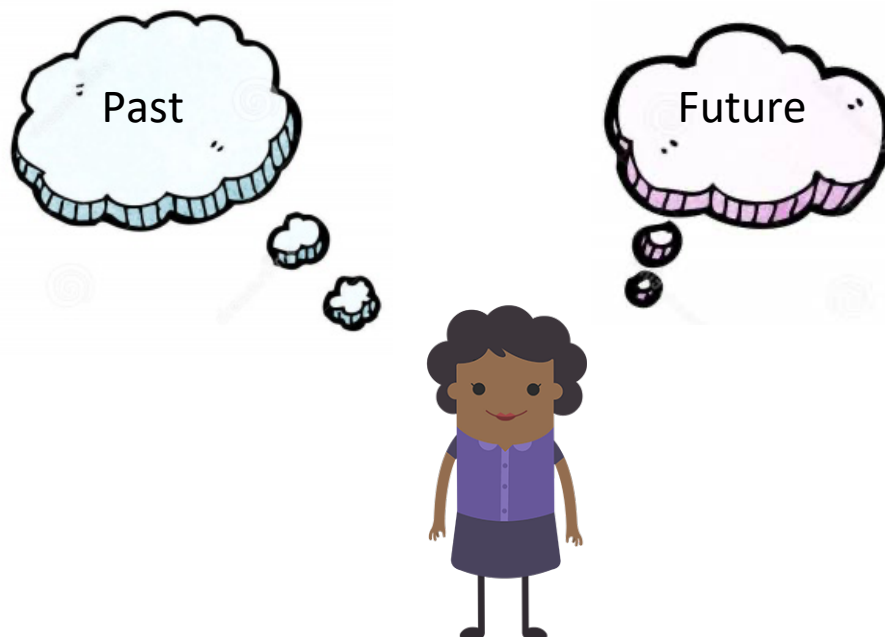


Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness training adapted from Buddhist meditation.

It is about being aware of what is happening in the present. Our minds can often focus on the past and the future which can be upsetting...



Mindfulness is about training our minds to pay attention to where we want our attention to be. We are trying to build our 'attention muscle' and train where our '**spotlight of attention**' goes.



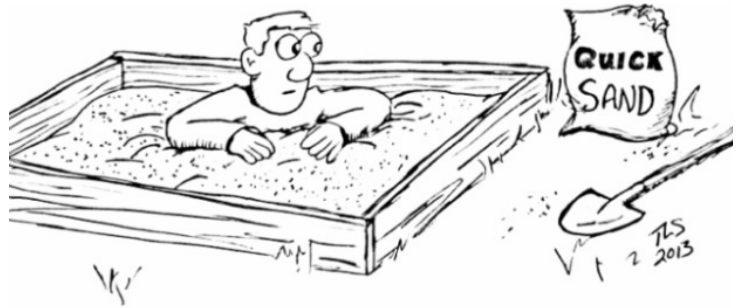
This helps us become **aware** of what we are doing. We are often on autopilot and are not noticing what we are doing.

This also helps us to become more aware of our thoughts and emotions without getting **wrapped up** in them.

It also involves us dropping **judgement**.

What we do

- Spend a lot of time on 'autopilot'
- Think about the past and future
- Overthink issues
- Avoid and push back against emotions



Aims of mindfulness

- To choose where our attention goes
- Learn where our attention is likely to go, and learn how to bring it back
- To focus on what's going on now, rather than the past and the future
- Stop overthinking issues and stop trying to problem solve everything
- Learn to stay with sadness and emotions and accept our experiences (thoughts, emotions, situations, physical reactions) without trying to change them

Judgements or Observations

Mindfulness helps us learn to observe and describe our thoughts, our emotions and our environments in a non-judgemental way.

We make lots of judgements but they can cause us more distress.

For example if you judge that you are a failure > you get upset

If you judge that someone has been disrespectful > you get angry

But our judgements are not facts, only our opinions. Knowing the difference between judgements and observations can help us be mindfully aware of the judgements we are making.

Judgements often involve the following words: *“right,” “wrong,” “fair,” “unfair,” “should,” “shouldn’t,” “stupid,” “lazy,” “wonderful,” “perfect,” “bad,” and “terrible.”*

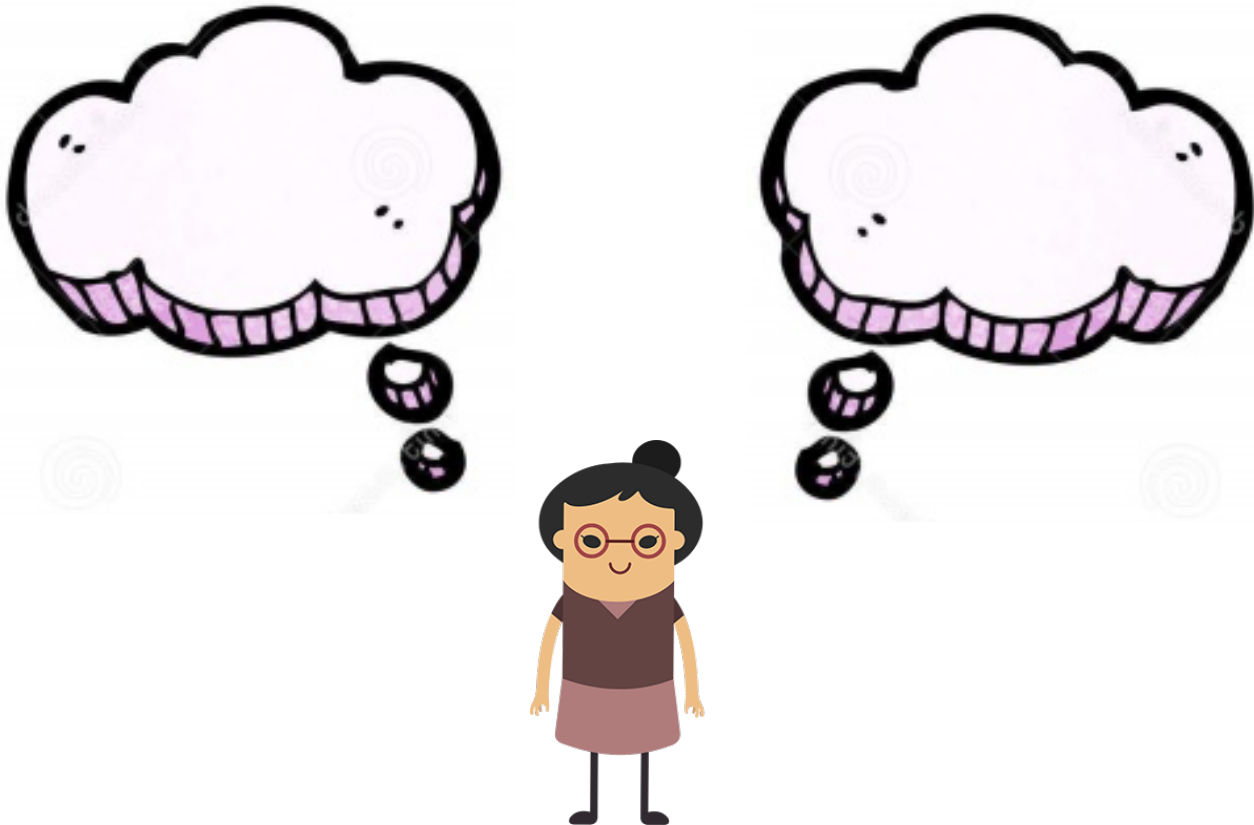
Judgement

I’ve messed up in this relationship, I always do the wrong thing, I’m so stupid.

Observation

This relationship has ended, I feel sad and I have been thinking about the past a lot recently.

What do I do without noticing? (autopilot)



What do I overthink about? (rumination)



Mindful activity



We often go through our day on 'autopilot' without noticing things happening around us.

To increase awareness of what we are doing, try doing activities mindfully.

This means really focussing on what you are doing.

Think about all the details:

What do you see, taste, touch, smell, hear?

What do you notice around you?

If your brain wanders to something else, notice that this has happened and bring it back to what you are doing.

Examples of mindful activities

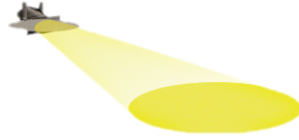
- Brushing teeth
- Having a shower
- Drinking a hot drink
- Eating



Mindful breathing



Being mindful includes 'training' our minds to focus on what we choose to focus on.



Practice focusing your attention on your breathing.

Sit or lie comfortably and bring your attention to your breathing.

What does it feel like?

Is your body moving as you breathe in and out?

Is the air hot or cold?

After a while, your mind will probably wander to something else.

When you notice that this has happened, gently bring back your attention to your breathing.

Your mind will probably wander again, and when it does, notice what has happened, and bring your attention back to your breathing.

Body scan



A body scan is where you pay attention to each part of your body in turn.

Sit or lie comfortably and bring your attention to your right foot.

Focus all your attention on your right foot.

What does it feel like in your shoe or sock?

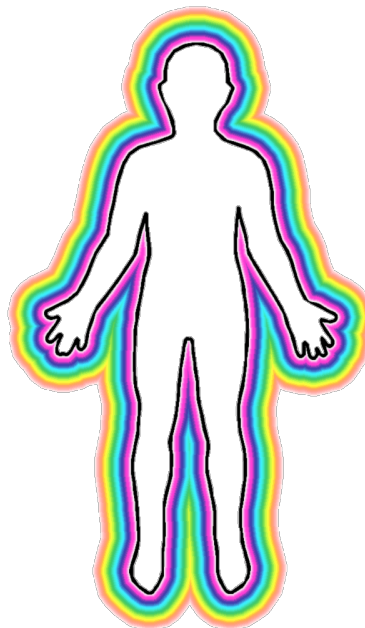
Are your toes touching?

Is it hot or cold?

Is there any pain?

When you have spent about a minute doing this, move your attention to the next part of your body and focus on that.

1. Right foot
2. Right calf
3. Right knee
4. Right thigh
5. Left foot
6. Left calf
7. Left knee
8. Left thigh
9. Stomach
10. Back
11. Right hand
12. Right arm
13. Left hand
14. Left arm
15. Shoulders
16. Head



If you notice that your mind wanders, notice it has done that and gently bring your attention back.

Mindfulness of Current Emotions

OBSERVE YOUR EMOTION

- Step back and just notice your emotion.
- Experience your emotion as a WAVE, coming and going.
- Now imagine surfing the emotion wave.
- Try not to BLOCK or SUPPRESS the emotion.
- Don't try to GET RID of or PUSH away the emotion.
- Don't try to KEEP the emotion around.
- Don't HOLD ON to it.
- Don't AMPLIFY it.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF BODY SENSATIONS

- Notice WHERE in your body you are feeling emotional sensations.
- Experience the SENSATIONS as fully as you can.
- Observe how LONG it takes before the emotion goes down.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTION

- Do not necessarily ACT on your emotion.
- Remember times when you have felt DIFFERENT.

PRACTICE LOVING YOUR EMOTION

- RESPECT your emotion.
- Do not JUDGE your emotion.
- ACCEPT your emotion.

Mindfulness of Current Emotions

Due Date: Name: Week Starting:

EMOTION NAME: INTENSITY (0–100) Before: After:

Describe situation that prompts emotion.

Check off any of the following that you did:

- ☐ Stepped back and just noticed the emotions I was experiencing.
- ☐ Experienced the emotion as waves, coming and going on the beach.
- ☐ Let go of judgments about my emotions.
- ☐ Noticed where in my body I was feeling the emotional sensations.
- ☐ Paid attention to the physical sensations of the emotions as much as I could.
- ☐ Observed how long it took the emotion to go away.
- ☐ Reminded myself that being critical of emotions does not work.
- ☐ Practiced willingness to have unwelcome emotions.
- ☐ Imagined my emotions as clouds in the sky, coming and going.
- ☐ Just noticed the action urge that went with my emotion.
- ☐ Got myself to avoid acting on my emotion.
- ☐ Reminded myself of times when I haven't felt like this.
- ☐ Practiced accepting my emotion.

Other:

Comments and descriptions of experiences:

Homework for this session:

Practice the 4 mindfulness exercises

Complete the mindfulness of emotions worksheet