

Feel Better Fast (Mindfulness)

Student Workbook



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Feedback Form: https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3L7zIHzZMCIMyMJ

Welcome!

Welcome to **Feel Better Fast**, a fast-paced, 3-session seminar designed to help you make a change in your life by learning mindfulness techniques, as well as ways to cope with distressing emotions and thoughts. The goal is to provide you with some skills to recognize and manage strong emotions you may be experiencing. We hope you find it helpful.

Remember, this intervention is not intended to “get rid of” unpleasant emotions. While occasionally unpleasant, difficult emotions can actually be helpful and motivating. Our hope is that these three sessions provide you with a jumping board from which to integrate skills into your daily life.

By the end of this course, you will have received a lot of information and at times it may feel overwhelming. Remember that like any skill (e.g., learning to ride a bike), the skills you will learn in **Feel Better Fast** take time and practice to master. At times, you may encounter obstacles and/or find it difficult to integrate these skills into your daily life. That’s okay, it’s how change works, and as with all change, it’s important to practice as much as you can, even after encountering setbacks.

Think of your practice of these skills as a form of “mental health hygiene.” At the outset, it may seem tedious and you may question why you need to practice these skills so often. Think of it like dental hygiene—you brush your teeth multiple times a day to prevent the buildup of plaque and ultimately to prevent cavities. Similar to brushing your teeth, daily practice prevents a buildup of anxiety and stress over time. The more you practice and use these skills as part of your daily routine, the less tedious they may seem because they simply become a regular part of daily life.

Should you wish to focus more in depth on any of your concerns, you may debrief with a therapist following completion of **Feel Better Fast** to discuss options.

If at any time you feel that you need additional support, please let your Feel Better Fast leader know or contact CAPS at (303)-492- 2277. Walk in hours are Monday through Friday 10am to 3:30pm. You may also find additional resources online at www.colorado.edu/counseling

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Feel Better Fast?

Feel Better Fast is a fast-paced, 3-session seminar designed to help you make a change in your life by learning mindfulness techniques, as well as ways to cope with distressing emotions and thoughts.

Why does Feel Better Fast use a 3-session model?

Teaching Feel Better Fast over the course of 3 sessions allows you sufficient time to learn the concepts with time to practice between sessions. Keeping it to three 60-minute sessions allows you to find time in your busy schedule to learn these skills.

What if I need more than 3 weeks to learn the model?

You are not alone. The skills taught in Feel Better Fast are difficult and take time to build. For this reason, we offer follow up options for anyone who would like additional support. Please see the front desk to schedule a follow up.

What if I don't feel comfortable in groups?

Many people feel a little anxious about participating in a group. Feel Better Fast is structured and curriculum-driven, like an academic class. You are not required to speak if you do not feel comfortable doing so. The facilitators respect each participant's right to share only what they are comfortable sharing and never require you to share sensitive or potentially embarrassing information.

What if I have an urgent need to see a counselor during Feel Better Fast?

Simply let the facilitator or CAPS' front desk staff know, and they will facilitate you getting the help you need. You can also walk in to CAPS Monday through Friday 10am to 3:30pm with limited exceptions. The CAPS phone number is available to you 24/7 at (303) 492-2277.

Why do I have to do homework?

The focus of this workshop is on building skills to cope with challenging emotions; in order to achieve that goal, regular practice is essential. Any homework offered is simply a suggestion for ongoing practice. The more you practice, the more you may find you get out of this workshop. You will not be required to provide your responses at any time.

IN SESSION WORKSHEETS



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindfulness: "the awareness that emerges through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment" (Kabat-Zinn 2003, p.145).

Be here. Right Now. Non-judgmentally.

Mindfulness Skill Sets

What Skills - What you do to be mindful

- Observe
- Describe
- Participate

How Skills – How you do what to be mindful

- Non-judgmentally
 - One-mindfully
 - Effectively
-

OBSERVE

Observing brings you into the present

Steps to observing

- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Notice on the experience without describing it.
- Observe things inside of yourself
- Observe things outside yourself

When a thought comes along

- Just notice it
- Return your attention

Observing inside

- Step back and watch your mind
- See If a thought comes in
- Notice it

DESCRIBE

Describing is putting words to what you notice

- You can describe things outside of yourself
- You can describe things inside of yourself
- You can describe thoughts put them into categories like
 - Worry thoughts
 - Planning thoughts
 - Critical thoughts
- The key is being able to tell the difference between a thought and a fact
- Describe only what you observe
- Do not add to or subtract from what you see
- Do not make interpretations

PARTICIPATE

Participating is being present fully in whatever activity you are engaging in

- Throw yourself into an activity
- Become one with the activity
- Lose self-consciousness in an activity
- Participating is really hard

HOW SKILLS OVERVIEW

How skills refer to:

- How to Observe
- How to Describe
- How to Participate

How Skills Set

- Non-judgmentally
- One-mindfully
- Effectively

NON-JUDGMENTALLY

Judging is observing a fact and then adding an evaluation of good or bad to it.

Know the distinction between

- Observing and JUDGING
- Observing and DESCRIBING

JUDGING: Mary said something not true on purpose and she is bad for lying

DESCRIBING: Mary said something not true on purpose & there were consequences for lying.

Judging is a shorthand way to describe consequences

- NEGATIVE = "bad"
- POSITIVE = "good"

Judging short hand sometimes confuses the difference between-

- Judging consequences as good or bad
- Judging persons as good or bad

Problems with judgments

- Hard to react to the real world
- Causes unending problem emotions

Steps for reducing judgments

1. Is it a priority to reduce judging? Do or do I not want to reduce judging?
2. Notice judgments: thoughts, actions, voice tone
3. Monitor judgments by counting them. (Remember; do not judge your judging.)
4. Replace judgments with consequences & know the difference between judgments & facts

ONE-MINDFULLY

One-mindfully means doing ONE thing at a time

- Observe one-mindfully
- Describe one-mindfully
- Participate one-mindfully

What interferes with one-mindfully?

- Not liking the current moment you are in
- When the past and the future get in the way

Three reasons to use one-mindfully

1. More efficient
2. Allows you to live life to the fullest
3. Reduces suffering

EFFECTIVELY

Effectively means doing what works

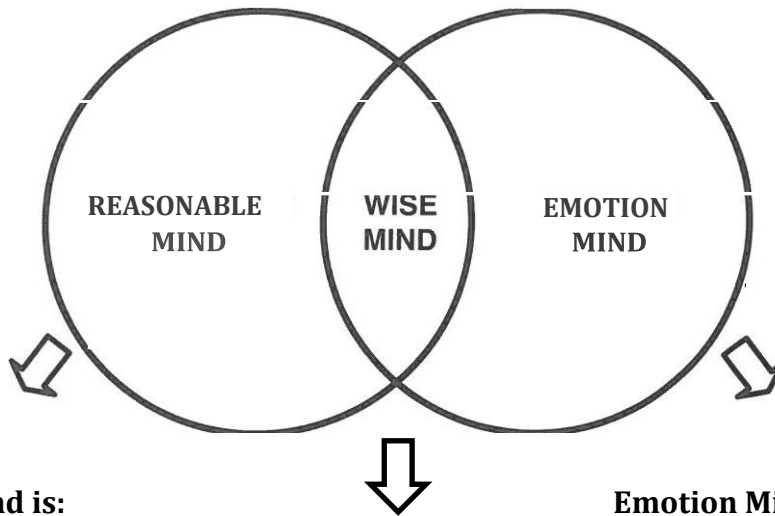
Steps to being effective – ask yourself

1. What are my goals?
2. What do I need to do to reach them?

What gets in the way of being effective?

1. Wanting to be right
2. Not wanting to make the effort
3. Not focusing on your most important goals

MINDFULNESS HANDOUT



Reasonable Mind is:

Cool

Rational

Task-Focused

When in reasonable mind,
You are ruled by facts, reason, logic and pragmatics. Values and feelings are not important.

Wise Mind is:

The wisdom within each person

Seeing the value of both reason and emotion

Bringing left brain and right brain together

The middle path

Emotion Mind is:

Hot

Mood-Dependent

Emotion-Focused

When in emotion mind,
You are ruled by your moods, feelings, and urges to do or say things. Facts, reason, and logic are not important.

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APPENDIX

Mindful Strategies

ONE-MINDFULLY

- **DO ONE THING AT A TIME.** When you are eating, eat. When you are walking, walk. When you are bathing, bathe. When you are working, work. When you are in a group, or a conversation, focus your attention on the very moment you are in with the other person. When you are thinking, think. When you are worrying, worry. When you are planning, plan. When you are remembering, remember. Do each thing with all of your attention.
- If other actions, or other thoughts, or strong feelings distract you, **LET GO OF DISTRACTIONS** and go back to what you are doing-again, and again, and again.
- **CONCENTRATE YOUR MIND.** If you find you are doing two things at once, stop and go back to one thing at a time.

SELF-COMPASSION

- The important part of mindfulness is not just noticing the moment but also noticing when you are not able to be in the moment.
- When you notice that you are not in the moment that is success because now you can refocus your attention on the moment.
- Try not to blame yourself or be unkind to yourself when you do notice your mind wandering.
- Bring your attention back to the moment with kindness and self-compassion.

EFFECTIVELY

- **FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS.** Do what needs to be done in each situation. Stay away from "fair" and "unfair," "right" and "wrong," "should" and "should not."
- **PLAY BY THE RULES.** Don't "cut off your nose to spite your face."
- Act as **SKILLFULLY** as you can, meeting the needs of the situation you are in. Not the situation you wish you were in; not the one that is just; not the one that is more comfortable; not the one that...
- Keep an eye on **YOUR OBJECTIVES** in the situation and do what is necessary to achieve them.
- **LET GO** of vengeance, useless anger, and righteousness that hurts you and doesn't work.

Adapted From Skills Training Manual by Marsha Linehan. © 1993 The Guilford Press.

Weather Metaphor:

We live in Colorado, which can have a wide range of weather within a single week or even a single day. Some people live in places where it's almost always sunny and calm. Similarly, many of us have emotions that can vary, sometimes unpredictably, and be rather intense. Those folks who are just sunny and calm, well, good for them!

Imagine if you were a person who was trying to live in Colorado with only shorts and a T-shirt for clothing. If you got caught in a thunderstorm, or worse, a snowstorm, you would get very wet and cold, even potentially be in danger of serious harm. You would feel helpless and out of control much of the time, because you wouldn't be able to go anywhere on certain days or times of year because of the weather, making it impossible to function. You might feel really angry at the weather.

If, however, you gradually became more accepting that weather is part of life here in Colorado, and acquired more tools for coping with the weather, you would begin to feel more able to function. For example, a raincoat would go a long way towards being able to tolerate rainy weather. A thick jacket and boots could help you tolerate snowy weather, even if snowstorms still annoy you.

You might get in the habit of looking out the window and reading weather reports to anticipate what could be coming, and plan accordingly, or carry an umbrella in your bag all the time. Having all these tools for coping with the weather would help you feel less stressed about when and whether it was going to storm.

Similarly, if we can learn to accept that emotions arise from time to time as part of life, and develop our toolkit of coping strategies, we can handle our emotional "weather" more effectively and function better. Mindfulness is one strategy for doing this.

Eating One Raisin: A First Taste of Mindfulness

1. Holding
 - a. First, take a raisin and hold it in the palm of your hand or between your finger and thumb.
 - b. Focusing on it, imagine that you've just dropped in from Mars and have never seen an object like this before in your life.
2. Seeing
 - a. Take time to really see it; gaze at the raisin with care and full attention.
 - b. Let your eyes explore every part of it, examining the highlights where the light shines, the darker hollows, the folds and ridges, and any asymmetries or unique features.
3. Touching
 - a. Turn the raisin over between your fingers, exploring its texture, maybe with your eyes closed if that enhances your sense of touch.
4. Smelling
 - a. Holding the raisin beneath your nose, with each inhalation drink in any smell, aroma, or fragrance that may arise, noticing as you do this anything interesting that may be happening in your mouth or stomach.
5. Placing
 - a. Now slowly bring the raisin up to your lips, noticing how your hand and arm know exactly how and where to position it. Gently place the object in the mouth, without chewing, noticing how it gets into the mouth in the first place. Spend a few moments exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth, exploring it with your tongue.
6. Tasting
 - a. When you are ready, prepare to chew the raisin, noticing how and where it needs to be for chewing. Then, very consciously, take one or two bites into it and notice what happens in the aftermath, experiencing any waves of taste that emanate from it as you continue chewing. Without swallowing yet, notice the bare sensations of taste and texture in the mouth and how these may change over time, moment by moment, as well as any changes in the object it-self.
7. Swallowing
 - a. When you feel ready to swallow the raisin, see if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow the raisin.
8. Following
 - a. Finally, see if you can feel what is left of the raisin moving down into your stomach, and sense how the body as a whole is feeling after completing this exercise in mindful eating.

Williams, J. M. G., Teasdale, J. D., Kabat-Zinn, J., & Segal, Z. V. (2007). *The mindful way through depression, freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Breathing Exercises

Belly (or Diaphragmatic) Breathing

You can do this exercise in any position, but it is helpful to do this exercise while lying down when first learning belly breathing.

1. Lie comfortably on your back, with a pillow under your head, your knees bent and your back flat. You can stretch your legs out if that's more comfortable.
2. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your upper chest.
3. Inhale slowly and expand your belly as you breathe so that your lower hand moves with your belly. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.
4. Slowly exhale, focusing on the movement of your belly and lower hand as it returns to its original position.
5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 for several minutes, always focusing on the movement of the belly as you breathe. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breathing.

Breath-Counting Exercise

This exercise focuses on the use of counting with the rhythm of the breath. Start with a short period of time and gradually increase the time. Set a timer so that you do not have to worry about when to stop.

1. Find a comfortable position. Take several deep breaths and settle into yourself. You may either close your eyes or keep them open, depending on your own comfort. If you keep them open, fix them on an object or a spot on the floor about four feet in front of you. Your eyes may be either focused or unfocused.
2. Take deep, comfortable breaths. Notice your inhalation. The pause between inhaling and exhaling, your exhalation, and the pause before starting again.
3. As you inhale, count, "one..." As you exhale, count, "two..." Inhale, "three..." Exhale, "four..." Continue until you reach 10 then start over.
4. If you lose count, simply begin with "one" on your next inhalation.
5. If you notice your mind has wandered, gently notice this, and return your focus back to counting your breath.
6. If you notice any body sensations catching your attention, focus on that sensation until it fades. Then return your attention back to counting your breaths.

CAPS Workshops

Please note workshop offerings are subject to change each semester. Please call CAPS at (303) 492-2277 for the most up to date information on CAPS' current offerings.

Anxiety Toolbox:

This workshop is a two-part series designed to help you understand anxiety symptoms and build skills to manage these symptoms. The sessions include modules dedicated to understanding anxiety, learning deep breathing and grounding skills, introducing a method for slowing down and disentangling anxious thoughts, and developing alternative responses to anxiety.

Feel Better Fast:

This workshop is a three-part series designed to help you make a change in your life by learning mindfulness techniques, as well as ways to cope with distressing emotions and thoughts. Some of the skills you will learn include how to make balanced decisions, to self-soothe, to take a step back from your thoughts and to live by your values. With guidance and support, this workshop might be all you need to get back on track and feeling better in no time.

COVID Workshop Series

The COVID workshop series is composed of 4 independent workshops designed to help you cope with ways in which COVID-19 has changed our lives. This is a great option if you're short on time, wanting some quick coping skills, and/or are noticing distress related to COVID. They include the following:

Mindfully Thriving: Learn how to stay present during times of unease. Now more than ever we can all benefit from learning mindfulness skills to stay grounded and present during the pandemic. This workshop teaches mindfulness skills and guides you through 3 different mindfulness exercises you can easily practice at home.

Anxiety Toolbox for COVID: acknowledges the ways in which COVID-19 can increase anxiety. Learn skills and tools to help you manage challenging or triggering thoughts, feelings and behaviors using examples from the current pandemic.

Coping with COVID: normalizes the different responses people have been experiencing related to COVID-19. Learn skills for managing overwhelming emotions and reducing emotional vulnerability during this stressful time.

How to Survive Quarantine with Other People: Because of COVID, more of us are spending more hours than usual at home with family members, partners, or roommates. Learn to address conflict, develop listening skills, and develop healthy boundaries to manage tension and conflict that many have experienced due to that challenges of increased time with others.

Feel Good Fridays:

This drop-in workshop is an opportunity to be led through a powerful guided meditation to undo stress, soothe the nervous system and feel better. Students, staff and faculty are welcome to attend. Participants are encouraged to bring materials for personal comfort that will aid meditation (e.g., yoga mat, a small pillow or cushion, etc.). Please arrive on time so the meditation is not disturbed. There will be no late admittance.

Identity and Sexuality Exploration

Do you have questions about sexuality, gender or relationships? Do you need help navigating gender-affirming healthcare? This workshop provides an inclusive and affirming space to develop knowledge and skills for your personal journey. An informal consultation with a queer-friendly nurse practitioner and clinical psychologist can provide insight for sex and sexuality questions, initiating sexual health exams and testing, gender-affirming treatment options and relationship health. All identities and questions are welcome!

Online Resources

Meditation Oasis www.meditationoasis.com

Mindful www.mindful.org

Mindfulness Research Guide <http://www.mindfulexperience.org/>

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center- Guided Meditations
<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

Russ Harris- ACT Mindfully
<https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/>

Apps for your Smartphone, Tablet, or Computer

ACT Coach

Calm

Stop, Breathe & Think

Headspace

(student discount)

Mindfulness Coach

<https://www.headspace.com/studentplan>

Books for Further Reading

The Mindful Way Workbook by Teasdale, Williams, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn (2014)

The Mindfulness Workbook: A Teach Yourself Guide by Langley (2013)