**About Mindfulness**

**(Adapted from** [**http://oxfordmindfulness.org/about-mindfulness/**](http://oxfordmindfulness.org/about-mindfulness/) **)**

Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, with compassion, and open-hearted curiosity.

Through cultivating mindful awareness, we discover how to live in the present moment rather than brooding about the past or worrying about the future.

**What is MINDFULNESS?**

A short daily, secular meditative practice …an integrative, mind-body based training that enables people to change the way they think and feel about their experiences, especially stressful experiences. Mindfulness:

* pays attention to thoughts, feelings and body sensations to become directly aware of them, and better able to manage them;
* has deep roots in ancient meditation practices and also draws on recent scientific advances
* is of potential value to everybody to help find peace in a frantic world

**Neuroscientific studies find…**

* changes in those areas of the brain associated with decision-making, attention and empathy in people who regularly practice Mindfulness meditation;
* that meditation increases the area of the brain linked to regulating emotion, and that it improves people’s attention, job performance, productivity and satisfaction;
* that meditation increases blood flow, reduces blood pressure, and protects people at risk of developing hypertension: it also reduces the risk and severity of cardiovascular disease, and the risk of dying from it.

**People who have learned mindfulness…**

* experience long-lasting physical and psychological stress reduction
* discover positive changes in well-being;
* are less likely to get stuck in depression and exhaustion, and are better able to control addictive behaviour.

It sounds and is simple, but takes some practice as we are unused to it! Especially in our modern task-focussed lives we don’t know how to pay wise attention to what we are doing, so we miss whole swathes of our lives, and easily get caught in over-thinking - damaging our well-being and making us depressed and exhausted.

Mindfulness has been shown both through rigorous clinical trials and personal experience to bring real benefit and improved quality of life to anyone who adopts this regular practice.

For more information - hear it from the horse’s mouth! If you only have time for one clip, the first one is the most succinct:

A non-jargony 10 minute Youtube clip with Dr. Dan Siegel on the key features of Mindfulness: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dFrOTgAIzY

Bringing mindfulness to UK schools: <http://developingmindfulness.ning.com/video/mindful-schools-in-class-instruction>

Professor Mark Williams talks about ***the benefits of Mindfulness*** – see video clips at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/OxfordMindfulness?feature=guide#p/u/3/CyiwVwwjFtQ>

See also the other main UK centre, the ***Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor University*** at: <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/index.php.en?menu=0&catid=0>

You can listen to a 30 minute Radio 4 broadcast ***Brain Culture: Neuroscience and Soc…2. Brain Science and Education*** in which Matthew Taylor examines how British schools will change in the era of 'Brain Culture'. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/console/b017cfkq>

Or experience a talk and meditation with the founder of Western Mindfulness: *Bottom of Form* ***Mindfulness with Jon Kabat-Zinn on Youtube:*** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc>

