

## Integrating Mindfulness

Although there is not one “right” way to integrate a mindfulness practice into the practice of medicine, or any other areas of life, there are many useful strategies to build momentum toward greater mindfulness. Here are a few strategies to consider:

**Set your intention.** Make the choice to live mindfully. Set it high on your list of priorities. As with any other skill, mindfulness will require focus and commitment to make it a reality.

**Be aware.** Once you have made the choice to live mindfully, you will become aware of the opportunities to practice mindfulness in your life. There will be times when you are aware of being “mindless” — being on autopilot, disconnected from your experience or distracted from the present moment. If you have difficulty being aware of these opportunities, make the opportunities happen by checking in with yourself at predetermined times or when you are engaged in regular daily activities. Ask yourself...how do I feel? What am I experiencing right now?

**Create space.** Whether it is creating a physical, emotional or mental space for mindfulness, you will need space to rehearse mindfulness behaviors. You may choose to reserve some time to meditate. Or you can participate in a workshop or seminar on mindfulness. It can also be as simple as taking time to practice deep breathing in between your meetings with patients and colleagues. Or you may just take a moment to check in with yourself.

**Practice.** Ask yourself reflective questions to promote curiosity about your internal experience. Focus on the present moment from an open and non-judgmental perspective. Use the information you gain to assist you to seek out mindfulness practices that match your unique needs. There is no “right” or “wrong.” Draw on your wisdom to inform the choices you make.

**Interact with others.** Share your experiences, including perceived successes and failures, with others. Exchange ideas about how you may incorporate mindfulness into your practice. Elicit feedback from others about their observations of your practice and ways to refine your strategies. Use these exchanges to continually assess and make adjustments as needed.



### SKILLS & STRATEGIES TOOLBOX

#### *Facilitating Your Mindfulness Practice*

##### **Use these questions to facilitate your mindfulness practice:**

1. What do I need in the moment to support positive thinking?
2. What self-care practices will help me to be best prepared to care for my patients?
3. How can I balance my needs with the needs of my patients?
4. How can I maintain an open and appreciative stance when interacting with colleagues and patients?
5. What helps me to genuinely connect to my patients as they share their concerns and thoughts?<sup>9</sup>