

Mindful Waiting

Helping others is a rewarding, but demanding job. Instances of feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, disappointed or frustrated can occur for all who do this work. The next time you find yourself waiting (in line, for a client, etc.), try the following mindfulness activity to help relieve stress and increase your ability to focus and think clearly. While you are waiting, choose a nearby object (a potted plant, a coffeepot, a tree) to focus on. Gently gaze at the object to relax and notice what is happening within and around you.

DURATION – 5 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit or stand comfortably, relax, and feel your breathing.
2. Choose something nearby that is pleasant to look at and rest your gaze on it. Keep your eyes soft and lightly focused on the object.
3. Notice any changes in your surroundings (colors, sounds, changes in light).
4. Let thoughts come and go as they please. Do not force any specific thoughts, simply relax.
5. If you noticed that you are distracted, return to gazing softly at the object.
6. Reflect on your thoughts - What did you see? Were you surprised by all the changes you noticed? Did your surroundings stay the same or change? How did you feel at the start vs. at the end? Did time pass slower or quicker than normal?

TIPS

1. This is a great activity for when you are waiting for an appointment or for a meeting to begin, or anytime you need a mindful break from your work.
2. *Mindful Waiting* is one way for professionals to calm down and be able to focus when they are feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

Adapted from *Mindful Games Activity Cards* by Susan Kaiser Greenland with Annaka Harris