

Mindfulness

Positive Psychology Club



Meeting Schedule

- Icebreaker game
- What is mindfulness?
- Raisin/jelly bean activity
- What are the mental and physical health benefits?
- How do I implement it into own life?
- Discussion
- Meditation



Mind Full, or Mindful?

What is
mindfulness?

—



Mindfulness Defined

Mindfulness : “A mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while non-judgmentally acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.”



But what does it really mean to live in the present?

- We live in a fast-paced world where we are trained to be constantly thinking about the past and future, which means we're never really spending time in the present moment.
- Within one day we have between 6,000 to 50,000 thoughts. Of these 50,000 thoughts, a study found that on average our minds wander for almost 50% of the time, and not only that but they usually wander to negative thoughts.
- This is partly due to our survival instincts of always being on the lookout for danger, but since we don't need to worry about getting eaten alive like cavemen, danger means uncertainty about the future, deadlines, money etc.

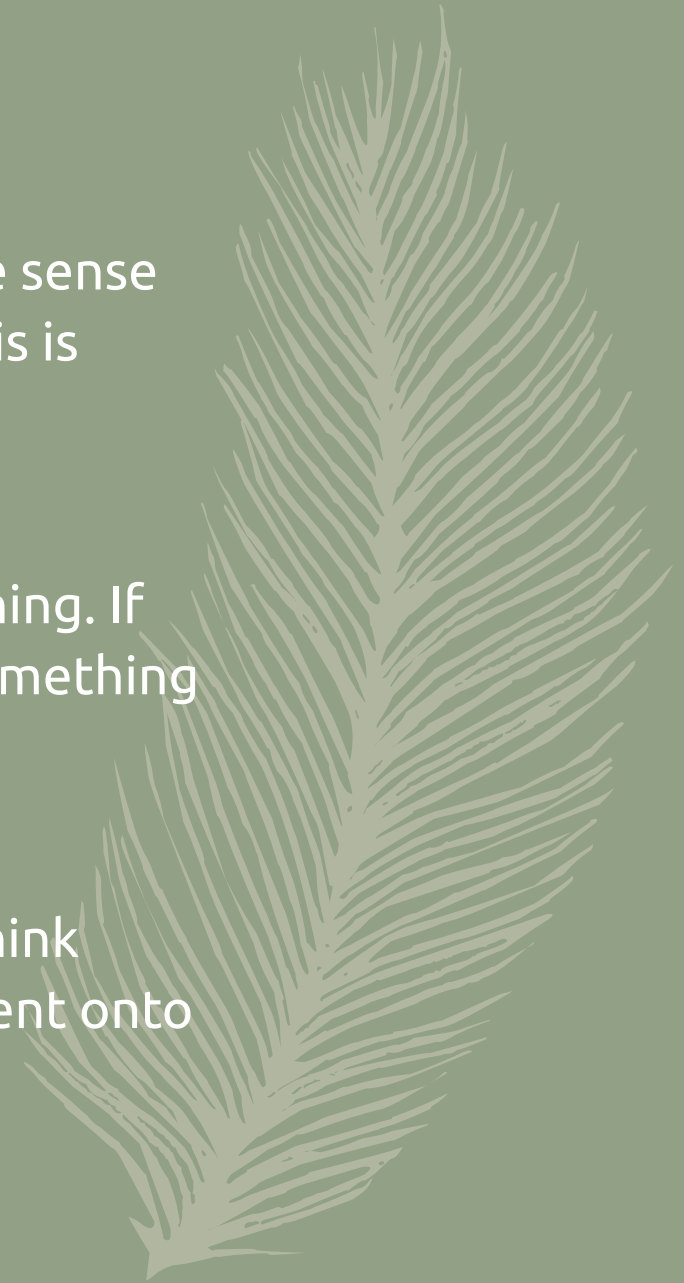


So how does our brain know what to think all the time?

- Well when we break it down, we know that everything EVER is just a bunch of atoms floating around.
- So whenever we see, feel, hear, experience, it's really just a bunch of electrical signals in our brains firing off trying to interpret what's going on based on our view of the world.
- And on top of that, our brains have adapted to process and react in under .3 seconds, which means 95% of our thoughts are automatic and habitual.
- So basically our brains think whatever we train it to think.

Why does any of this even matter?

- If we function majority of the time out of habit, wouldn't it make sense to train your brain to react in ways that are beneficial to you? This is where mindfulness comes into play.
- Our brains form habits through a process of emotional conditioning. If we are constantly reacting a certain way towards someone or something it's going to make that connection in your brain stronger.
- That means that the most effective way to break habits are to think about them without attaching any strong emotions and judgement onto them so the connection will eventually die out.



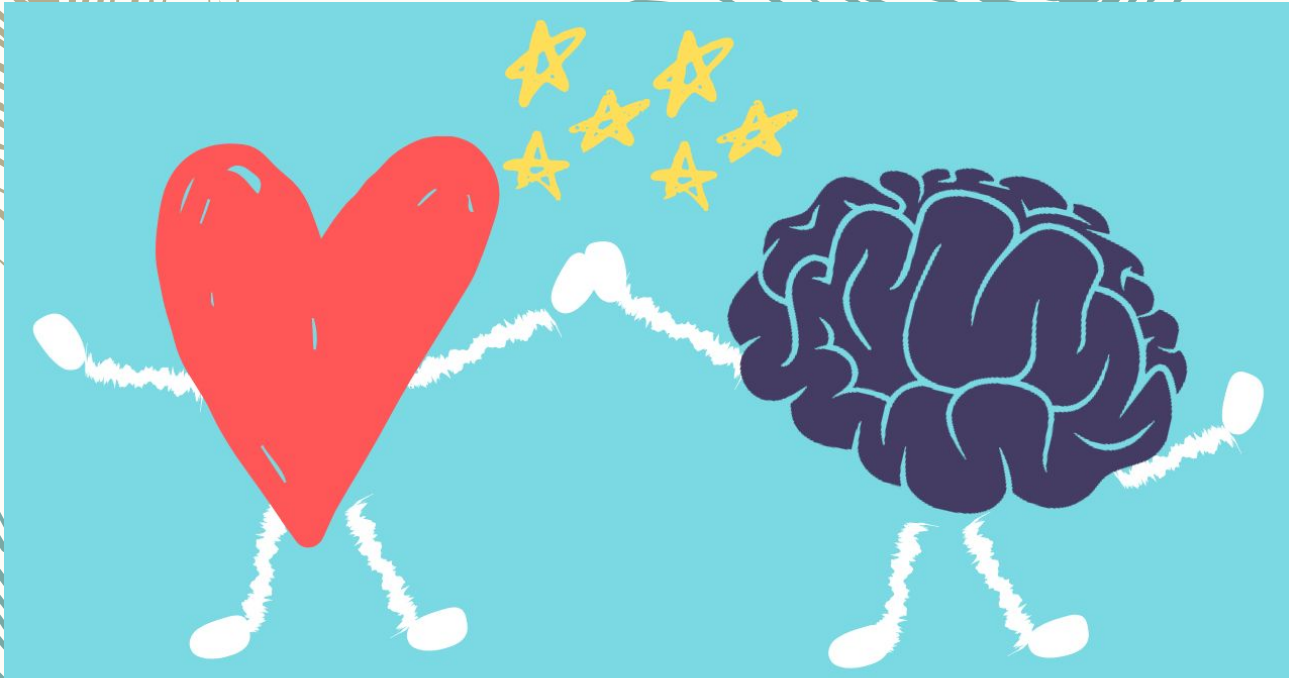
- ❖ To sum it all up, basically we live our lives on autopilot mode in a world where the only constant thing is change.
- ❖ That can feel really unsettling especially these days where we feel the need to always be in control of everything.
- ❖ But the silver lining here is that even though we can't control what happens, we can learn to control how we react to it.
- ❖ Its alot easier to push through obstacles when we can set our emotions aside and see things for what they are
- ❖ If you can count on yourself to react to situations in a calm, thoughtful manner, life tends to feel a lot less overwhelming and a lot more doable.





Raisin/ Jelly Bean Activity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YkjoXuCfWY>



What are the
mental and
physical health
benefits of
mindfulness?

Benefits / Neuroscience findings

- Less gray matter loss.
- More gyrification.
- Increased thickness in the prefrontal cortex and right anterior insula.
- Larger volumes of gray matter in the hippocampus.
- Help with addiction, depression and anxiety.





Other benefits of mindfulness


- Increased immune function
- Lowered blood pressure
- Lowered heart rate
- Stress reduction
- Increase in positive affect (positive outlook)
- Reduced rumination (repetitive negative thoughts)
- Significantly decreased anxiety, depression, and negative affect
- Improved memory and focus
- Higher cognitive flexibility
- Greater relationship satisfaction
- Enhanced self-insight and self-acceptance



How/Why does it help?

By reconnecting the body

- **Mindfulness of the Body**
- **Signs of dissociation from the body (mind-body split):**
 - Obsessive thinking
 - Judgmental thinking or behaving
 - Distracting/numbing
 - Speeding/Rushing



Consequences disconnection from the Body

- **Fatigue.**
- **Chronic anxiety.**
- **Feeling cut off.**
- **Confined in a small identity, a limited sense of self.**
- **Symptoms:** loss of vitality, chronic pain, and stress related conditions.



How do I
implement
mindfulness
into my own
life?



Reconnecting to The Body

1) **Notice** when time-traveling, predicting, mind reading. Come back

2) **Pause:** Become aware of what is happening in our body instead of getting lost in our reactive thoughts, emotions, and actions

- You can then instead relate differently to your experience, and act rather than re-act
- It can be helpful to list the negative ways your body reacts (ex: nail biting) to break bad habits

Reconnecting to The Body

3) **Body Scan** helps to reestablish contact with the body, to reconnect the conscious mind to the feeling states of the body, to feel more relaxed and more at home in our bodies

This can be done through:

- Yoga
- Communicating with your body
- Taking a breather



Adopting Helpful Attitudes

Some common positive traits to embody:

- Non-judging
- Patience
- Trust
- Acceptance
- Letting go





Adopting Helpful Attitudes

Some (hopefully) new traits to embody:

1) **Non-striving**: An attitude of being rather than doing

2) **Beginner's mindset**: Approaching the world with no preconceptions, but instead with openness and eagerness

-Idea of “I have to” versus “I get to”



Discussion Questions

Part 1 (5 mins)

1) How often do you take time to sit with your thoughts with no distractions?

2) Discuss some specific activities you can implement mindful thinking in for this next week.

ex: whenever you're walking to class, every night during dinner, while brushing your teeth...




Discussion Questions

Part 2 (5 mins)

1) What are some things that meditation can help YOU improve/reduce?

2) Can you think of a situation where you are disconnected from your body (figuratively speaking)?

- Obsessive thinking
- Judgmental thinking or behaving
- Distracting/numbing
- Speeding/Rushing



Discussion

Part 3 (5 mins)

Rose-Thorn-Bud Activity

Everyone goes around and says one:

- Rose (something good that happened today)
- Thorn (something ~meh~ that happened today)
- Bud (something they are looking forward to in the next week)

The purpose of this activity is to reflect on today through achievement and negative emotions. At the same time, this activity gives us hope and curiosity for what's to come.



Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSLuEXsMUOo>



Any Questions?

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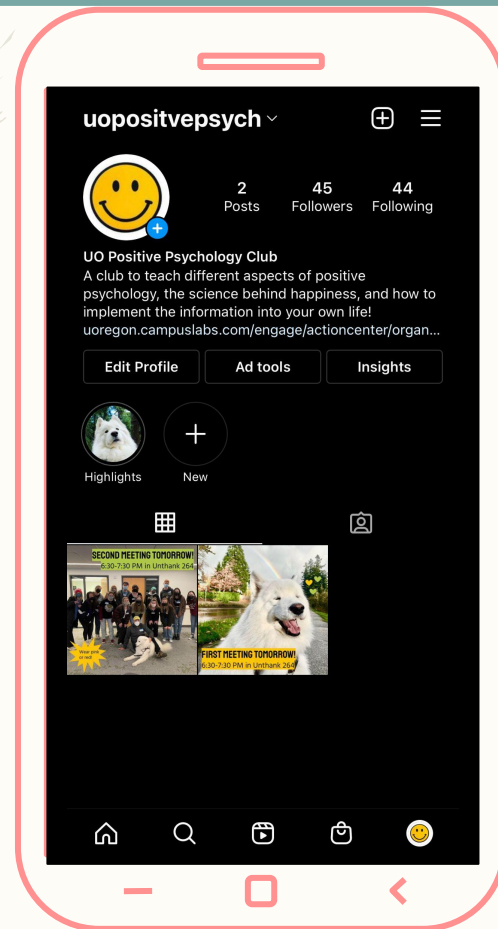
Engage Website:

<https://tinyurl.com/46aeu95h>

(Join to get our emails)

Instagram: @uopositivepsych

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?



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Thank you for coming!

Our final meeting of the term will be on 3/3/22
at the same time (6:30-7:30pm) and place.