



Mindfulness booster module

Session A: Introducing mindfulness

Aims

- ▶ To provide a brief 'booster' of the mindfulness module between other modules, where this is felt necessary.
- ▶ To provide a brief overview of mindfulness for individuals wishing to join the group at the beginning of other modules.

Session aims

- ▶ To introduce the concept of mindfulness.
- ▶ To introduce the concept of 'Mind the dog'.

Materials

- ▶ **Worksheet 1.8: 'Mind', the dog.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.9: Training 'Mind', the dog.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.10: Noticing what I do (practice task).**
- ▶ Taste mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**).
- ▶ Ice-breaker activity (**Resource A**).
- ▶ Small edible items e.g. raisins.
- ▶ Flip chart or whiteboard and pens.

Suggested timing: 2 hours

Method

Welcome participants

- ▶ Choose an ice-breaker activity to continue to build on group cohesion (**Resource A**).

Check-in

- ▶ Invite each participant to check-in to the group. Use open questions to encourage those who feel more reserved or reticent. It is important to encourage everyone, including facilitators and supporting personnel, to be involved in the process.

Introduce the concept of mindfulness

Explain the following:

- ▶ Mindfulness is a skill. It is known to help with problems like depression (sadness), anxiety (worry) and strong feelings of anger and physical pain.
- ▶ Mindfulness is simply about being more **aware**. It involves taking more control over the thoughts and feelings we have.
- ▶ Mindfulness is the first skill taught in the program as it is a skill that will be used again and again throughout all other modules.

Explore 'Mind', the dog

- ▶ Using **Worksheet 1.8 'Mind', the dog**, discuss what can happen to our **thoughts** and **feelings** if we let them guide us without us being aware of where they are taking us.
- ▶ Discuss how this can be like having a puppy on a lead, letting it take us where it likes without us being aware of where we are going.
- ▶ This can lead us to places we do not want to go. If we learn to be more aware of these times and take active control, like teaching the puppy to stay close to us and not run off, then we can choose where our mind takes us.
- ▶ Mindfulness is a skill we can learn which can help us control our minds better.
- ▶ Discuss how participants feel about where their thoughts and feelings take them.
- ▶ What happens when thoughts take our mind off what we are doing? How does this affect our ability to stay on task? What problems or issues might this create?
- ▶ Use **Worksheet 1.9: Training 'Mind', the dog** to explore how mindfulness can help us to reduce the intensity of feelings we have and their effect on behaviour (like self-harm or aggression) and to stay on task with things we are doing.
- ▶ Discuss with the group how strong feelings they can't control can affect them, the difficulties that result, and what they would like to see change.

Introducing a mindfulness exercise

There is no immediate need to go into the theory behind mindfulness; this is an opportunity to engage with a mindfulness task.

- ▶ Ask participants to take part in an exercise such as the taste mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**) or an alternative mindfulness exercise that is easy and fun to engage

in. Just allow individuals to freely experience what they are doing.

- ▶ Discuss what participants experienced. What did they notice? Did they notice any thoughts or feelings they had? What was it like to take part? Could they stay focused on what they were doing?

Explore the need to continue to engage and practice things in order to be able to get better at them – this is really important with mindfulness skills.

Practice task

- ▶ Introduce **Worksheet 1.10: Noticing what I do (practice task)**. Ask participants to identify one activity that they are going to engage in everyday until the next session. Explain that it is helpful if this is something they do every day at about the same time, such as having a drink, eating, or taking a shower. Write or draw this activity on the worksheet, or circle one of the pictures available.
- ▶ Ask participants to take more notice of that activity and reflect back on that experience. They will be asked to talk about it in the next session.

Check-out

- ▶ Go around the group asking participants to feed back one thing that has been discussed today. Check if they have any questions.
- ▶ Thank everyone for attending and confirm details for the next session.

Closing mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Conduct the taste mindfulness exercise (Resource A) again for two minutes, but do not reflect on it on this occasion.

Session B: States of mind

Aims

- ▶ To recap the underlying concept of mindfulness and 'mind the dog'.
- ▶ To explore the concept of different mind states.

Materials

- ▶ **Worksheet 1.8: 'Mind', the dog.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.9: Training 'Mind', the dog.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.11: States of mind.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.12: My different mind states (practice task).**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.13: Role-play rules.**
- ▶ Sounds and walking mindfulness exercises (**Resource A**).
- ▶ Hot, cold, and warm labels: three chairs (**Resource B10**).
- ▶ Flip chart or whiteboard and pens (red and blue).

Suggested timing: 2 hours

Method

Check-in

- ▶ Invite each participant to check-in to the group.

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the sound mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**) for two minutes. Ask participants to describe what they experienced.
- ▶ Use the flip chart or whiteboard to record participants' responses.

Practice task review

- ▶ Invite participants to discuss their experiences of 'active engagement' in their chosen activity (**Worksheet 1.10**). Explore what they did and what they noticed by paying more attention. Is it something they do regularly every day? Did they have any problems doing it?

Recap: what we need to do to be mindful

- ▶ Recap the core concepts of 'Mind' the dog (**Worksheets 1.8 & 1.9**).
- ▶ Check for understanding of the following:
 - ▶ That mindfulness is a skill we can learn.
 - ▶ The 'Mind' the dog analogy.
 - ▶ Mindfulness can help us manage feelings.

Introducing the states of mind

- ▶ Explain that we all behave in different ways dependent on the situations that we are in, and how we are feeling in relation to these.
- ▶ Draw a red head and a blue head on the whiteboard/flip chart.
- ▶ Explain the following:
 - ▶ Our minds can be 'hot' or emotional, or 'cold' where our thinking is under control. Give examples of each.
 - ▶ Explain that we are going to look at how our 'hot' and 'cold' minds affect us, and when using each one is useful and when they are not so useful. We will also look at how mindfulness can help us become more in tune to acting wisely – we call this 'warm, wise' mind.
- ▶ Explore **Worksheet 1.11: States of mind**.
- ▶ Discuss how we might behave in relation to the different mind states. Ask the group to look at both positive and negative actions or decisions we might take in both hot and cold minds. For example, 'cold' mind can be good when we need to solve a puzzle or read a bus timetable but it might be too logical and not take feelings into account when making important decisions.
- ▶ Explain that for people with overpowering emotions, getting that balance between strong feelings and rational thought is often hard to do. The solution is to use the 'warm wise mind' to make healthy decisions about your life. The warm wise mind results from using 'cold mind' thinking and 'hot mind' emotion together. It is a balancing between feelings and thoughts. The warm wise mind is the ability to make healthy decisions about your life based on both your rational thoughts and your emotions. This is not always as easy as it sounds.
- ▶ Draw the red head and blue head interlocked together to illustrate this concept.

Hot, cold and warm mind role play

- ▶ Before you lead the role play with participants, give out copies of **Worksheet 1.13: Role-play rules** and go through the rules. (You should also read the guidance in the Introduction on p.12 of the manual.)
- ▶ Place three chairs in a row with a label on each (hot, cold and warm labels – **Resource B10**).

- ▶ Choose an example situation to demonstrate the role play activity. Examples of situations to use might include: following a healthier diet, going to a care meeting, starting a new job, joining a mindfulness group, not receiving a birthday card from someone who usually sends one. Demonstrate the exercise using the three chairs as each of the three states of mind in the chosen situation.
- ▶ First explore the hot and cold mind states and then trying to balance the two to find the wise/warm way of looking at the situation.
- ▶ Ask for volunteers to explore a chosen situation to illustrate the states of mind using the three chairs as each state of mind.

Practice task

- ▶ Ask participants to notice a time between now and the next session when they recognise that they act in reaction to one of the mind states. Ask them to record this on **Worksheet 1.12: My different mind states (practice task)**.
- ▶ Ask participants to continue to take more notice of their chosen daily activity.

Check-out

- ▶ Go around the group asking participants to feed back what has been discussed and if they have any questions to ask.

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the walking mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**) for two minutes. Ask participants to describe what they noticed. Are they becoming more or less aware of their experiences?
- ▶ Use the flip chart or whiteboard to record the responses given.

Close

- ▶ Thank everyone for attending and confirm details for the next session.

Session C: The core skills of mindfulness

Aims

- ▶ To recap the states of mind.
- ▶ To explore the core skills of mindfulness.
- ▶ To be aware of how judgements can affect behavior.

Materials

- ▶ **Worksheet 1.14: Being mindful (example).**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.15: Being mindful (practice task).**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.16: Mindfulness: what we do and how we do it.**
- ▶ Body scan and sounds mindfulness exercises (**Resource A**).
- ▶ Mindfulness images (**Resource B9**).
- ▶ Action cue cards (**Resource B11**).
- ▶ Fact or judgement bubbles (**Resource B12**) (one per student).
- ▶ Flip chart or whiteboard and pens.
- ▶ Mindfulness toolbox (a variety of activities and objects to be mindful with).

Suggested timing: 2 hours

Method

Check-in

- ▶ Invite each participant to check-in to the group.

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the body scan mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**), for three minutes. Ask participants to describe what they noticed.

Practice task review

- ▶ Ask participants to feed back their experiences on the practice task (**Worksheet 1.12: My different mind states**).

Recap: states of mind

- ▶ Recap materials from the previous session.
- ▶ Check for understanding relating to hot, cold and warm (wise) mind.
- ▶ Elicit examples from the participants that may illustrate when we are in each mind state.
- ▶ Briefly discuss the benefit and disadvantages of being in hot or cold mind states.
- ▶ Elicit examples of why developing and using warm mind can be helpful.

Exploring the core skills of mindfulness

Using **Worksheet 1.16: Mindfulness: What we do and how we do it**, talk through each aspect of mindfulness skills in more detail, using a pre-selected mindfulness image to illustrate each (**Resource B9**).

▶ See

Sensing or experiencing without putting words to it. Notice what is happening or what you are seeing, but do not put words onto the experience. Imagine your mind is the sky and your thoughts, feelings and sensations are clouds. Notice each cloud as it goes by.

▶ Say

Use words to signify what you are seeing or experiencing; colours, sights, patterns etc. Describe only what you see, only the hard facts, make no judgements on what you think is happening, or might happen.

▶ Join in

Join in with the one thing at that time, paying attention to what you are doing with full concentration on what is happening in this moment. Notice the tiny details but do not get caught up in other events around us or allow our thoughts to take us away from what we are doing right now. Notice all of the sensations we experience in this particular moment.

▶ One thing

Mindfulness is paying attention to one thing in the present moment. It is not thinking of the past or the future.

▶ Don't judge

Discuss how we need to look at what is happening, or what we are experiencing, without judging it. Judging is tagging something as 'good' or 'bad', 'should' or

'shouldn't', 'worth it' or 'worthless', 'nice' or 'not nice'. It is also about us putting aside our own thoughts about what we think is happening in the situation and how we view what is happening because of this. Emphasise that an important mindfulness skill is NOT judging things this way.

Group exercise

- ▶ Ask participants to choose an action cue card (**Resource B12**) and take a minute to observe it. Say: 'Concentrate only on what you see yourself. If any thoughts or distractions come into your mind – put them on a cloud and let them pass by. Experience the moment. Capture it like a photograph in your mind.'
- ▶ Ask each participant to describe their cue card using only the 'hard facts'. Other participants are to notice if any judgements or interpretations are being made.
- ▶ They should use the 'Judgement' or 'Fact' bubbles (**Resource B12**) to identify when judgements/interpretations are being made, calling out as they notice them. These cards can be filled in to demonstrate how many facts and judgements are made. One set of cards per participant should be sufficient.

Mindfulness in everyday activities (group exercise)

- ▶ Explore with the group the way we participate in everyday activities. Explain that when we have already learnt a skill, doing it often comes as second nature without us having to think about it (e.g. brushing teeth).
- ▶ Open a discussion around how easy it is to do things automatically when we have mastered that skill.
- ▶ Get the group to name activities and things we often do without thinking about them, such as walking, breathing, eating, drinking, showering, driving etc. What happens when we are not fully aware of an activity we are doing?
- ▶ Ask participants to think about how well we do things when we are not focused on them and what difficulties we might have when we are trying to do a number of things at the same time.
- ▶ Use the flip chart or whiteboard to record the responses given.
- ▶ Discuss how being mindful is often like learning something new all over again, noticing details and focusing on that one thing with all our senses.

Practice task: Mindfulness in morning routines

- ▶ Ask participants to pick an activity that is a part of their daily morning routine, such as brushing their teeth, washing their hands, shaving, or having a shower. Explain that when they do it, they should totally focus on what they are doing: the body movements, the taste, the touch, the smell, the sight, the sound etc.
- ▶ Explore what they might notice e.g. 'When you're in the shower; notice the sounds of the water as it sprays out of the nozzle and as it hits your body and then gurgles down the plug hole. Notice the temperature of the water, and the feel of it in your

hair, on your shoulders, and running down your chest. Notice the smell of the soap and shampoo, and the feel of them against your skin. Notice the sight of the water droplets on the walls or shower screen, the water dripping down your body and the steam rising upwards. Notice the movements and sensations of your arms as you wash or scrub or shampoo.'

- ▶ Explain that again and again your attention will wander. As soon as you realise this has happened, gently notice it, note what distracted you, but just let it go and bring your attention back to the shower.
- ▶ Ask participants to record this using **Worksheet 1.15: Being mindful (practice task)**.

Giving examples of how to complete the worksheet may be useful (e.g. Worksheet 1.14: Being mindful (example)). Those with poor literacy skills can be encouraged to draw their experience, or use colours to depict what they experienced.

Check-out

- ▶ Go around the group asking participants to feed back what has been discussed and if they have any questions to ask.

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the sounds mindfulness exercise (Resource A) for three minutes. Ask participants to describe what they noticed.

Close

- ▶ Thank everyone for attending and confirm details for the next session.

Session D: Practicing mindfulness

Aims

- ▶ To recap the core skills of mindfulness.
- ▶ To establish a daily mindfulness practice.

Materials

- ▶ **Worksheet 1.17 Being mindful reflection sheet.**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.18: Mindfulness activities (practice task).**
- ▶ **Worksheet 1.21: My mindfulness daily diary recording sheet (practice task).**
- ▶ Breathing and bubbles mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**).
- ▶ What we do and how we do it – poster (**Resource B13**).
- ▶ Blowing bubbles.
- ▶ Mindfulness toolbox (a variety of different experiences and items to be mindful to).
- ▶ Flip chart or whiteboard and pens.

Suggested timing: 2 hours

Method

Check-in

- ▶ Invite each participant to check-in to the group, ask group members to name any mindful activity that they remember having done in the group so far

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the mindful breathing exercise (**Resource A**). Ask participants to reflect on their experience.

Practice task review

- ▶ Ask participants to feed back their experiences from the practice task (**Worksheet 1.15: Being mindful**). Explore any difficulties they encountered.

Recap – the core skills of mindfulness

- ▶ Use **Resource B13: What we do and how we do it – poster** to briefly recap the skills of mindfulness. Ask if participants remember what the symbols mean.

Emphasise the fact that again and again the mind may wander, but the key to being mindful is recognising these times and gently coming back to the present activity.

Reinforcing the core skills of mindfulness

- ▶ Invite each participant to lead a mindfulness exercise. It is important for participants to engage in the activities within the group setting to reinforce the skill use. For any participant who does not wish to lead, or feels unable to do so, ask them to instruct the rest of the group to participate in their own mindful exercise. Participation in the activity at any level is to be encouraged.
- ▶ Review each participant's experiences of leading the mindfulness activity.
- ▶ Explore any difficulties encountered.
- ▶ Provide participants with **Worksheet 1.17** to help them tailor their feedback.

Practicing mindfulness every day: introducing the mindfulness daily diary

- ▶ Explain that now that participants have experienced and practiced mindfulness, they need to build it into their daily routine. Only if they do this they will gain the full benefits of mindfulness, and be able to use it 'in the moment' when they need to. They should also be increasing their practice week by week until they can be mindful for at least 10 minutes at a time.
- ▶ Emphasise that if participants do not practice they will lose the skill – so it is really important to practice.
- ▶ Introduce **Worksheet 1.21: My mindfulness daily diary recording sheet (practice task)**.

Practice task

Ask participants to start to compile a list of activities that they could be mindful to using **Worksheet 1.18: Mindfulness activities**.

- ▶ Ask participants to complete **Worksheet 1.21 My mindfulness daily diary recording sheet**.

Check-out

- ▶ Go around the group asking participants to feed back what has been discussed and if they have any questions to ask.

Mindfulness exercise

- ▶ Engage in the bubbles mindfulness exercise (**Resource A**) for three minutes.
Ask participants to describe what they noticed.

Close

- ▶ Thank everyone for attending and confirm details for the next session.