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Strategies to Strengthen Executive Functions in Adults

O3: Program with specific techniques based on Mindfulness and Meditation



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Taking into consideration the findings of IO1 (handbook on the needs of adult population in relation to the executive function disorders) and IO2 (Compendium of Methods for developing/enhancing/improving executive functions in adult population), the program for improving Executive Functions is developed.

The program will assist adults suffering from executive function disorders or having such symptoms, to improve their competences and functioning and to enhance their employability. In order to improve the functioning of people with EFD it is recommended to improve their time management, working memory, work habits and social skills. Taking into account that cognitive behavioral therapy can help a client to self-monitor thoughts and behavior, and social skills training can help to create appropriate responses in social situations, the partnership produced techniques based on those therapy and training models. It includes exercises focusing on Mindfulness techniques and Meditation and specific exercises for the improvement of three main executive functions: working memory, emotional control and planning.

It is a program that should be followed for a minimum of 30 days daily. Each day the participant should go through at least one Mindfulness exercise and only after completing this, he/she could go on with the other exercises.

In order to assess the level of executive functions of each participant, there are 3 assessment questionnaires that have to be filled in at the beginning of the program and at the end of it, so as to find out any possible improvement.

In the following units, there is a detailed description of the Assessment questionnaires and the Exercises that are included in the Program for the improvement of the 3 executive functions.



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I. EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT

a. Working memory:

Is your memory strong enough?

Check it now!

For each of the given statements indicate a number from 1-5:

- 1. Almost always
- 2. Often
- 3. Sometimes
- 4. Rarely
- 5. Almost never

1. I find myself trying to remember where I have put everyday items, like keys or glasses.
2. I ask other people to remind me of an important task/event.
3. I remember names easily.
4. I tend to forget information that I have just been presented with.
5. I have to replace passwords because I've forgotten the original one.
6. I remember numbers easily.
7. I remember what I did one week ago.
8. I have to ask the other person to repeat a story to me because I can't remember what was said at first.
9. I don't remember what I wanted to say after being interrupted.
10. I have difficulty recalling the name of a person I have met a couple of times.
11. I can't remember what I have to do if I don't use notebooks/ post-its / or reminder apps.
12. I do not remember details easily.



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13. I tend to forget information that I have recently been presented with.
14. I have difficulty remembering phone numbers.
15. I keep remembering the birthdays of friends and relatives.
16. I find myself asking questions like, "What was I about to do next?"
17. I end up double-booking myself because I forgot I had previously made plans with someone else.
18. I have to ask someone to repeat instructions because I can't remember them.
19. I forget giving back a missed call.
20. I have difficulty remembering where I parked my car.



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Instructions for programmer:

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Scoring: Add the numbers of each question. Almost never = 1, Rarely=2 etc.

Reverse scoring: The following questions are scored reversely i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

No of Question: 3, 6, 7, 15

We will need a diagram with the results and the following interpretation

Interpretation:

*1: 20-25 **Very weak memory** – It seems that you have great difficulty in memorizing. You keep forgetting names, duties, important events. You are always looking around for items you use on a daily basis, like your keys or your glasses and asking people in your environment to remind you of your tasks and important things. You can't follow instructions as you can't remember the given order. Your memory evokes great difficulties in your daily life and therefore it is highly recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and memory exercises.*

*2: 26-40 **Weak memory** - It seems that you have difficulty in memorizing. You tend to forget names, duties, important events. You usually find yourself searching for items you use on a daily basis, like your keys or your glasses and asking for repetition of something just being said. In general your memory evokes several difficulties to your daily life, so it is highly recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and memory exercises, to improve your memory.*

*3: 41- 60 **Memory of medium level** – It seems that in general you don't have difficulties in memorizing names, numbers or information. You can follow instructions and have in mind the most important events. Though, sometimes you may need to write down deadlines or get reminders, as you may have missed/ forgotten some information or data. It would be helpful for you to go through our Mindfulness Program and memory exercises, to improve your memory even more.*

*4: 61-80 **Good memory** - It seems that your memory is at a high level. You almost never forget information, instructions, names, numbers, or lose your personal items. You are the person the others go to, to remind them of important dates and data. Keep up following our Mindfulness Program and memory exercises.*

*5: 81-100 **Very good memory** - It seems that your memory level is very sharp. You never forget information, instructions, names, numbers, or lose your personal items.*



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You are the one who always remembers important dates, birthdays and information and others come to you for reminders. Even though your memory is sharp, you can get advantage of our Mindfulness Program and memory exercises.

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b. **Planning:**

Do you think you are a good planner? Can you organize your daily duties and be successful in delivering on time? Find it out

For each of the given statements indicate a number from 1-5:

- 1. Disagree
- 2. Rather Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Rather Agree
- 5. Agree

1. I usually finish the tasks I start successfully.
2. I easily organize my tasks or activities.
3. I take care of personal items and do not lose them.
4. I forget aspects of daily activities (e.g., return phone calls, pay bills)
5. I anticipate correctly the time needed to carry out an activity.
6. I set my priorities correctly and easily.
7. I always manage to catch trains and buses, and am hardly, if ever, late.
8. My projects/assignments mostly get completed a day before required.
9. I often make last-minute plans.
10. I have a clear idea of where I should be (and when) and I am seldom late for appointments.
11. I am always ready with a plan "B" so that in case things do go wrong, at least I don't have to waste my time thinking as to what to do.
12. I adhere to deadlines and people would seldom find me rushing at the last minute to get a job done.
13. I rarely accomplish the tasks I'm working on in due time
14. When I make plans, I always stick with them.



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15. There is very little going on in my life which is not a part of my plans.
16. I like being organized and I like to know exactly where and how my belongings are kept.
17. I always plan my day ahead. I even make room for contingencies in my daily plan.
18. When I am busy, I find it difficult to remain organized.
19. I can't seem to find the time to do all the things that I want.
20. I often have a hard time remembering appointments or obligations.



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Instructions for programmer:

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Scoring: Add the numbers of each question. Disagree = 1, Rather disagree =2 etc.

Reverse scoring: The following questions are scored reversely i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

No of Question: 4, 9, 13, 18, 19, 20

We will need a diagram (bar?) with the results and the following interpretation

Interpretation:

1: 20-25 Very low level of planning – It seems that you have great difficulty in planning your tasks. You are used to miss deadlines, be late to appointments, postpone tasks and forget aspects of daily activities. It is highly recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and planning activities, so as to get better organized.

2: 26-40 Low level of planning - It seems that you have difficulty in planning your tasks. You tend to miss deadlines, forget aspects of daily activities, be late to appointments and probably postpone tasks. We recommend you to go through our Mindfulness Program and planning activities, so as to be better organized.

3: 41- 60 Medium level of planning – It seems that in general you keep deadlines and are able to handle your activities, though there are times that you may find yourself being late to an appointment or in delivering a task. It would be helpful for you to go through our Mindfulness Program and planning activities, so as to become even more organized.

4: 61-80 High level of planning - It seems that you are a good planner. You usually set priorities, organize your tasks and follow your plans successfully. Keep up following our Mindfulness Program and planning activities.

5: 81-100 Very high level of planning - It seems that your organizational level is really high. You are a person who sticks to your plans and always keeps up with deadlines. You are almost never late to appointments or delivering tasks. You are the person anyone could trust in matters of organization. Keep up following our Mindfulness Program and planning activities.



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c. **Emotional control:**

Find out how well you control your emotions.

For each of the given statements indicate a number from 1-5:

- 1. Disagree
- 2. Rather Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Rather Agree
- 5. Agree

1. It's hard to be patient when people criticize me.
2. If my carefully made plans have to be changed because of other people, it annoys me.
3. If people interrupt me while I'm trying to do something, it doesn't bother me.
4. I don't usually react impulsively.
5. I get frustrated with people too quickly.
6. When I have to wait in a long line for something, I don't get restless and fidgety.
7. When I'm feeling tense, even small things get on my nerves.
8. I can control my emotions easily when being assessed.
9. When something upsets me, I usually get over it quite soon.
10. I don't let myself get depressed over little things.
11. I rarely lose my patience.
12. I have more ups and downs in mood than most people I know.
13. I rarely feel tense.
14. I switch almost instantly and without apparent reasons from one emotion to another.
15. If I am interrupted when I'm doing something important, I often react in an aggressive manner.
16. When I'm angry or upset I succeed to restore my calm easily.



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17. I tend to feel vulnerable in the face of other people's criticism.
18. I am short-tempered.
19. Even when someone is slow to understand what I'm explaining, it is easy for me to be patient.
20. In some circumstances I have found myself behaving in an impulsive manner.



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Instructions for programmer:

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Scoring: Add the numbers of each question. Disagree = 1, Rather disagree =2 etc.

Reverse scoring: The following questions are scored reversely i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

No of Question: 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19

We will need a diagram (bar?) from 1-5 showing the results with the following interpretation

Interpretation:

1: 20-25 Very high emotional control – It seems that you can control your emotions at high level and you never show impulsive behavior or sudden outbursts and mood swings.

2: 26-40 High emotional control – It seems that you have high control over your emotions and your reactions, and you almost never show impulsive behavior and mood swings.

3:41- 60 Medium emotional control - It seems that in general you can handle your emotions, although sometimes you may show impulsive behavior or mood swings. It is recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and practice mindfulness and emotional control exercises for improvement.

4: 61-80 Low emotional control - It seems that you face difficulties in controlling your emotions, and you quite often have impulsive reactions, outbursts or mood swings and you may exaggerate emotional manifestations. It is highly recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and practice mindfulness and emotional control exercises for improvement.

5: 81-100 Very low emotional control - It seems that you can't keep control over your emotions, and most of the times you have impulsive reactions, outbursts or mood swings, you feel unable to hide your behavioural manifestations of emotion and you exaggerate emotional manifestations. It is highly recommended to go through our Mindfulness Program and practice mindfulness and emotional control exercises for improvement.



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II. Exercises combining Mindfulness and Meditation techniques

Short description of the process

Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing our attention to experiences occurring in the present moment. To rest in other words, in the here and now, fully engaged with whatever we're doing in the moment. Mindfulness is an inherent, natural human ability that can be developed and enhanced through the practice of meditation and other training.

In order to experience the benefits of Mindfulness it is necessary to practice it for at least 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week for about 4 weeks. Therefore, a set of very short mindfulness - based exercises has been developed that last no more than approximately 15 minutes in total to practice during the course of a day.

Practicing these mindfulness exercises are a prerequisite in order to proceed in practicing all other executive function enhancing exercises.

After having practicing mindfulness exercises (at least one per day) then you can choose specific exercises for working memory, planning and/or emotional control to go through. Ideally, each day you should practice for 15 minutes mindfulness exercises (2-3 in the day) and one exercise among the specific exercises in memory, planning or emotional control. Make a plan so as to include in your daily agenda 2-3 mindfulness' exercises and in your weekly agenda 2 exercises of each executive function (memory, planning and emotional control), i.e. Monday and Wednesday practice memory, Tuesday and Friday emotional control etc.

So let's start meditation!

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| PRACTICE 1 | " Gratitude reflection" |
| WHEN | Every day In the morning after waking up (maybe before getting up from |



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| | bed) or anytime of the day |
| DURATION | 2 min and 40 sec |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a comfortable position and gently close your eyes. 2. Take a few slow (pause) deep breaths, so that you relax as much as possible (pause 40 seconds) 3. Let your awareness move to your immediate environment: all the things you can smell, (pause 2 seconds) taste, (pause 2 seconds) touch, (pause 2 seconds) see, (pause 2 seconds) hear. (pause 2 seconds) 4. Say to yourself: "For this, (pause) I am grateful." (pause 3 seconds) 5. Now, bring to mind those people in your life to whom you are close: your friends, (pause) family, (pause) partner (pause)... Say to yourself, "For this, (pause) I am grateful." 6. Next, turn your attention onto yourself: (pause) you are a unique individual, blessed with imagination, (pause) the ability to communicate, (pause) to learn from the past and plan for the future,(pause) to overcome any pain you may be experiencing. (pause) 7. Say to yourself: "For this, (pause) I am grateful." 8. Finally, rest in the realization that life is a precious gift. That you have been born into a period of immense prosperity, (pause) that you have the gift of health, culture, and access to spiritual teachings. (pause) 9. Say to yourself: "For this, (pause)I am grateful." 10. Now, you can start or continue with your day as you wish, with this feeling of immense gratitude in your heart |



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| PRACTICE 2a | “Myself in the mirror 1” |
| WHEN | 1st day of practice (Monday) and every Monday |
| POSITION | Standing |
| DURATION | 1 min and 15 sec |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <p>Before leaving home in the morning, stand in front of a mirror.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a deep breath (pause 2 seconds) exhale slowly and look at your face in the mirror (pause 3 seconds) 2. Observe your facial characteristics, (pause 2 seconds) your expression (pause 3 seconds) 3. Bring in mind a person you love (pause 2 seconds) 4. Think that you have that person in front of you ,and that he or she is looking at you lovingly through the mirror (pause 5 seconds) 5. Now, observe your face again. 6. Pay attention to your eyes, how they have lightened up or how a smile probably, is formed on your lips (pause 3 seconds) 7. Observe the changes (pause 3 seconds) 8. Keep the emotion caused by the image of your beloved person, and start your day with the thought that you have as much love as you need to deal with everything and everyone you meet on your way... with a smile. |



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| PRACTICE 2b | “Myself in the mirror 2” |
| WHEN | Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday |
| POSITION | Standing |
| DURATION | 1 min and 10 sec |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <p>Before leaving home in the morning, stand in front of a mirror.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a deep breath, (pause 2 seconds) exhale slowly and look at your face in the mirror. (pause 2 seconds) 2. Observe your facial characteristics (pause 2 seconds) your expression (pause 3 seconds) 3. Look at yourself with love. You have your best friend in front of you. If necessary, change your gaze so as to reflect the affinity you feel for the person you have in front of you. (pause 2 seconds) 4. Say calmly and with a full heart “I love you” to your reflection in the mirror. (pause 2 seconds) 5. With the same calmness and peace, say “ I love you” as many times as you wish and notice how your face and your emotional condition change. (pause 5 seconds) 6. Start your day by keeping the memory of these moments and this mood as much as you can. |



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| PRACTICE 3 | “Mindful Breathing” |
| WHEN | Monday to Friday just before starting work / lessons etc. Saturday and Sunday before leaving home or any time of the day |
| POSITION | Sitting in an upright position with the back held up straight but not stiff and the soles of your feet placed firmly on the floor / crossed legged on the floor / in a lotus position |
| DURATION | 3 minute and 30 seconds on the 1st week + 1 minute each week |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit comfortably in a relaxed manner with your legs parallel and the soles of your feet firmly on the floor. (pause 2 seconds) 2. Keep your back straight but not stiff and put your hands gently in front of you, on your lap. (pause 2 seconds) 3. Gently close your eyes and focus on your breath (pause 3 seconds) 4. Notice how you inhale and exhale without trying to change anything. Just watch how the air enters and goes out of your body. (pause 4 seconds) 5. Bring your full attention to noticing each in-breath as it enters your nostrils, travels down to your lungs and causes your belly to expand. And notice each out-breath as your belly contracts and air moves up through the lungs back up through the mouth. 6. Follow with your attention the course of your breathing. Feel the subtle cool sensation in your nostrils as you inhale. (pause 3 seconds) and observe the warmer sensation of the air in your mouth as you exhale. (pause 3 seconds) |



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7. Allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm. Don't think. Don't judge. For a few seconds keep breathing just like you did anyway... and observe. (pause 15 seconds)
8. Now, exhale making a whoosh sound. (pause 4 seconds)
Close your mouth and inhale quietly on a mental count of four (4). ...1, 2, 3, 4 Hold your breath for a count of seven (7) ...2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and exhale completely through your mouth making a whoosh sound to a count of eight (8). 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. This is one (1) breath. Let's do three (3) more cycles.
9. Inhale through your nose 1, 2, 3, 4. Hold 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Exhale making a whoosh noise through your mouth 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
10. Once again, Inhale through your nose 1, 2, 3, 4. Hold 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Exhale making a whoosh noise through your mouth 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
11. And one last time: Inhale through your nose 1, 2, 3, 4. Hold 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Exhale making a whoosh noise 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
12. When you are ready, take your time to open your slowly (pause 2 seconds) and carry on with the rest of your day as usual.



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| PRACTICE 4 | Mindful observation |
| WHEN | Anytime at least twice a week |
| DURATION | 3 minutes |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon. 2. When you are ready press the start button to start the timer. 3. Focus on watching it for a few minutes. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows. 4. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time. 5. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence. 6. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world. |



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| PRACTICE 5 | “Body scan Relaxation” |
| WHEN | 5 times a week /At night before sleep |
| POSITION | Lying in bed |
| DURATION | 5 minutes and 10 seconds |
| DESCRIPTION (the content of the audio meditation) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lie down on your bed and find a comfortable position laying on your back with your arms put loosely on the sides and your legs put parallel without touching each other. (pause 2 seconds) 2. Gently close your eyes and relax (pause 2 seconds) 3. You have nowhere to go. Leave behind the day that has just passed and don't bring tomorrow in mind. Stay in the “now” (pause) In this moment you offer yourself the gift of relaxation. You deserve it. (pause 2 seconds) Let's begin with taking a deep breath filling your belly with air as you inhale (pause) and emptying it completely as you exhale.(pause) As I count from 1 to 4, start inhaling slowly. When I reach 4 you should have filled your belly completely with air. Next, start exhaling, as I count from 1 to 6 and emptying your belly completely by the time I reach 6. 4. Let's begin: Inhale : 1, 2, 3, 4. Exhale: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 5. Again: Inhale 2, 3, 4.... exhale 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 6. One last time. Inhale 2, 3, 4 ... exhale 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 7. Now, give yourself some time to observe the sensations on your body. (pause 4 seconds) |



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8. Check if you feel some discomfort anywhere. Adjust your posture appropriately ...if it helps. Compare the sensation you feel at the point of the discomfort, with the sensation in another point where there is no disturbance. (pause 4 seconds)
9. Pay attention to the places where your body touches the mattress and see how this sensation differs compared to the sensations in the rest of your body. (pause 4 seconds)
10. Now, turn your attention to your toes and wiggle them a little. (pause 3 seconds)
11. Feel a relaxing energy **moving slowly** through them and towards your soles, covering your feet completely and moving on towards your ankles relaxing completely every part (pause 2 seconds)
12. Feel the energy moving up through your shins and calves relaxing them (pause 2 seconds) Now your shins and calves are completely relaxed. (pause 2 seconds)
13. Turn your attention to your thighs. Feel the energy penetrating them and relaxing them fully. (pause 2 seconds)
14. Now, feel the energy moving up to your waist (pause 2 seconds) and pelvis. Feel them relaxing. (pause 2 seconds)
15. Relax your belly and feel the internal organs inside the stomach area relaxing completely. (pause 5 seconds)
16. Feel the energy moving up towards your chest. Feel your chest relaxing fully (pause 2 seconds) Relax your lungs and feel your heart beating rhythmically. (pause 2 seconds)
17. Relax your shoulders. (pause) Feel your shoulders sinking down (pause 3 seconds)
18. Feel the energy moving gradually from your shoulders to your fingertips penetrating and relaxing completely your arms, forearms and hands. (pause 2 seconds)



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19. Focus on your throat. Feel your throat muscles relaxing..
(pause 2 seconds)
20. Relax your jaw and your tongue in your mouth. (pause 2 seconds) Relax the muscles around your mouth, letting your lips half- open. (pause 2 seconds)
21. Relax your nose, (pause) your cheeks (pause) and your ears
(pause 2 seconds)
22. Relax the area around your eyes (pause). Feel your eyelids heavy and your eyes completely relaxed.
23. Turn your attention to your forehead. (pause 2 seconds) Feel the subtle relaxing energy penetrating it, smoothing out every wrinkle and allowing a feeling of complete relaxation in the area. (pause 2 seconds)
24. Feel the energy moving up to the top of your head. (pause) Pay attention to a subtle vibration that you can feel there maybe. Feel the top of your head completely relaxed.
(pause 2 seconds)
25. Now your whole body is completely relaxed. You are so relaxed that you feel like laying on a cloud or maybe so light ... like not having a body (pause 2 seconds) Enjoy this feeling of absolute relaxation for a while. (pause 5 seconds)
26. Now you can allow yourself enjoy a restful and calm sleep.



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III. SPECIFIC EXERCISES

a. Working memory

INSTRUCTIONS (for participants): **Choose the exercise you want to go through**

- Tratak
- Matching Pairs
- Flash Cards.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| EXERCISE 1 | Tratak - Concentration to a candle flame |
| WHEN | Any day – only after concluding one daily mindfulness practice. |
| TIME NEEDED | (3 minutes focus on the candle flame + 2 minutes (keeping the flame on the mind's eye) 5 minutes in total (the participant can add time if necessary)) |
| Script /Audio | <p><u>SCRIPT</u>: You'll need to train both your body and your mind to meditate, therefore it is better to start with short sessions, 3-5 minutes in length. You can repeat these short sessions throughout the day. Gradually you can increase the duration of the exercise to longer intervals of time. After several weeks of 3-minutes meditations for example, increase the time by 3 more minutes, then 5 minutes, etc.</p> <p>Choose a quiet room. Find a place where you won't be disturbed during the exercise.</p> <p>Dim the lights and remove any distractions by turning off your</p> |



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phone and/ or any other devices that may interrupt the exercise.

Sit comfortably in a posture that is most convenient for you.

Place a lit candle or the video/gif at eye level.

AUDIO**: Start by taking a few long, deep breaths to relax; Bring your attention to the candle. Study the candle's form. Gaze at the candle (or the image of it) and let the flame occupy your mind. Let yourself become absorbed by the light.

You may notice that your thoughts naturally begin to wander. Each time you catch your mind drifting, just redirect your attention to the flame. A great way to deepen a candle meditation is to imagine that you are breathing the light of the candle in and out of yourself. Just keep your eyes fixed on the candle flame, and allow your natural breathing rhythm to fill your awareness. In such a situation, your brain receives no new information to process. It is the nerves of your eyes that send signals to your brain. But in this case, no signal is sent. As a result, images beside the candle begin to fade away from your vision. During the experience, while your eyes are open, you only see the flame and nothing else as long as you watch only the flame. To achieve this, requires both mental stillness and the physical stillness of your eyes. As soon as you move your eyes around, your brain is flooded with new sensory input and you will instantly be able to see the room around you again. Remain still and focused on the candle, and you will slip back into this state of profoundly deep meditation quite quickly.

After 3 minutes: Now, close your eyes and try to hold the image of the candle in your mind's eye for 2 more minutes. If you lose the image at any time, open your eyes, look at the candle again and repeat. Do that for 3-5 more minutes.

**AUDIO: The text that is next to word AUDIO is the text that you should provide audio records of your voice reading the text provided.



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| EXERCISE 2 | Matching pairs |
| WHEN | Any day only after concluding the daily mindfulness practice |
| GENERAL DESCRIPTION (for programmer) | <p>A set of 20 cards facing down appears on screen. These constitute 10 pairs of cards. Each selected pair is automatically turned over. When the selected cards form a “matching pair” they remain turned over. If they do not form a “matching pair”, they turn facing down again.</p> <p>The participants will have to select the cards one by one randomly in the beginning, in order to match the pairs. After a while, they will be able to make their selections of cards using their memory. The aim is to find all matching pairs as soon as possible.</p> |
| SCRIPT (Instructions for participants) | <p>Try to find all matching pairs as quickly as possible. The timer starts as soon as you select the first card. (or when you press the “start” button) When you are ready, start by selecting one card and then another one, so as to create a pair. If the selected cards form a matching pair, they will stay turned over, otherwise they will turn facing down again. The exercise is complete when all matching pairs are found. (we could give them an example/demo before starting)</p> |



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| EXERCISE 3 | Flash cards |
| WHEN | Any day only after concluding the daily mindfulness practice |
| SCRIPT (Instructions for participants) | Find the matching flash - cards Each matching pair of flash cards will appear on your screen for a few seconds. You will have to try and remember their positions. When the "Start" button appears press it and begin selecting cards in pairs so as to match them. |



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b. Emotional Management

INSTRUCTIONS: Choose the exercise you want to go through

- First Aid Breathing
- Reflection
- Emotion Recognition

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| EXERCISE 1 | “First Aid Breathing” |
| WHEN | Any day only after concluding the suggested daily mindfulness practice |
| SCRIPT (Instructions for participants – audio or written before the start of the exercise) | When you are ready to start press the button. Breathe with the shape you see on your screen. When the time stops, check how you feel and repeat the exercise if you feel it is necessary. Let's start. |



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| EXERCISE 2 | “Reflection” |
| WHEN | Any day – only after doing daily mindfulness practice. |
| Emotional trigger /image / scenario | <p>1. Love https://unsplash.com/photos/BELycSEckC_c</p> <p>You are in a happy relationship with your partner for 10 years. However, he/she is now confessing to you that he/she doesn't love you anymore and that he/she is leaving you to move in with the person he/she is having an affair with for the last 6 months.</p> |
| | <p>2. Freedom https://unsplash.com/photos/T5roX1jajzU</p> <p>The court has ruled against you and you have to go in prison Nobody can bail you out and you will have to stay imprisoned for at least 1 year.</p> |
| | <p>3. Respect https://unsplash.com/photos/zQS7logtYEA</p> <p>You have a broken arm and someone on the bus demands that you give up your seat for them because they noticed that you've been “occupying your seat for too long” and there are no other seats available.</p> |



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| | <p>4. Be needed https://unsplash.com/photos/75nbwHfDsnY</p> <p>So far you have completed several demanding projects at work and the project manager is very satisfied with your performance. Nevertheless, they proposed your dismissal because they believe that your expertise will not be needed in the future projects that the company will undertake.</p> |
| | <p>5. Included https://unsplash.com/photos/3BK_DyRVf90</p> <p>You find out that your work colleagues have arranged to meet after work on Friday for some drinks and they have not asked you to join them.</p> |
| | <p>6. Autonomy https://unsplash.com/photos/wrTEeKJSP8A</p> <p>Your boss insists that you contact the customer to apologize for not delivering products on time and take responsibility, although it was another department's fault. You suggested an alternative solution that would both protect your professional image and the company's credibility but he does not want to listen. He even implied that if you don't do as told, your position is at stake.</p> |
| | <p>7. Safety https://unsplash.com/photos/rRgO49i8w2s</p> <p>The building is on fire and you are trapped in the elevator. The fire brigade has finally arrived but it takes too long for them to</p> |



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| | get you out and you can hardly breathe. |
| | <p>8. Be in control</p> <p>https://unsplash.com/photos/l1sqXJXBgd0</p> <p>You are in the car and your friend is driving dangerously. You ask her to stop the car but she ignores your requests.</p> |
| | <p>9. Be treated fairly</p> <p>https://unsplash.com/photos/PUyuhpHr9Z4</p> <p>You are certain that you are next for promotion at work, because you are a valuable employee who has proved his/her efficiency for over 7 years. When the time comes though, it is announced that your assistant who has very little experience on the job is getting the position.</p> |
| | <p>10. Peacefulness</p> <p>https://unsplash.com/photos/JKMnm3CIncw</p> <p>It is late in the evening and you have just returned home. It was a stressful day at work and all you need is to relax and take some rest. Your next-door neighbors are having a party. The music is loud and the noise is unbearable.</p> |
| Questions | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you feel?2. Why do you feel this way?3. How would you react to the situation?4. Is this the most suitable reaction in your opinion?5. Why?6. Would you prefer to have different feelings about the situation? |



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| | <p>7. Why?</p> <p>8. (If you would prefer to have different feelings) What do you believe you should do in order to change the way you feel?</p> <p>9. Would you be willing to do it?</p> <p>10. (If not) why?</p> |
| <p>SCRIPT (Instructions for participants – audio or written before the start of the exercise)</p> | <p>Read the scenario described below, try to understand it and put yourself into it. Suppose it is true and happening right now at this moment. A set of questions will appear on screen for you to answer to yourself (you don't have to provide any answers to the system) Take as much time as you need to answer each one of them. After answering a question, you can press the “next button” to proceed to the next one. When you are ready press “start” to begin the exercise.</p> |



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| EXERCISE 3 | “Emotion Recognition” |
| WHEN | Any day – only after doing the daily mindfulness practice |
| Basic emotion: Fear | <p>Emotion message: “You are in danger!”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking through a dark park in the middle of the night. 2. Having to undergo a risky surgery. 3. Being approached by a drunk while walking in the subway at night. <p>Physical sensations: Heart starts racing</p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): Urge to avoid the situation</p> |
| Basic emotion: Anger | <p>Emotion message: “You are being treated unfairly!”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Someone jumps the queue in front of you at the supermarket. 2. Someone accuses you of something you didn't do. 3. Someone is being rude to you and treating you disrespectfully. <p>Physical sensations: Hot and tense</p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): Urge to confront</p> |



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| <p>Basic emotion: Sadness</p> | <p>Emotion message: "You have lost/missed something important"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed a test. 2. Leaving the flat where you had so many happy memories. 3. Your son/daughter is leaving home for the first time to go for studies to another city. <p>Physical sensations: Without energy, tired</p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): Urge to be alone</p> |
| <p>Basic emotion: Guilt</p> | <p>Emotion message: "You have done something wrong!"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shouted at someone when you were angry. 2. Started smoking again after quitting for 10 years. 3. Leaving your 2 year old child <p>Physical sensations: Agitated</p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): self- criticism</p> |
| <p>Basic emotion: Joy/ Happiness</p> | <p>Emotion message: "You have found something important to you!"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a new friend that you have a lot in common with. 2. Landed a dream job. 3. Passing the exams. <p>Physical sensations: Motivated</p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): Urge to make plans.</p> |
| <p>Basic emotion: Contentment</p> | <p>Emotion message: "Everything is alright!"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lying in a sunny garden. 2. Having a walk at the beach. |



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| | <p>3. Watching the sunset</p> <p>Physical sensations: <i>Calm</i></p> <p>Behaviour (urges /actions): <i>Satisfied to stay where you are for a while longer</i></p> |
| <p>SCRIPT</p> <p>(Instructions for participants – audio or written before the start of the exercise)</p> | <p>(Participants will be given each time, just one piece of information from a category selected by the system. They will be then given 6 options from the remaining categories to choose the correct one). –instruction for the programmer</p> <p>Click to select one statement from each of the category to match the one you are given below. The given categories are: 1.Basic emotion, 2. Emotion message, 3. Situation, 4. Physical sensation & 5.Behaviour (urge/action). For example you'll have to match the given basic emotion with the appropriate situation or behavior or you will be given the behaviour to be matched with the correct basic emotion, emotion message, situation and physical sensation etc.</p> <p><i>*OR IF DRAG AND DROP EXERCISE</i></p> <p>Select one statement from each category (1.Basic emotion, 2. Emotion message, 3. Situation, 4. Physical sensation & 5.Behaviour/ action) that matches in your opinion the one you have been given. Drag and drop it to the space provided to group all statements that match.</p> |



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c. Planning

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INSTRUCTIONS: Participants will have to complete **daily at least TWO exercises** (of their choice) **from the three suggested below. The exercise “PLAN” should be done everyday.** (i.e. “PLAN” and “PRIORITIZE” or “PLAN” and “DELEGATE”), **AFTER** they practice the suggested daily mindfulness practices.

| EXECUTIVE FUNCTION | TIME MANAGEMENT | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| EXERCISE 1 | PRIORITIZE | |
| Content 1 | <p style="text-align: center;">MANAGE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Important and urgent</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. crises 2. pressing problems 3. deadline driven projects | <p style="text-align: center;">FOCUS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Important and not urgent</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. long range planning 2. recreation 3. relationship building |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">MINIMIZE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not Important but urgent</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. interruptions 2. meetings 3. reports | <p style="text-align: center;">AVOID</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not important or urgent</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. trivia 2. distractions 3. time wasters |



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| <p>Content 2</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">MANAGE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Important and urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cybersecurity breach and hacks ● Natural disasters ● Product recalls ● Heart attack ● Project deadline expires today ● Pick up your children from school | <p style="text-align: center;">FOCUS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Important and not urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budgeting ● Organising summer holidays in February ● Buy a new house ● New areas of investment research ● Meeting with friends ● Plan a medical check up |
| <p>Script</p> <p>(audio or written instructions for the participants)</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">MINIMIZE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not Important but urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hand in the weekly report ● Reply to emails marked as “urgent” ● Answer phone calls while working on something important ● Being asked to see an unexpected visitor ● Being interrupted by a colleague asking for help. ● Friend asking for your help with an unplanned chore <p style="text-align: center;">AVOID</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not important or urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unnecessary meetings ● Superfluous emails ● Social media posting ● Watching Tv ● Gossiping ● Playing video games | |



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| EXERCISE 2 | PLAN |
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| SCRIPT (instructions for the participants) | Use the planners / calendars to organise your daily, weekly, monthly and yearly tasks and appointments. Add colour to the cells if necessary and use the same colour for similar tasks to organise them visually. You can set email notifications for important events /tasks if you wish to. |
| Daily planner example | see attachment Daily_Planner.jpg |
| Weekly planner example | see attachment weekly_planner.jpg |
| Monthly planner example | see attachment Monthly_Planner.jpg |
| Yearly planner example | see attachment 2019_year_on_a_page.pdf |



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| EXERCISE 3 | DELEGATION |
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| <p>EXERCISE</p> <p>“DELEGATION STEPS”</p> <p>Put in the right order</p> | <p>Delegation Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the task Firstly you have to consider whether the particular task is suitable for delegation. Confirm that in your mind. 2. Select the individual or team After deciding that the task can be delegated, you have to consider the reasons for delegating to this particular person or team. Think what everyone is going to gain from it. 3. Assess ability and training needs Review if the person or team you chose is capable of doing the task. Ensure they understand what needs to be done. 4. Explain the reasons Explain the reasons for delegating the job or responsibility and why you selected them. State its importance and relevance. 5. State required results What must be achieved? Clarify understanding by getting feedback from the delegatee(s). How will the task success be measured? 6. Consider resources required What is required to complete the task? Consider people, |



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| | <p>location, premises, equipment, money, materials, other related activities and services.</p> <p>7. Agree deadlines</p> <p>When must the job be finished? Or if an ongoing duty, when are the review dates? When are the reports due? And if the task is complex and has parts or stages, what are the priorities?</p> <p>8. Support and communicate</p> <p>Who else needs to know about the job? Involve delegatee(s) in considering so they can see beyond the issue at hand.</p> <p>9. Feedback on results</p> <p>Finally, it is essential to let delegatee(s) know how they are doing, and whether they have achieved their aims. If they have not, you must review with them why things did not go to plan and deal with the problems. Absorb the consequences of failure, and pass on the credit for success.</p> |
| <p>Script of “Delegation Steps” exercise</p> | <p>Drag and Drop exercise.</p> <p>Put Delegation Steps in the right order. After finishing the exercise you can click on each delegation step to learn more about it.</p> |
| <p>EXERCISE 2</p> <p>“THE EFFECTIVE DELEGATOR”</p> <p>Click to select all correct answers</p> | <p>An effective delegator:</p> <p>communicates all facts about the task.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicates all information about him/her. • communicates all skills that make them a good delegator. <p>knows skills, talents and experience levels of people</p> |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• knows ideas, philosophy and religious beliefs of people• knows private data, goals and personal aspirations of people. <p>is comfortable sharing and assigning authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is comfortable sharing personal information with delegates• is comfortable sharing his /her opinion about the delegatee. <p>allows delegates to work independently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allows delegates to work inadequately• allows delegates to work closely with them <p>sets achievable expectations and provide the necessary resources for the delegatee to succeed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sets hourly breaks and provide the necessary recreational activities for the delegatee to succeed• sets high expectations and provide the necessary criticism for the delegatee to succeed <p>encourages delegates to use their initiative when completing a task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourages delegates to use their imagination when completing a task• encourages delegates to use their friends' support when completing a task. <p>provides positive feedback on a regular basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides psychological support on a regular basis.• provides new set of instructions on a regular basis. <p>gives full recognition to the delegates for their performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• gives no feedback to the delegates for their |
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| | <p>performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• gives written reprimand to the delegates for their performance |
| <p>Script of “the effective delegator” exercise</p> <p>(instructions for the participants)</p> | <p>Click to select the phrases that describe attributes of an effective delegator</p> |



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APPENDIX A

HANDBOOK