

## Make this month a mindful one

October is Emotional Wellness Month, making it the perfect time to focus on your mental health by practicing mindfulness. The National Center for Emotional Wellness defines emotional wellness as “being aware of and accepting your feelings and being able to manage them through challenges.” Mindfulness, a state of active, open attention on the present moment, might be just what you need to bring some peace of mind and balance to your life.

When you’re mindful, you carefully observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judgment. You focus on living in the moment, not letting your life pass you by. You concentrate, slow things down and reconnect with yourself and others with a goal of improving your physical and mental health.

Not sure how to incorporate mindfulness into your day? Here are some suggestions on ways to start:

- **Mindful Eating**

We often give little attention to what or how much we are eating, which can lead to making unhealthy food choices and overeating. Therefore, pick at least one meal per day where you can not only take a moment to select a healthy option, but also take your time and use all of your senses while enjoying it. Mindful eating will help you notice when you are full, give you cues to how your body reacts to the food and help you enjoy the experience instead of rushing through it.

- **Practice Kindness**

Kindness produces a positive sense of well-being both with ourselves and others. Feelings of contentment can help to reduce stress and increase life satisfaction. Try making a list of things you are grateful for in your life and leave it where you can see it throughout the week. Give a compliment or perform a small act of kindness to someone. Take notice of how these small moments make you feel.

- **Try Meditation**

Giving meditation a try is easier than you think and can help you to really focus on the present moment without judgment or other wandering thoughts. To set yourself up for a short meditation, start by finding a quiet place where you can sit or lie comfortably. Take a minute or two to focus on your breathing and notice air moving in through your nostrils and the rise and fall of your belly or chest. With each exhale, try to release any tension or thoughts you may be holding on to. Even a few minutes of meditation can show positive emotional health benefits.

You can make any moment a mindful one by drawing your attention to the present moment, whether it’s a conversation you are having, a walk outdoors or preparing a meal. By practicing mindfulness in different areas of your life, you may find more enjoyment and less stress in these little moments.