

# ***Living in the Moment***

## ***Mindfulness in Health & Wellbeing***

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### **Chronic Stress Impedes Success, Performance, & Health**

In a 2013 *Wall Street Journal* article, stress was described as the number one workforce risk issue, ranking above obesity and physical inactivity. A Michigan State University study found that a 2.8 second interruption can lead to two times more errors and a 4.4 second interruption can increase mistakes by three times. A *Catalyst* work report shows that most employees feel stress in four main areas: workload levels, interpersonal challenges, job security, and juggling work and personal life. *Family Practice Management* reports that 70%+ of patient's symptoms are stress-related or exacerbated.

**What is Mindfulness?** Mindfulness is a universal human capacity to direct and sustain attention, on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgementally. More simply, it means living moment to moment with kindness and clarity; "being" in our lives as opposed to "doing" our lives. This approach can provide a practical pathway to meeting life's challenges with skill and flourishing.

**What is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)?** MBSR is an evidenced-based, eight week, nine session (8 classes + 1 All Day Retreat) program in which participants learn to cultivate mindfulness through a variety of meditation practices – eating, breathing, walking, yoga, and sitting. Additionally, classes consist of small & large group discussions, and exploration of neuroscience, stress physiology and stress psychology in order to enhance one's ability to manage chronic pain, stress and illness, and to flourish.

### **Tips for Practicing Mindfulness**

- *Pay careful attention* to the impact of powerful stress triggers: *uncontrollability, uncertainty & rapid change*, and how these affect the mind, heart, body, and behavior.
- While driving, consider stopping completely at STOP signs and remember to: Stop, Take several deep breaths, Observe (situation, thoughts, feelings, body sensations), then Proceed with greater awareness and intention.

- *Mindfully listen* – to a loved one, to nature, or to sounds in the room. Be aware of stories, judgments, opinions, or even to your own responses as they arise.
- *Grow curious* about how often you interrupt yourself by jumping from one task to the next. Notice if certain habits, such as leaving email open while on a conference call, make it hard for you to fully pay attention.
- *Practice Strategic Acceptance* – you may not like what is happening in a given moment but creating space with your awareness for what *is* happening.
- *Tune into distractions*. Become aware of distractions and their effect on your body and mind this will take a certain amount of their power away and offer the possibility of responding as opposed to reacting.
- *Engage in a mindful check-in*. Periodically scan the body and mind just to get a sense of how you are. Even gently closing the eyes can slow down and calm the nervous system.
- *Pump the brakes*. The tendency when stressed is to speed up and do things on autopilot. On days your schedule is particularly full, could you build-in (and schedule) five-second pauses between tasks?
- *Designate times of the day or days of the week* when you unplug. It doesn't have to be for a long period of time to reap the benefits of really being together (mealtimes, vacations).

### **Resources:**

- Mindful Magazine – <http://www.Mindful.org>
- The Effect Of Technology On The Brain: Multi-Tasking Leads To Stress And Fatigue: [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/10/15/effect-technology-brain-stress-mindfulness\\_n\\_4099794.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=email\\_share](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/10/15/effect-technology-brain-stress-mindfulness_n_4099794.html?utm_hp_ref=email_share)
- UMASS Medical – Center for Mindfulness <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>
- *Mindfulness for Beginner's* (CD) – Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD
- Institute for Mindful Leadership: [www.instituteformindfulleadership.org/](http://www.instituteformindfulleadership.org/)
- Smartphone App Headspace <https://www.headspace.com> or Mind App <http://www.mindapps.se/?lang=en>
- *Exploring the Promise of Mindfulness as Medicine* (JAMA October, 2015) <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2449182>
- *Prospects for a Clinical Science of Mindfulness-Based Intervention* (American Psychologist October, 2015)