

From mountain to sea

Educational Psychology Service

Paying Attention to Now



Note for Team Leaders:

N.B. Some members of your team may be unwilling to engage in some of the following activities – equally, some may wish not to close their eyes. Please do not insist. We do not know about others' individual situations/experiences and there may be something in someone's background which means that they are not comfortable taking part or even not able to take part.

Please be aware that 'Mindfulness' is not the same as 'Relaxation'. When undertaking Mindfulness activities, it is impossible to predict what thoughts/feelings/sensations are going to arise for different individuals. Please monitor the responses of your team members during the following activities.

Activities

1. In groups of two or three, discuss what you understand by the term 'Mindfulness'. Think about what Mindfulness is **not**.
2. **Trainer/Team leader: You will need a timer(2 mins)**
 - Ask members of your team to sit comfortably, with both feet on the floor and to lightly close their eyes. Ask them to remain sitting like this and just to notice the sounds and sensations around them until you ask them to open their eyes again (2mins)
 - In small groups or as a whole group, depending on what is best for your setting, talk together about:
 - What people heard
 - What else people noticed – the feeling of sitting still? The feeling of clothing? Any other physical sensations? Emotional sensations?
 - What the overall experience felt like – did people feel comfortable? Awkward? Content? etc.

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3. Trainer/Team leader: You will need fruit pastilles and raisins. Please talk your team through this exercise:

- Choose either a fruit pastille or a raisin
- Look carefully at whatever you have chosen- notice its texture, its weight, its colour, its shape (Trainer/Team Leader – wait a few seconds)
- Move it towards your lips. What do you notice? Are you aware of your muscles moving? How does your arm feel as it moves? Does this change? What else do you notice?
- Touch your lips with your chosen item. What do you notice? Do you have any particular sensations? How does it smell? How do you feel?
- Put it in your mouth and let it just sit there without chewing it or moving it about. What do you notice now? What is happening in your mouth?
- Start to chew. What do you notice? Notice what happens to:
 - The texture?
 - The flavour?
 - The size?
 - Can you smell anything?
- Allow yourself to experience all the sensations being generated.
- Swallow when you are ready. Notice how swallowing feels. How did you know when you were ready to swallow?

Afterwards, discuss your experience of the above process with a partner.

4. There are many different Mindfulness techniques and exercises. Try out this visualisation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS1FQg9m5H4>

Afterwards, discuss your experience with a partner or in a small group:

- What was your overall impression?
- Did you feel comfortable undertaking this exercise?
- How did you feel beforehand? And during?
- How do you feel now?

Think about whether visualisation is a technique that works for you or might work for you with practice.

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5. At this time of Covid-19, many of us are experiencing strong emotions that are hard to let go of. The 'Soles of your Feet' technique has been shown to help with this. Watch the short video below and try out the technique, then discuss with a partner when you might use it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cj3nS5y8TD4>

6. Practising Mindfulness allows us to 'notice without judgement'. As we practise over time, becoming more mindful allows us to function less on 'autopilot' i.e. to rely less on our habitual perspectives, assumptions and responses and become more able to stand back and observe what is happening, how we are actually feeling etc. In turn, this may impact on our responses.

With a partner, or in a small group, discuss the following:

- Can you think of a time when you are aware that you were able to practise being mindful in a situation? What impact did this have?
- Can you think of a time when being more mindful might have led you to respond in a different way?
- How might being more mindful help you in this time of Covid-19 or in the future?