



MINDFULNESS MOMENT

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Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Health Campus Initiative (HCI) Mindfulness Moment. We know that stress is one of the greatest academic impediments for Portland State students¹. Similarly, for faculty and staff we know stress impacts attendance, productivity and satisfaction in the workplace². Mindfulness Moment is a pilot project designed to introduce students, faculty and staff to the benefits of a mindfulness practice.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a moment-by-moment awareness of our physical (body sensations), mental (thoughts), and emotional (feelings) experiences. It also involves non-judgment, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without believing that there is a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment.

It is important to recognize that mindfulness has its origins in the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism (a more than 2500 year old practice). Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn is often credited with bringing mindfulness to the Western world in the 1970s having studied and practiced mindfulness meditation under several Buddhist teachers, including Thich Nhat Hanh. Kabat-Zinn integrated mindfulness meditation practices with his knowledge of Western science to develop his 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program which now has more than 30 years of research to support its effectiveness in stress reduction.

Kabat Zinn defines mindfulness as “**paying attention; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.**”³ This definition highlights the three specific ways our attention shifts gears when we are practicing be mindful:

On purpose: conscious and deliberate direction of our attention

In the present moment: bringing attention to the here and now

Non-judgmentally: paying attention to our experiences without judging or labeling them

WHY MINDFULNESS?

There is a strong and growing body of research for mindfulness practices reducing levels of stress and anxiety by calming the body and mind, improving focus and attention by strengthening our “mental muscle” to bring attention back to where we want it, and increasing our capacity to show compassion to ourselves and others. We have piloted the Mindfulness Moment in more than 40 PSU classes. We have received positive feedback from both faculty and students. 75% of students reported that mindfulness helped them focus on the present and

¹ American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment, 2016.

² American Psychological Association, Stress in America Survey, 2012.

³ Kabat-Zinn, J (2003). Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future. *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice*, 10, 144-156.

65% of faculty noted that students appeared more focused on the present after practicing mindfulness.

HOW DO I LEAD THE MINDFULNESS MOMENT?

First, read this summary page aloud to your students on the first day you introduce the Mindfulness Moment. From then on, at the start of every class you and your students will take a “moment” (3-5 minutes) to practice one of the five exercises included in this packet: **Mindful Breathing, Body Scan, Self-Compassion, 5 Senses, or Gratitude**. We encourage you to start with the Mindful Breathing exercise for the first week. Your job is to read the script out loud to the class. Once completed, you can move into your regular class agenda/discussion for the day.

Once you have led all the exercises, we encourage you to discuss with your class whether you will continue to rotate through all five of the exercises or just select a subset to practice. Whatever you and your class decide is the right decision for the remainder of the term. You are welcome to consult with the Mindfulness Moment Team at any time, with any questions. A week before the term ends, we will have a short survey for you and your students to complete to give us feedback on the Mindful Moment experience.

What if I have students who do not want to participate? If you have students that would prefer not to participate, that is okay. This is a voluntary opportunity. Please ask those students to sit quietly at their seat.

Do students have to keep their eyes closed during the exercise? No. You may have students that would prefer to keep their eyes open during the exercises and that is okay. Those students can focus their attention to an object or area in the classroom.

What if a student is not able to complete an exercise? That is okay as well. Please encourage students to take care of themselves in that moment. We encourage you to follow up with those students and consult with the Mindfulness Moment Team if you or the student have further questions.

Mindfulness Video Resources for Instructors

- (6:35) The Science Behind Mindfulness Meditation
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTA0j8FfCvs>
- (2:43) Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower: An Animation
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>
- (1:38) “Arrive” - A Mindfulness Minute Helps Students Arrive in the Classroom
 - <https://www.mindfulschools.org/video/arrive-2/>

Mindfulness Moment: Breathing

Instructions: Read the following script at a slow, deliberate pace. You can read the purpose prior to the exercise if you'd like. Brackets [] contain instructional notes that are not read aloud.

Purpose: This exercise can be done at the start of a class to stay focused, before a test to feel less anxious, or any time during your day. It is simply a way of allowing yourself to have more mindful and conscious awareness of your body and its surroundings, your breath, and your capacity to relax. When our breathing becomes more slow and rhythmic, our muscles relax, and when our muscles relax, our mind relaxes.

Breathing Exercise: Sit quietly with both feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Allow yourself to feel centered in the chair. You may close your eyes if you'd like or you may keep your eyes open and focus your attention on something in the room. Start to notice the breath as it enters your body through your nose and travels to your lungs. Notice as you exhale how the breath leaves your body through your mouth.

[Pause for two breath cycles.]

Don't try to do anything with your breathing – simply notice it. Pay attention to it. Be aware of it. It doesn't matter if your breathing is slow or fast, deep or shallow. Allow your body to do what it does naturally. Breathe in relaxation, breathe out tension.

[Pause for two breath cycles.]

You will start to notice that each time you breathe in, your stomach will expand and each time you breathe out your stomach will relax. Be aware of the physical sensations of breathing in, and breathing out. If you find that thoughts intrude, this is okay. Notice the thoughts, allow them to be, and gently bring your awareness back to your breath.

[Pause for one breath cycle.]

Now with one last breath, bring your attention and awareness back to the present, ready to continue your day with awareness, relaxation, and focus.

Source: adapted from Livingwell.org

Mindfulness Moment: Body Scan

Instructions: Read the following script below at a slow, deliberate pace. You can read the purpose prior to the exercise if you'd like. Brackets [] contain instructional notes that are not read aloud.

Purpose: During a body scan, you focus attention on each part of your body in turn, moving from your head to toes. In each area of your body, you search for tension, then focus on relaxing the muscles in that area. This exercise provides practice for increasing your awareness of your body's tension areas and learning to relax those areas of tension.

Body Scan Exercise: Sit quietly with both feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Allow yourself to feel centered in the chair. You may close your eyes if you'd like or you may keep your eyes open and focus your attention on something in the room. Notice your breath - the inhale, the exhale, and the space in between. Focus on breathing in relaxation and breathing out tension [*Pause for several seconds.*] Acknowledge how your body is feeling in this moment [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Bring your attention to your head. Take note of any tension you may feel in your head. Then take in a deep breath, and on the exhale release the tension in your head. [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Now move your attention to your neck and shoulders. Notice any tension you may feel in your neck and shoulders. Then take in a deep breath, and on the exhale release any tension in your neck and shoulders.

[*Pause for several seconds. Repeat the previous three sentences for each area below, pausing for several seconds after each area.*]

- Back
- Arms, hands, and fingers
- Abdomen
- Legs
- Feet and toes

Now bring your attention, mindfulness, and awareness back to your breath. With one last breath, bring your attention and awareness back to the present, ready to continue your day with awareness, relaxation, and focus.

Source: Adapted from the Active Workplace Study

Mindfulness Moment: Self-Compassion

Instructions: Read the following script below at a slow, deliberate pace. You can read the purpose prior to the exercise if you'd like. Brackets [] contain instructional notes that are not read aloud.

Purpose: This is an exercise in feeling compassion towards yourself. Self-compassion often does not come naturally – it is a skill you need to learn, practice, and consciously engage in.

Self-Compassion Exercise: Sit quietly with both feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Allow yourself to feel centered in the chair. You may close your eyes if you'd like or you may keep your eyes open and focus your attention on something in the room. Bring your attention to your breath. [*Pause briefly.*]

Now bring your awareness and attention to a person who you care about that is experiencing something stressful. Think about the feelings of compassion and love you have for that person. Imagine yourself enfolding this person in that feeling. [*Pause briefly.*]

Extend your thoughts to include the desire that this person know a decrease in distress and an increase in joy and happiness. Notice the thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions that come to you when you focus on compassion. [*Pause briefly.*]

Now, bring your awareness to something that is causing you stress. Acknowledge that this is stress, and notice how it makes you feel without judging if those feelings are good or bad. Say to yourself “Stress is a part of life.”

Return your attention to the feelings of compassion that you extended to the person you care about, and now extend those feelings to yourself. Imagine enfolding yourself in feelings of self-compassion. Think about your own desire to experience a decrease in distress and an increase in joy and happiness. Notice how you feel when you direct compassion towards yourself. [*Pause briefly.*]

Now bring your attention, mindfulness, and awareness back to your breath. With one last breath, bring your attention and awareness back to the present, ready to continue your day with awareness, relaxation, and focus.

Source: Adapted from Livingwell.org

Mindfulness Moment: 5 Senses (4-5 minutes)

Instructions: Read the following script below at a slow, deliberate pace. You can read the purpose prior to the exercise if you'd like. Brackets [] contain instructional notes that are not read aloud.

Purpose: To help feel centered/grounded by focusing on the 5 senses in the present moment.

5 Senses Exercise: Sit quietly with both feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Allow yourself to feel centered in the chair. You may close your eyes if you'd like or you may keep your eyes open and focus your attention on something in the room. Notice your breath - the inhale, the exhale, and the space in between. Focus on breathing in relaxation and breathing out tension. Acknowledge how your body is feeling in this moment.

We are going to bring awareness to each of our 5 senses for about 30 seconds, noticing how each sense is activated in that moment.

Start with what you **hear**. Notice the sounds around you. [*Pause for several seconds.*] Try not to judge the sounds-just notice them. You might notice the unique quality of sounds that are close by versus farther away. Some of you might hear sounds from within your body. You may begin to notice more subtle sounds you did not hear before. Can you hear them now? [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Now shift your attention to notice the **scents** in your environment. [*Pause for several seconds.*] You might smell something specific, or something more neutral. It doesn't matter what you smell, as long as you stay open to and aware of your experience. If no scent comes into your awareness, you can be with your breath. [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Now observe what we **see** in our surroundings and notice the colors, shapes, and textures. [*Pause for several seconds.*] You may notice things that have gone unnoticed before. You can try this with your eyes closed if you prefer, focusing on sensations of color, light or dark shades of brightness or different contours or shapes. [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Gently move your attention to your sense of **taste**. Sense the taste within your mouth, just as it is right now. [*Pause for several seconds.*] You might sense sweetness or bitterness, or it could even be a neutral taste. It doesn't matter what the sensation is. Simply rest your awareness of whatever it is that you sense, even if it is a neutral one. [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Finally, shift your attention to **touch**. Pay attention to whatever sense of contact, or touch comes into your awareness – the touch of air, your body in contact with the floor, your clothes against your skin. [*Pause for several seconds.*] You might be aware of temperature, or the texture of different surfaces that you are in contact with. Stay with sensations of touch. [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Now bring your attention back to your breath and with one last deep breath, open your eyes and bring your awareness back to the room, ready to continue your day with awareness and presence in this moment.

Source: Adapted from Clayton State University, Counseling and Psychological Services

Mindfulness Moment: Gratitude

Instructions: Read the following script at a slow, deliberate pace. You can read the purpose prior to the exercise if you'd like. Brackets [] contain instructional notes that are not read aloud.

Purpose: Too often we find ourselves caught up in the difficulties of our lives. We get bogged down with the many challenges we face and often overlook the multitude of things that are actually going *right* in our lives. This is perfectly natural. Practicing gratitude helps us celebrate and acknowledge the small things we may take for granted in our day to day lives.

Gratitude Exercise: Sit quietly with both feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Allow yourself to feel centered in the chair. You may close your eyes if you'd like or you may keep your eyes open and focus your attention on something in the room. Notice your breath - the inhale, the exhale, and the space in between. Focus on breathing in relaxation and breathing out tension [*Pause for several seconds.*] Acknowledge how your body is feeling in this moment [*Pause for several seconds.*]

Now, we are going to practice a gratitude mantra. The mantra is: *I am grateful for fill in the blank*. Please fill in the blank with something or someone you're grateful for. We will repeat the mantra 10 times and ask that you think about something or someone different each time. For example, "I am grateful for the trees outside my window" or "I am grateful for the air that fills my lungs" or "I am grateful for my friends and family."

Lets begin:

I am grateful for _____ [*Pause for several seconds.*]

[Repeat above mantra, nine more times with a pause after each reading]

Now bring your attention back to your breath, breathe in one final deep breath, slowly exhale, [pause], open your eyes, and reflect on how you feel in this moment.

Source: Adapted from Mindvalley Academy