

Mindfulness



What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention, in the present moment, to yourself, others and the world around you. It is a skill you can learn. It '*emerges through paying attention on purpose in the present moment and non-judgmentally to things as they are*'. Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Key features

- **Becoming aware** – noticing and noticing that you are noticing
- **Focussing** on present moment
- **Exercising our capacity** to have a wide or narrow focus of attention
- **Working with direct experience** rather than thinking about experience
- **Accepting** – letting go of the impulse to avoid, control or hold onto thoughts and feelings
- **Practicing a non-judgemental attitude** especially suspending self criticism
- **Cultivating compassion**

The benefits

- **Take time out** of and get relief from preoccupations and worries
- **Be less distracted** and concentrate better
- **Experience life more directly** and step out of the relentless commentary of our thoughts
- **Feel less stuck** and drained
- **Understand that thoughts are passing** mental events and not the truth
- **Stop trying to solve problems** that can't be solved or force experience to be other than it is
- **Disengage from automatic thinking** and choose alternate, wiser perspectives and actions
- **Tolerate difficult feelings**, physical sensations or pain
- **Open up to the many possibilities** to feel more alive, engaged and happy
- **Be more compassionate**
- **Prevent mistakes and accidents** that can occur when our minds are elsewhere

What does mindfulness practice involve?

Mindfulness is taught through attention and meditation skills and practices that involve bringing attention to various aspects of sensory experience of the breath, the body in a set position, in walking meditation, simple movements and stretches and in everyday activities. Within the practices we exercise our capacity to shift between a wide or narrow focus of attention. Present moment experience is approached in a way that cultivates our capacity to accept and be curious about the many layers of our experience rather than relying solely on our thoughts, to understand more about our reactions to it and to experiment with ways of responding wisely and using our resources creatively.

Key research findings - Mindfulness has a growing evidence base:

Cognitive and Academic Performance

- enhances the ability to maintain preparedness and to focus attention
- improves information processing ability

Physical and psychological well-being and mental health

- develops body awareness and the capacity to tolerate discomfort and pain
- reduces stress, anxiety, and depression
- encourages better emotion regulation and the development of positive psychological states

Development of the Whole Person

- supports the development of creativity
- enhances the development of inter-relational capacity
- increases empathic responding
- helps with the development of self-compassion

For more information go to www.mindfulnet.org or www.bemindful.co.uk

Podcast with a sample practice

The Mental Health Foundation has 2 downloadable podcasts featuring mindfulness in their wellbeing podcasts selection. www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/wellbeing-podcasts

Mindfulness and the Staff Counselling and Psychological Support Service

Sally Rose is a psychotherapist who has practiced mindfulness personally for several years and completed a teacher training course with the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University

Mindfulness training and practice offered

- 1) Within the individual consultation, counselling and coaching service
- 2) Single training events and workshops open to all or for particular teams and staff groups
- 3) An 8 week course in Mindfulness –Mindfulness- based stress reduction MBSR / Mindfulness at work

**If you are interested please contact Sally Rose
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