



Introduction to Meditation & Mindful Mental Health

Meditation

- **Meditation** is a practice of self-acceptance and self-love by cultivating the willingness to be present with ourselves just as we are in the moment.
- With time and practice, becoming aware of our thoughts and bringing attention back to our meditation anchor will become easier.



Structural changes to the brain begin to occur in as little as 8 collective hours of meditation

Relation to Stress and Mental Health

- The more we meditate, the more we reduce emotional reactivity to our own thoughts and to the outer world

3 Key Facets

1. **Consistency:** Be consistent with meditating on a daily basis. It is better to meditate one minute a day for 15 days than to meditate once for 15 minutes.
2. **Accountability:** Partner with a friend or family member and hold each other accountable, or join a weekly meditation class. Tip: Utilize Meditation Apps like Calm, Headspace, and Insight Timer to create accountability.
3. **Patience:** Meditation is not a quick fix, but rather a long term solution to help improve mental well-being. Be patient with yourself and with the process.

Breathing Techniques

Easy Breath

Inhale through the nose and exhale slow and steady through pursed lips as if you're blowing out through a straw.

This pursing of the lips helps extend exhalation. Anytime we slow down our breathe and extend our exhale, we help to induce our parasympathetic or relaxation response.



5 Senses Mindfulness

Focusing on our external experiences through our five senses. Take drinking a cup of coffee as an example: When drinking a cup of coffee, *feel* the warmth in our palms, appreciate the *aroma*, mindfully *taste* it, etc. Focusing our attention on the sensory experience of the coffee will help to anchor to us to the present moment, reducing mental rumination and inviting a sense of ease in our mind and body.

Data adapted from "Introduction to Meditation & Mindful Mental Health", a webinar originally held on 6/19/2021. Presented by Jordan Lally.



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