

## Mindful Walking

I love mindful walking and encourage everyone to give this a try the next time you take a walk. The idea of this exercise is to help you really engage in the present moment, to ground yourself, to bring all your awareness to where you are, how you are and to the experience of walking. It can be an incredibly useful approach for being able to benefit from taking a walk for your own mental health.

### **Taking a mindful walk:**

Begin your walk (ideally choosing a calming setting amongst nature, but you can do this anywhere, in your local park, along the pavements, anywhere).

Start by gently focusing on your steps. You could gently count up to 10 steps as you walk and repeat.

Begin to notice your body, how your foot, heel, legs feel as you walk, notice your foot landing on the ground, notice the way your legs swing, how your body moves, your arms, neck, shoulders, head.

Look around you, notice 5 things you can see around you. Take a moment to look at what you can see, take your time to notice the details.

Listen. Notice 4 things you can hear. Tune in to each one. Notice the sounds, the tone, volume, rhythms.

Along your walk reach out to touch something. Find 3 things. A tree, leaf, grass, wall, building, your coat. Notice the feeling, the textures.

Focus on 2 things you can smell.

Notice what you can taste.

Let your mind focus on your senses then move gently back to your body, and the feel and movement of your body.

As you walk your mind will naturally be drawn to thoughts, worries, future predictions, memories, past events, judgements, assumptions. This is normal and a natural process your mind takes. Don't be frustrated or critical with yourself if this happens. Notice this. Notice what your mind is saying as if you are an observer, looking in through the window of your mind. Take a moment to notice and name how you feel emotionally and where you feel this in your body. And then just gently, just for now, guide yourself back to your mindful walking each time it happens. Draw your attention to the world around you, as suggested above, Take your time. Allow yourself to be present & just be. Walking, noticing, be present in the world around you.