
What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and fully engaged in the moment, free from distraction, and aware of our thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them. It has many known benefits including reducing stress and low mood, to increasing levels of focus and happiness.

The Mental Health Hub incorporates mindfulness into their working practices by taking time each week to reflect and focus, as well as observe their feelings and accept how things went in their working week.

"Upon reflection at our hub mindfulness session, we take the time to unplug, review and gain a better sense of control. It allows us to experience greater focus and awareness at work. Plus the time to relax at the end of each shift. These things improve our overall wellbeing"



Six steps to mindfulness

1. Connect to your senses to bring you into the moment – notice what you can see, hear, smell and feel.

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

(practice this over and over)

2. Take three mindful breaths, focusing on how it feels when you breathe in and out deeply.

3. Be aware of your body, how it feels and any movements you're making.

4. Notice the emotions you're feeling. Pause to name them, without judging or criticising yourself.

5. Notice the type of thoughts in your mind, rather than specific thoughts. Name the types – are they memories, worries, past conversations or future plans?

6. Find somewhere to sit or stand to do a three-step breathing practice:

- **Awareness:** notice how your body feels and what you are thinking.
- **Your breath:** become aware of which parts of your body move when you breathe in and find out how this feels.
- **Expanding:** breathe deeply so it feels like each breath fills your whole body.

Helpful tips for your mindfulness session

During your mindfulness exercise, you may wish to use an oil diffuser with lavender scented oil, which can help you to feel relaxed. Playing music in the background can also help. There are many examples of mindfulness music available online. These are some examples of the ones used by the Mental Health Hub team:

- • [Mindfulness and Meditation playlist \(Spotify\)](#)
- • [Marconi Union: Weightless \(Spotify\)](#)

The team also find these podcasts helpful:

- [The Mindful Minute podcast](#)
- [Mindfulness in 8 weeks - 40 minutes a day](#)

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques can support a mindful state. Grounding is an anxiety management technique which can be extremely helpful in allowing you to focus on the present moment and detach. It is beneficial in allowing you to gain temporary control over your feelings and provides you the chance to settle, and return to the present moment. Being grounded to the present moment can make us more aware and mindful of the resources around us that we can utilise to lessen the impact of the things we choose to detach from.

A common grounding technique that the hub benefits from is the 54321 exercise. This involves activating all 5 senses: sight, touch, hear, smell and taste, and increasing sensory awareness. This helps us when we feel anxious and overwhelmed.

You can contact [Lisa MacDonald](#), senior charge nurse, or [Kellyann Currie](#), psychological wellbeing practitioner, for more information on mindfulness for you or your team.