Mindfulness ~ A Way to Tackle Stress

"When everything feels like an uphill struggle, just think of the view from the top."

~ Author Unknown

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The Great Smoky Mountains

Mindfulness is the intentional awareness of our self and our surroundings. It is the act of becoming more aware of sights, sounds, feelings, smells, and thoughts.

Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the “here and now” with a non-judgmental attitude.

It is a method to cope with and reduce, anxiety, depression, and stress.
Research behind the practice of Mindfulness indicates numerous health benefits.

- Decrease anxiety
- Decrease depression
- Improve the quality of life
- Sleep better
- Lower blood pressure & cholesterol

Learning Mindfulness begins with the foundation of recognizing our personal cues. The first step is to notice our stress cues, which can be signals for us to take a breath and move into a mindful practice of breathing.
Mindful Breathing

One thing we can consciously control is our breathing. Too illustrate this, we will take about 5 minutes to simply pay attention to the breath.

Activity #1

Mindful Movements

Another area of mindfulness is of our movements. How aware are you of your body, your movements? Do you notice how your arms hang, your feet position themselves when standing? How aware are you of your posture and when it causes discomfort or even pain?

Activity #2
Mindful Eating

In this fast paced world, sometimes we throw down our food without even tasting it. This habit can lead to many physical problems such as indigestion. The next activity will give you an opportunity to experience what mindful eating should feel like!

Activity #3

What You Can & Cannot Control

➢ There are always things beyond our control.
➢ Mindfulness practices cannot change what is out of our control, but it can help us to manage the stress and related issues that come with losing that control.
➢ Handout: Circle the items you believe you can control!
Conclusion

✓ We have more control over our lives and events than we think we do.
✓ We are happiest when we have ways to connect within ourselves and re-establish a sense of balance.
✓ Our mental, emotional and physical health suffers when we lose that connection while being busy with projects and life responsibilities.
✓ A simple practice, a change in habit can be so powerful as to help us achieve that balance and lead a happier, healthier life.

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☑ CHOOSE to notice.
☑ SHIFT to gentle acceptance.
☑ PRACTICE daily tuning into mindful awareness.