**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a therapeutic approach with Buddhist meditation roots. It refers to being in the present and accepting things for what they are without believing there is a wrong or right way to think or feel in a given moment. It is a practice where you become aware of and pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, body sensations, actions and environment without judging them. This results in being able to engage in things other than our suffering. Thus, Mindfulness is not about changing our thoughts and feelings, but changing our relationship with them.

5 minutes of practice a day can help develop those mindfulness skills. But sometimes 5 minutes can feel like a lot! Following is a 30 second, 3 breath Mindfulness exercise our Psychologist *Melissa Bourchier* put together for you to begin to practice:

1. Close your eyes. Notice the pull of gravity on your body.
2. Notice parts of your body connected with the ground, or with any furniture, or holding an object.
3. Notice how your chest or belly moves with a slow breath in through your nose, and how the body settles with the slow breath out through your mouth.
4. Notice the feeling of air moving past your lips and nostrils with your next slow breath in through your nose, and the feeling of the air moving out through mouth.
5. Notice your thoughts; the words and images that move into your mind with each breath, and thoughts that move on whenever they choose. You’re not trying to change the thoughts that come to mind; just being aware of what thoughts are in your mind while you engage in your day. And there’s no need to judge thoughts. No need to change them.
6. When you’re ready, open your eyes and step on with your day.

Mindfulness exercises can be like a re-set button and can be a chance to connect with your environment before you get on with things. One of the great things about Mindfulness is you can do it anywhere: while sitting in your chair at work, while waiting for your computer to log-on, when sitting in a waiting room, when you wash your hands, while searching for your coffee cup, when you’re unpacking your grocery trolley, when your kids give you a goodnight cuddle. Just notice your thoughts, your breath, and your actions. Ask yourself: where is my mind right now?

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