

# ZOOM INTO WELLNESS

## Mindfulness Workbook

### Learning Objectives:

- Users of this workbook will learn strategies to execute a mindful breath
- Users of this workbook will be able to create systems for creating a self care plan

### **Disclaimer**

The information presented in the Zoom into Wellness recording and this workbook are for education only and are not intended as a replacement for informed medical advice. If you are experiencing stress that you feel is chronic or overwhelming, please contact a medical health professional.



## Self Care

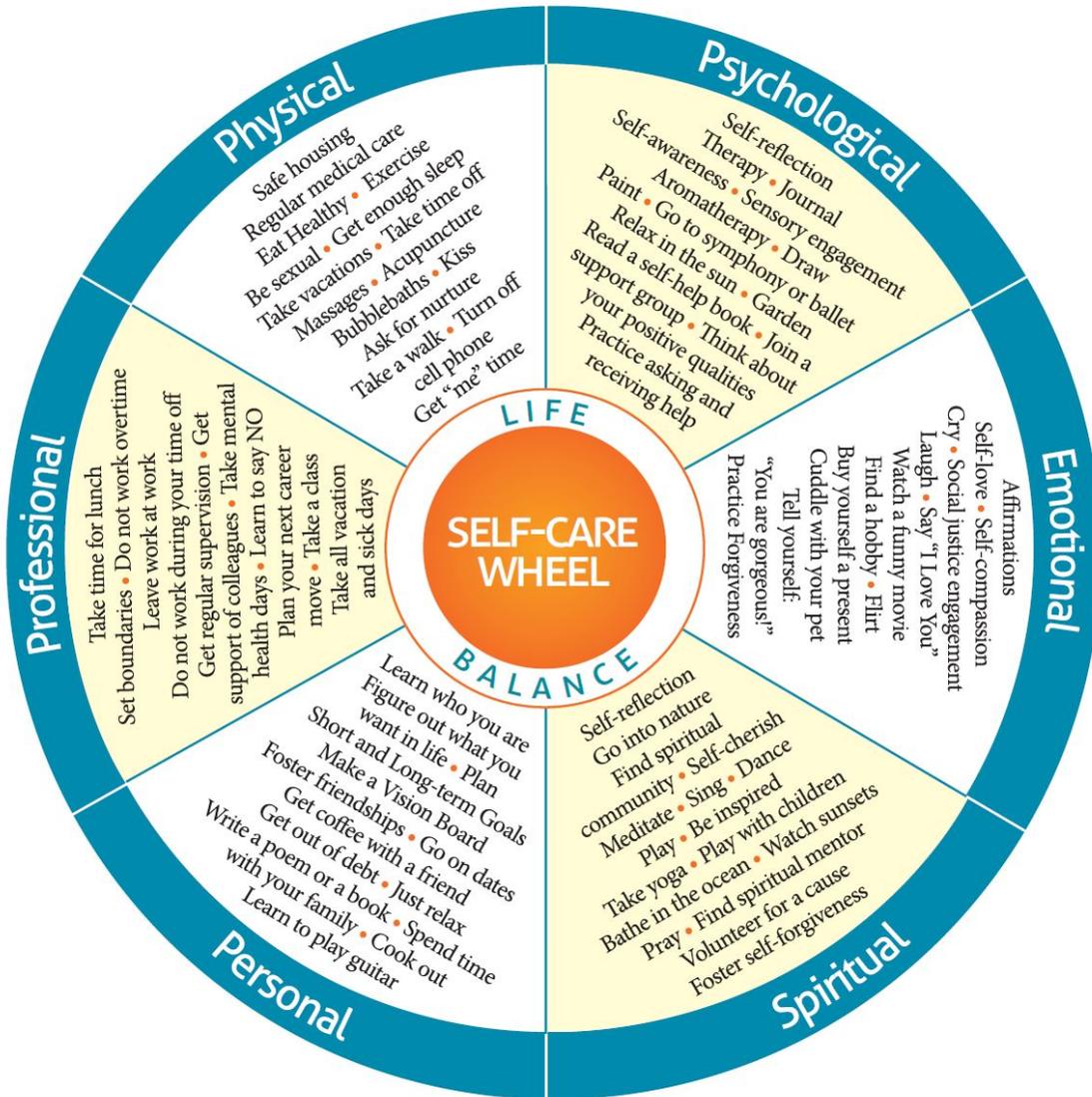
First, let's look at your self care.

You can use the self care wheel on the next page as a resource.

Area of self-care	Some of the behaviors and activities to support this area	Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 1=I don't practice much care in this area 5=I do many of these practices
<b>Physical</b>	Feel safe in my home, eating healthy food, exercise, healthy sleep, access to healthcare, utilize healthcare, unplug from technology, laugh, have "me" time, enjoy a hobby	
<b>Psychological</b>	Therapy, self-reflection, access to mental health care, relax, enjoy recreation (music, arts, dance), garden, read for pleasure, ask for help, practice positive self talk	
<b>Emotional</b>	Affirmations, self love, time with loved ones, practice forgiveness, laugh, flirt, feel attractive	

<b>Spiritual</b>	Self-reflection, worship, meditate, connect with spiritual community, support or volunteer for a cause, practice social justice, yoga	
<b>Professional</b>	Take lunch regularly, take breaks, professional development, use vacation time, take sick days, get support from colleagues, have open communication with staff	
<b>Personal</b>	Knowing who you are, sorting out what you want from life, vision board, meaningful friendships, satisfying relationship with finance, your legacy	

# SELF-CARE WHEEL



This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff

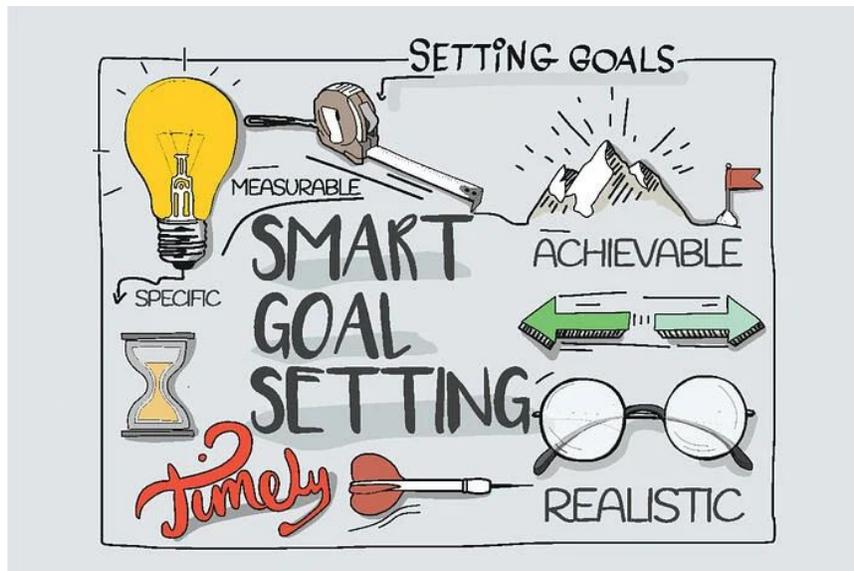
## Unpacking the results of your assessment

What patterns (similarities/differences) do you see?	
What surprised you?	
What are your areas for improvement and how are they affecting you?	
What are your stronger areas and how are they contributing to your success?	
What does this say about you	

Now that we know some areas where we are strong and other areas that could use a bit of work, let's start to make some goals. Think about where you are now--and where you want to be. What does it look like? What does it sound like? How will YOU feel in this space?

When thinking about goals:

Make goals that are SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC, and TIMEBOUND



## Goals

What area(s) will you focus on for the next 30-60-90 (pick one) days?	
What is your motivation to improve these area(s)?	
How is your community (family, friends, co workers) impacted when you improve in these areas?	

## Put systems in place to achieve your goals

When and how will you build time into your day/week to reflect, learn, and practice new behaviors?	
What are some additional support, tools, or resources that will help you be successful?	
What are specific ways will you hold yourself accountable?	
What obstacles do you anticipate as you strive to improve these dimensions?	

## Accountability and Support

Ask for feedback/support from 2 people on how to work on your wellness.

Engage with others and ask them for some help...ok-advice on ways to reach your goals by suggesting things that they have done to reach theirs.

Area of improvement	
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Person 1	
Person 2	
Person 3	
Person 4	

## The Plan

What systems will you practice to improve your 1st area?	
What systems will you practice to improve your 2nd area?	
What systems will you practice to improve your 3rd area?	
Whom can you observe and learn from for each dimension?	
Who/what is your accountability resource?	

## YOUR Self-Care Plan

Area of self-care	Some of the behaviors and activities you will do	Systems of support
Physical		
Psychological		
Emotional		
Spiritual		
Professional		
Personal		

Don't forget to reflect on your plan and make adjustments as needed. Remember-



# Mindfulness

## mind·ful·ness

/ˈmɪn(d)ˈfʊlnəs/

*noun*

1. the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.  
"their mindfulness of the area around them"
2. a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

## *Getting Started with Mindfulness*

You have questions about mindfulness and meditation.

### What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodeling the physical structure of your brain.



be mindful  
**NOW**

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 <p>Breathe In, Breathe Out - Feel the flow of the breath</p>	 <p>Be Aware of every Daily Activity (driving, texting, cleaning, etc.)</p>
 <p>Pay attention to all your Senses - for ex; notice the taste, texture of food.</p>	 <p>Go Outdoors - Walk Around in Nature</p>
 <p>Empty the Mind - Take a few moments to be still</p>	 <p>Forgive Yourself for every Negative Thought</p>
 <p>As soon as the Mind wanders, bring it back to your Breath</p>	 <p>Be Grateful - Say Thank You to Nature, People and Things.</p>
 <p>Practice Non-Judgemental Listening</p>	 <p>Go Easy on Yourself - with time, you will see the progress!</p>

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## What is meditation?

Meditation is exploring. It's not a fixed destination. Your head doesn't become vacuumed free of thought, utterly undistracted. It's a special place where each and every moment is momentous. When we meditate we venture into the workings of our minds: our sensations (air blowing on our skin or a harsh smell wafting into the room), our emotions (love this, hate that, crave this, loathe that) and thoughts (wouldn't it be weird to see an elephant playing a trumpet).

Mindfulness meditation asks us to suspend judgment and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness, to ourselves and others.

## How do I practice mindfulness and meditation?

Mindfulness is available to us in every moment, whether through meditations and body scans, or mindful moment practices like taking time to pause and breathe when the phone rings instead of rushing to answer it.

Source: Mindful.org

Here are some apps that you can use to start your mindfulness practice



### *The Breath*

Two things to keep in mind when practicing intentional breathing

- **First**, this is a practice. It may feel strange, awkward, or difficult. That is to be expected when trying something that you've never attempted before. Be kind

with yourself and see this as an exploration rather than something to be immediately mastered.

- **Second**, and more importantly, if for any reason you feel really uncomfortable or this doesn't feel right to you, it is perfectly okay to take a break or discontinue the exercise and try again another time.

## How to Practice Intentional Breathing

**1) Sit comfortably and observe your natural breath.** Start by finding a comfortable position like sitting upright in a chair or lying on your back. Begin to observe your breath just as it is. Notice where the breath flows – upper chest, lower belly, front, back, or sides. As you do, try to avoid placing a judgment on how you are breathing or attaching a story to it. Observe how you are breathing just as you are. You may already notice that the act of observing your breath slows down your respiration rate.

**2) Place your hands on your chest and belly.** Place your right hand on your breastbone (sternum) in the center of your chest. Place your left hand so that your thumb is below your navel. Continue to breathe normally and observe whether you are breathing more into your right hand or left hand. See if you can resist the urge to change your breath or make it deeper. Breathe as normally as you can and observe how it is to be in your body, breathing normally. How does it feel? What do you notice? Continue for at least 10 breaths.

**3) Breathe into your chest.** Try breathing just into your right hand that is resting in the middle of your upper chest. Without forcing the breath, see how it feels to breathe into the space below your right hand. What do you notice? Can you slow your inhalation or is that difficult or uncomfortable? Just see what happens. Keep observing for 10–20 breaths. After 10–20 breaths, take a few deep inhalations and exhalations and resume breathing normally for a minute or so.

**4) Breathe into your lower lungs.** Next, try breathing just into your left hand that is resting on your abdomen. Without forcing the breath, see how it feels to breathe into the space below your left hand. What do you notice? Can you slow your inhalation or is that difficult or uncomfortable? Just see what happens. Keep observing for 10–20 breaths. After 10–20 breaths, take a few deep inhalations and exhalations and resume breathing normally for a minute or so.

**5) Take half breaths into your chest and then your lower lungs.** Now, try breathing half of your inhalation into your right hand, pause for a second or two, and then breathe the remainder into the space below your left hand and pause. Then exhale from the bottom up, first releasing the air below your left hand, then allowing the exhalation to continue from below your left hand to below your right hand, traveling up and out either through your nose or mouth. Continue to your next inhalation, first into the area beneath your right hand and then into the area beneath your left hand, then exhale from the bottom up. Can you slow your inhalation or is that difficult or uncomfortable? How does it feel? What do you notice? Keep observing for 10–20 breaths. After

10–20 breaths, take a few deep inhalations and exhalations and resume breathing normally for a minute or so.

**6) Take full breaths.** Finally, try breathing deeply and fully from top to bottom as you inhale and bottom to top as you exhale, without pausing. If possible, see if you can slow the exhalation so that it is longer than the inhalation. If you like, you can count 1, 2, 3, and so on to see which is longer: your inhalation or your exhalation. After 10–20 breaths, take a few big deep inhalations and exhalations and resume breathing normally for a minute or so.

**7) Notice how you feel.** Was the exercise simple or difficult? Did breathing slowly and fully seem usual to you? How do you feel physically? Emotionally? Energetically? If you like, write down your experience.

## How Intentional Breathing Relieves Stress

This exercise is intended to activate your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) which initiates the relaxation response, depresses heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, and allows your body to engage in reparative and restorative functions. While not everyone experiences relaxation right away, most report feeling a sense of calm and a reduction in the feeling of stress after this exercise.

Although most find this intentional breathing exercise to be beneficial and informative, it doesn't always work for everyone. Some people find it difficult to remain focused on the breath when their brain is in a constant state of chatter. One of my recent course attendees, Shirley, reported that even though the exercise was soothing, she struggled to keep her overactive mind in check. Her experience isn't uncommon. There are many strategies to work with the mind in this situation, but the one that seems to work best for most people is to attach their breath to a word or a phrase to keep the mind focused. Shirley, for example, slowly recited the words "in" with the inhalation, and "out" with the exhalation. Pretty much any word or phrase can work to help focus the mind on the sensation of the breath. The trick is to keep the word or phrase simple so that the experience is still centered on the somatic, felt, or body sense of breathing rather than the thought sense, or a word or story that describes it.

Regardless of what works for you, intentional breathing takes practice. The good news is that it can be practiced virtually anywhere. The more that you practice, the easier it becomes. Particularly at the beginning, I suggest practicing intentional breathing at least a few times a day, every day, preferably in a quiet space and with all external distractions removed. You can do it whenever you find yourself sitting still for a few moments. It is much easier to learn a new skill while focusing on it, rather than trying to adopt it while multitasking.

Most of my clients and students report feeling benefits from this practice right away. They feel more calm and relaxed after a few minutes of intentional breathing. Over time, you may notice a shift in your awareness of your breath, or a tendency to breathe more deeply and fully most of

the time. This is the first step in defusing the stress feedback loop and teaching your brain and body to relax.

This article was adapted from *Mindful Relationships: Seven Skills for Success – Integrating the science of mind body and brain* (Handspring Publishing, 2016), by B Grace Bullock PhD