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**Strategies for**

**Establishing Well Being**

**Three Good Things:**

***Based on the work of Martin Seligman, PhD, University of Pennsylvania***

A research based method for reducing depression and building happiness. Seligman recommends practicing this exercise daily for one week. He notes he rarely needs to suggest to people they do it for a longer period, as they naturally do this on their own. It involves writing down three good things that went well from your day. Also writing down what role you feel you had in making these things happen. This is most effective when undertaken within two hours of going into your sleep cycle for the day.

**Informal mindfulness strategies:**

Mindfulness is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique. The purpose is to assist you in keeping your mind from wandering to distracting, defeating or worrisome thoughts that are keeping you from being present in the moment.

There are a variety of opportunities for practicing informal mindfulness (as opposed to mindfulness meditation), including:

* Taking a few deep breaths from the diaphragm throughout your day, focusing on the flow of your breath
* Spend time in nature with focused attention on all that is around you
* Intentionally pause before you move into your next meeting or task, and observe the sights and sounds surrounding you.
* Ask yourself what you are feeling a few times a day. You don’t need to fix difficult feelings just be aware of them.
* Take a brief walk and be aware of your feet carrying you and the sensations experienced by your feet as they move.

**Kind Attention:**

***Taken from the work of Amit Sood, MD, Mayo Medical Center***

This exercise involves attending with compassion and acceptance. It involves silently wishing someone well. The recommendation is to practice this with the first 20 people you see/talk to each day. It brings you positive energy, reduces social anxiety and sets the conditions for positive interactions with those around you.

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**Gratitude:**

***There are several different opportunities to practice gratitude. Choose one or more.***

The intent of these exercises is to purposely call attention to positive people and experiences in your life. Since our default thinking mode tends to be on the negative, it does require some intention and practice to shift to positive thinking.

* Think of five things/people you are grateful for every day upon rising from sleep.
* Keep a gratitude journal where you make note in writing of the things you are grateful for each day.
* On a regular basis, make a point of telling someone you are grateful for them or something they have done.
* Write a letter of gratitude to someone who has had an important influence on your life. If you choose to, send it to this individual or read it to them

**Higher Meaning:**

The intent of this exercise is to assist you in keeping an open mind to the potential opportunities and gains within situations that, at first glance, appear to be problems. It involves taking a disappointing or frustrating situation, and the considering the possible good that can come from it. For example, I once left my purse in a taxi cab on my way to the airport just as I was starting out for a two week trip. Thankfully, I was able to retrieve it. I purposely looked for higher meaning. I found it as I considered how much more vigilant I would be in keeping track of my belongings for the remainder of the trip, based on this experience.

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