

October 2019 EAP NOTES: Mindfulness...



There are plenty of books, articles and research that remind us that tell us that peace and tranquility in our life can be achieved by being “present”— and staying in the moment. So, how exactly do we do that? How do we put down our phones and just enjoy life. Well, it takes some intention and a little practice (you may already be doing some of these and not even know it.) Here are a few techniques:

1. Just Breathe. I know, sure we all know how to breathe, but these techniques are more specific to helping you become more mindful.

1. This technique draws breath deep into your lungs that leads to a tranquil state of being. (Diaphragmatic breathing.) Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your upper chest. When you inhale, draw air into your belly, allowing it to rise against your hand. When you exhale, you’ll reverse the process: release breathe from your chest first, then the diaphragm and through your belly.

2. This technique works wonders for calming and grounding you, as well as alleviating stress or anxiety. (Alternative nostril breathing.) Go into the restroom at work. Block off your right nostril and take a slow, deep breath in through your left nostril to the count of 4. Plug your nose and hold your breath to the count of 16, and then exhale solely through your right nostril to the count of 8. Then, reverse for the other side.

2. Grab hold of your senses. Be still, focus on what you can be aware of with each of your senses.

Touch: Focus on the things that you can feel physically. Close your eyes. What is the texture of the floor like beneath your feet? Is there a breeze against your skin?

Scent: Can you smell anything right now? With your eyes still closed, bring your awareness to any scents that may be lingering in the air. If you’re at the office, can you smell coffee from the lunchroom? If you’re at home or outside, try to pinpoint a few scents that you can recognize.

Hearing: Take a moment to *really listen* to the world around you. Most of us are so accustomed to our living conditions that we tune out most of what we hear over the course of the day, so keep your eyes closed and listen. Can you tune into the bubbles fizzing in your drink. Do you hear traffic?

Taste: When you take a bite or sip of something, take notice: what are the textures, the different flavors? Pay attention to the movement your tongue and throat make as you eat, and see if you can focus on what you’ve swallowed as it makes its way down to your stomach.

Sight: Let your eyes rest on an item near you, and really look at it, even if it's something that's in your peripheral vision every day. Do you have a plant that you can study and analyze in detail? Are there scratches on the cup you’re drinking from?

3. Stay grounded. Some people use a “grounding” item to help them stay or come back to the “present.” Your “item” can be anything you want it to be, a stone, a piece of jewelry, a paper clip. Something you can easily keep in a pocket. If you feel like you are getting overwhelmed, or need to focus, you can reach for that item and it’ll bring you back to the present. Focus your attention on what you’re holding in your hands, how you feel and what is going on around you at that very moment.

Staying present takes some practice, but using these techniques will help you be more aware of your surroundings and really enjoy life. You will notice that you’re much more prone to nudge those around you to put down the phones and just be. FINAL RESULT: Everyone will be able to appreciative each other and the shared experiences because of it.

Do you still feel like you need more help living in the present? Best Care EAP counselors are here to help. Schedule your confidential appointment by calling **(402) 354-8000** or **(800) 801-4182**, or send an email to eap@bestcareeap.org.