

Take a Mindful Moment for Mental Health Week!

Mindfulness is a state of being present and aware of our internal and external experiences without judgement or attachment.

There are many different practices you can use to achieve this state, one of the most common is meditation. Below are two different mindfulness practices, give it a try!

Mindful Drawing:

Before you begin the practice obtain any sort of drawing materials you'd like (ie paper, notebook, pencil, pen, markers, crayons).

Find a comfortable seated position, with a surface to use if desired, and have your drawing materials ready.

Choose whatever drawing material you'd like, pick it up, and close your eyes or avert your gaze from your page.

Take a gentle breath in and out, observing your breath. Whenever you're ready begin moving your drawing material (pencil/pen/marker etc) across the page.

Let go of what it might look like, and simply observe the sensation of drawing. Let go of trying to draw something specific and instead notice how it feels to move your pen/material across the page.

What does the drawing material feel like in your hand, how does it feel to move your hand and/or arm as you draw? Notice any textures, sensations, temperatures, sounds. Just trying to observe these sensations without judgement.

Continue drawing until the exercise feels complete, whatever that means to you today.

Mindfulness Meditation:

Begin by finding a comfortable seated position if possible. You may also lie down or orient yourself however is comfortable.

Gently close your eyes or soften your gaze and look towards the ground.

Begin to shift your awareness to your breath.

Notice where you feel the breath most distinctly. This might be the tip of your nose, your throat, your chest or upper abdomen or your belly. Gently rest your attention there, watching the breath cycle in and out.

If that feels like a comfortable place to rest your attention you can stay there, with the sensation you feel most distinctly. Or you may begin to watch the entire breath cycle. Try and notice your breath from the moment it arises to the moment it subsides.

You don't have to do anything to your breath or change it in any way, just notice it. Try and cover your breath completely with your attention.

If you get distracted or you notice yourself being pulled away by thoughts, notice that too, and gently come back to the breath. Try not to judge yourself, just notice and use your breath to anchor yourself.

Noticing and coming back to the breath.

Continue this practice for as long as you like and end it when you're ready to do so by gently blinking your eyes open and coming back to the space. Try and keep this awareness and presence with you as you move through your day/night.