**Mindfulness** means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment in an accepting way. It is a mental state achieved by focusing on the present and living in the now.

**WEEK FIVE:**

**Positive Body Image Mindfulness**

Mindfulness practice shifts our attention away from our external appearance to how our bodies feel from the inside.

**HEALTHY BODY = HEALTHY MIND & HEALTHY IMAGE**

Any questions? Email us:
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Mindfulness can be helpful in improving our body image. It can remind us to savor the here and now. It will help us stop chasing thinness. To tune out the noise of unhelpful media and rather tune into ourselves. To savor our food and tiny moments. To observe our bodies, thoughts and feelings without judgment. To be aware of the present moment, you must be fully present in your body.

**WHAT IS POSITIVE BODY IMAGE?**

Body image is the way you see yourself and how you view yourself in your mind. Having a positive body image means that you see yourself accurately, you feel comfortable in your body and you feel good about the way you look. We all have a body image. We all have feelings about the way we look. Having a positive body image means that you see yourself as you really are. People with a positive body image understand that how they look does not determine their self-worth. The key to developing positive body image is to recognize and respect our natural shape and learn to overpower those negative thoughts and feelings with positive, affirming, and accepting ones.
BE MINDFUL!
Practicing mindfulness helps us recognize how we have been conditioned to think, feel, and act in response to various stimuli (i.e., media images, food environments, etc.), and this recognition opens the possibility for making more conscious choices with regards to our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

GUIDED IMAGERY ☀

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE:
BODY IMAGE

The purpose of this mindfulness exercise is to provide you with a scene that completely absorbs your attention and distracts you away from your negative thoughts. As you become absorbed in the scene, you will deepen your state of relaxation and will notice physical changes. For body image concerns, this technique can be used to help you think about and attend to your body in a different way. You will work towards accepting your body and yourself as a whole.

This process begins by becoming mindful of your own inner experiences in the here and now.

Negative body image is produced and maintained in your mind. What do you notice about how you think about your body? What affect does this have on you emotionally? How do your negative self-statements affect your self-esteem? This exercise will help you release those negative thoughts and begin to feel appreciative of your body and accepting of yourself.
Begin by finding a comfortable position either sitting or lying down in a location where you will not be interrupted.

Closing your eyes, allow your attention to focus only on your body. If you begin to notice your mind wandering, bring it back to your body.

Take a deep breath through your abdomen, hold it for a few seconds, and exhale slowly.

Again... in... and out. As you breathe, notice your stomach rising and your lungs filling with air.

As you exhale, imagine the tension in your body being released and flowing away. Inhale... and exhale. Feel your body already relaxing.

Now, as you continue breathing, tune into your body. Notice how your body feels. How does it feel where it touches your clothing? Feel the pressure of your body resting on the surface on which you are lying or sitting.

Mindfully scan your body from top to bottom.

Breathe in...and out. How does it feel? What do you see? Which areas of your body stand out more or less? Now, think about your body image. What is body image to you?

Take some time to consider your own thoughts and ideas about your body. What are you thinking? What do you see? Breathe in... and out.

As you think about your body, notice how you are feeling. Are you feeling comfortable, satisfied, dissatisfied, disgusted, frustrated? Whatever you are feeling, it's ok, let yourself feel.

Now tune in to the part of your body you dislike most. Spend some time thinking about that area of your body. What are you thinking? Now how do you feel? How do these thoughts make you feel? Notice how damaging these thoughts can be to your emotions. Now imagine yourself accepting your body as it is. Imagine feelings satisfied with your physical self. What might it be like to feel comfortable with your body?

You begin to see yourself as a whole, rather than a collection of parts. You appreciate your own beauty.

Breathe in...and out. You appreciate all the wonderful things your body does for you. How it rejuvenates you when you need energy, how it relaxes you when you need rest.

You feel ok about who you are.

Now repeat after me.

I accept my imperfections. They don't define me or take away from who I am as a person.

I accept this body I am in. There is no need to be perfect.

I am free of judgment. I will no longer say negative things to myself.

I accept myself.

I am ok.

Breathe in... and out. Take a moment now to relax.

You notice yourself feeling more calm, more satisfied. You feel yourself beginning towards a path of self-acceptance. You know that soon you will begin to appreciate yourself. Breathe in... and out.

When you are ready... slowly begin to turn your attention back to your environment.

You continue to feel satisfied and relaxed. Slowly open your eyes and stretch your body, notice how rejuvenated you feel. Once you have returned to your usual level of alertness, resume your day, continuing to feel relaxed and satisfied.
Place a raisin in your hand. Imagine that you have just come to Earth from a distant planet without such food. Now, with this food in your hand, you can begin to explore it with all of your senses. Focus on one of the objects as if you’ve never seen anything like it before. Focus on seeing this object. Scan it, exploring every part of it, as if you’ve never seen such a thing before. Turn it around with your fingers and notice what color it is. Notice the folds and where the surface reflects light or becomes darker. Next, explore the texture, feeling any softness, hardness, coarseness, or smoothness. While you’re doing this, if thoughts arise such as “Why am I doing this weird exercise?” “How will this ever help me?” or “I hate these objects,” then just see if you can acknowledge these thoughts, let them be, and then bring your awareness back to the object. Take the object beneath your nose and carefully notice the smell of it. Bring the object to one ear, squeeze it, roll it around, and hear if there is any sound coming from it. Begin to slowly take the object to your mouth, noticing how the arm knows exactly where to go and perhaps becoming aware of your mouth watering. Gently place the object in your mouth, on your tongue, without biting it. Simply explore the sensations of this object in your mouth. When you’re ready, intentionally bite down on the object, maybe noticing how it automatically goes to one side of the mouth versus the other. Also notice the tastes it releases. Slowly chew this object. Be aware of the saliva in your mouth and how the object changes in consistency as you chew. When you feel ready to swallow, consciously notice the intention to swallow, then see if you can notice the sensations of swallowing the raisin, sensing it moving down to your throat and into your esophagus on its way to your stomach. Take a moment to congratulate yourself for taking this time to experience mindful eating.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE THINGS MY BODY ALLOWS ME TO DO!