Introduction to Mindfulness
Disclaimer

This information is being provided to increase your awareness. It is not intended to be medical advice. If you believe that you may have a medical condition or if you have specific questions regarding your health, see your physician.
Overview

• What is mindfulness?
• Why is it important?
• How to practice mindfulness
• What is mindfulness?
• What have you heard about mindfulness?
A Mindful Moment

- Accept your thoughts
- Be open minded
- Spend a minute in gratitude
Mindfulness definitions

• A moment-to-moment awareness of one’s experience without judgment
• A psychological state
• Different from meditation
• Paying attention on purpose
• Being in the present moment
Myths of mindfulness

• Mindfulness isn’t about fixing you
• Mindfulness isn’t about stopping your thoughts
• Mindfulness doesn’t belong to a religion
• Mindfulness isn’t an escape from reality
The problems

Busy schedules

Multitasking

Mind wandering

Chronic stress

Loss of motivation
Stress

• Impacts individuals both mentally and physically
• Body releases hormones in “fight or flight” response
• Some symptoms include
  – Difficulty focusing
  – Fatigue
  – Pain
  – Sleep problems
Main causes of workplace stress

Workload: 46%
People Issues: 28%
Worklife Balance: 20%
Lack of job security: 6%
Multitasking

- On average we switch between activities every three minutes during the workday
- Takes longer to get back on task
- Technology goes everywhere with us
Switch-Cost

• Switch your focus from one thing to another
• Brain stumbles a bit and requires time to get to where it was before it was distracted
• Can be a very big problem for complex tasks
  – 2% of the population is proficient at multi tasking
  – 40% of a person’s productive time is wasted when shifting tasks
Mind-wandering

- Mind-wandering is connected to unhappiness
- 47 percent of the time, people are thinking about something other than what they’re currently doing
- The more engaged in the present we are, the less our minds wander
Benefits of mindfulness

- Attention span
- Emotional control
- Productivity
- Relationships
- Working Memory

- Costs
- Symptoms of depression
- Stress
Practicing mindfulness

• Mindfulness is a *practice*
  – Don’t get discouraged if at first you don’t succeed
• Mindfulness may feel abnormal at first
• It requires patience
• Start small
• Work up to larger chunks of time
Getting started

Find quiet time

Practice deep breathing

Unplug

Get comfortable
Mindfulness Activities

- Mindful eating – the BASICS activity
- Mindful movement activity for postural awareness
- STOP activity
- Guided mindfulness activity
Eating mindfully BASICS

Check hunger and thirst signals
Assess your food
Slow down
Pay attention during meal
Chew your food
Savor your food
Mindful Eating

• What hunger cues are you sensing right now?
  – Stomach growling?
  – Thirst?
• During your next meal ask yourself;
  – Is the portion size appropriate for my needs?
  – How many colors are on my plate?
  – How many flavors can I taste?
• Use Mindful Eating handout
Mindfulness and physical activity

- Practice mindfulness to find your internal motivation for exercise
- Go on daily mindful walks
- Pay attention to how your body feels during exercise
  - Improves form
  - Prevents injury
- Increases postural awareness
Mindfulness in the workplace

- Accept what you can’t change
- Adopt a growth mindset
  - See every circumstance as a growth opportunity
- Be a single tasker
- Make stress your friend
  - How you react to it changes how stress affects you
- Slow down to speed up
- Practice gratitude
- STOP throughout the day
More ways to practice mindfulness

• Before bed
• During your commute
• During a difficult time
• When you first wake up
• While drinking morning coffee or tea
• While listening to others
Guided mindfulness activity
“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.”
– Simone Weil, philosopher

It’s a gift worth giving ourselves.
Additional Resources

• Mindful.org
  – Free website with plenty of articles and guided meditations

• HeadSpace Phone App
  – Basics are free
  – Guided meditations
Questions?
Evaluation

Learn something new today?
Have a tip or suggestion?
Want to share a success story?

Help us improve our programs and presentations by filling out this survey!

https://survey.geisinger.edu/Checkbox/pres-eval.aspx
References

• American Psychological Association
  – www.apa.org

• Mindful
  – www.mindful.org

• Greater Good Magazine
  – http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/does_mind_wandering_make_you_unhappy

• Harvard Health

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Postural Awareness
Mindful Eating Exercise
Take a moment to STOP

Stop

Take a Breath

Observe

Proceed