**Mindfulness Meditation**

**What it is:** Mindfulness meditation is paying attention to the present moment, noticing what’s happening around you and in you, including thoughts and feelings, without judging them. Accepting things the way they are, including ourselves.

**Why we do it:** Helps to the reduce the stress that comes from wanting things to be different from how they are or trying to control people, places and things beyond our control. It helps us to accept situations, especially challenging ones so that we can respond skillfully without overreacting (everything is a crisis) or underreacting (ignoring what’s happening).

**How we do it:** Wepractice putting our attention on something that is actually happening in the present moment, like our breath, the sounds around us, a feeling in the body (feet on the floor), something we see (a bird out the window)or the temperature of the water while we are doing the dishes.

**We can practice:**

* Formally by taking 10 minutes out of our day to sit, focusing our attention
* Informally by picking an activity we do every day and focusing our attention on that activity
* On the spot when we find ourselves upset, worrying or caught up in thinking about things we can’t control

Formal Practice

Recommended for 10 minutes daily. If you don’t have 10 minutes, (and who does?) reflect on your day and see if there is 10 minutes in your day that you feel **does not contribute** to your health and well-being. For example, watching too much news, talking to an unkind person, scrolling on your phone. Take that activity out for 10 minutes and practice 10 minutes of mindfulness meditation instead.

The suggested posture is seated on a chair in a way that feels:

* Grounded: feel your feet on the floor, your seat on your seat
* Upright: tall spine with a strong back but not rigid
* Open: relaxed shoulders and a soft front
* Relaxed: resting your hands in your lap comfortably

You can practice with your eyes either open or closed. If they are open, lower your gaze and soften the focus so you are not distracted.

1. Pick something to focus on so that the mind has an anchor: feeling of breath moving in your body, the sounds in the room.
2. When the mind wanders, bring it back to the anchor. Repeat over and over. Eventually, the mind begins to settle.

You can also use a guided meditation from the resource list or attend a group, virtually or in person.

Informal Practice

Whatever you are doing, and wherever you are, you can notice if your mind has wandered off on its own and come back to paying attention to anything and everything that is happening right now.

On a walk – let go of planning your day or finishing the argument and really see and hear the environment
In the shower – feel the water on your skin, the coldness of the floor, the scent of your soap
Doing the dishes – feel the shape of the dish, notice the color, feel the water temperature
Eating a meal – take the time to taste your food, feel the textures in your mouth, notice smells
Talking to friends and family – really listen to *them* without focusing on what you are going to say next

On the Spot:

Whenever you notice yourself upset, overwhelmed, flustered or you just need a break.

Practice S-T-O-P

S – stop what you are doing or thinking (worrying, obsessing)
T – take a deep breath or 3
O – observe what’s going on either around you (the situation) or in you (how it is affecting you)
P – proceed intentionally by choosing how you want to respond, which can include doing nothing

**RESOURCES**

Local groups (now available virtually)

Portsmouth Library: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/weekly-meditation>
 Wed 12:15 – 1:00 pm Online with Zoom

Gateway Taiji Studio: <https://www.gatewaytaiji.com/> Tues and Fri 7:30 – 8:15 am
 Online with Zoom

Websites with Guided Meditations

Mindful.org: <https://www.mindful.org/> – has great short articles about all aspects of mindfulness

Insight Timer: <https://insighttimer.com/> – available as an app for your phone, has a timer that you can set for silent practice

Korabek Training: <https://www.korabektraining.com/resources/> - short guided meditations including a **10 minute one for daily practice.** Click on Resources under Why Mindfulness?
 Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about mindfulness meditation.
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