Cancer Survivors and Caregivers Conference

“Managing Cancer Challenges”

Natchez, MS
May 7 – 8, 2019
Balancing Wellness: Mindfulness & Whole Food Plant Based Nutrition

Joanna Brumfield, LOTR
Holistic

/ho-listik/

adjective

Considers a whole person, taking into account not only physical symptoms, but also emotional and social factors that impact overall health.
MINDFULNESS
BASED
STRESS
REDUCTION
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Developed by John Kabat Zinn in 1984 at UMass

- MBSR was developed as a psychological tool to treat patients with depression.
What is Stress?

There is no definition of stress that everyone agrees on, what is stressful for one person may be pleasurable or have little effect on others. We all react to stress differently.
Cortisol - The Stress Hormone

Effects of Excess Cortisol to the Body:
- Arthritis
- Hunger
- Hostility
- Acid Reflux Disease
- Tunnel Vision
- Migraines
- Decreased Metabolism
- Depression
- Hypertension
- Chronic Fatigue
- Sleep Deprivation
Benefits of Mindfulness

- Improved Immune Response
- Decreased chronic stress
- Pain management
- Improved sleep quality
- Promotes longevity
“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn
meditation
just breathe
Starting a Mindfulness Practice

- Mindfulness is a simple practice but it is not always EASY.
- Use your breath as the focal point of your practice.
- Find a quiet spot where you will not be disturbed.
- Set a timer and begin with a 2 minute practice.
- Inhale and exhale. As thoughts enter your mind, recognize them (NON-JUDGMENTALLY) and return your focus to the BREATH.
- Practice daily and increase your time by 1 minute each week, Aim for a 10-15 minute daily practice.
Mindful EATING
Whole Food Plant-Based
Lifestyle-induced chronic diseases

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Metabolic syndrome
- Stroke
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Heart disease
- Some cancers
Whole Food Plant Based Diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRUIT</td>
<td>MEAT-CHICKEN, FISH, AND FOWL</td>
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<tr>
<td>VEGETABLES</td>
<td>DAIRY-BUTTER, MILK, AND CHEESE</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGUMES</td>
<td>EGGS</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHOLE GRAINS</td>
<td>PROCESSED FOOD</td>
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<td>TUBERS</td>
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<td>NUTS AND SEEDS</td>
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Benefits of a Plant Based Diet

- Weight control
- Reduced Inflammation
- Improved cholesterol levels
- Prevent and reverse diabetes
- Prevent and reverse heart disease
MEAT

❖ All meat is high in cholesterol.
❖ Meat is a significant source of saturated fat.
❖ Modern meat production (factory farming) produces animals that are treated with hormones and antibiotics.
❖ Many studies link processed meat to certain types of cancer specifically colorectal cancer.
Dairy

- Casein is the main protein in dairy. It has an addictive quality and is linked to cancer promotion.
- All dairy contains growth hormone which promotes tumor and cancer cell growth.
- Most people are unable to properly digest dairy,
- Calcium and Vitamin D is easily obtained from other sources,
Eggs

❖ The highest cholesterol density of all foods
Nutrient Density vs Caloric Density

- 400 calories of oil
- 400 calories of chicken
- 400 calories of vegetables
Plant Based Nutrition

**PROTEIN**

Recommended daily protein intake is 45-55 grams per day.

An essential nutrient that is made by plants and easily obtained from plant based foods.

**FAT**

Saturated Fats--clogs arteries, leads to diabetes

Unsaturated Fats-nuts, seeds, avocados

**CARBOHYDRATES**

Required for brain and muscle function.

Good carbohydrates….fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

Bad carbohydrates…cakes, cookies, and “white foods”

**FIBER**

Passes through the body undigested and cleanses the system.

Reduces cholesterol, blood sugar, and the risk of colon cancer.
GOING PLANT STRONG

- Ease into it with Meatless Monday or Meatless Meals.
- Keep it simple with easy with basic whole foods.
- It does not need to be expensive! Basic staples of WFPB are very inexpensive.
- Batch Cooking and Meal Prep can help with organization.
- Convenience Foods…..canned beans, pastas, veggie burgers.
- FRUIT is the ultimate fast food.
EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION

DOCUMENTARIES

❖ Forks Over Knives
❖ Vegucated
❖ Food Inc.
❖ The Kids Menu

BOOKS

❖ *How Not to Die* by Michael Greger
❖ *The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell
❖ *Finding Ultra* by Rich Roll
❖ *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease* by Caldwell Esselstyn
BREAKFAST
Genetic Testing for Cancer

Odessa Simon-Hawkins, CFNP
Each cancer site is associated with multiple hereditary cancer syndromes.
Surviving Cancer

Gregory W. Cotter, M.D.

133 Jefferson Davis Blvd.
Natchez, MS 39120 | (601) 442-1285
Our Mission:
To improve survivorship and lessen the burden of the cancer.

Our Commitment to you:
To preserve the compassionate care envisioned and provided by the founders of Caring River, and enhance the level of expertise, technology and resources available to residents of Natchez and surrounding communities.
Comprehensive Cancer Services at Mary Bird Perkins

• Radiation therapy
• Prevention, education and early detection programs
• Clinical trials
• Additional support programs in the future
• Access to cancer specialists and services not available locally

Research shows that survivorship and outcomes significantly improve and that financial and emotional burdens of cancer are lessened when patients have access to care in their own communities.

We take every measure to ensure you are informed and confident about the level of cancer care your local care team is providing.
What is Cancer?

In all types of cancer, some of the body’s cells begin to divide without stopping and in some cases spread into surrounding tissues.

*Age adjusted to the 2000 US standard population and adjusted for delays in reporting.
Source: Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program, National Cancer Institute, 2018.
### Estimated New Cancer Cases* in the US in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>870,970</td>
<td>891,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung &amp; bronchus</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon &amp; rectum</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary bladder</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma of skin</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney &amp; renal pelvis</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hodgkin lymphoma</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral cavity &amp; pharynx</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leukemia</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancreas</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other sites</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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*Excludes basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers and in situ carcinoma except urinary bladder.
What Causes Cancer?

Cancer causing agents: Carcinogens

- Infectious conditions
- Chemical Substances
- Complex mixed agents
- Radiation
- Mixtures
- Exposure circumstances
- Unknown
Signs and Symptoms of Cancer

- A change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or a lump in the breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Obvious change in a wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness
- Unexplained weight loss (>10% of body weight)
- Unexplained fever
- Easy bruising
- Unexplained abdominal pain
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Acute onset of a new neurologic problem
- No signs or symptoms
Cancer Prevention

- Avoid excess sun exposure
- Wear protective garments in the sun
- Use sunscreen
- Smoking cessation
- Avoid or use protection with partners with known HPV, Hepatitis C and HIV infections
- HPV vaccine
- Get treatment if diagnosed with Hepatitis C
- Use protective clothing or respiratory devices if handling chemical carcinogenic agents
- Follow healthy diet
If something doesn’t seem right...

See your doctor for an evaluation, which might consist of:

• Exam
• Biopsy
• Blood test
• Radiographic study
• Other appropriate procedure(s)
Cancer Detection

You can take charge of your health by following recommended screening guidelines and using preventive measures against cancer.

When cancer is detected early, treatment options and outcomes are much better.
Detecting Cancer Early for Better Treatment Options and Outcomes

Breast cancer
- **Women ages 40 to 44** should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms (x-rays of the breast) if they wish to do so.
- **Women age 45 to 54** should get mammograms every year.
- **Women 55 and older** should switch to mammograms every 2 years, or can continue yearly screening.

Colon and rectal cancer and polyps
- The American Cancer Society recommends that people at average risk for colorectal cancer begin regular screening at **age 45**.
- If you’re in good health, you should continue regular screening through **age 75**.
- No matter which test you choose, the most important thing is to get screened.
Detecting Cancer Early for Better Treatment Options and Outcomes

Cervical cancer
• Women should begin cervical cancer testing at age 21.
• Women between the ages of 21 and 29 should have a Pap test done every 3 years. HPV testing should not be used in this age group unless it’s needed after an abnormal Pap test result.
• Women between the ages of 30 and 65 should have a Pap test plus an HPV test (called “co-testing”) every 5 years. This is the preferred approach, but it is acceptable to have a Pap test alone every 3 years.

Endometrial cancer
• The American Cancer Society recommends that all women should be told about the risks and symptoms of endometrial cancer at the time of menopause.
• Women should report any unexpected vaginal bleeding or spotting to their doctors.
• Some women – because of their history – may need to consider having a yearly endometrial biopsy.

Please talk with a health care provider about your history.
Detecting Cancer Early for Better Treatment Options and Outcomes

**Lung cancer**
The American Cancer Society recommends yearly lung cancer screening with a low-dose CT scan for the following people who are at higher risk for lung cancer:

- **Aged 55 to 74** years and in fairly good health and
- **Currently smoke or have quit smoking in the past 15 years** and
- Have at least a **30 pack-year smoking history**

*A pack-year is 1 pack of cigarettes per day per year. One pack per day for 30 years or 2 packs per day for 15 years would both be 30 pack-years.*

Before getting screened, talk to your health care provider about:

- Your risk for lung cancer
- How to quit smoking if you still smoke
- The possible benefits, limits, and harms of lung cancer screenings
- Where you can get screened

You should also talk with your insurance provider about your coverage.
If you are diagnosed with cancer, your doctor will determine details needed to best treat the disease:

- Where the cancer is (staging)
  - Localized
    - Size
    - Causing problems
  - Regional spread
    - Lymph node involvement
- Distant spread
  - Brain
  - Liver
  - Lung
  - Bone
After determining the details of your disease, your care team will talk with you about treatment options:

- Surgery
- Systemic Therapy
  - Chemotherapy
  - Hormonal
  - Immunotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Other
Mary Bird Perkins Provides Comprehensive Care Before, During and After Cancer Treatment

- Assistance with transportation
- Insurance and financial assistance
- Psychological and spiritual care
- Care for disease symptoms and side effects of treatment
  - Nausea
  - Fatigue
  - Pain
  - Anxiety
  - Oral care
  - Skin care
  - Hair loss
- Nutritional care and support
- Manage treatment-related side effects
- Observe and assess outcome of treatment
- Manage cancer-related issues after treatment
Cancer survivors

Estimated Number of Cancer Survivors in the US

Year

Millions

Cancer survivors

Projections

MARYBIRD.ORG

@mbpccnat

(601) 442-1285

133 Jefferson Davis Blvd. | Natchez, MS 39120
Self-Compassion for Caregivers

Chaplain Doris Whitaker
University of Mississippi Medical Center
May 8, 2019
THE CAREGIVERS’ CREED

1. Believe in yourself:
   Give yourself credit. Believe you are making the best decisions you can at all times. No one is a “perfect” caregiver.

2. Ask for help:
   You don’t have to do it all. Accept offers of help - whether a friend wants to spend time with your loved one or run errands for you.

3. Revise your goals:
   Take one step at a time to tackle large tasks; set priorities; make lists; establish a routine. It is OK to say no to requests that are draining or difficult to take on - such as hosting the holidays.

4. Connect with resources:
   Community services may provide meal delivery or transportation to appointments. Free classes about the disease your loved one has may provide vital information.

https://healthnewshub.org/health-news-hub/people/caregivers-creed-caring-first/
THE CAREGIVERS’ CREED

5. Join caregivers’ support groups:
   Connecting with others who understand what you are facing can provide encouragement and coping strategies.

6. Recharge by being connected:
   Staying in touch with family and friends can provide emotional support and as well as keep them informed about the situation. Make time for you, whether it’s taking a walk or having a cup of coffee with a friend.

7. Take care of yourself:
   Stress and responsibilities can wear you down mentally and physically. Maintain your health by choosing healthy foods, eating regular meals, drinking plenty of water and staying physically active.

8. Consult your physician:
   Stay current with your checkups, screenings and immunizations. Tell your primary care physician that you are a caregiver. They may be able to address your concerns or related health problems.

https://healthnewshub.org/health-news-hub/people/caregivers-creed-caring-first/
“compassion” means to “suffer with”

- “a deep awareness of the suffering of another coupled with the wish to relieve it.”
- “a virtuous response that seeks to address the suffering and needs of a person through relational understanding and action.”
Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don’t like about yourself. Instead of just ignoring your pain with a “stiff upper lip” mentality, you stop to tell yourself “this is really difficult right now,” how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?
"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others."
~ Christopher Germer
SELF-COMPASSION

Negative Self-Talk: COMBATING THE INNER CRITIC

Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment
Common Humanity vs. Isolation
Mindfulness vs. Over-Identification
Self-Compassion

• Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings - after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?
Self-Compassion

• **CHECK YOUR SELF-TALK**
  - Are you regularly critical of yourself?
  - What are some common negative things we say to ourselves?
    - I’m useless.
    - I CAN’T DO THIS.
    - I’m a failure.
    - I’m not smart enough.
    - I’m not pretty enough.
    - Others things?
3 Ways to Talk Yourself Up

Here are some ways to help change the direction of your self-talk

1. **Listen to what you are saying to yourself**
   - Notice what your inner voice is saying
   - Is your self-talk mostly positive or negative?
   - Each day, make notes on what you’re thinking

2. **Challenge your self-talk**
   - Is there any actual evidence for what I’m thinking?
   - What would I say if a friend were in a similar situation?
   - Can I do anything to change what I’m feeling bad about?

3. **Change your self-talk**
   - Make a list of the positive things about yourself
   - Instead of saying: ‘I’ll never be able to do this’,
     try: ‘Is there anything I can do that will help me do this?’
TELL THE NEGATIVE COMMITTEE THAT MEETS INSIDE YOUR HEAD TO SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP

Ann Bradford
Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion involves being touched by and open to one’s own suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to alleviate one’s suffering and to heal oneself with kindness.

- Self-compassion also involves offering nonjudgmental understanding to one’s pain, inadequacies, and failures, so that one’s experience is seen as part of the larger human experience.

- Self-Compassion and Psychological Well-being, Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer
Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment

- Entails being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism.
- Recognize that being imperfect, failing, and experiencing life difficulties is inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals.
- People cannot always be or get exactly what they want. When this reality is denied/fought against suffering increases in the form of stress, frustration and self-criticism.
- When this reality is accepted with sympathy and kindness, greater emotional equanimity is experienced.
Self-Kindness

- Being supportive & sympathetic towards ourselves
- Not responding harshly, judgmentally when noticing our shortcomings
- Relating to our mistakes, failings with tolerance
- Recognizing that perfection is unattainable
- Internal dialogues are benevolent, not berating
Dear me, I choose a new inner voice...
Common Humanity vs. Isolation

• Frustration at not having things exactly as we want is often accompanied by an irrational but pervasive sense of isolation - as if “I” were the only person suffering or making mistakes.

• All humans suffer, however.

• The very definition of being “human” means that one is mortal, vulnerable and imperfect.

• Therefore, self-compassion involves recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience - something that we all go through rather than being something that happens to “me” alone.
Common Humanity

- Tunnel vision in which we lose sight of the larger human picture, focusing primarily on our own seemingly feeble, worthless selves
- When things go wrong in our external lives (through no fault of our own) we often assume that others are having an easier time; that our situation is unfair
- Believing that others are leading “normal”, happy lives
Mindfulness vs. Over-identification

- requires taking a balanced approach to our negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated
- This equilibrated stance stems from the process of relating personal experiences to those of others who are also suffering, thus putting our own situation into a larger perspective.
- It also stems from the willingness to observe our negative thoughts and emotions with openness and clarity, so that they are held in mindful awareness.
- Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be “over-identified” with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.
The Caregivers’ Creed

1. Believe in yourself: Give yourself credit. Believe you are making the best decisions you can at all times. No one is a “perfect” caregiver.
2. Ask for help: You don’t have to do it all. Accept offers of help - whether a friend wants to spend time with your loved one or run errands for you.
3. Revise your goals: Take one step at a time to tackle large tasks; set priorities; make lists; establish a routine. It is OK to say no to requests that are draining or difficult to take on - such as hosting the holidays.
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6. Recharge by being connected: Staying in touch with family and friends can provide emotional support and as well as keep them informed about the situation. Make time for you, whether it’s taking a walk or having a cup of coffee with a friend.
7. Take care of yourself: Stress and responsibilities can wear you down mentally and physically. Maintain your health by choosing healthy foods, eating regular meals, drinking plenty of water and staying physically active.
8. Consult your physician: Stay current with your checkups, screenings and immunizations. Tell your primary care physician that you are a caregiver. They may be able to address your concerns or related health problems.
9. [Link to resource](https://healthnewshub.org/health-news-hub/people/caregivers-creed-caring-first/)
The Big “C”

“COPING”

by

Ursula Brooks-Ware, MSN-NE, APRN, FPMHNP-BC
What is mental health?

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is defined as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can COPE with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”
- Mental health is our psychological, emotional, and social well-being.
- It affects how we think, feel, and act.
How does mental health affect you?

- Poor mental health can negatively impact physical health, leading to increased risk of certain conditions, worsen an existing condition/disease (CANCER), and decrease longevity of life.
What does cancer have to do with mental health?

- Cancer does not just affect one’s body; it can also affect your mind and individuals will experience significant changes to their emotional health.
- Cancer impacts a person’s life and the lives of his/her loved ones. Feelings of depression, anxiety, and fear are common in persons with cancer.
What does cancer have to do with mental illness?

- Mental health is treated in a manner similar to cancer. CATCH IT EARLY AT STAGE I INSTEAD OF LATER AT STAGE IV AND THE CHANCE OF REMISSION DECLINES!
- SCREEN, DIAGNOSE, TREAT, EVALUATE, AND FOLLOW-UP!
- Many cancer patients are never told about the chance of developing a mental health condition e.g. depression/anxiety nor will they receive tx for it....so if he/she does not receive tx, what happens???
Stats please...

1/3 of people tx’d for cancer in hospitals have a common mental health condition.

Major depressive disorder rates are 3x higher in cancer patients than in the general population.

8-24% of people with cancer are also living with depression.

Youth and young adults are at greater risk for depression compared to adults with cancer.
Why not seek help?

- Cancer, depression, and anxiety all share common symptoms – lack of sleep, fatigue, decreased appetite.
- These symptoms can be masked as symptoms of the cancer but can really be s/s of depression so no help is sought because the individual thinks that these symptoms are part of the disease process.
- Cancer care teams may not recognize mental health conditions. Their picture of depression may not be someone else’s view of depression. They may focus strictly on the cancer and place mental health on the backburner.
Research says...

- Having a mental health condition while living with cancer can worsen outcomes (may be less likely to follow treatment plans or take prevention screens)
- Dementia and substance use are more likely to have lower chances of survival after cancer diagnosis
- Those individuals that got tx and had fewer symptoms of depression had longer survival rates than those who had more symptoms
- Individuals who get tx often see improvement in their overall medical condition and are more likely to follow through with medical care and have a better quality of life.
Survival 101

- **Connecting with others** – People who feel connected are happier and healthier and may even live longer. Relate to other cancer survivors - join a cancer support group (e.g. Merit Health Wesley Breast Cancer Support Group, I Can Cope, Survivor 101 Support Group, The Positive Ones, online chats)

- **Stay positive** – People who regularly focus on the positive in their lives are LESS upset by painful memories. Focus on the GOOD days. THINK positive, SPEAK positive, ACT positive! Meditation is an excellent way to train the brain to achieve focus and gravitate back to that positive focus when negative thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations intrude.

- **Get physically active** – Research has proven that exercise can relieve insomnia and reduce depression. It doesn’t have to be strenuous exercise!

- **Eat well** – Eating healthy, nutritious foods can INCREASE your energy, DECREASE the risk of certain diseases, and influence your mood.
Survival 101

- Incorporate spirituality – People who have strong spiritual lives (and FAITH) may be healthier and live longer.
- Seek professional help if you need it - There’s a stigma regarding mental health or seeking tx for mental health, especially in the African-American community. Mental health involves the brain, which is one of the largest and most complex organ in the body. Just as heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, and lupus symptoms are treated, the brain also has to be treated.
- Who are the professionals??? Your local psychiatrists/psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, therapists, primary care physicians or NPs
In conclusion...

- Mental strength is not the ability to stay out of darkness rather it is the ability to sit in darkness with the hope that light will shine again ~
- Taking that 1st step to talk today will help lead you into a better tomorrow ~
Ursula Brooks-Ware, MSN-NE, APRN, FPMHNP-BC
Questions???
COMING HOME

A RE-INTRODUCTION TO BREATH AND STILLNESS
WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?
MINDFULNESS IS THE BASIC HUMAN ABILITY TO BE FULLY PRESENT, AWARE OF WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT WE’RE DOING, AND NOT OVERLY REACTIVE OR OVERWHELMED BY WHAT’S GOING ON AROUND US.

WHILE MINDFULNESS IS SOMETHING WE ALL NATURALLY POSSESS, IT’S MORE READILY AVAILABLE TO US WHEN WE PRACTICE ON A DAILY BASIS.
WHENEVER YOU BRING AWARENESS TO WHAT YOU’RE DIRECTLY EXPERIENCING VIA YOUR SENSES, OR TO YOUR STATE OF MIND VIA YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS, YOU’RE BEING MINDFUL.
THE GOAL
THE GOAL OF MINDFULNESS IS TO WAKE UP TO THE INNER WORKINGS OF OUR MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PHYSICAL PROCESSES.
WHAT IS MEDITATION?
MEDITATION IS EXPLORING. IT’S NOT A FIXED DESTINATION. YOUR HEAD DOESN’T BECOME VACUUMED FREE OF THOUGHT, UTTERLY UNDISTRACTED. IT’S A SPECIAL PLACE WHERE EACH AND EVERY MOMENT IS MOMENTOUS.
WHEN WE MEDITATE WE VENTURE INTO THE WORKINGS OF OUR MINDS: OUR SENSATIONS (AIR BLOWING ON OUR SKIN OR A HARSH SMELL WAFTING INTO THE ROOM), OUR EMOTIONS (LOVE THIS, HATE THAT, CRAVE THIS, LOATHE THAT) AND THOUGHTS (WOULDN’T IT BE WEIRD TO SEE AN ELEPHANT PLAYING A TRUMPET).
MINDFULNESS MEDITATION ASKS US TO SUSPEND JUDGMENT AND UNLEASH OUR NATURAL CURIOSITY ABOUT THE WORKINGS OF THE MIND, APPROACHING OUR EXPERIENCE WITH WARMTH AND KINDNESS, TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS.
HOW DO I PRACTICE MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION?
MINDFULNESS IS AVAILABLE TO US IN EVERY MOMENT.
• MINDFULNESS HELPS US PUT SOME SPACE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR REACTIONS, BREAKING DOWN OUR CONDITIONED RESPONSES.
SET ASIDE SOME TIME.
OBSERVE THE PRESENT MOMENT AS IT IS.
The aim of mindfulness is not quieting the mind, or attempting to achieve a state of eternal calm. The goal is simple: we’re aiming to pay attention to the present moment, without judgment.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE, WE KNOW!
LET YOUR JUDGMENTS ROLL BY.
WHEN WE NOTICE JUDGMENTS ARISE DURING OUR PRACTICE, WE CAN MAKE A MENTAL NOTE OF THEM, AND LET THEM PASS.
RETURN TO OBSERVING THE PRESENT MOMENT AS IT IS.
OUR MINDS OFTEN GET CARRIED AWAY IN THOUGHT.
THAT’S WHY MINDFULNESS IS THE PRACTICE OF
RETURNING, AGAIN AND AGAIN, TO THE PRESENT
MOMENT.
DON'T JUDGE YOURSELF FOR WHATEVER THOUGHTS CROP UP, JUST PRACTICE RECOGNIZING WHEN YOUR MIND HAS WANDERED OFF, AND GENTLY BRING IT BACK.
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION?
UNDERSTAND YOUR PAIN

- Pain is a fact of life, but it doesn’t have to rule you. Mindfulness can help you reshape your relationship with mental and physical pain.
CONNECT BETTER

• EVER FIND YOURSELF STARING BLANKLY AT A FRIEND, LOVER, CHILD, AND YOU’VE NO IDEA WHAT THEY’RE SAYING? MINDFULNESS HELPS YOU GIVE THEM YOUR FULL ATTENTION.
MEDITATION PRACTICE
SIT COMFORTABLY.

FIND A SPOT THAT GIVES YOU A STABLE, SOLID, COMFORTABLE SEAT.
NOTICE WHAT YOUR LEGS ARE DOING.

IF ON A CHAIR, REST THE BOTTOMS OF YOUR FEET ON THE FLOOR.
STRAIGHTEN YOUR UPPER BODY—BUT DON’T STIFFEN.

YOUR SPINE HAS NATURAL CURVATURE. LET IT BE THERE.
NOTICE WHAT YOUR ARMS ARE DOING.

SITUATE YOUR UPPER ARMS PARALLEL TO YOUR UPPER BODY. REST THE PALMS OF YOUR HANDS ON YOUR LEGS WHEREVER IT FEELS MOST NATURAL.
SOFTEN YOUR GAZE.

DROP YOUR CHIN A LITTLE AND LET YOUR GAZE FALL GENTLY DOWNWARD. IT’S NOT NECESSARY TO CLOSE YOUR EYES. YOU CAN SIMPLY LET WHAT APPEARS BEFORE YOUR EYES BE THERE WITHOUT FOCUSING ON IT.
FEEL YOUR BREATH.

BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PHYSICAL SENSATION OF BREATHING: THE AIR MOVING THROUGH YOUR NOSE OR MOUTH, THE RISING AND FALLING OF YOUR BELLY, OR YOUR CHEST.
NOTICE WHEN YOUR MIND WANDERS FROM YOUR BREATH.

INEVITABLY, YOUR ATTENTION WILL LEAVE THE BREATH AND WANDER TO OTHER PLACES. DON’T WORRY. THERE’S NO NEED TO BLOCK OR ELIMINATE THINKING. WHEN YOU NOTICE YOUR MIND WANDERING GENTLY RETURN YOUR ATTENTION TO THE BREATH.
BE KIND ABOUT YOUR WANDERING MIND.

YOU MAY FIND YOUR MIND WANDERING CONSTANTLY—THAT’S NORMAL, TOO. INSTEAD OF WRESTLING WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, PRACTICE OBSERVING THEM WITHOUT REACTING. JUST SIT AND PAY ATTENTION. AS HARD AS IT IS TO MAINTAIN, THAT’S ALL THERE IS. COME BACK TO YOUR BREATH OVER AND OVER AGAIN, WITHOUT JUDGMENT OR EXPECTATION.
TAKE A MOMENT AND NOTICE ANY SOUNDS IN THE ENVIRONMENT. NOTICE HOW YOUR BODY FEELS RIGHT NOW. NOTICE YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS.