

Well-Being Wednesdays:
Cultivating Awareness Through Mindfulness-Based Practices Supplement

Mindful vs Mind-“full”



Mindful vs. Mind Full



Purposefully present

Intentional decision-making

Fully experience what you are doing

Brain gets a break from endless chatter



Stuck in past or worried about future

Operating on “autopilot”

Reactive snap decisions

Trying to multitask and missing what’s important

Continue feeling stressed



Simple Mindful STOP strategy



Mindful STOP



Stop what you are doing

Take a few deep breaths

Observe your inner experience

Pause & proceed purposefully



Mindful STOP is great to use when you're frustrated with work/emails, your family, your colleagues, or your students

It's about cultivating that *space* that Frankl talks about between the stimulus and the response, so you are really free to *choose* how you respond, instead of reacting

S - stop what you're doing, put things down for a bit

T – 3-5 breaths or take a minute to breathe; follow your breath in and out of your nose; you can say to yourself “inhale”, “exhale”

O – observe thoughts, feelings, sensations, being a noticer , without judgment; pay attention to what your experience is in your *body* and what this says about your emotions; name them

P – what action will support you in this moment and bring you closer to your values and goals?

You can do this with anything. We were just talking about slowing down our eating and really enjoying it. You can use STOP here. Stop what you are doing, take a few deep breaths (or chews), and really observe your experience. Pause, and then proceed purposefully, with your intent being to stay focused again on the meal and all the flavors you notice.

You can even use this in your classroom. Preparing to transition from one lesson activity to another? Great time to pause, breath, reaffirm the value and purpose in that moment, and then proceed.

Sushi Train Metaphor

Metaphors are incredibly useful for explaining concepts without getting swept up in technical or letting our brains co-opt messages with more judgments and labels. Our minds are really good at that. The Sushi Train Metaphor embedded below is a great way to illustrate the ability to observe thoughts, creating space, and choosing to act.



Benefits of Mindfulness with Adults

▶ Adults who practice mindfulness experience...



Lower rates of stress, anxiety & depression



Greater life satisfaction & wellbeing



More self-compassion & empathy



Better relationships with friends & family



Higher ratings of job performance



Better sleep and physical health



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Mindfulness has existed as a practice in various cultures throughout history but research has only recently begun to explore it's actual benefits to adults. Interestingly, it impacts so many avenues of our lives.

Some of it might make sense. For example, if we are not focusing on the future and instead on the present, we are less prone to fall into hopelessness that is common with depression. We are also less focused on what we cannot control and instead being intentional with what we can control, which reduces the prevalence of stress and anxiety triggers. We are better able to connect with others because we are fully immersed in their personhood, which leads to better relationships. We are also generally less responsive to stressors and when you combine mindfulness with values-aligned actions, adults tend to perform better at their work because. And lastly, you can get better sleep and overall physical health generally because mindfulness helps turn off that brain chatter that keeps you up at night, or tells you that you cannot take care of yourself right now. And with better sleep and physical health, you experience better concentration which means better mindfulness. They support one another.

Ways to practice mindfulness other than meditation

All the activities below are called “mindful” versions of them because our goal is to implement the mindful practice—being present aware, noticing our thoughts and experiences and surroundings without judgment, and being intentional. With practice, these can become your default mode when engaging in these activities.

1. Mindful eating
2. Mindful teeth brushing
3. Mindful showers
4. Mindful walking
5. Mindful chores
6. Mindful work periods
7. Mindful play
8. Mindful conversation
9. Mindful active music listening
10. Mindful yoga
11. Mindful stretching
12. And honestly, anything can be mindful once you practice drawing your attention gently to what is going on right in front of you, without judgment, and with intention. Try it on anything you are doing. In short, be curious about your ongoing, minute-to-minute experience!