

Methods of Acceptance – Mindfulness of Emotions

- **Practice when emotions are not as high**
 - Like learning any new skill
 - Notice changes in emotional experience over time
- **Watch or observe our emotions**
 - Notice where it is in the body
 - Describe the sensations (“tightness in my chest, knot in my stomach, feeling shaky, heart is racing, feeling fidgety...”)
 - Notice intensity and changes in intensity/flow of the experience
- **Label our emotions**
 - “Here is a feeling of anxiety”
 - “Here come my self-critical thoughts again”
- **Be curious and nonjudgmental**
 - Remember emotions are not good or bad, not something we need to change or get rid of
 - Question to ask: how do I want to live my life, inviting this emotion along for the ride?
- **Normalize**
 - Remind yourself that feeling pain and a range of emotions is part of being human
- **Use imagery**
 - Emotions are a storm, an ocean wave, an express train, cloud in the sky, leaf floating on a stream – naturally coming and going, and impossible to stop or change, best to mindfully surf or ride out until we reach the other side
 - Give emotions a size, shape, color, texture and make space for it just like other physical objects around you
- **Coming back to the present moment**
 - After you have watched and made space for your emotional experience, gently direct your attention back to the present moment (why acceptance does not mean dwelling, stewing, etc. in distress)
 - Focus on 5 senses, the breath, or valued activity in the moment
- **Emotional comeback**
 - Acceptance does not mean that emotions go away, nor is that the aim!
 - A chance to practice mindfulness of emotions again if/when they come back