

FACT SHEET #3

STRESS MASTERY WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

"Mindfulness is the aware, balanced acceptance of the present experience. It isn't more complicated than that. It is opening to or receiving the present moment, pleasant or unpleasant, just as it is, without either clinging to it or rejecting it."

– Sylvia Boorstein

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT USEFUL?

Nowadays, most of us would have heard of 'mindfulness' – and that it is good to 'have it'! But what is it, why is it good and how does it relate to resilience?

mindfulness

[minded·ful·nuhs] noun

Mindfulness is the ability to be focused on the present moment in a non-judgemental way. That is, 'being' in the present moment, simply 'noticing' what is happening around us, without judgement.

Mindfulness encourages us to be calm and present within a moment (responding), rather than reacting. When we react to an event, we miss the chance to calm ourselves down or self-soothe, we miss the opportunity to evaluate the situation without bias. When we react, we say and do things without thinking first and don't consider the implications of what we do or say, we just act. Mindfulness helps us learn to respond rather than react, that is, becoming more thoughtful in our interaction to an event. Mindfulness enables us to explore our internal reactions, explore the situation, and explore how we wish to respond to said situation. This helps us become more resilient when confronted with challenging situations in life.

Benefits & Effects of Mindfulness...

- Reduced stress
- Increased resilience
- Improved working memory
- Decreased emotional reactivity
- Increased ability in problem-solving skills

- Improved ability in managing distressing emotions
- Increased focus
- Increased cognitive flexibility
- Increased relationship satisfaction
- Enhanced ability to deal with illness

- Improved general wellbeing
- Decreased anxiety and depression symptoms
- Increased frequency of positive thinking

WHY DOES MINDFULNESS HAVE THESE EFFECTS?



Unfortunately, researchers are still not completely clear on why mindful people cope better than others with difficult experiences, thoughts and emotions without being overwhelmed.

However, the two primary mechanisms thought to be behind this is the focus in the present and increased awareness. That is because when mindfulness concentrates your attention in the present moment, you are not dwelling in the past, or fretting about the future. Mindfulness additionally makes us more aware of our thoughts and feelings, which we can then change if they are not helping us constructively at the time.

If you or someone you know needs help contact **TIACS** on 0488 846 988 or your organisation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), your GP or call: **LifeLine** on 13 11 14, **Kids Helpline** on 1800 551 800, **MensLine Australia** on 1300 789 978 or the **Suicide Call Back Service** on 1300 659 467.