

## ACTIVITY: Mindfulness

Sometimes our thoughts and concerns are important and need our attention. Sometimes we play the same thoughts, concerns, and anxieties on a loop, long after they have any purpose. Because we have single-processor brains, our constant stream of thoughts and ruminations often causes us to miss the present moment. This is where mindfulness comes in.

Quite simply, mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the current moment without judgment. There are many ways to practice mindfulness, from mindful eating to extended mindfulness meditations. Research has shown many benefits to mindfulness, including:

- Stress reduction
- Increased working memory and focus
- Reduced fixation on unhealthy thoughts and decreased emotional reactivity

Mindfulness can be used as a way to calm and refocus ourselves at any moment and at any place.

### Try This!

#### **Mindful Breathing :**

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Breathe in and out slowly, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth
- 2) Let go of any thoughts. When a thought arises, just notice it non-judgmentally and imagine it floating away as you return your awareness to your breath.
- 3) Focus on paying attention to your breath, noticing how it feels as it enters and leaves your body. Notice the rhythm and the length of your breaths.
- 4) Notice how your body feels. Is there any tension or pain anywhere?
- 5) Continue this for 2-3 minutes.

#### **The Raisin Exercise:**

- 1) Get a raisin, or other small food item (cherry, nut, etc.)
- 2) Look at the food like you have never seen it before. Notice every aspect of it – the look, the feel, the smell.
- 3) Eat the food very slowly, paying attention to the texture and taste. (Do this before proceeding to next step).
- 4) What did you notice during this exercise? Did you think about other things during the exercise, or did focusing on the food prevent negative thoughts or worries from occurring?

What is Mindfulness?

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition>

Institute for Healthcare Improvement

10 Mindful Exercises for the Health Care Workplace

<http://www.ihl.org/communities/blogs/10-mindfulness-exercises-for-the-health-care-workplace>