

HANDOUT 6-1

PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS

MINDFULNESS OF SURROUNDINGS

Find yourself a comfortable position in your chair with feet flat on the floor, back resting gently against the back of the chair, thumb and middle finger connected in a loop, and hands resting gently palms up on your thighs. Keep your eyes open and focused on your surroundings whether you are inside a room or outside in nature.

Look around. Pay attention to what you see. Is it bright or dark? Are you alone or with others? Are you inside or outside? If you are inside, are there windows in the room? Can you see outside? Can you see the sky? Is there light, or sunshine shining in the window? Does it light up an area on the floor or the wall? If you are outside, can you see the sky? Are there clouds? Is the sun shining?

What is straight ahead of you? What is beside you? Can you see behind you? Look all the way around you. Observe. When your mind wanders, notice it, accept it, and then bring your attention back to looking around you again.

Notice the temperature around you. Is it warm, cold, just right? Is the air moving or still? Do you smell any odors or smells? Are they comforting or distasteful? Are they new smells or are they familiar?

What can you hear? Is it quiet? Is there noise? What sounds are there? Where are they coming from? Are they loud, soft, sharp, soothing, or annoying? Do you want to keep listening to the sounds or do you want them to stop?

Is there activity in the space? What is moving? What stays still? Are things moving through the space, coming and going?

Pay attention to your body sitting in the chair. Feel where your bottom is supported by the chair. Is the chair hard, soft, cushiony, or solid? Is the back supporting your back? Does the chair fit you? Do your feet touch the floor or swing above it? Do your knees bend at the edge of the chair? Do you fill the seat side to side?

Look around and find something that particularly attracts your attention. Notice what shape it is, where it is located, what color it is, its texture, its purpose. Observe why it draws your attention. Does it remind you of something else? Do you know what it is? Is it common, or unusual? When thoughts arise that are not about this present moment, notice them, accept them, and let them go. Tell them "not now." Bring your awareness back to your surroundings.

Become aware of yourself in this space. How do you feel? Do you feel safe? Do you want to be here? Does this place feel familiar or does everything seem new to you? Have you been someplace else that reminds you of this place? Do you feel good, bad, or neutral here?

Notice the energy you feel in this place. Become aware of your inner reaction to being in this place. Is it active or quiet energy? Is it calm, bubbling, hot, cold? Is it positive, negative? Is it peaceful or bustling? Is it intense or mild? Is it toxic here? Or healing?

Now that you have spent some time completely focused on being in this moment, bring the awareness you have gained back with you as you resume your regular life. Practice this exercise whenever possible to keep yourself present in the moment. You will increase your concentration, productivity, and lower your stress response.