



# iflow Psychology

## Information Sheet

*Supporting mental health, resilience, and wellbeing*

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### **Mindfulness**

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Mindfulness is the practice of directing your attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity, and acceptance. It involves noticing thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and the environment exactly as they are—without judgement or avoidance. Instead of becoming lost in rumination or future-focused worry, mindfulness helps you step out of “autopilot mode” and reconnect with conscious, deliberate awareness. This expanded awareness allows you to respond intentionally rather than react automatically.

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### **What Mindfulness Is**

Mindfulness involves cultivating a clear awareness of your inner and outer experience. It asks you to notice what is happening in the mind and body, while also tuning into the details of the world around you. Rather than analysing or judging these experiences, mindfulness encourages gentle observation—letting thoughts, feelings, and sensations arise and pass naturally.

A helpful metaphor is a slow-motion photograph of a falling droplet of water. Something too fast to notice becomes rich and detailed when observed closely. Mindfulness brings the same clarity to everyday life, revealing patterns you might normally overlook. With practice, it strengthens emotional regulation, attention, and self-understanding.

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### **What Mindfulness Is Not**

Mindfulness is not about emptying the mind or stopping thoughts. The mind is designed to think, and thoughts will naturally continue to arise. Mindfulness does not require suppressing thoughts, forcing relaxation, or achieving a blank mental state. Instead, it involves noticing when your attention has drifted and gently guiding it back to the present, again and again.

Meditation is one way to cultivate mindfulness, but mindfulness can also occur during daily activities such as walking, eating, showering, or talking. The essence is not stillness—it is awareness.

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### **Benefits of Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has been shown to improve emotional, cognitive, and physical wellbeing. When you practise regularly, you strengthen your ability to remain grounded even during distress. Mindfulness reduces rumination, worry, and the intensity of emotional reactivity. It can ease symptoms of anxiety and depression and decrease overall psychological distress.

Emotionally, mindfulness supports a calmer, more compassionate relationship with yourself. It enhances resilience, softens harsh self-criticism, and increases authenticity and self-acceptance. Interpersonally, mindfulness improves awareness in relationships, fostering empathy, clearer communication, and more meaningful connection.

In daily functioning, mindfulness enhances focus, concentration, and cognitive flexibility. It is associated with improved performance, reduced burnout, and greater overall wellbeing.

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## **The Basic Aim of Mindfulness: Become Your Senses**

Mindfulness anchors you to the present through your senses. By reconnecting with sensory information, you return attention to the here and now rather than drifting into mental noise.

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### **External Senses**

**Sight:** noticing light, colour, shapes, and movement.

**Hearing:** becoming aware of tone, pitch, rhythm, and volume.

**Taste:** observing sweetness, bitterness, sourness, saltiness, or umami.

**Smell:** detecting subtlety, intensity, and scent distinctions.

**Touch:** sensing texture, temperature, pressure, vibration, or discomfort.

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### **Internal Senses (Interoception)**

Internal senses help regulate your body's internal balance. These include awareness of hunger, fullness, heartbeat, warmth, muscle tension, and emotional cues. They also include proprioception (awareness of body position), equilibrioception (balance), and thermoception (temperature).

Mindfulness strengthens your ability to observe these signals clearly.

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### **Metacognition**

Mindfulness also develops the ability to notice your thoughts as thoughts. This meta-awareness helps you step back from mental chatter, reducing the urge to automatically believe or act on every thought that arises.

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## **Mindfulness Techniques**

Mindfulness develops through repetition. Each time you return your attention to the present, you strengthen neural pathways associated with awareness and emotional regulation.

### **1. Diaphragmatic Breathing**

Sit comfortably and allow your breath to find its natural rhythm. Notice the coolness of the air entering the nostrils or the gentle rise and fall of your abdomen. When your mind wanders, acknowledge the distraction and return to your breath without criticism.

### **2. Body Scan**

Move your awareness slowly through the body. Notice sensations such as warmth, tightness, tingling, or heaviness. This increases mind-body connection and helps you detect tension or emotional shifts.

### **3. Focused Attention**

Choose a single object—a raisin, a leaf, a candle flame, or a sound—and explore it with curiosity. This practice develops concentration and helps free the mind from unhelpful thinking loops.

### **4. Grounding Techniques**

Grounding brings you back to the present moment. You might take three slow breaths, place your feet firmly on the floor, or name things you can see, hear, feel, smell, or taste. The intention is to return your senses to what is real and immediate.

### **5. Letting Go**

Letting go means allowing thoughts to arise without engaging with them. You might imagine placing each thought onto a cloud and watching it drift across the sky. This helps reduce entanglement with thinking and strengthens emotional flexibility.

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## **How Often Should I Practise?**

Short, daily practice is more effective than occasional long sessions. Even five to ten minutes a day can significantly improve attention, emotional stability, and wellbeing. With consistency, your brain becomes more skilled at entering mindful states, making mindfulness more accessible during daily life.

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## **State vs Trait Mindfulness**

State mindfulness refers to the temporary mindful state you experience during or immediately after practice. Over time, repeated practice transforms mindfulness into a natural tendency—known as trait mindfulness. This shift supports long-term emotional resilience, clearer thinking, and greater stability.

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## **Developing Wisdom and Self-Knowledge**

Mindfulness deepens self-awareness by revealing patterns in your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. You become more aware of emotional triggers, avoidance strategies, and the beliefs that shape your reactions. With ongoing practice, mindfulness helps you notice subtle physical cues and see situations more clearly and compassionately. This self-understanding supports emotional maturity and long-term personal growth.

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