

Mindfulness in Meetings

Incorporating mindfulness into the workday in meaningful ways

Individual Check-In

Allow time at the beginning of meetings for individuals to “check-in” with themselves. What is your mental emotional state? Are you anxious? Fearful? Angry or irritated? Take a few moments to be mindful and aware before clearing away these things from your mind, so you can enter the meeting calmly and manage your thoughts and emotions.

Group Check-In

Go around the table and have people express how they are “feeling” (not thinking) that day. This will help the meeting leader and participants can gain a better appreciation of the inner states of the participants. Also have them check-in to *where* they are feeling that emotion (feeling anxious, tingling in my hands/ feeling nervous, lump in my throat, etc.)

Gratitude Exercise

Gratitude allows us to notice the positives we have instead of focusing on the misfortunes. Take time at the beginning of each meeting for each person to verbally answer:

- Name someone you are grateful for and why? Or
- What is one thing that has happened today that you are grateful for?

1-2 minute Grounding Exercise

Conduct a quiet one to two minute grounding exercise before starting the meeting. This will allow people to clear their minds of previous brain activities and mentally and emotionally prepare themselves for their new tasks in the meeting.

Grounding Exercises:

- **Pick up or touch an item near you:** Are the things you touch soft or hard? Heavy or light? Warm or cool? Focus on the texture and color of each item. Challenge yourself to think of specific colors, such as crimson, burgundy, indigo, or turquoise, instead of simply red or blue.
- **Listen to your surroundings:** Take a few moments to listen to the noises around you. Do you hear birds? Dogs barking? Machinery or traffic? If you hear people talking, what are they saying? Do you recognize the language? Let the sounds wash over you and remind you where you are.
- **Body Scan:** Pay attention to parts of your body and bodily sensations from feet to head, bring awareness to each part, notice aches, pains, tensions, and notice these without judgment.
- **Name 5 things you can see:** Notice things you haven't noticed before – A pattern on a wall, reflecting light on a surface, a nick on your desk.

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

Inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat for a few minutes.

Mindful Observation

This will help employees notice and appreciate seemingly simple elements of their environment in a more profound way.

1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.
2. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows.
3. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time.
4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence.
5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

Mindful Appreciation

Notice and name 1-3 things in your day that usually go unappreciated. These things can be objects or people. The point of this exercise is to simply give thanks and appreciate the seemingly insignificant things in life, the things that support our existence but rarely get a second thought amidst our desire for bigger and better things.

Intention Setting

Set aside time in the beginning or end of the meeting for employees to set their intentions for the day. This will interrupt the habitual flow of thoughts and invite inspiration and positivity into their days. Sit quietly for a few moments, grounding yourself through the breath, then focus on a single virtue to cultivate that day.