

Mindfulness for Umpires

AN EVIDENCE INFORMED APPROACH

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- ▶ Ph.D. in effective therapeutic interventions for individuals with emotion dysregulation
- ▶ Developed and overseen community programs with AFL Foundation, St. Kilda FC, Essendon FC and Melbourne Storm
- ▶ Mental Health Practitioner for 25 years (Social Work, Psychotherapy & Mental Health Nursing)
- ▶ Executive Director of the Australian DBT Institute
- ▶ Owner, Essentia Health Clinics and Essentia Health Retreats
- ▶ Adjunct Senior Lecturer at Southern Cross University
- ▶ Mindfulness Practitioner with Intensive Training in
 - ▶ Somatic Trauma Therapy
 - ▶ Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
 - ▶ Radically Open Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
 - ▶ Mindfulness Based Approaches

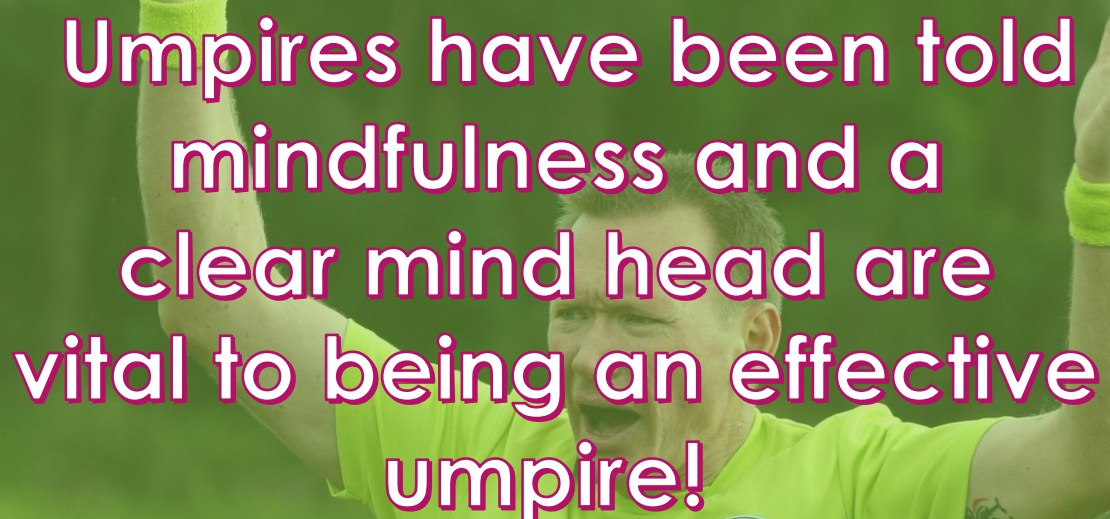


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Today's Session

- ▶ Umpires & Mindfulness
- ▶ Grounding Activities
- ▶ Wise Mind
- ▶ Addressing 3 keys to mindfulness
 - ▶ Non-judgement
 - ▶ Focusing on one thing at a time
 - ▶ Being Effective
- ▶ Summary

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Umpires have been told
mindfulness and a
clear mind head are
vital to being an effective
umpire!

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Characteristics of effective umpires

- ▶ Concentration
 - being calm under pressure
- ▶ Control
 - maintaining self-control
- ▶ Goal setting
 - clear communication with athletes and coaches
- ▶ Persistence
 - focused concentration for the duration of the game
 - make the tough calls in a decisive manner
 - handle challenging situations

According to Robert S. Weinberg and Peggy A. Richardson in their book "Psychology of Officiating"

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What is Mindfulness?

“the **awareness** that emerges through **paying attention on purpose**, in the **present moment**, and **nonjudgmentally** to the unfolding of experience **moment by moment**”

~Jon Kabat-Zinn

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**It is not staring into space
with nothing in your mind!**

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Differences: Mindfulness & Meditation

- ▶ **Mindfulness** is a way of **relating to oneself** and one's environment
- ▶ **Meditation** is a **formal practice** meant **to alter or enhance one's state of mind.**

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What are the Benefits of Mindfulness for Umpires?

- Reduces Stress
- Strengthens The Immune System
- Increased focus
- Improves Sleep & Recovery Times
- Improves Endurance
- Makes You Aware of Yourself & Your Body

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AFL Community Umpire Training



- ▶ **Week 1:** Write down 3 things you are grateful for and share with a friend.
- ▶ **Week 2:** Spend 5 minutes lying down, breathing in for 15sec and breathing out slowly for 15sec
- ▶ **Week 3:** Take a blank A4 piece of paper, and doodle until the entire sheet is covered
- ▶ **Week 4:** Download the 'Smiling Mind' app (free) and complete the 'Daily Mindfulness Guide'.
- ▶ **Week 5:** Create 3 manageable daily goals. Rather than writing a to-do list of twenty or more items, make it simple. Narrow your list to the top three that you know with certainty you can achieve during the day. You can always do more, as long as you achieve your top three.
- ▶ **Week 6:** Try to take two or three mini-digital breaks during your workday for about ten minutes each.

From <https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2020/04/30/e7d09e99-a14b-4ae6-9830-5ed1d68634ba/Training-Program-for-Community-Umpires.pdf>

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Grounding Techniques

TO INCREASE MINDFUL AWARENESS AND BEING PRESENT

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Connection through Grounding

Grounding techniques are strategies to help individuals reconnect with the present and bring individuals out of a panic, overwhelm, association with past experiences, unwanted memory, distressing emotion, or dissociation. They help to quickly separate individuals from the distress of their current emotional state or situation.

- Connect Core
- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
- Feet on the ground
- Cognitive Grounding
- Connect with the earth

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Engaging “connecting” your Core

- ▶ The body's core stability can aid emotion regulation
- ▶ Engaging your core means contracting your trunk muscles to provide support for your spine and pelvis in static positions and during dynamic movements. These muscles are used for balance, lifting, pushing, pulling, and general movement.
- ▶ **Sitting.** Sit up tall with your back straight but not arched. Draw your belly button toward your spine. You can also tighten your stomach as if someone were about to push on your belly.
- ▶ **Breathing.** Notice your abs, shoulders, and neck. Slowly breathe in, letting your stomach gently push outward. Try to minimize the amount your shoulders rise (or shrug) toward your ears, as this means you're using accessory shoulder and neck muscles to breathe.
- ▶ **Balance.** Seated or standing move your body left and right until you feel balanced. Then, move your body back and forth until you have that sense of feeling balanced.

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5,4,3,2,1 grounding technique

Connect with your five senses through noticing

- ▶ 5 things you can currently see
- ▶ 4 things you can currently touch
- ▶ 3 things you can currently hear
- ▶ 2 things you can currently smell
- ▶ 1 thing you currently taste

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Grounding with Feet on the Ground!

- ▶ Sitting or standing, place all of your awareness on the bottom of your feet.
- ▶ Place your feet fully on the ground by sinking all of your body's weight and tension into your feet. To support this grounding process, it may help to imagine roots growing out the bottom of your feet and connecting with the earth.
- ▶ Pay attention to any sensations in your feet.
- ▶ Apply pressure to different areas of your feet including the heels & balls of your feet.

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Cognitive grounding techniques

- ▶ If something simply becomes too much for your brain, you can mindfully distract yourself into returning to the present.
- ▶ Cognitive grounding techniques that act as mindful distractions, including:
 - ▶ Distraction through music, watching TV, or drawing
 - ▶ Talking to a friend or loved one
 - ▶ Playing with or simply interacting with a pet

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Connect with the earth – “Earthing”

- ▶ Earthing means connecting your physical body (skin layer) to the Earth.
- ▶ Taking your shoes off and having contact to the earth
- ▶ Connecting to the earth can ground individuals, and may re-balance their body
- ▶ Preliminary studies show that ‘earthing’ has a calming and balancing effect on the nervous system.

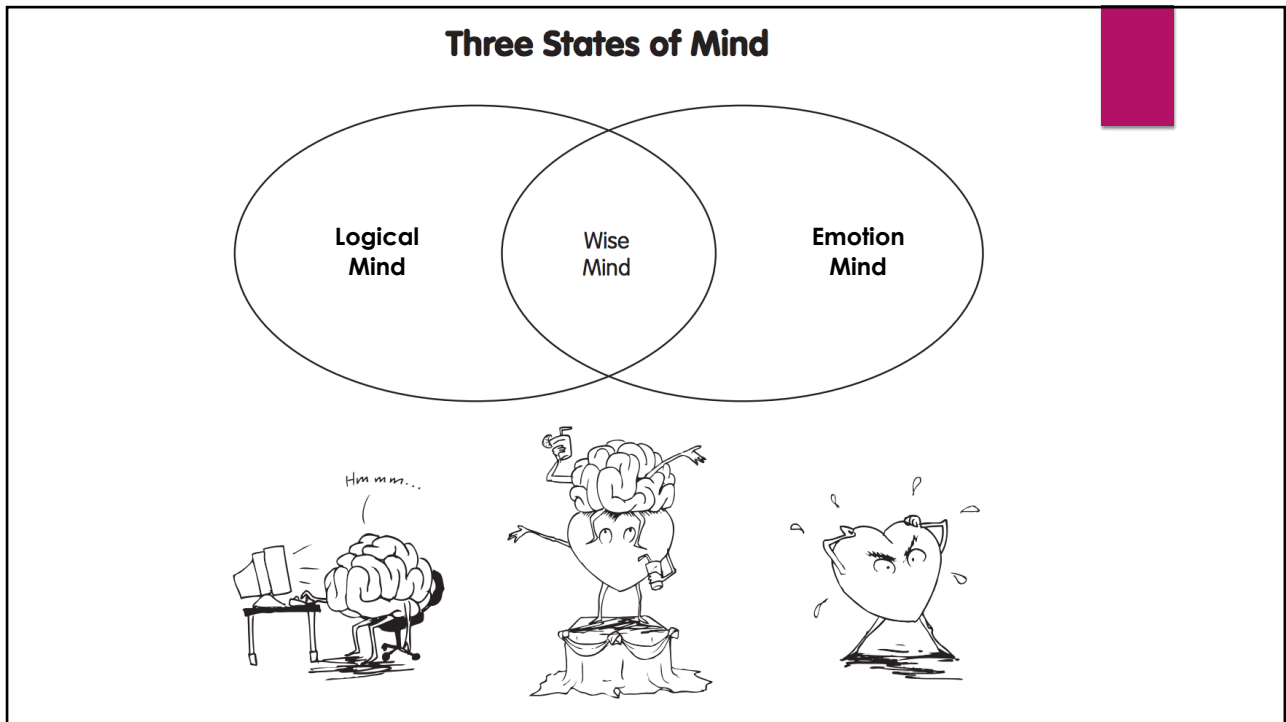
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Logic Mind

- ▶ We're viewing things logically and rationally.
- ▶ We consider things analytically, and the facts, but without necessarily factoring in how we feel about things.
- ▶ This is our cold mind... stick to the facts only!

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Emotion Mind

- ▶ Our preference, emotions and desires.
- ▶ We tend to be more easily swayed in this state, and are more likely to reach for dysfunctional behaviors and coping mechanisms.
- ▶ This is our hot mind, the facts are not important and our likes/preferences are dominant

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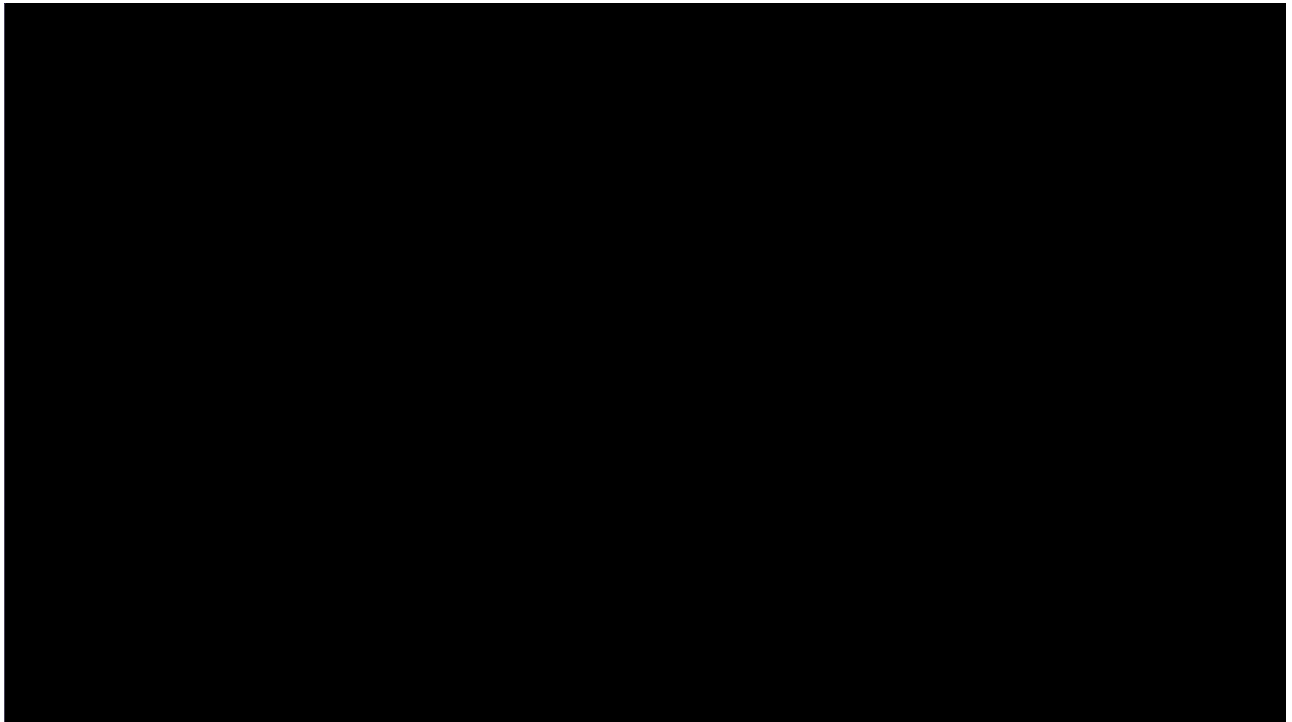


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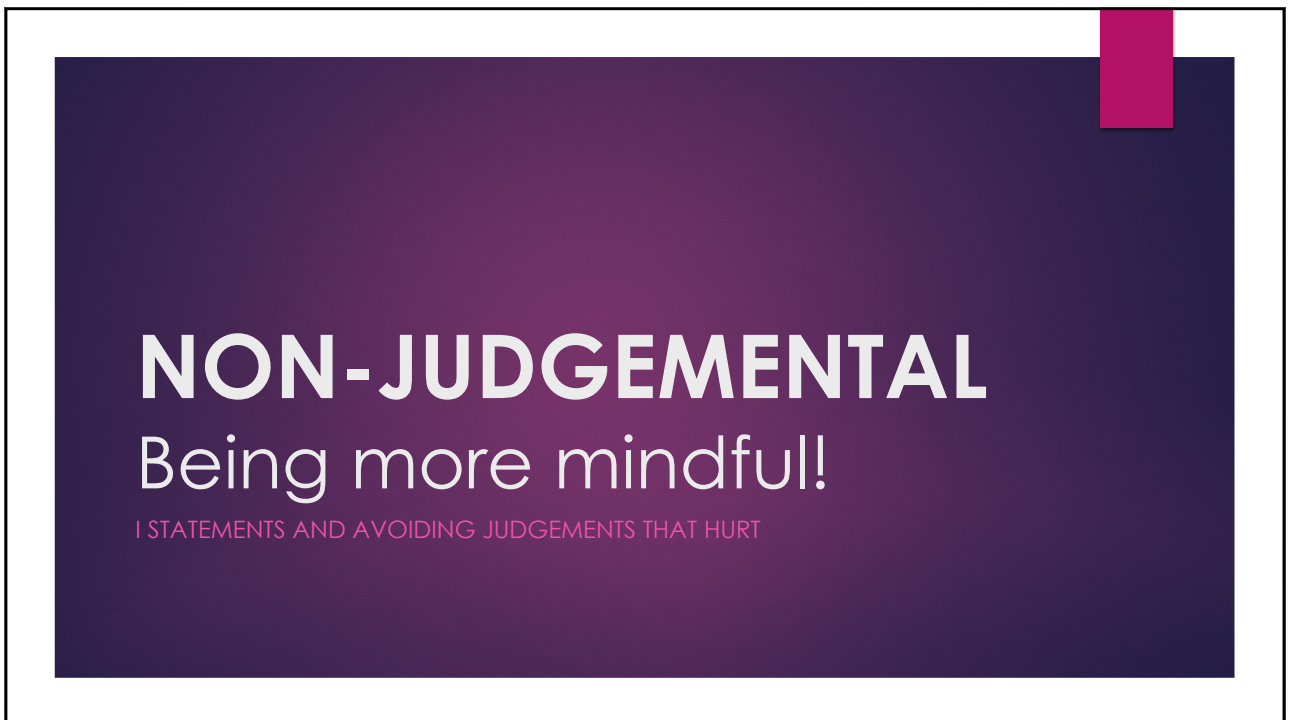
Wise Mind

- ▶ This is the goal in Mindfulness.
- ▶ Synthesis of Logical and Emotion Minds
- ▶ In this state, we consider things logically and rationally, while factoring in our likes, dislikes and desires; our feelings.

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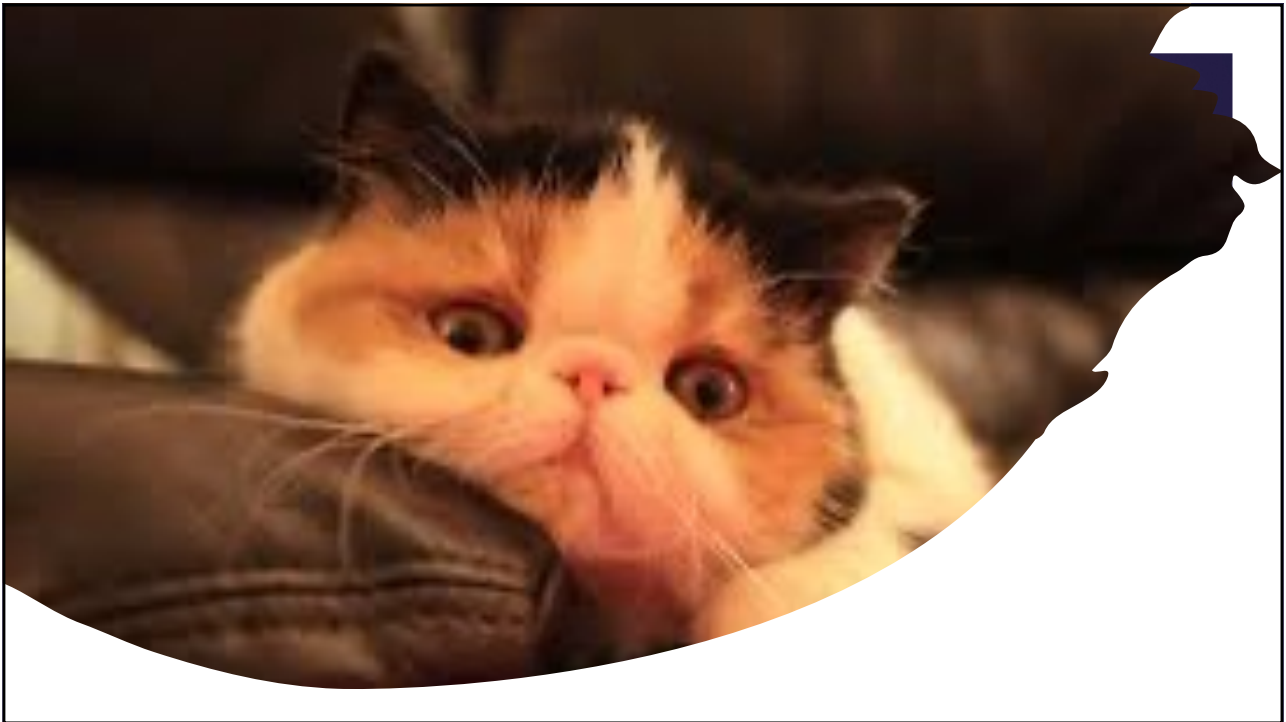
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Strategies to reduce judgements

- ▶ Practicing Exercises – observing any judgments that arise
- ▶ Try describing something you disliked
 - ▶ Now attempt this without judgment but expressing how you feel and replacing words “should” “good” “bad” and noticing your tone
- ▶ Getting in the habit
 - ▶ Start a sentence again when you notice you are using a judgmental tone or language or facial tone or posture
- ▶ Notice Judgements
 - ▶ Use mindfulness bell
 - ▶ Keep count
 - ▶ Have a conversation where you are looking for your own judgments and correct.
 - ▶ Avoid being too harsh on yourself...

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ONE MINDFUL

Being more mindful!

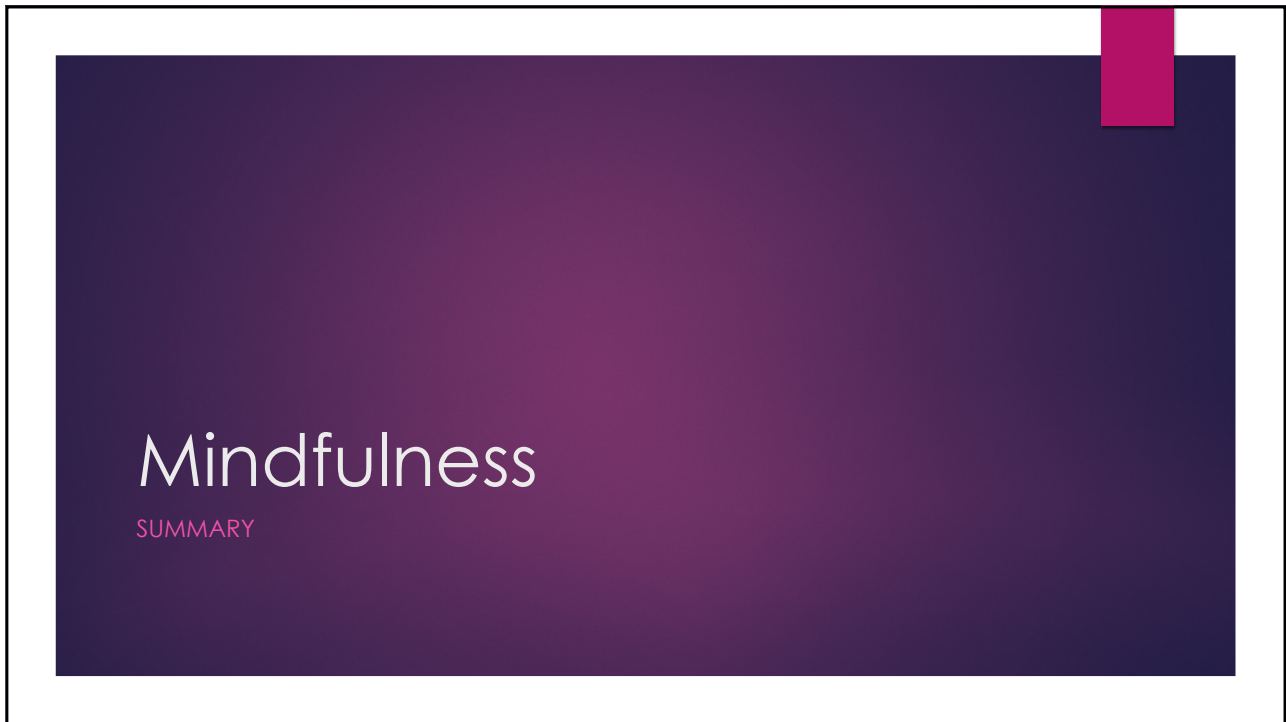
CONCENTRATING ON ONE MOMENT

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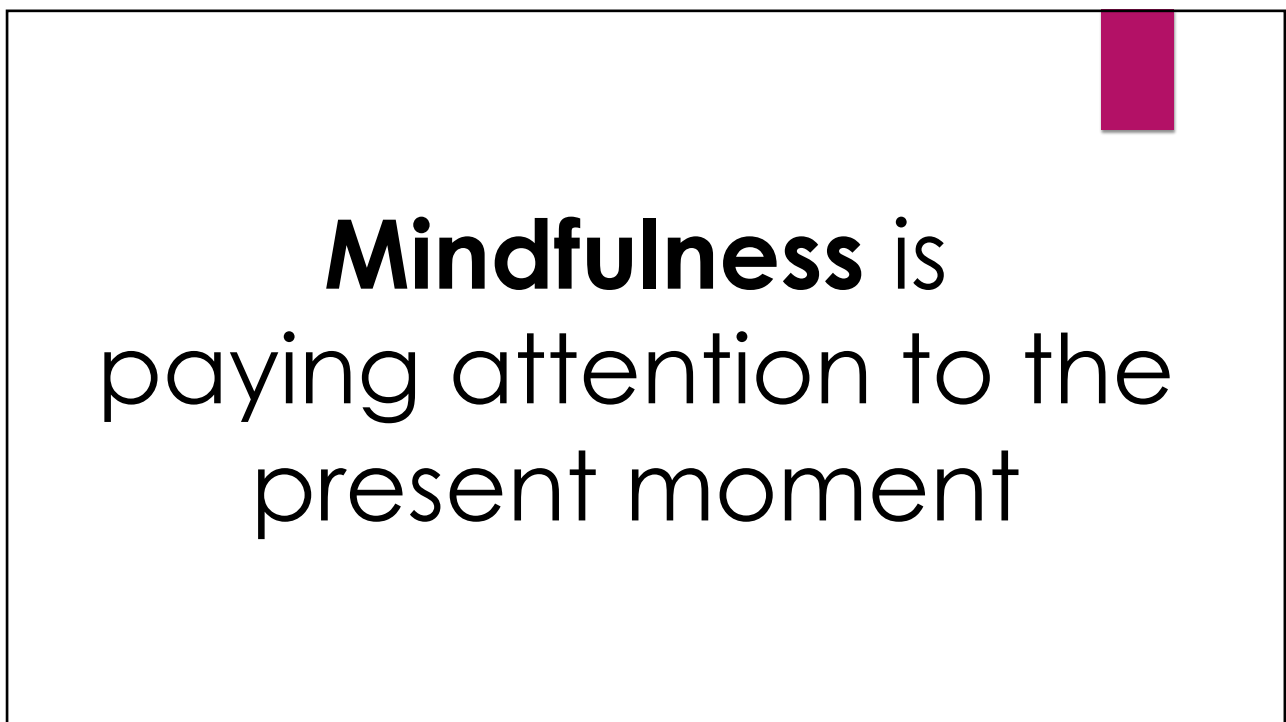
Strategies for increasing awareness of the moment!

- ▶ Making a Coffee/Tea
- ▶ Doing the Dishes or Household Chores
- ▶ Awareness whilst taking a bath or shower
- ▶ Breathing & Meditation
- ▶ Playing with pets
- ▶ Activities with your children

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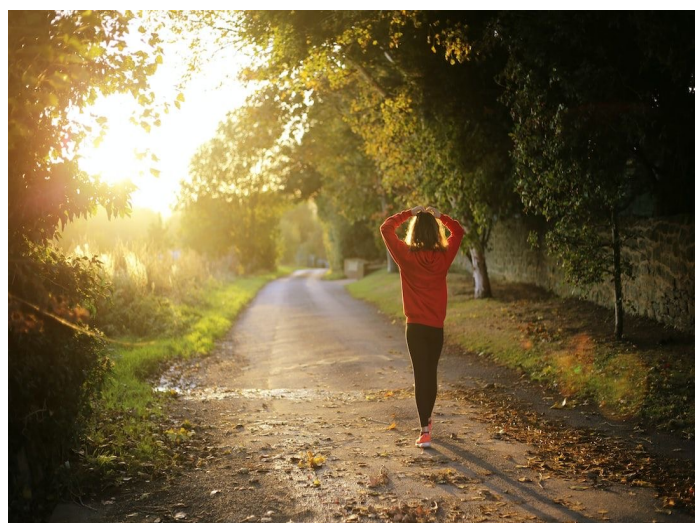
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Mindfulness has shown to be effective in reducing stress, helping with anxiety and improving emotional balance.

It can also help with getting better sleep and developing better eating habits.

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Regular practice of mindfulness helps us direct our attention away from all the thoughts of things we cannot control to experience where we are in the here and now.



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You can practice mindfulness by taking a walk or by savouring your morning tea or coffee.



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Practicing mindfulness often increases feelings of gratitude. What is one thing you are grateful for today?



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Remember: Mindfulness is the
practice of experiencing the
present moment without
judgement.

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