

Well-Being Connection



August 5, 2020 | Week 17

Welcome to the Weekly Well-Being Connection! Each week we will share advice from our clinical experts on ways to care for your mental health and well-being throughout COVID-19.

Practicing Mindfulness During COVID-19

The concept of **Mindfulness** seems to show up everywhere these days. **Some people have called it a [superpower](#)**. There is even an entire [magazine](#), devoted to it. Despite the popularity of the concept, **many of us are not certain what the practice is** or are not sure we want to try meditation practices. **While mindfulness can be a form of meditation, at its core, it is choosing where to put your attention, being fully present in any one moment, and non-judgmentally noticing what you observe.** Dr. Rajita Sinha explains, "It is really about being in the moment, observing what's coming at you from the outside and what's coming up inside—taking it in and observing, and not reacting to it. With extended practice, you can begin to let go of what's coming at you. But that takes longer." Read more [here](#).

Life during a pandemic can be a bit of a roller coaster (or as my kid's school principle likened it to – Mr. Toad's Wild Ride). One minute we may think about our finances and feel worry, then we might have a thought about someone we care about getting sick and feel more worry, then we might flash forward to fall and winter holidays and wonder what that will be like and begin to feel sadness and grief. All these thoughts can trigger intense and rapidly shifting emotions. Mindfulness practices can help us step out of this space and focus on just one thing at a time by being fully present in just that one moment. **So much of our anxiety, fear, guilt, and other intense and uncomfortable emotion comes when we step into spaces of thinking about the future or the past as opposed to just the one moment in front of us.**

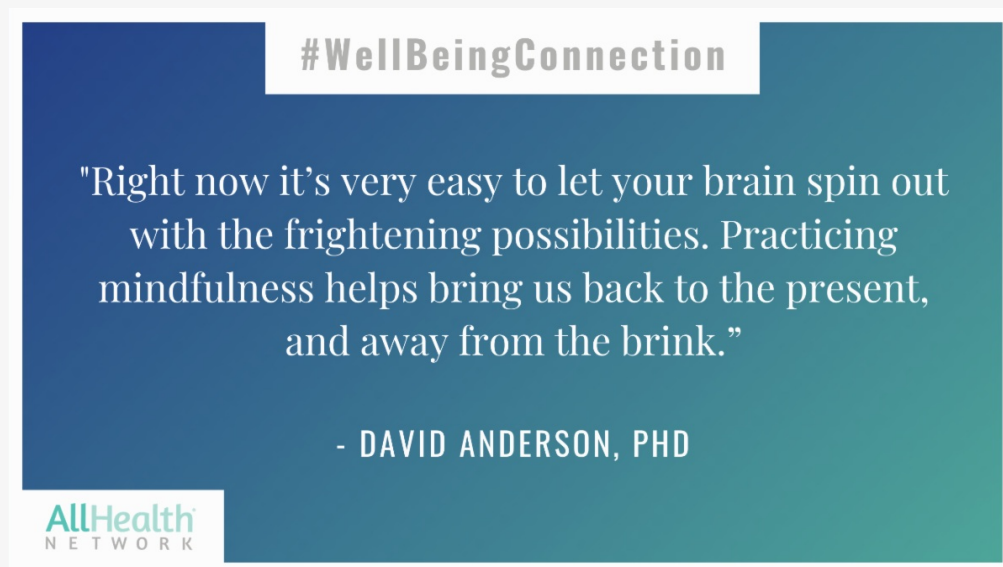
Mindfulness takes practice as it does not come naturally to most of us. **The good news is that anything can become a mindfulness practice!** We can mindfully eat breakfast; we can take a walk mindfully; we can mindfully brush our teeth. I am practicing mindfulness as I type this by directing my focus fully and completely to this task. Do I get distracted? Yes, constantly! I have thoughts about other things I need to accomplish today, I hear my kids bickering, I wonder what to make for dinner later...AND...**each time I notice**

that my focus has shifted, the very act of noticing this and bringing my attention back is a mindfulness practice! The goal is not to never shift our focus, but instead to notice when we are not fully engaged in the present moment and bring our attention back. Easier said than done (at least for me!), and I know the more regularly I make an active attempt to engage in my daily activities mindfully, the more natural it feels and the sooner I can notice my thoughts and emotions as opposed to reacting to them.

Want to give it a try? [Now Matters Now](#) has many helpful videos explaining what mindfulness is, how to practice it, and how many people find the skill helpful during moments of crisis. Would some specific ideas for activities help? **Check out [PsychCentral](#) for a few suggestions for mindfulness activities you can do in under a minute.**

Some other good news about mindfulness? Kids, adolescents, and adults of all ages can benefit from the practice! Check out this [article](#) for some specific tips for mindfulness practice with the whole family.

While mindfulness will not “fix” anything we are facing right now, we do believe it can be a powerful tool to help each of us navigate Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride.



If speaking with someone would help, please reach out. AllHealth Network, along with other community mental health centers, is continuing to provide service via telehealth or by phone and our Crisis Walk-in Center remains open 24/7. For more information and to get connected with our services, please call 303-730-8858. To learn more about what other community mental health centers are doing, please visit [The Colorado Behavioral Health Council COVID-19 website.](#)

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and are in need of immediate assistance, please the **Colorado Crisis Hotline at 1-844-493-8255 (TALK) or text TALK to 3855.**

Resource links

- [Mindfulness and Compassion Resources](#)
- [Calm- Mindfulness Resources](#)

Archives

- [Week 16- Understanding Depression](#)
- [Week 15 - Get Moving for Mental Health](#)
- [Week 14 - Couples Relationships & COVID-19](#)
- [More](#)

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