

ANUx - SP | 20180606_Amanda_Morrison_1

Hi. I'm Amanda from ANU Counseling Center. This is another module in our mindfulness course. This mindfulness is an imagery exercise to assist you to accept emotions or sensations in the body.

Now, let all your breath out until none is left and allow the lungs to automatically fill. Sense the gap, then return to your normal breathing, focusing on your in and out breath.

When you are feeling an unpleasant motion or sensation in the body, first step is to take a few slow, deep breaths and quickly scan your body from head to toe. You will probably notice several uncomfortable sensations. Look for the strongest sensation, the one that bothers you the most. For example, it might be a lump in your throat, or a knot in your stomach, or an ache in your chest, stiffness in your arm, pain or shakiness in another location in your body.

Focus your attention on the strongest sensation. Observe it curiously, as if you were a friendly scientist discovering some interesting new phenomenon. Develop a keen interest in this sensation. Continue to observe the sensation carefully. Notice where it starts and where it ends. Learn as much about it as you can.

If you had to draw a line around the sensation, what would the outline look like? Is it on the surface of the body or inside you, or both? How far inside you does it go? Where is the sensation most intense? Where is it the weakest? How is it different in the center than around the edges? Is there any pulsation or vibration within it? Is it light or heavy? Moving or still? What is its temperature? Does it have a color?

If you are struggling with this sensation, breathe into and around the sensation. Take a few more deep breaths and let go of the struggle with that sensation. Breathe into it. Imagine your breath flowing in and around it. Make room and space for it. Loosen up and around it. Allow it to be there. You don't have to like it or want it, simply let it be.

You may find it helpful to say to yourself, I don't like this feeling, but I have room for it. Or, it's unpleasant but I can accept it. The idea is to observe the sensation, not to think about it. So when your mind starts commenting on what's happening or making judgments about the sensation, just say, thanks, mind, and come back to observing.

You may find this difficult. You may feel a strong urge to fight with it or push it away. If so, just acknowledge this urge without giving into it. Acknowledging is rather like nodding your head in recognition, as if to say, they are you, I see you.

Once you've acknowledged that urge, bringing your attention back to the sensation itself. Don't try to get rid of the sensation or alter it. If it changes by itself, that's OK. If it doesn't change, that's OK, too. Changing or getting rid of it is not the goal.

You may need to focus on the sensation for anything from a few seconds to a few minutes until you completely give up the struggle with it. Be patient. Take as long as you need. You are learning a valuable skill. Once you've done this, scan your body again and see if there is another strong sensation that's bothering you. If so, repeat the procedure with that one.

You can do this with as many different sensations as you like. Keep going until you have a sense of no longer struggling with your feelings. As you do this exercise, one of two things will happen. Either your feelings or sensations will change, or they won't. It doesn't matter either why. This exercise is not about changing your feelings. It's about accepting them.

Now, bring your awareness to your body, touching your clothes, all the furniture, and the sounds inside and outside the room. And when you are ready, open your eyes.