MINDFUL MOMENTS

HEALTHIER MIND

JANUARY: CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Introduction

Breathing is something we do all the time, but usually we don't stop to give it a second thought. Conscious breathing is a way in which we can learn to breathe more deeply and often it can help us to feel a lot calmer.

How can conscious breathing impact my work?

Conscious breathing can also be a form of meditation and mindfulness.
In focussing on your breath, you can focus on what your body is telling you, how thoughts come and go in your mind and create space between you and your thoughts, helping you react more calmly to potentially challenging situations.

This can also help you when dealing with feelings of stress or anxiety at work, as well as helping you to deal with mental health problems.

How can it help me?

Conscious breathing is easy to do when you stop and take time to notice your breath. Sometimes when we're stressed our muscles can be tense and our breathing is quick and shallow. Learning to breathe more deeply can help you feel a lot calmer.

Support Available

- Mental Health Foundation, includes podcasts and videos with breathing and relaxation exercises: www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- NHS Choices, includes breathing exercises: www.nhs.uk
- Breathworks offers mindfulness courses to manage pain, stress and illness: www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk

Tips to try conscious breathing:

1. Make yourself comfortable – if possible, go to a quiet space and sit or lie down and close your eyes.
2. Keep your shoulders down and relaxed, then place your hand on your stomach. You should be able to feel it rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.
3. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
4. Start counting your breaths as you breathe in and out.
5. Slow down your breathing. Count 'one, two, three, four' as you breath in, then 'one, two, three, four' as you breathe out.