

## MINDFULNESS

### - Resilience Worksheet –

Mindfulness has been defined as "a moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment". This means having conscious awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviours, without evaluation, or the formation of an opinion.

You're acting mindfully when you listen to a song you love and notice every tiny detail in the sound. Or maybe you've felt anxiety before a big event like a wedding or a job interview, you acknowledged that feeling, and chose to simply accept it.

#### **Mindfulness can help you to:**

- increase your awareness of your thoughts and feelings.
- manage unhelpful thoughts.
- develop more helpful responses to difficult feelings and events.
- be kinder towards yourself.
- feel calmer and able to manage stress better.
- manage some physical health problem, like chronic pain.

In mindfulness you try to become more aware of your thoughts, emotions, and physical feelings. This can help you:

- Notice when you get caught up in negative thoughts, so that you can manage them.
- Become aware of the effect that thoughts or events have on your body, so that you can look after yourself.
- Feel able to make a choice about how you respond to your thoughts and feelings.
- Observe that thoughts come and go and do not have to define who you are or your experience of the world.

#### **How can I get started?**

- Set aside some time. Consistent short periods of mindful meditation can be better than occasional long ones. It can help to commit to a regular time every day to practice. If you struggle to find the time, it might suit you to focus on finding ways of being mindful in your daily life.
- Go slowly. Try to build your practice slowly. Remember, you're learning a new skill, so it'll take time to develop. Most people find it hard to sit and meditate for long periods of time at first, so try to do a few minutes and gradually build up to more.
- Be patient. There is no need to set goals when practicing mindfulness. Putting pressure on yourself may make it harder to be mindful. Mindfulness simply means noticing what is going on for you right now. It is impossible to get it wrong.

### **What exercises can I try?**

As mindfulness involves paying more attention to what you do in your daily life, it can be a good idea to decide on one or two routine activities which you will try to do mindfully each day. For example, this could mean focusing on:

- The taste, sight, and temperature of drinking a cup of tea or coffee,
- The sounds and smells of having a shower,
- The taste and sensations of brushing your teeth,
- The sound of the kettle boiling,
- The sensations of your body as you sit in a chair,
- The feel of your feet and body moving as you walk.

Different things work for different people, so if you don't find one technique useful, try another.

### **When you do any mindfulness exercise, the key steps are:**

- Pay attention – for example, when you shower in the morning, make a special effort to really pay attention to the feel of the water on your skin.
- Notice – when your mind wanders, which is just what minds do, simply notice where your thoughts have drifted to.
- Choose and return – choose to bring your attention back to the present moment, usually by focusing on your breath, body, or something in your surroundings.
- Be aware and accept – notice and be aware of emotions you are feeling or sensations in your body. Try to observe and accept these feelings with friendly curiosity and without judgement.
- Be kind to yourself – remember that mindfulness is difficult to do and our minds will always wander. Try not to be critical of yourself, and gently escort your mind back every time it wanders.