

**health  
enhancement  
for living \_\_\_\_\_  
program.**

**Stress reduction,  
Self-awareness  
& Wellbeing**

health  
enhancement  
for living \_\_\_\_\_  
program.

Reduce stress,  
enhance  
wellbeing,  
improve focus &

A practical and  
experiential program  
using discussion,  
reflection, mindfulness  
and cognitive  
techniques, & a  
Mindful Meditation  
relaxation exercise.

**Stress reduction, Self-awareness & Wellbeing**

## Introduction

Gentle self-awareness (as opposed to self-criticism) is essential for stress reduction and improved wellbeing. Mindful self-awareness allows you to respond instead of react.

There are all sorts of things going through our minds which constantly colour our responses to, and ability to deal with, daily life. Most of these thoughts, feelings and reactions are habitual and automatic. It's important to take a curious stance, rather than a judgemental one, as you observe your own behaviours and reactions.

The Program develops mindfulness and self-awareness using:

- Formal practice: mindfulness meditation
- Informal practice: the effects of being mindful or unmindful when going about day-to-day life
- Cognitive tools
- Discussion & self-reflection

### Materials

- Mindfulness-based meditation MP3
- PDF of key information

## Cognitive Tools

### 1. Perception & Stress

Different people can have very different responses to the same event or situation, depending on what they think or believe about it. An interesting challenge for one person can be extremely stressful for another. How you perceive and therefore respond to someone or something has a significant effect on stress levels.

#### **Your Mission ... if you choose to accept it**

1. Practice the mindfulness exercise for 5 minutes twice a day, preferably before meals.
2. Be aware of your level of mindfulness or unmindfulness in daily life.
3. Notice the effect that your perception of a situation or person has on your stress levels. What effect does mindfulness have on this?

### 2. Letting Go & Acceptance

To feel physically relaxed, we do not actually have to 'do anything', we merely have to let go of tension. It's similar with mental tension. What arises in the mind doesn't have a hold on us; instead we often hold onto opinions that are well past their use-by date. There may be considerable stress in not accepting something, or holding on to things such as expectations of ourselves or others, to our self-image, the need to be right, what someone did, or what you should have done ...

#### **Your Mission ... if you choose to accept it**

1. Practice the mindfulness exercise for 5 minutes twice a day, preferably before meals.
2. Be aware of what you might be holding onto that contributes to stress. If you choose to let it go or accept it, what do you notice?

## Cognitive Tools

### 3. Presence of Mind

Paying attention to what you're doing or saying allows you to have the presence of mind to respond appropriately to what's going on.

#### **Your Mission ... if you choose to accept it**

1. Practice the mindfulness exercise for 5 minutes twice a day, preferably before meals.
2. Observe whether you are 'present' when engaged in a task or conversation, or if you're being absent-minded. If a mistake or a stressful situation happens, try and recall whether you became preoccupied with other thoughts or concerns when it arose, or whether you were able to stay present - either way, how did that affect the outcome and your stress levels? Use the senses to help engage the mind in the present.

### 4. Listening

Are you listening to what's going on around you?

What are you listening to inside your head - is it helpful, negative, distracting?

#### **Your Mission ... if you choose to accept it**

1. Practice the mindfulness exercise for 5 minutes twice a day, preferably before meals.
2. Be aware of your inner conversations and commentary about yourself, others, the situation.
3. What effect does multitasking have on your attention, your communication, your performance, your stress levels?