

## **ANUx - SP | 20180606\_Amanda\_Morrison\_3**

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Hi, I'm Amanda from ANU Counseling Centre. This is another module in our mindfulness course. This mindfulness exercise assists you to allow thoughts to pass rather than holding on to them.

This exercise is called leaves on a string. Close your eyes and fix your attention on one spot in front of you. Imagine a beautiful slow-moving stream. The water flows over the rocks, around trees, descends downhill, and travels through a valley. Once in a while, a big leaf drops into this stream and floats away down the river.

Imagine you're sitting beside that stream on a warm, sunny day watching the leaves float by. Now become conscious of your thoughts. Each time a thought pops into your head, imagine that it is written on one of those leaves. If you think in words, put them on the leaf as words. If you think in images, put them on the leaf as an image. The goal is to stay beside the stream and allow the leaves on the stream to keep flowing by.

Don't try to make the stream go faster or slower. Don't try to change what shows up on the leaves in any way. If you have no thoughts, just notice the leaves floating past. If the leaves disappear or if you mentally go somewhere else or if you find that you are in the stream or on a leaf, just stop and notice that this happened.

File that knowledge away, and then once again return to the stream, watch a thought come into your mind. Write it on a leaf, and let the leaf float away downstream. Continue to place your thoughts on the leaves in any form preferred for the next 20 seconds until I ask you to open your eyes.

Now, open your eyes and bring your awareness back to your present surroundings.