

# Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)

---

October 2019

Marilyn Huckans, PhD\*  
Portland VA Medical Center and Oregon Health & Science University

Elizabeth Twamley, PhD\*  
VA San Diego Healthcare System and UC San Diego

Saw-Myo Tun, PhD  
Portland VA Medical Center

Lee Hutson, PhD  
Portland VA Medical Center

Sarah Noonan, PhD  
VA Boston and Boston University

Gauri Savla, PhD  
UC San Diego

Amy Jak, PhD  
VA San Diego Healthcare System and UC San Diego

Dawn Schiehser, PhD  
VA San Diego Healthcare System and UC San Diego

Daniel Storzbach, Ph.D.  
Portland VA Medical Center and Oregon Health & Science University

*\*Both authors contributed equally to this work as Lead/Corresponding Authors and have primary responsibility over its content.*

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

VA CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
**CESAMH**  
STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH



Both Dr. Marilyn Huckans and Dr. Elizabeth Twamley contributed equally to this work as Lead/Corresponding Authors and have primary responsibility over the content of the intervention. Please direct related correspondence to Dr. Marilyn Huckans ([marilyn.huckans@va.gov](mailto:marilyn.huckans@va.gov)) and Dr. Elizabeth Twamley ([etwamley@ucsd.edu](mailto:etwamley@ucsd.edu)). You may use this manual for clinical and educational purposes, but please cite the authors (include the title page with a full reference, and a citation on each page as a footer) when distributing all or part of the manual to patients, providers, students, or others, and when referring to the intervention at meetings, presentations, or other venues. If you would like to use this intervention for research purposes, please contact the Lead Authors for permission.

Huckans, M.\*, Twamley, E.\*, Tun, S., Hutson, L., Noonan, S., Savla, G., Jak, A., Schiehser, D., & Storzbach, D. (2018). Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI). Unpublished treatment manual. VA Portland Health Care System and Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon & VA San Diego Health Care System and University of California, San Diego, California.\* Both authors contributed equally to this work as Lead/Corresponding Authors and have primary responsibility over its content.

This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the VA Portland Health Care System, and Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon. The contents do not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the United States Government, or Oregon Health & Science University.

UCSD: Copyright 2004-2006 The Regents of the University of California  
All Rights Reserved

Permission to copy, modify and distribute any part of this Compensatory Cognitive Training Manual by Elizabeth Twamley, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of California, San Diego, for educational, research and non-profit purposes, without fee, and without a written agreement is hereby granted, provided that the above copyright notice, this paragraph and the following three paragraphs appear in all copies.

Those desiring to incorporate this Cognitive Training Manual into commercial products or use for commercial purposes should contact the Technology Transfer Office, University of California, San Diego, 9500 Gilman Drive, Mail Code 0910, La Jolla, CA 92093-0910, Ph: (858) 534-5815, FAX: (858) 534-7345, E-MAIL: [invent@ucsd.edu](mailto:invent@ucsd.edu).

IN NO EVENT SHALL THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BE LIABLE TO ANY PARTY FOR DIRECT, INDIRECT, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING LOST PROFITS, ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF THIS Compensatory Cognitive Training Manual, EVEN IF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

THE Compensatory Cognitive Training Manual PROVIDED HEREIN IS ON AN "AS IS" BASIS, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HAS NO OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE MAINTENANCE, SUPPORT, UPDATES, ENHANCEMENTS, OR MODIFICATIONS. THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS AND EXTENDS NO WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EITHER IMPLIED OR EXPRESS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR THAT THE USE OF THE Compensatory Cognitive Training Manual WILL NOT INFRINGE ANY PATENT, TRADEMARK OR OTHER RIGHTS.

## **Table of Contents**

Session 1: Course Introduction, Education and Lifestyle Strategies

Session 2: Organization, Prioritization and Prospective Memory

Session 3: More Organization, Prioritization and Prospective Memory

Session 4: Attention, Concentration and Working Memory

Session 5: Learning and Memory

Session 6: Executive Functions: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Session 7: Executive Functions: Decision-Making, Problem-Solving and Planning

Session 8: Skills Integration, Review, and Next Steps

## Session 1: Course Introduction, Education and Lifestyle Strategies

### Class Agenda

- Leader Introductions / Distribute Manuals / Agenda / Overview and Expectations (15m)
- Introduce Principles of Cognitive Training / Member Introductions / Name Game (15m)
- Benefits of Frequent Short Breaks (5m)
  - *2m Break - Chair Stretches*
- Education – Mild Cognitive Impairment (10m)
- Lifestyle Strategies (15m)
  - *10m Break*
- How important is exercise to you? (15m)
- Routine Places – Establish a "Home" for Important Personal Items (10m)
- Day Planner/Calendar Systems - Prospective Memory (10m)
  - *2m Break - Head and Shoulder Rolls*
- Goals - Class Exercise (10m)
- Home Exercises (5m)

### 1. Leader Introductions, Distribute Binders, Course Overview and Expectations

This class will introduce a variety of cognitive strategies and external aids designed to help participants manage problems with memory, attention, organization, problem-solving and planning. These strategies and aids are meant to be a toolbox. Some tools may work better for certain people, or in certain situations.

- 8-week course; one meeting per week.
- 2 hour classes with a break after the first hour and brief (2 minute) breaks every 30 minutes.
- Classes focus on improving cognitive abilities.
- You will apply your new skills to your most important real-life problems and goals.
- Feedback encouraged (questions, comments, suggestions, etc.).



## Expectations

- **Class Binders and Day Planners (Paper or Electronic Calendars):** Please bring your class binders and a day planner system (paper or electronic calendars) each week.
- **Home Exercises:** Each week, we will ask you to practice using various strategies and aids in your daily life. The more you practice, the better you'll get at using the strategies.
- **Class Discussion:** Each week, the class will have the opportunity to discuss ideas for managing common cognitive problems. You will also have the opportunity to discuss how the home exercises worked for you.
- **Privacy and Respect:** Please be courteous and respectful of one another. Help others find solutions. Be constructive when offering feedback. Personal information that is shared in the group is not to be discussed with members or persons outside of the group.
- **Class Attendance and Participation:** Please attend all classes. Please arrive on time. Please call instructors if you will be late or absent so we can plan accordingly.

## 2. Principles of Compensatory Cognitive Training

COGNITION = ALL ASPECTS OF THINKING

- **Cognitive abilities and areas of functioning that this course will target:**
  - Organization and Prospective Memory
  - Attention and Concentration
  - Learning and Memory
  - Executive Functions = Higher Level Thinking = Decision-Making, Problem Solving and Planning
- **Classes are interactive. The more you practice, the more automatic your new skills will become.**

COGNITIVE TRAINING = IMPROVING COGNITION (THINKING) BY PRACTICING SKILLS AND LEARNING NEW STRATEGIES

- **Name game:** One person begins by saying his/her name, turning it into a catchy phrase that tells us something about you. For example, "Mary Mallard" because I enjoy duck hunting", or "Grandpa Gabe because I have six grand kids." Each subsequent person in the room says his/her name and repeats all previous names. Note that this is a concentration challenge and that repetition and overlearning can be a helpful cognitive strategy. Using creativity to turn information into something more memorable like a catchy phrase, song, or story is also a helpful cognitive strategy.

### **3. Benefits of Frequent Short Breaks**

- **In this class, we will take a 10-minute break every hour. We will also take 1-3 minute breaks every 20-30 minutes.**
- **Taking frequent short breaks:**
  - Reduces fatigue and increases energy
  - Improves attention and focus
  - Wakes you up
  - Reduces stress and tension
  - Reduces mistakes
  - Increases mental speed
  - Breaks tasks into smaller more manageable steps

#### **Types of Short 1-3 Minute Breaks:**

- Chair Stretches
- Head and Shoulder Rolls
- Marching/Military March
- Jumping Rope (no rope needed)/Jumping Jacks
- Rub your head and neck
- Shake your hands out
- Point and flex your toes
- Close your eyes, count to 30, breathe
- Yawn and Stretch
- Abdominal Breathing
- Visualization - Imagine a relaxing place.



#### **4. Education - Mild Cognitive Impairment**

- **How common is MCI?**
  - Up to 30% or more of older adults may have mild cognitive impairment.
  - More common as individuals get older.
  - Younger adults may also experience mild cognitive impairments.
- **What are the symptoms**
  - *Mildly* impaired performance in the areas of memory, problem solving, or other thinking skills.
  - Intact global thinking skills.
  - Intact daily functioning, although mild problems may exist.
  - Symptoms are not entirely due to depression, illness, or some other reversible cause.
- **How is MCI diagnosed?**
  - Neuropsychological tests are often conducted to assess thinking performance. A neurologist or geriatrician may also examine you to rule out other conditions.
- **What is my prognosis?**
  - Having mild cognitive impairment places one at higher risk for dementia.
  - However, many people have “stable” MCI, with mild deficits for years with no appreciable decline.
  - Others may actually show some improvement in cognitive functioning over time.
  - Course is variable.



**Risk Factors:** There are many risk factors that contribute to cognitive impairments.



Cognitive impairments are often due to multiple risk factors, rather than a single cause. Modifiable risk factors are those you can change. By reducing modifiable risk factors and increasing protective factors, you may improve cognitive recovery and outcomes.

**Mark with an X or highlight your risk factors. Which are modifiable?**

- 🍏 Addiction to alcohol or other drugs
- 🍏 Heavy alcohol consumption (even without addiction)
- 🍏 Cigarette smoking
- 🍏 Older age
- 🍏 Family history of mild cognitive impairment or dementia
- 🍏 Other genetic risk factors
- 🍏 Medical problems such as:
  - High blood pressure
  - High cholesterol
  - Heart problems and cardiovascular disease
  - Lung disease
  - Diabetes mellitus
  - Liver, kidney or thyroid disease
  - Seizure disorder
- 🍏 Some medications
  - Such as benzodiazepines (often for anxiety), opiates for pain, opiate replacement therapy (methadone and buprenorphine) for opiate addictions, and antipsychotics (for psychiatric disorders).
- 🍏 Psychiatric problems such as:
  - Depression and other mood disorders
  - PTSD
  - Other anxiety disorders
  - Schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder
- 🍏 Traumatic brain injuries
- 🍏 Possibly sleep disorders, including obstructive sleep apnea

**Protective Factors:** Research shows the following protective factors during middle and older adulthood help reduce risk for mild cognitive impairment and dementia later in life. For individuals who already have cognitive impairments, they may also help improve cognition.

- 🍏 A healthy, well-balanced diet. For example, a Mediterranean diet.
- 🍏 Frequent exercise and physical activity
- 🍏 Frequent participation in cognitively-stimulating activities



## **5. Lifestyle Strategies:**

Lifestyle strategies are known to improve brain function and cognition in adults with and without cognitive impairments. Many are aimed at reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. They can be a solid foundation for brain health and cognitive recovery. They may also improve overall physical and mental health. **Mark with an X or highlight strategies you think you would like to work on.**

### **🍏 Avoid substances that interfere with brain function and thinking.**

- Minimize/avoid use of alcohol and drugs.
- Minimize use of caffeine and other stimulants.
- Minimize cigarette smoking.
- Minimize exposure to toxic substances and fumes (e.g., paints, stains, gasoline, lead, chemicals).

### **🍏 Minimize other risk factors for cognitive impairment.**

- Work with your doctors to best manage your medical, psychiatric, and sleep problems - many are treatable.
- Work with your healthcare providers to determine which medications provide the best balance of symptom relief versus unwanted side effects such as cognitive difficulties.

### **🍏 Good Nutrition – Give your brain the fuel it needs to work well.**

- Eat three balanced meals each day.
- Remember to include lots of vegetables and fruits.
- Remember your four food groups: protein, carbohydrates, fruits/vegetables, and dairy.
- Remember to follow your doctor's advice about special dietary needs, such as if you are diabetic or have high cholesterol.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
- Some research suggests a Mediterranean diet reduces risk for cognitive impairment, but there are also other healthy diets, including those from a wide range of cultures, which we will discuss in a future session.



### **🍏 Exercise your body.**

- Good for stress reduction.
- Circulates blood, including oxygen and nutrients, to your brain.
- Stimulates your brain and strengthens its connections.
- Improves your sleep, mood and physical health, which can in turn help your brain work better.
- Research suggests that an active lifestyle can reduce cognitive impairments in adults.

**🍏 Exercise your mind.**

- Puzzles, games, reading, computer games, etc.
- Social and recreational activities that get you talking and thinking.
- Try new activities and change things up from time to time so your brain gets a workout. This helps the brain strengthen its connections.
- Research suggests that frequent participation in cognitively-stimulating activities reduces risk of cognitive impairment and dementia.

**🍏 Get plenty of sleep at night.**

- Most people need 7-8 hours of sleep.
- Sleep patterns may change with age (e.g., less sleep at night, daytime napping).
- People with cognitive disorders, medical problems, or psychiatric problems may need more sleep.
- Sleep problems can contribute to cognitive difficulties and risk for dementia.

**🍏 Make time to relax and have fun every day.**

- Even if you are busy, try to find at least 20-60 minutes each day to do something that helps you relax or have fun.
  - Everyone is different. Some people like to take walks or baths. Others like to listen to music, watch a movie, socialize, or do other hobbies. What do you like to do?
- Practice mindfulness or tension-reducing techniques to relieve stress.

**🍏 Self-Pacing – Stick to your limits.**

- Schedule events or activities so that you will not go beyond your limits or energy level.
  - For example, if you know you cannot handle full-time work, schedule half-days. Or, if you are going on an outing with a friend, let them know you need to be home by a certain time.
  - If you know a “big day” makes you tired, schedule the next day as a “rest day” or a “slow day”. Schedule a couple days off after a big week.
- You can keep a diary to help you figure out how much you can handle and how often you need time to rest.

**🍏 Take frequent breaks.**

- You may be able to handle longer work days, outings, and activities if you just schedule frequent breaks.
- For example, schedule 10 minutes off every hour. Close your eyes, stretch, listen to music, or do whatever feels rejuvenating.
- Other people benefit from a longer break every few hours. For example, take a 30-minute power nap or go for a walk at lunchtime.
- Even 1-3 minutes off can help you re-energize and improve focus. This is what we will practice in each class every 20-30 minutes or so.

## **6. How Important is Exercise to You?**

Most people know that exercise is good for their overall health. Here are some additional facts that you may or may not already know:



- Health benefits include reduced risk of cognitive impairment and dementia; depression and other mental disorders; problems with daily functioning (ability to engage in activities needed for daily living); diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis; high blood pressure and high cholesterol which are risk factors for other diseases; premature death; and injuries.
- Regular physical activity reduces risk of many health problems.
- Some physical activity is better than none.
- For most health outcomes, additional benefits occur as the amount of physical activity increases through higher intensity, greater frequency, and/or longer duration of exercise.
- Most health benefits occur with a "Medium" level of physical activity, and additional benefits occur with "High" levels of activity.
- Both aerobic (endurance) and muscle-strengthening (resistance) physical activities are beneficial.

<b>Level of Physical Activity</b>	<b>Range of Moderate-Intensity Exercise Minutes Per Week</b>	<b>Summary of Overall Health Benefits</b>
Inactive	No exercise beyond daily life	None - Unhealthy
Low	1-150 minutes (up to 2 hours and 30 minutes)	Some
Medium	150-300 minutes (up to 5 hours)	Substantial
High	More than 300 minutes	Additional

- A number of studies have shown that exercise programs can effectively improve cognitive performance in older adults with mild cognitive impairments. Other studies show that aerobic activity decreases depression and increases a person's ability to cope with stress.
- Animal studies show that exercise causes new neurons to grow in the brain, and that new learning improves when an animal exercises before a challenging cognitive activity.

Although exercise has benefits, there may be costs and obstacles to exercising regularly. **Mark with an X or highlight those that are true for you:**

- 🍏 I have trouble finding time to exercise.
- 🍏 I don't enjoy exercise that much.
- 🍏 I have trouble finding a good place to exercise, or the right supplies.
- 🍏 The kind of exercise I like or would do costs too much money.
- 🍏 I am often in pain and it hurts to exercise.
- 🍏 I am often too depressed, anxious or overwhelmed to exercise.
- 🍏 I have bigger priorities to focus on right now.
- 🍏 Exercise is not as important to me as other things.
- 🍏 I don't think I will be good at most types of exercise.
- 🍏 I am not confident I will follow through with an exercise schedule.
- 🍏 I don't need yet another goal.
- 🍏 **What other costs and obstacles make it less likely you will exercise?**

---

---

Over the course of this class, we will be introducing many cognitive strategies. Based on your life circumstances, goals, and values, some strategies may seem more or less important for you to try. Some may seem more or less possible for you to use. And, some may seem more or less helpful to you in particular.

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how important would you say it is for you to exercise more regularly than you do now?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Important						Extremely Important				

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how confident would you say you are that, if you decided to exercise more regularly than you do now, you could do it?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Confident						Extremely Confident				

**If you were to decide to exercise more regularly, what would be your main reasons for making this change?**

---

---

---

***If you were to decide to exercise more regularly, what encourages you that you could make this change? What strengths do you have that would help you succeed?***

---

---

***If you were to decide to exercise more regularly, what steps would you be willing to try?***

---

---

## **7. Routine Places: Establish a "Home" for your Important Personal Items**

When we are overwhelmed, stressed, or recovering from illness or addiction, we have a tendency to lose or forget items. If we get in the routine or habit of always putting our most important personal items in a routine place, or "home", we reduce the chance of losing or forgetting the things we need every day. We also reduce the amount of time we waste looking for these things on a daily basis.

**ROUTINE PLACES = PLACES WHERE SOMETHING  
ALWAYS GOES SO YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND IT  
WHEN YOU NEED IT**

**A routine place is an organization strategy to compensate for organization and memory problems. One of your home exercises this week will be to make a "home" for your most important personal items (e.g., your day planner/calendar system, keys, wallet, glasses and cell phone). When you get home:**

### **Choose a container.**

- For example, a large bowl, small box, empty drawer or a backpack.
- If using a backpack, use one section/pocket just for personal items only.
- My container is: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Decide where the container will be kept in your home.**

- For example, a table near the front door, on a table near the coat closet, on the desk in the office or kitchen.
- It should be a convenient location that you will easily get into the habit of using every time you enter your home.
- I will keep my container: \_\_\_\_\_

**Start using this home for your personal items every day.**

## **8. Day Planner/Calendar Systems:**

Prospective memory is the ability to remember to do something later. Day planner/calendar systems help improve prospective memory. They can also help with planning and organization.

### **Benefits of using a day planner/calendar system:**

- Reduces errors in your daily life. You will rely less on your memory.
- You can see what is coming up in your schedule, and you will have a record of what happened in the past.
- Reduces time and energy. Your calendar will help you make use of routines.

### **A good day planner/calendar system includes several components:**

- **Daily Schedule/Calendar:** You can use your calendar to schedule events and tasks that you need to do or want to do in a day (e.g., appointments, meetings, work, studying, chores, errands).
- **To Do Lists:** A day planner system should also include a place to keep a list of things you need to do over time.
- **Taking Notes:** A day planner system should also allow you to quickly take and store notes throughout the day (e.g., a place to write down directions, a phone number, information from a doctor or co-worker).
  - **Categorized/Labeled Sections:** For example, in labeled tabs in a paper system, or labeled "Project Folders" or "Notes" in an electronic system. Labeled sections can be used for storing addresses and phone numbers, and for storing notes by specific categories, projects or goals (e.g., Health, Money, Shopping Lists, House Projects).
- **Automatic Features:** If you use a cell phone or electronic calendar system, you can automate certain activities by programming electronic reminders (e.g., water plants every Friday; call sister every Tuesday; neck stretches daily at 2 pm). You can automate your billing by paying your bills online and programming payments to be made automatically.
- **You will bring it with you everywhere!** Day planner systems are only helpful if you are able to use them routinely throughout your day.



**What type of calendar will work for you? Paper or electronic?**

- In an ideal world, your calendar will be with you at all times and you will check it every day, preferably multiple times a day.
- At the end of each day, it is a good idea to check your day planner/calendar system, including your schedule and to-do list so you can plan for and organize your next day. Then, you can check your calendar system several times each day to make sure you are staying on track with your plan.
- About once a week, it is a good idea to plan for the week ahead. For example, if you have a party to attend, you might need to bring a gift or some food, and you can plan ahead for that.
- Choose your calendar:
  - If paper, what system and what size (pocket size or larger format)? Balance convenience with how much space you need to write. Paper systems are readily available in grocery stores, office supply stores, pharmacies, and online (e.g., through FranklinCovey.com or DayTimer.com).
  - If electronic, what system? Cell phone apps, Outlook/Google/Yahoo, or other online systems.

One of your home exercises this week will be to select and obtain a day planner/calendar system. If you do not already have one with all the important features (Daily Schedule/Calendar, To Do Lists, Notes, Categorized/Labeled Sections), you may need to purchase one or add new features to your current system. You will be bringing this system to class each week so that we can practice different day planner skills together.

**Do you already use a day planner/calendar system? What kind?**

---

---

**Do you need to invest in a new day planner system or add features to your current system? What kind?**

Daily Schedule/Calendar: \_\_\_\_\_

To Do Lists: \_\_\_\_\_

Taking Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Categorized/Labeled Sections: \_\_\_\_\_

Automated Features: \_\_\_\_\_

**How will you remember to come to class each week?**

---

---

**How will you remember to bring your binder and day planner to class each week?**

---

---

**How can family members, significant others, friends, and/or caregivers support you while you take this class?**

---

---

### **9. Goals for the Class**

It is likely that cognitive problems are interfering with your ability to best manage some important aspects of your life, such as work, health, relationships, social or community activities, or recovery from addiction. Knowing your reasons for taking this course will motivate you to use the tools that you will be learning over the coming weeks.

Throughout this course, you will be reminded about your goals and will be asked to monitor your progress towards achieving these goals.

**What are one or two problems with cognition or thinking that affect you most (e.g., problems remembering things, focusing, organizing yourself, making good decisions, planning)?**

---

---

---

---

**What important life areas do these problems interfere with the most (e.g., work, relationships, managing your affairs, taking care of your health, recovery)?**

---

---

---

---

**Identify one or two important life goals you would like to work toward during this class (e.g., being more reliable at work or home, getting more done, being more active or social, remembering medications and appointments, making better decisions).**

---

---

---

---



## **Session 1: Home Exercise**

- ☐ **Read page 13. Make a “Home” for your most important personal items** (e.g., your calendar, keys, wallet, glasses and cell phone).

### **Choose a container.**

- For example, a large bowl, small box, empty drawer or a backpack.
- If using a backpack, use one section/pocket just for personal items only.

My container is: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Decide where the container will be kept in your home.**

- For example, on a table near the front door, on a table near the coat closet, on the desk in the office or kitchen.
- It should be a convenient location that you will easily get into the habit of using every time you enter your home.

I keep my container: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Start using this home for your personal items every day.**

- How is your system working from you? Does it need improvement?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **Read pages 14-15. Select and obtain a day planner/calendar system. If you do not already have one with all the important features (Daily Schedule/Calendar, To Do Lists, Notes, Categorized/Labeled Sections), you may need to purchase one or add new features to your current system. Bring this day planner/calendar system to class each week.**

What day planner/calendar system have you decided on? \_\_\_\_\_

Daily Schedule/Calendar: \_\_\_\_\_

To Do Lists: \_\_\_\_\_

Taking Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Categorized/Labeled Sections: \_\_\_\_\_

Automated Features: \_\_\_\_\_

- Enter all your upcoming appointments, including this class.
- Do you need to do something else to help you remember to come next week?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Decide how you will remember to bring your class binder and day planner/calendar system to class next week.**

- Some examples:
  - You could put your binder in the “**home**” you created.
  - You could put a **post-it note** on your front-door.
  - You could ask a **significant other** or housemate to remind you.
- Briefly **describe** how you will remember these items each week:

---

---

---

☐ **Read pages 11-13 "How Important is Exercise to You?" If you are considering exercising more regularly, complete the following items:**

The most important reasons I want to exercise more regularly are:

---

---

---

My main goals for exercising more regularly are:

---

---

---

I plan to do the following things to exercise more regularly:

Specific Actions:

When?

---

---

---

These are some possible obstacles to exercising regularly, and how I can handle them:

Possible obstacles to change:

How to respond:

---

---

---

---

## Session 2: Organization, Prioritization and Prospective Memory

### Class Agenda

- Review Home Exercise (15m)
  - *2m Break - Marching / Military March*
- Mindfulness Exercises (30m)
- How important is mindfulness to you? (10m)
  - *10m Break*
- Routines: Organizing Time and Space to Promote Life Priorities (15m)
- Time Management and Prioritization: What are your big rocks? (20m)
  - *2m Break - Jumping Rope/Jumping Jacks*
- Organizing Your Day Planner / Calendar System to Promote Life Priorities and Prospective Memory (15m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### 1. Review Home Exercises (pp. 17-18)

- What aspects of your “Home” are working well for you? What aspects do you plan to improve?
- What aspects of your calendar system are working well for you? What aspects do you plan to improve?
- If you are planning to exercise regularly, what is already working well for you? What steps will you take in the future? Why?

### 2. Mindfulness Exercises

One effective strategy for improving physical, emotional and cognitive health is regular mindfulness practice throughout your day and week. You can do a brief mindfulness exercise to clear your mind right before you want to focus on a task, activity or conversation. You can also practice mindfulness any time of day; people who practice mindfulness regularly (daily, or several times per week) experience cognitive and other health benefits regardless of what time of day they practice. Therefore, we will introduce mindfulness today and then practice at least one mindfulness exercise at all future sessions.

You can do formal mindfulness exercises while you are sitting, lying down, or moving slowly (yoga, walking). You can also do informal mindfulness practices throughout your day like when you are eating a meal, brushing your teeth, or taking a bath.

You can find free guided mindfulness practices on a variety of websites, including: <https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx> .

### Mindfulness = Focusing awareness on the experience of the present moment

- **Stay in the present moment:** During a mindfulness exercise, you purposely and gently bring your attention to an experience in the present moment – such as breathing, your body’s sensations, sounds or sights, thoughts, emotions.

- It is normal for the mind to wander - to thoughts about yesterday, plans for tomorrow, somewhere else, or someone else. Just notice that your mind has wandered, acknowledge the thought, and then gently bring your attention back to the present moment.
- **Non-judgmentally:** As best as you can, observe sensations, feelings, and thoughts non-judgmentally.
  - It is normal for your mind to make judgments, label likes or dislikes, develop opinions, or tell stories. Notice when your mind has wandered to judgments and gently bring your attention back to your objective experiences (sensations, feelings).
- **Without a purpose or goal:** Mindfulness practice is not about trying to actively change the present moment, nor is it about trying to achieve a specific state or goal such as relaxation during mindfulness practice. These immediate benefits may or may not occur on a particular day, for a particular person. Instead, mindfulness practice is about letting go of goals and accepting yourself in the present moment, however you may feel.
- **With curiosity and a beginner's mind:** Mindfulness is about experiencing the present moment as though it were new, something you have never seen, felt, or heard before. Be curious and inquisitive.

### **The Raisin Exercise**

*Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living. New York, New York: Bantam Books.*

- I am going to give you an object so that we can practice using a beginner's mind – paying attention to an experience with an open and curious attitude.
- Hold this object in the palm of your hand, and look at it closely as if you have no idea what it is or what it could be. In your head, describe what it looks like – its color, its shape, its contours, how it catches the light.
- Now gently, without smooshing it, roll it on your palm with one finger. How does this feel – sticky, dry, soft, hard?
- You may notice your mind wandering to opinions (likes and dislikes), or other thoughts and feelings. That is ok. Just notice this and then gently bring your attention back to the object.
- Now hold the object gently to your nose. How does it smell?
- Now hold the object gently to your ear. Does it have a sound? How about if you roll it between two fingers near your ear?
- Now gently bring the object to your lips without putting it into your mouth. How does it feel against your lips?
- Now slowly put the object on your tongue, without swallowing or chewing it. How does it feel against your tongue? How does it taste? Do you notice any urges to chew or swallow?
- Now take just one bite of the object. Do any sensations change? Taste, texture, shape, urges?
- When you are ready, slowly chew the object up, noticing how the motion feels and any changes to the object, its taste, shape, texture, etc.

- When you are ready to swallow, pause for a moment, notice how that feels, and then swallow, noticing how that feels too. Perhaps try to feel it move down your throat into your belly. Now how does it feel?

**What did you notice during the raisin exercise? Stick to objective observations of the present moment, rather than judgments, opinions or stories.**

---



---

### **Mindful Breathing Exercise**

We are going to practice a number of mindfulness exercises over the next few weeks. Mindful breathing is a short mindfulness exercise that you can do anytime, anywhere - such as when you wake up, before bed or meals, before an activity or conversation you want to focus on, or as a way to regroup after a stressful or challenging experience. Many mindfulness exercises begin with focusing on the breath. You can always return to mindful breathing during other mindfulness exercises, as a way to refocus your attention on the here and now if your mind is wandering.

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Do only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Now gently start to bring your attention to your breathing, without trying to control or change how you are breathing. Just simply notice how it feels.
- Gently relax your mouth, throat, and belly, allowing your breath to move freely, and curiously observing the sensations of breathing.
- Perhaps noticing air moving in and out of your nose or mouth. Is it warm or cold, dry or wet? How does the air feel inside your nose, or your mouth? How does it feel as it moves down your throat and into your belly?
- Do you perhaps notice some tickles, scratches, or even discomfort in your throat as you breathe.
- Is your belly expanding as you breathe in, and emptying as you breathe out? How does that feel? Feel free to perhaps put one hand on your belly as you notice its ups and downs.
- Your mind may at times wander away from the breath. Perhaps you have started thinking about something else, or perhaps you are noticing other sounds in the room, or other bodily sensations or emotions. That is perfectly normal and part of any mindfulness practice. Just gently notice those thoughts and do the best you can to return your attention to your breath. Perhaps you will do this over and over again today. That is ok, just return to your breath gently again and again, non-judgmentally.
- Ok. Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on your breath.

**What did you notice while doing mindful breathing? Stick to objective observations of the present moment, rather than judgments, opinions or stories.**

---

---

---



### **Mindful Body Scan Exercise**

*Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living. New York, New York: Bantam Books.*

Now we are going to try a mindful body scan exercise. Like with the raisin exercise and mindful breathing, you will gently bring your focus to the present moment, non-judgmentally and with an open and curious attitude. Perhaps like a scientist or an objective observer, here to record details about something new and unknown. Mindful body scans can be done laying down on the floor, or sitting in a chair or on a floor. Many people practice body scans once a day or several times per week, either first thing in the morning, as a break sometime during the day, or at the end of their day. Body scans can be done briefly (5-15 minutes), or they can be an extended exercise (20-45 minutes or longer). Today we will practice a short body scan while sitting in a chair.

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Doing only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Gently bringing your attention to your breath for a moment, noticing how the breath feels moving in and out of your nose, and your mouth, and your belly.
- With this practice, you will be gently bringing your attention to one part of your body at a time. There is no right or wrong way for your body to feel. The goal of this practice is neither to change how you feel, nor to feel in any particular way. Instead, just observing how each part of the body is feeling right now. If you notice your mind wandering, just gently bring your attention back to your body as

often as needed. You can also return your focus to your breath if that is what you prefer or need.

- Now bringing your attention to your feet. Exploring how your toes feel. Do you feel tingling? Prickles? Pulsing? Nothing? Does one toe feel different from the others? Do the toes on your right foot feel different from your left foot? How do they feel rubbing up against each other, or against your socks or shoes?
- Now moving your attention to the bottoms of your feet? What do you feel there? Are your feet warm, or cold? Dry or moist? Is there any discomfort?
- If there is discomfort at any time during this practice, just do your best to gently observe it. What is the quality of that sensation? Is it dull or sharp? Strong or weak? Is the discomfort a steady sensation, or does it seem to increase or decrease across time? If at any time the sensation is too intense, you can perhaps try to imagine slowly breathing into that area, noticing the sensation, and then breathing out, letting that sensation loosen a bit. If ever a sensation is too intense, you can also return your focus to another part of the body, or your breath. Whatever feels safe and right for you today.
- Now moving your attention to the tops of your feet. How do those feel today?
- And now the ankles. Do they feel tight, or loose, or something else all together?
- At different points throughout this practice, you may notice your mind wander off to other thoughts, other parts of the body, or perhaps sounds or sights in the room. That is perfectly normal and ok. Just acknowledge those thoughts and return your focus to your body, or your breath, coming back to the present moment.
- Now moving your attention to your lower legs, your calves, and your shins. Exploring any sensations you may have there. Can you feel the muscles, the bones, the tendons and ligaments?
- Now moving to the knees. What do you feel there?
- If you notice any judgments coming into your mind, thoughts such as “feels good” or “feels bad”, notice those, perhaps labeling them as “judgments” and then gently letting them go, returning your attention to your body and your sensations, the here and the now.
- Now moving your focus to your upper legs, your thighs, your hamstrings. What do you notice there? Perhaps feeling the pressure of the legs against the chair, perhaps noticing that some spots of the legs feel different than other spots. Perhaps some areas seem to have little sensation at all.
- Now moving your attention up your body to your hips and then your belly. What do you feel in your belly? Doing your best to notice each sensation, separately, curiously. Perhaps you notice movements in the abdomen; perhaps it is making sounds.
- Now moving your attention to your chest. What do you notice there? Perhaps noticing your heartbeat, or your chest rising and falling as you breathe.
- Now moving your attention to your lower back and spine, observing each sensation there. Is there tightness? Heat? Does one side feel different than the other?
- Again, if at any point there are any feelings of discomfort, just do your best to observe that sensation, gently exploring it. Or, you can try to imagine breathing

into that area, and then letting that sensation loosen a bit as you breathe out. Or, return your focus to another area of the body or your breath. Whatever is best for you today.

- Now moving your attention slowly up the spine to your upper back. What do you notice there? If there is any tightness, how does it feel to breathe into that area and loosen it a bit?
- And now moving your attention gently to your shoulders, upper arms, triceps and biceps. Do they feel loose? Tight? Is there a soreness, or perhaps an itch somewhere? How do those sensations feel? Do those sensations change or are they steady over time?
- Now moving your attention to your elbows and lower arms. What do you feel there? Does one arm feel different than the other, and how so?
- And now gently moving your attention and focus to your wrists and your hands. Can you feel each finger separately? Perhaps you can feel sensations in specific finger joints – perhaps heat, or pressure, or fullness in one or several joints. Or perhaps you notice the weight of your hands against your lap or the table. How does that feel?
- Now taking a breath and gently moving your attention back up your arms slowly to your neck. What do you feel in the front of your neck and throat? How about inside your throat? How about the back of your neck?
- Now bringing your attention to your face, noticing any sensations on your jaw, cheeks, nose, eyes, forehead, ears. If there is any tightness, how does it feel to loosen that tightness? Is perhaps the tip of your nose colder than the rest of your face? Do your eyes or lips feel wet or dry?
- Now bringing your attention to the top of your head. How does your hair feel against your skin? How does your scalp feel?
- Now taking a few moments to observe your body as a whole, as one whole body. Noticing your breath as you experience your body and all its sensations all at once.
- Now, as we gently end this practice, when you are ready, perhaps begin slowly wiggling your fingers and toes. Perhaps then slowly stretching, and then gently opening your eyes to bring your attention back to the room.

**What did you notice while doing a mindful body scan? Stick to objective observations of the present moment, rather than judgments, opinions or stories.**

---

---

---





### **3. How important is mindfulness practice to you?**

Most people know that mindfulness practice is good for overall health. Here are some additional facts that you may or may not already know:

- Common mindfulness programs include mindful breathing, body scans, sitting meditations, walking meditations, yoga, tai chi, and qigong.
- Research shows that regular mindfulness practice:
  - Decreases stress, in part by reducing levels of stress hormones in the body.
  - Decreases emotional reactivity and improves emotional processing. Helps people respond less emotionally to stressful or emotional situations. Changes how the amygdala (an emotion center in the brain) responds to emotions.
  - Improves cognition. Improves attention and the ability to filter out distractions, boosts working memory (in civilian and military groups), improves problem-solving and mental flexibility, increases processing speed, and improves grades (in student populations). Increases axonal density and myelination of neurons which improves signaling connections in the brain.
  - Lowers depression, anxiety, and worrying.
  - Improves sleep and sleep quality.
  - Increases relationship satisfaction and communication skills. May make us more compassionate and better listeners.
  - Improves immune function. Reduces the frequency, severity and duration of colds and flus.
- Preliminary research suggests that mindfulness practice may effectively improve substance use outcomes in adults with addictions.

Although mindfulness practices have benefits, there may also be costs and obstacles to fitting these techniques into your life. **Mark with an X or highlight those that are true for you:**

- 🍏 I have trouble remembering to do it.
- 🍏 I don't have enough time.
- 🍏 It feels silly, strange or hoaky to me. I don't enjoy it.
- 🍏 I am not good at it. I have trouble clearing my mind.
- 🍏 I have bigger priorities to focus on right now.
- 🍏 It is not as important to me as other things.
- 🍏 I am not convinced it helps.
- 🍏 I don't need yet another thing to remember to do in my day.
- 🍏 *What other costs and obstacles make it less likely you will practice mindfulness?*

---

---



Over the course of this class, we will be introducing many strategies that can improve cognition and overall health. Based on your life circumstances, goals, and values, some strategies may seem more or less important for you to try. Some may seem more or less possible for you to use. And, some may seem more or less helpful to you.

***On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how important would you say it is for you to practice mindfulness more regularly?***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Important						Extremely Important				

***On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how confident would you say you are that, if you decided to practice mindfulness more regularly than you do now, you could do it?***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Confident						Extremely Confident				

***If you were to decide to practice mindfulness more regularly, what do you think would be the main advantages (for you in particular) of making this change?***

---

---

---

***If you were to decide to practice mindfulness more regularly, what do you think would help make this change possible?***

---

---

---

***If you were to decide to practice mindfulness more regularly, what would you be willing to do? What would your plan be?***

---

---

---

#### **4. Routines: Organizing Time and Space to Promote Life Priorities**

PROSPECTIVE MEMORY =  
THE ABILITY TO REMEMBER TO DO THINGS IN THE FUTURE

**Forgetting to do things is a very common memory problem.**

- Examples: forgetting to go to an appointment, a study session, a meeting at work; forgetting to send a birthday card to a relative; forgetting to return a tool you borrowed from a neighbor.
- Using routines, organization, and a day planner / calendar system will be the best way to avoid these problems.

#### **Establishing Routines**

**Routine – Doing an activity regularly.**

- You are more likely to complete an activity if you establish a routine time, system, and/or space for it.

**Why are routines especially helpful to people with cognitive problems?**

- Routines simplify your life.
- Routines help you address your priorities regularly.
- Routines require less attention.
- Routines require less energy.
- Routines rely less on memory.
- Routines reduce the risk of errors.
- Routines can help with mood and self-care.

**What kinds of activities can be made into routines and how?**

- 1) **Mundane Routines**: Getting ready in the morning, meals, getting to and from work/school, chores, bills, using your calendar daily, having a weekly planning session with your calendar.
  - The idea is for these activities to take up less of your energy so you can save your energy for the more important stuff. If you do these tasks the same way each time, it will eventually be automatic and therefore simpler.
  - What is one mundane routine you have? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) **Important Activities**: Exercise, relaxation, studying, important work projects, spending time with family and friends.
  - The idea is to make sure you carve out enough time for these important activities to happen regularly. If you do not schedule a routine time for these activities, you may neglect them.
  - What is one important activity you do on a routine basis?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Annual/Seasonal Routines: Yardwork, holidays, special occasions.
- Because these activities do not happen that often, they can feel disruptive or overwhelming. Developing routines for them can make them easier (e.g., setting aside one Saturday in October and another in November for raking leaves) and/or more meaningful (e.g., cooking a steak dinner at home every year for your anniversary).
  - What is one annual/seasonal routine you have? \_\_\_\_\_

You can use systems and spaces to help promote important routines and activities. You are more likely to complete activities regularly if you know how and where they will happen.

**Systems – How you do a routine activity; an organized method.**

- Calendar/planner/appointment systems.
- Mail/billing/filing systems.
- Medication systems (pill container).
- Phone/family message systems (white board).
- Grocery/meal planning system (pre-made grocery lists).

**Functional Spaces – Where you do a routine activity; a designated place in your home.** This does not need to be a whole room. It can be a desk, a corner, a couch, a table, etc.

- A "Home" for Your Important Personal Items.
- Work/Important Projects – A quiet, non-distracting space in your home, like an office or a desk in a quiet room.
- Personal Recreation Space – If you like woodworking, a work bench in your garage. If you like music, a guitar next to a comfy chair. If you like reading, a bookshelf and chair under a reading lamp. What do you like to do?
- Family/Friend Time – Perhaps this is where you watch movies or play games together, or where you sit for dinners and discussions.
- Exercise – Perhaps you have a weight bench, or a space in a room for a yoga mat. Or perhaps you have a spot near the door where you keep your running shoes, rain coat, and dog leash.
- Medication/Healthcare Station – A place where you keep your medications (where you can see them) and other healthcare items you use regularly.

**Class Activity:** One of your home exercises will be to build a new routine into your life, or to improve an existing one. *What routines do think would be helpful toward your life priorities and class goals?*

---

---

---

## **5. Setting Priorities – Time Management and Prioritization**



### **A Time Organization Parable**

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he picked up a very large and empty jar and proceeded to fill it with large rocks. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the large rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes." The professor then produced 2 cups of water from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The large rocks are the important things--your family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions--things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else--the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the large rocks. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Take care of the large rocks first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand and water."



**We frequently under-prioritize health and self-care. But, if we take care of ourselves, we will have more energy for other areas of our lives. Our health should be our biggest “rock.”**

### **Prioritizing the Important Things**

We spend most of our time doing things in our life that are not very important to us. Often we do the easiest tasks first because we can cross them off our list.

The goal is to reverse this pattern. Schedule chunks of time to work toward your most important life goals and priorities, and allow no interruptions. The lesser items will fit in. This is like filling your bucket with large rocks first, then filling the rest in with pebbles, then sand, then water.

## **6. Time Management Matrix**

	<b>Immediate/Deadline</b>	<b>Not Immediate/No Deadline</b>
<b>Important</b>	<u>Large Rocks/Pebbles</u> Emergencies Important appointments Important deadlines Pressing problems (car dies, roof is leaking)	<u>Large Rocks/Pebbles:</u> Health/Exercise Relaxation/Recreation/Self-care Important Relationships Life Goals Planning and Prevention
<b>Not As Important</b>	<u>Sand:</u> Interruptions Phone is ringing Someone is knocking on door Popular activities (TV shows, shopping sales)	<u>Water:</u> Some chores Some mail, phone messages, or meetings Unimportant relationships Trivia, busywork, time wasters

**The goal is to move toward spending most of our time in the Important/Not Immediate quadrant. These are the large rocks/pebbles.**

**If you spend more time on planning and prevention, you will not need to spend as much time in the Important/Immediate quadrant.**





**Class Exercise:** What are your big rocks, pebbles, sand, and water? How do they fit into your time management matrix? Fill in the matrix below. (Facilitators can also write on a white board.)

	Immediate/Deadline	Not Immediate/No Deadline
Important		
Not As Important		

**7. Class Exercise:** Now, looking at your time management matrix, what are your big rocks in life right now? What are your major life priorities - the things that are most critical to your happiness and well-being, the things that can make your life full?

*Write them below and transfer them to your day planner/ calendar system.*

---



---



---



## **8. Organizing Your Day Planner / Calendar System to Promote Life Priorities and Prospective Memory**

Your calendar use will be more efficient when you develop routines for:

- Carrying it with you always
- Checking it regularly, usually 3+ times per day
- Writing down all appointments and commitments
- Using to-do lists to cue you about tasks needing your attention
- Having a planning session each night to prepare for the next day
- Having a planning session about once a week to plan for the week ahead and the big picture
- Using your day planner / calendar system to promote your life priorities / big rocks and healthy lifestyle strategies



**DOWNTIME:**  
20-60 MINUTES PER DAY  
1 DAY PER WEEK  
1 WEEK EVERY 12-16 WEEKS

**Activity:** We have already discussed how taking regular breaks, self-pacing and building pleasurable / relaxing activities into our lives can improve brain function, cognition, and overall health. Take time in class to practice scheduling "downtime" in your day planner / calendar system for the next week. This will also be a home exercise.

***What kinds of activities are you likely to schedule daily for your 20-60 minute downtime?*** \_\_\_\_\_

***What day of the week might you consider setting aside for downtime or a slower paced day this week? What kinds of things would you look forward to doing on your day off?*** \_\_\_\_\_

***If you want to schedule exercise and/or mindfulness practice, when do you think are the best days and times to fit this into your week?*** \_\_\_\_\_



## 9. Remembering to check your calendar

Your calendar will be much more helpful if you check it frequently! Plan to check it at least three times a day or more if you are busy or tend to forget things. Remember to have it with you always.

The following strategies can help you remember to check your calendar, but they are also useful for remembering to do other tasks.



**LINKING TASKS = FORMING A HABIT BY ADDING A NEW TASK TO SOMETHING YOU ALREADY DO**

### *How are you going to remember to check that calendar?*

- Link it to something you already do using a back-up note to remind you, and soon it will become automatic.
  - Waking up and going to bed (back-up note on alarm clock, light switch, or something you need to touch).
  - Eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner (back-up note on kitchen cabinet handle, coffee maker, or something you need to touch).
  - Other daily rituals? **What automatic activity and back-up system will you use?** \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTOMATIC PLACES = PLACES YOU WILL SEE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO REMEMBER**

- One additional strategy is to use an “automatic place” where you will see your calendar every morning and remember to check it.
- Some people might use automatic places already – Do you have a place where you always put your keys? A place where you always keep your glasses? A place where you always keep your medications? Hopefully all these things are in their “homes” by now.
- In what automatic place could you keep your calendar so you will see it?
  - Examples: in your “home for your stuff,” sticking out of your bag or purse, with bag on kitchen table or counter; on top of doorknob; on top of alarm clock; sticking out of shoes.
  - **Where will you keep your calendar?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Session 2: Home Exercise

- ☐ **Remember to come to class next week. Remember to bring your day planner / calendar system and class binder to class next week.**

Schedule the rest of our classes into your day planner / calendar system. *Do you need to do anything else to remember to come to class?*

---

*Do you need to do anything else to help you remember to bring your binder and calendar next week?*

---

- ☐ **Read p. 33. This week, practice having your calendar with you at all times, and practice checking your calendar three times a day.**

*What automatic activity and back-up system will you use to check your calendar throughout the day?*\_\_\_\_\_

---

*Where are you keeping your calendar at home?*\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **Read pages 29-32 and pages 9-10. Use your day planner / calendar system to schedule your downtime, lifestyle strategies, and other life priorities.**

*What kinds of activities did you schedule for your 20-60 minutes of downtime each day?*\_\_\_\_\_

---

*What day of the week did you set aside for downtime or a slower paced day this week? What did you do on your day off?*\_\_\_\_\_

---

*If you decided to exercise, practice mindfulness, or build in other lifestyle strategies, what days and times did you set aside for this? What did you do?*

---

---

*What other life priorities (e.g., health, relationships, hobbies) are you using your day planner/ calendar system to build into your life? Are you making time for your big rocks?*

---

---

☐ **Read page 6. Practice taking regular breaks.**

- Think of an activity you will do this week that might be hard for you to finish. Try to choose an activity that is important to you and your life goals. Think about how you could remind yourself to take breaks during this activity and what this break will look like.
- For example, if you plan to help clean the house this week, you could set an alarm on your watch to take a break after 45 minutes. You could decide you will wash your face and do deep breathing for 10 minutes during this break.
- Briefly describe how you plan to take breaks during your activity:

---

---

---

☐ **Read pages 27-28. Choose one new routine to build into your life (or improve one that you already have) that can help you address your life priorities and class goals. Describe this routine.**

---

---

☐ **Read pages 19-26. If you are considering practicing mindfulness more regularly, complete the following items. Also, consider practicing mindful breathing and/or a mindful body scan, once per day, for 10-20 minutes. There are free guided mindfulness practices on a variety of websites, such as: <https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx> .**

The most important reasons I want to practice mindfulness more regularly are:

---

---

---

I plan to do the following things to practice mindfulness more regularly:

Specific Actions:

When?

---

---

---

These are some possible obstacles to practicing mindfulness more regularly, and how I can handle them:

Possible obstacles to change:

How to respond:

---

---

---

## Session 3: More Organization and Prospective Memory

### Class Agenda

- Mindfulness Practice (15m)
- Review Home Exercise (15m)
  - 2m Break - Neck Rub, Shake Hands, Point and Flex Feet
- Organizing Your Day Planner (Appointments) / Exercise (20m)
- Organizing Your Day Planner (Prioritizing To Do Lists) / Exercise (15m)
  - 10m Break
- Organizing Your Day Planner (Notes and Labeled Sections) / Exercise (10m)
- Schedule Daily and Weekly Planning Sessions / Exercise (5m)
  - 2m Break - Close eyes, count to 30, breathe
- How important are day planners / calendar systems to you? (15m)
- Short-term Prospective Memory Strategies (10m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### 1. Mindfulness Practice

As we discussed previously, mindfulness practice is a strategy for improving cognition, physical, and emotional health. You can do a brief mindfulness exercise to clear your mind right before you want to focus on a task, activity or conversation. Or, you can set aside time each day for formal mindfulness practice. Any time works – when you first wake up, during a break or at lunch, after work or before dinner, or right before bed.

Formal mindfulness practices include mindful breathing, body scans, sitting meditations, walking meditations, yoga, tai chi, and qigong. You can find free guided mindfulness practices on a variety of websites, including:

<https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx> .

Last week we practiced mindful breathing and body scans. This week we will practice a sitting meditation that brings attention first to your breath, then your body, then sounds, and then thoughts and emotions.

**Mindfulness = Focusing awareness on the experience of the present moment**

During mindfulness practice, our intentions are to:

- **Stay in the present moment**
- **Non-judgmentally**
- **Without a purpose or goal (except to experience the moment)**
- **With acceptance**
- **With curiosity and a beginner's mind**

During mindfulness practice, your mind may wander to other thoughts, plans, judgments, likes or dislikes, or stories. That is what the mind does and is totally normal and ok. Simply acknowledge those thoughts, perhaps labeling them as such. For

example, say to yourself “that is a thought” or “that is judgment”. And then, gently let the thought go, returning your attention to the present moment. This may happen over and over again during your practice. That is ok, and is, in fact, part of the practice. Just bring your attention back to the present moment, over and over again, as many times as you need to.

### **Mindful Sitting Meditation**

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Do only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Now gently start to bring your attention to your breathing, without trying to control or change how you are breathing. Just simply notice how it feels.
- Gently relax your mouth, throat, and belly, allowing your breath to move freely, curiously observing the sensations of breathing.
- Perhaps noticing air moving in and out of your nose or mouth. Is it warm or cold, dry or wet? How does the air feel inside your nose, or your mouth? How does it feel as it moves down your throat and into your belly?
- Is your belly expanding as you breathe in, and emptying as you breathe out? How does that feel? Feel free to perhaps put one hand on your belly as you notice its ups and downs.
- Your mind may at times wander away from the breath. That is perfectly normal and part of any mindfulness practice. Just gently notice those thoughts and do the best you can to return your attention to your breath.
- Ok. Let’s practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on your breath.
- Now gently turning your attention to your body. Observing any sensations you may be feeling. You may scan the body bottom to top, or perhaps let the mind wander to specific areas on its own, or just let yourself experience the body as a whole.
- Gently exploring all the sensations of the body. Perhaps you are feeling hot or cold in particular areas. Perhaps moisture or dryness. Tingles, prickles, itches, or discomforts? Pulsing or beating. Tightness or looseness.
- Spending another minute or so, exploring all the physical sensations of your body.
- Now slowly shifting your attention away from your body and toward the experience of hearing. Exploring and observing the experience of sound.
- Perhaps there are sounds coming from your body, or from the room around you. Perhaps they are loud, or barely perceptible. Perhaps they are high pitched, or low pitched. Rhythmic or random.
- If you notice yourself naming the source of the sounds, or judging the sounds in some way, that is normal and ok. Gently let those thoughts go and return your attention to the experience of the sounds without thinking about them. Observe the patterns of the sounds without the need to figure out.

- Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on the experience of hearing.
- Now slowly, when you are ready, turning your attention away from the sounds and instead to your mind, including its thoughts and emotions. Gently watching your mind, observing its thoughts wander in and then away.
- If you find yourself directing those thoughts, or getting stuck on one thought or another, that is ok. Gently try to bring awareness to your breath for a moment. Breathing in, and then loosening your thoughts as you breathe out again.
- If you find yourself judging yourself or your practice, saying perhaps things like "I am not doing this right" or "I can't do this", that is also normal and ok. Simply acknowledge the thought, let it go, and continue watching your thoughts and emotions without direction, without judgment.
- As your thoughts wander into and out of your mind, you may decide to label each as a thought, or a feeling, or an opinion, or a judgment. Observing that that is all they are and nothing more. As you label each thought or feeling or judgment as just that, perhaps imagining it float away like a cloud in the sky, or like a leaf floating down a stream and then out of sight.
- Spending another minute or so, quietly observing your thoughts float into and out of awareness.
- Now as we end this practice, perhaps begin slowly wiggling your fingers and your toes. Then gently opening your eyes and bringing awareness back to the room and today.

**What did you experience during the mindful sitting meditation? Stick to objective sensations and present moment experiences from during the exercise, rather than telling new stories or providing new judgments or opinions.**

---



---



---

## **2. Review Home Exercise (pp. 34-35) – Class Discussion**

- What has been helping you to have your calendar with you at all times? To check your calendar 3 times per day?
- What have you liked about scheduling downtime this week (20-60 minutes each day, and a slower paced day one per week)? What else are you planning?
- What has been working well for you in terms of scheduling in time for exercise, mindfulness, and other lifestyle strategies? How about other life priorities and big rocks, such as health, relationships, hobbies? What else do you hope to do for yourself?
- What outines are helping you with your life priorities? What new ones do you still plan to build into your life and why?

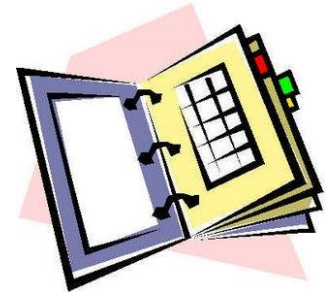
### **3. Organizing Your Day Planner: Appointments and Reminders**

It is important to organize your day planner for appointments and reminders. We are now going to do an exercise practicing this skill.

#### **Calendar Exercise:**

##### **YOUR TUESDAY:**

- Sometime during the day, you need to call your friend, Scott, and remind him about the party at the Recreation Center this Saturday at 7:00 p.m.
- Sometime between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m., you need to drop off your job application at the VA Hospital.
- At 11:00 a.m., you have a doctor's appointment with your physician, Dr. Stevens, and you want to ask about the side effects of amoxicillin. You also want to report that you have been having severe headaches about once a week and even threw up because of one of them last Tuesday.
- Before you visit the doctor, you need to stop at Rite Aid to buy deodorant and shampoo, and to pick up a refill of amoxicillin.
- At 1:30 p.m., you are due at your geography class.
- At 4:00 p.m., you need to meet with the social worker, Jane Dunne, to discuss your housing options.
- You want to meet Joe for dinner at a new restaurant, Dominic's, at 7658 Poway Rd (858-748-1265) at 7:00 p.m.



##### **What kind of reminders might you want to enter before this day occurs?**

- What would you need to do ahead of time, before picking up your refill of amoxicillin? (e.g., call in refill request to pharmacy)
- What would you need to do ahead of time, before going to your geography class? (e.g., make sure homework is done and in your bag)
- What would you need to do ahead of time, before meeting with Jane Dunne? (e.g., make copies of financial information)

**Don't forget to plan in time for healthy lifestyle strategies. Include a break for lunch, a break for exercise, and a break for mindfulness practice.**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
7 am	7 am	7 am
8 am	8 am	8 am
9 am	9 am	9 am
10 am	10 am	10 am
11 am	11 am	11 am
12 noon	12 noon	12 noon
1 pm	1 pm	1 pm
2 pm	2 pm	2 pm
3 pm	3 pm	3 pm
4 pm	4 pm	4 pm
5 pm	5 pm	5 pm
6 pm	6 pm	6 pm
7 pm	7 pm	7 pm

From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, Treatment Manual (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.



Here is a completed example. Notice the use of symbols: dashes (-) for items to do at home or elsewhere, plus signs (+) for errands in the community, **highlights** for appointments, and stars (\*\*) to schedule in breaks and lifestyle strategies. You could also use color, underlining, circles, or other symbols to visualize your day.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
7 am	7 am - <i>Bring bag /geography HW</i>	7 am
	- <i>Bring copies of \$ info</i>	
	<i>for Jane Dunne</i>	
8 am	8 am - <i>Call pharmacy @</i>	8 am
	<i>amoxicillin</i>	
9 am	9 am + <i>Drop off job application</i>	9 am
	<i>to VA Hospital</i>	
10 am	10 am + <i>Rite Aid (deodorant,</i>	10 am
	<i>Aveeno, amoxicillin)</i>	
11 am	11 am <i>Dr. Stevens</i>	11 am
	- <i>Ask @ amoxicillin side effects</i>	
	- <i>Headaches / threw up</i>	
12 noon	12 noon ** <i>Lunch</i>	12 noon
	- <i>Call Scott @ party</i>	
	<i>(Recreation Center, 7PM)</i>	
1 pm	1 pm	1 pm
	<i>1:30PM Geography Class</i>	
2 pm	2 pm	2 pm
3 pm	3 pm ** <i>Mindfulness Practice</i>	3 pm
4 pm	4 pm <i>Jane Dunne - Housing</i>	4 pm
5 pm	5 pm	5 pm
	** <i>Exercise</i>	
6 pm	6 pm	6 pm
7 pm	7 pm <i>Dinner with Joe</i>	7 pm
	<i>Dominic's, 7658 Poway Rd.</i>	
	<i>858-748-1265</i>	

#### **4. Organizing Your Day Planner: Prioritizing To-Do Lists**

Another important feature of your day planner system is your to-do list. Maintaining a to-do list can aid in prioritizing activities that are in line with life goals (big rocks), and what needs to be done. Write down what needs to be done as soon as you think of it, and re-organize it later for prioritization. This will ensure that you schedule the big rocks and pebbles first, and it will help you decide whether you need to let some of the sand and water go. Prioritizing helps you take charge of what you can and will get done.



**Ideally, things that need to get done on a certain day should go in your calendar for that day. Other to-do items should go on your running to-do list. Assign each item a level of priority as you enter it. Re-evaluate their level of priority during your daily and weekly planning sessions.**

- Some people have multiple to-do lists organized by categories (e.g., Work, Family, Personal). Such as in tabbed sections of a paper day planner.
- Some people keep their running to-do list as a "bookmark" in their paper day planner system. Or, a sticky can be used so that it can be carried forward from day to another.
- You can use the "Reminder" app on iPhones and iPads as a To-Do List.
  - If you set a date and time to a "Reminder", the device will sound an alarm when you are supposed to do something (e.g., "Wish daughter a happy birthday today." at 9AM on 10/12/13).
  - If you set a location to a "Reminder" on an iPhone or iPad, it will sound an alarm and tell you do something when you get somewhere (e.g., "Buy milk, eggs, and cheese." next time you arrive at Fred Meyer.)
  - If you don't set a date or location to a "Reminder", it will appear on the reminder list but won't alert you in the future.
  - You can assign priority levels to "Reminders", and you can attach notes to them.
- There are also other apps and features in electronic day planner systems that can be used as a To-Do List.
- Consider the time management matrix and your "big rocks" (life priorities) as you think about what is important versus unimportant.

**Exercise:** Make a To-Do List for yourself right now. Fill in one of the To-Do lists below, or use your own day planner system to gain practice with it. Enter high priority items into your calendar for today or tomorrow. Be sure to prioritize your to-do list.

**TO DO:**

High Priority (today or tomorrow) Enter into calendar	Medium Priority (within a week or so)	Low Priority (within a month or so)

**TO DO:**

✓	123	Item

In the above To-Do List, the "123" column is used to prioritize each item. High priority items get "1s", medium priority items get "2's", and low priority items get "3's" or no number at all. You could instead put one or two stars next to high priority items and leave the others blank...The column with the checkmark is used to check items off as you complete them.

**What style To-Do List do you prefer?** \_\_\_\_\_

The following page provides some possible TO DO List categories for you to keep in your calendar system, if you would like.

## TO DO List Categories

<b>APPOINTMENTS</b>	<b>KITCHEN</b>
Scheduling	Mop floors
Preparing Materials	Clean stove/oven
Transportation	Clean out cupboards (toss old food, clean shelves, organize)
Social outings	Scrub trash can/under sink
Exercise (more likely to happen if it's an appointment!)	Clean refrigerator (throw out old food, clean shelves, clean outside)
	Scrub counters & sink
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	Wipe down cabinets
Schedule Rides	Wipe down top of refrigerator and other appliances
Bus Pass/Schedules	
Automobile Maintenance	<b>BATHROOM</b>
	Clean out medicine cabinet (throw out all expired medications)
<b>WORK</b>	Clean shower curtains/stall doors
Job search	Organize items under sink/on shelves
Job interviews	Launder bath mats
Follow-up calls	Mop floor/vacuum carpet
Work schedule	Scrub sink/counters
File pay stubs	
	<b>BEDROOM</b>
<b>ERRANDS</b>	Clean out closets (Donate clothes that don't fit or are damaged)
Grocery shopping	Collect and complete mending (lost buttons, rips, hems, etc.)
Bank	Shoes: polish or get repaired
Pharmacy	Reorganize dresser drawers
Clothing/Shoes	
Post Office	<b>LIVING ROOM</b>
	Clean carpet spots
<b>PAPERWORK</b>	Wipe fingerprints from doors/walls/sills
Pay bills/balance check book	Wash windows
Correspondence (letters, cards, email)	Clean hanging lamps/chandeliers
	Test smoke alarm
<b>HOUSEHOLD CHORES</b>	
Cooking	<b>OFFICE</b>
Cleaning	Organize files
Laundry	Organize desk/supplies
	Catch up on correspondence
<b>SCHOOL/LEARNING</b>	Redo/Update Address book
Homework	Complete a will
Reading	Arrange photos in albums
	Organize craft/art/hobby supplies
<b>PHONE CALLS</b>	Organize computer files
Appointments, Doctors, etc.	File emails
Friends	Sync cell phone, iPod, etc., with computer
Family	Print photos

## **5. Organizing Your Day Planner: Notes and Labeled Sections**

### **Take Notes**

- Know where you will quickly take notes throughout your day, such as when someone gives you important instructions, a phone number, or directions from one place to another, or as you think through what you need to accomplish a project or task.
- On an iPhone or iPad, you can use the "Notes" app for taking notes, which can then be labeled by date, project, or topic. You can also use voice activation to speak instead of writing your notes.
- iPads and other tablets have handwriting apps that allow you to handwrite notes onto the tablet and/or convert them automatically to typed print.
- Electronic day planners may have other apps or features that are good for taking notes.
- Some people just carry around a small notebook for jotting down notes.

**What do you use?** \_\_\_\_\_



## **6. Create Categorized/Labeled Sections**

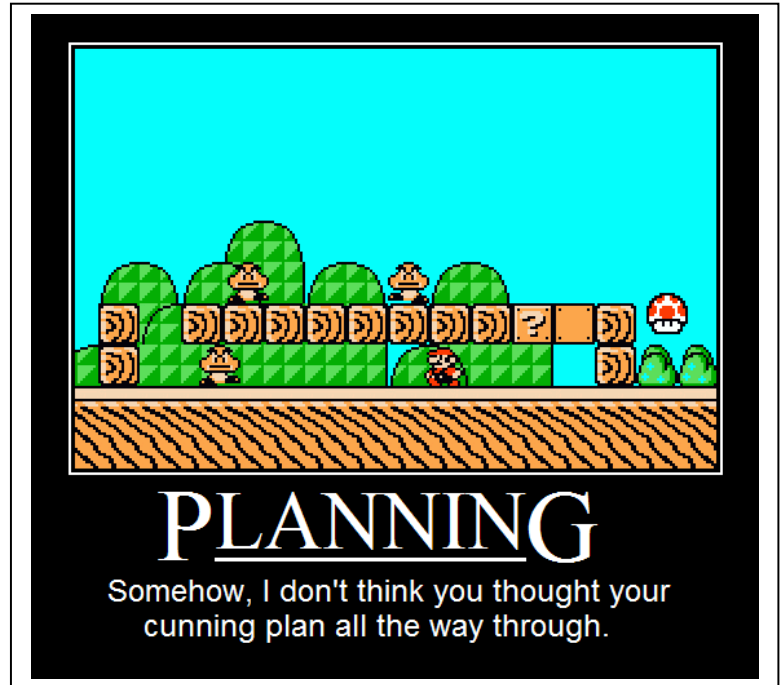
- You will have your calendar with you all the time, so it is a good place to keep information you need frequently, such as:
  - Commonly used phone numbers, addresses, and transportation routes
  - A list of your medications and their dosages.
  - Medical information that you want to have handy (e.g., questions for your doctor).
- It is also a good place to store information and notes related to projects or goals you are working on (e.g., "Finances", "House Remodeling Project", "Weight Loss Plan").

**Activity:** Spend some time organizing and improving your day planner system right now. If you haven't done so already, find a system for taking notes, and create categorized/labeled sections that will help you toward your specific life goals and projects. Ask the facilitators or group members for help if you need it.

## **7. Schedule Daily and Weekly Planning Sessions**

**Daily Planning Sessions:** Ideally, you should set aside time toward the end of day to use your day planner system to plan out your next day, looking at both your calendar of appointments as well as your To-Do List. **This will help you prepare for the next day's activities** (e.g., pack the items you need, schedule important To-Do List items in between set appointments, set "Reminders" or alarms to remind you when you need to do something, make time for your big rocks.)

**Weekly Planning Sessions:** Ideally, toward the end of each week, or perhaps on the weekend, set aside some time to sit down with your calendar for 5-10 minutes and plan for the upcoming week. Make sure that all of your appointments are entered and that you have everything you need in place for the coming week. This process will usually remind you of things to do, and these can go on your to-do list. It is also time to look at the big picture (e.g., Is there enough time this month to meet important deadlines or reach set goals?, **Have you organized your week and month to give you breaks and fit in your big rocks such as relationships and health?** Did you remember to cancel other appointments for the week you will be on vacation or have guests in town?)



**My weekly planning session will be** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise:** Enter your weekly planning session into your calendar.

## **8. How important are day planners / calendar systems to you?**

Although day planners / calendar systems can help people organize their life, make time for priorities, and remember important appointments, activities and information, there may also be barriers and costs to using them.

***Based on your particular life circumstances, goals, and priorities, what do you believe would be the specific benefits and costs of using a day planner /calendar system more regularly?***

Benefits	Costs

***On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how important would you say it is for you to increase your use of day planners / calendars?***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Important						Extremely Important				

***On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how confident would you say you are that, if you decided to increase your use of day planners / calendars, you could do it?***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Confident						Extremely Confident				

***If you were to decide to increase your day planner / calendar use, what do you think would work for you?***

---



---



---

***If you were to decide to increase your day planner use, what specific class goals and life priorities do you think it would help you toward?***

---



---



---

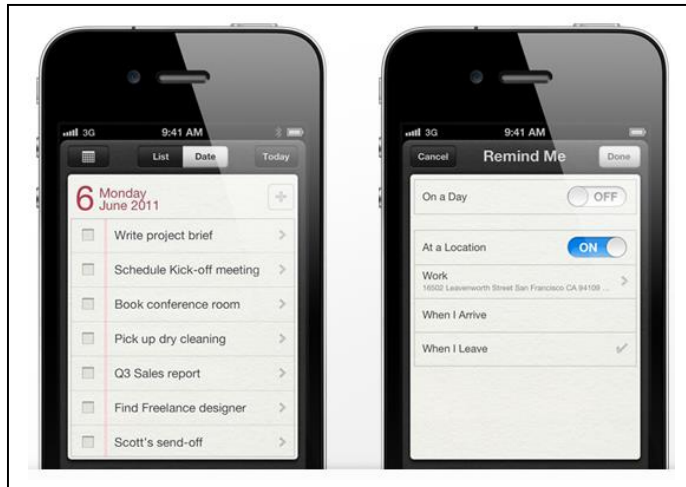
***If you were to decide to increase your day planner / calendar use, what could you do this week to improve your chances of doing this? Write down specific steps.***

---



---

## 8. Short-term Prospective Memory Strategies



**Do you remember what prospective memory is and why it is important to work on?** Below is a list of strategies to assist with prospective memory.

- **Calendar Systems, TO DO LISTS, Taking Notes:** But, it is not always feasible to use your calendar system to remember everything.
- Short-term situations may call for different strategies, such as:
  - One of the easiest strategies is to **write a reminder on your hand** so you are sure to see it.
    - Examples: “Call Katy,” “Mail taxes,” “Get milk”.
  - **Leave yourself a message** on your voicemail.
  - **Send yourself an email with the reminder in the subject line.**
  - **Use visual imagery.**
    - The weirder, funnier, and more elaborate, the better.
    - Example: You need to call your friend Violet when you get home. Visualize a pay phone attached to your front door, with a vase of violets on top of it. You open the front door and the violets fall down, spilling dirt all over the floor. When you get home and see your front door, you are more likely to remember to call your friend.
  - **Can't miss reminders** are sort of like automatic places. They are reminders that you can't miss seeing.
    - Items you need to take with you when you leave the house can be on your front doorknob or hanging in a bag on the front doorknob.
    - A sticky note on your cell phone screen is hard to miss.
  - **Talk to yourself about the consequences of forgetting to do something.**
    - Example: “If I don't call Violet when I get home, she will think I forgot her birthday, and I would feel awful if that happened.” “If I don't mail that bill when I leave, my payment might be late and I might get a late charge.”



### Session 3: Home Exercise

☐ Read pages 39-46. Practice using your day planner/calendar system each day.

- ***Continue looking at your calendar at least three times a day.***
- ***Set up or improve your day planner / calendar organization:***
  - Appointments / Calendar: If you have not done so already, add all your up-coming appointments and events to your day planner system. Add new appointments at the time they come up. Don't wait to write them down later.
  - To Do Lists: If you have not done so already, create one or more prioritized To-Do Lists. Add tasks to your to-do lists when they occur to you (so you don't forget them). Decide whether you should put them on the calendar for a certain day or whether they should go on your to-do list. Remember to prioritize each item.
  - Taking Notes: If you have not done so already, create a place for taking notes each day. Write down important information in your day planner system as you hear it (don't put it on scraps of paper, in your pocket, etc.).
  - Labeled / Categorized Sections: If you have not done so already, make sections in your day planner for information you may need frequently (e.g., addresses/phone numbers, medications/health information), and for projects and goals you are working on (e.g., "Weight Loss Plan", "Home Repair Project", "Getting a Job").
- ***Schedule daily planning sessions (5-10 minutes). When you check your calendar (ideally in the evening), plan the next day's schedule:***
  - Think about what you need to do tomorrow and schedule these items in your calendar.
  - Review your to-do list and make any necessary additions. Cross off the things you got done.
  - Do you need to schedule time to work toward other important life goals and big rocks?
  - Did you schedule time for healthy life strategies and breaks?
- ***Schedule weekly planning sessions (10-15 minutes). When you check your calendar (ideally late in the week or on the weekend), plan for the next week and month. Look at the big picture.***
  - Make sure that all of your appointments are entered and that you have everything you need in place for the coming week.
  - This process will usually remind you of things to do, and these can go on your to-do list.
  - It is also time to look at the big picture.
    - If there is a special week coming up, like a holiday, vacation, or out of town guests, have you canceled or rescheduled other

appointments during that week? What else do you need to do to prepare for this event?

- Do you need to schedule more time to work toward important deadlines, life goals and big rocks?
- Did you schedule time for healthy life strategies and breaks?

☐ **This Saturday, call and leave a message at \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_. This is a challenge to see how the calendars are working for you, so put a reminder note in your calendar right now to call on Saturday.**

☐ **Continue scheduling your downtime (page 32) and using lifestyle strategies (pages 9-10), such as exercise (pages 11-13) and mindfulness (pages 19-26).**

*What kinds of activities did you schedule for your 20-60 minutes of downtime each day?* \_\_\_\_\_

*If you decided to exercise or build in other lifestyle strategies, what days and times did you set aside for this? What did you do?* \_\_\_\_\_

*If you decided to practice mindfulness more regularly, what days and times did you set aside for this? What did you do? At this point, for example, you might consider alternating between mindful body scans and mindful sitting meditations each day, for 20-45 min each time. And/or, you could consider practicing mindful breathing for 5-10 min at a time, several times per day, particularly before an activity or conversation you want to focus on, or as a way of regrouping after a challenging activity.*

*What other life priorities (e.g., health, relationships, hobbies) are you using your day planner/ calendar system to build into your life? Are you making time for your big rocks?*

## Session 4: Attention, Concentration and Working Memory

### **Class Agenda**

- Mindfulness Practice (15m)
- Review Home Exercise (15m)
  - 2m Break - Yawn and Stretch
- Attention Strategies / Self Talk Exercise (25m)
  - 10m Break
- Attending to Conversations / Activity (20m)
  - 2m - Chair Stretches/Head and Shoulder Rolls/Pick Favorite
- Working memory training activity (15m)
- How important is “mental exercise” to you? (10m)
- Attention Strategies and Goals (5m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### **1. Mindfulness Practice**

#### **Mindful Body Scan Exercise**

*Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living. New York, New York: Bantam Books.*

Today we going to practice a mindful body scan exercise together, just like we did in week two, and some of you may be doing on your own. Like with any mindfulness practice, you will gently bring your focus to the present moment, non-judgmentally and with an open and curious attitude. Perhaps like a scientist or an objective observer, here to record details about something new and unknown.

Mindful body scans can be done laying down on the floor, or sitting in a chair or on a floor. Many people practice body scans once a day or several times per week, either first thing in the morning, as a break sometime during the day, or at the end of their day. Body scans can be done briefly (5-15 minutes), or they can be an extended exercise (20-45 minutes or longer). Today will practice a short body scan while sitting in a chair.

If you have been practicing guided or unguided mindfulness exercises at home or elsewhere, you may notice your mind at times wandering to comparisons. Your mind may have thoughts like, “I like that voice better”, or “I felt more relaxed last time”, or “I prefer sitting meditations.” That is normal and is just what the mind does. Simply notice the comparison, perhaps name it as such (“that is a comparison” or “that is a judgment”), let the thought go, and gently return your focus back to your body.

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Doing only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Gently bringing your attention to your breath for a moment, noticing how the breath feels moving in and out of your nose, and your mouth, and your belly.

- With this practice, you will be gently bringing your attention to one part of your body at a time. There is no right or wrong way for your body to feel. The goal of this practice is neither to change how you feel, nor to feel in any particular way. Instead, just observing how each part of the body is feeling right now. If you notice your mind wandering, just gently bring your attention back to your body as often as needed. You can also return your focus to your breath if that is what you prefer or need.
- Now bringing your attention to your feet. Exploring how your toes feel. Do you feel tingling? Prickles? Pulsing? Nothing? Does one toe feel different from the others? Do the toes on your right foot feel different from your left foot? How do they feel rubbing up against each other, or against your socks or shoes?
- Now moving your attention to the bottoms of your feet? What do you feel there? Are your feet warm, or cold? Dry or moist? Is there any discomfort?
- If there is discomfort at any time during this practice, just do your best to gently observe it. What is the quality of that sensation? Is it dull or sharp? Strong or weak? Is the discomfort a steady sensation, or does it seem to increase or decrease across time? If at any time the sensation is too intense, you can perhaps try to imagine slowly breathing into that area, noticing the sensation, and then breathing out, letting that sensation loosen a bit. If ever a sensation is too intense, you can also return your focus to another part of the body, or your breath. Whatever feels safe and right for you today.
- Now moving your attention to the tops of your feet. How do those feel today?
- And now the ankles. Do they feel tight, or loose, or something else all together?
- At different points throughout this practice, you may notice your mind wander off to other thoughts, other parts of the body, or perhaps sounds or sights in the room. That is perfectly normal and ok. Just acknowledge those thoughts and return your focus to your body, or your breath, coming back to the present moment.
- Now moving your attention to your lower legs, your calves, and your shins. Exploring any sensations you may have there. Can you feel the muscles, the bones, the tendons and ligaments?
- Now moving to the knees. What do you feel there?
- If you notice any judgments coming into your mind, thoughts such as “feels good” or “feels bad”, notice those, perhaps labeling them as “judgments” and then gently letting them go, returning your attention to your body and your sensations, the here and the now.
- Now moving your focus to your upper legs, your thighs, your hamstrings. What do you notice there? Perhaps feeling the pressure of the legs against the chair, perhaps noticing that some spots of the legs feel different than other spots. Perhaps some areas seem to have little sensation at all.
- Now moving your attention up your body to your hips and then your belly. What do you feel in your belly? Doing your best to notice each sensation, separately, curiously. Perhaps you notice movements in the abdomen; perhaps it is making sounds.
- Now moving your attention to your chest. What do you notice there? Perhaps noticing your heartbeat, or your chest rising and falling as you breathe.

- Now moving your attention to your lower back and spine, observing each sensation there. Is there tightness? Heat? Does one side feel different than the other?
- Again, if at any point there are any feelings of discomfort, just do your best to observe that sensation, gently exploring it. Or, you can try to imagine breathing into that area, and then letting that sensation loosen a bit as you breathe out. Or, return your focus to another area of the body or your breath. Whatever is best for you today.
- Now moving your attention slowly up the spine to your upper back. What do you notice there? If there is any tightness, how does it feel to breathe into that area and loosen it a bit?
- And now moving your attention gently to your shoulders, upper arms, triceps and biceps. Do they feel loose? Tight? Is there a soreness, or perhaps an itch somewhere? How do those sensations feel? Do those sensations change or are they steady over time?
- Now moving your attention to your elbows and lower arms. What do you feel there? Does one arm feel different than the other, and how so?
- And now gently moving your attention and focus to your wrists and your hands. Can you feel each finger separately? Perhaps you can feel sensations in specific finger joints – perhaps heat, or pressure, or fullness in one or several joints. Or perhaps you notice the weight of your hands against your lap or the table. How does that feel?
- Now taking a breath and gently moving your attention back up your arms slowly to your neck. What do you feel in the front of your neck and throat? How about inside your throat? How about the back of your neck?
- Now bringing your attention to your face, noticing any sensations on your jaw, cheeks, nose, eyes, forehead, ears. If there is any tightness, how does it feel to loosen that tightness? Is perhaps the tip of your nose colder than the rest of your face? Do your eyes or lips feel wet or dry?
- Now bringing your attention to the top of your head. How does your hair feel against your skin? How does your scalp feel?
- Now taking a few moments to observe your body as a whole, as one whole body. Noticing your breath as you experience your body and all its sensations all at once.
- Now, as we gently end this practice, when you are ready, slowly beginning perhaps to wiggle your fingers and toes. Perhaps then slowly stretching, and then gently opening your eyes to bring your attention back to the room.

**What did you notice while doing a mindful body scan? Stick to objective observations of the present moment, rather than judgments, opinions or stories.**

---



---



---

## **2. Review Home Exercise (pp.49-50) – Class Discussion**

- What aspects of your calendar system are working well for you (appointment calendar, to-do lists, notes, categorized sections)? What will you improve next and why?
- How are the daily and weekly planning sessions helping you? What else would you like to do to help you remember to plan ahead?
- What helped you remember to leave a message this Saturday, or what could help you next time?
- What is working for you in terms of scheduling downtime? Exercise? Mindfulness Practice? Other life priorities and big rocks? Why are they important to you?

## **3. Attention and Concentration Strategies**

- **Attention = focusing on something** (e.g., something you are doing, something someone is saying, your own thoughts).
- **Concentration = prolonged or sustained focus.**
  - Attention and concentration are essential for completing daily tasks.
  - Attention and concentration underlie successful memory.



## **4. Mindfulness Practices Improve Attention and Concentration**

Regular mindfulness practice helps us strengthen our attention and concentration skills. Also, if you do a mindfulness exercise before starting a task, it can help you minimize distracting thoughts or intrusive emotions and re-focus your attention.

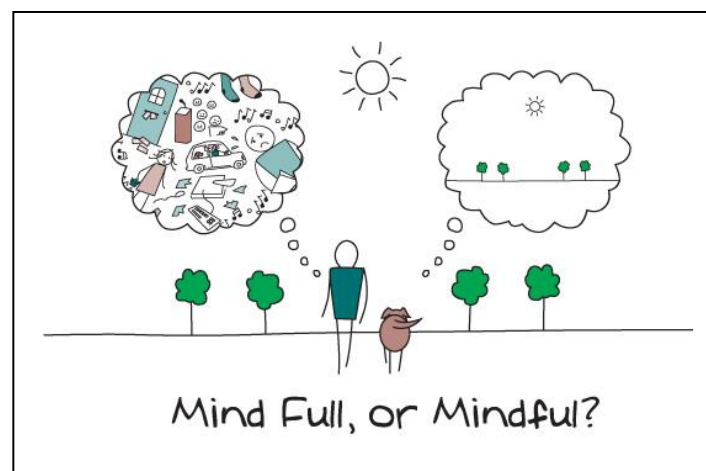
So far we have practiced several **formal mindfulness practices** – mindful breathing, body scans and sitting meditations. Although we will not practice them together in class, as discussed previously, there are other formal mindfulness practices that you may choose to integrate into your life, such as mindful walking, loving kindness meditations, yoga, tai chi, quigong, and others.

**Informal mindfulness practices** are when you deliberately decide to engage in one of your typical life activities with a mindful approach, with your full attention to the experience of the present moment, without judgment, with openness and curiosity.

- For example, like what we did with the raisin exercise.
- Other examples could be while taking a bath, waiting for the bus, eating a meal, listening to a song, making your bed, or holding a baby or pet.
- It is helpful to practice mindfulness during one or more simple or routine activities per day. Perhaps alternating between one pleasant activity (for example, while drinking tea or juice), one neutral activity (for example, brushing your teeth), and one unpleasant activity (for example, waiting in line). At first, choose activities that are only mildly unpleasant, nothing too intense, slowly building up to activities that are more challenging.
- During these activities, the intention is to focus moment to moment awareness on what you are doing, your body's movements, and your sensations – what you see, hear, taste, smell, and feel in your body.
- Your mind will likely also wander to thoughts and emotions, as the mind does. That is ok. The idea is to observe the thoughts and emotions as just that – thoughts and emotions, separate from what is actually happening. Name them as thoughts or emotions, let them go, and then return your attention to your sensations and the present moment.
- The point is not to try to create a certain kind of experience or state of mind, but to be fully aware of what you are experiencing. Simply notice if you have any difficulties, and cultivate curiosity, not judgment.

Over time these practices help us improve our attention and concentration skills. They also train our bodies to tolerate and cope with stress, distress, discomfort, and pain. They help us identify and perhaps let go of thoughts and judgments that worsen the effects of stress and discomfort.

Later today, we will practice active listening skills, which is, in a way, a form of mindful communication.



## 5. Other Attention Strategies

### FOUR PRINCIPLES:

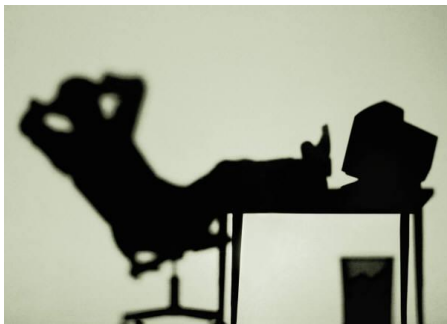
- 1) **P**reparation
- 2) **E**nergy Conservation (**STEP BACK**)
- 3) **A**ctive Effort
- 4) **S**elf-talk

### **Preparation**

- Break a task into simpler parts, understand the steps it will entail.
- Rehearse the steps mentally or write them down.
- Visualize completing the task.

### **Energy Conservation**

- Remember to **STEP BACK** and conserve energy to avoid fatigue and its effects on cognition.



### TIPS FOR CONSERVING ENERGY

<b>Self-Care</b>	<b>Be open to help</b>
<b>Take breaks</b>	<b>Avoid interruptions</b>
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Cut distractions</b>
<b>Pace yourself</b>	<b>Keep it simple</b>

- **Self-Care:** sleep enough and take care of yourself—eat well, stay hydrated, and avoid alcohol/drugs.
- **Take breaks** when you need to re-focus—even 30 seconds off can help you re-energize.
- **Exercise** regularly for better relaxation, sleep, and blood flow to the brain.
- **Pace yourself** and do your most difficult work when you are most alert.
- **Be open to help** and ask for help when you are struggling with a task.
- **Avoid Interruptions**, which make tasks take longer.
  - Turn off your phone ringer; consider a “Do Not Disturb” sign.
- **Cut distractions**, which use up cognitive energy you need for the task
  - Turn off radios and TVs, close curtains, use earplugs, and mask sounds with a fan or white noise machine.
- **Keep it simple** and avoid multi-tasking. Do one thing at a time, particularly when one of the things you are doing is potentially dangerous. Example: If you are driving, just drive. No talking on the cell phone, no texting, no map-reading, no distractions!



### Active Effort

- Consciously attending to details, closely analyzing.
- Be prepared to work more slowly than you might usually work.
- When reading, allow time for re-reading sections.
- Check your work for errors.

### Self-talk during tasks

- Repeat the steps of the activity to yourself as you complete them.
- Talk to yourself about your progress.
- Helps you remember completing the task.
- Examples: simple (e.g., programming contacts into your phone), and complex activities (e.g., rebuilding an engine; troubleshooting a computer problem).

**Self-talk Exercise:** Self-talk makes tasks easier. Try this sequence:

- Tap your fist on the table, then the side of your hand, then your palm.
- Keep going for 30 seconds.
- Now try talking to yourself while you do it. Say out loud, “Fist, Side, Palm.”
- Does self-talk make it easier to stay on track?

**What kinds of activities could you use self-talk for in your life?**

---

---



## Even More Attention Strategies (Optional with time)

Mark with an X or highlight those you want to try.

Problem	Strategy
<b>Internal Distractions:</b> Hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Make sure you have eaten properly, get a glass of water, and go to the bathroom.</li> <li>🍏 Take all medications as prescribed. Do you need any medications for pain or discomfort?</li> <li>🍏 Get enough rest each night.</li> <li>🍏 If you are tired, throw some water on your face, do some jumping jacks, or take a vigorous walk.</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Distractions:</b> memories, stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Deep breathing.</li> <li>🍏 Mindfulness exercises.</li> <li>🍏 Quickly write down things you want to attend to later (if you keep thinking about what you need to do later) and then return to the task at hand.</li> </ul>
<b>Forgetting</b> what you are supposed to be doing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Use your calendar to prioritize and schedule the task. Refer to your calendar to make sure you are on task.</li> <li>🍏 Before you begin an important task, post a sign near you that reminds you what task you are on. For example, "Bills."</li> </ul>
<b>Difficulty multi-tasking.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 If you find yourself not completing any one task, or failing to do tasks well, do one thing at a time!</li> </ul>
<b>External distractions, interruptions.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Turn off unnecessary noises like TV or radio.</li> <li>🍏 Use a fan or white noise machine to drown out street noise or nearby conversations.</li> <li>🍏 Use earplugs.</li> <li>🍏 Remove visually distracting items like computer screen savers or interesting magazines or pictures.</li> <li>🍏 Find a quiet room and close the door.</li> <li>🍏 Think about creating a "quiet space" in your house or work setting that you can use regularly.</li> <li>🍏 Try to be alone, or ask others to be quiet.</li> <li>🍏 Use a DO NOT DISTURB sign.</li> <li>🍏 Ask others not to interrupt.</li> <li>🍏 Decide not to answer phone calls or emails until after the task is complete.</li> </ul>
<b>Losing focus/ fatiguing.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Take regular breaks! If frequent, they can be quite short (e.g., do three jumping jacks or a quick stretch).</li> <li>🍏 Break tasks down into smaller steps, and take breaks in between steps.</li> </ul>
<b>Losing track</b> of what you are reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍏 Index cards, rulers, or paper to track what line you are on.</li> <li>🍏 Use a highlighter to underscore important points.</li> <li>🍏 Take notes or make an outline as you read. Make it more interactive.</li> </ul>

## **6. Paying Attention During Conversations**

We often get in trouble with bosses, teachers, or significant others when we have trouble paying attention during conversations. These four strategies can help.



### **FOUR PRINCIPLES:**

- 1) Listen Actively
- 2) Eliminate Distractions
- 3) Ask Questions
- 4) Paraphrase

**\*\*LEAP** into conversations\*\*

### **Listen actively**

- Use nonverbal behaviors to convey that you are listening.
  - Turn toward the speaker.
  - Open your posture, relax, avoid “closed” body language.
  - Lean toward the speaker.
  - Maintain adequate eye contact.

### **Eliminate distractions**

- What sorts of distractions affect your conversations? Phones? Kids? TV? Pets? How can you reduce these distractions?

### **Ask questions**

- Ask questions for clarification.
- Ask the speaker to slow down, repeat information, or explain something in a different way.

### **Paraphrase**

- Repeat information back in your own words, which will help you understand, pay attention to, and remember the information later.
- Helps ensure that you have heard correctly and understand; gives the speaker a chance to correct any misunderstandings.

**Here is an example of how paraphrasing and asking questions can help you pay attention during conversations.**

- Let's say that you are at your doctor's office, and the doctor says:

*“I've been looking over your records, and I'm a little concerned about your cholesterol level. It's been high in the past – it was over 230 back in August of last year. It's 205 right now, but your goal should be to get it down to 200 or below. Sometimes we prescribe medication to lower cholesterol, but in your case, I think you can take some steps to lower it without medication. Be sure to limit your dietary fats, including meats, eggs, butter, cheese, and ice cream. Exercising three times a week should also help*

*lower your cholesterol. I want to keep a close eye on it, so let's continue to check it every six months to see how you're doing."*

- That is a lot of information the doctor just gave you, and you want to make sure you understand everything. So, you can paraphrase what the doctor said, and say back:

*"Okay, let me make sure I understand you. My cholesterol is a little high right now, but if I cut back on the eggs, butter, and fatty foods, and if I exercise three times a week, I can lower it without taking any medication. We're going to check it in another six months and see how I did. Does that sound right?"*

- If the doctor was speaking too quickly, you may need to ask for repetition, or you may have to ask the doctor to slow down. You could say:

*"That was a lot of information, and I want to be sure I heard you right. Could you tell me again what I shouldn't eat, and could you say it a little more slowly?"*

**Exercise:** Break into pairs. Within each pair, one person should pick a topic and speak to the other person for 1-2 minutes in front of the group. The other person should use LEAP skills as they listen and then repeat back what the speaker says. The class and facilitators can then provide constructive feedback if appropriate. If there are multiple facilitators, the class can be broken into smaller groups. (The listener should: **L**isten actively, **E**liminate distractions, **A**sk questions, and **P**araphrase what was said.)

The worst weather I've ever experienced.	My favorite teacher.
Why it's important to help people who need it.	A challenge I overcame.
The most important thing I learned in the past year.	The music I like best.
Why it's important to take care of your health.	My favorite movie or TV show.
The last time I went out of town.	My hobby.
My favorite part of the city (or country).	My favorite TV show.



## **7. Working Memory Training**

**Working memory is the ability to remember information for a short amount of time so that you can manipulate the information in your head.** For example, remembering numbers for a moment so you can do a math problem in your head. Many people with mild cognitive impairments complain of problems with working memory (e.g., “I can’t remember the information long enough to solve the problem.”).

Some research suggests that repeated practice on working memory tasks can improve working memory. Research suggests that working memory training may be helpful for adults with mild cognitive impairments.

A variety of websites provide **free working memory training games** that you can do at home. For example, Digit Span, N-back, and Paced Auditory Serial Addition Tests (PASAT) are all working memory tasks and can be found on <https://cognitivedfun.net> . Go to your internet browser and type “free cognitive training games” or “free working memory training games” to see what you find.

You may also try downloading a working memory app on your smart phone. Go to the app icon on your smart phone. Click search. In the search bar, type “working memory”, “working memory training”, or “cognitive training” and click enter. Select the game you want to download.

**Exercise:** We are now going to do an activity to give you an example of a common working memory exercise, an exercise you might practice several times a week if you were interested in working memory training. This exercise is meant to be challenging, and you will not be able to get all or many of the answers correct, especially at first. The goal is get better at it over time, so just do the best you can and stick with it. This is what working memory training is about - practicing a difficult task so that you can get better at it.

Ok. Let’s begin. I am going to read a list of numbers to you. Listen for the first two numbers, add them up, and write down your answer. When you hear the next number, add it to the one you heard before it. Continue to add the next number to each preceding one. Remember, you are not being asked to write down a running total, but rather the sum of the last two numbers that I read...For example, if the first two numbers are “5 and 7,” you would write “12”. If the next number was “3”, you would write “10”. Then if the next number were “2”, you would write “5”. *[Facilitators can write this on the board for clarity.]*...Remember this is supposed to be a challenging task. If you lose your place, just jump right back in -- listen for two numbers in a row and add them up and keep going...Remember, you won’t get all of the items correct, especially at first.

*[Facilitators can use the PASAT Form A or Form B ([http://www.pasat.us/PDF/PASAT\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.pasat.us/PDF/PASAT_Manual.pdf) ) to read numbers at a rate of one number every 3 seconds. Or, facilitators can make up their own list of numbers in advance of class. At the end, the facilitators can read the correct responses back to the*

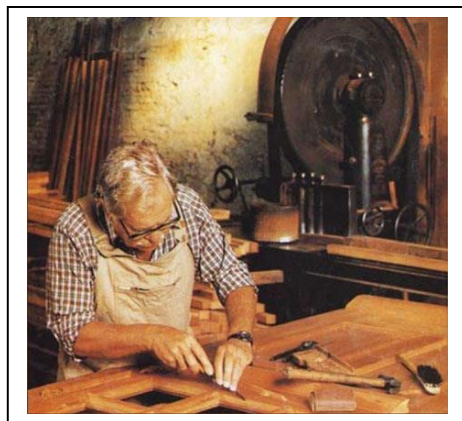
*group or write them on the board. Remind the group that if they missed a few in a row or left some blank, it will be difficult to know how many they actually got right. This is ok since the idea is simply to practice a difficult working memory task.]*

## **8. How important is “mental exercise” to you?**

As discussed in the first session on lifestyle strategies, adults who frequently engage in activities that “exercise their mind” and stimulate thinking are at lower risk for mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Research also suggests that adults who already have mild cognitive impairments may actually be able to improve their cognition by participating in activities that challenge their mind more often.

**Activities that might be considered “mental exercise” include those that challenge your mind and get you thinking in new ways, such as:**

- Working memory training exercises, like the one we just practiced in class.
- Other puzzles, games, computer games, etc.
- Creating music, learning to play an instrument, attending a live concert, etc.
- Fixing or building things, working on difficult projects, hobbies that challenge your mind.
- Painting, writing, sculpture, arts and crafts, sewing, knitting, creating art, etc.
- Going to live theatre, visiting a museum, attending a lecture, attending other cultural events.
- Working or volunteering if what you do challenges your mind by making you solve problems, plan, organize, think, etc.
- Social and recreational activities that get you talking and thinking.
- Trying new activities and changing things up from time to time so your brain gets a workout.



	7		2	8	5		1	
		8	9		3	5		
5				1				8
	1						9	
9				4				3
		2	4		8	6		
	9		6	3	2		8	

**Based on your particular life circumstances, goals, and priorities, what do you believe would be the specific benefits and costs of building more mental exercise into your life? Fill out the Cost/Benefit table below.**

Benefits	Costs

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how important would you say it is for you to build more mental exercise into your life?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Important						Extremely Important				

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how confident would you say you are that, if you decided to build more mental exercise into your life, you could do it?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Confident						Extremely Confident				

**If you were to decide to build more mental exercise into your life, what would be your main reasons for doing this?**

---



---



---

**If you were to decide to build more mental exercise into your life, what do you think you might do? What steps would you take to accomplish this?**

---



---



---

## **9. How can attention strategies help you with your class goals and life priorities?**

Think back to your class goals and life priorities. How will the attention strategies we have covered so far today help you achieve those goals?

---



---

## Session 4: Home Exercise

- ☐ **Read pages 56-57. Use at least one attention-improving techniques per day during a task or activity that is important to you and relates to your class goals and life priorities. Remember PEAS and STEP BACK.**

- Briefly **describe** your attention strategy experience so you can share:

---

---

---

- ☐ **Read pages 59-60. Practice active listening skills at least once per day during a conversation that is important to you and relates to your class goals and life priorities. Remember LEAP.**

Continue to practice the conversational attention skills that we learned about today. All this week, practice reducing distractions in your environment whenever you talk to someone, whether it's face-to-face or on the telephone. In your face-to-face conversations, practice nonverbal listening behaviors. Finally, practice paraphrasing and asking questions about what you hear in conversations.

- Briefly **describe** the active listening strategies you used and how this went for you:

---

---

---

- ☐ **Continue to use your day planner / calendar system on a daily basis.** Schedule daily and weekly planning sessions to enter your appointments and to do list items. Use the calendar to prioritize. Schedule downtime, healthy lifestyle strategies and priorities.

- Do you need to do anything to improve any parts of your day planner system (e.g., calendar, to-do lists, taking notes, categorized sections, reminders)?

---

---

---

---



☐ Consider whether you would like to practice the following lifestyle strategies more regularly. If so, describe how you plan to do this. Do you need to create or improve a routine to help you do this?

- **Physical Exercise / Physical Activity** (Read pages 11-13.):

---

---

---

- **Mindfulness Practice** (Read pages 19-26 and pages 54-55.). Consider one formal mindfulness practice for 15-45 minutes per day, several days per week or every day; consider alternating mindful breathing, body scans and sitting meditations. Also, consider one informal mindfulness practice for 2-5 minutes per day, alternating pleasant, neutral, and unpleasant activities.

---

---

---

- **Mental Exercise** (Read pages 62-63.):

---

---

---

- **Other Lifestyle Strategies** (Read pages 9-10.):

---

---

---

## **Session 5: Learning and Memory**

### **Class Agenda**

- Mindfulness Practice (10m)
- Review Home Exercises (20m)
  - 2m Break - March / Military March
- Learning and Memory Overview (5m)
- Active Memory Strategies - RITA / Exercises (30m)
  - 10m Break
- List Learning Exercise (25)
  - 2m Break - Jump Rope / Jumping Jacks
- Overlearning / External Memory Strategies / Retrieval Strategies (15m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### **1. Mindfulness Practice**

**Mindfulness** = Focusing awareness on the experience of the present moment

During mindfulness practice, our intentions are to:

- **Stay in the present moment**
- **Non-judgmentally**
- **Without a purpose or goal (except to experience the moment)**
- **With acceptance**
- **With curiosity and a beginner's mind**

### **Mindful Sitting Meditation**

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Do only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Now gently start to bring your attention to your breathing, without trying to control or change how you are breathing. Just simply notice how it feels.
- Gently relax your mouth, throat, and belly, allowing your breath to move freely, curiously observing the sensations of breathing.
- Perhaps noticing air moving in and out of your nose or mouth. Is it warm or cold, dry or wet? How does the air feel inside your nose, or your mouth? How does it feel as it moves down your throat and into your belly?
- Is your belly expanding as you breathe in, and emptying as you breathe out? How does that feel? Feel free to perhaps put one hand on your belly as you notice its ups and downs.
- Your mind may at times wander away from the breath. That is perfectly normal and part of any mindfulness practice. Just gently notice those thoughts and do the best you can to return your attention to your breath.

- Ok. Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on your breath.
- Now gently turning your attention to your body. Observing any sensations you may be feeling. You may scan the body bottom to top, or perhaps let the mind wander to specific areas on its own, or just let yourself experience the body as a whole.
- Gently exploring all the sensations of the body. Perhaps you are feeling hot or cold in particular areas. Perhaps moisture or dryness. Tingles, prickles, itches, or discomforts? Pulsing or beating. Tightness or looseness.
- Spending another minute or so, exploring all the physical sensations of your body.
- Now slowly shifting your attention away from your body and toward the experience of hearing. Exploring and observing the experience of sound.
- Perhaps there are sounds coming from your body, or from the room around you. Perhaps they are loud, or barely perceptible. Perhaps they are high pitched, or low pitched. Rhythmic or random.
- If you notice yourself naming the source of the sounds, or judging the sounds in some way, that is normal and ok. Gently let those thoughts go and return your attention to the experience of the sounds without thinking about them. Observe the patterns of the sounds without the need to figure them out.
- Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on the experience of hearing.
- Now slowly, when you are ready, turning your attention away from the sounds and instead to your mind, including its thoughts and emotions. Gently watching your mind, observing its thoughts wander in and then away.
- If you find yourself directing those thoughts, or getting stuck on one thought or another, that is ok. Gently try to bring awareness to your breath for a moment. Breathing in, and then loosening your thoughts as you breathe out again.
- If you find yourself judging yourself or your practice, saying perhaps things like "I am not doing this right" or "I can't do this", that is also normal and ok. Simply acknowledge the thought, let it go, and continue watching your thoughts and emotions without direction, without judgment.
- As your thoughts wander into and out of your mind, you may decide to label each as a thought, or a feeling, or an opinion, or a judgment. Observing that that is all they are and nothing more. As you label each thought or feeling or judgment as just that, perhaps imagining it float away like a cloud in the sky, or like a leaf floating down a stream and then out of sight.
- Spending another minute or so, quietly observing your thoughts float into and out of awareness.
- Now as we end this practice, perhaps slowly wiggling your fingers and your toes. Then gently opening your eyes and bringing awareness back to the room and today.

## **2. Review Home Exercises (pages 64-65) – Class Discussion**

- What attention strategies (PEAS and STEP BACK) worked well for you this week? What strategies would you like to try this week and why? [Facilitators should write out the PEAS and STEP BACK acronyms on a white board for reference and review.]
- What did you like or appreciate about using active listening skills (LEAP) this week? How did it help? What aspects of LEAP would you like to keep improving? [Facilitators should write out the LEAP acronym on a white board for reference and review.]
- What parts of your day planner system are you getting better at (calendar, to-do lists, taking notes, categorized sections, reminders)? What parts would help you the most to improve, and how will you do that?
- What lifestyle strategies do you feel you are successfully practicing more – physical exercise, mindfulness, mental exercise, others? What steps have you taken? What other steps are you planning and why?

## **3. Learning and Memory Overview**

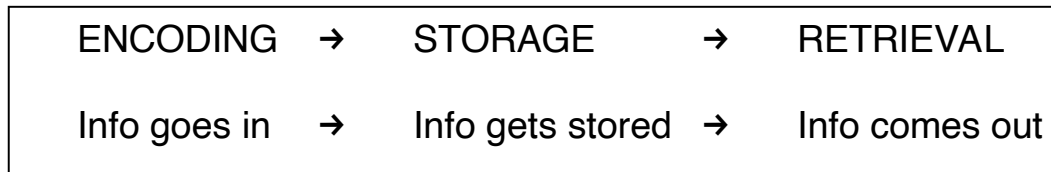
**Memory:** Your ability to store and retrieve information.

- Think of it like a filing cabinet in your mind. Different files are organized according to various topics (e.g., childhood memories, names of people you know, how to do something).
- Each type of file is likely to get stored in a different location in the brain. So, depending on what area of the brain a cognitive disorder affects, a different type of memory may be more or less affected.
- Through effort and organization, you are more likely to file a memory well, so that it can be more easily retrieved later. You need a good memory strategy (like a good filing system)!



**Memory Requires Attention:** You cannot remember something if you do not first attend to it!

**Memory Terminology:**



- Cognitive training focuses on encoding and retrieval, but not storage (which is not under our control).
- Strategies will help you:
  - Decide what is important enough to remember and simplify information to be remembered.
  - Reduce the amount of information to be remembered.
  - Make information personally meaningful to you in order to remember it more easily.
- Storage is most efficient when you are alert and well-rested.
- Alcohol and drugs interfere with encoding and retrieval, as well as storage.
- Everyday memory problems are usually due to encoding problems or not paying attention in the first place.
  - Again, you have to pay attention to something first to remember it later!



#### **4. Active Memory Strategies**

**Attention strategies remain critical** – you need to actively attend to information to move it into memory. Better attention → better encoding → better memory.

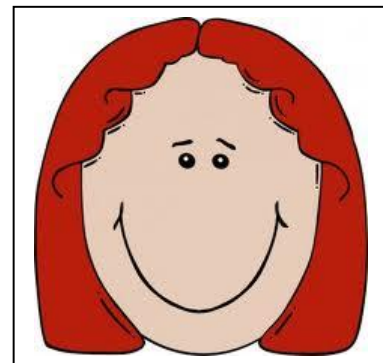
- Simplify, prioritize, reduce distractions, do one thing at a time.
- Attention skills:
  - Enhancing attention to the situation with self-talk (e.g., “I’m putting my keys on the kitchen counter,” “I’m closing the garage door,” or “I’m taking my vitamins”) → better encoding → better remembering → less worry and more energy.
  - Pay better attention to conversations by actively **L**istening to the person speaking, **E**liminating distractions in the environment, **A**sking questions as needed, and **P**araphrasing what the other person says (remember **LEAP**).

**Mindfulness remains critical** – to commit information to long-term memory (memorization), you must process information actively. Use the following steps (**RITA**):

- R** “Remember” – Tell yourself to remember the information.
- I** “Image” – Take a mental image of the information. Try to learn as many visual details as you can, to help cue you later.
- T** “Time” – Take time to consciously rehearse and study the material.
- A** “Active” – Work with the material in different modalities (e.g., read, write, listen, and do), and at higher levels of processing (e.g., re-organize, outline, creativity, discussion, experience, teach). Use internal memory strategies, too.

#### **WHAT WE REMEMBER:**

Read only	10%
Hear only	20%
Observe only	30%
Observe and Hear	50%
Discuss	70%
Experience	80%
Teach	90%



Committing information to long-term memory takes energy, time, and effort. Since energy and time are limited, try to reduce the number and complexity of things you want to remember. Routine and organization may be more important than memory!

## **5. Internal Memory Strategies: These are some active strategies – the “A” in RITA.**

- **Association**

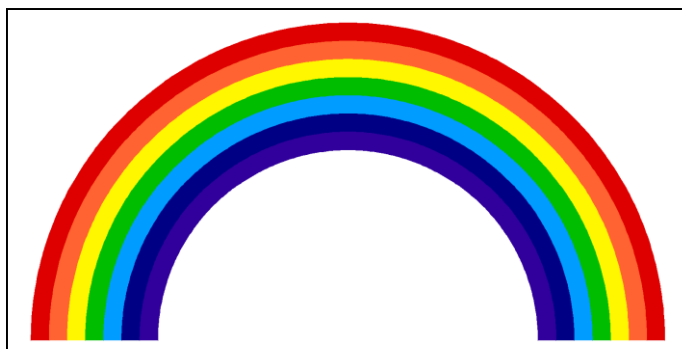
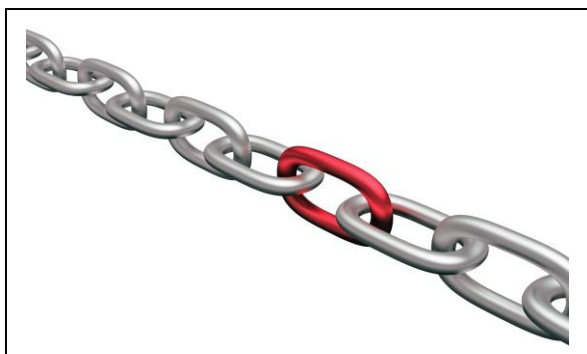
- Linking new information with information you already know.
- Focus on the similarities and differences between the new information and the old information.
- Association works well when you meet new people. Let’s say you are meeting someone new, and her name is Jane. You could remember her by comparing her to your friend Jane (e.g., “This new Jane has blue eyes, but my Jane has brown eyes. Both Janes are tall, though.”)

**Exercise:** Try it yourself. How would you use association to learn the name of one of your classmates? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---



- **Acronyms**

- Acronyms – like RITA – are words that are made up of initials that stand for a series of words.
- Acronyms reduce the amount of information you have to recall because each letter is a cue.
- Common acronyms: ROYGBIV for the colors of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. NBA for National Basketball Association. HOMES for the Great Lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior.

- **Exercise:** What other acronyms do you know? Any from the military?

---

---

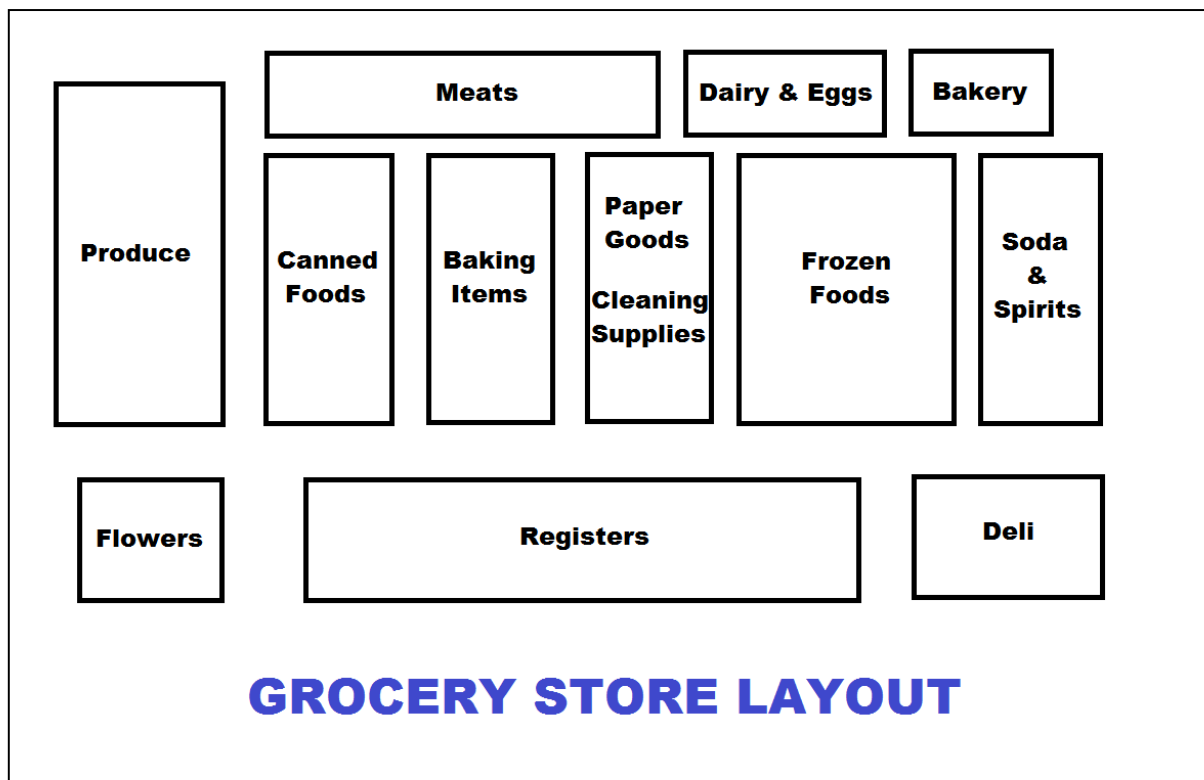
---

- **Categorizing or Chunking**

- Dividing a large amount of information into smaller groups or chunks to be remembered.
- **Chunking** is typically used for remembering numbers.
- The most common example of chunking is a 10-digit phone number (6—1—9—2—9—9—3—5—1—0 versus (619) 299-3510).
- **Categorizing** puts information together in a logical way.

**Exercise:** For example, let's say that you want to get ice cream, ketchup, toilet paper, mustard, shaving cream, popsicles, soap, relish, and frozen pizza at the grocery store. That's 9 items, and it probably would be hard to remember all those items without a list. But if you organize the items in a logical way, they are easier to remember, and if you wrote them down in a certain way on your list, you might get to the grocery store and not even need to look at your list. How could you categorize these 9 items into 3 groups? Categorizing the 9 items into 3 categories makes it so we only need to remember 3 things instead of 9.

Group 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Group 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Group 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_





- **Creativity** – Turn the information into something catchy and easy to remember. Using your creativity will also elaborate the information, which leads to better encoding and memory.
  - Catchy phrases: Like remembering someone's name by imagining their catchy phrase (e.g., "Marilyn Marathon.").
  - Stories: Turn the information into an exciting or interesting story.
  - Rhymes: Turn the information into a rhyme (songs are easy to memorize because lyrics usually rhyme).
  - Songs: Turn the information into a song.

**Exercise:** Choose one of the following: 1) Names of people in the class, 2) Names of your neighbors, 3) Names of your grandkids, 4) Foods you should not eat (due to allergies or health conditions). Turn them into a rhyme or song:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## **Visual Imagery**

- **Pictures**: Turn the information into a memorable picture. Draw this picture out. The weirder or funnier, the better. This strategy works well to remember people's names. **Example**: Your new doctor is Dr. Burns, who has dark, stubbly hair, as if there had been a big brush fire (burn) on top of his head! Once you create that image, you are much more likely to remember "Burns." Or let's say you are meeting your new neighbor, Sandy Reese. You can picture her eating Reese's peanut butter cups on a sandy beach.
- **Movies**: Turn the picture into a visual story or movie, and imagine the movie in your mind. Again, the weirder or funnier, the better.
- **Acting**: Even better, act out the information yourself.
- **Graphs/Charts/Maps**: Incorporate the information into a graph or chart or map, if this makes sense.

**Exercise**: How might you turn the name "Carrie Brown" into an image or picture in your mind? Describe this image:

---

---

---



## **6. Word List Memory Exercise**

### **Remembering a list of words.**

List 1: Listen to the list and then write the words down on the next page.

List 2: Read and study the list.

List 3: Read and categorize the list. (Optional: Make an acronym.)

List 4: Read, categorize, and use visual imagery.

**List 1:** Listen to the entire list of words. Don't write anything down – just listen. Then, write down as many words as you can remember.

How many did you remember? \_\_\_\_\_

**List 1:**

Hammer  
Monkey  
Toyota  
Jazz  
Saw  
Zebra  
Country & Western  
Honda  
Drill  
Giraffe  
Rock n' Roll  
Ford  
Screwdriver  
Classical  
Lion  
Cadillac

**List 2:** Study the following list of words for one minute, but don't write anything down. Then, turn the page and write down as many as you can remember.

Falcon  
Spark Plug  
Elm  
Eagle  
Diamond  
Hub cap  
Pine  
Maple  
Hawk  
Owl  
Alternator  
Ruby  
Emerald  
Oak  
Sapphire  
Wheel

**List 2:** Now write them down. How many did you remember? \_\_\_\_\_

**List 3:** Read the following list of words. Put the words into categories to help you remember them, and feel free to write the categories and words down. Then, turn the page and write them down from memory. If you want, you can turn the categories into an acronym.

Cat  
Carrot  
Broccoli  
Bread  
Mop  
Hose  
Asparagus  
Milk  
Sponge  
Eggs  
Vacuum  
Dog  
Bird  
Juice  
Hamster  
Onion

Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**List 3:** Now write them down. How many words did you remember? \_\_\_\_\_



**List 4:** Read the following list of words. Put them into categories and use visual imagery to help you remember the categories or words. This time, do not write out any words – only draw pictures. Then, turn the page and write down the words from memory.

Grass  
Chair  
Stapler  
Lawnmower  
Tree  
Eraser  
Pick  
Table  
Pen  
Rake  
Ruler  
Shovel  
Flower  
Sofa  
Shrub  
Bed

Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Image:

Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Image:

Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Image:

Category 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Image:

**List 4:** Now write them down. How many words did you remember? \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise:** Did this exercise convince you that some of these strategies will help you remember more information? What did you notice? What worked best for you? For example, did listening, writing, or drawing work best for you? Was categorizing helpful?

---

---

---

---

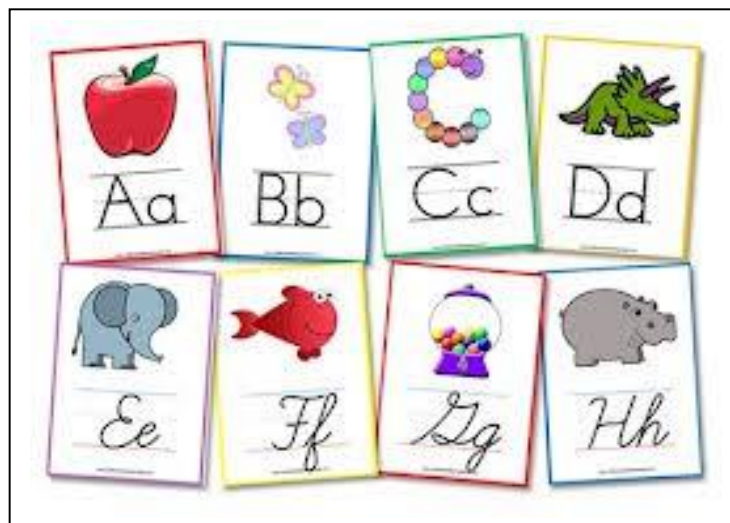
## 7. Overlearning

- Learning what you need to remember over and over.
- Things we overlearn: facts, our names, our birthdays, the names of our siblings and parents, the name of our high school, the name of our street, the name of our pets, the order of the letters in the alphabet, the happy birthday song, how to tie our shoes, etc.
- Anything can be overlearned.
- Overlearned information is very resistant to forgetting.
- Strategies for overlearning: **Flashcards** that you carry with you and study throughout the day. Works well for learning facts for school exams.
- If you are having trouble, break the learning task down into smaller chunks and learn one chunk at a time.
- Overlearning Example: Let's say you have to memorize the steps of a new task at work. You could write each step on a separate card, then shuffle the cards and put them back in order. You would not stop after getting it right once though – overlearning means you keep going over and over the material, even after you know it. In addition to using the flashcards, you would also want to actually do the task repeatedly, in the right order, to memorize it.
- **Exercise**: What information would it help to over-learn in your life currently?

---

---

---



## **8. Retrieval Strategies**

Think back to our memory model: Encoding → Storage → Retrieval.

All strategies thus far will help with encoding. The next ones will help with retrieval. Retrieval problems mean that a piece of information is in your brain somewhere, but you have difficulty getting it out (e.g., a name that is “on the tip of your tongue”).

### **Relax**

- Anxiety leads to difficulty retrieving information.
- Using relaxation strategies can enhance memory.

### **Mental Retracing**

- To retrieve a lost item.
- Mentally retrace your steps and reconstruct the events leading up to when you last had the item.

### **Alphabetic Searching**

- To remember a word or a name.
- Go through the alphabet, starting with A, and ask yourself, “Does it start with A? Does it start with B?” and so on. If you can identify the first letter, use the same process to get to the second letter, and so on.

### **Recreating the Context**

- Good strategy when you can remember where you were or what you were doing when you learned the information.
- For example, if you remember that you were eating at a certain restaurant when your friend told you about a class that you wanted to take, recreate that context. Either imagine the restaurant or actually go there, and it will be easier for you to remember the details about the class.



## **9. External Memory Strategies**

Is it really important to memorize information using an active memory strategy? If not, it is probably a better idea to use an aid or routine to reduce effort, energy, and time demands. Can you instead build this into a routine to reduce its attention and memory demand? Once you have a routine or habit, you don't need to remember the associated items again.

- **Calendars:** To remember appointments and events. Instead of having to remember each individual appointment, all you have to do is remember to use your calendar effectively each day (a routine).
- **Note Taking and Filing:** The #1 way to remember something is to write it down. Consider using a section of your calendar. Instead of having to remember each piece of information, all you have to remember is to file the information appropriately each day (a routine).
  - Don't trust your memory! Write it down!
  - Writing helps encode information in multiple ways, multiple times – hear it, write it, read it as you write, say it out loud after you write.
  - Easy, works every time.
  - Shopping lists, sticky notes in calendar, section in your phone or computer, writing on your hand, any other system that is easily accessible.
- **Voice Recorders:** Good for lectures or talks. Also for instructions from doctors or bosses. You can then review and actively process later.
- **Visual Cues and Signaling Devices:** Sticky notes, string on your finger, other “can't miss reminders” (e.g., placing what you need to bring with you in front of the door). Remember, it really helps if you have to touch the reminder.
- **Timers, Alarms, and other Auditory Cues:** Alarms on your cell phone or watch. Also, consider buying a device capable of multiple or complex alarms – there are ones you can attach to your keychain (see [epill.com](http://epill.com) for ideas).
- **Automated/Computerized Prompts:** e.g., Automated billing; Outlook reminders to water plants once a week, call Mom every Sunday, check tire pressure once a month, etc.
- **Navigational Systems:** To help you remember directions as you drive.



### Session 5: Home Exercise

☐

**Read pages 68-74 and pages 83-85. Practice using an active internal memory strategy from pages 71-74 at least three times this week.**

- Practice using three active memory strategies this week, focusing on activities that are relevant to your class goals and life priorities. Make a point to try out some strategies that are new to you. Pick information that you have been wanting to remember better in your daily life.
- Describe the strategies you used and when. How did they work for you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐

**Read pages 56-60. Use at least one attention-improving technique per day during a task or activity that is important to you and relates to your class goals and life priorities. Remember PEAS and STEP BACK and LEAP.**

- Briefly **describe** your attention strategy experiences so you can share:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐

**Consider whether you would like to practice the following strategies more regularly. If so, what steps are you going to take to make these activities more likely to happen this week?**

- Physical Exercise / Physical Activity (pages 11-13):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Mindfulness Practice (pages 19-26):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 
- Mental Exercise (pages 62-63):

---

---

---

- Other Lifestyle Strategies (pages 9-10):

---

---

---

- Day Planner / Calendar System Use (pages 39-46):

---

---

---

## **Session 6: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving**

### **Class Agenda**

- Mindfulness Practice (10m)
- Review Home Exercise (30m)
  - 2m Break - Pick Favorite
- Decision-Making Strategies – Evaluating Costs and Benefits (20m)
  - 10m Break
- How important is eating healthy to you? (15m)
- Mental Flexibility and Brainstorming/Exercise (10m)
  - 2m Break Jumping Rope/Jumping Jacks/Pick Favorite
- Problem-Solving/ Exercise (15m)
- How can decision-making and problem-solving strategies help me toward my goals? (5m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### **1. Mindfulness Practice**

#### **Mindful Body Scan Exercise**

*Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living. New York, New York: Bantam Books.*

Today we going to practice a mindful body scan exercise together again, just like we have done before, and some of you may be doing on your own. Like with any mindfulness practice, you will gently bring your focus to the present moment, non-judgmentally and with an open and curious attitude.

If you have been practicing guided or unguided mindfulness exercises at home or elsewhere, you may notice your mind at times wandering to comparisons. Your mind may have thoughts like, “I like that voice better”, or “I felt more relaxed last time”, or “I prefer sitting meditations.” That is normal and is just what the mind does. Simply notice the comparison, perhaps name it as such (“that is a comparison” or “that is a judgment”), let the thought go, and gently return your focus back to your body.

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Doing only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Gently bringing your attention to your breath for a moment, noticing how the breath feels moving in and out of your nose, and your mouth, and your belly.
- With this practice, you will be gently bringing your attention to one part of your body at a time. There is no right or wrong way for your body to feel. The goal of this practice is neither to change how you feel, nor to feel in any particular way. Instead, just observing how each part of the body is feeling right now. If you



notice your mind wandering, just gently bring your attention back to your body as often as needed. You can also return your focus to your breath if that is what you prefer or need.

- Now bringing your attention to your feet. Exploring how your toes feel. Do you feel tingling? Prickles? Pulsing? Nothing? Does one toe feel different from the others? Do the toes on your right foot feel different from your left foot? How do they feel rubbing up against each other, or against your socks or shoes?
- Now moving your attention to the bottoms of your feet? What do you feel there? Are your feet warm, or cold? Dry or moist? Is there any discomfort?
- If there is discomfort at any time during this practice, just do your best to gently observe it. What is the quality of that sensation? Is it dull or sharp? Strong or weak? Is the discomfort a steady sensation, or does it seem to increase or decrease across time? If at any time the sensation is too intense, you can perhaps try to imagine slowly breathing into that area, noticing the sensation, and then breathing out, letting that sensation loosen a bit. If ever a sensation is too intense, you can also return your focus to another part of the body, or your breath. Whatever feels safe and right for you today.
- Now moving your attention to the tops of your feet. How do those feel today?
- And now the ankles. Do they feel tight, or loose, or something else all together?
- At different points throughout this practice, you may notice your mind wander off to other thoughts, other parts of the body, or perhaps sounds or sights in the room. That is perfectly normal and ok. Just acknowledge those thoughts and return your focus to your body, or your breath, coming back to the present moment.
- Now moving your attention to your lower legs, your calves, and your shins. Exploring any sensations you may have there. Can you feel the muscles, the bones, the tendons and ligaments?
- Now moving to the knees. What do you feel there?
- If you notice any judgments coming into your mind, thoughts such as “feels good” or “feels bad”, notice those, perhaps labeling them as “judgments” and then gently letting them go, returning your attention to your body and your sensations, the here and the now.
- Now moving your focus to your upper legs, your thighs, your hamstrings. What do you notice there? Perhaps feeling the pressure of the legs against the chair, perhaps noticing that some spots of the legs feel different than other spots. Perhaps some areas seem to have little sensation at all.
- Now moving your attention up your body to your hips and then your belly. What do you feel in your belly? Doing your best to notice each sensation, separately, curiously. Perhaps you notice movements in the abdomen; perhaps it is making sounds.
- Now moving your attention to your chest. What do you notice there? Perhaps noticing your heartbeat, or your chest rising and falling as you breathe.
- Now moving your attention to your lower back and spine, observing each sensation there. Is there tightness? Does one side feel different than the other?
- Again, if at any point there are any feelings of discomfort, just do your best to observe that sensation, gently exploring it. Or, you can try to imagine breathing

into that area, and then letting that sensation loosen a bit as you breathe out. Or, return your focus to another area of the body or your breath. Whatever is best for you today.

- Now moving your attention slowly up the spine to your upper back. What do you notice there? If there is any tightness, how does it feel to breathe into that area and loosen it a bit?
- And now moving your attention gently to your shoulders, upper arms, triceps and biceps. Do they feel loose? Tight? Is there a soreness, or perhaps an itch somewhere? How do those sensations feel? Do those sensations change or are they steady over time?
- Now moving your attention to your elbows and lower arms. What do you feel there? Does one arm feel different than the other, and how so?
- And now gently moving your attention and focus to your wrists and your hands. Can you feel each finger separately? Perhaps you can feel sensations in specific finger joints – perhaps heat, or pressure, or fullness in one or several joints. Or perhaps you notice the weight of your hands against your lap or the table. How does that feel?
- Now taking a breath and gently moving your attention back up your arms slowly to your neck. What do you feel in the front of your neck and throat? How about inside your throat? How about the back of your neck?
- Now bringing your attention to your face, noticing any sensations on your jaw, cheeks, nose, eyes, forehead, ears. If there is any tightness, how does it feel to loosen that tightness? Is perhaps the tip of your nose colder than the rest of your face? Do your eyes or lips feel wet or dry?
- Now bringing your attention to the top of your head. How does your hair feel against your skin? How does your scalp feel?
- Now taking a few moments to observe your body as a whole, as one whole body. Noticing your breath as you experience your body and all its sensations at once.
- Now, as we gently end this practice, when you are ready, perhaps begin slowly wiggling your fingers and toes. Perhaps then slowly stretching, and then gently opening your eyes to bring your attention back to the room.

## **2. Review Home Exercises – Class Discussion**

- What active memory strategies (RITA, associations, acronyms, chunking/categorization, creativity, visual imagery, overlearning) have you been focusing on and why? What do you plan to try, or to continue to focus on next? [To assist with discussion and review, facilitators should use the white board to write out the RITA acronym and list out the active internal memory strategies.] **Exercise:** Consider practicing one or several of the active memory activities on pages 71-74 in class together.
- What attention strategies (PEAS, STEP BACK, and LEAP) are working for you? What will you focus on next and how? **Exercise:** Consider breaking into pairs or small groups to practice LEAP, similar to the activity in session 4 pages 59-60.
- What lifestyle strategies have you made progress on this week – physical exercise, mindfulness practice, mental exercise, calendar use, others? What is next for you?

### **3. Decision-Making Strategies: Evaluating Costs and Benefits**

- Each day, we are faced with many choices and decisions to make. For example, we must decide what to eat for each meal, what to wear, where to go, what to do, what to say, and who to be with.
- Whenever we have to make a choice, there are *costs* as well as *benefits* associated with each option. *Benefits* are the rewards, advantages, and positives of a particular choice. *Costs* are the consequences, disadvantages, and negatives of a particular choice. For example, if someone decides to speed while driving, one benefit might be they get to where they want to go faster. One potential cost might be they get an expensive speeding ticket.
- Usually, there are both *immediate* as well as *long-term* costs and benefits of each option. *Immediate* costs and benefits happen quickly, right away or soon. *Long-term* costs and benefits occur later in time and so are delayed. For example, an immediate cost of studying might be that you are bored. A long-term benefit of studying might be that you pass your test and feel proud of your achievement.
- We often evaluate the costs and benefits of our options quickly and automatically, without even being aware that our brain is going through this decision-making process.
- Some people are more *impulsive* than others. Adults who are impulsive tend to choose options because of their immediate rewards, possibly ignoring the long-term costs of their choice. And, they tend to pass up other options that have bigger long-term benefits. For example, an impulsive person might choose to eat candy for lunch each day because of its immediate reward - it tastes really good. They may pass up healthier options like soup, salad, or sandwiches each day because they undervalue the potential long-term costs of eating candy for lunch every day (e.g., weight gain, tooth decay, diabetes) and the long-term benefits of eating healthier options (e.g., healthier body and teeth, longer life span).
- One way to make better choices is to slow down your decision-making process, particularly if you tend to be impulsive. For example, you can write out the costs and benefits associated with each option. We will practice doing this together using a simple worksheet.



#### **4. Using Decision-Making Worksheets to Identify Better Choices**

##### **Example 1:**

Charlie wants to exercise more. He is trying to decide whether to join an expensive gym, or develop an exercise routine at home. He writes out the costs and benefits associated with each option below on a worksheet.

	<b><u>Benefits and Rewards</u></b>		<b><u>Costs and Disadvantages</u></b>	
	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>
<b><u>Option 1:</u></b>  <i>Buy a gym membership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I like taking classes and using fancy equipment more than exercising at home.</li><li>- I feel excited about doing something new.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I may meet a work-out buddy.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I will go into debt over time because I don't have enough income for a regular membership.</li><li>- I will probably exercise less often because it will be hard to find transportation to the gym.</li></ul>
	<b><u>Benefits and Rewards</u></b>		<b><u>Costs and Disadvantages</u></b>	
	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>
<b><u>Option 2:</u></b>  <i>Exercise at home</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I already own workout tapes, a bike, running shoes, and a jump rope, so I am ready to go.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I will probably exercise more, because I won't have to find transportation.</li><li>- I won't go into debt because it is free.</li></ul>		

***Based on his answers, which option do you think is best for him? Why?***

---

---

---

---

## **Example 2 - Exercise:**

Imagine that your very good friend calls you up to ask you a favor. She was suddenly invited on a one-month long vacation to Thailand with her new boyfriend (who you also like). But, now she needs to find someone to care for her two dogs while she is gone. She leaves next week and wonders if you can help her out.

**Use the worksheet below to evaluate the costs and benefits of deciding to take care of her dogs versus deciding not to take care of her dogs. This can also be done together on a white board.**

	<b><u>Benefits and Rewards</u></b>		<b><u>Costs and Disadvantages</u></b>	
	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>
<b><u>Option 1:</u></b>  <i>Take care of your friend's dogs for one month.</i>				
	<b><u>Benefits and Rewards</u></b>		<b><u>Costs and Disadvantages</u></b>	
	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>	<b><u>Now or Soon</u></b>	<b><u>Later</u></b>
<b><u>Option 2:</u></b>  <i>Say you are sorry but you can't take care of her dogs for her.</i>				

**Based on your answers, which option do you think is best for you? Why?**

---

---

---

---

Think of a decision you need to make in the next week or so. Pick a decision that would only have a couple choices or options. For example, deciding whether or not to do something. For your home exercise, you will use worksheet like the one above to help you evaluate the costs and benefits of your two options.

What choice are you trying to make? What are your options?

---

---

---

---

### **5. Asking Four Questions to Make Quick Decisions**

It is a great idea to use worksheets to help you with important decisions, especially ones you have some time to think about. But, sometimes it is not practical or possible to use a worksheet, especially for decisions that need to be made in the moment – such as what to eat at a restaurant, what to buy at the store, whether to stay at a social event longer, whether or not to give someone a ride, and whether or not to drink a beer or glass of wine. In these cases, it is still helpful to slow down for a moment and think (at least in your head) about short-term costs and benefits AND long-term costs and benefits. Ask yourself:

- How might this **help** me **now**?
- How might this **hurt** me **now**?
- How might this **help** me **later**?
- How might this **hurt** me **later**?

For example, this decision-making strategy may be helpful to adults with addictions (when they are faced with decisions about whether to use alcohol or other substances), to adults trying to lose weight (to make decisions about food choices), or to adults who tend to spend more money than they would like (to make quick spending choices).

**How might this decision-making strategy (evaluating costs and benefits) help you with choices in your day to day life? What types of quick choices might evaluating costs and benefits help you with?**

---

---

---

---



## **6. How important is healthy eating to you?**

Most people know that good nutrition is important and has many short- and long-term health benefits. Short-term benefits can include increased energy, and improved cognition, mood, and sleep. Long-term, healthy eating also reduces the risk of:

- Cognitive problems
- Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- Obesity
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Some types of cancer

A “diet” is simply your style of eating. A healthy diet typically focuses on three meals per day (no skipping meals), appropriate portion sizes and calorie intake, plenty of water, and a healthy mix of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, healthy dairy products, and lean proteins (legumes, nuts, and fish). Also, minimizing or avoiding processed foods, fried and deep-fried foods, foods and drinks with added sugars and sweeteners (such as sodas), and foods with unhealthy trans fats or solid fats (lots of desserts).

The **VA's MOVE! Weight Management Program website** includes lots of free and helpful handouts about nutrition and physical exercise. The handouts are useful for people who want to improve their eating and exercise habits, even if they don't need or want to lose weight: <https://www.move.va.gov/handouts.asp>

The following VA MOVE! Handouts are great starting points for healthy eating, and part of these handouts are included with your home exercise [With time, facilitators may briefly review these handouts with the class, focusing on the healthy plate concept.]

- How Do I Get Started With Changing My Eating Habits?:  
[https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S04\\_ChangingMyEatingHabits.pdf](https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S04_ChangingMyEatingHabits.pdf)
- Making Healthy Food Choices With A Healthy Plate:  
[https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S06\\_MakingHealthyFoodChoicesWithAHealthyPlate.pdf](https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Standard/S06_MakingHealthyFoodChoicesWithAHealthyPlate.pdf)

A variety of diets or eating styles are healthy and promote health benefits. The Mediterranean diet is both popular and well-researched in terms of its benefits to cognition and health. The following website contains helpful information, recipes, and resources on healthy eating through a Mediterranean, African, Latin American, Asian, or Vegetarian/Vegan Diet. The website also includes food pyramids to guide daily and weekly food choices based on these different cultural and traditional diets. The Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid is also included with your home exercise as an example.

- <https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets>

**Based on your particular life circumstances, goals, and priorities, what do you believe would be the specific benefits and costs of increasing your healthy eating? Fill out the Cost/Benefit table below.**

<b>Benefits and Rewards</b>		<b>Costs and Disadvantages</b>	
<b>Now or Soon</b>	<b>Later</b>	<b>Now or Soon</b>	<b>Later</b>

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how important would you say it is for you to increase your healthy eating?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Important						Extremely Important				

**On a scale of 0-10, based on your current life and goals, how confident would you say you are that, if you decided to increase your healthy eating, you could do it?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All Confident						Extremely Confident				

**If you were to decide to increase your healthy eating, what would be your main reasons for doing this?**

---



---



---

**If you were to decide to increase your healthy eating, what do you think would work for you? What goals would you focus on?**

---



---



---

**If you were to decide to increase your healthy eating, what could you do this week to improve your chances of success? Write down specific steps.**

---



---



---



## **7. Cognitive Flexibility and Brainstorming**

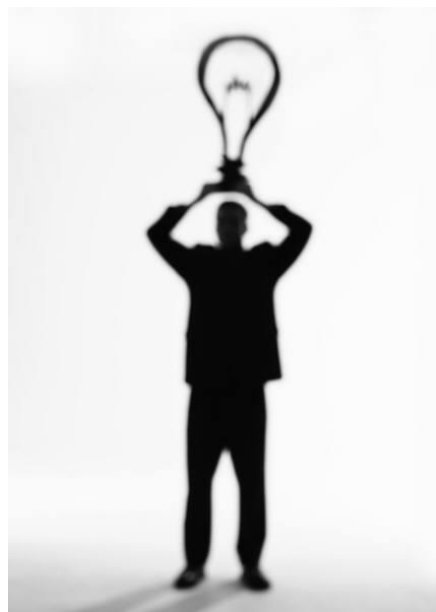
**COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY = THE ABILITY TO THINK FLEXIBLY AND COME UP WITH DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS**

- Sometimes, people have trouble with problem solving because their thinking style can be rigid. For example, they may see only one or two ways to solve a problem, when in fact there are many ways. They may get “stuck” on an idea.
- We will use a problem-solving method that will help you think as flexibly as possible. One of the steps to this method is brainstorming.

**BRAINSTORMING =  
COMING UP WITH AS MANY IDEAS AS POSSIBLE FOR A PARTICULAR TOPIC**

- Think of as many ideas as possible without making judgments about them.
- Don't edit out any ideas because they seem silly or bad. Just let the ideas keep coming because you never know when a “silly” idea will trigger a good one.
- Brainstorming is the key to cognitive flexibility and problem-solving, which will be the focus of our next exercise.

**Brainstorming practice exercises: Try to come up with at least 30 ideas for each of the following scenarios.** [Facilitators can do one or both examples on the white board with the class after participants have had time to brainstorm on their own.]



All the items you would need for painting a room.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.
- 26.
- 27.
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.

All the ways to get a cat out of a tree.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.
- 26.
- 27.
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.

## **8. The 6-Step Problem-Solving Method**

### **The 6-step problem solving method (DBESTE)**

1. **Define** the problem.
2. **Brainstorm** solutions to the problem.
3. **Evaluate** each solution in terms of ease of implementation, costs and benefits, and likely consequences.
4. **Select** a solution to try.
5. **Try** the solution.
6. **Evaluate** the solution: Did it work? Do you need to try another one? If so, go back to step 4.

- Your goal is to use the 6-step problem solving method quickly when you need it. Being able to do this requires practicing it until it becomes automatic.



### **Exercise:**

**Practice the steps of the 6-step problem solving method with one or both scenarios and worksheets that follow. Once you have the hang of it, try it with your own real-world problem at home for your home exercise.** [Facilitators can do one or several scenarios on the white board with the group together.]

## 6-Step Problem Solving Worksheet - Exercise 1

[illegible]

## 6-Step Problem Solving Worksheet - Exercise 2 (Optional with Time)

[illegible]

**9. How can decision-making, brainstorming, and problem-solving strategies help you with your class goals and life priorities?**

---

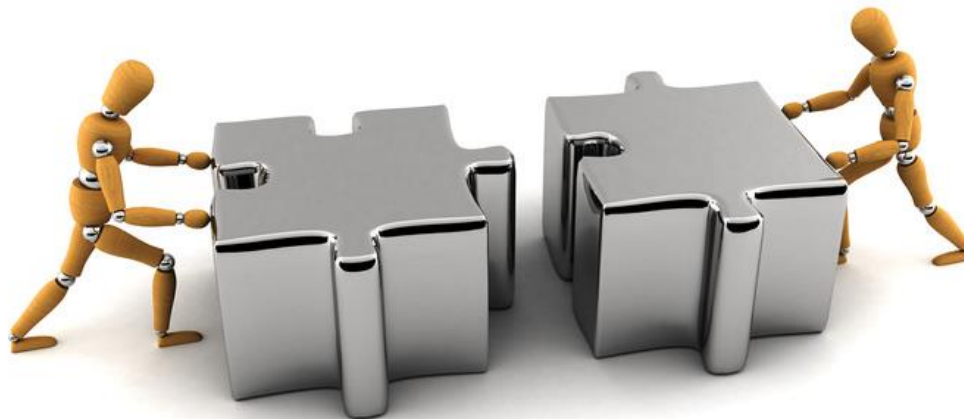
---

---

---

---

---



## Session 6: Home Exercise

☐ **Read pages 91-94. Pick one decision you will need to make in the next couple days or weeks. Pick a decision that only has a couple options or choices. Use the worksheet below to evaluate the costs and benefits of your options.**

## What choice are you trying to make? What are your options?

---

---

---

---

	<u>Benefits and Rewards</u>		<u>Costs and Disadvantages</u>	
	<u>Now or Soon</u>	<u>Later</u>	<u>Now or Soon</u>	<u>Later</u>
<u>Option 1:</u>				
	<u>Benefits and Rewards</u>		<u>Costs and Disadvantages</u>	
	<u>Now or Soon</u>	<u>Later</u>	<u>Now or Soon</u>	<u>Later</u>
<u>Option 2:</u>				

***Based on your answers, which option do you think is best for you? Why?***

---

---

---

---

---



☐ **Read pages 97-102. Practice the 6-Step Problem-Solving Method with one current life problem.**

- Pick one problem in your life that needs to be solved. (If you can't think of any right now, try asking a friend or family member for ideas, or think of problems you have had in the past.)
- Use the 6-step problem-solving method worksheets on the next page to address these life problems.
- There is an extra worksheet at the end of this home exercise (page 111) so you can make copies and use in your life as problems come up.

## 6-Step Problem Solving Worksheet

[illegible]

☐ If you have been considering building the following strategies into your life more regularly, what progress have you made so far? What other changes might you consider making to improve your success?

- **Physical Exercise** (pages 11-13):

---

---

- **Mindfulness Practice** (pages 19-26):

---

---

- **Mental Exercise** (pages 62-63):

---

---

- **Healthy Eating** (pages 95-96). If you are considering focusing more on healthy eating, consider reading the handouts at the end of the home exercise (pages 108-110) and looking at the following websites:

- <https://www.move.va.gov/handouts.asp>
- <https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets>

---

---

- **Other Lifestyle Strategies** (pages 9-10):

---

---

- **Day Planner / Calendar System Use** (pages 39-46):

---

---

- **Attention Strategies** (pages 54-60):

---

---

- **Memory Strategies** (pages 70-74 and pages 83-85):

---

---

# Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

*A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating*

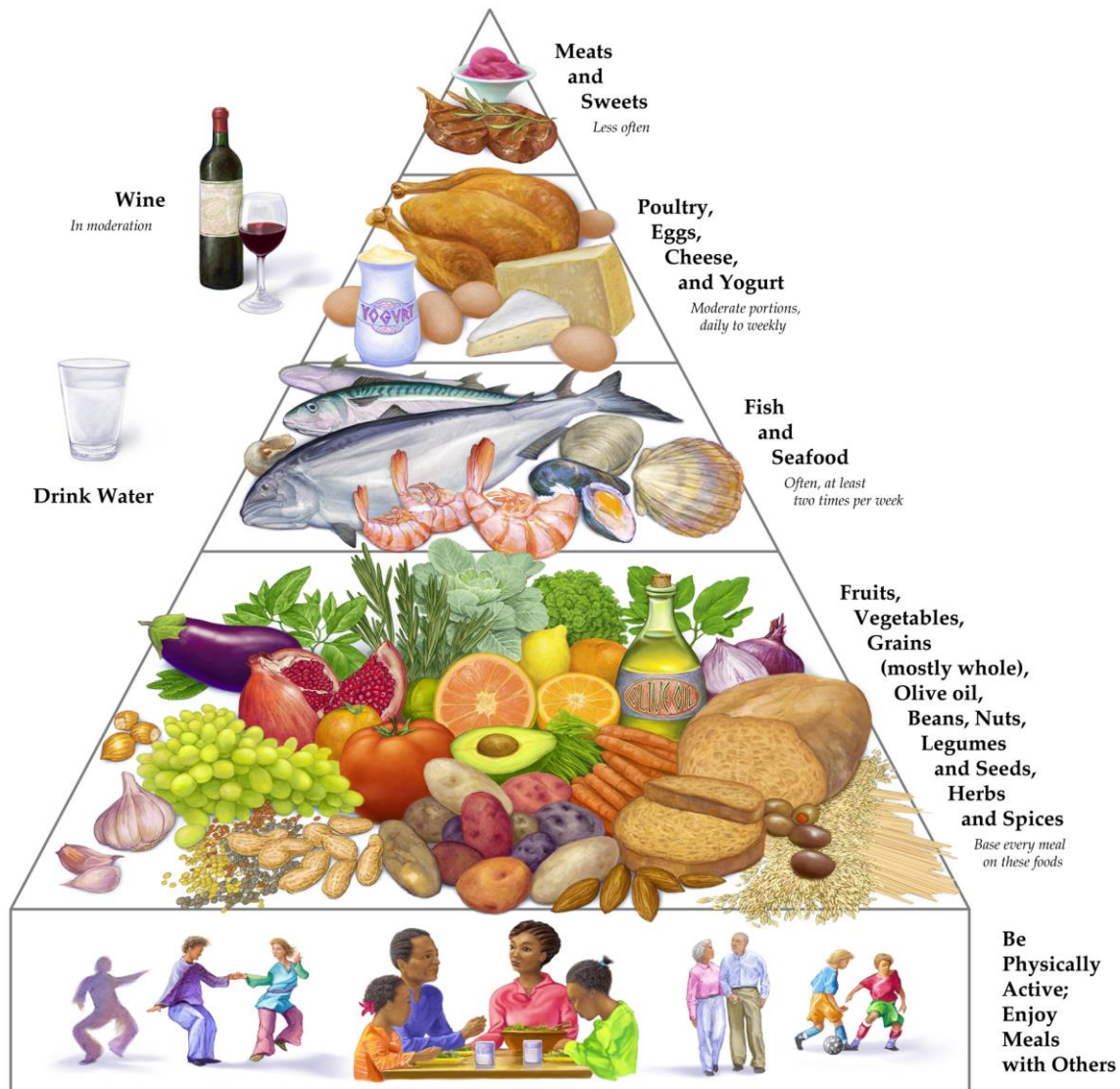


Illustration by George Middleton

© 2009 Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust • [www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org)

From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, Treatment Manual (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.

## How Do I Get Started With Changing My Eating Habits?

*Consider posting your goals or this handout on your refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or another prominent place.*

### Set goals and write them down.

- Make one or two changes at a time and start with something simple.
- Take your time, eat slowly, and enjoy your food.
- Tell yourself to eat until you are satisfied, not until you are stuffed.
- Keep a food diary to help you see where changes can be made.

### Consider some of the following:

- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. These are good for you and help fill you up.



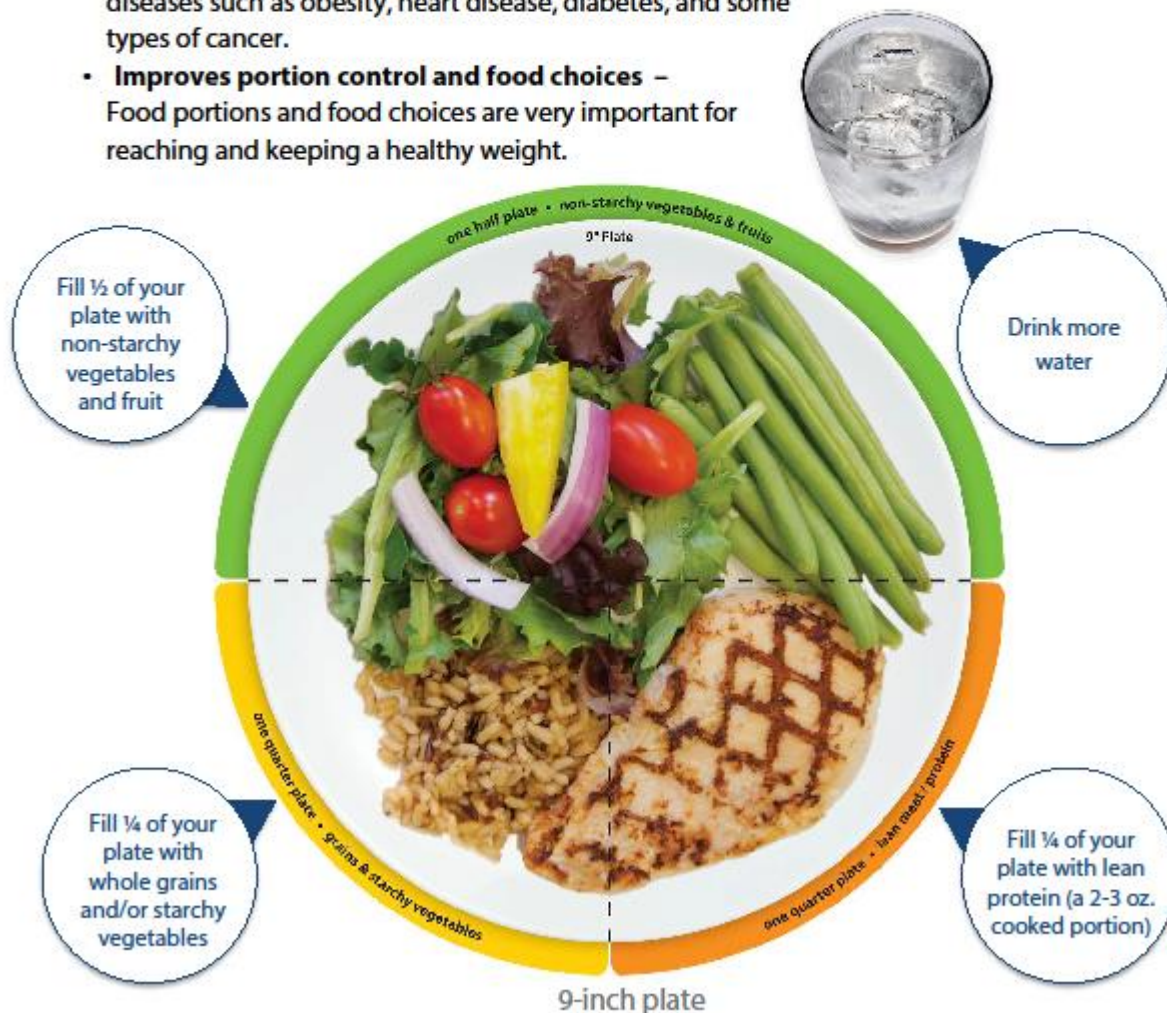
- Drink a glass of water before eating.
- Drink water, diet sodas, or artificially sweetened drinks instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Get rid of snack foods high in calories, fat, and sugar. If these foods aren't available, you won't be as tempted. Instead, have healthy snacks easily available.
- Broil, bake, steam, or grill your food instead of frying it.
- Choose lean cuts of meat; cut off visible fat.
- Plan snacks and meals ahead of time.
- Avoid alcohol.



## Making Healthy Food Choices With a Healthy Plate

### Why create a healthy plate?

- **Reduces health risks** – Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup, glass, or bowl. Vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fruits, and lean protein foods are all great choices. Eating these foods can reduce risks of developing diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer.
- **Improves portion control and food choices** – Food portions and food choices are very important for reaching and keeping a healthy weight.



## 6-Step Problem Solving Worksheet

[illegible]

## **Session 7: Decision-Making, Problem Solving and Planning**

### **Class Agenda**

- Mindfulness Practice (10m)
- Review Home Exercises (25m)
  - 2m Break - Pick Favorite
- Continue Home Exercises (25m)
  - 10m Break
- Planning – Re-Evaluating Goals and Priorities Regularly/Exercise (15m)
- Planning for Goals and Deadlines/Planning Exercise (25m)
  - 2m Break - Pick Favorite
- How can planning toward goals and deadlines help you? (5m)
- Home Exercise (5m)

### **1. Mindfulness Practice**

We are going to practice our third **guided mindful sitting meditation** together again, focusing our attention first on breath, then our body, then sounds, and then thoughts and feelings. If you have tried other guided sitting meditations at home or elsewhere, you may have noticed that there are other ways of doing sitting meditations. You can focus your attention on these experiences in a different order, or focus your attention on just one experience (for example, just breathing or just sounds) for the entire meditation period. Or, you can do what is called a **choiceless meditation** where you do not specifically focus on any one experience and instead let your mind wander on its own to different experiences of the here and now – always with the intention of focusing on the present moment, non-judgmentally, with acceptance, openness and curiosity.

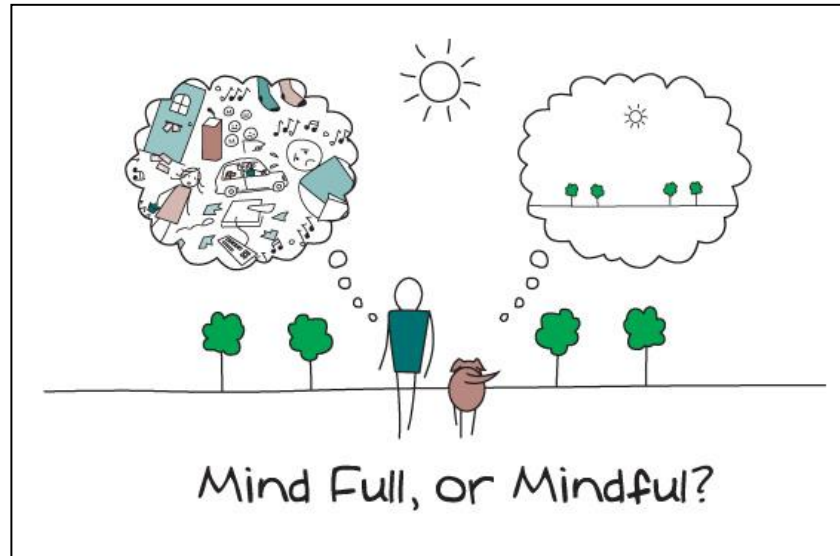
### **Mindful Sitting Meditation**

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Do only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Now gently start to bring your attention to your breathing, without trying to control or change how you are breathing. Just simply notice how it feels.
- Gently relax your mouth, throat, and belly, allowing your breath to move freely, curiously observing the sensations of breathing.
- Perhaps noticing air moving in and out of your nose or mouth. Is it warm or cold, dry or wet? How does the air feel inside your nose, or your mouth? How does it feel as it moves down your throat and into your belly?
- Is your belly expanding as you breathe in, and emptying as you breathe out? How does that feel? Feel free to perhaps put one hand on your belly as you notice its ups and downs.



- Your mind may at times wander away from the breath. That is perfectly normal and part of any mindfulness practice. Just gently notice those thoughts and do the best you can to return your attention to your breath.
- Ok. Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on your breath.
- Now gently turning your attention to your body. Observing any sensations you may be feeling. You may scan the body bottom to top, or perhaps let the mind wander to specific areas on its own, or just let yourself experience the body as a whole.
- Gently exploring all the sensations of the body. Perhaps you are feeling hot or cold in particular areas. Perhaps moisture or dryness. Tingles, prickles, itches, or discomforts? Pulsing or beating. Tightness or looseness.
- Spending another minute or so, exploring all the physical sensations of your body.
- Now slowly shifting your attention away from your body and toward the experience of hearing. Exploring and observing the experience of sound.
- Perhaps there are sounds coming from your body, or from the room around you. Perhaps they are loud, or barely perceptible. Perhaps they are high pitched, or low pitched. Rhythmic or random.
- If you notice yourself naming the source of the sounds, or judging the sounds in some way, that is normal and ok. Gently let those thoughts go and return your attention to the experience of the sounds without thinking about them. Observe the patterns of the sounds without the need to figure them out.
- Let's practice some more quietly for another minute or so, gently focusing on the experience of hearing.
- Now slowly, when you are ready, turning your attention away from the sounds and instead to your mind, including its thoughts and emotions. Gently watching your mind, observing its thoughts wander in and then away.
- If you find yourself directing those thoughts, or getting stuck on one thought or another, that is ok. Gently try to bring awareness to your breath for a moment. Breathing in, and then loosening your thoughts as you breathe out again.
- If you find yourself judging yourself or your practice, saying perhaps things like "I am not doing this right" or "I can't do this", that is also normal and ok. Simply acknowledge the thought, let it go, and continue watching your thoughts and emotions without direction, without judgment.
- As your thoughts wander into and out of your mind, you may decide to label each as a thought, or a feeling, or an opinion, or a judgment. Observing that that is all they are and nothing more. As you label each thought or feeling or judgment as just that, perhaps imagining it float away like a cloud in the sky, or like a leaf floating down a stream and then out of sight.
- Spending another minute or so, quietly observing your thoughts float into and out of awareness.

- Now as we end this practice, perhaps begin slowly wiggling your fingers and your toes. Then gently opening your eyes and bringing awareness back to the room and today.



## **2. Review Home Exercises (pages 104-111).**

- If this was something you worked on, what steps have you taken to increase your healthy eating? What else would you like to try and why?
- What other lifestyle strategies are you making progress on (physical exercise, mindfulness, mental exercise, calendar use, others)? What else are you planning?
- What attention strategies (PEAS, STEP BACK, and LEAP) are working for you? What will you focus on next?
- What memory strategies (RITA, associations, acronyms, chunking/categorization, creativity, visual imagery, overlearning) are working for you and in what situations? What else would you like to try?
- **Exercise:** Pick one or both of the following activities to do in class:
  - Break into pairs or small groups to practice LEAP, similar to the activity in session 4, pages 59-60.
  - Practice one or several of the internal active memory activities on pages 71-74 in class together.

When trying out the Decision-Making Worksheet at home, what did you like about it? What kinds of decisions do you think this process or worksheet will help you with in the future? ***Exercise: Pick an example decision scenario to work on together in class. This could be someone's home exercise, or something new. Complete the worksheet below. [Facilitators should also complete the example on the white board in front of the class to evaluate the costs and benefits.]***

---

---

---

***Based on your answers, which option do you think is best for you? Why?***

---

---

---

When trying out the 6-Step Problem Solving Worksheet at home, what aspects worked well? What kinds of situations do you think this process or worksheet could be helpful for in the future? ***Exercise: Pick an example life problem to work on together in class. This could be someone's home exercise or something new. Complete the worksheet below. [Facilitators should also complete the example on the white board in front of the class to work toward a solution together.]***

[illegible]

## **Goal Setting and Planning**

### **5. Class Exercise: Identify and re-evaluate priorities regularly.**

- Priorities shift in life, so it is important to re-evaluate your priorities on occasion (monthly, yearly, etc.).
- Review the priorities/goals (“large rocks”) you previously listed on page 31 and transferred to your day planner. Do these truly reflect what you believe to be most important to you in your current life? If not, revise your list.

---

---

---

---

### **6. Class Exercise and Discussion: Plan out your day and week with your priorities in mind.**

- Review the large rocks on your list. Do your calendar and to-do list allot enough time to your priorities/goals? If not, schedule in time to address these large rocks.
- Review the **lifestyle strategies** that we went over in Session 1 (pages 9-10). Are you allotting enough time on your calendar to incorporate these strategies into your life? If not, schedule more time toward these lifestyle strategies.
- Identify one priority you would like to give more time to in your life. Share with the group.



### **7. Take Home Messages:**

- It can be helpful and important to regularly schedule time to review and revise your life priorities (big rocks) and your lifestyle strategies, so you can make sure you are using your calendar and time to focus on what matters most.
- It is easy to fall into the trap of using your to-do lists, calendars, etc. to fill up your time with things that don't matter as much as your health, relationships, passions, etc. Instead, the intention is to use your systems to achieve balance, health, and meaning, rather than just to be busy.
- It is also easy to become overwhelmed, disappointed, self-critical, etc. when looking at your list of life goals and lifestyle strategies. Instead, the intention is to simplify. Identify one or two strategies at a time to focus on in the coming weeks. Pick the ones that matter to you most, and the ones that might work best for you under your current circumstances.
- Once this class is over, it may be useful to review the manual periodically and then pick one or two strategies to focus on a time to address your priorities and goals and any problems you may be having.

From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, Treatment Manual (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.

## **8. Planning Strategy/Method: Planning to meet goals and deadlines.**

- Set aside time to think about your goal or deadline. Have your calendar handy.
- Define the goal or deadline in measurable, concrete terms (e.g., “By December 10, I will have all of my holiday cards mailed out”).
- Brainstorm the steps needed to meet the goal or deadline – it may help to “work backwards” from your goal.
- Make sure all the steps are in the right order and figure out when each step must be completed by in order for you to meet the goal or deadline.
- Schedule times in your calendar to complete the steps. Allow a bit more time than you think you need to accomplish each step; urgent matters may come up and interfere with your progress, so allow some leeway.
- Review the timeline at each step to make sure it is realistic. You may have to re-order your steps or add additional steps.

**Example Goal:** By December 10, I will have all of my holiday cards mailed out.

Target Date	Step
11/1	Make a list of card recipients and addresses.
11/5	Purchase holiday cards.
11/10	Start writing cards, 30 minutes per night.
11/20	Have 50% of cards written.
11/25	Obtain any missing addresses.
12/1	Have all cards written and addressed.
12/5	Purchase stamps.
12/10	Mail cards.

**Planning Exercise:** Use the worksheet on the following page to plan out an important goal. Transfer tasks/dates into your calendar. [Facilitators should do this on the whiteboard together with the class.]



From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, *Treatment Manual* (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.

---

---

---

---

[illegible]

**9. How can the goal setting and planning strategies we discussed today help you toward your class goals and life priorities?**

Think back to your class goals and your life priorities. How can the goal-setting and planning strategies we covered today help you achieve those goals?

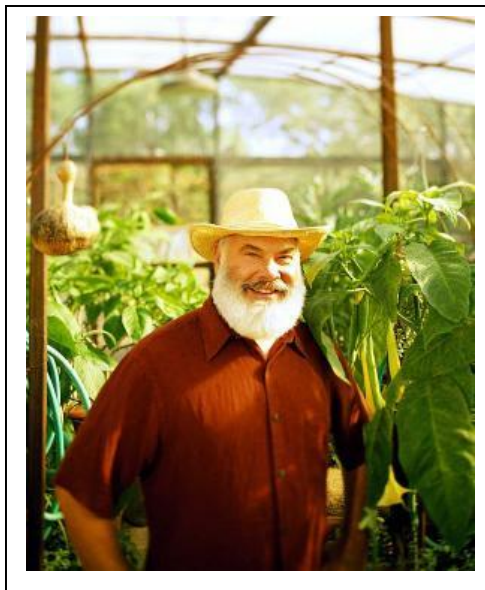
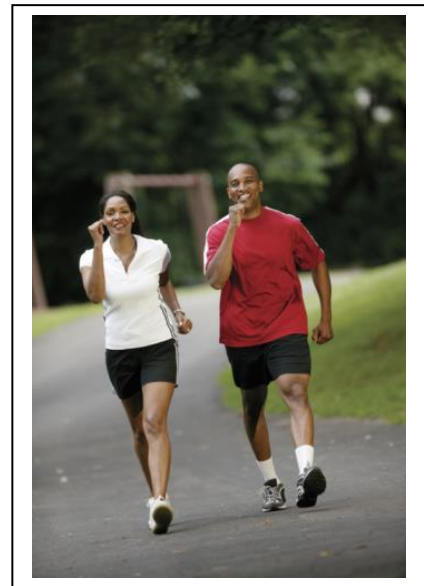
---

---

---

---

---



From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, *Treatment Manual* (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.



## Session 7: Home Exercise

- ☐ **Read pages 118-119. Practice planning toward one deadline or goal with the worksheet below. Enter steps and target dates into your calendar system.**

## Define the goal or project:

---

---

---

[illegible]

- ☐ If you have been considering building the following strategies into your life more regularly, what progress have you made so far? What other changes might you consider making once the class is over, as you continue to work toward your life goals and priorities?

- Physical Exercise / Physical Activity (pages 11-13):

---

---

---

- Mindfulness Practice (pages 19-26):

---

---

- Mental Exercise (pages 62-63):

---

---

- Healthy Eating (pages 95-96 and 108-110):

---

---

- Other Lifestyle Strategies (pages 9-10):

---

---

- Day Planner / Calendar System Use (pages 39-46):

---

---

- Attention Strategies (PEAS, STEP BACK, LEAP; pages 54-60):

---

---

- Memory Strategies (RITA; pages 70-74 and pages 83-85):

---

---

- Decision-Making Strategies (Evaluating Costs and Benefits - pages 91-94):

---

---

- Problem-Solving Strategies (6-Step Problem-Solving Method – pages 100-102):

---

---

- Planning Strategies (pages 118-119):

---

---

## **Session 8: Skills Integration, Review, and Next Steps**

### **Agenda**

- Mindfulness Practice (20m)
- Review Home Exercise (Planning Worksheet Exercise) (15m)
  - 2m Break – Pick Favorite Short Break.
- Review key concepts and application of strategies by domain (25m)
  - 10m Break
- Review more key concepts and application of strategies by domain (25m)
  - 2m Break – Pick Favorite Short Break.
- Review more key concepts and application of strategies by domain (20m)
- Referral Information (5m)

### **1. Mindfulness Practice**

#### **Mindful Body Scan Exercise**

*Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living. New York, New York: Bantam Books.*

Today we going to practice a mindful body scan exercise together again, just like we have done before, and some of you may be doing on your own. Like with any mindfulness practice, you will gently bring your focus to the present moment, non-judgmentally and with an open and curious attitude.

- Find a comfortable yet alert way to sit in your chair. Perhaps with both feet on the ground, with a straight back, and your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, you can gently close your eyes, or you can keep them open if that is better for you. Doing only what feels comfortable and safe for you today.
- Gently bringing your attention to your breath for a moment, noticing how the breath feels moving in and out of your nose, and your mouth, and your belly.
- With this practice, you will be gently bringing your attention to one part of your body at a time. There is no right or wrong way for your body to feel. The goal of this practice is neither to change how you feel, nor to feel in any particular way. Instead, just observing how each part of the body is feeling right now. If you notice your mind wandering, just gently bring your attention back to your body as often as needed. You can also return your focus to your breath if that is what you prefer or need.
- Now bringing your attention to your feet. Exploring how your toes feel. Do you feel tingling? Prickles? Pulsing? Nothing? Does one toe feel different from the others? Do the toes on your right foot feel different from your left foot? How do they feel rubbing up against each other, or against your socks or shoes?
- Now moving your attention to the bottoms of your feet? What do you feel there? Are your feet warm, or cold? Dry or moist? Is there any discomfort?

*From: Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI), Treatment Manual (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.*

- If there is discomfort at any time during this practice, just do your best to gently observe it. What is the quality of that sensation? Is it dull or sharp? Strong or weak? Is the discomfort a steady sensation, or does it seem to increase or decrease across time? If at any time the sensation is too intense, you can perhaps try to imagine slowly breathing into that area, noticing the sensation, and then breathing out, letting that sensation loosen a bit. If ever a sensation is too intense, you can also return your focus to another part of the body, or your breath. Whatever feels safe and right for you today.
- Now moving your attention to the tops of your feet. How do those feel today?
- And now the ankles. Do they feel tight, or loose, or something else all together?
- At different points throughout this practice, you may notice your mind wander off to other thoughts, other parts of the body, or perhaps sounds or sights in the room. That is perfectly normal and ok. Just acknowledge those thoughts and return your focus to your body, or your breath, coming back to the present moment.
- Now moving your attention to your lower legs, your calves, and your shins. Exploring any sensations you may have there. Can you feel the muscles, the bones, the tendons and ligaments?
- Now moving to the knees. What do you feel there?
- If you notice any judgments coming into your mind, thoughts such as “feels good” or “feels bad”, notice those, perhaps labeling them as “judgments” and then gently letting them go, returning your attention to your body and your sensations, the here and the now.
- Now moving your focus to your upper legs, your thighs, your hamstrings. What do you notice there? Perhaps feeling the pressure of the legs against the chair, perhaps noticing that some spots of the legs feel different than other spots. Perhaps some areas seem to have little sensation at all.
- Now moving your attention up your body to your hips and then your belly. What do you feel in your belly? Doing your best to notice each sensation, separately, curiously. Perhaps you notice movements in the abdomen; perhaps it is making sounds.
- Now moving your attention to your chest. What do you notice there? Perhaps noticing your heartbeat, or your chest rising and falling as you breathe.
- Now moving your attention to your lower back and spine, observing each sensation there. Is there tightness? Heat? Does one side feel different than the other?
- Again, if at any point there are any feelings of discomfort, just do your best to observe that sensation, gently exploring it. Or, you can try to imagine breathing into that area, and then letting that sensation loosen a bit as you breathe out. Or, return your focus to another area of the body or your breath. Whatever is best for you today.
- Now moving your attention slowly up the spine to your upper back. What do you notice there? If there is any tightness, how does it feel to breathe into that area and loosen it a bit?

- And now moving your attention gently to your shoulders, upper arms, triceps and biceps. Do they feel loose? Tight? Is there a soreness, or perhaps an itch somewhere? How do those sensations feel? Do those sensations change or are they steady over time?
- Now moving your attention to your elbows and lower arms. What do you feel there? Does one arm feel different than the other, and how so?
- And now gently moving your attention and focus to your wrists and your hands. Can you feel each finger separately? Perhaps you can feel sensations in specific finger joints – perhaps heat, or pressure, or fullness in one or several joints. Or perhaps you notice the weight of your hands against your lap or the table. How does that feel?
- Now taking a breath and gently moving your attention back up your arms slowly to your neck. What do you feel in the front of your neck and throat? How about inside your throat? How about the back of your neck?
- Now bringing your attention to your face, noticing any sensations on your jaw, cheeks, nose, eyes, forehead, ears. If there is any tightness, how does it feel to loosen that tightness? Is perhaps the tip of your nose colder than the rest of your face? Do your eyes or lips feel wet or dry?
- Now bringing your attention to the top of your head. How does your hair feel against your skin? How does your scalp feel?
- Now taking a few moments to observe your body as a whole, as one whole body. Noticing your breath as you experience your body and all its sensations all at once.
- Now, as we gently end this practice, when you are ready, perhaps begin slowly wiggling your fingers and toes. Perhaps then slowly stretching, and then gently opening your eyes to bring your attention back to the room.



**Mindfulness** = focusing awareness on the experience of the present moment

- Pay attention to what is happening in the present mind and body.
  - Sensations – sights, sounds, smells, taste, touch
  - Thoughts and emotions
- Observe these sensations, thoughts and feelings:
  - Non-judgmentally
  - Without a purpose or goal (except to experience the moment)
  - With acceptance
  - With curiosity and a beginner's mind
- The mind wanders. Thoughts are just thoughts – let them come into your consciousness, let them go, and then return to the present moment.

Regular mindfulness practice improves cognition and thinking. Also, if you do a mindfulness exercise before starting a task, it can help you minimize distracting thoughts or intrusive emotions and re-focus your attention. Regular mindfulness practice also helps reduce stress, depression, and anxiety, and it improves sleep, relationship and communication skills, and immune function.

We have practiced several **formal mindfulness practices** – mindful breathing, body scans and sitting meditations. As discussed previously, there are other formal mindfulness practices that you may choose to integrate into your life, such as mindful walking, loving kindness meditations, yoga, tai chi, qigong, and others.

**Informal mindfulness practices** are when you deliberately decide to engage in one of your typical life activities with a mindful approach, with your full attention to the experience of the present moment, without judgment, with openness and curiosity.

- For example, like what we did with the raisin exercise.
- Other examples could be while taking a bath, waiting for the bus, eating a meal, listening to a song, making your bed, or holding a baby or pet.
- It is helpful to practice mindfulness during one or more simple or routine activities per day. Perhaps alternating between one pleasant activity (for example, while drinking tea or juice), one neutral activity (for example, brushing your teeth), and one unpleasant activity (for example, waiting in line). At first, choose activities that are only mildly unpleasant, nothing too intense, slowly building up to activities that are more challenging.
- During these activities, the intention is to focus moment to moment awareness on what you are doing, your body's movements, and your sensations – what you see, hear, taste, smell, and feel in your body.

**If you were to decide to practice mindful meditation regularly after the group ends, what short- and long-term benefits do you think there would be for you?**

---

---

---

**2. Review Strategies for Planning Toward a Goal or Deadline (pages 118-119).**  
**Review Home Exercise (pages 121-122).**

**Discussion:** Since we will be reviewing other strategies today by topic, the focus of the present homework review will be to practice using the planning worksheet together. What was helpful about using the planning worksheet this week? What situations do you think you might use this type of worksheet for in the future?

**Exercise:** Pick an example goal or deadline scenario to work on together in class. It can be someone's home exercise or something new. Complete the worksheet below. [Facilitators should complete this on the white board with the class.]

### Define the goal or project:

---

---

---

---

[illegible]

## **Review Key Concepts and Skills / Apply Them to Your Life Goals and Priorities**

Think back to your class goals and life priorities. As we review the following key concepts, consider what strategies you are using to help you reach your goals. What other strategies could you use that would be helpful? How will you use these new strategies in your life from here forward?

**3. Lifestyle strategies:** Review pages 9-10 together in class. Answer the following questions and share them with the group.

Name one lifestyle strategy you are using:

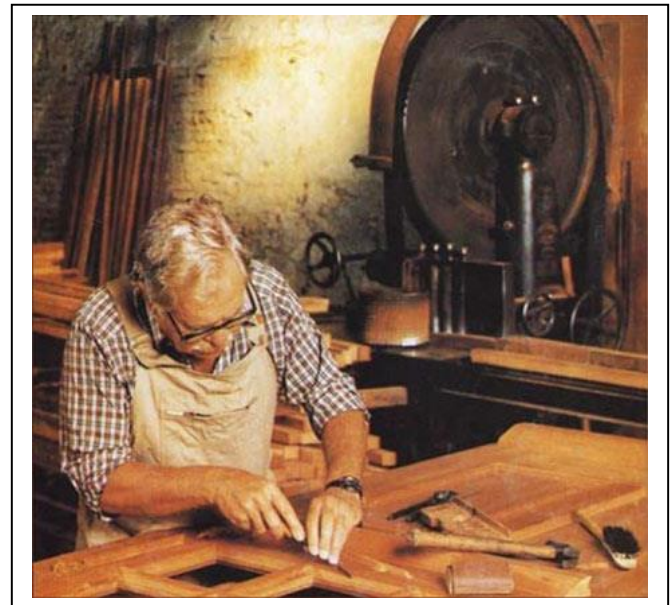
---

---

Name one lifestyle strategy you would like to focus on over the next month:

---

---





**4. Organization and Prospective Memory Strategies:** Review the time management parable on page 29. Also, tips on using day planners on pages 39-46. And, other prospective memory strategies on page 48. Answer the following questions and share them with the group.

Name one organization or prospective memory strategy you are using:

---

---

Name one organization or prospective memory strategy you would like to focus on over the next month:

---

---



From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, *Treatment Manual* (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.

**5. Attention Strategies:** Review pages 54-60 together in class. Answer the following questions and share them with the group. [Facilitators should write out PEAS, STEP BACK, and LEAP on the board. Consider practicing LEAP together in small groups, similar to the activity in session 4 if that was not repeated in session 7.]

Name one attention strategy you are using:

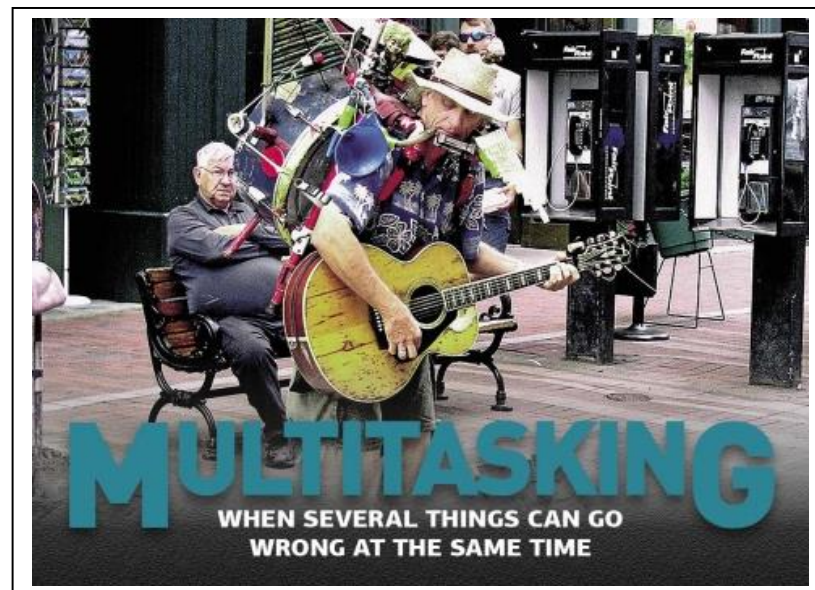
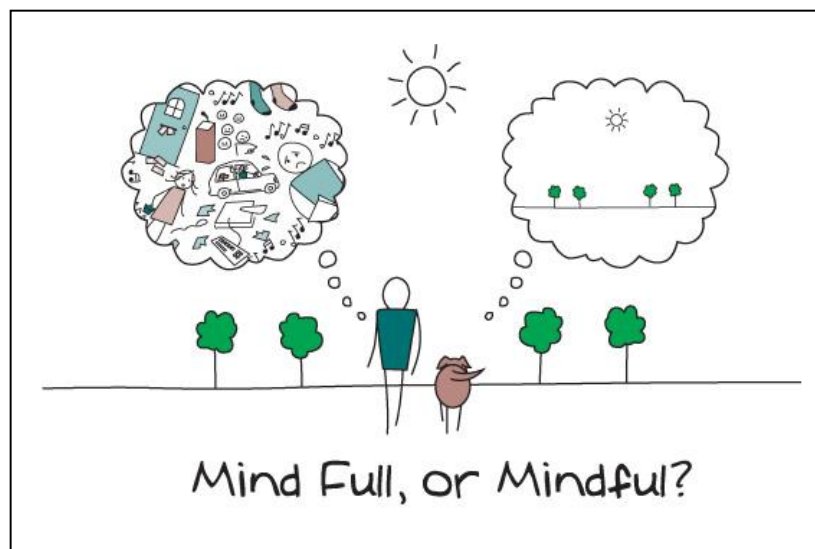
---

---

Name one attention strategy you would like to focus on over the next month:

---

---



From: *Motivationally Enhanced Compensatory Cognitive Training for Mild Cognitive Impairment (ME-CCT-MCI)*, *Treatment Manual* (2018) by Marilyn Huckans\*, Elizabeth Twamley\*, and colleagues. \*Lead Authors.

**6. Memory Strategies:** Review pages 70-74 and pages 83-85 together in class. Answer the following questions and share them with the group. [Facilitators should use the white board to write out RITA and list active memory strategies – association, acronyms, categorization/chunking, creativity, visual imagery, overlearning. Consider practicing one or several of the internal active memory strategies together, similar to the activities in session 5, if these were not repeated in session 7.]

Name one memory strategy you are using:

---



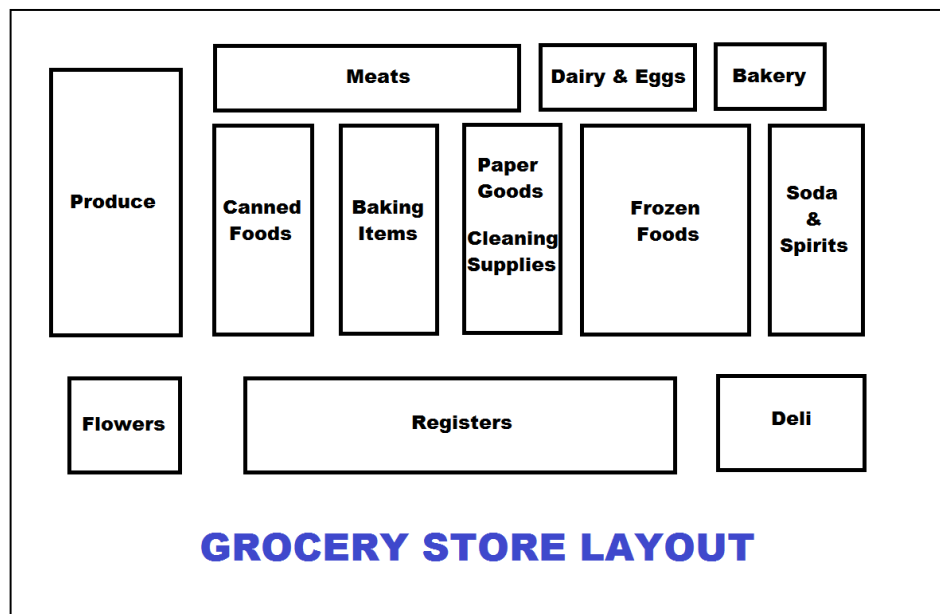
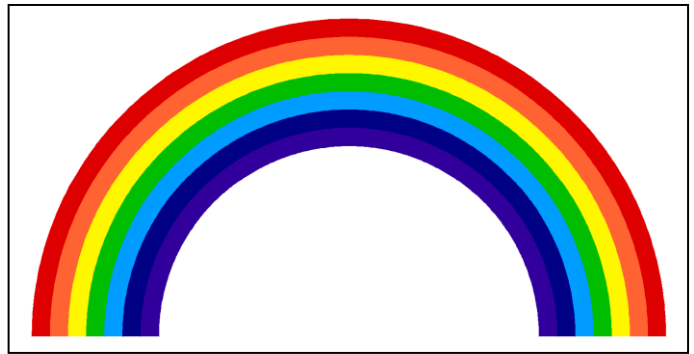
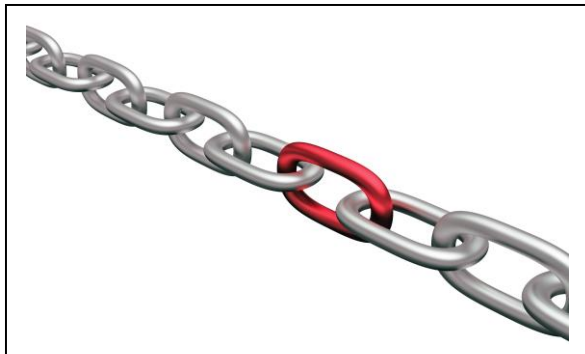
---

Name one memory strategy you would like to focus on over the next month:

---



---



**7. Decision- Making, Problem-Solving and Planning Strategies: Review pages 91-94, pages 97-102, and pages 118-119 together in class. Answer the following questions and share them with the group.**

Name one decision-making, problem-solving or planning strategy you are using:

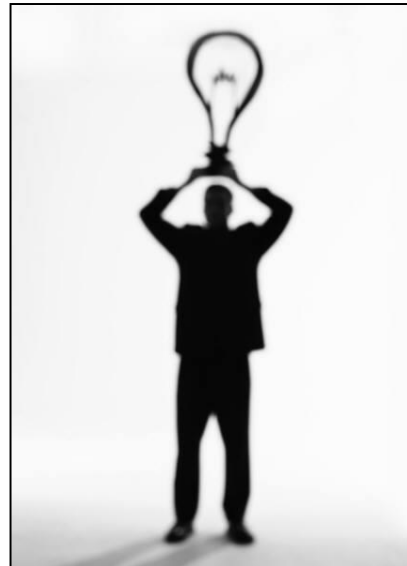
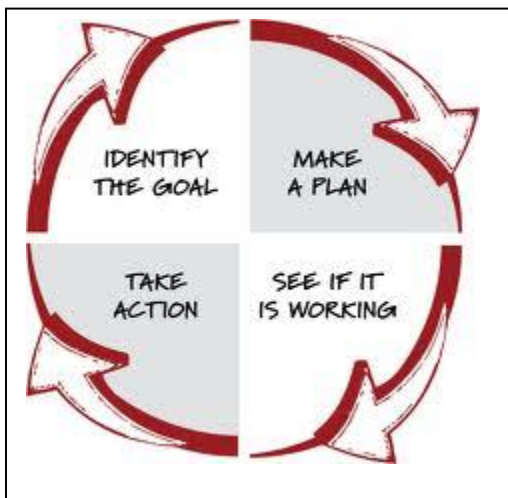
---

---

Name one planning or problem-solving strategy you would like to focus on over the next month:

---

---



**8. Class Exercise:**

In the future, if you find you are having significant problems related to cognitive issues, what can you do to address them?

---

---

What do you think your friends, family, and support persons can do from here on out to best support you as you continue to work on skills to help you manage your cognitive difficulties?

---

---

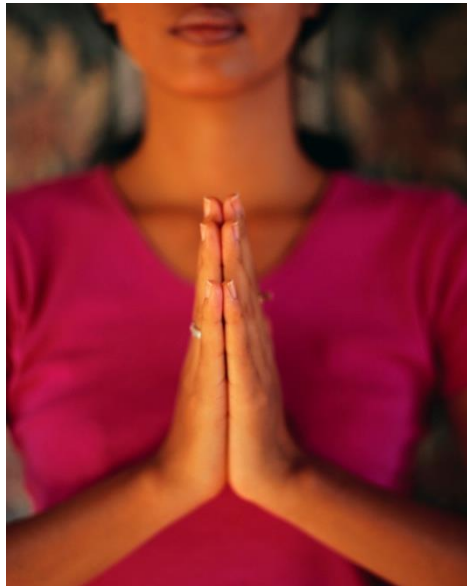
What final questions or feedback do you have for the instructors?

---

---

## **9. Resources and referrals – where do we go from here?**

- **Cogsmart Website and App: [www.cogsmart.com](http://www.cogsmart.com)**
- **Referral Information – Available Resources at the VA:**
  - Individual therapy
  - Therapy/Support/Peer-run Groups
  - Marital/Family therapy



**Thank you for participating in this program and  
for your feedback!**