

## Short Attention Training Exercises

### **Benefits of attention training:**

Improves cognitive function, interpersonal relationships, creativity, and overall wellbeing  
Reduces stress and distractibility

### **Reminders:**

Normalize the urge to giggle and resistance  
Speak slowly and take the full time  
Practice as you guide

### **Exercises:**

#### **Opening**

With your feet flat on the floor and arms uncrossed, gently extend your body upward. On the in breath, relax your belly, lift your chest, and roll your shoulders back. Let your shoulders drop and relax on the out breath.

#### **Breathing**

Bring your attention to the sensations as the breath enters and leaves your body. It is normal for attention to wander. When thoughts, emotions, physical feelings or external sounds occur, simply notice them, and bring your attention back to the sensations of the breath.

#### **Sensations (sitting)**

Place your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands on the desk or on your legs. Bring your attention to the sensations of your feet on the floor. Now feel the weight of your body on the chair. Move your attention to your stomach and notice any sensations there. Move your attention upward to the chest...to the throat...to the shoulders. Now bring your attention to the sensations of breathing.

#### **Thoughts**

Bring your attention to the sensations of the breath as it enters and leaves your body. Now bring your attention to the activity of thoughts. You can watch your thoughts like you watch cars driving by or fish swimming in a tank. There may be a lot of activity or it may be quiet. When you find that you are caught by a thought, bring your attention back to the sensations of the breath, and then return to watching your thoughts.

#### **Emotions\***

Take a gentle breath and bring your attention to the sensations of the breath as it enters and leaves your body. Now bring your attention to where you notice the feeling. Notice whether it feels heavy or light, tight or loose, empty or full, solid or moving. Notice whether it feels strong or mild. Watch to see how the feeling changes or moves.

### **Listening**

Face the person who is speaking and listen carefully to what they are saying. When your attention wanders, just bring it back to the person who is speaking. Do this without speaking or asking questions.

### **Body scan (laying down)**

Lay down on your back with legs uncrossed and arms at your side. Bring your attention to your toes. Notice whatever sensations you find there. Bring your attention to your feet. To your calves...

### **Standing**

Stand with your feet together, arms at your side, and eyes closed. Bring your attention to the sensations in your legs as your body naturally adjusts to stay balanced.

### **Wiggling toes**

Place your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands on the desk or at your sides. Bring your attention to the sensations of your feet on the floor. Slowly wiggle your toes and notice the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations in your legs as you move your toes.

### **Thumb and forefinger**

Place your thumbs against your pointer fingers. Slowly rub them against each other and notice the sensations.

### **Curling hands**

Rest your arms at your side or on the desk in front of you with palms up. Bring your attention to the sensations in your hands and arms, slowly open your hands as wide as you can. Now, as slowly as you can, curl your hands into a ball and then open them again.

### **Holding an object (pen, pencil, stone)**

Holding an object in your hand, bring your attention to the texture of the object. Feel the weight of the object. Look closely at the object as you feel it. Notice as many things as you can about the object.

### **Walking**

Place your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands on the desk or at your sides. Bring your attention to the sensations of your feet on the floor. Slowly wiggle your toes and notice the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations in your legs as you move your toes.

### **Sounds**

Place your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands on the desk or at your sides. Close your eyes. Bring your attention to the sounds you notice. Notice if there are thoughts about what you are hearing. When your attention wanders, just bring it back to the sensations of sounds you can hear.

### **Feeling of sunshine/grass**

Stand outside in an open position with eyes closed facing the sun. Take a gentle breath and feel the sensations of warmth on your body.