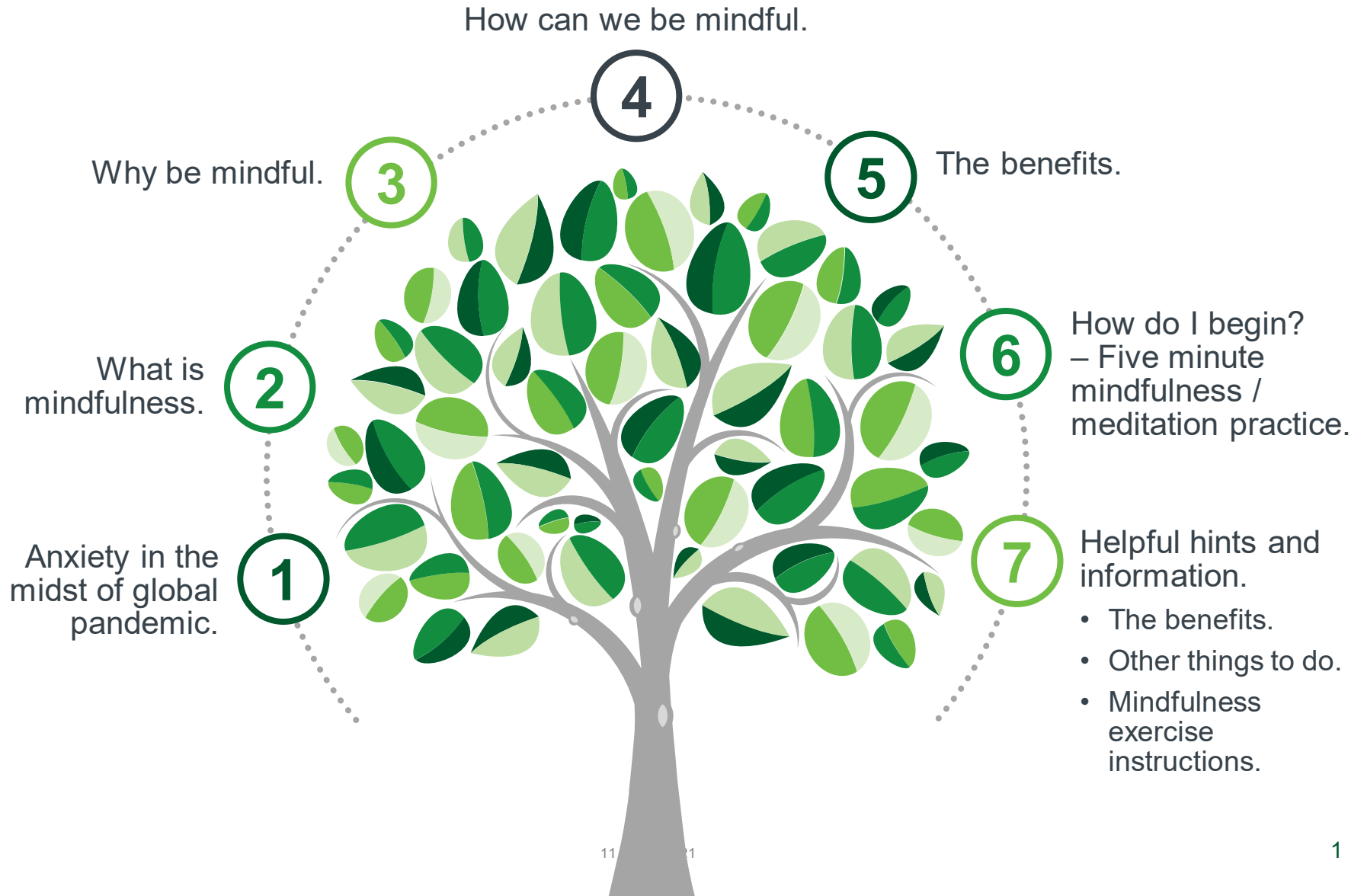


# MENTAL HEALTH MINDFULNESS

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**Head of Mental Health Risk**

# This is a Basic Introduction to Mindfulness



# COVID-19 Anxiety and Mindfulness



\*Mental Health.gov

# Mindfulness – What is it?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

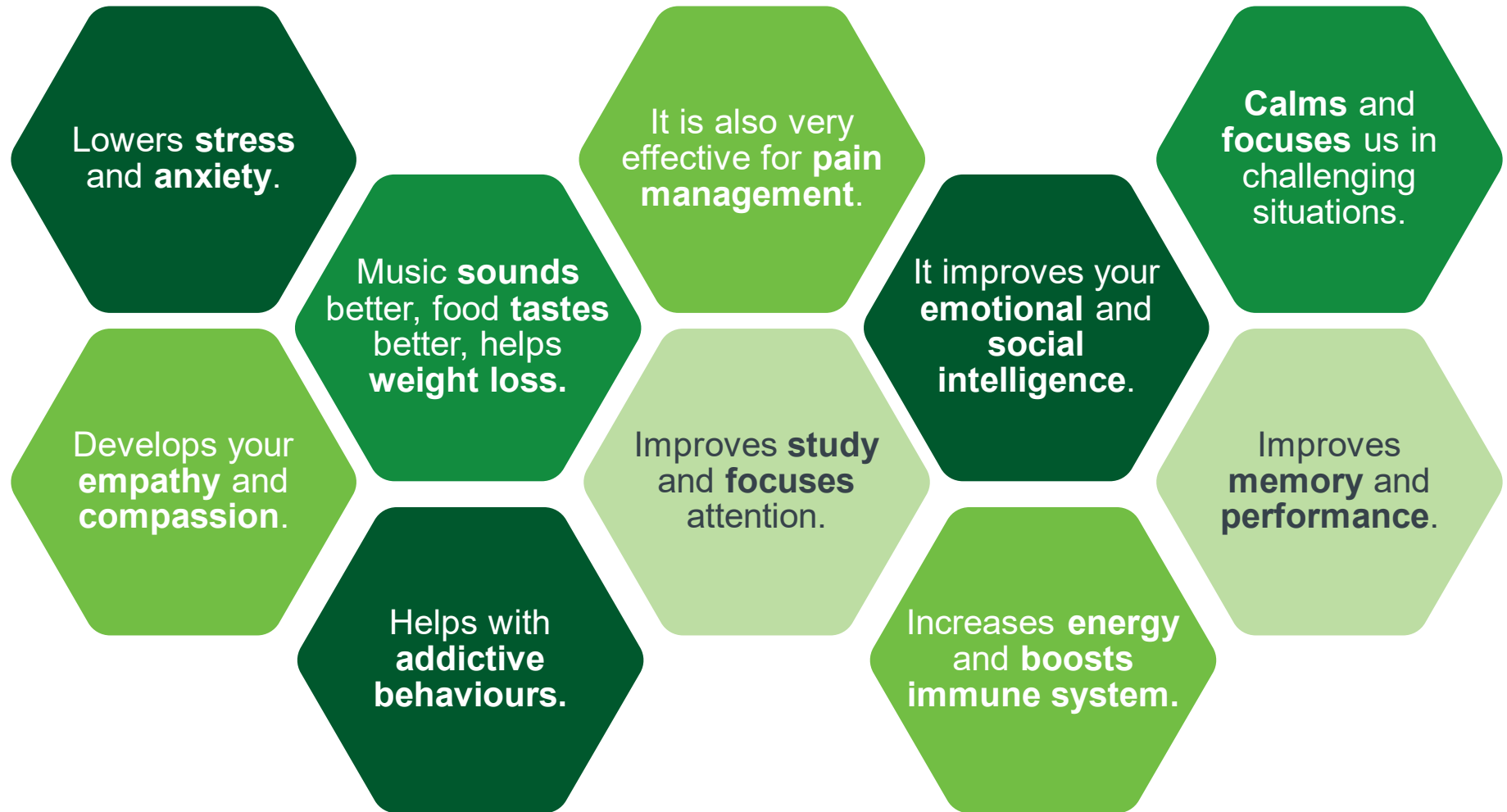


# Mindfulness – Why be mindful?

Mindfulness practice can help us to increase our ability to regulate emotions, and decrease stress, anxiety, and depression. It can also help us focus our attention, as well as to observe our thoughts and feelings without judgment. As we become more present in our lives and in relation to others, it can help us to make better decisions, to manage our emotions, and to be more fully engaged in life.



# The Benefits



Source: NHS, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

# How do I Begin?

## Start Small – Five Minutes a Day – Practice

You need a **timer.**

Take a seat somewhere quiet where you can relax and won't be disturbed.

Listen along to the practice exercise.

Full instructions are in the **“Helpful Hints and Information”** section.

# Regular Daily Practice

A mindful start can help you focus and prepare for busy day ahead. In the morning, give yourself extra time to get ready.



## Stick with it –

Regularity is essential. All the evidence points to regularity being the key to gaining benefits. It is the accumulative effect of slowing down your mind, and calming anxiety and repetitive or obtrusive thoughts that is so powerful.



Q & A

**THANK YOU**

Q&A

**Thank you**



# HELPFUL HINTS AND INFORMATION

## THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

# The Benefits

- 1 It lowers **stress, anxiety**, and other destructive emotions (Mindfulness actually shrinks the brain's "fight or flight" centre, the amygdala. This primal region of the brain, associated with fear and emotion, is involved in the initiation of the body's response to stress; this is the part of the brain responsible for so many destructive emotions like fear, unhappiness, and anger).
- 2 It reduces **depression** (clinical trials are showing that mindfulness is as effective as medication with no side effects).
- 3 It decreases **insomnia**, increases your **sense of well being**, reduces lethargy and increases energy both mentally and physically.
- 4 It is also very effective for **pain management**.
- 5 It sharpens your memory and increases your **focus** and **attention**.

# The Benefits ...Continued

- 6 It improves health and boosts **immunity**. In fact, mindfulness is shown to have beneficial effects on many serious illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

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- 7 It creates clearer, more **focused** thinking and improves **efficiency** at work and at home.

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- 8 It improves **confidence** and **emotional resilience**.

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- 9 It reduces compulsive and **addictive tendencies** and has also been shown to work better than any diet for effective long-term weight loss

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- 10 It turns out to also be the single most important determining factor in whether or not you will be **happy** in your life (once your survival needs are met).

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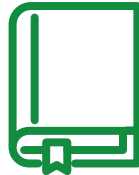
- 11 It improves your **emotional** and **social intelligence** and develops your **empathy** and **compassion**. It is also shown to improve relationships.

# Other Things To Do...



## Mindfulness/meditation

There are lots of apps; **Headspace** and **Calm** you have to pay a small fee for. Alternatively, you can go on to **Youtube** and search for **guided mindfulness** and **guided meditation**. I suggest that you do this before bed and first thing in the morning.



## Journal things

it may be useful to write down on a notebook or journal your worries. Allow yourself to worry, put it down in writing in a notebook, and then put that away. Once you have written it down, let it go.



## Draw circles

drawing circles; circle of control and a circle of no influence – and fill them with things in your life that you worry about. This helps you to remember what things you can impact and those that, no matter how much you worry, you can do nothing about.

# HELPFUL HINTS AND INFORMATION

## OTHER THINGS TO DO

# Other Things To Do



## Stay connected

Either by FaceTime, Skype, or by telephone. Maintaining strong connections will help you to feel supported and surrounded by positive and good energy.



## Laugh

Get the endorphins going, watch comedies, read joke books. The ability to find the funny pumps oxygen into adverse situations. With humour, we can live our lives a little more honestly, and less fearfully, even though we can't make bad things go away.



## Eat healthy and exercise

We know it maybe difficult for some at this moment in time, but where possible choose fresh fruit and veg, limit the amount of caffeine and alcohol intake. Take walks or take part in free YouTube exercises. This will all help contribute to a good healthy mental mind.

**Remember we are all in this together and the storm will pass. Keep positive and keep the faith.**



# Useful Self Help Guides

## My recommendations for self help books or Audible are:

1

Chimp paradox – by Prof Steve Peters - Recognise how your mind works, understand emotions and thoughts and become the person you would like to be.

2

Everything is F\*\*\*ked (A book about hope) by Mark Manson

3

You can heal your life by Louise Hay – change your circumstances through the power of the way you think

4

The Ultramind Solution by Dr Mark Hyman – Learn how to heal from depression and anxiety

5

Be Extraordinary by Jennifer Wild – Discover how you can flourish with renewed resolve to face any problem with grace and ease.

NHS website has recommendations on Self-Help Therapies

# Useful Self Help Guides

For inspirational messages and videos, follow the below on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, some have podcasts to:

1

**Jay Shetty**

A former monk, turned host, storyteller and virtual creator.

2

**Brene Brown**

Researcher, Story Teller on Mental Health

3

**Nawal Mustafa**

The brain coach – PHD student – Clinical Neuropsychology

4

**Russell Brand**

Actor and now self care expert

Follow groups on Instagram and Facebook such as Happyplaceofficial, projecthappiness\_org, findyourshinetherapy, iamfearlessoul, positivevibes

There are lots of Ted talks and motivating speeches on YouTube. Replace watching soaps with this and see your life improve massively.

# HELPFUL HINTS AND INFORMATION

## MINDFULNESS EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

# How Do I Begin?

Start Small – Five Minutes a Day – You Need a Timer and Quiet Space

## Basic Mindfulness/Meditation

1

**Take a seat**, it can be a chair, a settee, office chair, car seat, or even a park bench. If you prefer the floor, you could sit on a cushion. The key thing is to make sure you have a stable, solid seat – a position that doesn't leave you feeling as though you're perched or as though you might rock back and forth. You can even do this standing up.

2

**Now let's pay attention to our lower half:** our legs, feet, bottom. If you're on a cushion you could simply cross your legs comfortably in front of you. Make sure your knees are at the same level or below your hips, otherwise, it's going to be uncomfortable after awhile. If you're seated on a chair, it's a good idea to have your feet on the floor, fully touching the floor.

3

**Focus on the upper half of your body now:** the torso. We want to straighten but not stiffen our spine. Try leaning over a bit first, letting yourself relax down, and then lift up. Allow your spine to have its natural curvature, which is the shape of a question mark. You should have a feeling of being upright. If you have some issues with your spine, just get yourself into whatever works for you as a comfortable, upright posture.

# Start Small – Five Minutes a Day – You Need a Timer and Quiet Space

4

**Now for our arms and hands.** The upper part of our arms should be parallel with our torso. And we let our hands drop and rest naturally from there. As long as your arms are parallel, that keeps you from hunching over or being too stiff.

5

**Let's focus on our head and eyes now.** The first thing we do is just drop our chin slightly and allow our gaze to lower. At this point, you can let your eyes close or you can keep them open. Just feel the relaxation of your eyes – they do so much work so much of the time. This is our opportunity to let them relax.

6

**The last part we pay attention to is our mind and body together.** First, notice points of contact. Notice how it feels to have your feet touching the floor. Or if you're seated cross-legged on a cushion, notice the contact that your legs have with that cushion; feel your bottom touching your chair or cushion. It's very important where you have your points of contact.

# Start Small – Five Minutes a Day – You Need a Timer and Quiet Space

7

**Now tune into your breath, simply pay attention to your breath.** Your breath coming in, and going out. Notice when and where you feel your breath in your body. Breathe in slowly and think “rising” breathe out slowly think “falling”. Do this for 5 minutes and increase to 10 minutes then to 15 minutes a day.

8

**Be Kind to your wandering mind.** You can notice here that you think all sorts of thoughts. Your mind may start to wander, it is not a problem. Just let your mind flow and then bring your mind back to being in your chair or redirect your attention to your breathing. If something upsets you, come back to your breathing, and back to just being settled.

9

**Now, let’s take one last deep breath in ... and fully out.** And open your eyes.



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