

A Calm Oasis: Mindfulness

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Mindfulness techniques help us become more resilient to life's challenges. Amy Roberts, LCSW and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher at RBOI, says that developing a non-judgmental, beginner's mind is key. "Be aware of your reactions, your thoughts, your body, but in a way that's patient and trusting," she explains. "Don't judge your reactions as right or wrong, or good or bad, but have a childlike curiosity about your feelings, emotions, or responses. It's really extending a kindness inward, but also to those around you."

She 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.

Roberts offers free Friday meditation sessions on Zoom, for anyone to access. RBOI patients age 55 and older can attend free in-person meditation sessions in Ocala on Tuesdays, noon-1pm, at One Health Center, SW 17th Ave. To learn more about RBOI mindfulness programs, call Roberts at **352-732-0277**. You can also access meditation videos at any time on RBOI's guided meditation page, RBOI.com, under the "Cancer Support" tab.



Take a Rest STOP

How do you create internal peace in the midst of disruption? Roberts recommends the STOP technique.

S means Stop. Pause whatever you're doing. It may help to picture a big STOP sign in your head.

T means Take a big, slow breath. Fill your lower and middle belly, widen your chest up to the top, and then reverse that flow down to the belly button. Take those breaths for however long you need to.

O means Observe. "We're observing without judging ourselves," Roberts says. "With a sense of kindness, the way you would with a friend. What's going on right now? Am I hungry? Am I tired? What do I need?"

P means Perceive whatever you need in that moment. Maybe you need to say, "I'll get back to you tomorrow" or take a brief walk outside. For some people, prayer provides a sense of stillness.

The STOP technique is an internal exercise. "It's something you can do when something is really triggering you," Roberts explains. "Nobody has to know what you're doing, but you can do it quietly for yourself. And the more times you use it, the more it becomes the default."

By the numbers

9.8%

Increase in US adults practicing meditation from 2002 (7.5%) to 2022 (17.3%)
(National Health Interview Survey)

>75%

People in the US who say they use meditation for health reasons

As much as
70%

Reduction in PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in people who practice mindfulness meditation

One-half

of insomniacs reduce their wakefulness by practicing meditation.

Giving Thanks

Having a gratitude practice can lift you out of a dark place. "Gratitude doesn't mean ignoring what is difficult," Roberts says. "Life is tough, but a gratitude practice balances that a little bit. You're not just your disease. There are other things in your life that have value or purpose or that give you some sense of joy or safety. A gratitude practice helps to balance the heaviness of managing a crisis."

The practice can include a gratitude journal. "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.

Don't worry if you skip a day or a week, Roberts advises. Just start again. "Patience and empathy are key."



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