

# **Mindfulness & Acupressure: Effective Health-Care Strategies**

**with Dr. Dana Fine, Dr. Anat S. Geva and  
Dr. Benjamin Scheier**

National Webinar Transcript

March 29, 2022

Presented by:



**This webinar was made possible with the support of:**

Merck

Daichi-Sankyo

The Cooperative Agreement DP19-1906 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Siegmund and Edith Blumenthal Memorial Fund

**Thank you to our program partners:**

Dr. Dana Fine Acupuncture

No Shame on U

Eve Kleinerman:

Thank you so much for joining us this evening for Sharsheret's webinar: mindfulness and acupuncture effective healthcare strategy. Tonight, we will explore evidence-based complimentary techniques with Dr. Benjamin Scheier, Dr. Dana Fine. And Dr. Anat Geva. I am Eve Kleinerman, Illinois Regional Director at Sharsheret. And for those of you who don't know about Sharsheret, we are here to help women who are facing breast and ovarian cancer, as well as those who are at elevated genetic risk through free, confidential, and personalized support and resources. We provide health education throughout the country through webinars like this evening, and you can access all of our prior webinars on our range of cancer-related topics, as well as access our calendar of upcoming virtual programs through our website. The link to those programs should be in the chat box now. And before we begin, I just want to cover a few housekeeping items.

Tonight's webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the Sharsheret's website, along with the transcript. Participants' faces and the names will not be in the recording as long as you remain muted. If you would like to remain private, you can turn off your video and rename yourself, or you can call into the webinar. Instructions are in the chat box now for both of those options. You may also have noticed that participants were muted upon entry, please keep yourself on mute throughout the call. And if you have questions for the speakers, please put them in the chat box either publicly or you can click on Sharsheret in the chat box, which would be to me or to one of our staff members labeled Sharsheret to submit a private question and I will ask them throughout the program. We have received many questions in advance, so we will do our best to get as many questions answered as we can. We will also send out a follow-up email with any tips and recommendations from today's webinar with the recording the next week or so.

As we move into the webinar itself, I also want to remind you that Sharsheret is a national not-for-profit cancer support organization, and does not provide any medical advice or perform any medical procedures. Information you will hear this evening provided by Sharsheret and our partners is not a substitute for any medical advice or treatment or for specific medical conditions. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem. If you do have any questions that are specific to your medical care, our speakers this evening may not be able to advise regarding those specifics and would instead advise that you speak to your medical provider. As always, seek the advice of your physician or qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

We want to thank our generous sponsors for this evening's program, Merck, Daiichi-Sankyo, the Cooperative Agreement DP19-1906 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and The Sigmund and Edith Blumenthal Memorial Fund. It is because of their generous support they have been able to continue to provide our series of webinars throughout the pandemic. We also want to give a special thanks to our community partners this evening, Dr. Dana Fine Acupuncture, and No Shame On U in Chicago. No Shame On U is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating the stigma associated with mental health conditions, raising awareness in the Jewish community and beyond. No Shame On U's goal is for people who need help to seek it, for family members and friends to know how to provide proper support and to save lives. Before we get started, I do want to mention that Sharsheret, of course, understands the importance of taking care of your mind while you also take care of your body, hence the content of tonight's webinar. And to that end, we also have some additional meditations as well, and you can contact our social workers and fill out our form that has been shared in the chat to access any of our additional programming.

And now, for this evening, we are honored to be joined by three excellent doctors, Dr. Benjamin Scheier, Dr. Dana Fine, and Dr. Anat Geva. Dr. Benjamin Scheier is a doctor of hematology-oncology at Kaiser Permanente in Denver, Colorado. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology and medical degree from

Ohio State University. He completed his internal medicine training at the university of Colorado and a fellowship in hematology-oncology at the university of Michigan. Dr. Scheier's areas of focus are gastrointestinal, bladder, prostate, kidney, hematologic, neuroendocrine, brain, breast, lung, head and neck malignancies, and benign hematology.

Eve Kleinerman:

Dr. Dana Fine is a licensed acupuncturist in the State of Illinois certified as a Diplomate of Acupuncture by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. She is the owner of Dana Fine Acupuncture, LLC in Glenview, Illinois. She graduated from Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in Chicago with a doctorate of acupuncture and Chinese medicine. Dana treats various issues such as symptoms from cancer therapy, headaches, musculoskeletal issues, psycho-emotional issues, insomnia, as well as many other concerns. And Dr. Anat Geva has a BSc in psychology from the University of Toronto, a PhD in clinical and experimental psychology from the University of Michigan, and a JD from the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law. As director of strategic initiatives at No Shame On U, Anat oversees the expansion and implementation of new mental health initiatives, and she also advances development and organizational support efforts. We will begin this evening by hearing remarks from Dr. Benjamin Scheier. Dr. Scheier, the floor is all yours.

Dr. Benjamin Scheier:

Thank you so much for the introduction. I'm really happy to be here tonight. This is my first time working with Sharsheret, and I've learned very quickly how important of an organization it is in the Jewish community and in the oncology community, the cancer community at large. So I'm really glad to be here and of course, share the stage with such distinguished speakers. So thank you so much for having me. As was mentioned, I am an oncologist hematologist, I practice here in Denver, I have a very broad practice, but one of my focus areas is in women, I treat them with breast cancer, also ovarian cancer among other gynecologic cancer. When I heard the topic for tonight's talk, I thought this is a very interesting topic to me. I continue to learn and engage in complementary learning about complementary treatments and really that stemmed from the place that my patients are telling me that they have more and more interest in them, and they ask more and more questions.

And we're spending a lot more time in our consultations and our visits, exploring therapies for cancer and for support beyond chemotherapy and targeted treatments and the things that I prescribe. So I've become more engaged in the topic, and I wanted to share that I think really the whole world is moving in that direction from the way doctors are trained in fellowship and in residency to consider and learn the data behind some of these complementary therapies and kind of remove the veil and the mystery behind them. And I'm learning as I read my journals and get updates that more and more research dollars is being put into this subject and what it leads to is better trials proving which therapies work and which therapies don't and to what effect. And so, rather than navigating in sort of a gray voodoo area, I think we're thankfully moving into a place, and I think speakers will probably highlight this a bit tonight, where we truly have evidence based approaches.

And so, I think the message I wanted to convey to the listeners is to please feel free to have an open conversation with your oncologist about what therapies you're interested in and ask questions. And my hope would be that the oncologist, if they don't have an answer to your question, can at least route you in a direction that you could find it. And do not feel like you need to hide any therapies, whether it be something like a herbal supplement or some sort of pill, but all the way to mindfulness practices and acupuncture like we'll cover tonight. I think it's just important to have an open conversation about it. I think what you'll learn is that more and more doctors see it valuable. I think in particular women being

treated for breast and ovarian cancer are right candidates for these therapies. And the reason I say that is because the women going through these treatments, they're often in the long haul.

Dr. Benjamin Scheier:

Whether you're diagnosed in the early stages or the more advanced stages, treatments often go across many months, if not years, across multiple modalities with a lot of different mounting side effects and toxicities. And so, what I find is that whether these complementary therapies, especially acupuncture and mindfulness, often help in that long haul mentality. Being on treatment for several years and then even into the survivorship stage, I think these therapies have a lot of value. And I would just share one particular anecdote and this relates to women who are on what's called adjuvant or postoperative therapy for breast cancer in particular, a class of drug is called aromatase inhibitors, which may be familiar to some of those in the audience, this is a hormone-blocking drug used to help enhance curate in those with early stage breast cancer and also help treat women with advanced breast cancer and there can be a lot of musculoskeletal side effects of those therapies.

I have several patients, it wouldn't even just be one anecdote to share, where I've tried prescriptions to try to help with some of those side effects and they work a little bit, but as you may learn, sometimes the treatment the doctor gives, gives a new side effect, even though it may have eliminated the previous one. But several women have then pursued in our community here in Greater Denver and Boulder, acupuncture especially and they found tremendous relief from what's called a musculoskeletal syndrome related to aromatase inhibitors. And so, I share that because it's one shining point of success, but I think the use is expanding. And you, of course, want to find someone with comfort... practitioner who's comfortable, someone like Dana, for example, who I know quite well, but just finding practitioners that have the experience they need to provide for the right care, I think it could be a very meaningful intervention.

Again, just open conversations, I think oncology is moving in a place where we understand beyond just our drugs that we're trained on, there are ways to really help patients thrive and survive. And I think tonight we'll learn a lot about those. So I look forward to hearing more.

Eve Kleinerman:

Thank you so much, Dr. Scheier, for sharing. It was really so helpful to hear your perspective on how cancer patients might introduce complementary medicine into their routines, and we are so grateful that you're here today to share with us. Before I introduce Dr. Fine, just a quick reminder that all the speakers today will do their best to answer questions at the end of the program. So if you have questions, please submit them via the chat box publicly or privately, and we will get to those questions at the end of the presentation. We will now hear from Dr. Dana Fine, who will teach us some acupressure techniques. Dr. Fine, the screen is all yours.

Dr. Dana Fine:

Everyone, thank you for everything, everyone said. I am going to share my screen now because I have a presentation for you guys. Hi, everyone. I'm Dr. Dana Fine. I have a practice in Glenview, Illinois. A little bit about me. I also attended the Ohio State University with Dr. Scheier. And after that, I got my doctorate at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine and I treat patients with various issues, and a lot of patients I see are cancer patient who come to me with all different signs and symptoms. And I just want to make it clear that I treat the signs and symptoms from cancer treatment. I'm not at like... I'm not treating cancer, I'm treating the signs and symptoms from cancer treatments. Sorry, I'm just... so, cancer and Chinese medicine, within Chinese medicine, acupuncture and acupressure is one small part of it.

There's also, if you were to go see an acupuncturist, they would do moxibustion, which is a heated mugwort that can be used to help patients with numbness and tingling, which is what I see a lot with patients, and it helps with energy.

Dr. Dana Fine:

There's Tui Na, which is a form of massage that can help with musculoskeletal issues. And then, if done by a trained Chinese medical practitioner, cupping can be very useful as well as herbs which can, if you see a trained herbalist can also help with cancer treatments. Acupuncture has been around for 3000 years. It uses specific points along the body to help treat and balance. The points in acupuncture are designated to specific organs, but it doesn't necessarily mean that organ is the organ that you are having issues with, so just in case your acupuncturist says that. But for example, if you have someone who is having difficulty falling asleep, a lot of will use the pericardium where the heart channels- to help them- which is along the arm to help them fall asleep. So it doesn't always correlate in your head like, "Oh, I'm going to treat the heart to sleep," but everything makes sense within the Chinese medical terms.

Acupuncture needles are very, very thin. About 35 to 40 acupuncture needles can fit into one hypodermic needle. So a lot of times when people are going through cancer treatments, they are just done with needles. That's what I find a lot, especially because acupuncture can sometimes hurt, especially when you are going for musculoskeletal issues and you get sensations from the insertion. Sometimes you could get a warm feeling, a tingling feeling, an achy feeling. If you can get a slight prick, if the prick keeps going for a long time, then you want to have a reinsertion. But just so you know, because I understand that during cancer treatments, the acupuncture needles can be a little bit... you just don't want them anymore, so that's why we go to acupressure because acupressure is basically the same thing just without needles. Obviously, acupuncture would be a little more successful because it is going further, it's going deeper in, but acupressure is a wonderful, wonderful treatment that can go along with it and kind of make you more at ease.

These are the different symptoms that I usually see with cancer patients. These are the main ones. Obviously, there's a lot that I see with it. But insomnia I'd say is the number one issue that I see with my patients that are going through chemotherapy and radiation. And within the insomnia umbrella, it can be difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or both, or sometimes it's even like people who have an issue that they sleep all day and then they can't sleep at night. So it's about resetting your sleep cycle. So these are three hints that I use with patients for to help sleep: One, especially when you're going through cancer treatments, always sleep socks on; two, make sure that there are no technical devices in your room.

Take out your phones, iPads, your computers, your TVs, everything from your room because the light is not good for your eyes. You want at least an hour before bed for your eyes to not have artificial lights. And then, I'm very excited for the mindfulness practice afterwards because meditation and mindfulness is also a wonderful way that we can all have better time, an easier time sleeping. But now I'm going to go over the acupressure, acupuncture points for insomnia. So if everyone, if you want to do it with me, just we're going to look at your wrist. Okay. So pericardium 6, 7, and heart 7 are major points that can help you sleep. So pericardium 6 is also a point that we're going to be using a lot during this presentation, so you want to learn it. So you take the wrist crease, and you're going to go three fingerbreadths down.

So you want to go at the bottom of the finger, in between the tendons, it should be a little tender and then you want to rub in there and you always want to go on a clockwise motion. Okay. And then for pericardium 7 and heart 7, pericardium 7 is located on the wrist crease, in between the tendons, closer to the thumb. And heart 7 is on the wrist crease between the tendons close to the pinky. And so, what

we do a lot of times if you are having issues sleeping is you just rub the entire wrist before bed. So you want to go clockwise and you want to rub the entire wrist before you go to bed. So those are great, and you want to actually put a little pressure in it, not gentle rubbing, like you want to put good pressure in your wrists.

Dr. Dana Fine:

Another great point for sleep is called *An Mian*. In English, it's called peaceful sleep. And it is a great point for sleep and what you do is you want to just go onto the mastoid process, which is the bumpy, the bony area behind your ear, and you want to take it and you want to go down. So you want to go where you find the apex of it, so it's like the highest point of it and you want to go down and you're going to fall into a little divot, that divot when you press into it, should be a little tender and that's *An Mian*. And that's a great point before you go to bed. It's also a great point for neck pain. It's a great point for while you're going through cancer treatments such as rub, so if you're having trouble sleeping, rub your wrist and rub *An Mian*. Peaceful sleep.

Another, I would say this is probably the second biggest reason people come see me for while they're going through cancer treatments and it's for numbness and tingling while they're going through treatment. Kidney 1 is on your foot. So I'm not going to show you guys my foot today, but it is... there's a picture towards the bottom, and it's in the depression below the second and third metatarsal. It will be tender when you push in it and it's a very grounding point. It's a very strong point in Chinese medicine, so it's a great point for numbness and tingling. And it kind of when you press into it, you're going to feel like a big rush of blood to your toes, which is what we're going for.

And then, large intestine 4, which is a big, a big point that a lot of people know within acupuncture. So here's your hand. You want to go into the web of your hand and then you're going to press in here and you're going to find where it's really tender, and you want to press hard. And you want to press really hard and you're going to go where it's really tender and that will help bring a rush of blood to your fingers. And then, also it mimics that. It's called liver 3, and that is on your foot in between the big toe and the second toe. And it's going to be like, there's like a web there too and you press there. And all those points can help with bringing blood flow and help with the numbness and tingling that's going in your hand. Another trick that we use with is called Tui Na, which is a form of massage. And if you're having numbness and tingling, we just go like this and you click on your fingers to try to bring a little bit more circulation to the area.

Acupressure and neck pain. A lot of times also when you're going through chemo and you're sitting in the chairs, you can get neck pain, and a lot of times you don't really want to be rubbed in your actual neck because it feels it's too tender. So what I have seen is that my patients that are going through chemo when they come to me and I would want to do some massage or some needles in their neck, their neck is just really hurting them, so I try to do points that are not actually in the neck. So large intestine 4 again the one in the web is great for it.

Another thing is, especially if you're sitting going through chemotherapy, you just want to go to the base of your pinky and when you press on it, your pinky should move like this. And small intestine 3 and press in there and you're going to feel it's going to be tender. That is a great point for neck pain. And then, another great point is actually on your leg. It's called gall bladder 39, and the knobby bone on the outside of your foot, it's called the lateral malleolus. And if you go to your lateral malleolus and you're going to do the four fingers up and you want to go to the bottom in between the tendons, you'll feel like a little tender area, that is also that treats neck pain.

For nausea, this is very common that people have nausea while they're going through chemotherapy and a lot of times they have vomiting. And we want to go back to pericardium 6. So that's the one that's

three fingerbreadths down, and you want to go in the middle, and then you just want to rub in there. And you want to rub in there often. What I, a lot of times, recommend to patients are these called sea-bands, get them on Amazon, and they actually go right into the point. And while you're going through chemo, if you keep those sea-bands on, they will also help with... They're going to put pressure on your wrist, which is going to help you with feeling a little bit more relaxed. And then, they will also help with nausea.

Dr. Dana Fine:

Two very important points that you should just use every day to stay healthy are spleen 6 and stomach 36. So spleen 6 is a point that it's the medial malleolus, which is the knobby point on your foot, but in the middle of your foot, so closer to your inner parts of your legs. And you want to go three fingerbreadths up again. It's going to be in the middle and you'll feel a divot and it'll be sensitive. And you're going to feel like, if you just go off the medial malleolus and you run your finger down, you're going to feel a divot and it'll be sensitive. And that point is for abdominal pain, headache, vertigo, and any menstrual concerns. It can help with if you're bleeding too much, if you're not bleeding, it could help just relieve any menstrual concerns, cramping, so it's just a great point to just use even after cancer, just to use.

And then stomach 36 is probably, I would say, the most popular point in acupuncture. A lot of people take the moxibustion, which is the heated mugwort and they heat this point every day. A lot of people just rub it every night before they go to bed or every morning when they wake up for a long life and to just kind of like go into the day, relax, and feeling good. So it's four fingerbreadths below the knee on the outer part of the tibia. It's for vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, insomnia, dizziness, coughing. It's a great point that treats a lot of different conditions. Another big concern while going through chemotherapy is feeling cold a lot. These are my little hints for keeping warm is always wear socks. Warm feet in Chinese medicine are the most important thing that you could have because the warm feet helps you able to focus, it helps you sleep better, it helps all your whole body just feel better. So warm feet. So always wear socks.

Keep your neck covered, wear scarfs, because when your neck is exposed, you tend to get colder. So wear scarfs for high sweatshirts or eternal neck sweaters and a weighted blanket. Weighted blankets can help you feel warm and calm your anxiety. They really feel like a warm hug. When anyone's going through cancer treatments, these are the three gifts that I tell everyone to get. Get someone socks, get someone a scarf, and a weighted blanket. I think those would be the best gifts for people because they will only help keep people more relaxed and ease their anxiety while they're going through everything.

These are just three teas that can help, but I always say that consult your doctor before drink herbal tea. And just like Dr. Scheier said, it is okay to be honest with your doctor about wanting to drink teas and to do acupuncture. A lot of times, they are so relieved. And in Chicago, I work with a lot of doctors where they send me patients and we work together and they are open to you asking like, "I want to try acupuncture." They're most of the time will be open to it. We will communicate with each other. If it's okay with you then, and you tell me I can communicate with your doctor. We could communicate with each other. I have the knowledge about the herbal medicine that I could speak to him or her about it. And it's just an open communication, which most doctors want to have because they want the best thing for their patient.

With consulting your doctor, if you can drink herbal teas, cinnamon tea helps warm the body. So for patients that are cold a lot, cinnamon tea is great, especially at night before you go to bed. Chamomile tea is literally the jack-of-all-trades tea. It is the best tea and it helps calm the stomach. For anyone who has nausea, chamomile tea is phenomenal. It adds energy. It also eases anxiety. So it can help you sleep

at night because it could help with easing anxiety. And then, ginger tea. Ginger tea, ginger chews, all that is great for patients that have nausea while they are going through chemotherapy. If you could stomach it, I feel the ginger tea is easier to stomach than the ginger chews, which are so strong. So that's why a lot of times I recommend the ginger tea.

Dr. Dana Fine:

I wanted to thank you all for listening to me. I really appreciate Sharsheret for having me. This means a lot to me. Sharsheret has been wonderful for my family, and so I really, really, really appreciate being here. I saw this quote that it says, "I ask not for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders," so I hope that we can help make your shoulders a little broader while you're going through everything. So I really appreciate you having me and listening. Thank you very much.

Eve Kleinerman:

Thank you so much, Dr. Fine for teaching us so much helpful acupressure information and methods that we can all try to incorporate into our own self-care routine. And I also want to thank you for providing the PDF sheet that has been shared in the chat that will be good for easy reference for everybody participating this evening. I now want to introduce, introduce Dr. Anat Geva of No Shame On U who will guide us in mindfulness techniques. Dr. Geva the screen is all yours.

Dr. Anat Geva:

I'm now unmuted, I hope. All right. I said, thank you. Actually. I want to point out that unlike Dr. Fine, and Dr. Scheier on this panel, I went to the University of Michigan. And even though we likely cheer for different football teams, we're probably quite united in our belief that the best approach to healing the body and the mind is a holistic one. So I am delighted to be here and delighted to be talking with them. I'm going to just say a few words just about No Shame On U. We can talk a little bit about the concept of mindfulness and how it can be used as a complementary technique. And then, we will finish off actually with a mindfulness exercise for everyone. Just say a few words now about No Shame On U. We are a Chicago based organization with national and international reach at this point, and we are dedicated to eliminating the stigma associated with mental health conditions and raising awareness in the Jewish community and beyond.

We come from the sense that there are these Jewish values that tell us that we must look out for the entire person and that we have to work together to support the wellbeing of our community and the world. And we believe that supporting mental health is an important part of this support work. Specifically, No Shame On U's goal is to ensure that the people who need help will seek it. We want to give family members and friends, tools to support, friends and family, and really we want to save lives. And we achieve our mission through community outreach programs, presentations, workshops, trainings, and schools and camps. We have some programs targeted at teens. We have a teen ambassador program in which we train high schoolers about mental health, and then they go out and do projects in the community, mental health projects, awareness projects in the communities, and we do some B'nai Mitzvah projects now.

And then, we offer weekly yoga, which I'll actually talk about a bit at the end. And we have some support groups that we have. We have one for individuals with adult loved ones who live with mental health symptoms. And then, we have another one that we do, which is aimed at helping those who are grieving a loss to suicide. And we have an online presence of over 120,000 followers, and we distribute mental health resources. We have a blog, we have podcasts, and we're always happy to collaborate with others to create any sort of customized programming and materials. Just highlight some upcoming



programs that might be of interest tomorrow night. We actually have a virtual program titled Navigating the Challenges of Parenting Your Child with ADHD.

Dr. Anat Geva:

And we have a monthly series called Feed Your Mind in which we take a deeper dive into a mental health issue at lunchtime. Next Wednesday, we have as part of the series, we have a program titled Managing Anxiety in Today's Uncertain World. And then, we also offer weekly every Tuesday, 4:00 PM central, we have a virtual yoga class with a special focus on mindfulness taught by Mara Zimmerman, who's a certified meditation and yoga teacher. Speaking of mindfulness and mindful yoga, mindfulness is not a cure for cancer, but it certainly can contribute to the overall wellbeing of the body. So let's talk about it. A question people might have, or even people... I think everyone has heard mindfulness. It seems to be like a big buzzword like so what is it.

Mindfulness is the focusing of attention on the present moment, so not the past and not the future. And then, in that moment, adopting a stance of curiosity, openness, and acceptance. So participants who are engaging in mindfulness are engaged to become aware of their thoughts and feelings and sensations. And you're supposed to observe them in a nonjudgmental way. So they're not good, they're not bad, they just are. Mindfulness is not about stopping to think altogether or to completely blocking out any sort of unpleasantness in order to be relaxed, and that would actually be impossible for many people.

It's really based on the philosophy that a full and nonjudgmental experience of the present moment creates positive outcomes for wellbeing, even then in the midst of a health challenge. Mindfulness meditations, they originate from Eastern religious traditions, Buddhism and Hinduism, but the way that we practice or we talk about mindfulness now it's understood as a sort of non-religious practice. And in the Western health system, it's a way to achieve a state of mind that is aware and importantly in control, which is something that we often don't feel that we are.

I don't need to tell, I think, any of you about the way in which health challenges challenge one's quality of life and functional status and the challenges that there are in terms of coping and adjustment, and mindfulness is the perfect antidote or at least supplementary antidote to this life challenge. Actually, it's not surprising that there've actually been quite a few studies looking at the relationship between the cancer experience, we'll call it, and mindfulness-based interventions. So there's this experience of a loss of control and uncertainty and there's constant change, and these are like some of the more challenging aspects of coping with cancer. And so, what mindfulness talks about is accepting things as they are, turning towards as opposed to away from those challenging difficult emotional experiences. And instead sort of embracing them and from that sort of developing a self understanding and a way to heal psychologically and acknowledging these thoughts and feelings, then plays a critical role in reducing overall stress and anxiety.

And by reducing your stress and anxiety, you're basically allowing yourself to live more fully in the present moment, regardless of whatever the road ahead is. So mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to actually enhance the psychosocial wellbeing of participants and, I mean, of those engaging in mindfulness activities. And keep in mind that there's this really well established relationship between psychosocial factors and immunology functioning. And we know that sort of interventions and sort of immunologic functioning actually then play a role in coping with cancer. It's actually not surprising then to find that people who live with cancer or who are remission or currently cancer free, who engage in mindfulness practices, show significant improvements in a long, long, long list of outcomes. So people who engage in mindfulness practices who are dealing in some capacity with cancer have been shown to have decreased depression, decreased anxiety, better coping strategies, decreased in gastrointestinal symptoms, decreased fatigue.

Dr. Anat Geva:

So for instance, people who engage in mindfulness practices show a greater percentage of sleep time and less waking bouts than those who have not engaged in mindfulness. There's also some evidence of improvement in immune response. There's enhanced, I think they're called enhanced NK cell activity. Those are some of the cells that like to kill cancer stem cells. And there's also one study that I really like that looked at people engaging in mindfulness during chemotherapy, and it showed that compared to the control group, the mindfulness group showed an increase in cortisol, which is our stress hormone, but actually it's a good thing since... what it means is that the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal or the HPA axis is now responding more effectively to maybe other stressors that the body is encountering. We see that by helping to regulate emotions and allowing a patient to work with the physical pain in the body, mindfulness can actually bring a sense of peace to many people living with cancer or a greater sense of peace.

So mindfulness, what are some exercises? There's breathing methods. There's guided imagery, all sorts of practices that relax the body and mind to help reduce stress. They're paying attention, literally just slowing down, taking in the experience of your environment with all your senses that there's touch, sound, smell, and taste. There's focusing on your breathing, and that's actually the mindfulness exercise that we're going to engage in a minute. Then, there's these more structured exercises, like body scan meditations or walking meditations. And with that in mind, actually, let's turn to a mindfulness exercise. What I'm going to ask you all to do... For those who have their screens on, that's great. For those who want to turn it off, because you're going to want to close your eyes. That's also a great thing to do.

And what I'm going to do is we're going to go through a guided breath meditation right now. So let's start. I want everyone to get comfortable, so that it means you can be sitting on a chair, you can be sitting on the floor, you can be lying down and find a place where you can have some quiet and a place where you can close your eyes or at least lower your gaze so that you can focus softly on whatever is in front of you. So sit in a way that you feel relaxed, but also alert right with your back straight but not strained.

I want you to breathe. And what we're going to do now is we're going to take five full breaths. And as you breathe in and out, I want you to feel the sensations of the breath filling your body, and then leaving your body. Connect with the sensations as fully as you can. And on that in breath, I want you to feel that sense of energy that it brings. And then with the out breath, the sense of letting go. And then as you're letting go, how you're relaxing into the seat beneath you. All right. So let's do five breaths, right. Connect with the energy of in breath, and then we're letting go of the out breath. And after each of the breaths, just relax and start again. And when you're done with the five breaths, I want you to let your breath return to its normal rhythm, but keep paying attention to the sensations of breathing in and out.

And now, I want you to notice the spaces between your breaths. So start letting your attention be drawn to the spaces and your breath to the short pause after you breathe in and then the short pause after you breathe up. And ask yourself, what am I noticing? What am I sensing in these pauses? And you'll notice that even if you have no thoughts, you're still aware that you're in a pause and quiet space. And if your attention wanders, remain kind and curious. Gently notice anything that arises in your inner landscape, your sensations, your emotions, your memories, even your worries. If you become aware of a worry, for instance, just note it. And if you notice that your foot is itchy, just note it. And I want you to think, am I trying to suppress my experiences? Am I judging them? Or am I just allowing myself to shift my attention to the breath in, the pause out? Don't let your mind pull you into the future or into the past. Just keep bringing your attention back to the breath because that's what's going on right now, here and now.

Dr. Anat Geva:

Now keep going and with each breath, let your attention rest for a moment longer in the pauses. You can maybe even try to hold your breath for a fraction longer to just make that pause a little bit longer, but without any strain or without feeling out of breath. And if there's any sense of stress or anxiety, just keep focusing on that, refocus on that breath sensation. Be curious about it. Be curious about your physical sensations and just note the relaxation. Note how your body's expanding and contracting with each breath. And now we're going to just take one final breath. We then feel the energy, notice the pause and the space, and then breathe out in silence. And now you can finish and take that last breath.

So that practice of attending to your breath and attending to the space, it's like a metaphor for everyday living. So in the same way that you can choose to put your attention in this practice. You can choose where you're going to put that practice in everyday life. So instead of focusing on something that was troubling or an upsetting emotion, instead, you made a decision to focus your attention in this sort of space between the breaths or the action of the breaths. And hopefully, you came back just a little bit more grounded and a little bit more refreshed. And while you can't change many of the challenges that life froze at you, you can practice mindfulness to help you better handle the stressors.

Mindfulness is not a cure for cancer, as I said, but it can contribute to the overall wellbeing of your body and your mental health. There are lots of resources. I'm going to... If it's okay with the folks at Sharsheret, I'll just put in the chat, some links to places that do some mindfulness work or at least that will connect you to mindfulness apps. There's actually quite a bit online. I mean, even I keep saying like, "Even Peloton has the mindfulness meditations," which I will tell you... I can't tell you how many times I sit, tell myself I can't fall asleep and then I do one of the body scans and I don't even remember when it ended. So I highly, highly recommend, and so, I'm going to put them right now in the chat. And with that, I will turn it back to Eve.

Eve Kleinerman:

Thank you, Dr. Geva. And also if you will send those over to us, we can share that in our post-webinar resources as well. And I want to thank all three of our speakers this evening. Dr. Scheier, Dr. Fine, Dr. Geva, just so immensely for educating us. Your demonstrations and explanations were so helpful and I'm sure that all of us feel much more equipped to consider using these techniques in our own self-care routines. And I now want to go to some of our questions from this evening. So for starters, Dr. Fine, when you were talking about holding pressure, how long should one hold pressure? Is that like a five-second hold? A minute? More? And is it- can you also address, is it better to do one hand versus the other, one foot versus the other, one wrist versus other?

Dr. Dana Fine:

You could pick either which wrist, which hand you want to do. That doesn't matter. So you could pick either side, just pick one side. You could do both. That's not... when you're pressing on it, really honestly like you want to... let's say we're doing pericardium 6 for nausea, you just want to do it until you're kind of feeling better. It could be like you're sitting and watching TV or you're sitting and someone's driving you and you're rubbing the point. There is really no set time for how long to do it for when to do it. I always tell people that when I do it, I would always do it when I was just... it just throughout the day. And you could just do it whenever you want. And before bed, it could honestly be like 30 seconds, just rub your wrists, rub your wrists for 30 seconds and then do the mindfulness and get yourself to sleep. There is no set time and there's no set arm or leg. It's really whatever you feel more comfortable with doing.

Eve Kleinerman:

Great. Great. Thank you. And Dr. Scheier, a question came in about how a woman could advocate for herself if her medical oncology team does not encourage other complementary medicine options. Do you have any suggestions for patients?

Dr. Benjamin Scheier:

Thank you for that question, and just to the comments of the audience for being here. I want to thank you all. It takes a lot of courage. Whether you're going through cancer therapy yourself, you're a caregiver, or just showing interest in getting better and strong, I really applaud you all for being here. It takes great resilience and you're here to learn, so I'm happy to help as anyway I can. To answer that question, that can be an awkward dynamic and a challenge. I still think that I would kind of push back to encourage an honest conversation, almost set up a follow up visit just to have a discussion about that, because I think just identifying the barriers may really help. Sometimes it's a time crunch.

In these visits, we have a lot to go over, whether it be scan results, lab results, chemotherapy, treatments, to review, there's a lot on the plate, and so, maybe you feel this sense of dismissiveness because there's this no time and there may be other hurdles. But I think having an honest conversation. And when push comes to shove, I do feel like within a larger practice, there maybe even as simple as, "Hey, I'm interested in a second opinion," and someone who does have an interest in that field, and I think you can do it tactfully. We're open to that in our group that sometimes the fit's just not right and you have to find someone that does. So that would be my piece of advice.

Eve Kleinerman:

Great. Thank you. And Dr. Geva, we had a question on what your thoughts are relating to cognitive behavioral therapy? And whether that could be used with mindfulness?

Dr. Anat Geva:

Yes. In short, the answer is yes. I'd say, again, it sort of right now knowing all the details of the actual treatment and whatever else is going on, CBT, DBT, these are all treatments that are evidence based. Also, by the way, there's mindfulness based cognitive therapy as well, which is sort of a mix of the two and actually DBT, which is dialectical behavior therapy, is a kind of cognitive behavioral therapy that actually very explicitly includes mindfulness and validation and acceptance. And so, the general concept of bringing in the two is pretty well researched and has been shown to be pretty effective. So, yes.

Eve Kleinerman:

Great, great. Thank you. And I know that we did receive many questions this evening, and so we are going to ask the doctors if they're willing to answer the questions offline and we will send those answers in our follow up email later this week. But I am going to ask one last question to Dr. Fine. Is there an acupressure point that can help address hot flashes? Because that is something that affects many of our callers.

Dr. Dana Fine:

Yeah. With hot flashes, the reason that I didn't do acupressure, because usually that has to be done with acupuncture and moxibustion. So it is much more effective if it is treated with acupuncture. You can try to rub a point above, it would be again in the inner part of your leg, it's called kidney 7. You could also

look it up or kidney 3, but those points are much better if you have acupuncture and you have moxibustion.

Eve Kleinerman:

That absolutely makes sense. As I mentioned, I know that we did have many questions that we didn't get to this evening, but we are going to send out some answers to those questions in our follow up. So please keep an eye out for that. And again, I really want to thank our three speakers this evening, Dr. Geva, Dr. Fine, Dr. Scheier and to our partners, No Shame On U. This really was amazing. We learned so much from you and we are feeling so much more knowledgeable just after this presentation. And I would ask if you have a moment to please fill out our brief evaluation survey that is right now linked in the chat box. Our evaluations really do inform our future programming, and we thank you so much for taking the time to fill that out. And please never forget that our Sharsheret social workers and genetic counselor are here for you and your loved ones. Sharsheret provides emotional support, mental health counseling, and other programs designed to help navigate you through the cancer experience. All of our programs are free, completely private, one on one. And our phone number and email have again been linked in the chat box. You can also access any of the webinar recordings from past transcripts, as well as this one will be up soon on our website. And from all of us at Sharsheret, thank you so much for joining us and have a great night.