

STRESS LESS WITH MINDFULNESS

SESSION 4 - BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

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MINDFULNESS IS...

- Paying attention
- On purpose
- In the present moment “Here and Now”
- With a nonjudgmental attitude



Jon Kabat-Zinn(1994). *Wherever You Go, There you Are*.

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE



TODAY WE WILL

- Practice mindful attention to your thoughts.
- Observe your thoughts and let go, over and over again.
- Understand more about how the brain works under stress.
- Learn the power of acceptance and gratitude to relieve stress.

Mindfulness

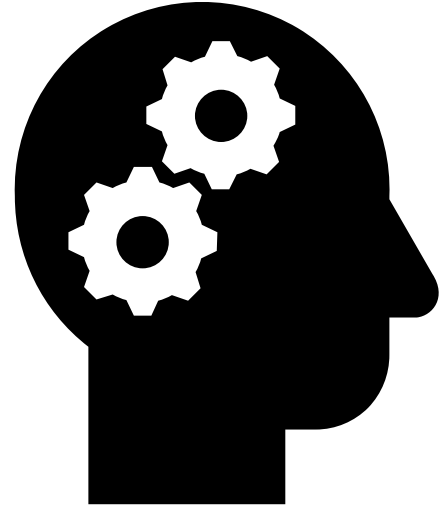
IT IS USUALLY BETTER TO UNDER-REACT!



- Mindfulness gives us the ability to observe our thoughts from an outside perspective.
- Developing your detached observer.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 80,000 thoughts each day.
- 90% of these thoughts are ones we've had before.
- 80% of this 90% are negative thoughts.
- We are stuck to our beliefs, even in the face of contradictory evidence.



HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO YOUR OWN THOUGHTS?

- **Control.** Struggle to control thoughts, feelings, or body sensations?
- **Manage.** Get mad, feel sad?
- **Avoid.** Get busy or eat so you don't notice?
- **Blame** yourself & others for thinking or feeling that way?

***Controlling, managing, avoiding, and blaming
can all become problems!***

“What You Resist, Persists”

Attempting to control thoughts and feelings:

- Works temporarily.
- Increases anxiety and anger.
- Worsens memory.
- Makes you work harder.
- Results in poorer quality of life.

TRYING TO SUPPRESS AND CONTROL THOUGHTS DOESN'T WORK

Exercise:

Don't think about a pink elephant!



INNER CRITIC



TRUE OR FALSE?

- **Anxiety and depression are part of life's experience.**
- **Negative feelings are unavoidable in the face of life circumstances.**
- **It is impossible to maintain perfect control of one's emotions.**
- **Emotions are not a sign of weakness, but of being human.**

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

Unpleasant thoughts and feelings are normal experiences in the flow of life.

Being more open to life's experiences leads to:

- Greater happiness and enjoyment.
- Improved mood and relationships.
- Improved physical health.



Mindfulness

Cognitive Fusion is mistaking our thoughts for reality.



- The story is not reality, it is our perception.
- We become stuck in our thoughts.

Thoughts...

- Are merely sounds, words, or stories.
- May or may not be true.
- May or may not be important.
- Are definitely not orders.
- May or may not be wise.
- Are never threats to us.

Pay attention only if helpful.

STEP BACK

Zoom in and out

- Pick a thought or worry.
- Focus on it for 20 seconds.
- Visualize the thought as words on a giant screen TV.
- Zoom out in your mind's eye until the words become tiny and disappear.



<https://www.pixelthoughts.co/#>

A Mind in Constant Motion

- List of “To Dos”
- Fears
- Hurts
- Judging present
- Creating drama

<http://daringtolivefully.com/>



Tips to Tame your monkey mind...

- Know your monkey mind can be tamed.
- Talk to your monkey mind.
- Engage your mind.
- Play a game of fives.
- Piko-Piko breathing.

<http://daringtolivefully.com/>

Instead of struggling



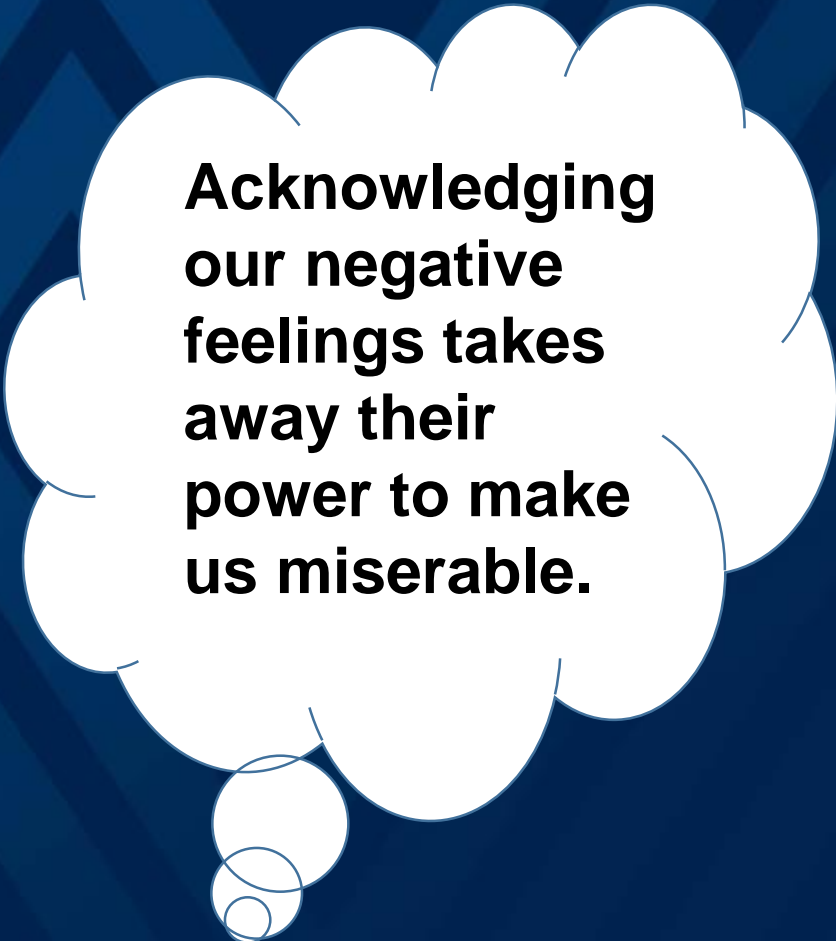
Let thoughts
come into your
mind and slip
right out.

NOTICE

- What your mind is saying.
- What your body is doing.
- How your mind evaluates body sensations.

NAME the emotion

- Feel it in the body & watch it pass.



**Acknowledging
our negative
feelings takes
away their
power to make
us miserable.**

ACCEPT



Watch your thoughts coming and going, like waves in the ocean or clouds in the sky. Just let it be.

RELEASE

Practice kindness and
patience with yourself
and others.

Focus on what has
gone well for you.



Mindfulness

Attitude of Gratitude

Every night, before you go to sleep, write down three things that went well for you today.

Small positive daily practices add up to large positive changes over time.

Mindfulness

MINDFUL PERSPECTIVE

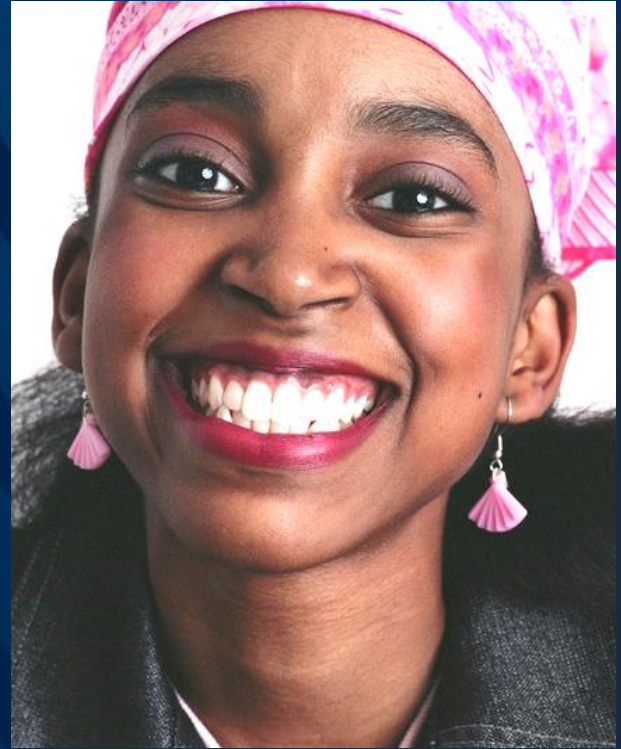
It is not whether the thought is true or not,
but whether it is HELPFUL.

Ask yourself:

*“If I pay attention to this thought, will it help
me create the life I want?”*

Mindfulness

It is possible to
choose to stop
struggling and
start living.



YOUR PLAN FOR THE WEEK

Can you name and notice thoughts this week?

When might you write in your gratitude journal this week?

THREE SMALL STEPS . . .

CHOOSE TO NOTICE what happens when you get anxious, angry, or happy.

SHIFT to gentle acceptance.

PRACTICE daily tuning into what you are doing with your thinking.



Mindfulness

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