



Simply Mindful  
CANBERRA MINDFULNESS CENTRE



## Mindfulness for mental health carers

### 2: Mindfulness on the go

This session focuses on ways of using mindfulness in your day, with more of a focus on early intervention and prevention of escalating stress or distress.

**On good days:** Mindfulness can help us recover, recharge and refill. It's cumulative and preventative

**On bad days:** Mindfulness can help us survive and cope. It helps us to get through, take one moment at a time, interrupt stress and reduce negative rumination.

#### Training our attention to work with the inbuilt negative bias

Human beings have an inbuilt negative bias –we're always scanning for threats and tend to pick up on negative things in our environment more quickly than positive things. This is important for survival, but can really rob us of the opportunity to see and benefit from the good things in life.

#### How can Mindfulness help?

We can learn to use our attention to tap into positive or nurturing aspects of our experiences, even really small ones, and use them to resource us internally. Over time this increases our sense of having 'more in our internal tank' to meet challenges with.

When we're stressed, our attention tends to narrow just on to the perceived threat and we lose our 'peripheral vision', our ability to see the broader context, to take in other information or experiences. This is part of our survival or stress response, so we can't help it. However, we can practice pausing, and opening up to what else is here that could help or nurture us.

#### Check in - how am I going right now?

Take a few moments to check in internally.

**BODY** - Right now, how does your body feel? What sensations are drawing your attention?

**EMOTIONS** - What emotions are here, if any? Are they mild or intense?

**THOUGHTS** - What kinds of thoughts are present? What's the state of the mind like?

**BEHAVIOURS** - What behaviours or impulses to act do you notice?

Having checked in, how would you rate your level of stress or distress from 0 – 10?

*Calm happy*                      *ok*                      *a bit unsettled*                      *distressed*                      *freaking out*  
0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10  
Calm no stress    mild di/stress    moderate di/stress                      high di/stress                      extremely high di/stress

## Orienting and Settling practice

When to use this: When you find yourself with a moment, perhaps waiting for an appointment, or for transport, or when you arrive somewhere.

Settle into a comfortable position. Explore the place/space you're in right now with your senses.

Tune into everything you can see for a minute  
Then tune into all the sounds coming and going for a minute

Then tune into all the sensations you can feel in and with your body for a minute

Now choose 1 thing to focus on – the most soothing, calming, pleasant or good thing you can see, hear or feel. Give this 1 thing your full attention for a few deep slow breaths. Really 'drink' it in as best you can, just like drinking a glass of water when you're thirsty. Knowing as you do, that this is nurturing you.

## See, hear, feel practice

When to use this: you can use this anywhere, anytime to help bring yourself into the present and calm yourself.

- 5 things you can see, hear, feel (whatever draws your attention) - broad focus
- 4 things see, hear, feel (whatever draws your attention)
- 3 things see, hear, feel (whatever draws your attention)
- 2 things see, hear, feel (whatever draws your attention)
- Choose 1 thing you can **see** that's soothing, calming or pleasant (narrow focus).
  - Focus on it for a few breaths (10 seconds +) and take it in as best you can. Then repeat with **hear** and **feel**.

**TIP** Do one of these exercises every day for a couple of weeks.

**WHY?** Getting into the habit of doing it now will build the habit. If you don't practice it regularly, you're less likely to remember it when you need it!