1. Welcome  
   Thanks for coming, guess you read the article in the Focus, not my article, it was Rachel’s. Before we begin should say we are not professionals, no medical background, this is not a therapy group (so it is not really a chatting and sharing session). What we would like to do is guide you through and programme to learn mindfulness. This is the second time we have done it, so please bare with us. The plan for the afternoon is a bit of discussion and three exercises.
   1. Introduction to the course – course length, homework  
      The course is 8 weeks including this one. You can’t read a book and become mindful so there is a lot of doing. Recent studies show that mindfulness can deliver benefits after about 100 minutes of training. So about the length of the feature film.
   2. Ground Rules  
      I guess I should lay out a few ground rules.
      1. The course in incremental so you can’t join after the start
      2. We need to start on time, for obvious reasons
      3. Mobile phones off for the same reason
      4. Confidentiality
      5. Recommend that you do the practice, it is not onerous
      6. £36 for 8 weeks for the room and materials
   3. Rachel and Joe
2. What is Mindfulness, including observing a single breath  
   Parable of the guy on the horse, we often experience life as being dragged along, we would like to look cool, or even have some mastery of our emotional life.  
   This would be a great skill to have, and it turns out that emotional skills are trainable.  
   Like getting fit, learning about getting fit does not make you fit. Actually getting in the gym and doing the exercise does. That’s why I keep emphasising doing the exercises. Like doing reps. Brain training is the same. Reluctant to say “mental muscle”. But the brain does remain plastic. And you do, think and attend to changes the structure of your brain. A nice demonstration of this is that London taxi drivers have an abnormally enlarged hippocampus. 20 years of navigating in London definitely affects the structure of their brains.  
     
   So the course we’ll follow is an incremental training programme, like learning to juggle. Training by parts. So this is how you learn to juggle.  
     
   You can do exactly the same thing for mindfulness. The challenge is that it is harder to see how you are doing. If you can’t juggle it is obvious. It is less obvious with mindfulness so it can be frustrating. So bear with us and suspend judgment.  
   So what does the training look like. Lets have a go.  
     
   One breath. Sit up right and dignified. Helps sense your breathing. Focus on your breathing. Attention will wander. Just gently bring it back.
3. Raisin Exercise and Discussion
4. Explanation of Autopilot  
   Another way to look at it is that we live our lives in autopilot, hijacked by our thoughts, reliving and pre-living out experience.  
   This isn’t actually bad from a survival point of view. But it is not necessarily useful.  
   Mindfulness isn’t about suppressing emotions like Mr Spock  
   Neither is it about changing how you feel  
   It is more about accepting thoughts, recognising when you are being hijacked and recognising when you are in automatic pilot.
5. Check in - “Affect Labelling”
6. 2 minute silence sandwich
7. Personal Introductions Check in
8. Pleasant Experience exercise
9. Handouts and Homework
   1. 2 minutes of sitting daily…observe what happens, what you do.
   2. Fill in pleasant events diary daily
   3. Eat something mindfully daily
10. Check out