

# **HANDOUTS – MOVING FORWARD Week3/5 week**

## HANDOUT WK 3 Mindfulness in Crisis

### Take ten breaths

This is a simple exercise to center yourself and connect with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings. 1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves. 2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders. 3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house. 4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and feel.

### Drop anchor

This is another simple exercise to center yourself and connect with the world around you. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Notice your entire body—and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet.
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.

### Notice Five Things

This is yet another simple exercise to center yourself and engage with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings. 1. Pause for a moment 2. Look around and notice five things that you can see. 3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear. 4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair). 5. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously

## HANDOUT WK 3 STOP

### Slow your breathing

- Take a few deep breaths, and mindfully observe the breath flowing in and flowing out. This will help to anchor you in the present.

### Take note

- Take note of your experience in this moment. Notice what you are thinking. Notice what you are feeling. Notice what you are doing. Notice how your thoughts and feelings are swirling around, and can easily carry you away if you allow them.

### Open up

- Open up around your feelings. Breathe into them and make room for them. Open up to your thoughts too: take a step back and give them some room to move, without holding onto them or trying to push them away. See them for what they are and give them space, rather than fusing with them.

### Pursue your values

- Once you've done the above three steps, you will be in a mental state of mindfulness. The next step is to respond to the crisis by pursuing a valued course of action. Connect with your values: ask yourself, 'What do I want to be about, in the face of this crisis? What do I want to stand for? How would I like to act, so that I can look back years from now and feel proud of my response?'



## HANDOUT WK 3 Self – Compassion Break

Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress.

Call the situation to mind, and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Now, say to yourself

- 1) This is a 'moment of suffering'  
– That's mindfulness – other options include:
  - 'this hurts'
  - 'ouch' or
  - 'this is stress.'
  
- 2) Suffering is a part of life. Say to yourself:  
'That's common to humanity.' Other options include:
  - Other people feel this way
  - I'm not alone
  - We all struggle in our lives'

No, put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest.  
Or, adopt the soothing touch you discovered felt right for you.

Say to yourself

- 3)** May I be kind to myself

You can ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Is there a phrase that speaks to you in your particular situation, such as:

- May I give myself the compassion that I need
- May I accept myself as I am
- May I learn to accept myself as I am
- May I forgive myself
- May I be strong.
- May I be patient

This practice can be used any time of day or night, and will help you remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when you need it most.

## HANDOUT WK 3 Informal Mindfulness Practice

1. Mindfulness in Your Morning Routine- Pick an activity that constitutes part of your daily morning routine, such as brushing your teeth, shaving, making the bed, or taking a shower. When you do it, totally focus attention on what you're doing: the body movements, the taste, the touch, the smell, the sight, the sound, and so on. Notice what's happening with an attitude of openness and curiosity. For example, when you're in the shower, notice the sounds of the water as it sprays out of the nozzle, as it hits your body, and as it gurgles down the drain. Notice the temperature of the water, and the feel of it in your hair, and on your shoulders, and running down your legs. Notice the smell of the soap and shampoo, and the feel of them against your skin. Notice the sight of the water droplets on the walls or shower curtain, the water dripping down your body and the steam rising upward. Notice the movements of your arms as you wash or scrub or shampoo. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, and let them come and go like passing cars. Again and again, you'll get caught up in your thoughts. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what the thought was that distracted you, and bring your attention back to the shower.

2. Mindfulness of Domestic Chores -Pick an activity such as ironing clothes, washing dishes, vacuuming floors—something mundane that you have to do to make your life work—and do it mindfully. For example, when ironing clothes, notice the color and shape of the clothing, and the pattern made by the creases, and the new pattern as the creases disappear. Notice the hiss of the steam, the creak of the ironing board, the faint sound of the iron moving over the material. Notice the grip of your hand on the iron, and the movement of your arm and your shoulder. If boredom or frustration arises, simply acknowledge it, and bring your attention back to the task at hand. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, let them be, and bring your attention back to what you're doing. Again and again, your attention will wander. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to your current activity.

3. Mindfulness of Pleasant Activities Pick an activity you enjoy such as cuddling with a loved one, eating lunch, stroking the cat, playing with the dog, walking in the park, listening to music, having a soothing hot bath, and so on. Do this activity mindfully: engage in it fully, using all five of your senses, and savor every moment. If and when your attention wanders, as soon as you realize it, note what distracted you, and re-engage in whatever you're doing.

## HANDOUT WK 3-5: Common Acceptance Techniques Common Acceptance Techniques

ACT Made Simple

### HEALING HAND

Lay a hand on the part of your body where you feel this most intensely. Imagine this is a healing hand--the hand of a loving nurse or parent or partner. Send some warmth into this area--not to get rid of the feeling, but to open up around it, make room for it, hold it gently.

### SOFTENING

See if you can soften up around the feeling, loosen up, and hold it gently.

### ALLOWING

See if you can allow this feeling to be there . You don't have to like it or want it--just allow it.

### EXPANSION

See if you can open up and expand around the feeling. It's as if, in some magical way, all this space opens up inside you.

### THE OBSERVING SELF

Take a step back and look at this feeling from your observing self.

### THE CURIOUS SCIENTIST

Notice where this feeling is in your body. Zoom in on it. Observe it as if you are a curious scientist who has never encountered anything like this. Where are the edges? Where does it start and stop? Is it moving or still? Is it at the surface or inside you? Hot or cold? Light or heavy?

### THE CHOICE TO FEEL

Suppose I could give you a choice:  
(a) you never have to have this feeling ever again, but it means you lose all capacity to love and care, or  
(b) you get to love and care, but when there's a gap between what you want and what you've got, feelings like this one show up.  
Which do you choose?

## FEELINGS

### PHYSICALIZING

Imagine this feeling is an object. Is it liquid, solid, or gaseous? How big is it? Is it light or heavy? What temperature is it? Is it at the surface or inside you? What shape does it have? What color? Is it transparent or opaque? What does the surface feel like--hot or cold, rough or smooth, wet or dry?

### COMPASSION

Hold this feeling gently as if it's a crying baby or a whimpering puppy.

### THE STRUGGLE SWITCH

Is the struggle switch on, off, or at the halfway point we call "tolerating it"?

If the switch was like a dial with a scale of 0 to 10, and 10 is full on struggle, and 0 no struggle at all, then right now, what level are you? Are you willing to see if we can bring it down a notch or two?

### NORMALIZING

This feeling tells you that you're a normal human being who has a heart and who cares. This is what humans feel when there's a gap between what we want and what we've got.

### METAPHORS

Quicksand  
Passengers on the Bus  
Demons on the Boat  
Wade Through the Swamp  
Pushing Against a Clipboard

### BREATHE INTO IT

Breathe into this feeling. It's as if your breath flows into and around it .

### NOTICING

Notice where this feeling is. Notice where it's most intense. Notice the hot spots and cold spots. Notice the different sensations within the feeling.

Figure 8.1 Common Acceptance Techniques

**HANDOUT WK 3      Getting Hooked with Thoughts and Emotions Worksheet**

In ACT, we talk colloquially of being “hooked by your mind” or “hooked by emotions” – by which we mean you get all caught up in your thoughts and emotions and they exert a strong influence over your actions. In what situations does your thoughts/emotions manage to hook you? Were you able to use any of the acceptance skills to help you manage through the thoughts and emotions.

| Date/time<br>Triggering Events of<br>Situation | What did your mind say<br>or do to hook you? | How did your behavior<br>change when you got<br>hooked? What did<br>those actions cost you? | Did you manage to<br>unhook yourself? If so<br>how? |
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