

## Session Recap

**Mindfulness** involves being **aware of the present moment**, on **purpose**, with **acceptance** - rather than **judgment** - of our experiences.

### Formal vs Informal Mindfulness Practice



We're asking you to **not** do any formal mindfulness practices for the duration of this project

#### Formal mindfulness

- Structured
- Practiced for a certain amount of time
- Guided (using an audio recording) or unguided (bells)



#### Informal mindfulness

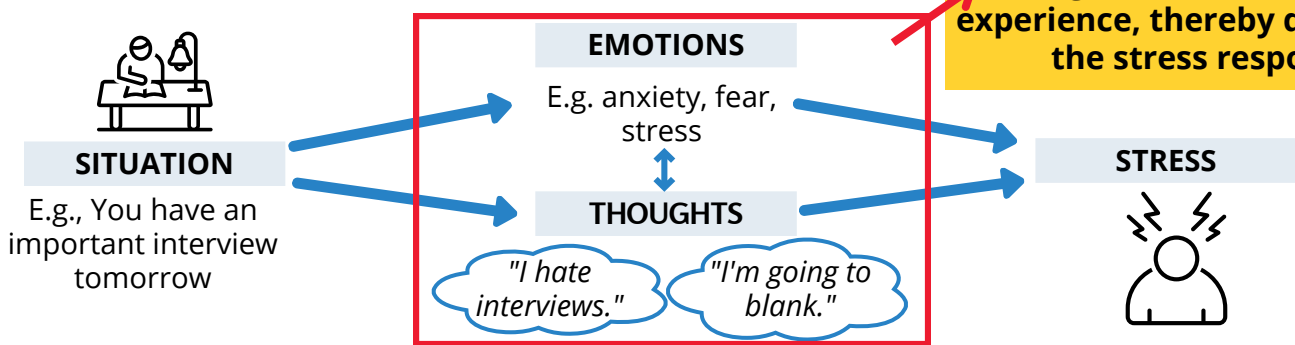
- Less structured
- Can be done anytime and anywhere
- Incorporated into daily activities (washing hands, going on a walk)



This is your group!

Most situations do not **directly** cause stress. Rather, it is our thoughts and emotions that influence our **stress response**.

### How Mindfulness Works



## Debunking Mindfulness Myths



#### Mindfulness is about focusing on the positive

- Unrealistic to be positive all the time
- Mindfulness = Being **aware** and **accepting** of your experiences, rather than trying to change them



#### Practicing mindfulness means "silencing your mind"

- Mindfulness ≠ Eliminating thoughts
- It's about allowing thoughts to come and go **without getting caught up in them**



#### If your mind wanders, you're doing it wrong

- Mind wandering is **normal**
- Most important = That you **bring your attention back to the present moment** every time



#### Mindfulness practice should feel relaxing

- Becoming aware of your present moment experience may bring about **physical or emotional discomfort**
- Try to sit with discomfort **without immediately trying to change it**

## Home Practice Instructions



### Informal mindfulness

**Practice mindfulness informally** on at least **4 additional days over the next week, as much as possible each day**, to make for a total of 5 days of practice (including the in-session practice). Specifically, try integrating the following strategies into your day-to-day activities:

## 1 Coming to Your Senses - Basic

**Instructions:** During routine activities that you already do every day, try to notice **each of your five senses as you do them**. Although we tend to do these routine tasks on "autopilot," it can be interesting to try being mindful of our senses as we do them, because we might notice things we hadn't before.

**Don't try to change anything about your experiences** - just become aware of them, and try to let them be exactly as they are.



### Example routine activities:

- Brushing your teeth
- Taking a shower
- Getting dressed
- Washing hands
- Drinking water
- Exercising
- Listening to music
- Lying down
- Going for a walk
- Commuting to work/school

You may want to post sticky notes or some other reminder nearby, to remind you to do this!



## 2 Anchoring



**Instructions:** This week, if you encounter a difficult moment, try to take **10-15 seconds** to anchor yourself using either **the pressure of the surface beneath you, your breath, sounds coming to your ears, or any other sense that works for you.**

**Remember:**

- Focus exclusively on the **physical sensations** associated with your anchor during this time.
- Do not try to change anything about your experience – simply sustain your focus on your anchor and take note of how this feels.

## 3 Routine Tasks

**Instructions:** To help you get accustomed to practicing mindfulness informally during routine tasks, we encourage you to follow along with this brief (5-10 minutes) audio guidance **at least once per week throughout the duration of the program.** The idea isn't to rely on audio guidance indefinitely to practice informal mindfulness – instead, the idea is to use this brief guidance during these first few weeks, to reinforce **how this can be done.** This audio file will walk you through completing 4 routine tasks mindfully. **The downloadable MP4 file can be found on the same webpage as this handout.**

The tasks are: hand washing, getting a drink of water, laying down on a couch or bed, and listening to music.



*Given the nature of the tasks, this practice should be completed at home.*

## Home Practice Log

At the start of the next group session, we will discuss how the informal practice went for you. If you'd like, you can use the log below to keep track of your practice throughout the week!

	Date	Practiced today?	Name of practice(s)	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

For any questions about the project, contact Julia Petrovic, the project coordinator at [student.wellness@mcgill.ca](mailto:student.wellness@mcgill.ca)