

# MINDFULNESS

'LEARNING TO BE PRESENT AND ENJOY THE MOMENT'

We can sometimes go about our day to day activities on “automatic pilot”, not being fully aware of what we’re doing and not present moment by moment. We can often do daily tasks being miles away without realising it. In this state, we’re more likely to have our “buttons pressed” as our environment may trigger old, unhelpful thinking patterns. By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations, we give ourselves more opportunity to challenge and change our old thoughts and habits that might cause us problems.

## WHAT IS IT?

Mindfulness is an ancient eastern practice. It means to pay attention in a specific way; on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement.

Mindfulness does not conflict with any religious or cultural beliefs or traditions. It is a practical way to notice your thoughts, physical sensations, sights, sounds and smells.

It is simply noticing things that we don’t normally pay attention to, because our heads might be preoccupied by the past or the future. Mindfulness can help us to focus and choose where we focus our attention.



# WHY BE MINDFUL?

*Mindfulness can:*

- » Help reduce stress and anxiety and conflict
- » Increase resilience and emotional intelligence
- » Improve communication



## A MINDFUL ACTIVITY

One way of increasing mindfulness is through day to day activities. This can include eating, tidying, cleaning and walking.

When we go for our daily walks or cleaning the dishes, we might be ruminating over things in the past, or worrying about the future.

If you find yourself doing this, gently nudge yourself back to the present. If you're going for a walk, notice the temperature of the air on your skin, you might notice the smell of the grass or flowers, take notice of the nature around you.

Can you hear birds singing or cars driving past?

What noise do your shoes make when they hit the ground?

Can you hear other people talking?

Try paying attention to specific tasks and activities to increase mindful thinking.

# BREATHING

## Breathing Meditation 1 (Kabat-Zinn 1996)

Assume a comfortable posture lying on your back or sitting. If you are sitting, keep the spine straight and let your shoulders drop. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.

Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the in-breath and fall on the out-breath.

Keep your focus on the breathing, being with each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.

Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.

If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your job is simply to bring it back to the breath every time.

Practice this exercise for fifteen minutes every day, whether you feel like it or not, for one week and see how it feels to add this to your daily life. Be aware of how it feels to spend some time each day just being with your breath without having to do anything.



# 5 STEPS

FOLLOW THE 5 STEPS BELOW FOR AT LEAST A WEEK!

01



Sit in a quiet place

02



Just notice your breath for 3 minutes

03



Notice both sad and happy thoughts

04



Do not judge the thoughts as good or bad

05



Let the thoughts pass over your mind like clouds in the sky

## REFERRING TO WELLBEING SERVICES

If you have a G.P. in the Southside of Glasgow you can refer to us for treatment. You can do this yourself by visiting our "Virtual Courses" webpage or by phoning us. We also accept written referrals from G.P.'s, CMHT's and external/internal agencies.

If your G.P. is not registered within the Southside of Glasgow don't worry as anyone can download the self-help materials. If you feel you need further support please get in touch with your G.P.