



INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION

Spring 2021 Flex Presentation -
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Agenda

What is Stress?

Mindfulness Based
Stress Reduction

Practice Mindfulness
Meditation



STRESS



Stress

- (noun): a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.
- Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand.

Stress

- Stress triggers a particular **biological** response.
- Stress triggers your **fight-or-flight response**.
 - Stress hormones are released into your body to prep for the flight or fight!
 - Typically, after the response occurs, your body should relax.
- However, too much constant stress can have **negative effects** on your long-term health.

headaches

Stress can trigger and intensify tension headaches.

increased depression

Chronic stress can wear you down emotionally and lead to depression.

heartburn

Stress increases the production of stomach acid, which could lead to heartburn or make it worse.

insomnia

Stress makes it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep, which can lead to insomnia.

rapid breathing

When you're stressed, the muscles that help you breathe tense up, which can leave you short of breath.

weakened immune system

Long-term stress weakens your immune system's defenses, leaving you more vulnerable to infections.

risk of heart attack

Over time, an increased heart rate and high blood pressure damage your arteries, which could lead to a heart attack.

high blood sugar

Stress causes your liver to release extra sugar (glucose) into your bloodstream, which over time puts you at risk for type 2 diabetes.

pounding heart

Stress hormones make your heart pump faster so that blood can quickly reach your vital organs and limbs.

high blood pressure

Stress hormones tighten blood vessels, which can raise your blood pressure.

fertility problems

Stress interferes with the reproductive system in both men and women, and may make it harder to conceive.

stomachache

Stress affects your body's digestive system, which can lead to stomachaches, nausea, and other tummy troubles.

erectile dysfunction

Your brain plays an important part in the process of getting an erection. Stress can interfere with this process.

low sex drive

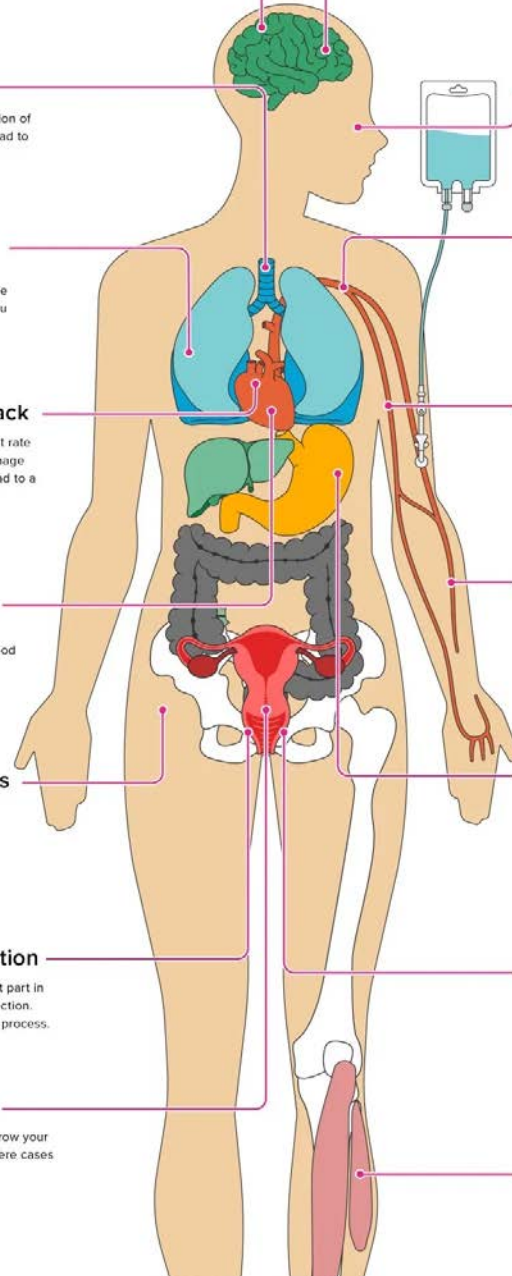
Stress — and the fatigue that often comes with it — can take a toll on your libido.

missed periods

Fluctuating hormones can throw your menstrual cycle off, or in severe cases stop it altogether.

tense muscles

Stress makes muscles tense up, and chronic stress can lead to tension-related headaches and backaches.



Individual Responses to Stress

A person with long dark hair is shown from the side, covering their face with both hands. They are wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

Emotional/Mental Health:

- High levels of anxiety
- Feelings of depression
- Chronic low self-esteem
- Abuse of alcohol/drugs
- Over-eating or under-eating
- Difficulty making connections
- High levels of irritability, mood swings
- Constant headaches
- Too much -- or not enough -- sleep
- Harming yourself

Individual Responses to Stress



Physical Health:

- Heart rate increases
- Blood pressure increases
- Oxygen need increases
- Breathing rate increases
- Palms, face sweat
- Adrenalin flows
- Blood sugar increases
- Blood vessels constrict in hands, face
- Tension
- Jaws Clench
- Body Braces for Action
- Lingering illnesses and aches and pains

Examples of Stressors

- Inability to balance responsibilities (work, family, leisure time, etc.)
- Career/professional challenges
- Childcare difficulties
- Financial difficulties
- Transportation difficulties
- Housing instability
- Food instability
- Relationship issues (family, friends)
- Parenting challenges
- Injury or illness
- Abuse or neglect
- Loss of a family member/loved one
- Environmental challenges/disasters (pandemic, wildfires, etc.)
- Legal issues

Stress Isn't All Bad



Stress isn't necessarily a bad thing. It's what helped our hunter-gatherer ancestors survive! It can be healthy when it helps you avoid an accident, meet a tight deadline, or keep your wits about you amid chaos.



But stress should be temporary. Once you've passed the fight-or-flight moment, your heart rate and breathing should slow down and your muscles should relax. In a short time, your body should return to its natural state without any lasting negative effects.

Stress Isn't All Bad

- On the other hand, severe, frequent, or prolonged stress can be mentally and physically harmful.
- And it's fairly common. In "pre-pandemic times," **80 percent** of Americans reported they'd had **at least one symptom** of stress in the past month. **Twenty percent** reported being under extreme stress.
- Life being what it is, it's not possible to eliminate stress completely. But we can learn to avoid it when possible and **manage it** when it's unavoidable.



MBSR

MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION – WHAT IS IT?



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is **paying attention...**

- On purpose,
- And without judgment

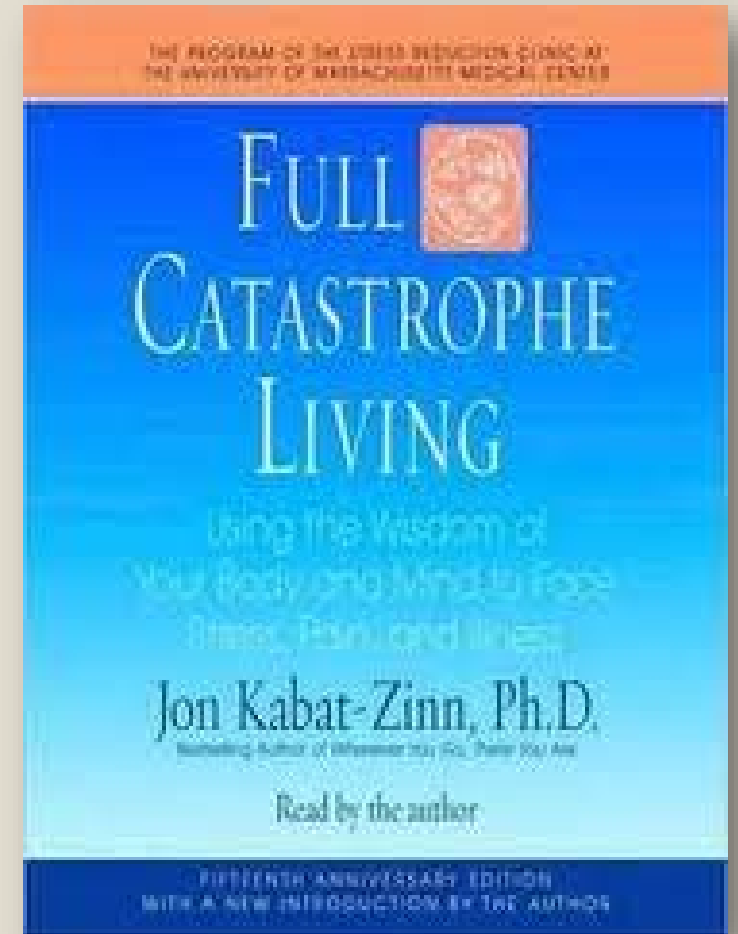
We can be mindful of our **senses**, and of our inner world of **thoughts** and **emotions**.

It helps us to **respond**, not **react**.

It can be a **simple concept**. But it is not often **easy**.

Origins - Now

- Mindfulness meditation is based on Buddhist teachings.
- In the 1960s and 1970s, Westerners visited Southeast Asia and practiced mindfulness meditation. They brought these teachings back to the West.
- In the 1970s – 1990s, clinicians learned that mindfulness meditation could be used to treat a variety of physical and mental health illness.
- In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn created Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School to treat chronically ill patients.
 - MBSR-trained practitioners teach individuals how to manage their stress through mindfulness meditation.



Cultivating Mindfulness

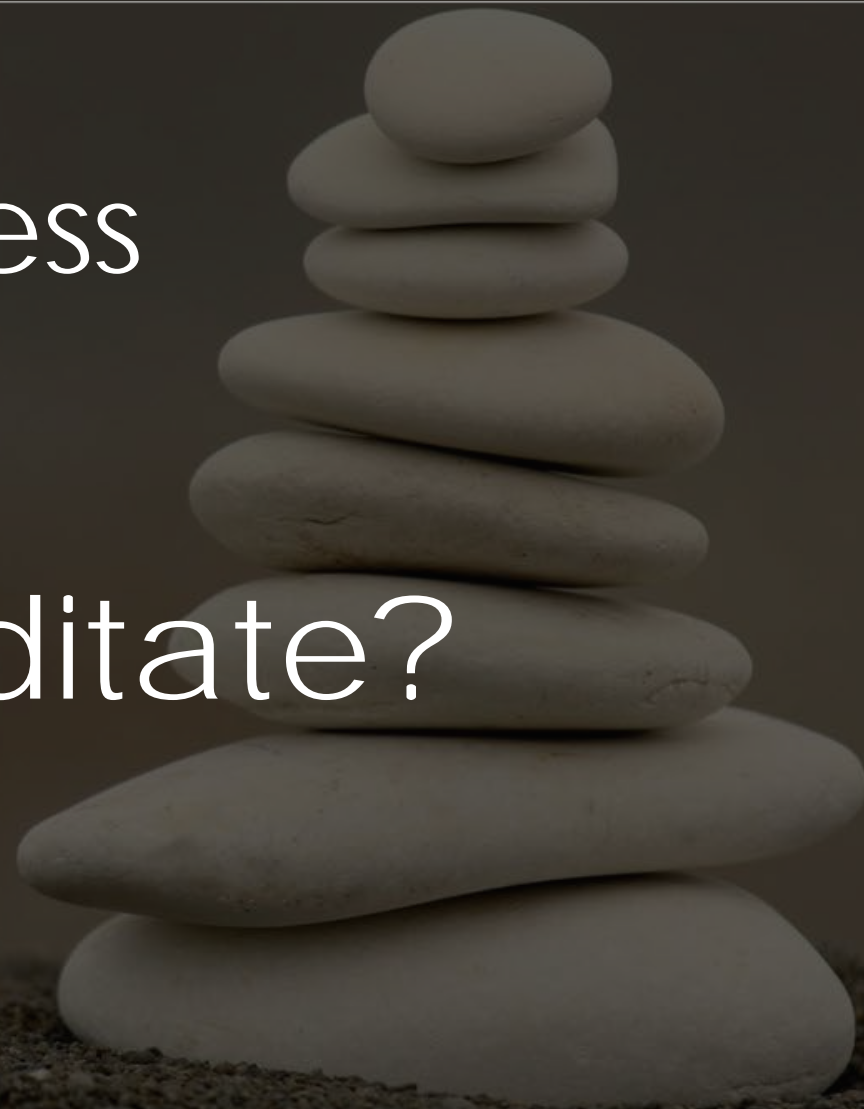


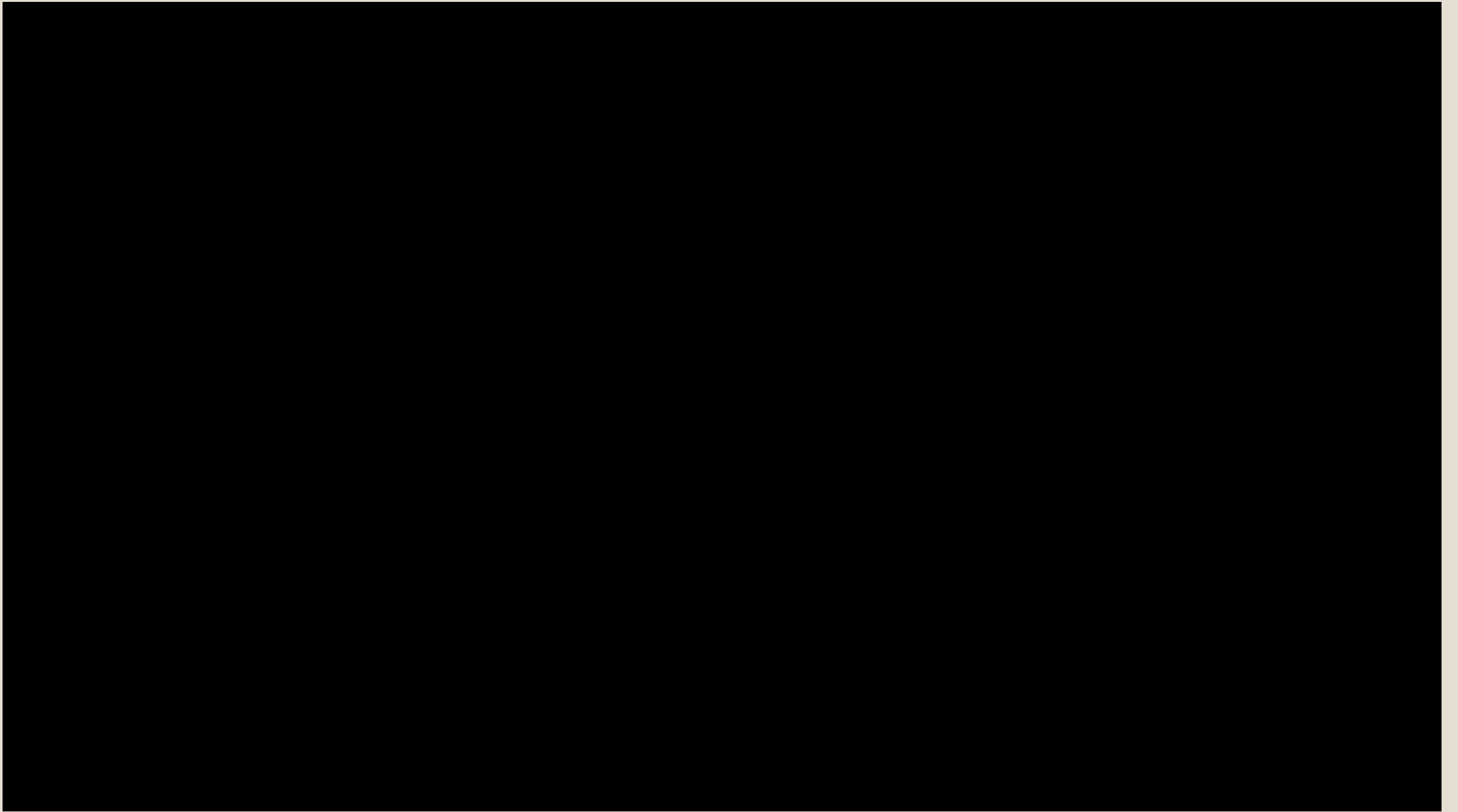
Cultivating Mindfulness

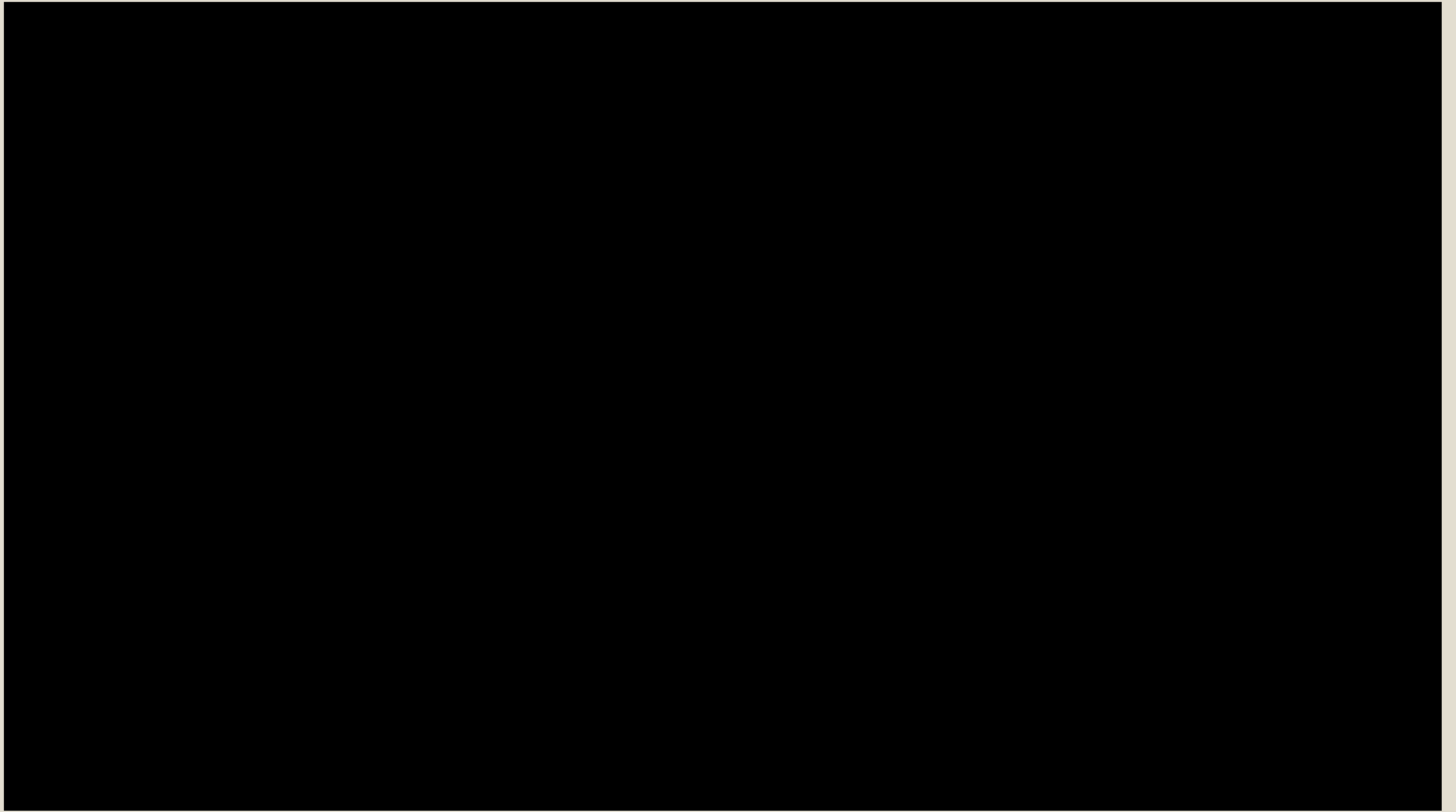
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
 - Meditation
 - Training your mind to think differently – recognize all experiences change. Moments will be different.
 - Think creatively to solve problems, barriers.

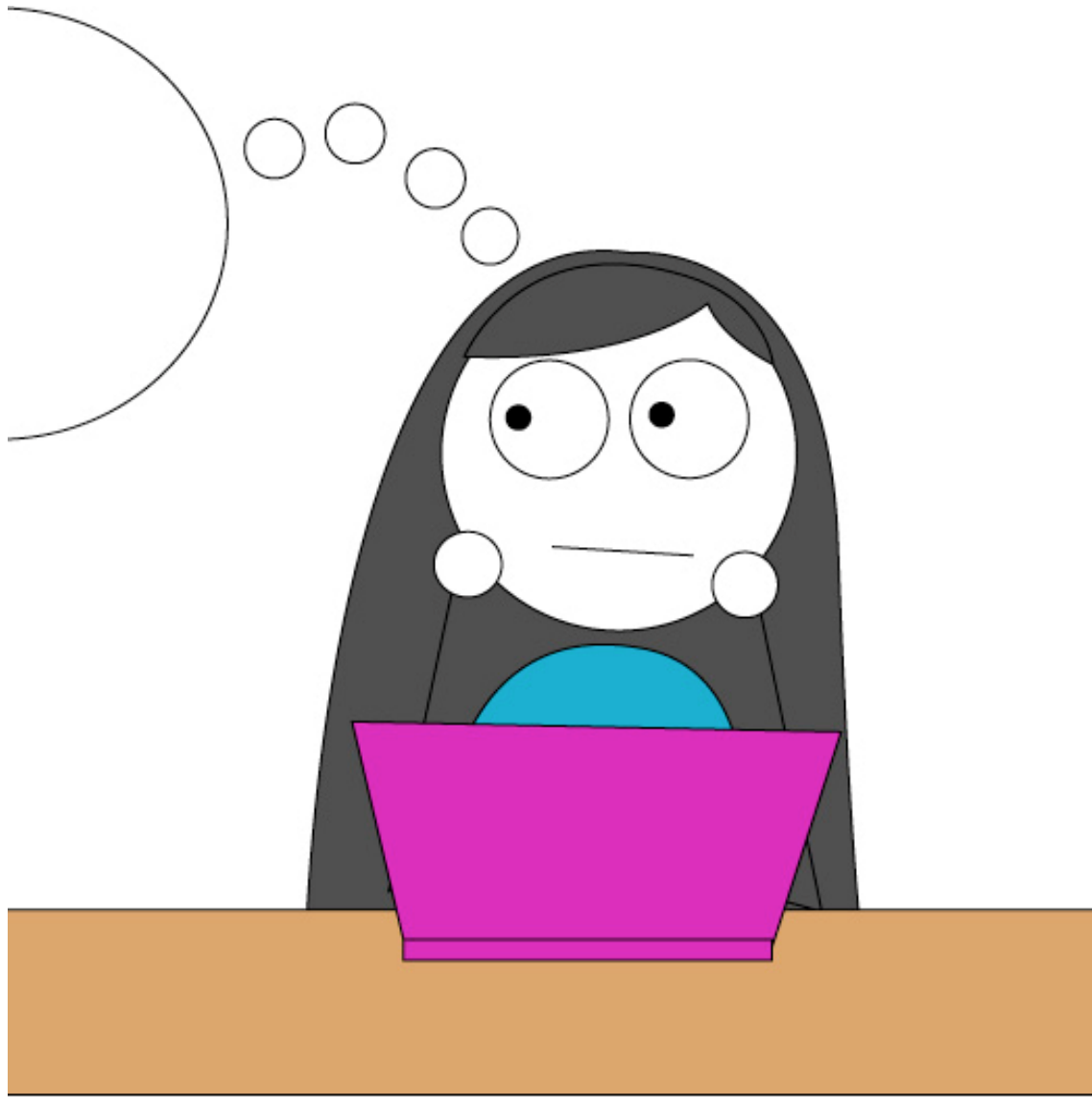
Cultivating Mindfulness

How do I meditate?









What Mindfulness is NOT

- "Thinking about nothing."
 - *It's being aware of our thoughts.*

What Mindfulness is NOT

- Being happy ALL THE TIME and loving EVERY SINGLE MINUTE of life.
 - *It's bringing non-judgmental awareness to the present moment.*



- Religious.
 - *It can be a secular practice.*
 - *It is mental training.*
 - *It is supported by clinical research.*
 - *It is integrated into many workplaces, including Google, General Mills, and the Huffington Post*

What
Mindfulness is
NOT

What Mindfulness is NOT

- Long periods of passive sitting.
 - *It can be active!*
 - *Yoga, walking, daily routines...*





What Mindfulness is NOT

- Living only in the present. Never thinking about the past or planning for the future.
 - *It is awareness and deliberate attention – even on the act of planning...*



What Mindfulness is NOT

- Relaxation.
 - *It might be relaxing. It might be boring and annoying. It's being with WHAT IS.*

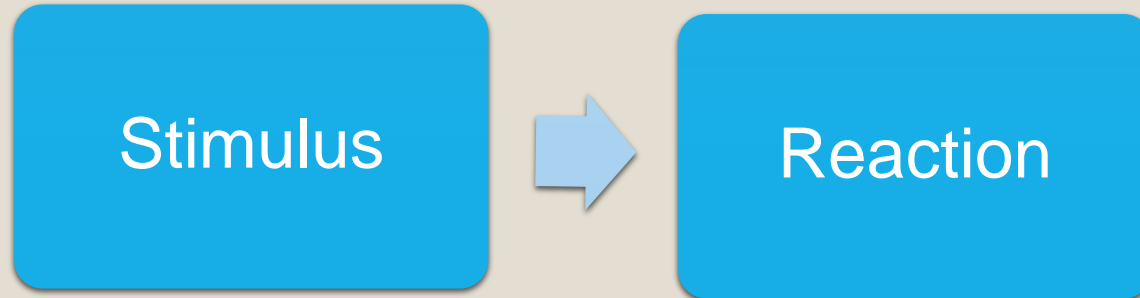
What Mindfulness is NOT

- Zoning out.
 - *It's zoning IN. It is purposeful awareness.*

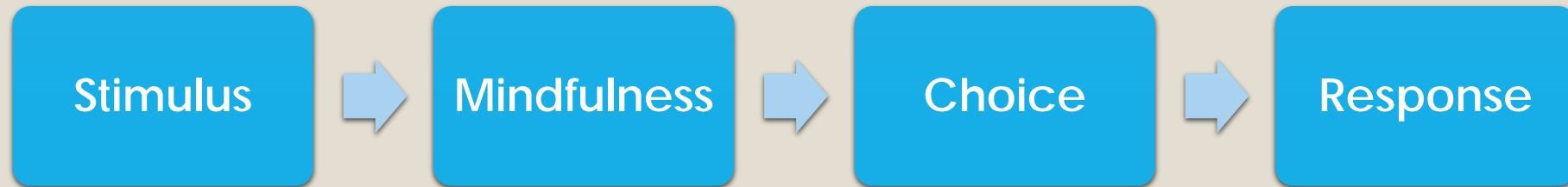


Why Practice MBSR?

Without Mindfulness



With Mindfulness



The Benefits of Mindfulness

Reduce Stress!

Reduce the negative physical and emotional consequences of stress.

Improved attention, focus, and concentration

Increased self-awareness (ability to recognize emotions)

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Improve pain and suffering
associated with chronic illnesses

Improve impulse control, immunity,
recovery from surgery, sleep, and
decision-making

Increased empathy (for self and
others)

Can be especially helpful for
people with ADHD

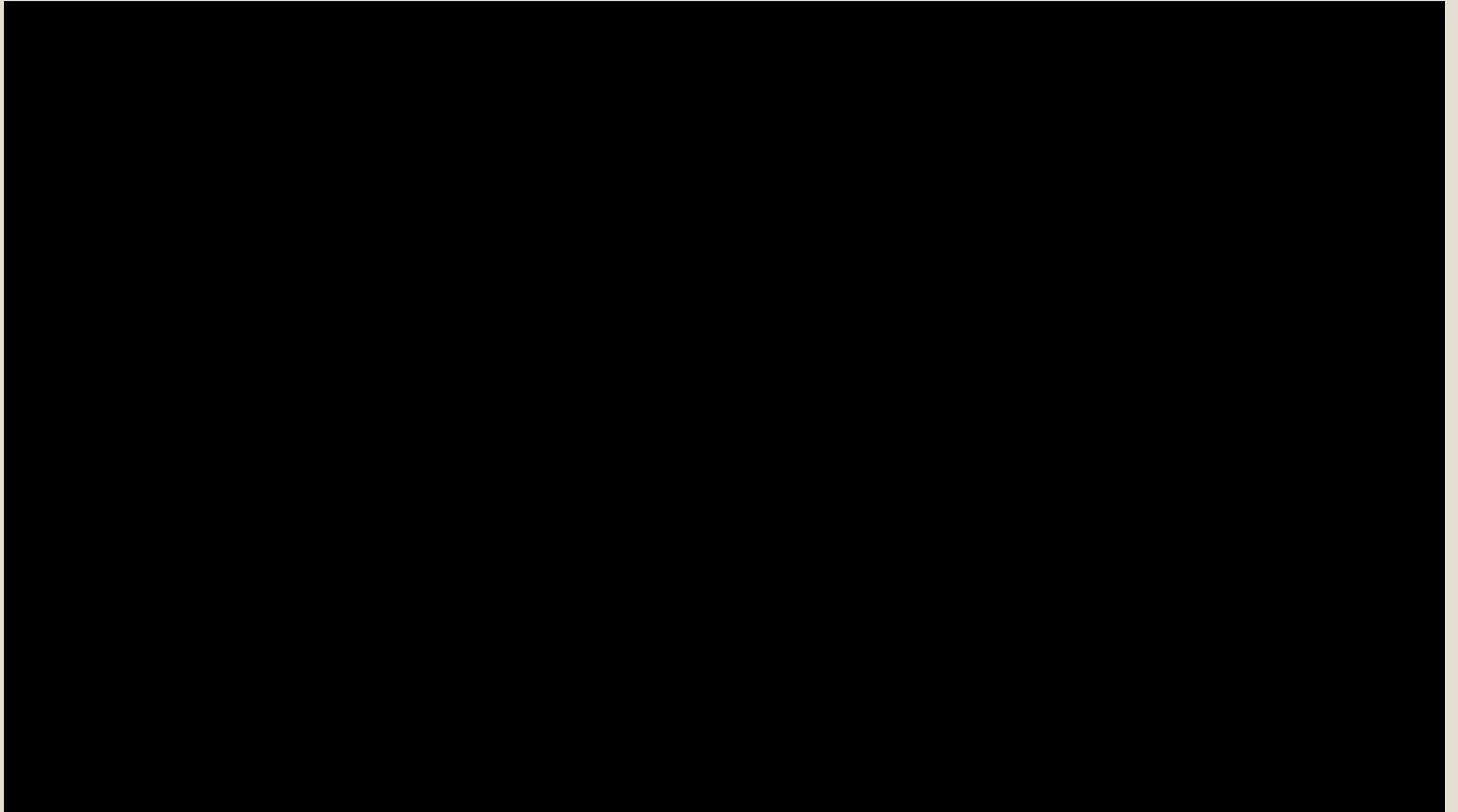
Let's
Practice!



**" Acting with Intention is
Active Mindfulness Meditation "**

Meditation

Getting Started



Meditation

Tips -

- Sit in a relaxed comfortable position (floor or chair, back is supported).
- Breathe – in through your nose, out gently through your mouth
- Soft eyes – let your gaze go unfocused.
- Body scan – paying attention to different parts of the body (feet, legs, torso, arms, hands, neck/shoulders/head) and how they're feeling (tingly, heavy, light, hot, cold, etc.)
- Non-judgmental awareness – it's okay if your mind wanders. No judgements. Just notice and bring it back.

Meditation

Guided Meditation

Regular Practice

- Create “mindful pauses” throughout your day.
- Take 1-5 minutes to practice slowing down, feeling the body, breathing more fully, letting go of thoughts, and returning to the present moment with gratitude and acceptance.
- Set aside 5-30 minutes a day for meditation, yoga, art, or another mindful activity you enjoy.
- Surround yourself with support. Get books, audio, phone apps to learn more and keep you motivated in the practice.
- Take a mind-body class
- Do a meditation retreat

Resources

MBSR Trainings

- [Palo Alto Medical Foundation](#)
- [Stanford Health Care](#)
- [Mindfulness and Therapy Center](#)
- [UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine](#)
- [StressCare - Berkeley](#)

Mindfulness Meditation Apps

- Headspace
- Calm
- Insight Timer

Retreat Centers

- Google MBSR/Mindfulness/Meditation Retreats. Lots of spaces in the Bay Area to practice!

Flex Day Survey

- Thank you for attending!
- Please complete the [Flex Day Survey](#) to provide feedback about this workshop.
- You can access the asynchronous, recorded version of my workshop [here](#).