# 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.

## 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.

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# 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.

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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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NAMI Maryland can help. Visit www.namimd.org or email info@namimd.org for more information.