

Center for Mindfulness, Compassion and Resilience

**Mindfulness Exercises for Work or Home**

**Formal Sitting Meditation**

*Formal sitting meditation has a distinct focus on the breath, a mantra or an intention.*

- Begin by sitting in an upright, dignified position, hands on lap or at your sides, feet on the ground (uncrossed)
- Close your eyes (or have a soft gaze at an object in front of you if that is more comfortable)
- Begin to focus on your breath – in (you inhale)...and out (you exhale). Breathe naturally.
- Give your breath a color, the color of your intention – what is the color you associate with joy/gratitude/peace?
- Imagine that color as you inhale and exhale
- Breathe for several long breaths
- As you breathe in, breathe the air of joy/gratitude/peace in through your nose and through your lungs and stomach. Take in that positivity for yourself
- As you breathe out, send that joy/gratitude/peace to a person or a creature you love, or back into the room
- Breathe for several long breaths
- Coming back into the present moment, into this space, deepen your breath, rub your thumb over your fingertips, wiggle your toes, gently open your eyes, take a long stretch.

*Note: Some like imagining a color because it gives them something tangible to focus on. If you are doing this exercise with a group, ask how that experience felt and have a quick debrief of thoughts that came up.*



## Physical Reactions to Stress - Body Scan

*The body scan is a meditative way of cultivating mindfulness on your physical self.*

- Make yourself comfortable and warm as you lie down on a mat or a blanket, sit down, or even stand. A quiet area is preferable.
- Close your eyes or keep them open with a soft gaze.
- Begin by bringing attention on your breath and focusing an awareness of your body.
- Breathe in, breathe out
- Bring attention to your hands. Notice if they feel tense or are clenched. Can you allow them to loosen?
- Notice your arms, your shoulders. Are you holding tension? Where? Can you let go?
- Face, jaw, mouth – these are sometimes places where we hold stress. Relax the muscles of your face, of your jaw. Let the muscles be soft.

*This is a short body scan that can be completed within a couple of minutes. Longer scans include the entire body.*



## Mindful Eating

*Mindful eating is a skill that can be incorporated into daily life. Mindfully eating can promote greater well-being by bringing awareness to how food affects your physical and/or emotional state.*

Notice, *without judgement*:

- What you are eating.
  - Where you are eating.
  - With whom you are eating, or alone.
  - Emotions you may be feeling as you eat.
  - Physical sensations.
  - What you are doing as you eat.
- 
- Mindful eating: chocolate and/or raisin
    - Choose which you would like.
    - Pick up the object (chocolate or raisin) and feel it in your hand. If it has wrapping on it, do not unwrap it yet, but rather feel the texture of the object. Feel the object in your hand.
    - Pretend you have never seen this object before and notice the colors, the shapes, the sounds it makes. Examine all sides of this object.
    - Begin to open the wrapper if your object has one. Listen to the sounds.
    - Raise the object to your nose and smell. Breathe slowly and deeply. Does this trigger any other sensations? What is the rest of your body feeling.
    - Bring the object to your lips but do not put it in your mouth quite yet. Feel it on your lips.
    - Put the object in your mouth but do not chew or swallow yet. What are the sensations you are noticing now?
    - Notice the weight of the object in your mouth, what your reactions are, and swallow only when you cannot hold it anymore.

*What did you notice? Was this different than your normal way of eating? How? What would it be like if eating like this was a habit?*

