

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS DURING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

By Clara Wicoff



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. To celebrate, consider practicing mindfulness! This is a term that seems to be everywhere, but what exactly does it mean? Mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn defines the term as “awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

While mindfulness should not be considered a “cure-all,” it does have many benefits. These include an increased ability to relax, improved concentration, increased energy and enthusiasm for life, increased creativity, increased self-awareness, improved self-esteem, and improved work or school performance.



To get these benefits, consider incorporating mindfulness into your daily routine this month! You can start simple by committing to an uninterrupted time each day to practice a mindful meditation. This can be done for as little as five minutes (although you may benefit from increasing the meditation time). Once you’ve committed, find a quiet place

away from technology. Find a comfortable position, either sitting or laying down. Then, focus on your breathing and let negative thoughts float away like clouds. There are many online resources and apps which can help take you through guided mindful meditations which help you to live in the present moment. As Kabat-Zinn puts it: “We take care of the future best by taking care of the present now.”

For more information, please contact Clara Wicoff, Nutrition, Food and Health Extension Agent, at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or by calling 620-365-2242. If you or someone you know is in need of immediate assistance, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.