



MINDFULNESS FACT SHEET

February 2020

MINDFULNESS

In today's busy world it is easy to become so overwhelmed with the constant flow of information bombarding our brains, unexpected challenges and daily responsibilities. Mindfulness is the practice of bringing focus to the here and now and giving full attention to the moment at hand, endeavouring to bring calm and structure to your thoughts. A way to bring moment-to-moment awareness of ourselves and our environment.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Mindfulness works by calming the brain and causing a relaxation response - breathing slows, blood pressure is lowered, helping to relax and feel calmer.

FORMAL MINDFULNESS V INFORMAL MINDFULNESS

Formal mindfulness or mindfulness meditation is practised by sitting in a comfortable position with closed eyes. Focus attention on a specific thing eg. breathing, physical sensations, the view in front of you. This is done on a regular basis for a certain period of time (daily if possible)

Informal mindfulness involves focusing fully and non-judgmentally on whatever it is you are doing at the present time and giving it your full attention. It may be reading a book, doing household chores or watching a movie. It involves taking the skills learnt through formal mindfulness and applying them to everyday situations.

FUNDAMENTALS OF MINDFULNESS

NOTICING

What are you thinking and feeling right now?

ACKNOWLEDGING

Accept those thoughts and feelings without judgment.

RECENTERING

Bring your thoughts back to the here and now.

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

Allows you to be more present.

Improves awareness of the world around you.

Calmer thought processes and greater focus.

Improves concentration and increases productivity.

Reduces anxiety.

Improves physical wellbeing and allows for better sleep.

Increases happiness.

Deepens compassion towards and understanding of others.

Teaches the ability to relax and regulate emotions.

Improves resilience when dealing with challenging situations.

THE FIVE SENSES PRACTICE

Focus on the environment around you.

LOOK FOR



Five things you can see

Four things you can feel



Three things you can hear

Two things you can smell



One thing you can taste

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How often should mindfulness be practised?

As with any skill we are trying to improve, mindfulness should be practised regularly, preferably daily. Over time, practice makes it easier to apply the skills to difficult situations and challenges and react to them in a calmer and more focused manner.

What are the possible downsides of mindfulness?

It can be hard to sit and concentrate when the mind is running in a thousand directions. It takes a strong focus to bring your attention to a particular focal point.

Some people who have experienced trauma can be triggered by certain sights, sounds and smells, reliving the traumatic experience.

Mindfulness practice can also trigger mania, depression, hallucinations and psychosis.

If any of these happen when practising mindfulness, always seek professional help.