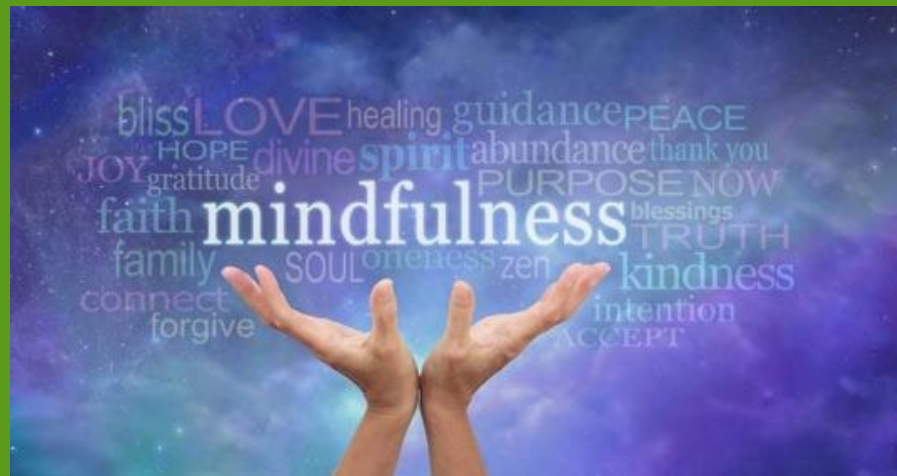


Using Mindfulness To Combat Stress



Objectives

- Learn how mindfulness is used today
- Understand how to practice mindfulness and reduce stress
- Incorporating stress reducing techniques into daily life



“There’s no secret to balance. You just have to feel the waves.”

~Frank Herbert



What is mindfulness?

Mind'fulness, *n.*

The act of paying attention, of noticing what's around and within us without judgment.



Mindfulness can improve your life

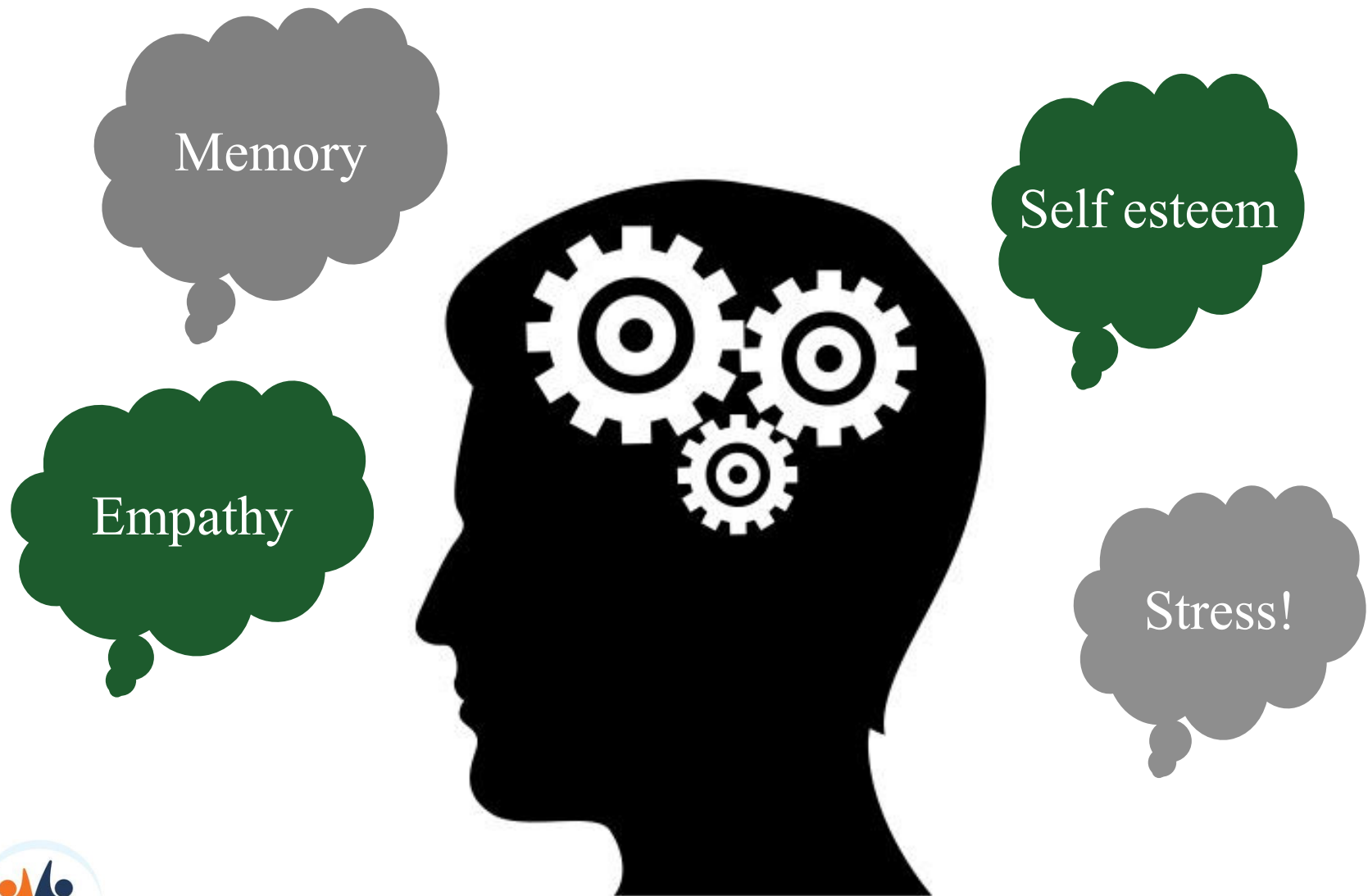
A recent study showed that patients who practiced mindfulness experienced the following benefits:

- Fewer primary care visits
- **Overall reduction in anxiety***
- Improvement in the immune system
- **Longer and better quality sleep with fewer sleep disturbances**
- **A reduction in negative feelings like anger, tension and depression***
- Improvements in physical conditions as varied as psoriasis, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue



Source: <http://bemindful.co.uk/mbsr/mbsr-evidence/ynndrome>

Your brain reaps the rewards



Source: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/01/eight-weeks-to-a-better-brain/>

Practicing mindfulness



Morning

- **Waking up:** How are you breathing?
- **In the shower:** What sensations and scents are you experiencing?
- **At breakfast:** Where did your food come from? How does it taste?



Noon

- **Walking:** Pay attention to your movements.
- **Driving:** Notice your body while on the road.
- **Working:** Practice breathing.
- **Lunch:** Be mindful of what you're eating and avoid staying at your desk.



Night

- **Reflection:** What was good and bad? What does tomorrow look like?

Throughout the day: Set reminders to be mindful. Change schedule times occasionally so it doesn't turn into a meaningless habit.

We are looking to always avoid 'rote' behaviors.**



Source: <http://www.today.ucla.edu/portal/ut/using-mindfulness-to-reduce-stress-96966.aspx>

How else is mindfulness being used?

Mindfulness is being used to for various purposes in various environments, including:

- Veterans for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Preschools and elementary schools to increase focus and attention in young students
- **Hospitals and clinics to reduce pain in patients**
- Weight management classes (mindful eating)



Easy ways to be more present

- Meditate for 5 minutes a day
- Journaling and expressing gratitude*
- Practice deep breathing as needed
- Be present in the moment

Incorporate the **S.T.O.P.*** practice into your daily life:

- **S**top
- **T**ake a breath
- **O**bserve thoughts/feelings/emotions
- **P**roceed



Reduce stress at work

Incorporating other simple stress reducing strategies can also improve overall well-being. For example try to incorporate:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Hand or ear massage*



Just smile!

We often overlook this simple act but those who smile are simply less prone to anger. So take a moment and get some giggles in to help you de-stress! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- YouTube a favorite movie clip or funny video
- Visit a favorite and funny cartoon strip
- Look up funny quotes or sayings



Connect with people or animals

Your social network is one of your best tools for handling stress. Talk to others face to face or at least on the phone and share what's going on. Pets can also be a wonderful stress reliever too so take your dog for a walk or just spend some time with your furry friends as well.



Move

Just moving regularly can increase self-confidence and lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Some exercises that reduce stress are:

- Simple yoga poses
- Take a walk
- Stretch
- *Lowering stress through strength training*



Give!

Another easy and quick stress reliever is to “give”. There are many ways you can help others. Here are a few examples:

- Make a meal for a neighbor
- Pack a coworker’s lunch
- Be the designated driver
- Donate

