

# MINDFULNESS

**Author:** Anna Książek

**Main objectives:**

- Getting familiar with the concept of mindfulness

During the workshops participants will (specific objectives):

- Reflect on what mindfulness is and how it can enrich our life.
- Exchange experiences connected to mindfulness.
- Experience chosen technique of mindfulness.

**Time:**

2h

**Place:**

indoor or outdoor (depending on the chosen technique)

**Materials:**

Stationary – paper (recycled if possible), pens, in case of mandalas – crayons, paints, brushes, markers, chalks

Equipment – computer, speakers

To print:

- Appendix 2 – one copy for each person
- Mandalas from website suggested in the scenario



## Course:

### 1. Introduction

Tell participants that today's workshop would be about mindfulness. Divide them in small groups of 3-4 people and invite them to discuss what mindfulness means to them? How do they understand this word? Do they have any experiences with mindfulness? Summarize discussion together, adding to definitions if needed. Reflect together: how mindfulness can help us in preventing discrimination or violence? How can it enrich our daily life and help us to become more resilient, empowered and independent?

### 2. Mindfulness practise

There are several ways we can practice mindfulness. Below we listed techniques which we have experience with – we proposed them to our target groups during various workshops. You can choose those which suit the best your group and their needs.

#### a) Meditation

Invite participants to different kinds of meditations. You can start from body scan, most common meditation, which helps us to pay attention to sensations of our body. You can guide it yourself following the introduction from Appendix 1 or use the meditation proposed in Coursera online course of De-Mystifying Mindfulness (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/mindfulness/supplement/TRDhj/med-lab-1-exercises>)





After the meditation, ask participants for their impression. Encourage any comments – both positive and negative. Meditation, especially for those who have no experience with it, can be quite difficult or/and boring experience and that's fine. Meditation is one of many ways we can practise our mindfulness.

After body scan you can propose diverse kinds of meditation (for example walking meditation – <https://www.coursera.org/learn/mindfulness/supplement/mk9X7/med-lab-2-exercises> or Compassion & Befriending meditation – <https://www.coursera.org/learn/mindfulness/supplement/Aq6Yj/med-lab-5-exercises>). You can also try the speaking exercise suggested below or use some of the alternative methods described in next points.

Speaking exercise – divide participants into couples. Ask them to decide who is person A and who is person B. For 1 minute person A describes everything which is happening right now, everything she notices (for example: I feel something itchy in my toes, my back starts to hurt, I noticed that the light has changed, I have thought coming how difficult and stupid is this exercise, I see that you are smiling, I smell something pleasant, etc). Person A just notices and names what she notices, without judgment or analyzing. Person B is listening without any comment. After one minute they change – person B describes what she notices and person A is listening. Repeat this exercise three times, so three times person A speaks about what she notices for one minute and three times person B speaks about her observations. Then invite participants to discuss this experience in pairs and after that in the whole group. How was the experience for them? How did it change with every round? What did they learn from it?





## b) Mandalas

Another form of meditation or mindfulness practice which brings great effect in our workshops is making mandalas. Before the workshop print various mandalas (you can find them in Internet, for example here: <https://mondaymandala.com/m>, <https://www.justcolor.net/relaxation/coloring-mandalas/>, <https://www.free-mandalas.net/>, <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/arts-culture/mandala>).

Put all mandalas in the middle of the room. Prepare crayons, markers, paints with brushes, chalk. Before starting, tell participants about the concept of mandala.

Mandala has a shape of circle, by many cultures considered the perfect one. Mandalas are said to come from Buddhist tradition. While creating them we focus rather on process than on outcome, in fact many people destroy mandalas when they are finished to underline that everything is temporary. Similar concept of temporarily we can see in kolams – traditional drawing from Tamil Nadu (region in India), where women would draw various shapes in the morning in front of their houses with chalk powder or rice flower. During the day kolams would be destroyed by weather, people and animals and washed away in the evening to give space for next to come in the following morning.

In all those cases process is what counts, not the outcome. Making your own mandala, don't overthink it, don't plan perfect colors, let yourself go, let your hand, your intuition choose, not your mind. Try to start from the outside part of the mandala, slowly coming with coloring into the middle, which will help you to come with your attention from the outside world to your inner world.

Before you start, have a close look at different mandalas in the room. See which one is calling you. Take it, together with tools you want for coloring. Spend some time just watching mandala, noticing different details of it. And when you are ready – start coloring, without thinking. Let yourself be lost in the process.





Ask participants to go through the process in silence. Put relaxing music in the background. Give them enough time and space to get into it.

Mandalas helped me, the author of this scenario, a lot, especially during the time of pandemia. It was my meditation, during which my thoughts could calm down, my feelings got ordered. I proposed mandala workshops in various circumstances, both for women and men and it always surprised me how much people get into it, even those who have never tried before.

After participants finish, create time and space to share their experiences. You can do it in smaller groups or, if there are not that many participants, you can share in the bigger circle. Ask participants how the process was for them, how they feel, what they discover?

**c) Nature**

Nature is a powerful tool for mindfulness. There are several ways you can use nature in this workshop.

You can propose walking meditation (as suggested in point a), but in the forest, instead of the training room.

You can invite participants to think about one question they need an answer for and go for a lonely walk for 30–40 minutes, observing what answer nature has for them. Discuss the experience when they come back. You can also ask them to bring one object from nature which symbolizes their experience, to share it with others.



You can also use poetry and creative writing. Introduce participants the poem of Wisława Szymborska “Possibilities” (Appendix 2). Give every person a copy and read it loudly. Invite participants to go around to nature, find their place in it, discover it with different senses and when they are ready – write their own poem. They can follow the example of the poem, finishing the sentence “I prefer...” or create something completely new. After 40–50 minutes, invite them to come back and share their experience in small groups. Then open the circle for those who want to read their poems. Don’t push anyone, but give enough time to settle and decide.

### 3. Summary

Ask participants about their impression of today's workshop. What did they learn about mindfulness? How can they use it in their daily life? Ask them to fill the evaluation form.

Bibliography (and materials to share with participants after the workshop):

- Websites with mandalas to print: <https://mondaymandala.com/m>, <https://www.justcolor.net/relaxation/coloring-mandalas/>, <https://www.free-mandalas.net/>, <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/arts-culture/mandala>
- Wisława Szymborska, Possibilities
- Coursera course of De-mystifying Mindfulness: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/mindfulness/home/welcome>





## Appendixes

### Appendix 1 – Instruction to body scan meditation

Read it slowly, leaving some time after each instruction:

- Concentrate on all sounds you can hear around. Notice every single noise.
- What are the smells which you feel?
- Pay attention to your skin. What sensations do you feel? Is it cold, hot, itchy, vibrating?
- Feel the chair you are sitting on, the floor under your feet.
- Put your attention on breathing. Feel the air coming in and flowing out.
- Now, put attention on your head. What do you feel in your head?
- Stay a little bit longer with your face. Is there any tension? If yes, let it go.
- Go slowly to your neck. What's going on in this part of your body?
- After the neck, pay attention to your arm. What are the sensations you feel there? Is there any tension?
- Slowly move your attention from the shoulder to the hand, till the end of fingers. First one hand, then the other.
- Go to your chest. What do you notice there?
- Pay attention to your stomach. Is there any tension?
- Go to your back. How is it feeling today?
- Slowly move down, to your legs. Go through one leg and then another, from the top, till the end of your toes.
- Come back to your breathing, notice the air coming in and flowing out.
- Before coming back to us, pay attention to your emotions. How do you feel? Where are those emotions located in your body?
- When you are ready, open your eyes.



## Appendix 2 – Poem of Wisława Szymborska

### Possibilities

I prefer movies.  
I prefer cats.  
I prefer the oaks along the Warta.  
I prefer Dickens to Dostoyevsky.  
I prefer myself liking people  
to myself loving mankind.  
I prefer keeping a needle and thread on hand, just in case.  
I prefer the color green.  
I prefer not to maintain  
that reason is to blame for everything.  
I prefer exceptions.  
I prefer to leave early.  
I prefer talking to doctors about something else.  
I prefer the old fine-lined illustrations.  
I prefer the absurdity of writing poems  
to the absurdity of not writing poems.  
I prefer, where love's concerned, nonspecific anniversaries  
that can be celebrated every day.  
I prefer moralists  
who promise me nothing.  
I prefer cunning kindness to the over-trustful kind.  
I prefer the earth in civvies.





I prefer conquered to conquering countries.  
I prefer having some reservations.  
I prefer the hell of chaos to the hell of order.  
I prefer Grimms' fairy tales to the newspapers' front pages.  
I prefer leaves without flowers to flowers without leaves.  
I prefer dogs with uncropped tails.  
I prefer light eyes, since mine are dark.  
I prefer desk drawers.  
I prefer many things that I haven't mentioned here  
to many things I've also left unsaid.  
I prefer zeroes on the loose  
to those lined up behind a cipher.  
I prefer the time of insects to the time of stars.  
I prefer to knock on wood.  
I prefer not to ask how much longer and when.  
I prefer keeping in mind even the possibility  
that existence has its own reason for being.

Translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

