Mindfulness and Feelings

When practicing **mindfulness**, you learn about many feelings you can have. Use this handout to learn about how mindfulness can help you handle your feelings.

Using mindfulness can help you:

- **Notice and put a name to your feelings.** By putting a label to your feelings, it can help you better cope with strong feelings.

- **Be more open and welcoming to all feelings** (even the not-so-great ones).

- **Deal with hard feelings and learn from them.** Mindfulness helps you learn to sit with your feelings.

- **Take time to enjoy the good moments in life.** It lets you focus on what you are grateful for.

How to know what emotions you are having:

There are many feelings that you can have. Labeling feelings helps you stop thinking too much and notice what is happening in the moment. You can use the **STOP** method* so that you can pause and notice what you are feeling.

S	Stop.
T	Take a breath.
O	Observe. Look around you.
P	Proceed with your day.

- **Notice how your body feels when certain feelings come up.** Write down words that name what you are feeling in that moment.

- **Keep a journal.** Write about what you are feeling during your day or week. Write about what you felt. Was it good, bad, or in-between? Were the feelings you felt very strong? How did your body feel when you had these feelings?

*Goldstein, E. (2012), *The now effect: How this moment can change the rest of your life*. New York: Atria Books
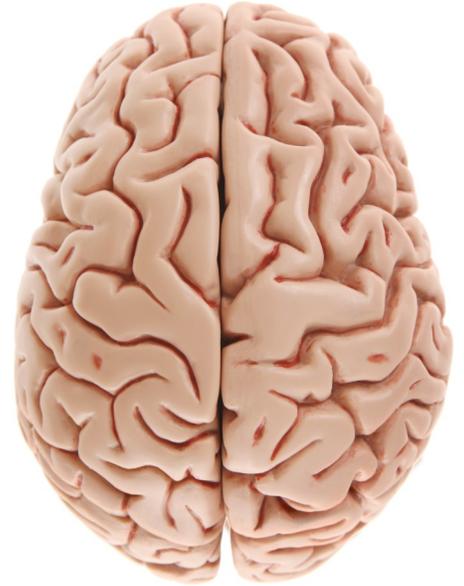
Mindfulness and The Brain

Mindfulness causes changes in the brain that can help you manage your feelings. Use this handout to learn more about how your brain reacts to stress and how mindfulness can help.

How does mindfulness affect the brain?

- Mindfulness works by helping you learn how to become aware of your thoughts, feelings, and physical feelings of your body.

When you are stressed:

- The part of your brain that helps you solve problems and handle feelings shuts down. This makes it hard to deal with stressful feelings and make choices.

- The area in your brain that handles feelings will set off an alarm signal to the rest of the brain. This signals that something dangerous or stressful is happening.

- The part of your brain that controls your heart rate and breathing will react to this alarm signal. The body then goes into a **fight, flight, or freeze** mode.

Fight	When you fight off what is harming you.
Flight	When you flee from harm.
Freeze	When you stop and freeze as a reaction to the harm.

How does mindfulness help with stress in the brain?

- Mindfulness manages the brain's response to stress. It helps to calm the brain.

- Mindfulness helps you to notice your thoughts and feelings and take a step back from them. By taking a step back, you have a better chance of changing your thoughts and feelings.

Mindfulness can help our brain stay strong and healthy. Use meditation and breathing exercises to help you stay mindful.

Mindfulness

What is mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is noticing your thoughts and feelings as they happen.

Practicing mindfulness can help you:

- Learn how to accept stressful feelings and changes in mood.

- Deal with pain.

- Stay focused on what is happening in the moment.

- Make choices in your daily lives with more purpose.

- Treat yourself and those around you with kindness.

Ways to practice mindfulness:

Activity	What it is	How to do it
Grounding Skills	Grounding skills help bring you back to the present moment.	Take deep breaths Focus on objects in the room Notice your feet touching the floor Go on a walk Talk with a friend
Eating Mindfully	Eating mindfully helps you to become more aware of the food you are eating.	Use your 5 senses to learn about your food Notice the foods color, texture, smell, and taste Take note of these things as you eat and reflect on it afterwards
Breathing Exercises	Breathing exercises are good for helping you focus and connect with the present moment.	Sit up straight. Close your eyes Pay attention to how your body is feeling and what thoughts you are having Focus on each breath in and each breath out