

## Mindfulness – Being Present

Mindfulness is being able to be aware of your thoughts, feelings and surrounding environment at the present moment. Mindfulness is paying attention to your own thoughts and feelings and not judging them without socially constructed ideal of “right” or “wrong.” Mindfulness also helps in times when it is difficult to concentrate because of all the thoughts that are running through your mind. Being mindful of your thoughts can have many benefits and help release stress or pressure.

### How Mindfulness Helps Your Health and Social Life:

- Practicing being mindful through meditation has shown to work in aiding your immune system to fight illness.
- Being mindful helps you to focus better in situations and tune out distractions that may be environmental or psychological factors.
- Mindfulness helps in enhancing healthy relationships. By practicing being present, individuals are more optimistic and relaxed and can make you more accepting of others.
- An individual who is mindful has also been shown to be more compassionate toward others as well as themselves and help people who are in need of help.
- Meditation is a great way to relax and control your breathing. From meditation, you are able to take a new, clear approach to your thoughts and feelings and tackle them in a controlled manner.



### Guide to Attaining Mindfulness:

- Begin to pay attention to your breathing (this can be key when you are experiencing intense emotions such as stress).
- Pay attention to senses (sights, sounds, smells) and physical sensations you are experiencing.
- Recognize that your thoughts don't control you. You control them.

After becoming mindful of your thoughts, senses and physical sensations around you, you are able to channel your emotions in a positive way and begin to become more present in the moment.



## Other Ways to Becoming Mindful in the Moment:

- Make a list of all your thoughts and categorize them into a “To Do” list or “Maybe Later” list. Things that are on the “Maybe Later” list you can worry about in the future, once you have completed your “To Do” list. The things that make these two lists are not just tasks you need to accomplish, it includes *everything* from vacations that you want to take to worries about your family or global issues.
- In situations where you are waiting (in line, in traffic, for a movie to start, etc.), instead of becoming impatient or agitated, focus on your breathing and become mindful of your thoughts and take a positive spin on the situation. For example, think about how much you will enjoy the movie you're waiting to see.



## Activity Options:

- **Practice breathing meditation:**
  - Find a comfortable, quiet place where you can fully relax your body.
  - Relax your shoulders and begin to breathe deeply; let your stomach expand as you inhale.
  - Focus on your breathing, let go of all physical sensations and thoughts.
  - Continue for about 10 minutes or until fully relaxed.
- **End the session by having team members make lists of “To Do,” “Maybe Later,” and/or “In Life/ Throughout Life”**
  - Include working on breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques every day until the next meeting.
    - During the next session, have the team reflect on what techniques worked best/what they learned from practicing mindfulness in their own life!

