Mindfulness Activities Appendix

The goal of mindfulness is to be fully present with our emotions, with others, with our bodies, with our environment and with the universe (Davidson, 2012). It is through being fully present and aware and observing mindfully that we can participate most effectively in building our own resilience and wellness. We incorporated a mindfulness practice at the beginning of each agenda to model a compassion resilience practice and to give participants a moment to become mentally present in the space. The practice we incorporated into each agenda is the same one. If you’d like variety or if your participants would like additional time practicing mindfulness together, please feel free to utilize the resources below.
## Setting Your Intention Practice

*Eve Eckman, Mindful Healthcare Summit*

**Script to read or do individually.**

- Take a moment with a soft focus or even eyes closed. First check in on the physical body. What does it feel like in your body right now? Is there tension and tightness? Is there ease? Is there fatigue? Is there energy? Take a moment to bring the attention and focus inward to just notice the experience of the body right now.

- And now take a moment to include the mind. What is the quality of the mind right now? Are there many thoughts or few? Might there be some emotional residue from something that happened earlier in the day or something we anticipate later?

- And from this noticing, from paying attention to what our body, our mind, our heart is experiencing, set an intention from here. A simple sentence or even a word: For the rest of the day, my intention is...

- Repeat it silently to yourself a couple of times. It doesn’t have to be the perfect one or the right one. It’s just what is working right now.

- Gently, if your eyes were closed, blinking them back open. And otherwise just returning your attention and awareness here.

This simple practice of setting an intention can be quite powerful. It can help us throughout the day.

## One Minute of Breathing – Three Areas of Attention Practice

*Adapted from 3 Breaths-Jenee Johnson, and the 3 Minute Breathing Space*

**Script to read or do individually.**

- Just connect with your breath, find your breath. As you relax into your breath, bring your attention to what is happening right here and now. Notice thoughts, feelings, and sensations as you arrive in this moment, just as it is, just as you are.

- Now feel your breath as it flows throughout your body, relax your body as you feel the breath in your body from your head to your toes.

- As you breathe in and out easily, ask yourself the question, “What is important now?”, and then just let that arrive.
The Pause Practice
Adapted from Lubar Solvang, S. (2017, April). The Pause. School Community Partnership for Mental Health newsletter

**Explain:** Taking a brief pause throughout the day can help us re-center ourselves and calm our minds. Pauses help us to refocus and provide clarity to help guide us to act intentionally, rather than reactively. Pauses give us time to step back from our judging or fixing mode and instead shift our senses and thoughts to the present. One means of taking a “pause” is to focus on your breath.

**Share:**
- Find a comfortable posture with your feet on the floor and your back erect. You may sit or stand and close your eyes or look at the ground.
- Now find your breath, typically most apparent in your nose, chest or stomach. Give your attention to your breathing and attune to it with curiosity.
- Do not worry about your mind wandering, just gently bring it back to focus on the sensation of breathing, like you are redirecting a puppy that has wandered off.
- Notice how breathing nourishes your body even when you are not paying attention to it.
- Feel your whole body breathe, gently moving with the rise and fall of your breath. Try to pay attention to at least 5 breathing cycles.
- Now, release your breath and allow everything that comes into awareness to just be as it is.

Guided Meditation for Relaxation

**Guide participants through a grounding exercise.** Ask them to sit with both feet on the floor, backs straight but relaxed and away from the back of the chair, palms on knees, and eyes either closed or softly open. If eyes are open, it is helpful to focus on the circle centerpiece.

In a calm and soothing voice, guide them to relax their minds and bodies. Ask them to quiet their minds by simply noticing when thoughts come into their minds and allow them to leave without attention to them. Guide them to relax their bodies from head to toe, one area of their bodies at a time.

You can find a full script [here](#).
Self-Compassion Break


Script to read or do individually.

When you notice that you’re feeling stress or emotional discomfort, see if you can find the discomfort in your body. Where do you feel it the most? Make contact with the sensations as they arise in your body.

Now, say to yourself, slowly:

“*This is a moment of suffering*”
That’s mindfulness. Other options include:

- This hurts.
- Ouch!
- This is stressful.

“*Suffering is part of living*”
That’s common humanity. Other options include:

- I’m not alone. Others are just like me.
- We all struggle in our lives.
- This is how it feels when a person struggles in this way.

Now, put your hands over your heart, or wherever it feels soothing, feeling the warmth and gentle touch of your hands.

“*May I be kind to myself*”
That’s self-kindness. Other options might be:

- May I give myself what I need.
- May I accept myself as I am.
- May I live in love.

If you’re having difficulty finding the right words, imagine that a dear friend or loved one is having the same problem as you. What would you say to this person, heart-to-heart? If your friend were to hold just a few of your words in their mind, what would you like them to be? What message would you like to deliver? (pause) Now, see if you offer the same message to yourself.

Listen to an [audio file](link) of Kristin Neff leading the practice.
**Finding Calm**  
*Adapted from practice done by Rick Hanson, PhD*

**Mindful Education Practice Challenge: Find Calm in Your Body**

This is a short practice where we can explore engaging the parasympathetic nervous system which can bring us into a sense of calm. After you learn it and practice it a few times, you can do this practice in 20-30 seconds to help decrease the intensity of a fight/flight response to stress.

As with any practice, do as much of the practice as feels comfortable and right for you.

- You can close your eyes or keep them open during this practice.
- As we begin, getting a sense of this room we are in and that it’s OK to be here. Right here, right now. You might push your feet on the floor or tap the arms of your chair. Get a sense, this is my place. It’s okay for me to be here.
- And then being aware of your breathing. Notice the sensations and be aware that you’re basically all right. Right now. ……. There’s enough air to breathe. ……. You’re doing okay.
- And then for a couple of breaths let your exhalation of your breath be longer than the inhalation. You can even count inhale, one two. Exhale, one two three four five. The parasympathetic branch of the nervous system handles exhaling.
- Noticing how you are feeling right now. And if you feel a sense of calm, or another positive sensation, really taking that in, noticing it, even savoring it. Perhaps staying with it for a few more cycles of breathing, feeling it in your body and noticing what feels good about it. Calm feels good.

And now letting go of this short practice, coming back to your sense of yourself in the room, and if your eyes were closed, slowly and gently opening them. Just settling for a few moments, and feeling however you are feeling, just as it is. Nothing to do, nothing to change.

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**Hand Movements Activity**

**Share the statements below.**

- Hold your hands out and squeeze them into fists. (Hold for at least 30 seconds and invite participants to close their eyes for the rest of the activity.)
  - Think about what emotions arise as you close your fists. This is a metaphor for resistance – what it feels like when we fight rather than accept our current reality.
  - Resistance can be helpful if it leads us to discover where we might have some level of control. Yet, staying in the place of resistance can be unproductive and fatiguing.
• Now, bring your elbows to your side, open your hands and turn your palms upward.

— Think about what emotions arise for you. This is a metaphor for mindfulness, what it feels like when we are present and open to ourselves, our experiences and the changes/challenges/opportunities we are faced with.

• Now extend your palms and your arms forward.

— Think about how this makes you feel. This is a metaphor for common humanity — what it feels like when we reach beyond ourselves and welcome and include others.
— In our vulnerability we discover the common aspects of humanity and can form bonds with others. We can act with compassion.

• Now place one hand in the other with both palms facing upward. Slowly bring them to your chest. Feel the warmth and gentle pressure. Breathe naturally.

— Reflect on your feelings during this last step. This symbolizes self-compassion. Caring for ourselves is the foundation that supports our compassion for others and helps us find comfort in our common humanity.