



FORT GARRY WOMEN'S  
RESOURCE CENTRE

# Mindfulness-Based Coping



**Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre**

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*Accept emotions*

*Reflect before responding*

*Choose how you will react and respond*

*Act with intention*

### **What Does Mindfulness Mean?**

"Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment." – Jon Kabat-Zinn

"Mindfulness is a way of feeling connected to yourself and your surroundings, regardless of what is going on." - Babette Rothschild

### **What are some benefits of practicing mindfulness?**

- Learn to recognize and respond (rather than react) to stress and learn our own stress reactions
- Teaches us resilience and resilience tools we can practice in times of low stress
- Helps reduce the effects of chronic stress (sleep issues, body tension, muscle pain/tension, headaches, uncontrolled emotions, etc)
- Encourages compassion, empathy, patience, and non-judgment towards ourselves and others

### **Mindfulness is...**

- A coping technique
- A way to respond to stress/anxiety (rather than react)
- A tool to build resilience, compassion, empathy, patience, trust, and non-judgement to ourselves and others

### **Mindfulness is not...**

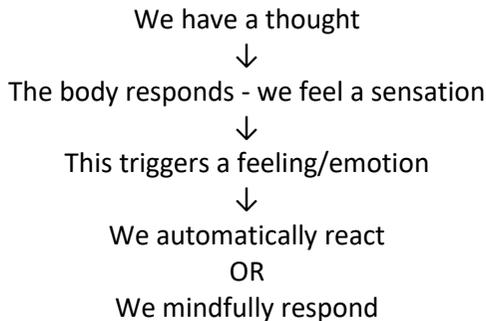
- A relaxation technique
- A way to get rid of stress/anxiety
- A way to control, avoid or stop thinking and feeling

### **“Doing Mode” vs “Being Mode”:**

**Doing** – we become so driven that we just try to move through our moments to get to the next one (“killing time”, “filling time”, feeling like you need to be occupied always). We become “human doings” and often forget who we are and why we’re ‘doing’.

**Being** – paying attention to what arises moment to moment, rather than trying to change it. Thinking is our default setting when nothing much else is going on. There’s nothing wrong with thinking but awareness of our thoughts can provide balance and perspective, so thoughts don’t rule our lives. Paying attention in this way is a trainable skill.

## Paying Attention to our Body Sensations - What Do They Tell us?



For most of us this process happens so fast we're completely unaware of it. By bringing awareness to our automatic processes we can move from automatically reacting to mindfully choosing how to respond.

### Images of the Mind that might be useful:

- Sports commentary (our thoughts) vs the game (the present moment/our mind)
- The ocean (the mind or body as a whole) and the waves on the ocean (our thoughts/body sensations/sounds/breath)
- A stream or river (the body of water is the mind but depending on what is going on it can be a light stream, a rushing river, or a torrential waterfall)
- A leaf (our thoughts) floating down a stream (the mind)
- Bubbles coming off the bottom of a pot of boiling water (the bubbles are different thoughts/sensations and the pot is the mind)

### **Informal Mindfulness Practice**

- Mindfulness of eating: slow down, take your time, choose what you will eat, take small bites, chew longer, describe flavors, textures.
- Mindfulness of daily chores: slow down, notice and describe what you see. don't judge what isn't done or what you 'still have to do'.
- One mindfulness daily task (showering, getting dressed, brushing teeth, makeup, lotion, etc.). Describe the steps e.g. I'm turning on the water, I'm getting undressed, I'm lathering my body, I'm toweling off, I'm putting on a sweater etc.
- Driving without music or radio: Notice the sun, the kids in car seats in the car beside you, the speed limit sign.
- Stop and take 5 Mindful breaths: "I'm inhaling, I'm exhaling".
- Stop and feel your feet on the floor
- Name 5 colors you see: The Kleenex box is red, the curtains are green, the banana is yellow...

Remember that while you are being mindful, lists and judgements and other messages will creep in. This is normal. Be gentle with yourself and say, "I'll get to that later, at this moment I'm eating mindfully/ showering mindfully" etc. Give yourself permission to return to mindfulness, not rush through it.

## **A Mindful exercise (spend equal time in each phase) 1-5 min**

1. Set an intention for the exercise e.g. "I want to be present." Close your eyes and pay attention to your body. Be curious and open to what you notice. What are your hands doing? Notice your facial expression, tensions, images etc.
2. Follow your breath. As you inhale, say quietly to yourself, "inhale." Do the same as you exhale. Be with yourself. Let what is happening around you just be. If you notice noise or become distracted with plans and ideas, bring yourself back to your breath.
3. Return your focus to your body. What are you noticing now? is anything different? Stay here awhile.
4. Write about your experience. Use a specific journal or even a piece of paper you plan to discard. Reflect on your experience.

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## **Resources and Supports**

### **Klinik**

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction  
and Mindfulness Drop-In  
204-784-4090

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction  
204-982-6100

### **Cancer Care Manitoba**

Free courses offered to patients and  
families.  
204-787-4122

### **Yoga Public**

Spring, fall and winter series offered as  
well as Day Of Mindfulness retreats  
open to the public. For more  
information contact (204) 890-7627  
or [integralwellbeing@gmail.com](mailto:integralwellbeing@gmail.com)