

Mindfulness Course starting in October

Many of us would like to slow down and be less affected by the buffetings of daily life, we may try to be calmer and more relaxed but find that it is not easy.

Have you ever started eating a snack bar, taken a couple of bites, then noticed all you had left was an empty packet in your hand? Or been driving somewhere and arrived at your destination only to realise you remember nothing about your journey? Most people have! These are common examples of "mindlessness," or "going on automatic pilot." In our modern, busy lives, we constantly multi task. Its easy to lose awareness of the present moment as when we become lost in our efforts to juggle work, home, finances, and other conflicting demands. All this can lead to us being "not present" in our own lives. We often fail to notice the good things about our lives, fail to hear what our bodies are telling us, or poison ourselves with toxic self criticism.

Take a moment to stop and notice what is around you, use your senses to hear, touch, feel, see and maybe even taste your surroundings. What can you hear? What can you see? Can you notice the chair under you if you are sitting? Or the floor under you if you are standing, or maybe lying down? And what about you? Are you hot or cold? Can you notice aches or pains?

That is the essence of mindfulness which simply means to be aware of what is happening when it is happening, without judging whether that is good or bad. It allows us to pay attention to, and see clearly whatever is happening in our lives, it is very simple and yet very profound. It will not eliminate life's pressures, but it can help us respond to them in a calmer manner that benefits our heart, head, and body. It helps us recognise and step away from habitual, often unconscious emotional and physiological reactions to everyday events. It provides us with a scientifically researched approach to cultivating clarity, insight, and understanding. Practising mindfulness allows us to be fully present in our life and work, and therefore improve our quality of life.

How can it help?

Most of us find ourselves frequently 'swept away' by the current of thoughts and feelings, worries, pressures, responsibilities; wanting things to be different from how they are right now. This can be particularly powerful when we are faced with pain, difficulties and illness that confound our attempts to find a solution or to feel better. Feeling stuck in this way can be draining. Many people report finding inner strengths and resources that help them make

wiser decisions about their health and life in general. Mindfulness can help us to work directly with the struggle we sometimes have in relating to life's experience and in doing so can really improve the quality of our life.

The next courses at Riverside Wellbeing are likely to start w/c 16th October with two options, a daytime course held on Tuesday mornings 10 - 12 and a Monday evening course 7 - 9pm. They will be held over 8 weeks so are likely to finish during w/c 11th December (which allows for a break over half-term for those with childcare and/or holidays). If you wish to join the course or find out more, please contact Sarah Talbot on 0777 202 4653 or sarah@growingawareness.net