

REHABILITATION SERVICES
PATIENT EDUCATION MANUAL

MINDFULNESS SKILLS



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO
Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital & Clinics

THE GOALS OF MINDFULNESS SKILLS

Mindfulness Skills help you to balance your emotions, thoughts and behaviors. Mindfulness is the “foundation skill” that underlies all others. The focus of mindfulness involves a conscious direction of your awareness in the moment, a *purposeful* focusing of your attention on thoughts or physical sensations that are helpful in the moment. In many of our group therapies, we introduce and practice mindfulness skills, because that is what this takes, *lots of practice...*

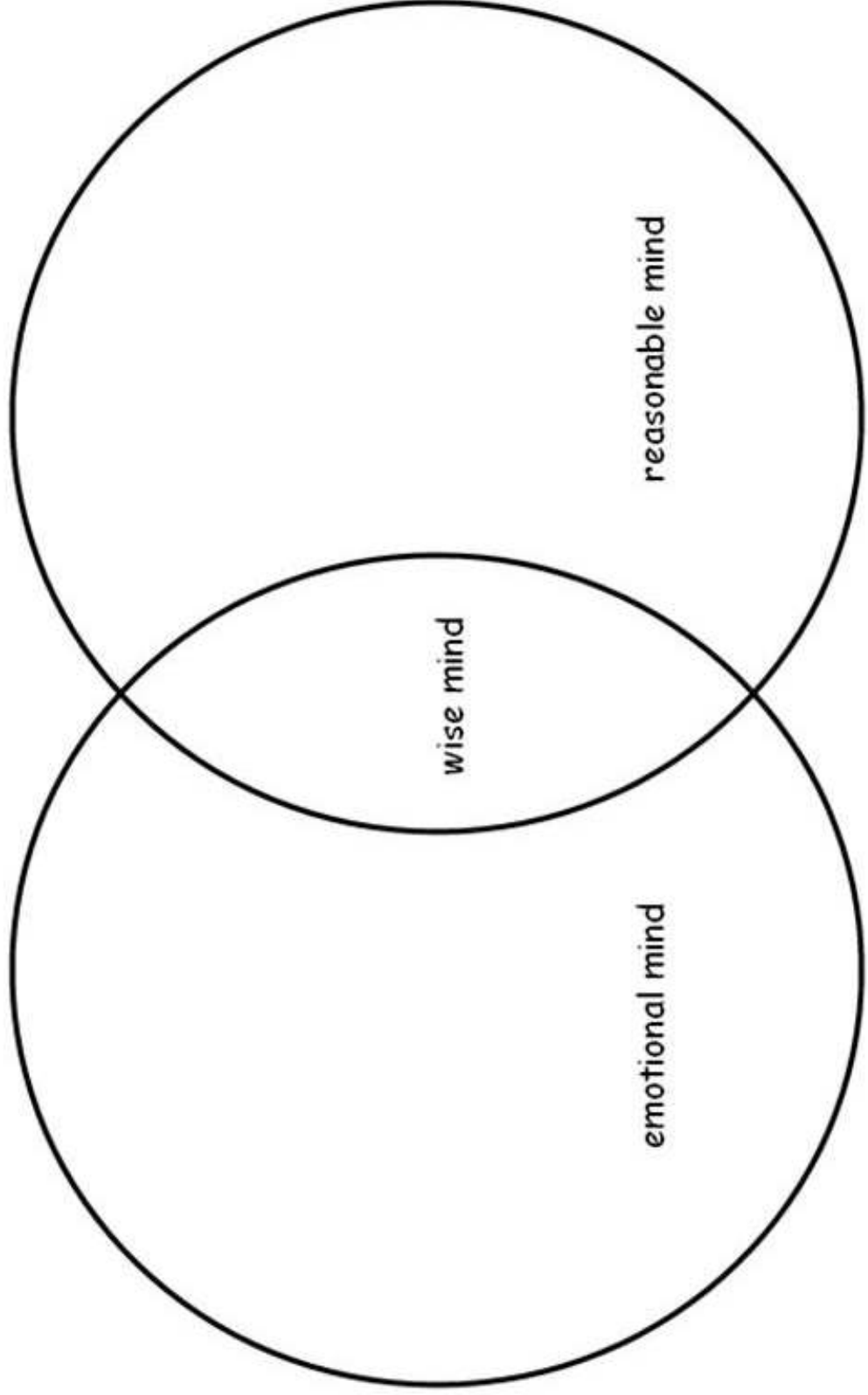


KEY STRATEGIES INCLUDE

1. Learning to focus your attention
2. Learning to concentrate on a task
3. Learning how to stop negative thoughts

THERE ARE THREE PRIMARY STATES OF MIND

They will be described on the next few pages

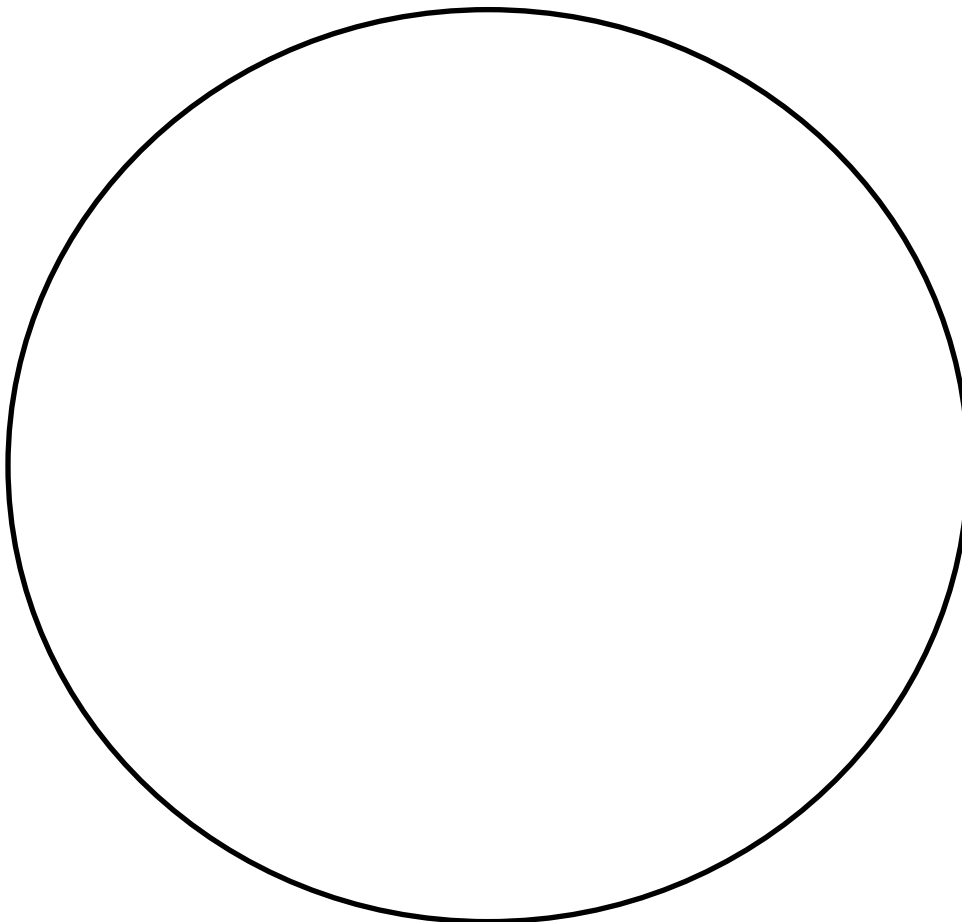


REASONABLE MIND



Your *Reasonable Mind* is the part of you that plans and evaluates things logically and intellectually. You can think of it as your "cool" part (if you remember "SPOCK" from the Star Trek TV series, he's kind of like that). Without Reasonable Mind, people could not build homes, roads or cities. They could not run meetings, balance checkbooks or follow instructions. When we're feeling unwell or distressed, it's harder for our Reasonable Mind to function.

How do *you* experience your Reasonable Mind? What are you doing when you're in that state of mind? Draw or write something in the circle below that expresses your *experience* of Reasonable Mind.



EMOTIONAL MIND

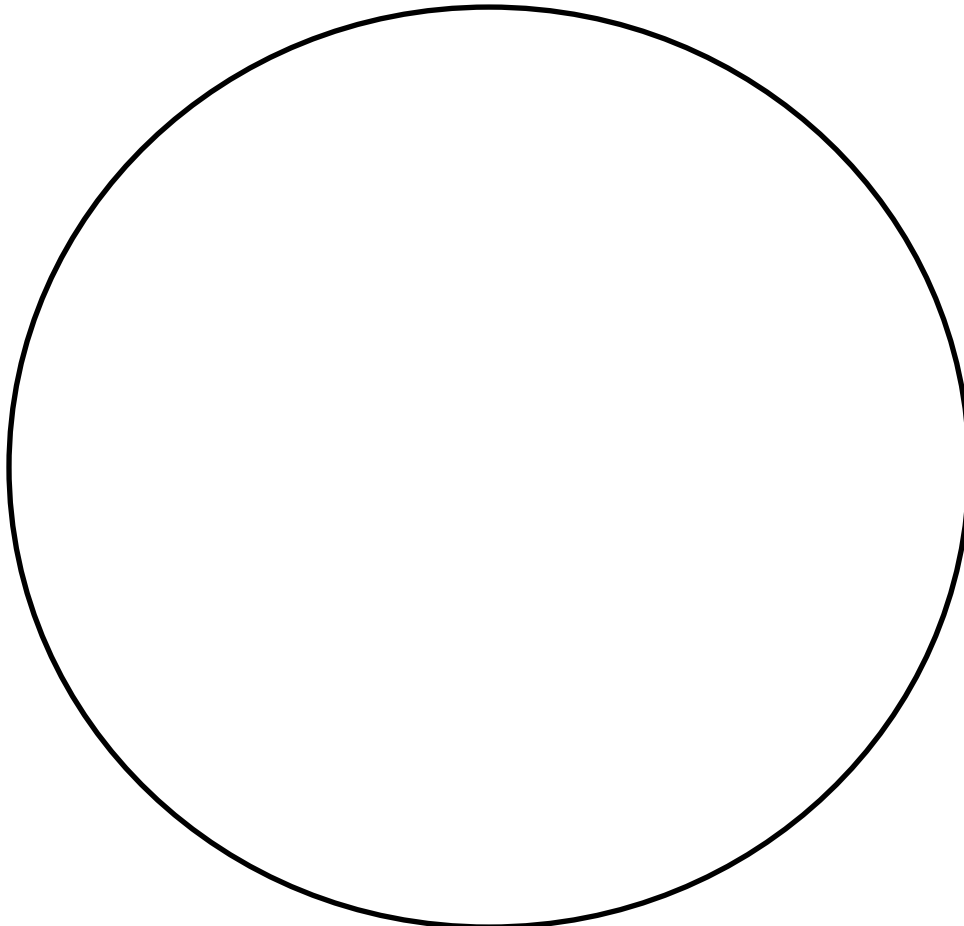
You are in your *Emotional Mind* when your emotions are in control, when they drive your thinking and your behavior.



Don't think of your Emotional Mind as a bad thing. Intense love often motivates us; strong desires can keep us focused on a hard task. People high in Emotional Mind are often passionate about people, causes and beliefs.

Emotional Mind is your "hot" part. When you're in your Emotional Mind, it's very hard to think logically. Facts get distorted by whatever intense emotion you're feeling. It's as though you see everything through emotion-colored shades.

How do *you* experience your Emotional Mind? In the circle below draw or write something that expresses your *experience* of Emotional Mind.



WISE MIND

Using "Wise Mind" is learning how to make decisions based on your inner wisdom. "Wise Mind" helps you to step out of the immediate worries of life. It honors both your true emotions and also what is *reasonable* or *logical*, creating a balance.



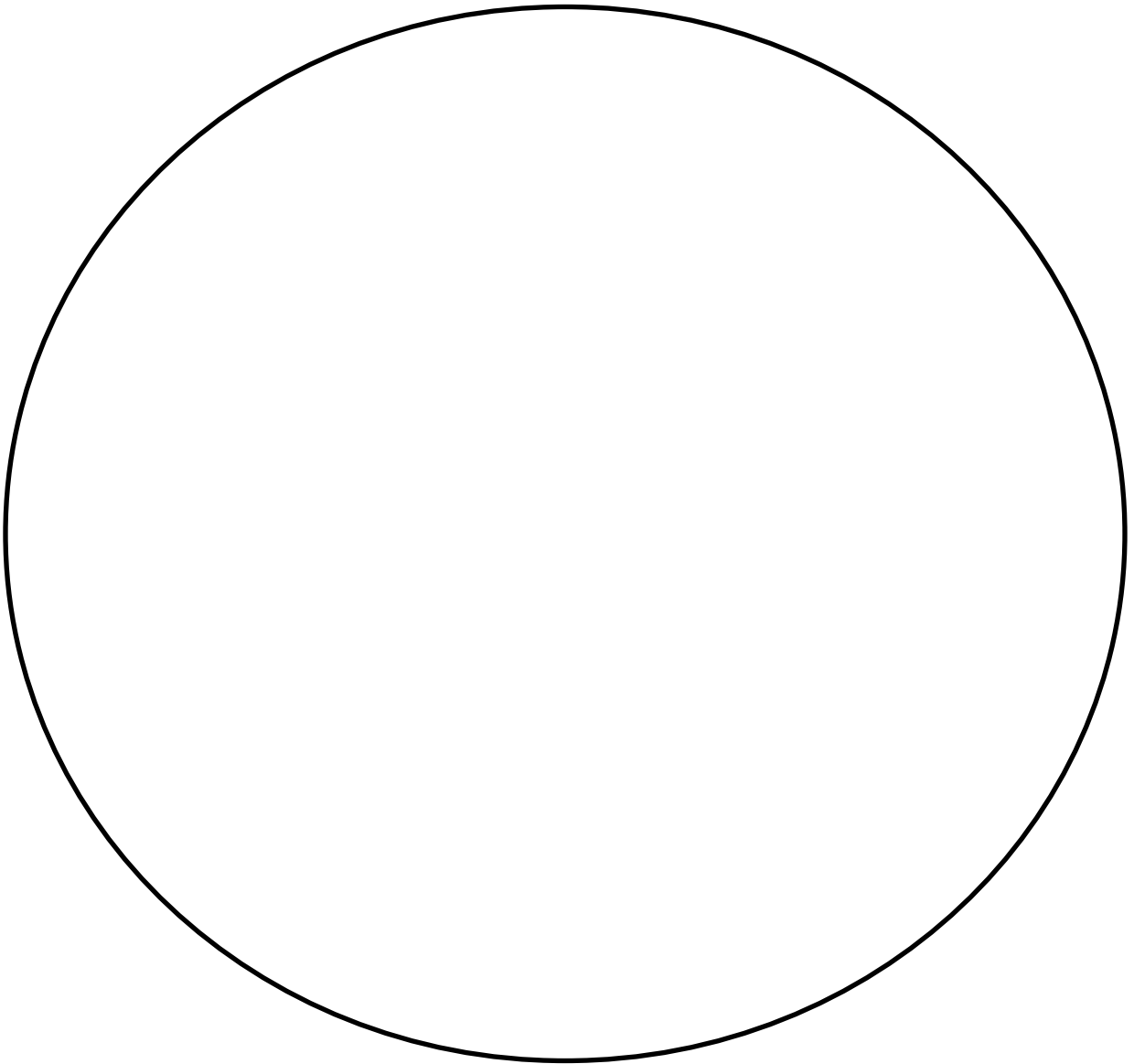
Wisdom or Wise Mind depends on ways of knowing something; knowing by observing or by analyzing logically, knowing by recognizing your body experiences or emotions, knowing by what you do and by your *intuition*.

Everyone has a Wise Mind, but some people have not experienced it. Wise Mind is like having a heart. Everyone has a heart, whether they experience it or not. Here are some ways people *experience* Wise Mind:



HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE YOUR WISE MIND?

Draw or write something in the circle below that expresses
your experience of Wise Mind.



FINDING WISE MIND



Finding Wise Mind is like riding a bike, rollerblading or swimming. You can only learn it by *experience* and *practice*.

Finding Wise Mind in Two Steps

1. Follow your breath in and out as you breathe naturally and deeply.
2. After some time, focus your attention on that moment of quiet that exists between the breaths, between exhalation and inhalation. That centered place in your abdomen is where some are able to discover the calm experience of wise mind.

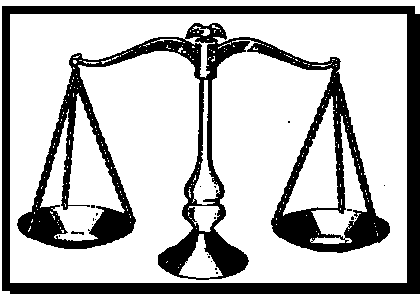
What happened for you? What did you notice?

No one is in Wise Mind all the time. Like a garden, the Wise Mind needs to be cultivated. The more you *practice*, the easier it is to find that wise place in yourself, and the longer you will be able to hold it.

As you go through your day today, give yourself "*Wise-Mind-Breaks*" and notice what happens.

MINDFULNESS SKILLS

Mindfulness Skills are the *first* to be taught and are the core of all the DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) skills taught in many of our therapy programs. These skills are drawn from both Western and



Eastern meditation practices. Mindfulness Skills are the vehicle for balancing "Emotional Mind" and "Reasonable Mind" to achieve "Wise Mind". Mindfulness means learning to focus your attention so you can feel more balanced.

TAKING HOLD OF YOUR MIND (*"WHAT" DO YOU DO*)

1. **OBSERVING:** Notice events, emotions and behaviors without trying to stop them when they're painful, and without trying to keep them going when they're pleasant. Learning to observe is learning to *detach* or step back from an event or emotion. Observing is like sensing, there are no words. It's like seeing things the way a camera would see, without judgment...just what *is*.
2. **DESCRIBING:** Use words or thoughts to identify or label a feeling or experience. Describing is using words to *identify* what the "camera saw", without judgment...just the facts.
3. **PARTICIPATING:** Involve yourself *completely* and totally in the one activity you are doing at the time. When you are eating, "*eat*". When you are walking, "*walk*".

*Which of these "WHAT" skills is your strength? Which is your weakness?
The most difficult one is the one to practice most.*

Turn to the next page for the
TAKING HOLD OF YOUR MIND - "*HOW*"-SKILLS

TAKING HOLD OF YOUR MIND ("HOW" DO YOU DO IT)

1. **NON-JUDGMENTALLY:** Learn not to judge. This means *seeing* but not *evaluating*. Focus on the "what", not the "good" or "bad", the "terrible" or "wonderful", the "should" or "should not".
2. **ONE-MINDFULLY:** Do one thing at a time. If thoughts or strong feelings distract you, let go of the thoughts, let go of the feelings...go back to what you were doing - again and again and again. Concentrate your mind. If you find yourself doing two things at once, stop and go back to doing one thing at a time.
3. **EFFECTIVELY:** Focus on what *works*. Do what needs to be done in each situation. Play by the rules - don't "cut off your nose to spite your face". *Act* as skillfully as you can in the situation you're in. Let go of vengeance, useless anger and righteousness that hurts you and doesn't work.



REMEMBER

Mindfulness Skills take time and can only be mastered with practice, practice, practice. Be patient with yourself. Do your best. But know that your best when you're feeling great is different than your best when you are depressed. Do your best today.

PRACTICING: OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, PARTICIPATE

Try some of the following exercises and then write down a few words to describe your experience.

Attend to and try to sense your feet, your stomach and your shoulders. What do you notice?



Stroke your finger just above your lip, then stop stroking and notice how long it takes before you can't sense your upper lip any longer. What did you notice?



Listen to the sounds in the room. What did you notice?



Imagine your mind is the sky. Thoughts, sensations and feelings are clouds. Gently notice each cloud as it drifts by (or scurries by). What happened in your mind?



MEDITATION

Most people cover miles in the course of their daily routine. This makes walking a great opportunity to practice mindfulness. You can focus on the act of walking in the same way you would focus on your breath in a sitting meditation.

One way of practicing walking meditation is to count your steps in time with your breathing. For instance, if you take three steps during each inhalation and exhalation, mentally say to yourself:

"In...two...three - Out...two...three - In...two...three - Out...two...three"
and so on.

Your "IN" breaths may be longer or shorter than your "OUT" breaths. Or your step count may change from breath to breath. That's OK. Just pay attention and re-adjust your walking to the ins and outs of your breathing as needed.

When thoughts or images interrupt your focus, which is *natural and inevitable*, simply take note of this and return to your walking and breathing.

*Walk around counting
your steps.*

What did you observe?

Did anything change in you?



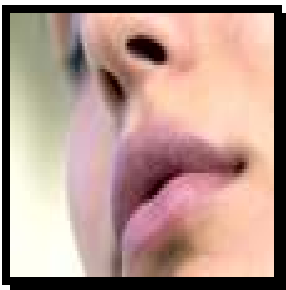
"If you're going through hell, keep going" --- Winston Churchill

BREATHING MEDITATION



The first stage of meditation is to stop distractions and to help your mind become clearer and more lucid. This can be accomplished by practicing a simple breathing meditation. Choose a quiet place to meditate and sit in a comfortable position. You can sit in any position; however it may help to keep your back straight to prevent your mind from becoming sluggish or sleepy.

Sit with your eyes partially closed and turn your attention to your breathing. Breathe naturally, preferably through the nostrils, without attempting to control your breath, and try to become aware of the *sensation* of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This sensation *is* your object of meditation. Direct your awareness onto the sensation of breathing, to the exclusion of everything else.



At first, your mind will be very busy, and you might even feel that the meditation is making your mind busier; but in reality you are just becoming more aware of how busy the mind actually is. There will be a great temptation to follow the different thoughts as they arise, so when you notice this, simply direct your attention back onto the *sensation* of the breath. If you discover that your mind has wandered and is following other thoughts, return it to the breath. Repeat this as many times as necessary until the mind settles on the breath.

SEEING MEDITATION



Find an object within your line of vision that you might want to fix your eyes on...a painting, a wall or a plant. Take several belly breaths and *glue* your eyes to the object. Let it capture your interest, as though it were the only object around you. Try not to judge what you are seeing. Look at it as an artist might: lines...shapes...colors. See if you can have the experience of "just seeing". When thoughts arise, notice them and return your focus to the object.

What did you notice?

Try to describe the object in words or draw a picture of it in the space below.

SIMPLE MEDITATION

Any simple activity can become a meditation when you try to continuously focus your attention on it. A good mindfulness exercise to do is to choose an activity you do every day, preferably a short one...like brushing your teeth, washing your face or drinking a glass of water. Practice concentrating on every action and every sensation involved in the activity. As thoughts occur, notice them and then go back to the task with renewed concentration. Sometimes it helps if you switch to your *non-dominant* hand when you do the activity. The awkwardness is a reminder that you want to concentrate on what you're doing.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

May I be safe, happy,
and free from suffering.

May I be at peace.

May my loved ones and
friends be safe,
happy, and free from
suffering.

May my friends and loved
ones be at peace.

May all beings be safe,
happy and free from
suffering.

May all beings be at
peace.

Another way to think of Mindfulness



Mindfulness is like holding a flashlight in a darkened room and shining it where you choose. Mindfulness is the learned ability to focus the mind and your immediate awareness on what you decide is helpful in the moment. Mindfulness is the ability to “direct the flashlight”...



***Mindfulness of body sensations
Mindfulness of thoughts
Mindfulness of emotions***

RESOURCE LIST FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS

This manual is part of a series discussing Mindfulness Skills, Distress Tolerance Skills, Emotion Regulation Skills and Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills. If you would like additional reading materials or resources related to the skills discussed in these manuals, we would like to direct you to the following:

Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life: How Dialectical Behavior Therapy Can Put You in Control by Scott E. Spradlin, MA, New Harbinger Publications, 2003.

The Feeling Good Handbook by David D. Burns, M.D., Penguin Books, 1999.

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., Dell Publishing, 1990.

Guided Meditations, Explorations and Healings by Stephen Levine, Doubleday, 1991.

The Language of Letting Go by Melody Beattie, Hazelden Foundation Meditation Series, 1990.

Practicing the Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle, publisher New World Library, (www.newworldlibrary.com), 1999.

The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook by Martha Davis, Ph.D., New Harbinger Publications, 2000.

The Spirituality of Imperfection by Ernest Kurtz, Ph.D., Bantam Books, 1994.

Turning Suffering Inside Out: A Zen Approach to Living with Physical and Emotional Pain by Darlene Cohen, Shambhala Publications, 2000.

Women, Anger & Depression: Strategies for Self Empowerment by Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D., Health Communications, Inc., 1992.

Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha by Tara Brach, Ph.D., Bantam Dell, 2003 (www.tarabrach.com)

TAPES AND CDs

Guided Mindfulness Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Stress Reduction CDs and Tapes, P.O. Box 547, Lexington, MA 02420 or www.mindfulnessstapes.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many of the materials discussed in these manuals are based on the works of Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D. as presented in her books **Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder** and **Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder**. Both are available through the Guilford Press, 1993.