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**Free Mindfulness Exercises for Everyday Life**



**Solent NHS Trust mental health recovery teams have recorded 22 tracks around mindfulness, acceptance, openness and being compassionate to yourself.**

These are free for anyone to use.

You can play and download the recordings online here:

**tinyurl.com/yc5n29ln** 

**Mindfulness Exercises for Everyday Life: Description of Tracks**

**Introducing Mindfulness** *Written and read by Dr. Lorraine Bell.*

1. **What is Mindfulness?** This briefly introduces what mindfulness is and why it might be helpful.

2. **How do I do Mindfulness?** Discusses issues such as when to do mindfulness and how to overcome barriers which might get in the way.

3. **Using Mindfulness in Everyday Life:** Discusses how you can use mindfulness in everyday life.

**Being Aware**

4. **Mindfulness of Breath:** Awareness of the breath is a good exercise to try if you are new to mindfulness.  It guides you to connect with your breathing and use your breath as an anchor when your mind wanders.  *Adapted from* [*www.mindingthebedside.com/*](http://www.mindingthebedside.com/) and *read by Lucy White.*

5. **Mindfulness of the Hand:** An exercise focusing on noticing your hand, which you would normally not pay attention to. This is a useful introductory exercise for anyone. *Read by Jane Butt and taken from ACT made simple by Russ Harris.*

6. **A Short Breathing Space:** This is a quick and simple way of accessing the present moment by changing the focus of your attention to your breathing and your body. It might be useful when experiencing difficult moments. *Written and read by Stewart Yorke.*

7. **Body Scan:** Body scan meditations invite you to move your focus of attention around the body, being curious about your experience and observing any sensations that you become aware of. This exercise can be particularly challenging if you are distressed by focusing on body sensations but we encourage you to try. *Read by Dr Helen Courtney and adapted from* [*http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk*](http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/) *and* [*http://www.stillmind.com.au*](http://www.stillmind.com.au/)

**8. Taking the Mind for a Walk:** This exercise is best done out and about with headphones. It asks you to focus on the activity of walking: something we do very often but rarely notice doing. It is about developing a curious attitude to this. It is *a good general practice,* but might be especially helpful as a ‘grounding’ strategy when you have strong emotions urges or disturbing thoughts or urges. *Written and read by Stewart Yorke.*

9. **Mindfulness of Sounds and Thoughts:** An exercise to help you focus on sounds you would not normally pay attention to, and also try to watch your thoughts come and go without getting lost in them. *Written and read by Dr. Thomas Richardson.*

10. **Present Moment Questions:** A series of questions to help you focus your attention on the here-and-now. This can be done in a number of different situations including being on the move. This can be good to help practice focusing your attention, and also as ‘grounding’ (anchoring to the present in a helpful way) if you are feeling distressed. *Written and read by Stewart Yorke.*

11. **Mindful Eating:** An exercise to help you really pay attention to what your eating: usually you might eat in a rush and not really notice. This might be especially helpful for those who are prone to depression or have strong urges they struggle with. *Written by Dr. Thomas Richardson and read by Jane Butt.*

**Acceptance and Openness**

12. **Thoughts on a screen**: A ‘defusion’ exercise from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) which helps you get space from difficult thoughts. It is likely to be especially helpful for those with worries about the future or self-critical thoughts, and for those with good imagery. *Read by Dr. Thomas Richardson and taken from ‘ACT made simple’ by Russ Harris.*

13. **Leaves on a Stream**: Description as above, *Read by Lisa Holland and taken from ‘ACT made simple’ by Russ Harris.*

14. **Beach Defusion:** Description as above. *Written and read by Dr. Thomas Richardson.*

15. **Connecting with Values**: A brief exercise to help you connect with your values: what is really important to you, and the kind of person you want to be. This might be especially helpful for those who feel lost or depressed. *Written and read by Dr. Thomas Richardson.*

16. **Opening up to Emotions**: An exercise to guide people how to ‘sit with’ current emotions in a present focussed way. Many people avoid painful emotions, or thoughts pop in about *all the times* they have felt this way, which can lead to them feeling overwhelming. This exercise aims to support people to make space for difficult emotions, in a safe, graded way. *Read by Dr. Anna Redding and taken from ‘ACT made simple’ by Russ Harris.*

17. **Opening up to a difficult truth:** We all struggle with accepting difficult truths in our life at times. This exercises helps you ‘drop the struggle’ with situations which are hard to accept. It be better to do this exercise initially with something which is not too challenging and then build up to more difficult worries. *Written and read by Dr. Thomas Richardson.*

18. **Continuous You:** An exercise to help you connect with the part of you which is separate from your experiences: if you can notice your thoughts, you cannot be your thoughts. *Read by Dr. Thomas Richardson and taken from ‘ACT made simple’ by Russ Harris.*

**Being Compassionate**

19. **Compassionate Image/Smell:** This exercise uses the sense of smell to help soothe in the present moment. It can be helpful to ground in the present when you are feeling distressed, sad and anxious. You need to prepare for the exercise by having something to hand that you can smell; the smell you choose needs to evoke positive memories. *Written and read by Jo Tedbury.*

20. **Soothing Rhythm Breathing:** We can learn to access compassion for ourselves and others by using a soothing, rhythmical breath to turn off or tone down our threat system whilst having mindful awareness. *Read by Dr Helen Courtney and adapted from The Compassionate Mind-Guide to Recovering from Trauma and PTSD by Deborah Lee.*

21. **Loving Kindness:** Loving kindness is the practice of sending warm wishes to others.  This exercise will guide you to direct loving kindness to others and then yourself. *Read by Lucy White and adapted from the Metta Institute script*.

22. **Safe Space Imagery:** When you are feeling anxious or sad, having a safe place to go to in your mind can be a helpful experience. We are trying to create a place in the mind where you will feel safe, calm and contented. This place can be real or imaginary. Before you start, spend a few moments thinking about the kind of places that you  could feel safe in. *Adapted from The DBT skills workbook and The Compassionate Mind Recovery from PTSD Workbook; read by Jo Tedbury.*