

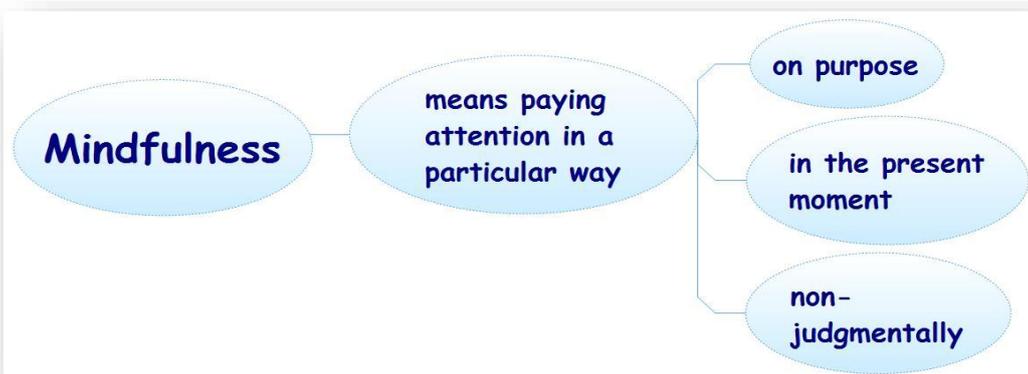
Mindfulness during Covid-19 Pandemic

Here at Wellbeing we understand that as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic we may experience more worry and anxiety than we usually do. This is a completely understandable and normal reaction to a very stressful and unusual situation. We might find that we are worried about loved ones, jobs and are worrying about the future, struggling to stay in the present moment. Mindfulness can help with that.



What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is an ancient eastern practice. It means to pay attention in a specific way; on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement. Mindfulness does not conflict with any religious or cultural beliefs or traditions. It is a practical way to notice your thoughts, physical sensations, sights, sounds and smells. It is simply noticing things that we don't normally pay attention to, because our heads might be preoccupied by the past or the future. Mindfulness can help us to focus and choose where we focus our attention.



.....

We can sometimes go about our day to day activities on "automatic pilot", not being fully aware of what we're doing and not present

moment by moment. We can often do daily tasks being miles away without realising it. In this state, we're more likely to have our "buttons pressed" as our environment may trigger old, unhelpful thinking patterns. By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations, we give ourselves more opportunity to challenge and change our old thoughts and habits that might cause us problems.



Mindfulness can:

- » Help reduce stress and anxiety and conflict
- » Increase resilience and emotional intelligence
- » Improve communication



Mindful Activity

One way of increasing mindfulness is through day to day activities. This can include eating, tidying, cleaning and walking. When we go for our daily walks or cleaning the dishes, we might be ruminating over things in the past, or worrying about the future. If you find yourself doing this, gently nudge yourself back to the present. If you're going for a walk, notice the temperature of the air on your skin, you might notice the smell of the grass or flowers, take notice of the nature around you. Can you hear birds singing or cars driving past? What noise do your shoes make when it hits the ground? Can you hear other people talking? Try paying attention to specific tasks and activities to increase mindful thinking.



Breathing Meditation 1 (Kabat-Zinn 1996)

Assume a comfortable posture lying on your back or sitting. If you are sitting, keep the spine straight and let your shoulders drop. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.

Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the in-breath and fall on the out-breath.

Keep your focus on the breathing, being with each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.

Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.

If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your job is simply to bring it back to the breath every time.

Practice this exercise for fifteen minutes every day, whether you feel like it or not, for one week and see how it feels to add this to your daily life. Be aware of how it feels to spend some time each day just being with your breath without having to *do* anything.

You can watch this short [mindful breathing exercise video on YouTube](#) from Every Mind Matters.

NHS Mindfulness App

If you are interested in developing your mindfulness skills further NHS GG&C have developed a mindfulness app, which can be downloaded for free from the App/Google Play store (just search NHSGGC mindfulness-based approaches). There are lots of good resources on there, including a link to a free 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction course.

Having suicidal thoughts? Discuss with a loved one, call Samaritans on **116 123** or access your **G.P.** or **Crisis Service** via **NHS** on **111**.



Our recommended resources (click for direct access):

NHS Inform	Offers the most up-to-date information on coronavirus. Please visit: NHS Inform
Wellbeing	Our website offers a variety of self-help materials, groups, and courses for all sorts of problems that you may be facing. Anyone can download the self- help materials. Please visit: Wellbeing Website Glasgow
Mental Health Foundation	A range of content designed to give you more information about mental health and to help you to look after your mental health. Please visit: Mental Health Foundation - Coronavirus
World Health Organization	Trustworthy source for accurate and up-to-date public information regarding current pandemic. Please visit: World Health Organization - Coronavirus
Psych Central	Mental health professionals offering reliable, trusted information to individuals struggling. Please visit: PsychCentral for Mental Health
MIND	Information hub provides advice on how to support your mental wellbeing during this period. Please visit: MIND for Mental Health
SAMH	Hub of information and guidance about looking after mental health as the coronavirus developments continue. Please visit: SAMH Mental Health During Coronavirus

Useful Apps:

	Mind Shift	Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It can encourage you to take charge of your life, ride out intense emotions, and face challenging situations
	SAM	SAM might be perfect for you if you're interested in self-help, but meditation isn't your thing. Users are prompted to build their own 24-hour anxiety toolkit that allows you to track anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and learn 25 different self-help techniques.
	Happify	Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to overcome negative thoughts
	Headspace	The Headspace app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day. You gain access to hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to sleep and focus.
	Calm	Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music.
	Smiling Mind	Smiling mind is a way to practice daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device. This is helpful during times of stress and is a fun and unique way to help you put a smile on your mind.