining how *interoceptive awareness* supports emotion regulation and an integrated sense of self. The authors argue that developing interoceptive awareness is central to self-regulation, health, and well-being, and they situate mindfulness as a body-oriented pathway for cultivating these skills.

Note: *This resource group isn't intended to be exhaustive. It is, however, a snapshot of evidence, theory, and intervention resources concerning mindfulness. Together they demonstrate how library materials can be linked together through an OT lens.*

References

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