Mindfulness Manual

Mindfulness is: “Paying attention to something in a particular way on purpose, non-judgmentally.”

-John Kabat-Zinn

“It’s not really about sitting in the full lotus, like pretending you’re a statue in a British museum. It’s about living your life as if it really mattered, moment by moment by moment by moment.”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mindfulness:

- Awareness of what is happening as it is happening, both inside and out
- Make a decision to train your mind to check in as you are
- Autopilot is useful for some things (like driving a manual needs to be automatic)
- Autopilot is not useful if you need to attend (driving and attending to changes in the road or traffic)

John Kabat-Zinn is a well-known mindfulness expert and shared some other insights.

- “99% of what goes on in my head is none of my business”
- Work on falling awake (not falling asleep)
- Nurture your awareness, rather than forcing it
- Don’t ask if there is life after death but if there is life during life

How Mindfulness Works:

- Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the brain to change
- Mindfulness changes the functioning and structure of the brain as demonstrated in EEG and brain studies
- The attentional skills that you practice become a well-developed neural pathway, allowing you to refocus more easily over time
  - If someone experiences depressive, negative feelings, that is the neural pathway that gets developed
If someone mentally rehearses times they felt happy or had a good performance, that is the pathway that develops

- Studies that monitor brain activity of athletes show that when athletes do imagery, different areas of the brain light up
- The brain makes new neurons until we die and we are always learning
- Actions get easier as you do them more. They become routine
- John Kabat Zinn’s program of meditation has a positive impact on the mind, body and behavior
- This has been demonstrated repeatedly in research studies

The Three Pillars of Mindfulness

Paying attention to the present moment, without judgement.

What are the Benefits of Mindfulness?

Your mind is like any other part of your being, you can benefit from understanding how it works and you can train it to work better. According to a meta-analysis done by Baer (2003), benefits include:

1. **Stability of mind** – maintaining your mind in an alert, clear space instead of being distracted by extremes fuelled by judgements of yourself, others or your experience.

2. **Flexibility of mind** – the ability to shift your mind to whatever object you choose, rather than having it bounce haphazardly between a number of issues.

3. **Self-Awareness** – being aware of the contents of your mind and understanding the typical patterns of your mind.

4. **Acting** rather than **reacting** – becoming less reactive, allowing space to be intentional.

5. **Exposure** – Simply allowing ourselves to feel emotions instead of fighting or avoiding them makes them less painful over time.

6. **Acceptance** – When we fight things we cannot change, it causes us a lot of pain and suffering. When we work on accepting them the pain feels more tolerable and goes away faster. Plus, fighting it doesn’t change anything anyway.
Principles of Mindfulness:

1. Set an intention. This is what you want to pay attention to.
2. Cultivate self-awareness. Know where you are, know yourself, and then you can change it. Notice what happens as you change.
4. Strengthen self-regulation. Want pre-frontal cortex control
5. Practice kindness and compassion for self and others. Disengage from your inner critic.

Formal vs. Informal Practice

Mindfulness is very simple, but can be difficult to learn, therefore it requires practice! In this group we will be focusing on informal practice and we always encourage experimenting with formal practice.

Informal Mindful Practices
- More of a mindset, a philosophy of living each daily more fully
- Any effort to bring mindful awareness to your daily activities and inner experiences (like eating, relating with others, going for a walk, etc.)
- Any effort to spend more time in the now and less time worrying or ruminating

Formal Mindful Practices
- Sitting Meditation
- Walking Meditation
- Yoga / Movement / Qi Gong
Homework

Step out of Automatic Pilot

Choose one activity each day that you often do in autopilot. Activities such as brushing your teeth, eating a meal, attending lectures, showering, preparing for bed, walking in the park are all suitable.

When the time comes for that activity, do it in a fully mindful frame of mind. Pay attention to the activity itself, what is happening right in the moment. As a general aim, stick to the sensations present at the time, touch, sight, sound, taste, smell. You may also note what emotions, thoughts and bodily feelings you have.

If the activity is likely to be longer than a few minutes such as eating a meal or walking in the park then practice the first two minutes mindfully.

Keep a journal (what you did and what you noticed) of your mindfulness practice this week:

Wednesday-

Thursday-

Friday-

Saturday-

Sunday-
Monday-

Tuesday-
### Mindful Awareness or Auto Pilot?

**Mindful Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can experience my emotions without having to act on them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay attention to what is happening in the moment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am compassionate toward others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I notice when and where I hold tension in my body.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am compassionate with myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give people my full attention.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my mood changes, I can point out what changed in my thinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I walk outside, I am aware of the smells and how the wind or sunshine feels on my face.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Auto Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I run on “autopilot”, without really paying attention to what I am doing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think about the past.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a hard time naming my emotions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rush to get things done and on to the next thing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes I don’t realize how I feel until much later.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry about what might happen in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to control my feelings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are things that I try not to think about. Never  Sometimes  Always

Questions for Reflection

1. Where have you marked “Always” or “Never”? What does this tell you about your relationship to your experience?

2. Are there any surprises in your answers, anything you are just noticing about yourself?

3. Looking over your answers, is there some part of your experience that you would like to bring more mindful awareness to?
General Mindful Meditation Scripts

**Meditation Introduction**

- Choose a comfortable position
- Keep eyes open
- Be aware of the space around you
- Take breathe, notice the silence around you
- Close eyes
- Be aware of breath in and out
- Be aware of sounds
- Be aware of physical sensations, contact of body with chair, hands arms etc
- If mind wanders, bring attention back to body
- Notice how your body feels, still restless, general sensations
- Do body scan from head down to toes
- Identify areas that are comfortable or not
- Notice your mood
- Attend to the rhythm of your breath, watching it, following it
- Count: 1 inhale, 2 exhale, 3 inhale, 4 exhale….up to 10
- Start again
- If your mind wanders, bring it back
- Now let go of your focus and let your mind wander wherever it wants to go
- Come back to the sensation of your body, physical sensation
- Let your body unwind

**Meditation: Balance focus and relaxation**

- Breath in and out, attending to your breathing
- Feel your chest expand, lungs fill, breath out, let your body soften
- Close eyes
- Notice the weight of your body, contact against where you are sitting, feet on the floor, arms/hands resting
- Notice the sounds around you, familiar
- If your mind wanders bring it back
- Check in with your body, the general sensations your feel
- Scan your body, notice areas of comfort or discomfort
- If mind wanders bring it back
- Notice your mood, emotions
Settle your attention on the rise and fall of your breath
Feel it, don’t change it
Notice the rhythm, quality of your breath
Count 1-10 (inhale on odd numbers, exhale on even numbers)
Let go of focus on breath, let mind go
Bring attention back
Notice sounds, smells, physical sensations

Mindfulness for Anxiety

Anxiety often occurs because our minds are in the past or the future.
With mindfulness we calm the arousal, relax the mind and move to the present.

1. Relaxation Breath
   Inhale to the count of 4 (or any count that is comfortable to you)
   Exhale to the count of 4
   Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly to see which hand moves (you want the hand on your belly to move)
   Start the count again and do 4 sets of inhale/exhale

2. Relaxation Breath + Imagery
   Do relaxation breathing as outlined in #1
   Use imagery with each breath
   As you inhale, picture energy, health, peace
   As you exhale, picture letting go of stress (pushing it out with your breath)

3. Awareness of Breath
   Do relaxation breathing as outlined in #1
   Become aware of every nuance of your breath
   Is it warm or cold?
   What do you smell each time you breathe?
   What do you feel in your body each time you breathe? Pay attention to how your body move with each breath
   Appreciate your breath
   Breathe the good in, exhale the bad out
   If your mind wanders, that’s ok, just bring it back

4. Present Moment Awareness
Life is a series of moments
You lose this one if you are thinking about another
If a thought comes in say to yourself “not now” or “maybe later” or “let it go”
Repeat these as distracting thoughts come to mind

5. **Space Between Meditation**
   This is a focus meditation where you will notice the space between things
   Start with deep breaths
   Then notice the space between your eyes, visualize it, hear it
   Put your hands together
   Focus on your thumbs, then focus on the space between your thumbs
   Now focus on the space in your head
   Can you imagine the space between your nose and your mouth
   Can you imagine the space between your ears
   Can you imagine the space between your chin and chest
   Can you imagine the space between your shoulders
   Can you imagine the space between your chest and navel
   Can you imagine the space between your knees
   Can you imagine the space between your ankles
   Can you imagine the space between your toes
   Can you imagine the space between your head and feet

6. **Mindfulness of Anxious Thoughts**
   Begin with mindful breathing
   Notice the thoughts that come to mind
   If you don’t like a thought, observe it, accept it, let it go
   OR, pay attention to the thought
   Develop awareness of the thought
   Decide to change it

**Meditations To Disengage**

1. **Lazy River**
   Start with meditation breathing
   Imagine a lazy river, such as the ones at a water park where the rafts drift by
   Imagine the rafts going by; these rafts are all thoughts and you are to watch them go by
   Accept all of them that go by for what they are
   Then eventually choose a raft (thought) you want to get in
   Get in the raft (thought) and stay with it through the river to see where it takes you
2. **Conveyor Belt**
   Similar to lazy river but using the imager of a conveyer belt with thoughts moving by
   Eventually choose one and get on the conveyer belt with it

3. **Traffic**
   Similar to lazy river but imagine the cars and traffic going by as your thoughts
   You passively observe and accept them
   Eventually choose a car (thought) to get in

**Meditations To Engage**

1. **Comparative Thinking**
   Notice your thoughts, good or bad
   Be aware of each one
   Find better thoughts and replace

2. **Changing the Channel**
   Watch the worry channel
   Accept those worries
   Then switch channels to something more positive and uplifting

3. **Outer to Inner**
   Start with awareness of outer self, how body feels
   Move to awareness of breath, how body responds to breath
   Move to inner thoughts, what is going through your mind
   Move to inner emotions, what are you feeling

**Meditation For Distress Tolerance**

1. **Ice Cube Experience**
   Goal is to sit with emotion without trying to change it
   Hold an ice cube in your hand as long as you can
   Pay attention to the feelings, possibly discomfort
   The longer you do it the less uncomfortable it gets

**Mindfulness of Tasks**

1. **Every Day Tasks**
   Pay attention to everyday tasks and the steps you take to go through them; appreciate each one
Washing dishes, brushing your teeth, eating, driving

2. **Mindful Eating**
   - Get a piece of candy or raisin
   - Let it slowly dissolve in your mouth
   - Pay attention to the taste and sensations in your mouth
   - Take your time!

3. **Mindful Walking**
   - Stand up and feel your body
   - Pay attention to your feel
   - Take a step very slowly
   - Notice every part of the movement as your heel leaves the ground, then the ball of your foot and finally your toes
   - Feel your leg as it moves forward and your foot comes off the ground
   - Feel your foot as you place it on the ground again, one step ahead
   - Repeat this for several steps

4. **Body Scan**
   - Pay attention to each part of your body, one at a time
   - Start with your feet and notice how your feet feel
   - Move to your calves, knees, quads and hips
   - Then move to your stomach and lower back, chest and upper back
   - Then shoulders, neck and head
   - Then upper arms, forearms, and fingers
   - Take your time at each point along the way

5. **Sense of Smell**
   - Be aware of the smells in your environment
   - Examples: fresh cut grass, orange, smoke from a campfire, chlorine, ocean, nail polish, perfume, coffee, bacon

---

**Mindfulness for Reducing Depression**

1. **Lazy River/Conveyor Belt/Traffic Highway**
   - Allow depressive thoughts to float by
   - You can get on with one and explore it
   - Or you can choose to get on a positive thought to replace it
2. **Vanishing Thoughts**
   Take a breath
   It is normal that thoughts come and go
   Picture a blank white board with thoughts on the board in red letters
   Notice that the thought(s) vanish so the board is blank again
   Another thought comes and your write it on the board; or you can draw pictures of the thoughts on the board
   Erase them if they are unwanted thoughts
   You can also draw/write thoughts on a piece of glass and then shatter the glass to eliminate the thoughts

3. **Getting in the Gap**
   See Space between thoughts meditation

4. **Write Affirmations**
   Choose affirmations and work them into a meditation
   For depression the goal is to learn a thought that feels better
   One thought could be “I am being mindful”
   Take the first word and put it in the upper left corner of your mind
   Take the second word and put it in the upper right corner of your mind
   Take the third word and put it in the lower left corner of your mind
   Take the fourth word and put it in the lower right corner of your mind
   Focus on the spaces in between the first two (upper) words
   Focus on the spaces in between the second two (lower) words
   Breathe and exhale as you focus in between the words

5. **Shift Depressive Thoughts**
   Choose alternative thoughts
   Move your mood state from depression to anger
   This increase the energy of your mood state

6. **Awareness of Emotions**
   Use an image of waves building and coming into the shore (building of emotion)
   They get smaller as they come all the way in and then go out (taking emotion with them)
   Repeat
   Attend to a current emotion, notice it
Have you felt it before? Is it from your past? Take in the present moment of your emotion.
Breathe, pay attention to your posture, how is the feeling in your body?
Have you noticed this body sensation before? Tense or relaxed?
If thoughts come in, notice them, bring yourself back to your emotion.
Repeat the process: allow, accept, name the emotions.
Remind yourself “I am not my emotion.”

7. **Using Gratitude**
   The goal is to shift into that from depression.
   Breathe
   Clear mind
   Focus attention on your heart
   Breathe through your heart
   Remember a time you felt appreciation or gratitude.

8. **Sending Love and Compassion**
   Start with meditation breathing.
   Send love and compassion to
   - **Yourself:** “May I be well, may I be happy, may I be free from suffering.”
   - **A close friend:** “May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering.”
   - **A neutral person (e.g., store cashier):** “May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering.”
   - **A difficult person in your life:** “May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering.”
   - **All together (everyone you have used for this exercise):** “May everyone be well, may everyone be happy, may everyone be free from suffering.”
   - **To the universe:** “May the universe be well, may the universe be happy, may the universe be free from suffering.”

9. **Shift from Negative to Positive**
   Bring your attention inside to your thoughts, be aware and let it go.
   Put it in a bubble, then pop the bubble and the thoughts disappear.
   Breathe, look around at something good, take it in.
   Do imagery of something good.

**Staying Present**

1. **Stay grounded in present moment**
Remind yourself of date and time and where you are

2. Do a body scan, attending to each part
3. Contact Mindfulness
   Notice where each part of your body is touching
   As you do that say “contact”

Panic

1. Use relaxation breathing (make eye contact with someone or something, breathe)
2. Visualize your hands getting warmer

Anger

- Increase awareness of thoughts, emotions, actions
- Identify triggers for anger
- Use skills to calm arousal state, change situation
1. Vanishing thoughts
2. Tuning into warning thoughts
3. Mindfulness of Emotion
4. Body scan
5. Taking pulse
6. Variation of relaxation breathe (stop, breathe, exhale away the anger)
7. Focus on bottom of feet (reduces the intensity of the anger)
   Put feet on floor, breathe, do nothing
   Remember an angry event, let feelings come, stay with anger, notice the signs
   Shift attention to soles/bottoms of your feet, move toes, feels shoes on feet, arch heels
   Keep breathing, focus on feel until you feel calm
   When calm can walk away or respond calmly

Pain

1. Accept and embrace pain
   Embrace and feel
   Breathe, take inventory of pain
   Notice it without trying to change it
   Embrace it, hug it, accept it without resistance
   Thank the pain for doing its job
   Can also see a white healing light running through body enveloping pain
2. Relax around pain
3. Distract from pain
Do movement  
Lazy River  
Mindful Tasks  
4. Remember a time when you felt well  
Breathe  
Choose a time when you felt healthy/good  
Get a good picture of that  
Keep it for the future  

Sleep Problems  

- Learn to calm busy thoughts  
- Relax mind and body  
1. Awareness of breath, thought, emotion  
2. Body scan  
3. Sleep meditation  
  - Count 1-10 (inhale on odd numbers, exhale on even numbers)  
  - Let go of focus on breath, let mind go  
  - Bring attention back  
  - Notice sounds, smells, physical sensations  

Exercises available from Karen Cogan  

- 10 Minute Mindfulness Audio File  
- 20 Minutes Mindfulness Audio File  
- 10 Minute Body Scan Audio File  
- Competition Audio File FEN  
- Dealing with Unexpected Audio File (FEN)  
- Competition Audio File (DIV)  

Apps  

- HeadSpace - Free, can also buy additional sessions  
- Breathe2Relax - for deep breathing (used a lot at the VA Hospital for veterans) - Free  
- Buddhify2 - $2.99 but you choose the activity and guided meditation to go along with it  
- Omvana - you can great your own program using their music, meditations - Free
• Relax and Rest Guided Meditations - good for those with sleep issues or someone wanting to learn more about meditation - $1.99
• The Mindfulness App - Has a range of meditations from 3 to 30 minutes and has a place to set notices to "do a body scan for stress" - $1.99

PODCASTS: (all are free)

• Audioharna.org - has hundreds of talks by some leading meditation gurus and also has a six-week intro to meditation
• Meditationoasis.com - lots of short podcasts that are both meditations and talks
• Tarabrach.com - Brach a meditation teacher talks you through guided meditations and some more that are fairly advanced
• The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (at marc.ucla.edu); click on Free Guided Meditations - an audio introduction to mindfulness meditation, and some episodes that are 30 minutes long that are meditation and inspirational talks

Research

• Mindfulness.org