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Individuals with Mental Illness Can Control their Aggressive Behavior Through Mindfulness Training

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Verbal and physical aggression are risk factors for community placement of individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. Depending on the motivations involved, treatment typically consists of psychotropic medications and psychosocial interventions, including contingency management procedures and anger management training. Effects of a mindfulness procedure, *Meditation on the Soles of the Feet*, were tested as a cognitive behavioral intervention for verbal and physical aggression in 3 individuals who had frequently been readmitted to an inpatient psychiatric hospital owing to their anger management problems. In a multiple baseline across subjects design, they were taught a simple meditation technique, requiring them to shift their attention and awareness from the anger-producing situation to the soles of their feet, a neutral point on their body. Their verbal and physical aggression decreased with mindfulness training; no physical aggression and very low rates of verbal aggression occurred during 4 years of follow-up in the community.

Key Words: mindfulness • Soles of the Feet • meditation • cognitive behavior therapy • anger management • serious mental illness

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