Hi, my name is Lori Valentino-Smith and I am here to talk about and provide an experience for you in mindfulness meditation. Has anyone in the room ever

 practiced mindfulness meditation or know anything about it?

Discuss ability to live in the present rather than the future or past # of thoughts take from other presentation

 The practice of mindfulness is one way to begin fostering inner awareness. In the past few years mindfulness meditation as emerged as an important intervention in the reduction of illness –related and emotional distress.

 Mindfulness has been described as the process of “bringing one’s complete attention to the present experience on a moment to moment basis and acknowledging and accepting each thought, feeling, and/or sensation that arises. Mindfulness meditation assists the individual in learning more adaptive ways of responding to aversive mental states by encouraging a focus on remaining present and cultivating an attitude of non-judgment and an acceptance of all mental states.

I will talk a little bit more about some of the current research and the concrete benefits of mindfulness meditation but I think the best way to understand it is to dive in and tallow yourself to explore it experientially. We will first practice a breathing meditation and then experience a practice called the body scan. Ring bell

 The most frequently cited method of mindfulness is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. Mindfulness mediation as a means of relaxation, reduction of psychological distress, and symptom control has demonstrated utility across a spectrum of health care concerns. Mindfulness-based programs have shown effectiveness as complementary treatments in patients suffering from medical disorders including chronic pain, panic disorders, psoriasis and depression and these findings were consistent among heterogeneous patient populations. Quasi-experimental studies suggest that mindfulness meditation may be useful in the treatment of anxiety disorders, fibromyalgia, hypertension, and in reducing symptoms of stress and mood disturbance in cancer patients and in caregivers of children with chronic conditions. Program participants involved in a relatively new program,, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) reported that mindfulness enhanced their coming to terms with life’s situations, thoughts or feelings, as well as their awareness of signs of impending depression and that development of mindfulness skills prevented relapses of recurrent depression.

 Practicing and modeling mindfulness can help us as social workers on multiple levels First of all, a regular mindfulness practice of our own can help us reduce the level of stress in our own lives and it can also help us to be more present with our clients. This ability to stay present will facilitate the creation of a nurturing therapeutic alliance providing attunement and enabling our clients to “feel felt”. New research in neuroscience provides evidence that the practice of mindfulness facilitates the integration of consciousness producing neural plasticity in the brain; the ultimate goal of treatment.