Welbeing 101

Tips and Strategies to Help You Focus on Wellbeing

www.csh.umn.edu www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu



Earl E. Bakken Center for SPIRITUALITY & HEALING

University of Minnesota

What is Wellbeing?

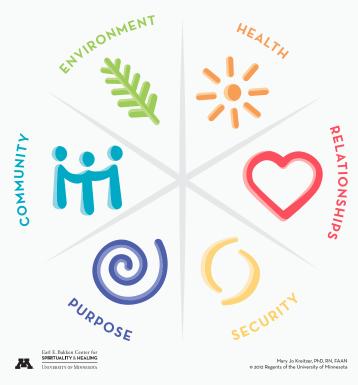


Wellbeing encompasses all aspects of our lives.

The Bakken Center provides resources for you to improve and optimize your wellbeing. The tips and ideas in this guide are things you'll be able to do on your own right now in the comfort of your own space.

We illustrate the concept of wellbeing through our Wellbeing Model - this includes six areas of wellbeing, each of which feature many subsections. The dimensions are health, purpose, relationships, community, security and environment.

WELLBEING



The Bakken Center offers virtual and inperson programming in support of individual, organizational and community wellbeing. We offer programming for both individuals and organizations on topics including mindfulness, wellbeing and resilience, cooking and nutrition, nature based therapies, organizational wellbeing and more. Learn more at https://www.csh.umn.edu/

Our **Taking Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing** website is a free resource offering a wealth of information, tips and self-assessments on each of the dimensions of our Wellbeing Model.

Health



Health is affected by the food we eat, how often we exercise, how we manage our stress, and how much we sleep, as well as social, environmental, and genetic influences.

When you experience excessive stress or do not manage workloads effectively, your health is compromised. Strength in this area includes the ability to make healthy choices, maintain a healthy attitude, and experience resilience as you bounce back from setbacks or disappointments. Don't forget that it's also important to reach out proactively when you need help and support.

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Visit nami.org to find your local NAMI, find mental health providers, and access many free online mental health resources.



Assess Your Health, and Explore More
Tips and Suggestions Visit z.umn.edu/WBHealth
to do a short, free wellbeing assessment.

After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.

4-7-8 Breath

The 4-7-8 breathing exercise for relaxation is simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere.

Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- $\circ \overset{\circ}{\mathsf{O}}$ Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a
 mental count of four.
- ° O Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound
 to a count of eight.
- °O° This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three o more times for a total of four breaths.

With this breathing technique, you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

For more tips on breathe to relax, visit: takingcharge.csh.umn.edu

What Do Experts Recommend for Healthy Sleep?

EXPERTS GENERALLY AGREE that adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night; too much or too little can have negative health consequences. As you begin to pay more attention to your own sleep patterns, you will see how different aspects of your life affect and are affected by sleep.

To get 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night, experts recommend that you:

Honor your body's need for sleep.

Don't trade a few hours of productivity/wakefulness for sleep. If you feel as though you don't have enough time to accomplish everything, see what else you can cut out—watching television in the evening, for example—and make sleep a non-negotiable priority.

Stay active during the day.

Regular exercise improves sleep and can help with sleep disorders such as insomnia and restless legs syndrome (RLS). Tai chi and yoga may have particularly powerful benefits if you are having trouble sleeping — they offer physical exercise and create a sense of relaxation that facilitates sleep.

Nurture relationships with loved ones.

Research shows that troubled relationships can disrupt sleep. Make cultivating healthy connections with your family and loved ones a priority, practicing deep listening, gratitude, and good communication skills.

Avoid stimulants late in the day.

Resist that cup of coffee at 3:00 in the afternoon, no matter how tempting it may be. Caffeine affects everyone differently, but you can generally expect its effects to last 6-8 hours after consumption. Even if you fall asleep easily at night, the leftover effects can disrupt your sleep cycle, making you even sleepier the next day (which may cause you to consume more caffeine!).

Create a sleep routine.

Having a ritual every night before bed can help to remind the body that it's time to sleep and lull the mind into a restful state. Harvard's Healthy Sleep program recommends making your nighttime routine as stress-free as possible—take a hot bath, meditate, or read a good book before turning out the lights. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends.

For more information on how you can achieve healthier sleep, visit:

z.umn.edu/ HealthierSleep

Take Charge of Your Sleep.



There are many steps you can take to return to a more regular sleep schedule:

1. IMPROVE SLEEP HYGIENE.

The first and most important step you can take in overcoming insomnia is to develop healthy sleep habits. Creating a comfortable sleeping environment free from distractions (i.e., no television, large clocks, or laptops in the bedroom) is key in finding more consistent sleep. If you find yourself lying in bed wide awake for more than 20 minutes, get up. Read a few pages of a book, drink warm milk, or imeditate until you feel sleepy enough to get back into bed.

2. MAKE SOME CHANGES IN YOUR DAILY LIFESTYLE.

If you suffer from insomnia, what you do during the day can be just as important as what you do when you lie down at night. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine, which can disrupt sleep even in non-insomniacs. Make sure you get enough exercise each day and eat healthy foods, but avoid vigorous movement, heavy meals, and spicy foods 2-3 hours before bedtime. If you're tired during the day because you can't sleep at night, try to avoid napping, except for "emergency naps" before driving or operating heavy machinery. If you can, save your tiredness for when it's time to go to bed. If you lie awake at night with your mind buzzing with work, make a to-do list before bed and set it aside, knowing that you can take care of everything tomorrow.

3. DO YOGA OR TAI CHI.

Doing yoga or tai chi on a daily basis can help you reduce feelings of stress, fall asleep faster, and stay asleep longer.

4. PRACTICE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION.

Research shows that mindfulness-based meditation can have a positive effect on sleep in as little as 8 weeks of practice. Meditation lowers cortisol levels (a stress hormone) and facilitates a more relaxed and accepting state of being. This can help tremendously if you find yourself unable to sleep because you are worried or stressed.

5. TRY RELAXATION TECHNIQUES.

Because insomnia is often connected to stress, basic relaxation techniques can help you calm your mind and body so that you can rest. Deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery (imagining peaceful, relaxing places) are all effective ways of gently

guiding your body into a relaxed state. Taking 20 minutes for a relaxation practice before going to bed can also ease anxiety.

6. TAKE HERBAL AND DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS.

There are several options for non-pharmaceutical treatments for insomnia. Be sure to tell your healthcare practitioner about any herbs or supplements you use on your own.

a. VALERIAN is a popular botanical herb that has long been used for its sedative effects. While many people use valerian to help them fall asleep and some clinical trials have shown it to be helpful for the treatment of insomnia, larger reviews indicate that more trials are needed to conclusively prove its efficacy. (All studies agree, however, that valerian is safe to use for short 4-6 week periods at a time).

b. MELATONIN is a natural hormone that regulates sleep and can also be taken as a supplement. Many people prefer melatonin to prescribed sleeping medications because it does not have a next-day "hangover" effect and is not addictive. Like valerian, much of melatonin's effectiveness is anecdotal and based on small research studies. A 2013 meta-analysis demonstrated that melatonin increases total sleep time with overall improvement in sleep quality. The Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database has found that melatonin's is possibly effective for insomnia, but larger, more quantifiable studies are needed. c. CHAMOMILE can be taken as a bedtime tea. Though many report feelings of relaxation that are induced by chamomile, scientific evidence of its efficacy has not been proven.

7. USE AROMATHERAPY.

Many people use lavender to help induce a state of relaxation, and research suggests that the inhalation of lavender essential oils can have a positive impact on sleep quality and mood. There are a number of ways you can use lavender—get a massage with lavender oil, inhale a few drops on a cotton ball, or use a diffuser.

8. VISIT AN INTEGRATIVE PRACTITIONER.

Many clinical trials and personal case studies have reported the benefits that acupuncture, acupressure, massage, and reflexology can have on sleep. Larger reviews indicate that there is a need for more standardized research in these areas, but these practices are safe to try and are not likely to have any side effects.

9. SEE A THERAPIST.

Cognitive behavioral therapy has also been found to be an effective form of treating insomnia.

If you are having trouble sleeping, you should first take into consideration if there are any changes in your life—such as a new job, high levels of stress, or medications—that might be affecting your sleep. Visit your healthcare provider to talk about your symptoms and get a physical examination to rule out or seek treatment for any underlying health conditions that may be causing your sleeping problems.

What Do Experts Recommend for **Healthy Eating?**

Large portion sizes, processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and saturated fats—these are the deadly components of the Standard American Diet (S.A.D.), which has caused obesity rates to skyrocket in both adults and children.

Making healthy food choices and practicing mindful eating can help you provide your body with the nutrients it needs to achieve optimum wellbeing and lower your risk for diseases like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, and certain cancers.

Follow dietary guidelines.

Whether you are working to lose or maintain weight, you should make healthy food choices following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These guidelines will improve your health, help you meet your nutrient requirements, and reduce your risk of chronic disease.

Combine healthy eating with exercise.

Studies show that diet alone is not as effective in achieving a healthy body weight as diet combined with exercise. Physical activity has many other health benefits as well. Even relatively small weight loss can make a difference in health by reducing blood pressure and improving glucose tolerance and blood lipids.



Pay attention to your eating patterns.

How, when, and where do you eat? If you're like many Americans, you may often eat meals while doing something else: driving, talking on the phone, watching television, or reading. In short, you may pay little attention to your food.

Drink Water.

Your water needs depend on many factors, including your health, how active you are, and where you live. It's generally not a good idea to use thirst alone as a guide for when to drink. By the time you become thirsty, you may already be slightly dehydrated. It is especially important for older adults to drink water before becoming thirsty, because your thirst sense is diminished as you get older.



Avoid the influence of the "Food Giants."

In Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us, reporter Michael Moss describes how executives at large food corporations have figured out the science of getting people to buy more of their products. In short, many processed foods are not designed to enhance wellbeing, but to exploit natural cravings for salt, sugar, and fat.

INCREASE POSITIVITY INCREASE POSITIVITY INCREASE POSITIVITY

In her book *Positivity*, Barbara Fredrickson offers five specific tips to help increase positive emotions:



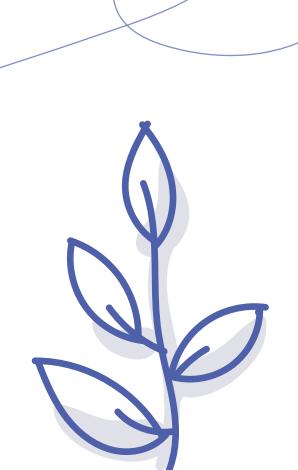
Practice Gratitude
Be Kind
Connect With Others
Spend Time in Nature
Savor Goodness

To explore these ideas in more depth, visit z.umn.edu/IncreasePositivity

Purpose



Your wellbeing is enhanced through a sense of knowing who you are, and what you are here to do. This understanding grows through all the activities that you participate in (volunteering, work, religious and cultural activities, community groups, etc.) Developing strength in this area will help you understand your personal guiding values, beliefs, strengths, and passions. You'll also be able to identify central aspects of a purposeful life, and have a sense of hope, purpose, and self-efficacy in your career and life.



Assess Your Purpose, and Explore More Tips and Suggestions

Visit z.umn.edu/WBPurpose to do a short, free wellbeing assessment. After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.

TO EXPLORE YOUR PURPOSE:

Question yourself regularly about purpose

Use the answers to find your unique way to contribute

Don't ignore your spiritualityit can be a source of purpose

> Take the next stepmove to action

Life Spiral Exercise ®

- At the bottom of the spiral, write your date of birth. At the top, write the age you think you will live to be. Mark the place on the spiral which represents your current age. How far along are you in this life? What feelings does this evoke?
- Record three trigger experiences that shaped your life story. These could be any major life events, breakthroughs or breakdowns, such as beginning or ending relationships, moves, losses, job changes, etc. Write down the age each trigger took place. What was the life lesson learned in each case?
 - Focus on each of these life lessons—what did they teach you, and how did they change you? Can you gauge from this exercise where you are in your life today and where you'd like to be by the end of it? What would a life well lived look like? Seeing your life in this broader perspective can help identify what is meaningful and valuable to you.

WHAT IS A CALLING?

A CALLING:

UTILIZES YOUR NATURAL GIFTS. We each possess hundreds of skills, and nearly all of us also have some natural gifts, which often emerge early in our lives. Gifts are more than just talents; they are what make you feel fulfilled and happy. Having a sense of humor or an ability to bring joy to others, an ability to quickly compute numbers, or an aptitude for leading others are examples of natural gifts that can express your purpose.

SERVES OTHERS. Your calling can be thought of as the urge to share your gifts with the world. When you express your gifts for the sake of others, you often experience the joy of being fully alive.

CREATES "FLOW."

What were you doing the last time you experienced such absorption that you lost all sense of time? You were probably doing something that relates to your calling.

Visit our Taking Charge site to discover your passions, try freeflow journaling, and explore purpose even more. z.umn.edu/wbpurpose

Relationships



Relationships are about authentic connections, respect for self and others, the ability to relate across multiple types of differences, the skills to connect effectively in-person and in online environments, and sustaining connections that are supportive and nurturing (including family, friends, significant others, and pets).

When you have strength in this dimension, you are able to navigate many kinds of relationships smoothly. You're accepting of others, non-judgmental, and curious to learn and grow through connections. You know when to collaborate and seek help from others rather than act on your own, and have a close group of friends (even if small in number!)



Assess Your Relationships, and Explore More Tips and Suggestions

Visit **z.umn.edu/WBRelationships** to do a short, free well-being assessment. After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.



Tips to be More Grateful

Every night, reflect on 3 good things from your day. If you'd like, you can record them in a gratitude journal.

Thank those important in your life to let them know you appreciate them.

Lighten a stormy mood with a gratitude inventory. Start with listing 5 things you're thankful for in the moment. Thank yourself for your healthy habits.

Send out some good vibes to friends on social media and let them know you are thankful for them. Stop and notice the beauty and good in your surroundings. Pay attention to them, so you can remember this moment later.

Look for silver linings even in difficult situations.

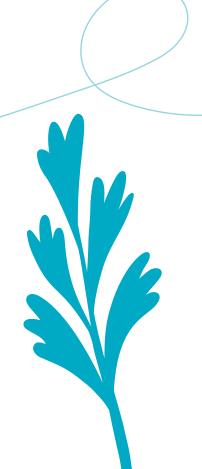
Look outward. Empathy for other can trigger a sense of gratitude.

Community



Community reflects a sense of belonging to a neighborhood, workplace, interest group, or volunteer organization. When this area is strong, you'll be inclined to join organizations or initiatives, spend time in group activities, and feel supported by various group connections.

Systemic racism is a significant barrier to the wellbeing of a community. Today, many people are just now waking up to the reality of racial inequity in America - a reality that has long been the lived experience of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. While people may feel moved to do something, we may also feel helpless: How can we help fix a systemic problem that is so complex and pervasive? Rhonda Magee, a law professor, mindfulness teacher, and social justice advocate believes that we can start by cultivating mindfulness - what she calls "The Inner Work of Racial Justice." Read our interview with Professor Magee, which includes tips and strategies to help you begin this critical work, at z.umn.edu/CSHracialjustice



Assess Your Community Connections, and Explore More Tips and Suggestions

Visit **z.umn.edu/WBCommunity** to do a short, free well-being assessment. After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.

Using Mindfulness for Racial Justice

Rhonda Magee, a law professor and mindfulness teacher and the author of "The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities" says that "Mindfulness deepens our ability to notice very subtle aspects of our lived experience and to be present with those aspects. It also provides an ethical lens to help us understand how the ways we engage impact our interpersonal relationships and actions in the world."

Mindfulness practice can bring about transformation on three levels: personal, interpersonal, and collective. We must first clearly see our own biases in action, and how they harm others, and then work with compassion to bring justice into the world.

Magee emphasizes the importance of grounding within your physical experience as a way of connecting to the present moment. When you see a news story about police brutality against a person of color, or find yourself in a conversation about race, pay attention to your moment-to-moment experience.



Don't judge your experience; the practice is to simply become familiar with what is happening within you. Remember to be compassionate to yourself—you are learning and changing, which can be difficult. "Self-compassion sustains us as we do the painful work of seeing ourselves and our circumstances rightly," says Magee. "This is the first step in personal healing and societal transformation."

Do you tense up?

What does it feel like in your body?

Do you change the channel or shift topics?

What do you assume you know about the issue?

Do you become defensive?



Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential.¹

When we look at community as a whole, we find three attributes that play a large role in wellbeing: connectedness, livability, and equity. We can explore each of these attributes for factors that contribute to community wellbeing.

What is community wellbeing?

Connectedness

Social support Civic engagement Community participation

Equity

Housing, Transportation, Education, Parks and recreation, Human services, Public safety, Access to culture and the arts

Livability

All members are treated with fairness and justice Basic needs are met Equal opportunity

Security



Security and Safety reflects a sense of security in your home, in the workplace, and physical, mental, and emotional safety in all relationships. It also includes a sense of financial stability, and the ability to have secure access to basic needs like food, housing, clean water, and healthcare. In short, threats to safety and security erode or even prevent wellbeing.

Safety also comes from our own lifestyle choices, including what and how we choose to use alcohol, our sexual choices, and the ways we engage with technology.



Assess Your Relationships, and Explore More Tips and Suggestions

Visit z.umn.edu/WBSecurity to do a short, free wellbeing assessment. After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.

Security and Safety in the Workplace

In the workplace, at home and in our communities, in addition to our basic need for physical safety and security, a sense of psychological safety is essential to our thriving as human beings and knowing we may lead our lives free from intimidation, discrimination, harassment and social injustice. Our workplaces, community organizations and governmental agencies must work together to provide and enforce clear policies and practices that protect human rights, equal opportunities and ensure social justice for all.

According to Dr. Amy Edmondson of Harvard University, in the workplace psychological safety also exists when individuals and teams experience interpersonal trust and mutual respect; where people feel comfortable being themselves. As employees and employers, we can help to promote a greater sense of psychological safety, for ourselves and others by:

Acknowledging our own fragility and biases. Practice mindful selfawareness and commit to lifelong learning.

Recognizing and honoring both our shared humanity and others unique life experiences.

Committing to listening to learn. Replacing blame with curiosity.

Providing opportunities for open dialogue and respectful sharing of differing perspectives.

Encouraging experimenting with new ideas and processes, without fear of repercussions.

Considering mistakes as lessons learned and as opportunities to learn and grow – as organizations, teams and individuals.

Practicing authentic acts of compassion, gratitude, appreciation and recognition.

Create a Safe Home

Your home is the place you spend the most time—where you eat, sleep, connect with family, and relax. By working to ensure that your home is a safe space, you can make your personal space a refuge for wellbeing. Your first steps are to improve the quality of your air, water, and household products, and prepare for emergencies.

To explore these ideas in more depth, visit z.umn.edu/SafeHome

Are you free of the "big three" common home toxins (radon, mold, and lead)?

Is your home well-ventilated?

Does your landscaping contribute to your environmental health? If you smoke, stop.

Install a carbon monoxide detector. Test your water. Increase water quality. Don't reach for the bottled water. Assess beauty products carefully.

Don't create toxic trash. Clean clothing responsibly. Limit your plastic use. Watch your use of plastic containers.



Ways to Improve Your Relationship with Money

Notice Your Habits

Take some time to notice how and when you spend money. What are your patterns?

Reflect on How You Spend

Spending money on material goods doesn't bring happiness. But there are ways that money can make you happier.

Avoid Comparing —

Comparing ourselves to others and focusing on income is a never-ending treadmill of dissatisfaction.

Adjust Your Goals

Take a good look at your budget. Establish incentives that will motivate you to meet your goals.

Nudge Yourself to Save

Saving money helps provide financial security. It can also give you a sense of financial freedom.





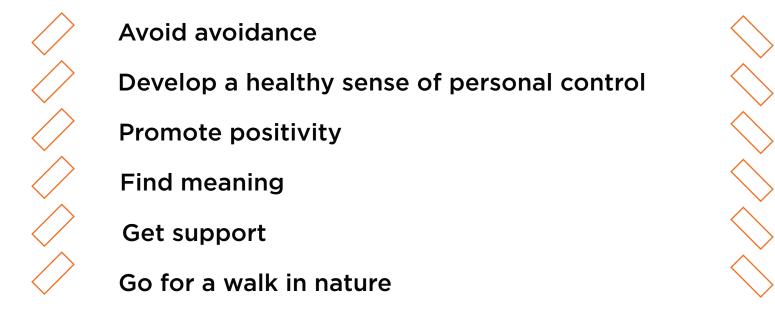






Read more about these tips and others on our site: **z.umn.edu/MoneyAndYou**

How to Deal with Fear and Anxiety



Face your fears and anxieties so they don't become debilitating. Identify ways to create a sense of personal control or mastery in your life.

Ways to Protect Yourself from Fear When Reading the News

Evaluate the risk.

Unplug from technology.

Write in a journal.

Practice good safety habits and self-care.

Reduce the overall stress in your life.

Cultivate strong relationships and experiences of shared joy with the people around you.

Focus on the ways you are safe.

Talk to someone about your fears.

Create a safe space for others.

Feel the fear in small doses.



Environment



Environment is focused on a welcoming neighborhood, access to adequate housing, places for reflection and contemplation, and access to nature. When this dimension is strong, you feel welcomed and accepted as part of your community. You have the physical resources (transportation, housing, food, technology, academic resources) to be successful; and you feel connected to both yourself and nature.

As humans we are deeply connected to the natural world—we are part of nature and interact with it in many ways—from the cells of our body taking in air and water to our role in the larger ecosystem. This interaction is deeply beneficial to humans: apart from meeting some of our most basic needs, nature relaxes and refreshes us. We need to preserve the health of the natural world for our own wellbeing.



Assess the Connection Between Nature and Wellbeing, and Explore More Tips and Suggestions

Visit z.umn.edu/WBEnvironment to do a short, free well-being assessment. After you've completed the assessment, you'll have the opportunity to set goals to improve your health and wellbeing.



Many people know that exercise improves health and wellbeing. But did you know that there's a growing body of research which suggests that exercising outside is more effective than exercising inside? Go outside!

Green Exercise - which is simply activity in the presence of nature - has been found to benefit emotional wellbeing by improving attention and reducing stress.

Get motivated! Green Exercise may help you become excited about physical activity by offering you a break from your busy life.

Go green. Some evidence suggests that exercise may feel easier when performed outside, and that even being in the presence of the color green while exercising will positively affect your mood.

Things You Can Do for Planetary Health

Below are ten solutions suggested by Project Drawdown, an organization that reviews and distills climate research into practical solutions. For tips on how you can take action and even more ideas, join Drawdown's Ecochallenge and find measurable actions you can take to reduce global warming. Still want to learn more? Visit Drawdown.org, the world's leading resource for climate solutions, to explore changes you can make right now.

Our tip: After visiting Drawdown.org, pick one or two solutions from the categories below that look interesting and manageable to you. Pay attention to when you're feeling overwhelmed. That's a good sign that you might want to relax, take a deep breath, and focus on what feels most meaningful in the moment.

Reduced Food Waste

Wind Energy

Refrigeration

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Water Saving

Educating Girls

Solar Power

Tropical Forests

Plant-rich diet

Family Planning

• Mindfulness



While mindfulness is not a separate aspect of our wellbeing model, it is an essential part of it all. It lets us pay attention to our health, relationships, and environment. It helps us discover our purpose and path to security. It builds community.

At the Center, we describe mindfulness as an awareness of one's present moment experience with curiosity, kindness and a non-judgmental attitude. Over thirty years of research in mindfulness meditation has demonstrated that regular practice may lead to a number of positive outcomes including reductions in stress and overall enhanced wellbeing. Mindfulness is also other-oriented, it involves social/environmental awareness. When we are mindful, we are often able to see and respond to others with greater sensitivity and understanding.

The Center offers many virtual as well as in person mindfulness courses, workshops and retreats for individuals and organizations. Learn more about our mindfulness programming for individuals at z.umn.edu/mindfulness and about our Mindfulness at Work program for organizations at z.umn.edu/MindfulOrganizations

And join us for our weekly, free, online Stress Busters drop in – you'll learn about mindfulness, mindful movement like yoga, and more!





When you notice something has **triggered** you and you are about to **react**:



Slow down Take a breath

Observe What are you feeling in your body? What are you thinking? What other possibilities exist?

Proceed Considering multiple possibilities

To whatever worries arise, ask yourself: Could it be OK?



Try a classic sitting meditation

- Sit comfortably
- Begin with intention
- Bring attention to the body
- Pay attention to breath
- Notice when attention wanders and gently come back to the breath

Remember that mindfulness is about developing a steady and balanced mind and heart that can be present with whatever situation or experience arises.

If you find it challenging, sometimes it's best to take a break and try again later.

Try a short mindfulness exercise

- Touch your index finger and thumb together.
 - Explore your thumb with the tip of your index finger.
- What do you notice? Roughness? Smoothness? Heat? Coolness? Dry? Do any thoughts or memories arise?
- Now explore your index finger with your thumb. Is it the same? Rougher? Smoother? Hotter? Cooler? Drier? Other memories or thoughts?

