

## Mindful Stress Management



### How Stressed Are You?

**Before jumping into a mindful stress management practice, take a moment to identify the stressors in your life.**

In the form below, list the situations that you perceive to be current stressors in your life. Although it's fine to be general (i.e., work, school, partner, crowds, being alone, news finances, physical pain, poor sleep, etc.), we recommend being as specific as you can. For example, instead of "school," you might say "when I have to write a paper under time pressure," or "when I have to speak in class." This will give you something more specific to track as you determine whether the situation or your stress level has changed as you move forward with your stress management practices.

In the column immediately to the right of each stressor, rate each on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not very stressful and 10 being extremely stressful.

Current Stressors	Rating

## Mindful Stress Management



Mindfulness practices strive to bring our full attention to our body and mind in the present moment without trying to change our thoughts or experiences. We simply observe whatever is occurring in the body or mind (sensations, thoughts, and feelings).

By cultivating an ongoing, regular practice of mindfulness we can begin to see the ever-changing nature of the body and mind, as well as the patterns of thinking that often lead to stress and suffering. This in turn provides the opportunity to shift those patterns and achieve greater balance and peace in our lives.

### Key Attitudes of Mindfulness

**Beginner's Mind:** This is a quality of awareness characterized by curiosity, in which we see things as fresh and new.

**Non-judgment:** This involves cultivating impartial observation of any experience—not labeling feelings, thoughts, or sensations with values such as good/bad, right/wrong, fair/unfair, but simply taking note of thoughts, feelings, and sensations in each moment.

**Non-striving:** This means not trying to get anywhere other than where we are in a given moment—no grasping, aversion to change, or movement away from whatever arises in the moment.

**Equanimity:** This quality of awareness means calmness or evenness of mind, and is embodied by the ability to observe with patience and compassion and to remain centered in the middle of whatever is happening in the moment.

**Letting Be:** This quality of awareness allows us to let things be as they are, with no need to let go of whatever is present.

**Self-Reliance:** This quality of awareness centers your own observations and wisdom, allowing you to see from your own experience what is true or untrue.

**Self-Compassion:** This involves cultivating love for yourself as you are, without blame or self-criticism.

Reflecting on and cultivating these attitudes and principles through mindfulness practices can be calming, informative, and liberating. These attitudes are interdependent—each influences the others, and by cultivating one, you can enhance them all.

