

Mindfulness Exercises

Internal Mindfulness Practices

- ❖ Mindful breathing: close your eyes and bring your attention to the breath, don't change the way you're breathing just notice the sensations associated with your breath.
- ❖ Focus on feet or hands- close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and bring your attention to your feet or hands and notice all the sensations present, or lack of.
- ❖ Deep belly breathing: close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath, begin focusing on bringing your breath deep into your belly, filling it with air. Notice how each inhale and exhale feels and observe the rise and fall of your stomach with the breath.
- ❖ 4-7-8 breathing: Eyes closed or open, inhale through your nose for the count of 4, hold your breath for the count of 7, and exhale through your mouth for the count of 8. *Great for anxiety, racing thoughts, and panic attacks
- ❖ Gratitude mindfulness: bring your attention to something you are grateful for and allow your attention to be completely with how it feels to think about that, or make list of things you are grateful for and pause for a moment with each one to notice the feelings that arise while thinking about it.
- ❖ Safe Place: Chose a place that you will be tapping -knees, shoulder or collar bones. Take a deep breath and take yourself to your safe place. When you see it slowly tap 8 times alternating left to right, take another deep breath and chose another part of your safe place to focus on- smell, sound, image, and tap 8 times slowly, keep doing this for at least 3 sets
- ❖ Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Take a few deep breaths with eyes close or open. Starting with your feet and working your way up to your head you are going to be tensing and releasing your muscles. Tighten the muscles on your feet on inhale, release on exhale, move up to calves, tighten inhale, release exhale. Continue doing this with your last muscle set you tighten being your face. Do this as many times as necessary.

External Mindful Practices

- ❖ Focus on one thing: Take a few deep breaths and bring your attention to just one thing nearby you, get lost in it. Notice everything about it, non-judgmentally and describe it to yourself, keep breathing deeply throughout.
- ❖ Naming: Take a few deep breaths and begin naming everything you see, if you run out of items either repeat this exercise or start talking to yourself about the details of the things you see, i.e. the clock has a white face, black hands, and is ticking.

- ❖ Pick a Color: Take a few deep breaths and choose a color, then start looking around you and naming off everything that is that color. If needed choose another color and continue exercise as many times as need. Remember to keep breathing.
- ❖ Finger tapping: Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, bring your attention to your fingers and begin tapping your thumbs on one finger at a time starting with your pointer finger and working your way to your pinkie. Reverse directions or resume from the pointer finger. Continue breathing.
- ❖ Eat or Drink One-mindfully: Make some tea or coffee (if you're not anxious), or grab a glass of water, or find a food you like and eat/ drink it very slowly. Start with noticing what it feels like in your hand, what it looks like, what it smells like, place your face close. What does it feel, smell, look like? Then take a small sip or bite and notice what it feels like in your mouth, tongue, roof, cheeks, what does it taste like? Take your time and repeat this as many times as you would like focusing on talking yourself through the process. *Try to pick a food or drink that does not trigger you to overconsume, this exercise can be done with foods or drinks that you have that tendency towards but start with something that does not first. Sometimes people notice they don't want to consume something they usually eat quickly after they have tried it slowly.

All of these exercises can be helpful to reduce or interrupt negative thinking, worrying, anxiety, shame producing thoughts, and trauma triggers. They can help bring you into the present box and choose where in the moment you want your focus. They are separated into two types internal and external. Internal practices help you ground in the body, external resources are especially helpful in bringing your awareness to your surroundings and are great for trauma triggers as sometimes being focused internally can be uncomfortable. Go forth and be present!