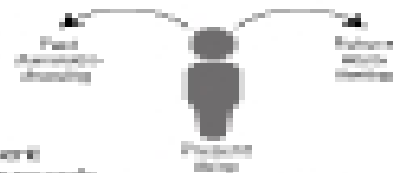


What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the short-term for mindfulness meditation practice. This is a form of self-awareness training adapted from Buddhist mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness is about being aware of what is happening in the present, moment-by-moment, without making judgements about what we're doing. Mindfulness meditation practice today is used in a variety of evidence-based psychological therapies, including dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

Why should I practice mindfulness?

Our minds can be constantly distracted by the past, present or future. We often focus on what's happened, or worrying about things that could happen. This can often be distressing.



Mindfulness is a practice which encourages us to focus on the present moment. There is good evidence that mindfulness practice can help people cope with a wide variety of feelings states such as depression and anxiety, but also physical health conditions such as back pain and chronic illness.

Why don't we do practice? Can't I just pay attention to the present moment already?

We can all pay attention to the present moment, at least for a short while. If you haven't tried meditation before, though, you might notice that your attention wanders and is not easily controlled. Mindfulness strengthens our ability to pay attention to the present moment, but also increases our awareness of how our minds fluctuate, often in unhelpful ways. People who practice mindfulness regularly find that it helps their ability to stay in the present moment without being distracted.

What does it mean to cultivate a non-judgmental attitude?

Shakespeare said 'there is nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so', and this is a core idea in therapies like cognitive behavioral therapy. Making judgements about our own experiences can often lead to us becoming quite distressed. For example, thoughts like 'this is terrible' and 'I can't take anymore' are both judgements associated with distress. Practising mindfulness teaches us to accept things as we experience them without judging it. This has been shown to help people live more fulfilling lives.

Some helpful quotes about mindfulness:

"You let a clearly-sentient self arise, because clear if you do your part mind will arise your nature will also become clear"

- Eckhart Tolle, *The Way Zen* (1957)

"Mindfulness means paying attention to particular regions, purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally"

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever you go, there you are* (1994)

"The non-judgmental observation of the ongoing stream of internal and external stimuli as they arise"

- Matthew S. Delgado-García, *Journal of Mindfulness* (2011)

"Mindfulness is a practice that allows us to be present with what is"

- Jack Kornfield, *The Way of Zen* (1997)

"Mindfulness is simply the act of noticing without comment whatever is happening in your present experience"

- Jay Garfield, *The Heart of Mindfulness* (2014)