

## **Annotation**

People most often seek help from mental health professionals because of a form of suffering that could generally be regarded as emotional dysregulation. Setting aside the diagnostic criteria of international classification of mental and behavioral disorders, people generally seek help because they feel and show the right emotion but at an inappropriate intensity (e.g., experiencing worry as anxiety), or they may feel the right emotion, but show it in an inappropriate way (e.g., overeating instead of expressing anger), or they may feel and express an inappropriate emotion (e.g., experiencing fear in a safe situation). They also often look for help from mental health professionals when they are experiencing symptoms that at first sight have nothing to do with emotions (e.g., insomnia, chronic fatigue, difficulty across different organ systems, fibromyalgia, somatoform disorder, and conversions). These symptoms are often classified as psychosomatic or medically unexplained; emotion processing is often a significant etiological factor of these symptoms. In this context, it is evident that emotion processing is a key etiological co-factor of many mental and somatic disorders. The way emotions are regulated is an important mediator between feelings and mental and physical health under stress. A general goal of any treatment should thus be to help patients regain control over their emotions. Finding effective ways to do this is one of the major challenges for mental health services.

In recent years, there has been an enormous increase in research evidence indicating that mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) are very effective in improving mental health in healthy people and in those with various psychiatric or somatic conditions. MBI therapies are increasingly being adopted in education and counseling to support mental health and in clinical practice to treat various psychological disorders. It is evident that MBIs and follow-up programs integrating mindfulness and psychotherapy present ways to change human experience at a fundamental level through the ability to regulate emotions and thoughts. Many psychological disorders have, at their core, emotion dysregulation; MBIs should be a basic method of treatment in mental health care. To face this challenge, it is necessary to understand how mindfulness practice works, what mediates its effect on mental and somatic health and disease, and which concrete mechanisms investigated in Western science, especially in the field of emotion regulation research, can describe and explain mindfulness.

This habilitation thesis aims to integrate the constructs of mindfulness and emotion regulation. The thesis first describes traditional psychological models of emotion regulation, it

operationalizes the mindfulness concept, and it explains how mindfulness practice works and what mediates the positive effects of MBIs. The thesis then explores how emotion regulation processes differ from the mindfulness approach to emotion regulation in terms of the underlying mechanisms they address. Another aim of the thesis is to answer the question of whether the mindfulness approach is a unique emotion regulation strategy or a set of many of strategies that could be called “mindful emotion regulation.”

One part of the thesis is also a presentation of some results of our research group verifying the effectiveness of an eight-week online mindfulness program based on mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) for students, teachers, and staff of Masaryk University. The initial results of our research group, describing the relationship between mindfulness and emotion regulation, are also presented.