



# New Pathways

Life beyond sexual violence

**Sea Change**

**Being in the moment**





## What is mindfulness?



### **Mindfulness is...**

- Paying attention in a particular way
  - In the present moment
  - On purpose
  - Non-judgementally
- “As if your life depends on it”





## What is mindfulness and why might it help?

- Basically, mindfulness involves the focus of consciousness on whatever is happening now, in the present time, in and around you.
- Thoughts, feelings, sensations, and impulses may all be targets of mindful awareness .
- Mindfulness is using your attention to focus and explore something without judgement in the present moment..





## How can mindfulness– being in the ‘here and now’ help with trauma impact?

### Re-cap Trauma and PTSD:

- Re-experiencing the event (flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, nightmares)
- Avoiding any reminders of the event, or feeling emotionally numb
- Hyper-arousal, which consists of a very sensitive startle response
- Although described as a ‘disorder’ it is absolutely **NORMAL** to respond and react to a traumatic experience. Normal response to an abnormal event.

Therefore if the impact of trauma causes our stress hormones to be activated, for us to feel on edge and hypervigilant and anxious, our brain can never be calm enough to think and feel at the same time. If we cannot think and feel at the same time we are governed only by our internal feelings.

If we can calm our automatic nervous system (ANS) down we will be able to think and feel at the same time and this will enable us to think contextually and assess and see our environment.





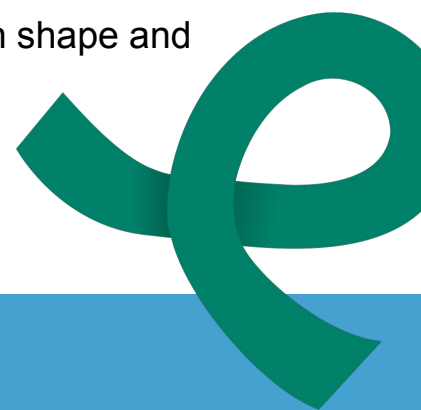
## The Clay Brain

Neuroscience has found much evidence to support the idea that the brain is able to change and heal itself .

Brain Plasticity means that certain practices and brain training can have a very positive and healing effect for individuals who have suffered traumatic experiences.



These pathways in the brain can be repaired. The fabric of the brain is able to change due to its **plasticity**. Plasticine is similar to the material of our brain in as much as we can effect its shape and change it under certain conditions. So the potential is that we could in fact, not exactly remove the effects left over from the trauma in the brain, but we can certainly reduce and change, shape and remould its effects. We can shape and build new pathways and new ways of thinking.





## Mindfulness is...

“Paying attention in a particular way, in the present moment, on purpose, non-judgementally”. (1990)

Developed from Eastern practices by Dr. Jon Kabat Zinn

If we are able to be in the here and now, in the present moment it focuses our attention and enables a calming affect on our body and brain.





## Mindfulness activities

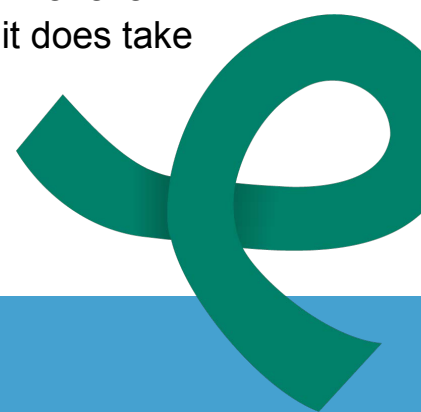
### Mindfulness activities

- Mindful Eating
- Mindful Listening
- Mindful Walking
- Mindful Dishes
- Mindful Breathing
- Mindful Exploring



There are lots of ways we can introduce mindfulness into our everyday lives. You can adapt normal day activities and approach them in a mindful way. Even washing the dishes. All you would need to do is to take notice in a different way to how you normally would, for example; when washing the dishes maybe you would notice the steam rising from the sink, listen to the bubbles popping, notice the rainbow colours in the bubbles. Feel the water make contact with your fingers and hands, notice the change in temperature, hear the clatter of the dishes, feel the smoothness of the china dishes, notice the hardness or sharpness of the cutlery. While your awareness and your attention notices these things, your mind **observes** only, **without judgement**, without distraction or other thoughts taking over. If you do have some random thoughts you just acknowledge them, accept them then let them go.

We don't have to dedicate hours of practice. Just 5-10 minutes a day can have a profound effect and we can apply a mindful approach whenever we feel the need (obviously if convenient to do so). However, it does take time and practice...







## Eating mindfully

Take whatever item you love to eat, this might be a piece of chocolate or a segment of an orange , a raisin, whatever you love. Look at it and choose how you are going to start eating it. Examine what it looks like, what its colour is like the texture of how it feels.

Bring it up to your nose and smell it. Now start to get ready to eat it, if it needs preparing– taking out of a peel or packet do this now.

Once you have got it ready pull any pieces off which you want to eat first.

Place one piece of whatever this food is into your mouth– just one segment for example if it was chocolate just one small piece of it, if it is an orange then one segment. But instead of biting and swallowing right away, allow your senses to feel the taste, texture and smell of it, slowly let it dissolve or melt into your mouth.

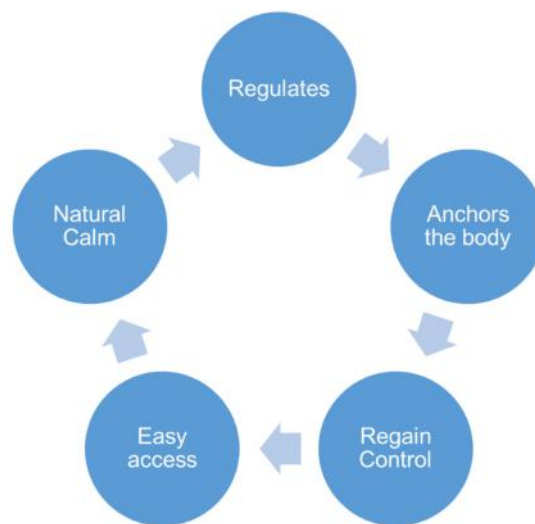
Feel its texture, then lightly bite it. Take your time to enjoy this food in a fully present way, not eating for eating but slowly savouring it.







## How to use breathing as a way of calming



The breath is one of the fundamental ways of regulating anxiety and the effects left over from trauma. The breath can anchor you by re-oxygenating your body, help you feel like you are back in control.

You can practice breathing techniques anywhere or anytime - wherever you are, so is your breath. Plus it's totally natural like nature's sedative.

Bringing attention to your breath mindfully is also a grounding technique. Breathing is also regulated by your automatic system, you do not consciously breathe. However, by becoming conscious of your breathing you can learn to settle and master your automatic response system, providing you with a deeper sense of control.





## Balloon breathing

Countless studies have found that paying attention to the present moment can help you to feel calmer and more in control. Try this mindfulness breathing exercise to bring yourself back to the moment at any time of day.

1. Sit in a chair and uncross your legs, placing your feet flat on the floor. Sit up reasonably straight.
2. As you close your eye (or hold your attention to one thing), take and hold in a big breath. Gently put both hands on your chest or stomach and imagine your lungs as brightly coloured balloons.
3. As you slowly exhale, visualise the balloon deflating. Then imagine it growing big again as you breathe in.
4. Keep filling and emptying your balloon, focusing on the feeling of expansion and contraction until you begin to relax.

(Unger, p.19, 2015)





# Breathing Exercises

## Four In, Four Out Slow Belly Breathing

1. Close your eyes.
2. Breathe through your nose.
3. Deliberately slow your breathing down.
4. Breathe from your relaxed belly.
5. Keep your breaths smooth, steady, and continuous.
6. Breathe in while counting slowly "1-2-3-4."
7. Pause.
8. Breathe out while counting slowly "1-2-3-4."
9. Pause.

## Whole Body Muscle Tensing and Relaxing

1. Take a very deep breath in with your mouth open; fill your lungs up.
2. Hold your breath.
3. Tense muscles all over your body.
4. Count 5-10 seconds.
5. Let go of all the tension in your muscles and slowly let your breath out.

## 4-4-4-4 Breathing

1. Breathe in while counting to 4. Make it a deep, belly breath.
2. Hold your Breath while counting to 4.
3. Breathe out while counting to 4.
4. Hold your Breath while counting to 4.
5. Do this sequence 2 more times.

## 4-6-4-6 Breathing

1. Breath in for a count of 4.
2. Hold for a count of 6.
3. Breathe out for a count of 4.
4. Hold for a count of 6.

## The Sigh

1. Breath in.
2. When you breath out, open your mouth and let the air out so you hear the sound of the air releasing, a soft sigh sound.
3. As you let the air out, relax your shoulders, neck and other muscles and let go, like you're melting.

## Buteyko Small Breath Holds

1. With your mouth closed, take a small, but calm and relaxed, breath in.
2. Take a small breath out.
3. Hold your nose closed with your hand.
4. Hold for a count of 5.
5. Release.
6. Gentle, soft breathing in-between sets.
7. Tongue rests at the roof of the mouth; Teeth slightly apart; jaw relaxed; Drop shoulders; relax chest and belly; Relax facial muscles.

## Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Close the right nostril with your right thumb. Then inhale slowly through your left nostril.
2. Then close the left nostril with your right index finger and open the right nostril by removing the right thumb. Exhale very slowly through the right nostril.
3. Then draw the air through the right nostril as long as you can do it with comfort and exhale through the left nostril by removing the right index finger.
4. This is one round. Do 12 rounds.
5. Breathing in and out should be as slow, soft, steady and long as possible. But don't force.

## 4-7-8 Breathing

1. Exhale all the air out through your mouth.
2. Curl the tip of your tongue up to touch the hard ridge behind your upper front teeth and hold it there for the duration of the exercise.
3. Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Don't force it, but take a good breath as this has to last for the next 15 counts.
4. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
5. Open your mouth and exhale through your mouth (still pressing the tip of your tongue to the hard ridge behind your upper front teeth) for a count 8. of You will make a sound as the air moves around your tongue. You may want to purse your lips if this helps you to direct the flow of your exhalation.
6. Repeat 4 times.

(instructions written by madlyinlovewithlife.com)

## The Complete Breath

1. First, inhale completely at the abdomen.
2. Continue to inhale by filling in the mid-section, the area of the diaphragm.
3. Continue to inhale by filling the chest, allowing the upper chest and the shoulders to rise.
4. Then systematically release and empty from the upper portion, then the mid-section, and finally empty completely at the abdomen.

(www.swamij.com)

## Relearn How To Breathe (Don Campbell)

1. Inhale deeply
2. Exhale with a short burst (as if blowing out a candle). This helps activate your diaphragm.
3. Exhale with a long, slow finish to empty the lungs. Breathlessness is from not expelling enough CO2.
4. Inhale, filling your lungs from the bottom to the top, instead of taking short sips. Most use a third of their lung capacity.
5. Hold for a moment to allow oxygen to saturate the cells.
6. Exhale slowly and completely.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 for five minutes.
8. Do this exercise five times a day



## Making a mindfulness jar

### Ingredients

1 x jar

Glitter

Sequins

Beads/buttons

Food dye

Wallpaper paste

Warm/hot water

Silicone

Glass jar– can be an old jar from pasta sauce etc



### Method

Put a teaspoon or less worth of wallpaper paste in the bottom of the jar.  
Pour hot water into it up to the top but do not over fill.

Stir if you can fit a spoon in jar or use pencil or stick to mix up. Keep mixing until water starts to become slightly clearer.





## Mindfulness Jar

### Method continued

Once the paste had dissolved into the water begin to add glitter, you can use a pinch for each of the difficult, worries, thoughts feelings you have. Think of different feelings/thoughts you might know distract you during the day or night. Add a different coloured glitter or different texture sequin or bead for each thought. You could also add buttons and food colouring if you want your jar to have a particular colour.

### What is a Mindfulness Jar used for?

The idea is that the jar can act as a visual representation for thoughts- as a day goes on, or as our mind becomes fuller the thoughts swirl around and our head can feel busy. Sometimes if we take a moment to allow our thoughts to just pass through and settle, by using breathing techniques and focusing our attention to something outside of our head it can allow the thoughts to settle, much like the glitter in the jar.

Each colour can represent different feelings. Other variations include using a few plastic beads to represent behaviours and watching until the behaviours separate from thoughts and feelings. Some people try to focus on just one colour, or one piece of glitter until it settles, or all of them.







## Mindfulness Jar

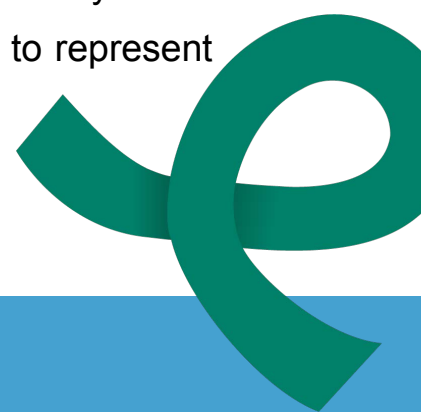


A finished glitter jar can serve as a visual timer for other practices, such as breathing practices. For example, you can shake the jar do some mindful slow breathing as you watch the glitter float and fall to the bottom. Some people use the jar as a “calm-down jar,” to mark and measure calm-down time.

We actually don't want to get rid of the thoughts and feelings and urges. We just want them out of the way so they don't prevent us from seeing clearly. Some people use the jar as a way of taking a moment; having some space and not talking but just being and noticing before starting to talk about their feelings.

We just want to practice allowing a moment to focus our attention and let the thoughts settle rather than swirl around and become more swirly.

You can choose different coloured glitters, beads, or buttons to represent different feelings, thoughts or behaviours.





## Babette Rothschild's

### Plot your course to Mindfulness

#### Exercise 1. The foundation of Mindfulness

Babette Rothschild asked what is the best **gauge (marker/way of noticing)** for yourself, are you best at recognising:

- Body sensations
- Moods
- Feelings
- Thoughts
- Your mind's image

If you are know which is your best gauge (way of noticing) then you can skip this stage.

If you are unsure then experimenting with each is the way to find out. Next, choose one gauge (e.g. Moods, Thoughts) and try one or more of these experiments:

- Imagine drinking something warm. Notice what changes in the gauge.
- Imagine having something cold. Notice what changes in the gauge.
- Look around a room and choose two chairs in your mind that you could sit in. Imagine sitting in one. Now the other. Notice any changes in the gauge. Now actually sit in a chair. Is it different to how you imagined?
- Experiment with different scenarios and notice different gauges.





## Mindful Imagination



You can develop a whole set of meditative practices using your imagination as a tool. Many (especially adults) shy away from their imaginations, some even believe that they do not have a “good imagination” or an imagination at all. It is true that some people can struggle to engage with this abstract inner world, however, it does lie within us all and through applied practice we can all access our imagination and it can offer many benefits to our lives.

### FLOATING ON A CLOUD

\* Lie on your back & close your eyes.

Imagine a big fluffy cloud floating above you. See it come down gently beside you.

\* Imagine what your cloud looks like. What color is it? Does it have a shape? This is your own special cloud... you are completely Safe & Happy when you are on your Cloud.

\* Climb up onto your cloud & it will take you anywhere you want to go.

\* What things do you see as you float on your cloud? Where will it take you? Let your cloud Fly you to a special place where you can rest Quietly & feel Peaceful.





## **Guided visualisation for calming and thinking about your own set of tools which help you**

This guided visualisation is very open to your own imagination, it is not too descriptive, so you can make this unique to you.

Firstly try to find if you are sitting comfortably. If not move yourself until you feel you are in a comfortable position.

Try and feel your feet on the floor press your heels down on the floor just a light amount of pressure and feel the solidity of the floor.

Now imagine:

You find a gate, the gate opens with a lock, only you have the key for this, and as you open the gate it opens into a beautiful series of gardens, these are connected by a small path. You noticed the sound of your feet crunching on the floor and you can hear some songful birds chirruping in the trees.

You feel the warmth of the sun on your body and you feel like you want to continue walking along the path. You start to feel the warmth inside as well as on your skin and your chest feels relaxed you breathe in for 5 and slowly out for 7.





## Guided visualisation continued



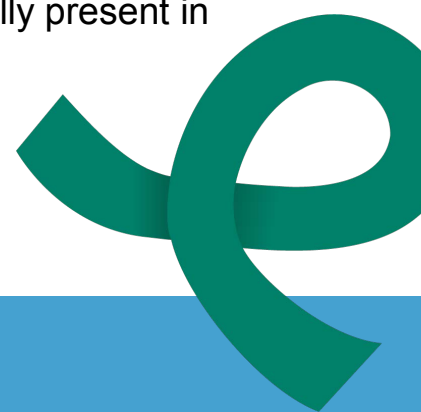
Along your path you find objects, and discoveries that will equip you on your journey.

You stop for a minute to collect different pieces of knowledge, discovery or healing objects. As you walk you discover more things which catch your eye, you gather them and put them into your bag. Your bag is getting fuller and fuller with different discoveries along the way.

You look up, you spot the perfect place a little way in the distance and with all of the energy and healing you have packed into your bag you find a new sense of enthusiasm to reach the spot you have your eye on.

You stop at this place, you sit and place your bag slowly down onto the soft mossy floor. You take off your shoes and socks and you feel the softness and solidity under your feet, you hear the sound of the birds again and you rest.

Now in the room press your feet on the floor again and push your tiptoes to the floor, feel the stretch in the back of your calf muscles. Tap your heels onto the floor and do a quick body scan until you feel fully present in the room. If you need to stand up and have a quick stretch.





## **Guided visualisation (can be used before sleep)**

Get into a comfortable position, close your eyes- only if you want to- otherwise just ensure you feel comfortable and hold attention to one spot.

Take a breath in for 5 and out for 7, complete this 3 times, breathing in and slowly out from the belly; feel it come from your belly a deep breath.

Imagine that you are sitting on the bank of a river, watching the water flowing slowly downstream. You notice how the water gently runs downstream and you notice that occasionally a large leaf drops from a tall tree onto the river and is then gently carried downstream.

You watch as a leaf begins its journey, passes you by and is then carried further downstream until it disappears from view.

Now notice your own thoughts and whenever a thought arises imagine gently placing that thought on a leaf and watching it float away.

As each leaf drops from the tree it carries with it a different thought, each leaf is a different colour size and texture and holds different thoughts and each thought slowly flows down the stream and disappears out of view.

Now take a moment to sit with this feeling allowing each thought to drift onto the leaf and float downstream.

Taken from Activate your life Neil Frude 2015



**Never suffer in silence, please contact us...**

**Phone: 01685 379 310**

**Email: [enquiries@newpathways.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@newpathways.org.uk)**

**Twitter: [@newpathways\\_](https://twitter.com/newpathways)**



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