

Transcript: Mindfulness of a Leaf

Health Care Provider:

This exercise will be a way to practice mindfulness by exploring a leaf with your senses. Often times this is done with a leaf from a common tree or bush, which is a great object to practice with; but if there are no leaves around, a small rock, stick, blade of grass, or flower could work as well. Take a moment to find a leaf or other natural object that can fit on the palm of your hand. Get in a comfortable position to rest while you explore this leaf. As with all mindfulness exercises, when your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to exploring the object.

Hold the object in the palm of your hand. Take a moment to examine this small piece of nature, trying to focus on the visual features you notice rather than judgments about the object, such as “this is ugly,” or “beautiful,” or “misshapen.”

Can you notice the weight of the object in your palm? Can you feel where the object makes contact with your palm?

Explore the edges of the object. What do you notice?

Pay attention to the colors you see in the object. You might bring it close to your eyes or further away, getting different perspectives on this object. How do the colors change from one part of the object to another? And how does light affect the object?

Explore any differences between the front and back of the object.

Explore the texture of the object in your fingers. What do you notice? Is it rough, smooth? Bumpy? Hard or soft?

Does this leaf, or rock or other natural object make any sounds when you move it with your fingers? Does it have a smell?

As you come to end this exercise, recognize how much you noticed about that object that you would not have otherwise paid attention to. Reflect on how this mindful approach to exploring this object might extend to other areas of your life. If you were mindful like this in other aspects of your day today, what might you notice in your relationships, your work, your hobbies, your surroundings, or your body that you would otherwise miss? As you go about your business today, take moments to really explore your senses in the present moment.