

ANXIETY WELLNESS

Are you being *mindful* or is your *mind full*?

If you are struggling to manage anxiety or stress it is important to practice strategies that help relax your mind and body. **Mindfulness** is an approach used to focus on the present moment. In a fast-paced world with endless responsibilities, self-care is critical to your mental health.

COMBATING ANXIETY WITH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose and without judgment.

- Incorporating mindfulness into your daily routine helps you respond not react.

Mindfulness can help you make better decisions.

- With mindfulness your decision is thought-out and you are able to avoid impulsive decision-making.

The Truth about Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is *not*...
 - Thinking about *nothing*.
 - Living *only* in the present and never thinking about the past or planning for the future.
 - Long periods of "zoning out", passive sitting, daydreaming, and/or gazing.
- Mindfulness is *active* and *engaging*!
 - For example, practicing yoga, walking, eating, or coloring.

USING MINDFULNESS TO COPE WITH COVID-19

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

Common signs of Stress and Anxiety during an infectious disease outbreak:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

TECHNOLOGY & SELF-CARE

Watch a mindfulness Youtube channel or download an app.

Apps: [Calm](#) • [MindShift](#) • [Headspace](#) • [Stop, Breathe, Think](#) • [Smiling Mind](#)

Youtube: [Mindful Breathing](#) • [Grounding](#) • [Body Scan](#)

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CREATE A DAILY PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS

- Mindful *breathing*
- Mindful *listening*
- Practice *body scanning*
- Mindful moments throughout the day (*where is my attention?*) You can practice mindfulness while washing dishes, driving, eating breakfast, washing hands, etc.
- **Eat healthy, well balanced meals, get plenty of rest, and avoid alcohol.** It's important to fuel your body to improve your mental health and overall well-being.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. During this time of social isolation, don't forget to reach out to your support system.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy. Practicing coping skills are a necessity right now. Get outside, read a book, listen to your favorite song—make time for YOU!
- **Seek help.** You can seek professional support during this time through Telehealth or Telephonic sessions.

MINDFULNESS GAMES AT HOME

- **Blowing bubbles.** Have your kids focus on taking in a deep, slow breath, and exhaling steadily to fill the bubble. Encourage them to pay close attention to the bubbles as they form, detach, and pop or float away.
- **Pinwheels.** Use the same tactics from blowing bubbles to encourage mindful attention on the pinwheels.
- **Playing with balloons.** Tell your kids that the aim of this game is to keep the balloon off the ground, but have them move slowly and gently. You can tell them to pretend the balloon is very fragile if that helps.
- **Texture bag.** Place several small, interestingly shaped or textured objects in a bag. Have each child reach in and touch an object, one at a time, and describe what they are touching. Make sure they don't take the object out of the bag, forcing them to use only their sense of touch to explore the object.
- **Blindfolded taste tests.** Use a blindfold for each child and have them experience eating a small food, like a raisin or a cranberry, as if it was their first time eating it.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

-Victor Frankl

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom [LINK](#)
- The Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-Stress Art Therapy [LINK](#)
- Mindfulness for All [LINK](#)
- The Little Book of Mindfulness [LINK](#)

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