



TUESDAY APRIL 24, 2018 – SUPPORT GROUP MEETING RECAP

What is mindfulness?

There are many interpretations of this concept, but simply put it is being aware of the present moment without judgement. “Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally,” says John Kabat-Zinn (PhD). “It’s about knowing what is on your mind.”

Why care about mindfulness?

Scientific research continues to show that mindfulness can help in many areas;

- ↑ overall life satisfaction
- ↑ emotional regulation (happier & healthier relationships)
- ↑ memory (short-term, working, long-term)
- ↑ greater confidence (especially decision making)
- ↑ enhanced learning
- ↑ attention
- ↓ stress
- ↓ pain
- ↓ depression and anxiety
- ↓ insomnia
- ↓ PTSD

These researchers came to realize that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/11/wandering-mind-not-a-happy-mind/> and even developed an app to track your happiness!

How do we become more mindful?

Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways! Including everyday experiences, such as washing dishes or sipping tea. It does NOT occur in multi-tasking!

Mindfulness can also be done in an attentional practice with focused on something specific (the breath or physical sensations) and when attention wanders it is gently brought back to the attentional focus. Try meditation, yoga, or tai chi, in either a formal (class) or informal (home) setting.

Practice makes imperfect!! (things are not supposed to be perfect!!!). Be kind and forgiving to yourself. The practice that is right for you is the one that you will do!

How can mindfulness practices be adapted for individuals with ABI?

Mindfulness practices can be difficult to start/stick with, to begin with, and even more so for individuals with ABI's. It can be more challenging to;

- Redirect thoughts
- Recognize thoughts/emotions
- Hold attention/concentration
- Sit through pain and discomfort

Consider these and manage your expectations accordingly. Consider these options;

- Set reminders
- Make individual sessions shorter (10-15 min)
- Commit to the long haul – results will come but may take longer
- Stick to the same practice (when you find one that works)

The Take-a-ways:

“Between stimulus & response, there’s a SPACE, in that space lies our POWER to CHOOSE our responses, in our responses lies our GROWTH & FREEDOM.” Viktor Frankl (neurologist, psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor)

How can you be mindful in your life? Start small; the snowball effect!!

It is not just the mind! Listen to your heart! Listen to your gut!

Try a 3 minute mindfulness meditation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk&feature=youtu.be>

or a 10 minute mindfulness meditation

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/mindfulness-10-minute-practice-exercise>

Suggested Resources:

- Free local transcendental meditation class <http://www.innerlights.ca/>

- Websites with free apps;
 - for guided mindfulness meditation: <https://my.headspace.com/>
 - for mindfulness information: <https://www.mindful.org/>

- Apps; Stop, Breath, & Think; Mindz; Breethe; Calm

Books: Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body by Daniel Goleman & Richard J. Davidson