A beginner’s guide to
Mindfulness Meditation
for
Cancer Survivors
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✧ Mindfulness Meditation Teacher
✧ Cancer Survivor
✧ Cancer Caregiver
Why Meditate?

- Having cancer is STRESSFUL!
- Empower yourself - take an active role in improving your health and well-being
- Address your stress!
- Meditate your way to calm and better health
Stress

“People used to say- this stress is killing me- now we know it does”
Saki Santorelli, executive director UMass Medical School Center for Mindfulness

Some stress is normal …

… but sustained chronic stress
Chronic stress

is damaging to your mental and physical health —
it suppresses the immune system and increases risk of:

- Heart disease - stroke –heart attack
- Cancer
- Digestive problems-IBS
- Memory loss
- Emotional reactivity- depression, anxiety
- Self- medicating with alcohol, drugs, over-eating
How do you handle Stress?

- Tension in muscles of neck, shoulders, jaw
- Feel depressed or angry or anxious
- Tend to overreact - short fuse
- Forgetful - can’t think or clearly or make decisions
- Feel guilty or inadequate
- Eat or drink too much
- Check out - withdraw

*these are common and unhelpful ways of handling stress*
Meditation I
Focusing Attention
Mindfulness Meditation
~ a healthy way to relieve stress

1. **Body** — check in with your body.
2. **Breathe** — deeply and fully, releasing tension.
3. **Now** — relax into the present moment.
What is Mindfulness?

It’s deepening awareness and...

- Being Present
- Paying attention
- With curiosity
- Without judgment
- Being- not doing
- Letting go
- Being more compassionate
Mindfulness Meditation is…

a way of deepening awareness through paying attention

with curiosity and kindness to whatever arises

in the present moment

it is waking up to living in the preciousness of each moment – the only moment we are truly alive!

Erica Rayner-Horn
Decades of research studying meditator’s brains has shown that meditation changes the physical structure of parts of the brain due to...

Neuroplasticity

“Paying attention – intentionally – sculpts your brain!” ~ Neuroscientist Dan Siegel
Meditation Benefits

Research shows that meditating for only 20 to 30 minutes a day

- lowers blood pressure
- boosts immune system!
- cope better with stress
- improves sleep
- reduces anxiety and depression
- improves memory!
Your Meditation Prescription

• Every day 10-30 mins.
• Once or twice a day
• Sit on floor-chair-recliner-be comfortable
• Follow guided meditation recording
• Make it a routine – like brushing teeth
• Start and end your day
• Meditate with others- go to a weekly group meditation- or retreat

Commit to meditate daily for at least 21 days!
Mindfulness Pause
Take as needed!

Anytime-anywhere- when tense, distracted, upset
~ Dr’s waiting rooms, traffic jams, office etc.

• Take 3 deep releasing breaths…
• Check in with your body – relax - let go of tension
• Check in with your feelings- sad? angry? afraid? anxious?
• Check in with your thinking - what’s on your mind?
• Breathe deeply –release- let go –
• Staying present right here- right now

with kindness, acceptance and ease
Mindfulness & Pain Management

Recent research shows that mindfulness meditation helps you change your relationship to pain ~ experiencing less...

- Anticipatory pain
- Intensity of pain
- Duration of pain
Resist, and the tide will sweep you off your feet. Allow, and grace will carry you to higher ground.

Suffering = Pain x Resistance

from Allow by Dana Faulds
Meditation II
Expanding Attention
Expanding Attention

• Awareness of Body & Breath

• Awareness of Feelings - letting them come and go. *I am not my feelings*

• Awareness of Thinking - letting thoughts come and go. *Thoughts are not facts*

• Awareness of Heart - *Can I be present in this moment with kindness & acceptance*
Breathing in I calm my body.
Breathing out I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment,
I know this is a wonderful moment.”

Thich Nhat Hahn
Mindfulness Meditation…

- Is not based on beliefs- anyone- any age- can learn to meditate
- Greatly improves emotional and physical health and well-being
- Daily meditation session- once or twice a day
- Mindfulness Pause- at any time

Remember

Breathe ~ Let Go ~ Release Tension

You are always one breath away from ease-calm-acceptance
Resources

CD available for Purchase

Mindfulness Retreats

Mindfulness Meditation & Stress Reduction

2014 Awake & Alive: Mindful Living with Cancer

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