

A Calm Oasis:

Mindfulness

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

If you've ever wanted to catch your breath and clear your head, mindfulness can help. Mindfulness techniques ground us and help us become more resilient to life's challenges.

Amy Roberts, LCSW and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher at the Robert Boissonneault Oncology Institute, says that developing a beginner's mind is key. "It's living in the moment and being aware of the moment you're in," she explains. "Being aware of your reactions, your thoughts, your body, but in a way that's patient and trusting. A childlike curiosity."

Being non-judgmental is central to mindfulness. "You're noticing you're having some reactions or some feelings, and going, 'Huh. That's interesting,'" Roberts says. "Not judging it as right or wrong, or good or bad, but being curious about your feelings, emotions, or

responses. It's really extending a kindness inward, but also to those around you."

Roberts points to studies showing that mindfulness improves memory and concentration. Mindfulness can also decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, while improving quality of life and one's ability to cope. Citing an American Society of Clinical Oncology study, she says, "After an 8-week course, these concepts, tools, and mindset that you're learning stay with you. The skills you learn show long-term improvement. It's not just a temporary release."

Roberts offers Friday meditation sessions on Zoom and will give a weekly mindfulness class starting on Tuesday, January 17. Both are free, but pre-registration is required for the class. **To learn more about mindfulness programs at RBOI, call 352-732-0277.**



Growing a Positive Experience

Growing a Positive Experience expands our daily moments of happiness. These moments can include a child's greeting, sounds in nature, a stranger holding a door open, and more. Growing them means using all our senses to absorb the experience. "This is something you're doing anyway throughout the day," Roberts says. "But instead of pushing it aside, you're learning to let it in and let it really resonate with you."

Keeping a Gratitude Journal

Keeping a Gratitude Journal helps provide balance for when times are tough. "Every morning or evening, write down a few things that happened that day or that you have that day that you're grateful for," Roberts says. It can be something simple like, "I really love my hair color today," or, "I have a roof over my head." Then think about why you are grateful for those things and what they mean to you. Gratitude doesn't mean ignoring what is difficult in life. Rather, it can help provide an emotional anchor for when life feels overwhelming.

by the numbers

5

minutes is the time it takes for your body to start releasing tension and stress when you meditate



1/2

awake time of insomniacs cut by meditation



Up to

87%

is the amount that meditation can lower the risk of coronary disease hospitalization



Up to

500

million global estimate of the number of people practicing meditation

The Body Scan

The Body Scan slows down the nervous system, eases the mind, and helps us tune into our senses. You can access Amy Roberts' body scan video at any time on RBOI's guided meditation page, RBOI.com, under the "Cancer Support" tab.



Patience and empathy are key

"If you decide you want to start a practice and you forget a day or a week, just start again," Roberts advises. "Every time you restart, you're rewiring your brain and you're practicing it all over again. So just be really sweet and kind to yourself."



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