



Intentions and Assessments

Before we begin our journey, it's helpful to **pause and reflect on why we're here**.

What brought you to this course? What are you hoping to learn, to change, to accomplish during our time together?

Use the next couple pages to spend some time in reflection before the course begins. As you think about your aspirations and intentions, remember that they are just that — **intentions**. We cannot attach too firmly to specific outcomes, and our goals may change during our journey. But it's helpful to have a sense of where we'd like to go!

You'll also find a **"Stress Assessment"** in this packet. This exercise will be a helpful way to identify your current stressors and to see how your experience of the stressful events in your life may change as a result of practicing mindfulness. The final assessment is the mindful awareness scale – you might find it interesting to take the assessment now, and again at the end of the course.



Your Intentions

What are you hoping to learn in this course?

What events or stressors in your life have brought you here? What specific concerns are you hoping mindfulness will help you with?

List three goals, or intentions, that you have for yourself over the next four weeks in class. These can be practice aspirations, ways that you want to feel, or specific things you are hoping to change about your life.

1.

2.

3.

Journaling Prompts

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on your current level of bodily awareness. They are “yes/no” questions, but take some time to consider your responses and just write down what comes to mind as you answer each question.

1. On a day-to-day basis, how often do you pause and pay attention to your body (your posture, internal sensations, breathing, etc.)? Are you generally aware of your body and its movements throughout the day? Or do you tend to spend a lot of time “in your head” and not aware of the body?
2. Do you experience recurrent aches and pains in the body? If so, where? How intense are they? How frequent?
3. Do you notice and pay attention to the parts of the body that feel *good*?

Stress Assessment

It will be helpful to track your progress over the course in terms of dealing with the things that currently stress you out. On this chart, identify **3 of the top stressors in your life right now**. Clearly identify a specific situation that you find stressful. For example, instead of just writing, "*making dinner*," write, "*when my kids are really loud and keep yelling mom! mom! mom! and I'm trying to make dinner*." Then **rate the stressor** on a scale from 1-10 {1 being hardly stressful at all (and not a likely score for something that stresses you out!), and 10 being extremely stressful.} Leave the remaining two columns blank – we'll check-in midway through the course and again at the end and see if anything has changed!

Stressor	Stress Level (1-10) pre-course	Stress Level mid-course	Stress Level post-course

Stress Assessment

Many people come to mindfulness to learn how to manage stress — and stress reduction is one of the best “side effects” of mindfulness.

The **Perceived Stress Scale** (PSS-10) is a commonly used clinical assessment to evaluate stress levels. Answer the questions below – instructions for scoring the assessment are on the following page.

Perceived Stress Scale- 10 Item

Instructions: The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, please indicate with a check how often you felt or thought a certain way.

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

___0=never ___1=almost never ___2=sometimes ___3=fairly often ___4=very often

Perceived Stress Scale: Scoring and Interpretation

The scale is described as “a measure of the degree to which situations in one’s life are appraised as stressful.” The individual items assess how “unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded” you perceive your life to be, and ask about your current stress levels.

To score your assessment: REVERSE your scores for numbers 4, 5, 7, and 8 (e.g., 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0) and then add the number (you’ll have a score between 0 and 40). Higher numbers are indicative of higher levels of stress.

My Score (pre-course): _____

An “average” score is around 13. {For you data nerds, the average score for men is 12.1, and for women it’s 13.7. The age range with the highest stress levels is ages 18-29 (14.2) and the age range with the lowest stress levels is 55-64 (11.9)}.

My Score (post-course): _____

Mindfulness Assessment

On the following page you will find a commonly used clinical measurement to assess your dispositional mindfulness, that is, your receptive awareness of the present moment.

To score your assessment, you simply add up your responses to all the items on the scale, which will give you a score ranging from 15 to 90. Divide that number by 15 to determine your average item score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of dispositional mindfulness, and are correlated with fewer unpleasant emotional states and a greater sense of autonomy (feeling in control of one’s responses to events).

From GoodMedicine.org.uk:

Normative scores on the MAAS

The table below gives figures for typical scores on the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Undergraduates</u>	<u>Zen Meditators</u>	<u>Matched Adults</u>
<i>Average total score</i>	57.75	65.7	59.25
<i>Average item score</i>	3.85	4.38	3.95

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1–6 scale below, please indicate, in the box to the right of each statement, how frequently or infrequently you have had each experience in the last week (or other agreed time period). Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

	<i>almost always</i> 1	<i>very frequently</i> 2	<i>somewhat frequently</i> 3	<i>somewhat infrequently</i> 4	<i>very infrequently</i> 5	<i>almost never</i> 6
1	I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later					
2	I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else					
3	I find it difficult to stay focused on what’s happening in the present					
4	I tend to walk quickly to get where I’m going without paying attention to what I experience along the way					
5	I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention					
6	I forget a person’s name almost as soon as I’ve been told it for the first time					
7	It seems I am “running on automatic” without much awareness of what I’m doing					
8	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them					
9	I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there					
10	I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I’m doing					
11	I find myself listening to someone with one ear, while doing something else at the same time					
12	I drive places on “automatic pilot” and then wonder why I went there					
13	I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past					
14	I find myself doing things without paying attention					
15	I snack without being aware that I’m eating					

total score = _____ average statement score = _____