

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Have you ever started eating a snack bar, taken a couple of bites, then noticed all you had left was an empty packet in your hand? Or been driving somewhere and arrived at your destination only to realise you remember nothing about your journey? Most people have! These are common examples of "mindlessness," or "going on automatic pilot." In our modern, busy lives, we constantly multi task. Its easy to lose awareness of the present moment as when we become lost in our efforts to juggle work, home, finances, and other conflicting demands.

As humans we are often "not present" in our own lives. We often fail to notice the good things about our lives, fail to hear what our bodies are telling us, or poison ourselves with toxic self criticism.

Human minds are easily distracted, habitually examining past events and trying to anticipate the future. Becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and sensations may not sound like an obviously helpful thing to do, however learning to do this in a way that suspends judgement and self-criticism can have an incredibly positive impact on our lives.

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to, and seeing clearly whatever is happening in our lives. It will not eliminate life's pressures, but it can help us respond to them in a calmer manner that benefits our heart, head, and body. It helps us recognise and step away from habitual, often unconscious emotional and physiological reactions to everyday events. It provides us with a scientifically researched approach to cultivating clarity, insight, and understanding. Practicing mindfulness allows us to be fully present in our life and work, and improve our quality of life.

The ABC of mindfulness: A is for awareness - Becoming more aware of what you are thinking and doing – what's going on in your mind and body.

B is for "just Being" with your experience. Avoiding the tendency to respond on auto-pilot and feed problems by creating your own story.

C is for seeing things and responding more wisely. By creating a gap between the experience and our reaction to, we can make wiser choices.

The benefits of Mindfulness include

Helping individuals to:

- Recognise, slow down or stop automatic and habitual reactions.
- Respond more effectively to complex or difficult situations.
- See situations more clearly
- Become more creative
- Achieve balance and resilience at work and at home

Since the late 1970's there have been more than 1000 publications documenting medical and psychological research on mindfulness which demonstrate its validity and breadth of application.

Some free guided meditations can be found at:

<http://www.mindfulness-solution.com/DownloadMeditations.html>