



Issue 3: May 19, 2020

### OUR MISSION

*Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS) empowers youth in our community to find their way through social-emotional support and by building safe, accepting communities.*

### WHO WE SERVE

*Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS) exists to support the wellbeing of all teens, tweens, and young adults ages 10-25 in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.*

### OUR HISTORY

*Founded in 1975, ACS currently implements four core programs in Santa Clara and San Mateo County communities:*

**Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment**

**Community Counseling**

**On-Campus Counseling**

**Outlet**

## Mindfulness Tips

I Without a doubt, many are experiencing recognized (and/or unrecognized) anxiety, fear, anger, and/or sadness - the emotions that we typically wish to avoid. Without practice in caring for our innermost selves, we can burn out and create even more difficulties in our lives.

When our lives are inconvenienced, upended by tragedy and the future is completely uncertain in so many aspects, self-care becomes not simply a nice thing we do for ourselves, but an imperative. The first thing to do is to acknowledge and accept that our reactions are normal.

Second, recognize that many, many throughout the country and the world are experiencing the same basic emotions. One of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family is explore the various methods of mindfulness.

No matter what method you explore, research demonstrates that three important pillars of success of any mediation practice are Intention, Attention, and Attitude (IAA).

- **Intention** - setting the intention to pay attention as best as you can in the interest of caring for yourself and others;
- **Attention** - noticing where your attention is - eg., in the future, the breeze on the nose, or on the feel of the chair supporting the body.
- **Attitude** - adjusting your attitude to be one of interest, self-compassion

## Mindfulness Tips for Practice

- Start with 5 minutes
- Experiment with time of day - for many, first thing in the morning and in the evening work- either right after work, or before bed
- Have an accountability friend to text
- Start by paying attention to your posture
- Notice your feet and the way your body feels i your chair
- Begin counting your breaths from 1-10, and every time you lose count, return to 1 or repeating a word that has meaning for you, such as peace, every time you jump onto the freight train of your thinking process
- Try various guided meditations from the internet

## Tips to Incorporate with Teens

- Share the information about IAA, and how and why you are using it (note - to be effective, you will want to have used and tried this yourself - as you know, teens can smell inauthenticity!)
- Have family meetings/discussions on IAA
- Teach by example - have them see you meditating
- Ask them to join you, or make it a family meditation, including the pets!
- Work with very short intervals
- Discuss your experiences afterwards



## Informal Mindfulness

A practice that does not require taking extra time is one of the pillars of mindfulness - **informal mindfulness**. This means paying attention to what you are doing when you are doing it.

To some, this might sound very boring - and many of us prefer to use each moment efficiently. Why not use the time when making coffee to be thinking about how to apportion computer usage time amongst family members while everyone is home, or adding up the expenses arriving at the end of the month?

But even making coffee can be a mindfulness exercise. Smelling the coffee as it is first poured, or feeling the warmth of the cup in your hands can be profound. This is because in times of inner or outer turmoil it can be grounding and comforting to many aspects of oneself to simply feel the warmth of the coffee mug.

## Informal Mindfulness Tips

- Set the intention to practice, either randomly during the day or with a specific activity, such as the shower, chewing (and tasting!) food or making coffee
- Saying to oneself “Now I feel the warmth of the water streaming from the shower head” to support focusing and interrupt the stream of thoughts that may be spinning in the mind
- Reflect on the mood before and after
- Practice patience - the course of a river is rarely changed overnight
- Again, have a “buddy” for this practice
- Practice in nature - either on a walk, or simply feeling the ground under your feet



## Resources

If you are attempting to learn to meditate, you might benefit from an app like, Insight timer.

You may also find that you want to dig deeper and learn more. These are names of thought leaders and practitioners who have been training for close to forty years that are that can be helpful to learn from:

Tara Brach, PhD  
Jack Kornfeld, PhD  
Joseph Goldstein  
Sharon Salzberg  
Dr. Dan Siegel  
Dr. Deepak Chopra

Any other additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Matthew Stull via email to [matthew@acs-teens.org](mailto:matthew@acs-teens.org) or by phone to (650)-434-2443.

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