

## Mindfulness & You

Mindfulness techniques can be used to help people reduce stress and improve health. It has been shown to be useful for many mental and physical health conditions, such as preventing relapse to depression, substance abuse recovery, pain management, weight loss, and smoking

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Jon Kabat-Zinn- Full Catastrophe Living)

Breaking it down:

"paying attention" can include focus, concentration, awareness

"on purpose" means deliberately, with intention

"in the present moment" is right now; not the past or the future

"non-judgmentally" means without applying labels such as good or bad, right or wrong, I want this or don't want this

Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways.

Here are some suggestions that only take a few moments:

- ❖ Try giving yourself a reminder to take a mindful moment by placing a post it note somewhere in your house, saying, " pause and take a breath."
- ❖ Pick an activity and try doing Just That One Thing. When you are washing the dishes, just focus on washing the dishes. When you are preparing dinner, bring your attention to each task as you are completing it. When you are taking a walk, notice the sensations of your body and footsteps as you walk.
- ❖ Try doing a few shoulder rolls. While breathing in, bring your shoulders forward and up. As you exhale, bring your shoulders back and down.
- ❖ Take a moment or two to pause during the day, put aside whatever you are working on or thinking about, and take in a few slow breaths. Just noticing the sensations of the air going in through your nose and exhaling out through your nose.

## *Mindful Breathing Exercise:*

Tuning into the breath brings awareness of our bodies and brings us right into the here and now.

Pause for 3 minutes to watch your body breathing. Just follow the inhalations and exhalations, without trying to control or change anything.

There are different places to focus on the feeling of the breath: the nostrils, the chest, the belly.

Become aware of the sensations that accompany your breathing at that place. Feel the air, the movement of the air into and out of your body. Just pay attention, don't force it or change it.

Tuning into the body brings us below the surface chaos of the mind. Like an ocean, it can be choppy on the surface and still be calm below the surface.

Paying attention to the breath is a way to connect with the calm part of the mind and see things more clearly.

If you find your mind wandering, that's ok. Just gently bring your attention back to the breath.