

Mindfulness

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mindfulness is simply taking time to pay attention to the present moment. There is no judgement or problem to solve, just a time to take notice. It isn't much more complicated than that! Mindfulness can occur formally through a meditation session or informally where you take note of an activity you are engaging in. Either way, the key is to openly and calmly direct your full attention to a moment or activity. Engaging in mindfulness can stop the escalation of negative or unhelpful emotions and be an effective tool to assist in promoting wellbeing.

Mindfulness is a particularly helpful tool as it is an effective coping and stress reduction technique that doesn't cost anything, requires no materials or tools, can be done anywhere or anytime and is so discreet that no one even needs to know it is occurring.

Not everyone will take to the practice in the same way, but it important to give many opportunities to rehearse and get more comfortable with the technique so that each person can figure out what works best for them. People who experience feelings of stress, anxiety, worry or frustration may find this a particularly useful skill to have.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

First up... promise that you will give this a chance! Some people take to mindfulness right away and never look back. For others, it feels a little strange at first and can take some adjusting to. If this is true for you, commit to trying 5 sessions of mindfulness before deciding if it's for you or not. Chose which kind of mindfulness you will try (you can do both!) and complete the reflection once you've had a chance to complete 5-10 sessions. Aim to do one or two every day for a week.

Formal mindfulness

We love the free app developed by [Smiling Mind](#). With mindfulness sessions for youth, adolescents and adults, you can select the age range and length of time of each mindfulness sessions you run. A 10-minute session every day or every other day is a perfect way to start.

Informal mindfulness

If you don't want to use an app to help guide the mindfulness sessions for your child, try to find opportunities through the day for them to practice mindfulness. It doesn't need to be complicated, just look for opportunities for them to give their full and non-judgemental attention to something – that's it!

Some ideas include:

- While on walk or in the backyard, take note of a specific detail (e.g. Listen out for birds, look for flowers, notice different colours, notice how many sounds can be identified, notice what the wind is doing etc...),
- While eating dinner, notice how the food looks, tastes or smells.
- Lie on the grass on a sunny day and watch the clouds go by.
- Close your eyes and notice which muscles feel tight, which ones are relaxed.
- Notice what it feels like while brushing your hair or teeth.



MINDFULNESS ACTION PLAN

To me, mindfulness means...

The most important things I need in place to take part in mindfulness are...

The area(s) in my life I can see mindfulness being of most benefit...

I hope that mindfulness practice will help me to...

To reach my goal defined above, I will need to practice mindfulness in the following way:

Frequency

(daily/weekly/fortnightly)

Time of day and duration:

(before getting up / after dinner etc.)

The types of mindfulness reflection that worked best for me were:

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