

# THE WHEEL OF AWARENESS

## CONNECTING WITH OURSELVES THROUGH MINDFULNESS

When life gets challenging, mindfulness can help us cope. Learn how to use the Wheel of Awareness technique to help manage stressful moments, and role model this to the children and young people in your life.

### What is the Wheel of Awareness?

The Wheel of Awareness is a mindfulness tool for enhancing your focus, presence and peace. It encourages you to experience moment-by-moment awareness, which can help you:

- ✔ reduce stress levels, anxiety and depression
- ✔ improve your mental and emotional wellbeing
- ✔ find a higher level of empathy
- ✔ enhance your interpersonal skills
- ✔ strengthen your resilience.

The Wheel of Awareness will help you to centre your thoughts and guide you through your mindfulness session.



### Putting the wheel into practice

Sit in a quiet place, engaging in deep breathing while moving through the following steps.

- 1.** Begin by placing yourself in the **centre** of this practice. Find stillness by taking deeper inhales and exhales, focusing only on your breath. As you enter each step of the wheel, you become aware of each aspect of your total being in turn. It's very normal to find your mind wandering, if this happens gently release the thought, and bring your focus back to your breath.
- 2.** Start with your **five senses** as the grounding exercise. Think about what you see, touch, hear, taste and smell. This will help bring you fully into the present moment. Breathe it in. And out.
- 3.** Next, do a **body scan**. Focus on individual parts of your body, slowly moving from head to toe, and notice where you feel tension. Gently release the tension through your breath. In this segment, you will become aware of what your body is telling you and allow yourself to become relaxed and calm.

4. Open your awareness to your thoughts and emotions and notice what comes up. Allow yourself to experience an awareness of these thoughts and feelings. Ask yourself: What does this awareness feel like? Do you recognise any patterns here? How long does a thought stay present? No thought or feeling defines you, so don't judge what comes up for you — just notice and accept. Observing your thoughts and emotions instead of engaging with them can help you regain control over how you think and feel.

5. Think about your connection to the people and world around you — for example, your family, friends, Country and neighbourhood — and allow your awareness to focus on that connection. Expand the connection to become more and more encompassing: for example start with your connection to your family, and expand it to people in your neighbourhood, then to your city. Keep expanding until your awareness is on your connection to all the people on earth, the planet we inhabit together. This compassionate state will lead you to self-compassion. Ask yourself how you help others, where are you making a difference? Where does your compassion lead you? When you feel connected, you also feel happier and more hopeful.

6. End the practice in the same way you began, by becoming aware of yourself using your breathing. Take some deep breaths as you do, and open your eyes when you are done.

### Next steps

Once you have mastered this technique why not introduce it to your child or young person?

You can also encourage other mindfulness techniques such as:

- > Let the clouds of emotion roll by: Remind children that feelings come and go. Negative emotions are temporary states, not enduring traits.
- > Help children pay attention to the sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts within them. To understand and change one's inner experiences, you must first be aware of what's going on inside.
- > Exercise mindsight: mindsight practices, such as mindfulness using the Wheel of Awareness, teach children to calm themselves and understand their thoughts and feelings.

*Note: The terms 'child' and 'children' also refer to 'young person' and 'young people'.*

Here to help! Come and talk to us if you'd like more practical ways you can be trauma informed.

Sources:

- > <https://www.wheelofawareness.com>
- > Aware, Daniel. J. Siegel. 2018



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