

# Mindfulness Practices

Practicing Mindfulness helps us to feel more calm and relaxed. Doing mindfulness means being in the here and now. It helps us notice our thoughts, worries or feelings about the past or the future and to let these thoughts pass by without judgement. Mindfulness helps us to pay real attention to whatever we are doing, whether it's focusing on our breathing, walking, or even making a cup of tea! It helps us feel best when we practice mindfulness every day. Mindfulness can be used as a self-management strategy by individuals with an intellectual disability, helping them to regulate their behaviours and achieve goals. Below are some mindfulness exercises that staff can support service users in doing every day.

## Feeling Thankful

Description: Gratitude means being thankful for the good things in our life. We can learn how to notice good things about ourselves, about others and about our lives, and how to feel thankful for these things. When we think about the good things in our life we feel happy, calm and relaxed. This helps to put us in a better mood. Practicing gratitude helps keep us happy and well.

How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Help the service user to get comfortable, sitting on a sofa or chair. They might like to get a blanket and put it over their legs or around their body for the practice.
- Explain to the service user that this practice involves learning to be thankful for the good things in life.
- Support the service user to play the 'Feeling Thankful' practice on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- When ready, ask the service user to watch the video and move through the exercises.
- Offer choice - reassure the service user that they can stop the practice at any time.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- If possible, staff should also engage in the 'Feeling Thankful' practice with the service user. When staff feel relaxed, the service user is more likely to attune and feel more relaxed too.

Click here for video: [Learn about 'Feeling Thankful' with Sine. A step by step practice to help you notice all the good things to be grateful for in life](#)

## Mindful Eating

Description: Noticing our senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) in everyday situations helps us stay in the present moment. Mindful Eating is one way to notice our senses and to practice mindfulness in everyday life.

### How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Ask the service user to sit upright in a comfortable seat. Back straight. Feet flat on the floor.
- Explain to the service user how noticing our senses (in this case, taste) helps us stay in the 'here and now' and feel more calm and relaxed.
- Support the service user in playing the 'Mindful Eating' exercise below on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- Ask the service user to watch the video and follow the instructions. Reassure them that they can stop the exercise at any time.
- Provide the service user with chocolate or another food item for this exercise.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- If possible, staff should also engage in the Mindful Eating exercise, modelling each element of the mindfulness practice for them.

Video Link: [Click here for 'Mindful Eating' exercise with James](#)

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Description: Progressive Muscle Relaxation, or simply 'Muscle Relaxation', means relaxing our muscles one by one, from our toes all the way up to our face. This helps us be in the here and now. It helps us to pay more attention to all the parts of our body. It helps us notice different feelings and sensations in the body and learn to relax. Muscle Relaxation helps us feel more in control.

### How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Ask the service user to sit upright in a comfortable seat. Back straight. Feet flat on the floor.
- Explain to the service user how relaxing our muscles helps us stay in the 'here and now' and feel more calm and relaxed.
- Support the service user in playing the 'Muscle Relaxation' exercise below on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- Ask the service user to watch the video and follow the instructions. Reassure them that they can stop the exercise at any time.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- If possible, staff should also engage in the Muscle Relaxation exercise, modelling each element of the mindfulness practice for them.

Video Link: [Click here for a 'Muscle Relaxation' exercise with James](#)

## Feeling Kindness

Description: Kindness means generating feelings of care and comfort towards ourselves and others. Practicing kindness increases our ability to notice positive feelings and helps to reduce stress. It helps to build self-compassion and acceptance of ourselves. We can also learn self-kindness by modelling how others are kind to us.

### How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Ask the service user to sit upright in a comfortable seat. Back straight. Feet flat on the floor.
- Explain to the service user how feeling kindness towards ourselves and others helps us feel more calm and relaxed. Feeling kindness helps us to be happy with who we are.
- Support the service user in playing the 'Feeling Kindness' exercise below on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- Ask the service user to watch the video and follow the instructions. Reassure them that they can stop the exercise at any time.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- If possible, staff should also engage in the Feeling Kindness exercise, modelling each element of the mindfulness practice for them.

Video Link: [Click here for a 'Feeling Kindness' practice with James](#)

## Mindful Body Scan

Description: This video introduces the 'Body Scan' and the concept of mindful muscle relaxation. We are going to do a relaxation exercise that involves trying to relax our muscles one by one, from our toes all the way up to our face. There is a link between what is happening in our body and what is happening in our mind. By focusing on what is happening in our bodies, we can help our mind feel calm and quiet. This is a great skill because it can help us feel calmer and more relaxed.

How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Help the service user to get comfortable, sitting on a sofa or chair. They might like to get a blanket and put it over their legs or around their body for the practice.
- Explain to the service user that this practice involves learning to relax our bodies.
- Support the service user to play the 'Body Scan' on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- When ready, ask the service user to watch the video and move through the practice.
- Offer choice - reassure the service user that they can stop the practice at any time.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- If possible, staff should also engage in the Body Scan with the service user. When staff feel relaxed, the service user is more likely to attune and feel more relaxed too.

Click here for video [Click here to learn how to Relax through doing a 'Mindful Body Scan' with Sine](#)

## Focus on the Breath

Description: When we are stressed we tend to breathe in and out very fast. Learning to notice and control our breathing helps us to become aware of our own bodies. Mindful breathing helps us to be ok with what is happening in our body, and to feel more calm and relaxed.

How Staff can support:

- Find a quiet space for the service user where they are unlikely to be interrupted.
- Ask the service user to sit upright in a comfortable seat. Back straight. Feet flat on the floor.
- Explain to the service user how focusing on our breath and slowing down our breathing helps us to feel more calm and relaxed.
- Support the service user in playing the 'Focus on the Breath' exercise below on their phone or laptop.
- Ensure that there is an adequate internet/WiFi connection.
- Make sure that the service user can hear the video and that the sound is at an appropriate level. The service user may also benefit from the use of headphones.
- Ask the service user to watch the video and follow the instructions. Reassure them that they can stop the exercise at any time.
- Staff should sit with the service user and answer any questions that they may have around the video content, until the service user becomes comfortable with the material.
- For the 'Focus on the Breath' exercise, it is very important that staff model mindful breathing for the service user, i.e., by placing one hand on their stomach and the other on their chest while breathing in and out.

**Video Link:** [Click here for 'Focus on the Breath' exercise with James](#)