

# Mindfulness

**This factsheet is for guidance only and has been produced with assistance from healthcare professionals**

## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness might simply be described as choosing and learning to focus our attention on the present moment, without judgment. Its roots lie in ancient eastern practice but are very relevant to our lives today. Formal methods of practice include guided meditation. Less formal practice helps us in the way we approach and manage everyday life. Being more aware of the present moment, helps us to notice what we don't normally notice, because our heads are too busy in the future or the past- worrying about what may lay ahead of us or ruminating on what has already happened. It helps us to notice afresh the things that are going on around us.

Mindfulness meditation involves bringing the mind back to a particular focus, for example, the breath, the body or an object.

## The aims of mindfulness

Mindfulness can help people to feel calmer and more able to cope. It can be a way of learning to respond more effectively to some of the challenges of feeling stress, pain or ill health. Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better.

## Benefits of mindfulness

Studies have identified many benefits of mindfulness, they can include:

- A greater sense of feeling in control
- Feeling more able to deal with pain
- Feeling calmer and less stressed
- Reduction in symptoms of anxiety, fear or depression
- Improvement in sleep patterns
- Reducing fatigue
- Improved general well-being

## Simple ways to be more mindful in your daily life...

- Take a break for two-five minutes, sit in quiet and focus on your breath
- Look around you and identify five colours, five textures, five shapes, five scents
- Hand-washing – notice the feel of the water, smell of the soap, what is the temperature like, how do your hands feel
- Eat or drink mindfully – notice the flavours, textures, sensations, take your time to chew your food/drink your drink
- Walking – notice the sounds, colours, textures, buildings

## Resources you may find useful

There are many Apps which are free and can be downloaded to provide guided meditations.

Guided meditations can also be accessed via YouTube or through Mindfulness CIC. Meditation practice that focuses on 'the awareness of the breath' and 'the body scan' are good ways to start.

## Further information

Contact the LOROS Occupational Therapy team or Complementary Therapy if you wish to find out more about mindfulness or to express an interest in attending a mindfulness course.

## Are meditation and mindfulness safe?

Meditation and mindfulness are generally considered to be safe; however, if you are experiencing mental health problems or have regular talking therapy such as counselling, you should seek advice from a healthcare practitioner first.

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If you would like this information in another language or format, please contact the Patient Experience Lead PA on (0116) 231 8435

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