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**help is
always
available**

Mindfulness is a brain training technique which helps individuals manage their mental illness effectively along with increasing positive mental wellbeing. Practising mindfulness consists of focusing all of your attention on what you are doing in the **present moment** making you more aware of your thoughts and feelings without the input of any judgements.

Awareness is key – acknowledge what your mood is by focusing what is going on in your body – how does your heart and mind feel?

Acceptance - moods are ever changing but accept what your mood is like in the present moment without any judgements.

Mindful exercises can be done in any scenario using your hearing, touching, seeing and tasting senses where applicable. For example, you can focus on what your body and mind is going through in the present moment, you can even read mindfully by focusing all of your attention on the activity without thinking about anything else. **This is great technique to use when also Nam Japna to ensure all your focus and attention is on your connection with Waheguru Ji!**



Below are a few mindfulness techniques you can try and incorporate into your daily routine:

Mindfulness Technique for Low Mood and Depression

- Awareness is key – acknowledge what your mood is by focusing what is going on in your body – how does your heart and mind feel?
- Acceptance - moods are ever changing but accept what your mood is like in the present moment without any judgements.

1. Sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor.

2. Close your eyes. Now focus all your attention on your breathing, but don't do anything different with your breathing. Observe where your breath is in your body...is it in your mouth, throat, stomach, chest, etc.?

3. Your mind may start to wander, simply acknowledge this, and bring yourself back on focusing on your breath. Remember – do not judge yourself when your mind wanders, it's totally natural! And do not judge your judgements – do not judge yourself when you realise you are judging your thoughts!



Mindfulness Technique for Anxiety - Finger Breathing

- Hold one hand in front of you.
- With the index finger of your other hand, trace the outside of your thumb whilst taking a deep breath in, pause at the top of your thumb, then trace it down the other side of your thumb whilst breathing out.
- One finger = one breath.
- Count each breath as you go along.
- When you get to the end, you can repeat this by starting from your pinky to your thumb.
- Purpose – able to do this anywhere at any time when anxious, without closing your eyes.
- Able to focus on something visual whilst also focusing on your breathing and counting.



Grounding Techniques

- Coping technique for flash backs and dissociation/variant of mindfulness.
- Can use all five senses to bring individual's attention back to the present.
- Some examples of grounding techniques when feelings of flashbacks/dissociation set in:
 - Holding an ice cube/cold shower – very cold meaning it will ensure you stay in touch with the present moment.
 - Smell strong peppermint – could keep strong scented oil in bag so can smell when needed, bring you back to the present.
 - Hot sauce – don't eat too much! This will again, provide an intense sensation but through taste, bringing you back to the present.



Mindfulness Technique for Intrusive Thoughts

- Imagine you have a container or box with a lid.
- Acknowledge and accept the unwanted thought(s) and place into the container and put on the lid.
- Now put this container away by saying "I do not need these thoughts in this present moment".
- Visualize your thoughts but this time imagine them traveling from your mind/head to your feet.
- Ensure both feet are flat on the ground, feel the ground beneath you whilst bringing your unwanted thoughts to your feet
- REMEMBER – you can not completely block out/push away thoughts – this will result in them coming back and biting you when you least expect it!



Mindfulness Skills for Emotion Regulation

- Take a balloon
- Whilst blowing into the balloon, imagine your exhaling all of your worries, stresses and fears into the balloon.
- Let go of any judgements you may have and focus on the task.
- If you start to get any other thoughts and your mind starts wondering, acknowledge it and bring yourself back to the present task.
- Now, with all of your worries, stresses and fears you've put into that balloon, push the balloon away from you – could float back to you.
- How does everyone feel after that? Do you feel kind of lighter after letting your worries drift away in the balloon? Did any of you notice your mind wondering off? Did you have any judgements?
- How easy/hard was it to focus on the task and be mindful?



Mindfulness Skills for Impulsive Behaviour

- STOP, THINK and DECIDE
- Mindfully, without any judgements, take a minute to think about the event that has caused you to have these urges to take part in impulsive behaviours – drinking, drugs, spending excessively, gambling etc.
- Think about the consequences – how will this impact me, my future and my relationships?
- Carefully decide if it is worth acting on your urges and impulses.
- This can bring up feelings of shame, guilt, sadness and anger – that's okay, everyone has impulses, but we can learn to manage these.
- Breath in through your nose and whilst exhaling, make a "hissing" sound (like a balloon losing air) for as long as you can.
- Exhales out all of your negative feelings and impulses.
- You should feel your face and body start to relax.

