BUILDING WELLNESS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Evidence-based strategies and healthy coping can help us regulate our emotions during difficult times and protect us against the harmful effects of stress.

HOW TO PAUSE/BREAK
Taking a pause/break refers to the practice of any non-work related activity that purposefully distracts you and holds your attention.

An effective way to pause/break is by using mindfulness!

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is paying attention to what we sense or experience

- In the present moment
- On purpose
- With nonjudgmental acceptance

STRATEGIES TO PAUSE/BREAK

COMING TO YOUR SENSES
Using your senses is a great way to keep yourself in the present moment. Focus on the sounds or smells around you or how your clothes feel on your body.

Try using a mindful progressive muscle relaxation activity.
Try using a calming breath activity.

CLICK FOR AN EXAMPLE
CLICK EACH SENSE FOR SHORT GUIDED VIDEOS

STRATEGIES FOR SLEEP

CLICK HERE FOR A YOGA NIDRA SLEEP MEDITATION
CLICK HERE FOR A PODCAST THAT TELLS BORING BEDTIME STORIES TO HELP YOU FALL ASLEEP
**STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE POSITIVE AWARENESS**

**WHY ENHANCE POSITIVE AWARENESS?**
We are all often very quick to notice negative information (e.g., criticism, daily hassles, upsetting news) in our daily lives. This is due to an evolutionary mechanism which serves to readily notice danger and keep us out of harm's way.

This negativity bias predisposes our perception to recognize negative information while positive information (e.g. praise, pleasant feeling, daily joys) often goes unnoticed. Research shows that increasing positive awareness is protective against stress, so we need to work to recognize and appreciate the good things in life.

There are always little (or big) things to be grateful for even if the most difficult of times.

**THREE GOOD THINGS**
Note down 3 things that you enjoyed during the day (e.g., first sip of coffee in the morning or seeing the sun) - think of how they made you feel and savour that feeling.

**GRATITUDE JOURNAL**
Try it! Take time aside 2-3 days per week to write down a few things you are grateful for.

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**STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE KINDNESS TO SELF AND OTHERS**

**WHY KINDNESS?**
Research shows that the ability to be kind to ourselves i.e., self-compassion, is linked to better functioning under stress through persistence.

Self-compassion refers to treating ourselves with the same kindness and consideration we would show a friend.

**KINDNESS TO SELF**
Try using a **self-compassion** meditation activity.

**KINDNESS TO OTHERS**
Acts of kindness towards others (e.g., prosocial behaviors) have been shown to enhance mood and increase overall well-being!

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**RESOURCES FOR ALL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANXIETY CANADA</th>
<th>CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION</th>
<th>GREATER GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based website which provides anxiety management resources</td>
<td>Resources and suggestions to support your mental health during times of uncertainty</td>
<td>Stress management resources for all ages developed by University of California, Berkley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT TIMER** | **STOP. BREATHE & THINK** | **HAPPIFY** | **SMILING MIND** | **ISLEEP EASY** | **REACHOUT BREATHE** |

Free **mindfulness** and **stress management** apps available on **iOS** and **Android** mobile devices.

Check out the "mindfulness" episode in The Mind, Explained series on Netflix.

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Dr. Nancy Heath
Associate Dean of Research & Innovation
Faculty of Education

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McGill Student Services | Services aux étudiants | Student Wellness Hub | Pôle bien-être étudiant

**CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION**
**RESOURCES FOR MCGILL STUDENTS**

- **Student Wellness Hub**
  Resources and services for student success and well-being

- **Maple Virtual Care**
  Online medical consultations for international students with Medavie Blue Cross insurance

- **Keep.meSAFE**
  24/7 mental health counselling service available to McGill students

- **Office of the Dean of Students**
  Student Affairs Case Managers provide services, referrals, and support to students seeking help

- **Peer Support Centre**
  Confidential and non-judgmental listening and support service run by McGill students

**RESOURCES FOR MCGILL FACULTY AND STAFF**

- **My Healthy Workplace**
  Staff engagement initiative with resources and events to promote health in the workplace

- **HR Health and Well-being Program**
  Resources to support your mental and physical well-being and build resilience

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program**
  Resources and services for staff with professional, personal, or family related issues.

**TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD**

- **Problem-Solving**
  When your child is distressed, listen. Validate. Empathize. Then support them in problem-solving rather than problem-solving for them.

- **Money in the Bank**
  Take advantage of good moments with your child.
  Create brief moments in the day to let your kids know you love them and are proud of them.
  It’s okay to have negative parenting moments!

- **Safe Haven**
  When your child is overwhelmed, provide them with a safe haven in the storm.
  You can do this by grounding yourself using strategies shared in this infographic!

- **Modelling vs. Telling**
  You need to practice what you preach and explicitly model healthy coping behaviours.
  Practice the strategies, take care of yourself, and try to create a positive environment!

Questions? **CLICK HERE** to contact us!