

Introduction to Mindfulness

Being on Auto Pilot / Being Mindless

- Can you think of a time when you have travelled from A to B and at the end you couldn't remember the journey?
- Have you ever been startled or 'had your buttons pressed' by events or people that have triggered difficult feelings and sensations and reactions?
- Our minds are good at this; being on auto pilot and reacting quickly to things.
- Our minds are good at wandering and getting hooked into thoughts, feelings and sensory input that can end up overwhelming us and taking us away from the moment – maybe to the past or the future or to getting stuck on unhelpful or distressing thoughts

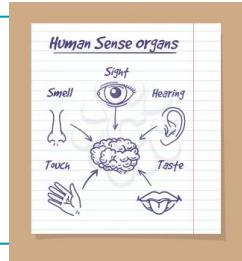


Being Mindful



- Mindfulness comes from ancient Buddhist practices which helped people pay attention to things in particular ways (Ref: [Jon Kabat-Zinn: Defining Mindfulness – Mindful](#))
- Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as “awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally”
- When we are more mindful we are better able to bring our minds back to the here and now, choose where we put our focus and how we react to thoughts and feelings
- It is simply a practical way of noticing where our mind is, and gently bringing it back to our choice of focus
- We can benefit from being more mindful. It takes practice, but the skills are simple. Think of it as going to the gym for your mind
- You may feel more relaxed after doing mindful activities – but this isn’t the aim!

Being Mindful



- **Mindfulness practice** (5-10 minute mindfulness practices including breathing anchor, body scan, visualisations)
- **Mindful activities** (e.g. washing up, drinking a hot/cold drink, brushing your teeth or cutting a piece of veg, listening to music) focus on; temperature, shape, colour, texture, taste, emotions, feel on my body or in my mouth e.g. is it crunchy, soft or hard?
- **Engaging our senses** 5,4,3,2,1 technique (what can I see, hear, feel, smell, taste?)
- **Mindful walking** – being aware of the noises, scents, textures, temperatures, nature around you
- **Mindful writing** - journaling, writing a diary, creative writing
- **Hobbies** that allow you to focus your attention e.g. craft, art, sports, jigsaws, boardgames, reading, playing or listening to music (but remember pacing techniques)

Home practice: Try at least one mindfulness activity at home this week

References for extra reading: Mark Williams and Danny Penman – Mindfulness - a practical guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World / Mindfulness for Health by Danny Penman and Vidyamala Burch