

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.