

Coping Skills Seminars

Cultivating Resiliency Handout

Counselling Services

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Shifting from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset

Adapted from Carol Dweck (<http://mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/>)

Characteristics	Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
Beliefs	<p>Traits are fixed: I am smart or I am not</p> <p>If I have to try, I am not good enough</p> <p>No matter how hard I try I am not good enough</p> <p>“The disease of me”: my failure (or success) is me</p>	<p>My knowledge and abilities grow with effort</p> <p>The path to excellence is one of commitment to practice</p> <p>Mistakes and failures are meaning-making: they help me learn</p>
Rules	<p>Doing things effortlessly is essential to my identity</p> <p>Hide mistakes and struggles</p> <p>Pay attention to judgement</p> <p>It only counts when I win</p>	<p>To build my brain muscle I have to lift “heavy weights”</p> <p>Target mistakes and incorporate corrections</p> <p>Focus on improvement, not results</p> <p>Mistakes are my path forward</p>
Strategies	<p>Avoid mistakes, procrastinate</p> <p>Avoid discomfort or effort</p> <p>Defend against or dismiss criticism</p> <p>Focus on results</p> <p>Can’t get started</p>	<p>Target mistake-focused learning practice</p> <p>Seek out and interpret criticism/feedback as opportunities to improve</p> <p>Repeat efforts, when it gets easier: choose something harder!</p>
Ideologies	<p>Struggle only conveys failure</p>	<p>“Struggle is not an option; it is a biological requirement.”</p>

Cultivating growth mindset: Learning to learn

Adapted from: <http://mindsetonline.com/whatisit/about/index.html>

“I don’t divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the success and the failures. I divide the world into the learners and the non-learners.” Benjamin Barber

Step 1: Learn to hear your fixed mindset “voice”

- I was born without talent
- That guy is brilliant; either you have it or you don’t
- She was just meant to be the best
- I am only as good as my achievements
- He’ll never step up; I give up on him

Step 2: Recognize that you have a choice

- What are the costs to these fixed rules and messages, beliefs and thoughts, actions and behaviours?
- You mean I don’t have to be the ‘dumb one’ (or ‘the smart one’, ‘the late one’, the disorganized one’ etc)?
- My thoughts, beliefs, and actions can change and grow with me
- Admitting my struggles does not mean I am unworthy

Step 3: Talk back to it with a growth mindset voice

- I am willing to learn new skills to improve
- With effort I can do something I find difficult and it can get easier
- My competency grows with practice

Step 4: Take the growth mindset action

- If I was not afraid to fail, what would this allow me to do?
- Asking for help is not a sign of weakness
- Putting myself in what feels like a risky position, could just mean I am growing

A Guide to Better Sleep

Adapted from “The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook”, 2007 New Harbinger Publications Inc., Oakland, CA

Having good sleep habits contributes to a healthy and happy life. Try the following suggestions if you have trouble falling or staying asleep.

Stay away from caffeine for at least six hours before going to bed. Remember to avoid caffeinated pops or energy drinks with ginseng or other stimulants.

Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and street drugs before going to bed or in the evening. You may believe that alcohol will help you sleep but it actually disrupts sleep patterns.

Stay away from bright lights, especially television or video games, before going to sleep because they are stimulating and activate the brain.

Don't eat a heavy meal before going to sleep because the digestive process can keep you up.

Exercise is helpful for going to sleep but only if it is done early in the evening. A late night work-out is stimulating and will wake up you instead of settling you down to rest.

Ensure that your bedroom is as comfortable as possible. A room that is too cold or too warm makes it difficult to get a restful sleep. It is also important to keep your room as dark and as quiet as possible to prevent your sleep from being disrupted. A sleep mask and ear plugs can help to prevent wakefulness stimulated by light or sound.

It is important to use your bed only for sleeping and sexual activity. You should not be working, reading, playing online games or reading in bed. You need your body to associate your bed with sleep and rest rather than work and activity.

If you have difficulty falling asleep or if you wake in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, it is much better to get out of bed and do something calming and soothing until you feel tired enough to go back to sleep. Avoid reading as it can be stimulating and wake you up more. Don't stay in bed thinking about things you need to do. It will just make you feel more irritated and make it even more difficult to fall back to sleep.

Go to bed at a regular time every night. Wake up at the same time every morning. By creating a regular sleep schedule, your body will fall into a habit of good sleep.

Use some kind of meditation or relaxation method before going to sleep in order to settle your mind and body. Try any or all of the following: having a warm bath, meditation, prayer, writing in a journal, relaxation exercises.

If your sleep difficulties continue, if you have problems staying awake during the day, or if you are feeling depressed or anxious, contact a medical practitioner for advice and guidance.

Breathing techniques

Used with permission from www.getselfhelp.co.uk and Simon Fraser University Counselling Resources

Healthy living is a matter of balance. Relaxation is part of the balancing process alongside other aspects of your lifestyle such as what you eat, your physical activity and how you handle stress. It is important to practice regularly so we can be prepared for the more stressful times.

Our out-breath releases tension in our chest muscles and allows for all of our muscles to release their tension more easily. With your shoulders down take a deep, slow breath in and hold it for five seconds. Feel your abdomen expand as you do this. Breathe out slowly, to a count of five. Breathe in again, make every breath slow and steady and exactly the same as the one before it and the one after it.

As you breathe out, focus on expelling all the air in your lungs; keeping the out-breat going for as long as you can. Practice this for five minutes

Option one:

Try visualizing breathing in the colour blue to absorb all that is calm and relaxing. As you exhale visualize breathing out the colour red indicating the stress and anxiety being expelled from you. If you are alone try making a noise like “whoop” as you exhale the negative energy out.

Option two:

Try visualizing a tranquil and/ or relaxing scene. It may be an imaginary place or somewhere that exists. Ask yourself how do you feel in this safe place? What do your five senses say about this safe place? Imagine smells, sounds, tastes and tactile sensations that go along with your image. If you imagine yourself walking along a tree lined mountain path, notice the bird songs, the light through the trees, the fragrance and colour of the leaves, and feel the breeze on your skin.

Option three:

Step one - Touch your thumb to your first finger and think back to a time you felt healthy fatigue (i.e. after a long bike ride or a hike). Remember the feeling in your muscles and your heart beating slowly.

Step two – Touch your thumb to your second finger and think back to a time when you had a big achievement in your life or when you had finished an important project. Feel the pride of accomplishing something important to you.

Step three – Touch your thumb to your third finger and think back to the nicest compliment you have received. Feel the warmth and happiness from the compliment.

Step four – Touch your thumb to your fourth finger and go back to the most beautiful place you’ve been to or can imagine. Allow the beauty to soak in. Feel safe and secure and let all the tension and stress go. Reflect and enjoy for a while.

Option four:

Sit in a comfortable chair. Close your eyes. Feel the chair supporting your whole body – your legs, your arms, your head. If you can feel any tension, begin to let it go.

Become aware of your head – notice how your forehead feels. Let go of any tension from around your eyes, mouth, your cheeks and your jaw. Let your teeth part slightly and let the tension go.

Now focus on your neck – let the chair take the weight of your head and feel your neck relax. Let your shoulders lower gently down. Notice how your body feels as you begin to relax.

Be aware of your arms and hands. Let them sink down into the chair.

Think about your back – from your neck to your hips. Let the tension go and feel yourself sinking down into the chair. Let your hips, your legs and your feet relax.

Notice the feeling of relaxation take over you.

Notice your breathing – your abdomen gently rising and falling as you breathe. Let the next breathe be deeper and a little slower. Concentrate on being relaxed and on your rhythmic breathing.

When you are ready, count back from 5 to 1 and open your eyes. Breathe deeply and stretch. Look around the room and become aware of your surroundings. Pause before gently rising.

Conclusion:

Practice one of these exercises every day for a few weeks will set up an automatic relaxation process that you can activate whenever you begin to notice stress and anxiety starting to creep in to your day.

Relaxation Strategy: Mindful Breathing

Five-Minute Mindful Breathing Script

Take a few moments to be still. Bring your awareness to your breath wherever you feel it most prominently in your body. It may be at the nose, neck, chest, belly, or somewhere else. As you breathe in normally and naturally, be aware of breathing in, and as you breathe out, be aware of breathing out.

There is no need to visualize, account, or figure out the breath; just be mindful of breathing in and out. Without judgment, just watch the breath ebb and flow like waves of the sea. There's no place to go and nothing else to do, just be in the here and now, noticing the breath – just living life at one inhalation and one exhalation at a time.

As you breathe in and out, be mindful of the breath rising on the inhalation and falling on the exhalation. Just riding the waves of the breath, moment by moment, breathing in and breathing out.

From time to time, attention may wander from the breath. When you notice this, simply acknowledge where you went and then gently bring your attention back to the breath.

Breathing normally and naturally, without manipulating breath in any way, just be aware of the breath as it comes and goes. As you come to this end of this exercise, congratulate yourself for taking this time to be present and mindful.