

OCTOBER 2022

THE RESILIENCE FACTOR

A 115FW Psychological Health Team Publication

FEATURES:

- Pg. 3** - Mindful Attention Assessment Scale
- Pg. 4** - Mental Fitness To-Do List
- Pg. 5** - Suicide Prevention Review
- Pg. 6** - Resources

SCAN
to let us know
you read this
issue!



MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR MIND

Content by Patricia Weiner & Emily Barrett

Mental Fitness training continues! In previous issues, mental fitness basics were covered. This month we're going to take a deep dive into being present, which is one of the many indicators we can use to determine our mental fitness. So, what does it mean to be present? And what does it take to get there?

Being present is a state in which we can better retain information, listen, and be aware of, but not sabotaged by, distractions. Staying in the moment is associated with higher productivity and more energy. It has to do with mindfulness - in fact the terms can be used interchangeably, and we'll find out later that there are even many more ways to describe the concept. Generally speaking, though, it is a practice of just noticing things about us or the world for what they are without adding or subtracting anything . . . observing thoughts, sensations in the body, and emotions in an impartial and neutral way (Altman, 2014).

The way in which each individual person perceives the act of living in the moment takes many different forms. It could be helpful to determine a mindful-

ness vocabulary that resonates with you. Feeling connected to the concept will make the practice more relevant, relatable, and accessible, especially in the moments when it's challenging you the most. So, start to think about how you might describe leaving stress, anxiety, and negative thoughts behind. Here is a list of words and phrases if you need a jump start:

Getting into the game	Chill-axin'
Hitting the pause button	Clarity
In the eye of the hurricane	Impartial witness/spectator
The present moment	Be here now
Coming back to your senses	Making friends with your mind
Watching and observing	Curiosity/being curious
Picturing the ocean or a river	Patience
Changing your relationship to thoughts and feelings	Peace, calm, stillness
Getting in the zone	Putting on the right gear for stormy weather
Changing the channel	Taking a breath
Acceptance of this moment	Focused attention
	Non-judging awareness
	Surfing the moment

Note the ones you like best or of the words/phrases you came up with on your own.

Try out some different activities or new habits that promote focusing on the here and now to see what works best for you. Here are some examples:

Listen to a guided body scan or mindfulness exercise.

Use all your senses. Feel your feet on the ground, note distant or close sounds.

Focus on your breath. Time your breathing for one minute and focus only on breath.

Practice gratitude. Recognize small positives.

Use your break time mindfully. Commit to setting aside distractions - give yourself a 10 minute break from the computer.

Move between activities. Wiggle your toes, stretch, walk a lap around the building.

Check-in with yourself. What am I feeling?

Embrace your playful side.

Practice active listening. Make eye contact, ask questions.

For more ideas google "mindfulness tips" or "tips for being in the present moment." A smart phone app called COVID Coach (free) also has a great selection of mindfulness exercises.

On Page 4, update the ways you are practicing Mental Fitness and identify the items you want to try next.

How Mindful Am I?

On page 3 you'll find a self-assessment that measures one's tendency toward mindfulness. Add your points and divide the total by 15. Higher scores reflect higher levels of dispositional mindfulness. Generally, with higher scores come lower reported negative emotional states.

MINDFUL ATTENTION AWARENESS SCALE (MAAS)

Indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be; treat each item separately from every other item using the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6
almost very somewhat somewhat very almost
always frequently frequently infrequently infrequently never

I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself doing things without paying attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I snack without being aware that I'm eating.	1	2	3	4	5	6

MENTAL FITNESS TO-DO LIST

○ Practice mindfulness

to heighten awareness of your automatic thoughts and feelings; refocus your attention, disrupt negativity, and choose behaviors that align with your goals.

○ Keep a list

of empowering thoughts in a visible location (like Post-Its!). This will reinforce the new thought and make it easier to change course.

○ Practice Gratitude

to shift your thinking toward optimism.

○ Use a coach, trainer, or a fitness partner

to reach goals faster and more effectively.

○ Take care of your emotional health

sooner, rather than later, to prevent more serious conditions or disruptive situations.

○ Avoid procrastination.

It's self-reinforcing; once you put something off, it becomes easier to continue to put it off. It drains your self-esteem and motivation.

○ Take care of your physical health

to optimize cognitive and emotional functioning.

○ Take on new challenges

to keep your brain flexible. Learning or doing something new 'exercises' parts of the brain that aren't part of your regular habits or routines.

○ Prevent burnout.

It's not about overworking. Explore the ways you can connect to your "why" in the work that you do and the people you work with.

○ Be open

to new experiences and opportunities; from trying a new restaurant to backpacking in the Alps!

○ Build 'whitespace' into your day.

This is intentional downtime to slow your body, reflect, and re-center.

○ Stay connected.

Change happens in the context of relationships whether it's family, friends, a pet or the grocery clerk you see every time you go to the store.

○ Be kind to yourself

as you develop this new set of mental muscles. The goal is to build self-compassion, resilience, and mental agility - and no one ever did that by beating themselves up.

Military and Family Life Counselor

Alicia Zenk, LPC
608-215-3037

Alicia Zenk is our new Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC) at Truax. Give her a warm welcome when you see her on walkabouts! Alicia is a critical addition to the support services available to you on base, and we are excited to have her as part of the team.

Veteran's Crisis Line

What used to be called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or Veteran's Crisis Line is now 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. New name, same services. Trained counselors are available 24/7 to support individuals experiencing suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis. Contact with 988 is confidential, offered in English and Spanish, and has tailored support for military service members. They can be reached by calling, text, or online chat.



Dial 988
or visit
988lifeline.org



Operation Resilience



Operation Resilience (OR) is a strategic effort across the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard to recognize the many challenges that Service Members face, by providing hope, guidance, and resources to aid in the resiliency of the force.

Scan the red QR code to check out OR's quarterly Toolkits!



Comprehensive Health & Wellness



Comprehensive Health & Wellness (CHW) is dedicated to equipping people with the proper tools to work on improving life, health, and wellness. The CHW team aims to provide support to our service members across the state, along with making meaningful connections and enhancing communication on every level across the ranks.

Check out their Facebook page!

