

Managing your Brain

I. Mindfulness

- ▶ Mindfulness has two main components: awareness and non-judgment
- ▶ Mindfulness is about slowing down, paying attention and being open-minded before making decisions





Mindful Awareness of the Senses

- ▶ Paying attention to things we don't often notice
 - ▶ Close your eyes and listen to sounds
 - ▶ Go outside and look for a detail in the everyday ex. 5 shades of green
 - ▶ Eat something slowly
 - ▶ Sit quietly and notice the feel of everything on your body - your clothes, the chair you're sitting in, the air going in and out of your nose



Nonjudgement

- ▶ Nonjudgment means not deciding whether something is good or bad, whether you like it or not, until you've taken the time to really pay attention and experience it.
 - ▶ A new student comes to school wearing weird clothes
 - ▶ A friend brings something for lunch that you have never seen before
 - ▶ Someone is trying to talk to you while you are busy
 - ▶ You walk by someone who is homeless
 - ▶ A friend is texting while driving
 - ▶ You try to do something, and find it is very hard

II. Distress Tolerance



1. ACCEPTS

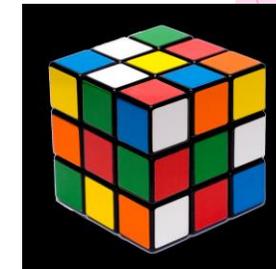
- ▶ The ACCEPTS strategy helps us deal with critical moments of distress, but can also be used for everyday kinds of stress
- ▶ Accepting when something has happened (death of a loved one, breakup of a relationship, failing at something important) is the first step to healing
- ▶ Acceptance does not mean forgiveness
 - ▶ Example: I can accept that my boyfriend has broken up with me, without forgiving him or even letting go of the hurt.
- ▶ Acceptance does mean I am not trying to undo it
 - ▶ Example: Not trying to persuade boyfriend to stay

ACCEPTS Acronym



- ▶ Temporary strategy to calm down, gain perspective, and get out of the rut of obsessively thinking about what had occurred
- ▶ Come back to the issue after, to deal with feelings and problem solve
- ▶ Create your own script: When I am upset I can...

- ▶ Activity bike ride
- ▶ Contribute help mom
- ▶ Compare world issue
- ▶ Emotions funny show
- ▶ Push-away rubix cube
- ▶ Thoughts talk to friend
- ▶ Sensations eat spicy chips



ACCEPTS Acronym

- ▶ The goal of the visual script is to interrupt the cortisol cycle, and give someone a chance to calm down and heal before making decision about actions. It turns the brain's attention to the experience they are in, and away from obsessing about the issue that is concerning them
- ▶ Be familiar with your script so it is in your mind when something happens and cortisol is rushing through your brain. Can you think of when it might be useful

2. Self-Soothe

- ▶ Many of us know what we would say to someone who is going through what we are struggling with, but we are not nearly as kind to ourselves. We criticize and judge ourselves far more harshly than we do someone else.
- ▶ Self-Soothing has two components:
 - ▶ Be kind to oneself. What would a parent or friend say to you? What would you say to someone else going through the same thing?
 - ▶ Interrupt the cycle of brain reaction. Use strategies for calming down

2. Self-Soothe

- ▶ Think of a time you were angry with yourself about something. What did you say to yourself?
- ▶ Soothing means to make someone feel better, calmer, more peaceful. Self-soothing means taking care of ourselves in the same kind way we would someone else.
- ▶ Imagine a self-soothing response to your angry situation, or try one of these:
 - ▶ You fail a test
 - ▶ You lose a game because you made a mistake
 - ▶ You say something that embarrasses a friend in front of others
 - ▶ You gain some weight and your jeans don't fit