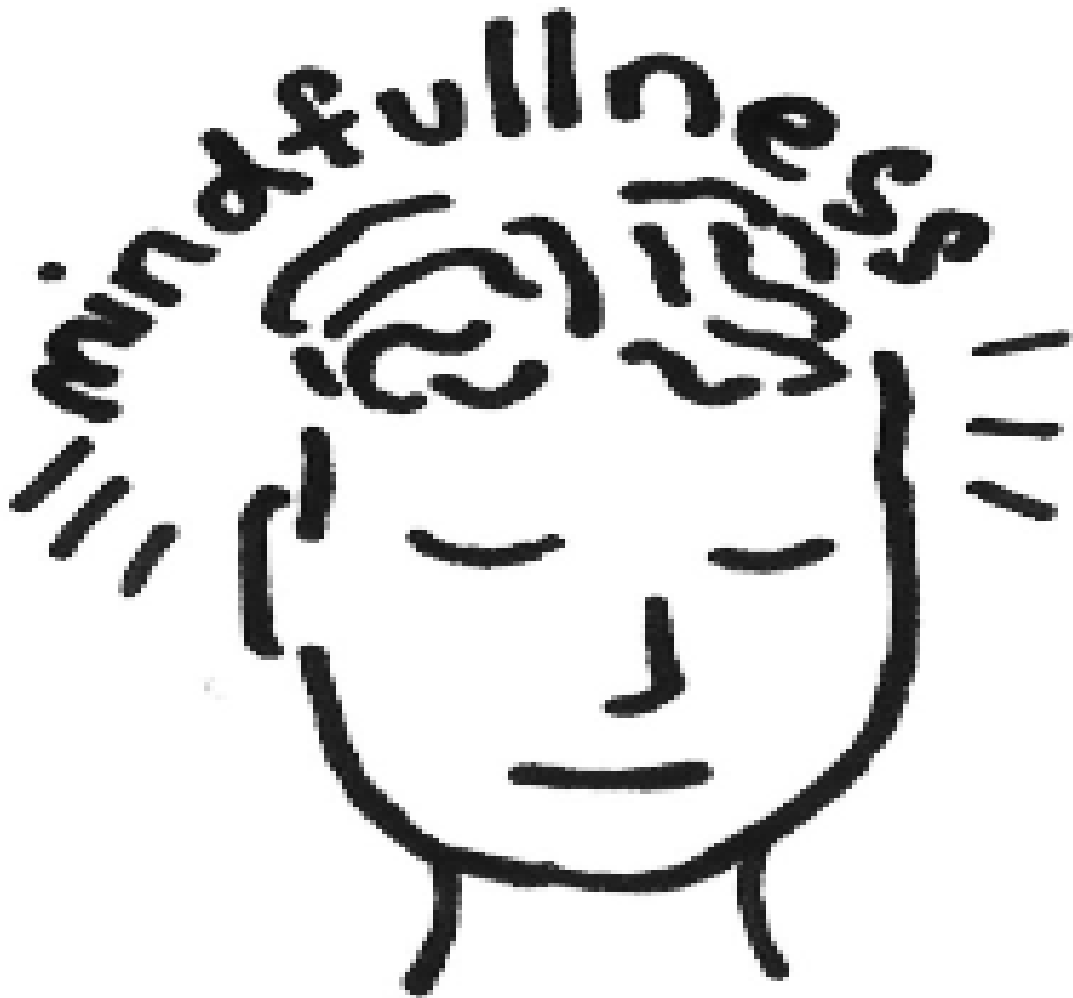


time to change
champion
helping to end mental health discrimination

Mindfulness Activity Pack



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Body Scan



10 - 15 minutes

Key message:

Having an awareness of your body and how it is feeling is important. Your body reflects your mind and your mind reflects your body. Most of us only pay attention when something goes wrong like when we ache, or our back hurts or our neck is in pain or even we notice that we want to go to the loo! Most of us rarely stop and properly take care of ourselves until our body shouts at us in some way.

Mindful awareness enables us to be more conscious of our body's signal and take action early enough to prevent some problems from happening whilst also maintaining wellbeing. If we are aware of our body then we are likely to be at our peak in terms of performance and productivity.

Activity:

This is a simple activity where you can ask colleagues to observe / get a sense of each part of their body – including breathing. 45 seconds to focus on each body part is a good way to strengthen participants focus as it's not too long or short a time.

You will need:

- Sheet with prompts to help you keep track of how you guide participants.
- Comfortable and well ventilated space for participants to relax into chair or floor if they want to lie down
- A watch to keep track of time
- **To brief participants that they should look after themselves and if it feels uncomfortable or they change their mind about participating, they can always leave the room, or not participate (without disturbing others)**

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What to do:

- You can start with them noticing their feet, wiggling their toes and getting a real sense of their feet. Noticing how they feel.
- Ask participants to bring their attention to their ankles, then up to their knees and thighs so that participants can scan their whole leg.
- Ask for participant's attention to be on their hips and lower back.
- Take their attention to the top of their back and shoulders.
- Take their attention to the top of their arms going down to elbows, then wrists, then hands and fingers.
- Finally bring their attention to their chests and stomach. This part of the body is very expressive and so may feel heavy / anxious etc. Ask them if they feel heavy or anxious or worried then they should let that out as they breathe out. Here you might want to increase time from 45 seconds to a 75 seconds.

Throughout the session encourage participants to observe the feel of their muscles and insides. Prompts: Are your muscles tight/sore? Is your stomach tight or sore? Are your hands clenched?

Participants can be encouraged to observe the way they breathe.

Prompts:

Is your breath shallow? Place one hand on your belly, the other on your chest. Watch your hands rise and fall with each breath. Notice when you breathe fully or when you "forget" to breathe.

If participants do feel tension / or something comes up for them you can discuss what they can do.

Briefing after: ask participants

- How are they feeling?
- How was it for them doing the activity?
- Is this something that they could do on their own by themselves?

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Noticing another



5 minutes

Key message:

Our brains like to reserve energy and so encourage habit making or being on auto pilot to make processes more efficient. This is great for things like driving or texting where you can go on auto pilot, however not so great to really notice where you are or even exactly who you are interacting with. When you take the time to notice your surroundings and noticing the people around you, you will see there are things about them that you like or possibly appreciate. Things that they may not realise about themselves!

Activity:

This is a simple activity where you can train your focus to be present and notice your surroundings whilst also helping another by noticing things you like or if you know them really well - appreciate about them. The aim is to really get a sense of the present moment but also to make another feel good. By complimenting or appreciating someone you can make them feel good, you get to feel good as a result and also get to train your focus and attention skills which can lead to peak performance and creativity – RESULT!!

You will need:

- At least one other person to do this with. This activity works best in pairs.
- A comfortable and safe space to be expressive.
- To be available in yourself to notice the feelings come up for you as you notice the other person. This will help you to catch yourself being more authentic in yourself.

What to do:

- Sit facing each other in (pairs).
- Each then takes turn to verbalise what they like or appreciate about the other
- Let your attention flit from their physical presence to (depending on how much you know them) to other things about them such as their humour or their ability to be self-motivated etc.

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Check in with each other:

- How are you both feeling?
- How was it for you both to do the activity?
- Is this something you can incorporate in your daily interactions? (not on a rotation basis like this activity but when interacting and then noticing something about the other and letting them know)

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Connecting without speaking



5 – 7 minutes – longer of more than 8 people

Key message:

Mindfulness allows us to see that thoughts are just thoughts. Generally many of us tend to be so engaged with our thoughts that we don't realise how we disconnect from our environment and then allow our thoughts to shape our experiences. If your thoughts are negative or defensive or even angry then you are likely to view the world in that way and as a result react accordingly. Luckily the opposite is also true in that if our thoughts are positive and we are more mindful of our surroundings whilst objectively noting thoughts and feelings as though they were passing traffic, then we will find ourselves in a great place to engage with the world around us, connecting with those around us.

This is how strangers meet who then go onto become great friends or even great lovers!

Activity:

The activity will centre on people walking around – people are encouraged not to speak to one another but instead try to communicate with one another non verbally and get a sense of what that feels like. For example smiling at one another, catching someone's eye and keeping that contact etc

You will need:

- Just yourself and others – works best as part of group work

End discussion:

- How are you all feeling?
- How was it for you all to do the activity?
- What barriers would you face in smiling at people you pass on the street? (this is not meant to get judgemental in anyway and people should be ok to say that they would feel more comfortable smiling at some people over others.)

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Gratitude Practice



10 - 5 minutes

Key message:

“When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.” Lao Tzu
Sometimes we can end up focusing on what we don’t have and feel miserable for it. This can then feed our fears and other negative feelings. Gratitude helps put things in perspective by getting you to focus on things that you do have and as a result can help make us happier, benefit our relationships, improve health and reduce stress.

Activity:

Group activity where everyone on rotation has to state something they feel grateful about and this rotation will keep rotating. This could be anything, like breathing, having a comfortable bed, wearing favorite shoes etc. Initially it might be difficult but the more you rotate the easier it gets!
This could have a positive impact on person’s outlook.

You will need: just a group of people who want to be grateful for all the good things they have in their life.

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Discussion point:

Around how people are feeling and then a take away action would be to write or mentally note at least 5 things that person is grateful for every night.

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My True Joy



10 minutes

Key message:

We are all unique individuals with unique tastes, where general activities could become so personalized. By identifying all those little things that give us true joy, we can fall back on them when we need them most and yet at a point where we can least recall them!

Activity:

This activity is designed to help you engage your audience by getting them to come up with creative ways to experience what truly gives them joy. The more participants there are the more ideas to see how unique relevant personal tastes give us our true joy.

You will need:

A piece of A4 paper per participant and a pen.

What to do:

Ask everyone to fold their paper in half, half again and then half again. They should be left with 8 squares outlined on their paper once opened up.

Invite everyone to brainstorm then write in each box personal activities that give joy.

Encourage participants to really think out of the box and not worry about barriers or limitations around their ideas. They are then given 5 minutes to complete this activity, so essentially 40 seconds to complete each box.

The limited time allows them to just focus on ideas without enough time to talk themselves out of suggesting the conversation starter.

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Self-Compassion and love



10 minutes

Key message: to our friends or loved ones we would generally wish them well, send them love. If they made a mistake we would be so much more willing to forgive them, support them etc. We would make a point of making ourselves available because we love them and feel empathy and compassion towards them. However when it comes to how we treat ourselves, we tend to do the complete opposite. Something we wouldn't dream of saying to even someone we don't like we would easily say to our self for the most trivial of things.

Activity:

Group activity where everyone on rotation has to state something they love about themselves and this rotation will keep rotating. This could have a positive impact on a person's outlook. Similar to gratitude activity however everyone says something complimentary about themselves on rotation. Ending with a discussion

You will need: Just a group of people who want to tell or remind themselves that they do love and care about themselves.

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Discussion point:

Around how people are feeling and then take away action would be to write or mentally note at least 5 things that person likes, loves or appreciates about themselves every night.

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