



MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION

Notes from Levine Cancer Institute Supportive Oncology Presentation

These notes are from a virtual class with Dr. Shamille Hariharan January 25, 2023.

Meditation is not one specific thing, it's an umbrella term for a wide variety of techniques. **Mindfulness** is one technique or approach of meditation. Which one you choose depends on personal preference. It's about finding a mind-body practice to use as a tool, then set time aside every day to practice it for mental health self-care, even if it's five minutes a day.

When feeling overwhelmed, distressed, anxious, or mind racing, we tend to have shallow rapid breathing that encourages the stress response, fight/flight/freeze, that releases hormones and gets our heart rate up. We want to interrupt that and move towards a mind-body-spirit balance that will help healing.

Breath Meditation is very effective, free, and accessible. It is a great habit to develop and do as soon as you feel triggered and out of balance. It is a reminder to PAUSE and focus on your breathing to regain feelings of peace. (There are many techniques, search YouTube for more.)

- Dr. Andrew Weil's 4-7-8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8fjYPC-k2k>
- Box Breathing
 - Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four in your head.
 - Hold your breath for a count of four.
 - Exhale for another count of four.
 - Hold your breath again for a count of four. (Repeat)

When stressed, switch to being mindful, focus on using your five senses. As you take deep breaths, think about what you see, hear, smell, taste, feel the way your clothes are on your skin, or pay attention to how something feels when you touch it. It is very common to feel amazement and gratitude, all very helpful feelings to help return to a sense of balance and well-being. Try practicing mindfulness the next time you are out on a walk or eating.

Other meditation techniques to try, in addition to Seated (still) Meditation: Guided meditation, guided imagery. Movement meditation. Movement done with breath meditation, like therapeutic-style yoga. Mantra meditation. Music guided meditation.

Guided Imagery Stanford's audio mindfulness library available for free!

https://www.healthjourneys.com/partneraccess/index/display/token/yNLC0B9TSA4qEHWMAv9Od6wqL_lwnByxp9srAOAcdkBIRSGqVXNJ4DqgRBpU6I3CiiRKo0GPW7M2WzHeTe6iSiEDAySeA1OgxD8G_I0d9I_IDorqjdsO5DbdOK0iUwycphCv-70bXgJmRMIrK8v9_Q==

Guided meditation to music from LCI departments: www.youtube.com/@lcisupportiveoncology

Some mobile apps: Insight Timer, Calm, Headspace, Exhale