



Hello and Happy New Year from the Coventry Service Program!

Here at the Coventry Service Program office, we're preparing for cooler temperatures and continue reaching out to our policyholders. As we look forward to 2019, and reflect on the year past, we find ourselves thinking about resolutions for positive change. One of our Wellness Specialists mentioned that she has been trying to be more mindful in her day to day life. Her mindfulness practice is inspiring, and we thought we would share some information with you. As you read through, note that you can click on any of the blue words to be connected to a webpage with more information about that topic.

We hope that you have success in meeting any new year resolutions you've made for yourself. As always, let us know if we can support you in any of your health or wellness goals. We welcome your call or email.

What is Mindfulness?

Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as: "paying attention; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." Mindfulness is our basic human ability to be fully present and aware of what we're doing.

When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than dwelling on the past or imagining what the future might hold. Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing that there's a "right" or "wrong" way to think or feel in a given moment.

How Can You Practice Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is not obscure. We already have the capacity to be present. We can cultivate these innate qualities with simple practices that are scientifically demonstrated to benefit ourselves, our loved ones, and our friends.

One way to practice mindfulness is through the formal practice of meditation. A **meditation** practice is commonly done sitting, usually with eyes closed, but can also be done lying down or even walking.

You could also practice mindfulness informally by bringing your full attention to whatever you're doing in the moment. Washing dishes? **Do it mindfully**; pay attention to the feel of the water and soap, to the weight of the dish in your hand, to the sounds of the dish as you stack it.

What Are the Benefits of Being More Mindful?

There are many benefits of practicing mindfulness and meditation. Below are just a few. Click on the link for more information about each.

- **Improved cognition**; improved memory and executive functioning
- **Reduction in distractions**
- **Reduction in symptoms** related to anxiety and depression
- **Stress reduction**
- **Improved sleep**
- **Improved physical health**

A first hand account of the benefits of Mindfulness from Jane, one of our Wellness Specialists:

The Importance of Mindfulness as We Age, By Jane Vachon

I have noticed that if I practice Mindfulness in my activities and tasks I am less likely to forget what I was about to do or make mistakes. The practice of mindfulness is great for any age, and especially as we age. Mindfulness is easier said than done; you might be thinking. Mindfulness is a discipline and practice of this discipline may make your life easier.

How I Use Mindfulness:

- When I cook: I try not to multi-task and leave the kitchen to do something else. Safety in the kitchen! I avoid burning food or even worse causing a fire in the kitchen.
- Taking medication: If I am mindful in taking my medication, I will focus on the medication I am taking. I look at it, its shape and its name. Some of you may already have a daily medication box, which is an added help.
- Falling asleep at night: Taking deep breaths (at least three); focusing my attention on my feet (tightening my feet and then relaxing them); focusing on my ankles (repeat tightening then relaxing), and continuing this practice until I become sleepy.
- Waiting in line: Rather than getting impatient and wondering if the customers in front of me are going to take “forever,” I take deep breaths and try to be mindful of the experience of just being. Waiting is not such a bad thing.
- Being Outdoors can help me to be mindful; walking while focusing on the sky, trees, flowers etc. I try to refocus from my “mind chatter” to what I’m observing. Think about a time when you were completely engrossed in something; painting, gardening, assembling. These are activities that can naturally put us in a state of mindfulness.

The benefit of practicing mindfulness is that I am moving my mind away from to do lists in my head, away from worrying about issues which we all have plenty of, and redirecting my thoughts to allow my mind to relax.

Please email Jane directly if you would like to learn more about her practice of mindfulness and meditation, she encourages you to share your comments. She can be reached at jvachon@coventrycarelink.com.

Resources for you:

We have found the following resources to be helpful in the development of this newsletter. Please click the blue link to access the webpage.

- [Greater Good Magazine](#)
- [Mrs. Mindfulness](#)
- [Mindful.org](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [Next Avenue](#)

You may also be interested in [this article](#) offering information about how to make your workday more mindful. Lastly, you may like to give this [quiz](#) a try to help determine how mindful you already are.

We would love to hear about your current mindfulness practice, or about any resolutions you've made to try out mindfulness or meditation!

Have you made a resolution to share your thoughts? We await your feedback!

Stay Connected!

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