

MINDFULNESS FOR LIFE AGENDA

Definition and benefits

How to practice

Practical applications

Practice exercises



MINDFULNESS FOR LIFE



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Stress Solutions Committee: MOSS

Together, all the way.®



What is Mindfulness?



“Cultivating non-judgmental awareness of the present moment and opening to things as they are with compassion and acceptance.”
- Cigna Mindfulness Committee

“A flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context.”
- Ellen Langer, PhD
Harvard University

On average, what percentage of the time are we lost in thought?

47%

Wandering Mind Not a Happy Mind, Killingsworth & Gilbert, Harvard Gazette, November 2010

Mindfulness helps improve ...

- Leadership presence and charisma
- Decision making
- Resiliency and change agility
- Ability to stay calm and cool under pressure
- Relationships via enhanced listening, engagement, empathy and compassion
- Innovation
- Many physical and mental health conditions
- Enjoyment of life!



For more information, see:

Positive Psychology: Harnessing the power of happiness, mindfulness and inner strength, Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School, 2016

What are the benefits of Mindfulness: Daphne M. Davis, PhD, and Jeffrey A. Hayes, PhD, American Psychological Association, July/August 2012, Vol 43, No. 7

Research from Institute of Mindful Leadership, 2016



8 weeks of mindfulness practice

Increased thickening
of brain for memory,
learning, attention,
emotional regulation,
and sense of self

*Massachusetts General Hospital
& Harvard University*



Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density, *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging* (2011), Holzel et al
Brain changes over 8 week mindfulness training - <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/01/eight-weeks-to-a-better-brain>



Meditation research and positive brain changes



Networks and connections

Concentration
Attention



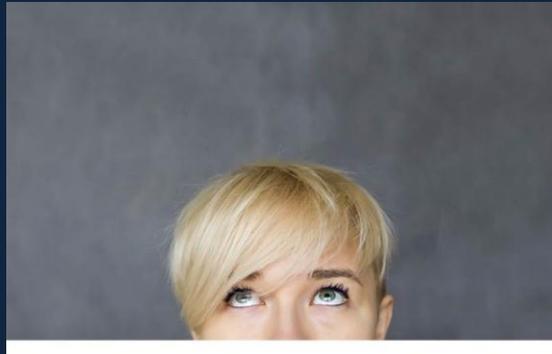
Amygdala size

Stress/fear response



Gray matter

Emotional regulation
Self-awareness



“Me” center activity

Impulsivity

Dr. Richard Davidson, University of WI - Center for Healthy Minds, 2015



Mindfulness at work research



- 32% decrease in medical symptoms
- 29% decrease in perceived stress symptoms
- 26% increase in acting with self-awareness
- 26% increase in observational skills
- 25% increase in non-reactivity
- 22% increase in non-judgment

UMASS Medical School/Center for Mindfulness - 2016 research data collected from MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) workplace programs



Research shows practicing mindfulness at work:

- Reduces employee turnover and absenteeism
- Increases productivity
- Improves decision making
- Enhances relationships
- Improves job satisfaction
- Fosters creativity

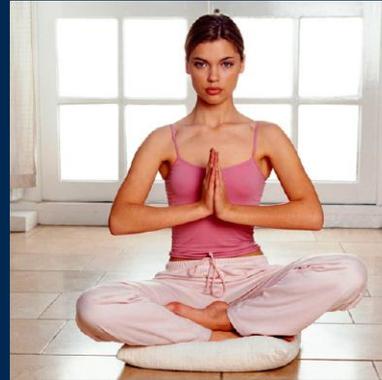


Studies by the National Institute of Health UK, the University of Massachusetts, and the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Harvard University suggest that mindfulness at work is good for business. *Bringing Mindfulness to the Workplace*, Kimberly Schaufenbuel, Program Director, UNC Executive Development, 2014



Mindful practices

FORMAL



INFORMAL





ABC MINDFUL EXERCISE



Mindfulness practice loop

Each step cultivates kindness, curiosity, acceptance and non-judgment

Choose focus



Distraction occurs

Awareness of distraction

Let go of the distraction and refocus





Practice tips



- Set a clear intention
- Use the breath as an anchor
- Commit to and schedule a consistent practice time
- Cultivate an attitude of curiosity, kindness, and acceptance
- Be gentle and kind to yourself!

Simple Mindful Actions

- Be intentional about choosing the next activity when switching to a new activity
- Complete a self check-in before any important decision or meeting
- Do daily activities mindfully – eating, driving, walking, listening, etc.
- Use STOP – Stop, take a breath, observe and proceed
- Enjoy a few minutes of daily quiet time
- Take a few mindful deep breaths
- Do something different in a routine
- Do the mini ABC mindful exercise

These help switch you from autopilot to present moment!





Expressing gratitude improves:

- Feelings of joy and happiness
- Generosity, altruism and compassion
- Resiliency
- Relationships
- Anxiety and depression symptoms
- Physical health
- Sleep





MINDFUL GRATITUDE EXERCISE

Myth of multi-tasking

Stanford Research: “Those who consider themselves to be great multitaskers are in fact the worst multitaskers. Those who rated themselves as chronic multitaskers made more mistakes, could remember fewer items, and took longer to complete a variety of focusing tasks analogous to multitasking.”

- You are not multi-tasking, you are switching
- 40% reduction in productivity



Cognitive control in media multitaskers; Ophir, Nass & Wagner;
PNAS 2009 106 (37) 15583-15587; August 24, 2009



Tips to reduce multi-tasking

- If possible, do one thing at a time with full attention.
- Don't start a new task without consciously deciding it's the right one.
- Switch off potential distractions or move away from them.
- Show up when interacting with others.

Remember, your brain is not hard-wired to multi-task!

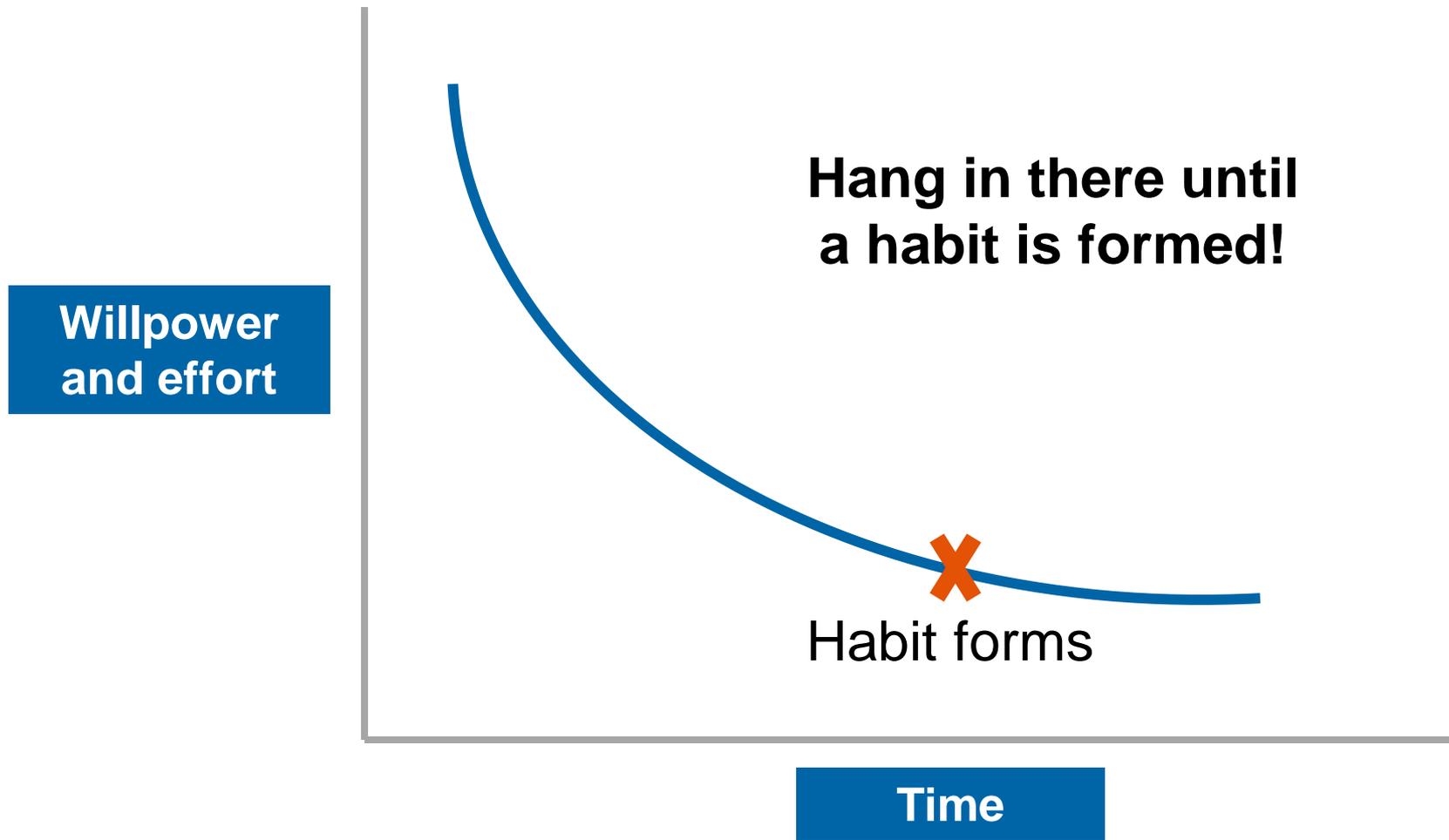


“People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their future.”

– *F.M. Alexander*



Learning and practicing something new



Getting started

- Incorporate a few of the practical tips into your routine each week.
- Become more familiar with mindfulness – take a class or read a book.
- Do daily:
 - One routine activity mindfully – eating, walking, cleaning, driving, etc.
 - 10 minutes of mindful practice – starting out with 5 minutes and guided
- If you like movement, take a yoga or tai chi class (consult your physician first).



MINDFULNESS QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Definition

Benefits

Application

Practice

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Contact your Cigna Account Team or email us at
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