

# Evidence based tools to increase feelings of wellbeing at work or wherever you are

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*“Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.”*

-Aristotle



*“Happiness = the experience of joy, contentment, or positive wellbeing, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful and worthwhile.”*

– The Greater Good Science Center, University of California - Berkeley



# Happiness & Wellbeing: Current fields of study

- The power of social connections
- Compassion for others
- Self-compassion
- Cooperation and giving
- Gratitude
- Optimism
- Resiliency
- Mindfulness vs mind wandering
- Awe
- Exercise



# The brain's negativity bias

Positive emotions are like Teflon

Negative emotions are like Velcro.



# Habituation

A psychological learning process wherein there is a decrease in response to a stimulus after being repeatedly exposed to it. This concept states that an animal or a human may learn to ignore a stimulus because of repeated exposure to it.

[Video Clip](#)



# Counteracting the negativity bias

Taking In The Good – Rick Hanson, PhD

- 1) Have/recollect an experience of good – within or outside of you - or create one**
- 2) Enrich it by sustaining it for at least 10-15 seconds**
- 3) Absorb it (invite it to sink in – helps to have a primed nervous system)**
- 4) Link it if desired (in the foreground of the mind) to negative material (in the background of the mind) to help the latter soothe, reduce or potentially dissipate**



# One Good Thing (a variation of the Three Good Things exercise)

1. Give the event a title. (e.g. “coworker complimented my work on a project”)
2. Write down exactly what happened in as much detail as possible, including what you did or said and, if others were involved, what they did or said.
3. Include how this event made you feel at the time and how this event made you feel later (including now, as you remember it).
4. Explain what you think caused this event – why it came to pass.
5. Use whatever writing style you please, and do not worry about perfect grammar or spelling. Use as much detail as you’d like.
6. If you find yourself focusing on negative feelings, refocus your mind on the good event and the positive feelings that came with it.



# Mind-wandering vs. Mindfulness

*When we're singularly focused on what we're doing, we're happier.*



**Movement Break!!**



# Movement and your mood



# Why does moving make you feel good?

Movement triggers the release “happy brain chemicals”

- **Endorphins**
- **Monoamines**
- **Serotonin**
- **Dopamine**



# What are endorphins & monoamines?

**Endorphins**-neurotransmitters, released into the body after moving

- Combat feelings of pain and stress
- Improve the immune system
- Modulate the appetite
- Create a feeling of euphoria

**Monoamines**- may play a role in helping the brain from recover from mental disorders

- Protect the brain against stress
- Relieve anxiety
- Improve one's memory and ability to learn



# Exercise as a treatment for depression



VS.



- In 2014, the *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* released a study focusing on a group of individuals being treated for **Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)**
- Results showed:
  - 1) The effects of exercise last longer than antidepressants
  - 2) Patients who regularly exercised were less likely to relapse.



# Movement and stress management

Aerobic exercise may decrease:

- Tension
- Fatigue
- Anger



# How much exercise?

Per the CDC guidelines adults should strive for:

- 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of **moderate-intensity aerobic activity** every week

**OR**

- 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of **vigorous-intensity aerobic activity** every week

**OR**

- An equivalent mix of moderate-and vigorous intensity **aerobic activity**



# Intensity: Moderate vs. Vigorous

## 1. Relative Intensity

- The Talk Test

## 2. Absolute Intensity:

Moderate Intensity	Vigorous Intensity
Walking Briskly	Jogging/Running
Water Aerobics	Swimming Laps
Bicycling (slower than 10 mph)	Bicycling (10 mph or faster)
Ballroom Dancing	Hiking uphill or w/heavy pack
General Gardening	Chopping Wood (manually)

REMEMBER ANY MOVEMENT is better than NO MOVEMENT



**Move more...**



**...SMILE more**



# What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness = paying attention in a particular way – on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

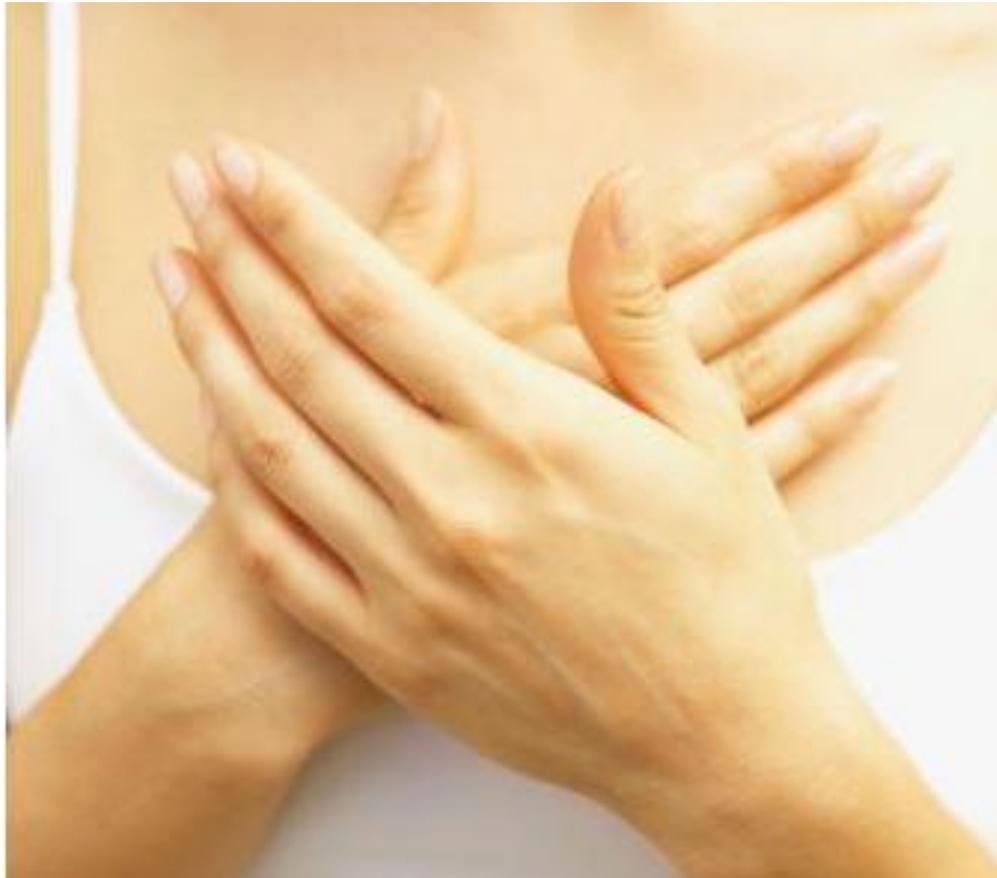


# Deep breath exercise



# Self-compassion

The ability to become aware of, accept & be with our own stress, pain and suffering, and respond with warmth and kindness



# Self-compassion exercise #1

1. Think of how you would talk to a friend, child or other loved one who is struggling with something in their life and feeling upset: What kinds of things might you say? What tone of voice would you use? What body language, gestures, or kind touch might you use?
2. Now think of how you talk to yourself when you are struggling with something like a mistake at work that is noticed by colleagues and/or your boss. What kinds of things might you say to yourself? What tone of voice do you use in your mind (or out loud)? What body language or gestures might you use in the height of your struggle?
3. How does the way you talk to a loved one who is struggling compare to the way you typically talk to yourself?



# Self-compassion exercise #2:

1. Think of how you would talk to a dear friend who is struggling with something in her life.
2. Think of something you are currently challenged with in your own life and write yourself a letter using the language you would use with your friend.

Make it:

- Caring, nurturing, sensitive, respectful
- Non-judgmental, warm and kind
- No “should” language



# Share with a friend:

- What was different in the way you wrote to yourself compared to the way you normally talk to yourself when you're struggling?
- How did it feel to write/speak to yourself this way?
- How might you make this a more regular practice in the future if you're not already speaking to yourself in this way?



# Benefits of self-compassion (Neff)

**LESS:** anxiety, depression, stress, perfectionism, body shame, fear of failure

**MORE:** life satisfaction, happiness, self-confidence, optimism, curiosity, creativity, gratitude; greater compassion & empathy for others and more forgiveness of others



# Gratitude

The practice of noticing and appreciating the positives in the world (particularly your own) and shifting the focus from what you don't have to what you do.

Research shows that a daily gratitude practice can lead to increased concentration, enthusiasm, optimism and life satisfaction as well as improved sleep quality and a greater sense of connection to others.

[Video Clip](#)



**Thank You!**



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