

# Mindfulness: Tools to Help You During Intense Times and Situations



*Together, we can help you manage life's challenges*

## Staying Focused During Intense Times and Situations

- Practice bringing your **attention to whatever you're doing** this very moment: brushing teeth, task at work, eating food, watching TV.....
- **Notice one of your 5 senses** – things you see, touch (chair, feet on floor, etc.), hear (sounds in/out of room) taste, smell. Every movement. Notice when you wash your hands as if you're doing it for the first time.
- **Notice any loose thoughts that pop up** – let them float by like clouds in the sky. No need to change or get rid of them...let them be. If you like you can say to yourself: "That's an interesting thought!" or "There's a worry." You can do the same with feelings and sensations ("Ah, there's frustration", "nervousness", "sweaty palms," "light-headedness", etc.).
- **Gently refocus back to the task at hand.** Cue yourself back by gently saying "focus," or another word of your choice.
- **Notice when you get lost in thoughts or are in a struggle with thoughts**-complement yourself for noticing being stuck in thoughts and gently refocus back to the task or what's important to you. This practice allows you to let go of struggling easier throughout the day.
- **Don't judge yourself for the loose thoughts that show up....** they just pop up on their own! Our job is to notice thoughts and let them go. Ask yourself..." Did I ask these thoughts to show up, or did they pop up on their own?"
- **"Is it helpful for me to be entertaining this thought *right now*?"** If not, just refocus back to what you were doing.

Remember, our minds are always with us, trying to help us out by worrying, doubting, commenting, predicting, analyzing, evaluating, etc. *Sometimes we don't need our mind's help right this very moment!* Say, when you're busy and need to spend your time being focused, instead of solving or predicting problems that either are over (in the past-"Why did I make that mistake?"), haven't happened (in the future/what-if's -"What if I make another mistake?"), or we are powerless to do anything about. You can always review those concerns at a later point.

*J. Hamilton, ACSW, HFHS ENHANCE EAP*