



Goals of Distress Tolerance

SURVIVE CRISIS SITUATIONS

Without Making Them Worse

ACCEPT REALITY

**Replace Suffering and Being “Stuck”
with Ordinary Pain and the Possibility of Moving Forward**

BECOME FREE

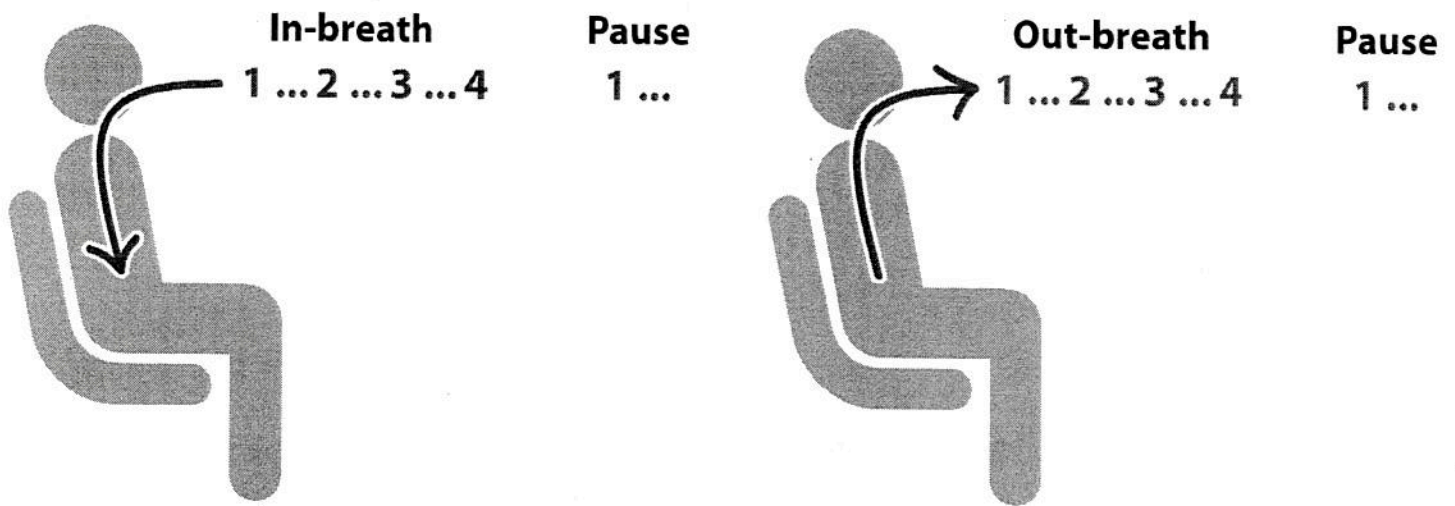
**Of Having to Satisfy
the Demands of Your Own
Desires, Urges, and Intense Emotions**

OTHER: _____

To Survive an Emotional Crisis without Making Things Worse, Try...

- STOP! (Stop, Take a step back, Observe, Proceed mindfully)
- Put cold water on your face and hold your breath for 30sec
- Exercise intensely
- Breathe *slowly* and deeply
- Tighten and then relax one muscle group at a time
(PMR - progressive muscle relaxation)
- Distract
- Self-Soothe (with 5 senses)
- Ask for help:
 - A trusted support person
 - Your therapist and/or psychiatrist: 408-366-4400
 - Adult Psychiatry Triage Team: 408-366-4400
 - Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 - Emergency Room
 - 911

When we are anxious or threatened our breathing speeds up in order to get our body ready for danger. Relaxed breathing (sometimes called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing) signals the body that it is safe to relax. Relaxed breathing is *slower* and *deeper* than normal breathing, and it happens lower in the body (the belly rather than the chest).



How to do relaxed breathing

- To practice make sure you are sitting or lying comfortably
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so
- Try to breathe through your nose rather than your mouth
- Deliberately slow your breathing down. Breathe in to a count of 4, pause for a moment, then breathe out to a count of four
- Make sure that your breaths are *smooth, steady, and continuous* - not jerky
- Pay particular attention to your out-breath - make sure it is smooth and steady

Am I doing it right? What should I be paying attention to?

- Relaxed breathing should be low down in the abdomen (belly), and not high in the chest. You can check this by putting one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Try to keep the top hand still, your breathing should only move the bottom hand
- Focus your attention on your breath - some people find it helpful to count in their head to begin with ("In ... two ... three ... four ... pause ... Out ... two ... three ... four ... pause ...")

How long and how often?

- Try breathing in a relaxed way for at least a few minutes at a time - it might take a few minutes for you to notice an effect. If you are comfortable, aim for 5-10 minutes
- Try to practice regularly - perhaps three times a day

Variations and troubleshooting

- Find a slow breathing rhythm that is comfortable for you. Counting to 4 isn't an absolute rule. Try 3 or 5. The important thing is that the breathing is slow and steady
- Some people find the sensation of relaxing to be unusual or uncomfortable at first but this normally passes with practice. Be patient and keep practicing.



Goals of Mindfulness Practice

REDUCE SUFFERING AND INCREASE HAPPINESS

Reduce pain, tension, and stress.

Other: _____

INCREASE CONTROL OF YOUR MIND

Stop letting your mind be in control of you.

Other: _____

EXPERIENCE REALITY AS IT IS

Live life with your eyes wide open.

Experience the reality of your . . .

- connection to the universe.
- essential "goodness."
- essential validity.

Other: _____

MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 1A

Mindfulness Definitions

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- **Intentionally living with awareness in the present moment.**
(Waking up from automatic or rote behaviors to participate and be present to our own lives.)
- **Without judging or rejecting the moment.**
(Noticing consequences, discerning helpfulness and harmfulness—but letting go of evaluating, avoiding, suppressing, or blocking the present moment.)
- **Without attachment to the moment.**
(Attending to the experience of each new moment, rather than ignoring the present by clinging to the past or grabbing for the future.)

WHAT ARE MINDFULNESS SKILLS?

- Mindfulness skills are the specific behaviors to practice that, when put together, make up mindfulness.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS PRACTICE?

- **Mindfulness and mindfulness skills** can be practiced at any time, anywhere, while doing anything. Intentionally paying attention to the moment, without judging it or holding on to it, is all that is needed.
- **Meditation** is practicing mindfulness and mindfulness skills while sitting, standing, or lying quietly for a predetermined period of time. When meditating, we *focus* the mind (for example, we *focus* on body sensations, emotions, thoughts, or our breath), or we *open* the mind (paying attention to whatever comes into our awareness). There are many forms of meditation that differ mostly by whether we are opening the mind or focusing the mind—and, if focusing, depending on what is the focus of our attention.
- **Contemplative prayer** (such as Christian centering prayer, the rosary, Jewish Shema, Islamic Sufi practice, or Hindu raja yoga) is a spiritual mindfulness practice.
- **Mindfulness movement** also has many forms. Examples include yoga, martial arts (such as Qigong, tai chi, akido, and karate), and spiritual dancing. Hiking, horseback riding, and walking can also be ways to practice mindfulness.

**Overview:
Core Mindfulness Skills**

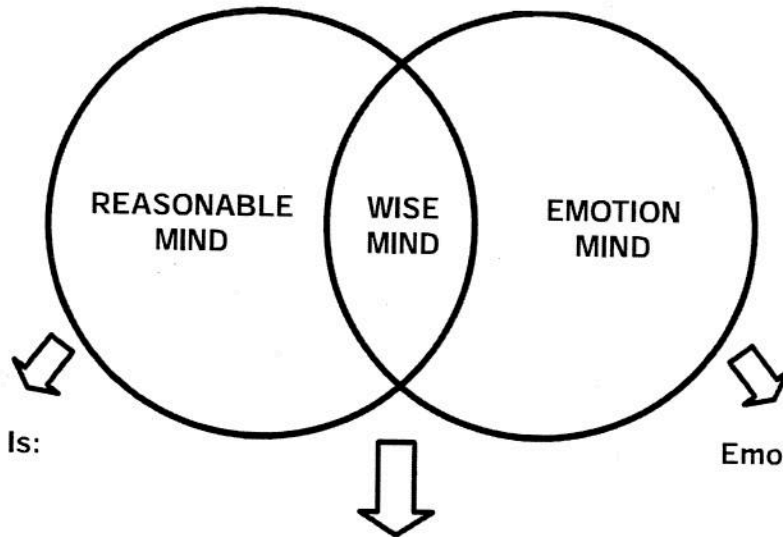
**WISE MIND:
STATES OF MIND**

“WHAT” SKILLS
(what you do when practicing mindfulness):
Observing, Describing, Participating

“HOW” SKILLS
(how you practice when practicing mindfulness):
Nonjudgmentally, One-Mindfully, Effectively



Wise Mind: States of Mind



Reasonable Mind Is:

Cool

Rational

Task-Focused

When in *reasonable mind*, you are ruled by facts, reason, logic, and pragmatics. Values and feelings are not important.

Wise Mind Is:

The wisdom within each person

Seeing the value of both reason and emotion

Bringing left brain and right brain together

The middle path

Emotion Mind Is:

Hot

Mood-Dependent

Emotion-Focused

When in *emotion mind*, you are ruled by your moods, feelings, and urges to do or say things. Facts, reason, and logic are not important.



Taking Hold of Your Mind: “What” Skills

OBSERVE

- Notice your body sensations** (coming through your eyes, ears, nose, skin, and tongue).
- Pay attention** on purpose, to the present moment.
- Control your attention**, but not what you see. Push away nothing. Cling to nothing.
- Practice wordless watching:** Watch thoughts come into your mind and let them slip right by like clouds in the sky. Notice each feeling, rising and falling, like waves in the ocean.
- Observe both inside and outside yourself.**

DESCRIBE

- Put words on the experience.** When a feeling or thought arises, or you do something, acknowledge it. For example, say in your mind, “Sadness has just enveloped me,” or “Stomach muscles tightening,” or “A thought ‘I can’t do this’ has come into my mind.”
- Label what you observe.** Put a name on your feelings. Label a thought as just a thought, a feeling as just a feeling, an action as just an action.
- Unglue your interpretations and opinions** from the facts. Describe the “who, what, when, and where” that you observe. Just the facts.
- Remember, **If you can’t observe it through your senses, you can’t describe it.**

PARTICIPATE

- Throw yourself completely into activities of the current moment.** Do not separate yourself from what is going on in the moment (dancing, cleaning, talking to a friend, feeling happy or feeling sad).
- Become one with whatever you are doing**, completely forgetting yourself. Throw your attention to the moment.
- Act intuitively from Wise Mind.** Do just what is needed in each situation—a skillful dancer on the dance floor, one with the music and your partner, neither willful nor sitting on your hands.
- Go with the flow.** Respond with spontaneity.



Taking Hold of Your Mind: “How” Skills

NONJUDGMENTALLY

- See, but don’t evaluate as good or bad.** Just the facts.
- Accept each moment like a blanket spread out on the lawn,** accepting both the rain and the sun and each leaf that falls upon it.
- Acknowledge** the difference between the helpful and the harmful, the safe and the dangerous, **but don’t judge them.**
- Acknowledge** your values, your wishes, your emotional reactions, **but don’t judge them.**
- When you find yourself judging, **don’t judge your judging.**

ONE-MINDFULLY

- Rivet yourself to now.** Be completely present to this one moment.
- Do one thing at a time.** Notice the desire to be half-present, to be somewhere else, to go somewhere else in your mind, to do something else, to multitask—and then come back to one thing at a time.
 - When you are eating, eat.
 - When you are walking, walk.
 - When you are worrying, worry.
 - When you are planning, plan.
 - When you are remembering, remember.
- Let go of distractions.** If other actions, or other thoughts, or strong feelings distract you, go back to what you are doing—again, and again, and again.
- Concentrate your mind.** If you find you are doing two things at once, stop—go back to one thing at a time (the opposite of multitasking!).

EFFECTIVELY

- Be mindful of your goals in the situation,** and do what is necessary to achieve them.
- Focus on what works.** (Don’t let emotion mind get in the way of being effective.)
- Play by the rules.**
- Act as skillfully as you can.** Do what is needed for the situation you are in—not the situation you wish you were in; not the one that is fair; not the one that is more comfortable.
- Let go of willfulness and sitting on your hands.**

MINDFULNESS WORKSHEET 2 (Mindfulness Handouts 2-5c)

Mindfulness Core Skills Practice

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe the situations that prompted you to practice mindfulness.

SITUATION 1

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- Wise Mind
- Observe
- Describe
- Participate
- Nonjudgmentally
- One-mindfully
- Effectively

At left, check the skills you used, and describe your use of them here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this mindfulness skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced suffering | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased ability to focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased reactivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased wisdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased experiencing the present |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased sense of personal validity | |

SITUATION 2

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- Wise Mind
- Observe
- Describe
- Participate
- Nonjudgmentally
- One-mindfully
- Effectively

At left, check the skills you used, and describe your use of them here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this mindfulness skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased sense of personal validity | |

List any and all wise things you did this week. _____