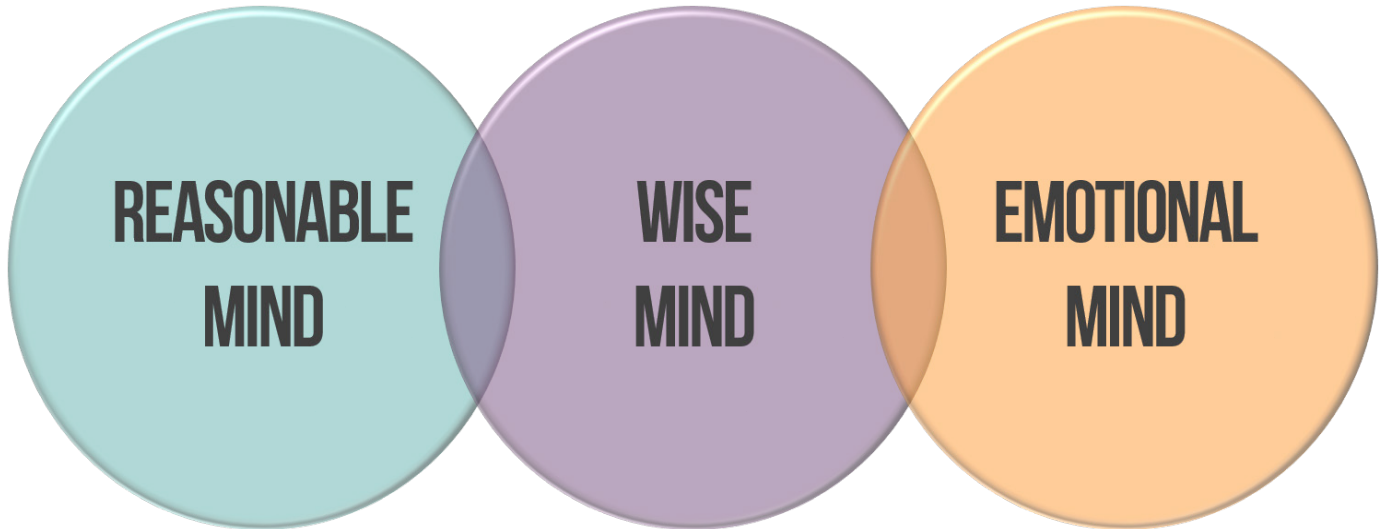


LEARNING TO BE MINDFUL: WHAT & HOW SKILLS



WHAT SKILLS

OBSERVE

Notice your experience

DESCRIBE

Place words on your experience

PARTICIPATE

Be fully present in your experience

HOW SKILLS

NONJUDGMENTALLY

Notice your judgments, stick to the facts

ONEMINDFULLY

Avoid multitasking, stay on track

EFFECTIVELY

Focus on what works to meet the needs of the situation

WHAT SKILLS: PRACTICE IDEAS

Are there moments when you have experienced difficulty putting words on your experience? Where you attempt to avoid, forget or dismiss your current reality? Or where you just forget to notice what is happening in the here and now? The WHAT skills can give you a roadmap to tune in to whatever experience you are trying to turn your attention towards.

OBSERVE

Turn over your hand, observe the lines on your palm, see each detail. Trace the lines with your finger.

Listen for sounds, near and far from you.

When eating, notice the smells of your food, bring it close, breathe in.

Watch your baby breathe, belly rising and falling.

DESCRIBE

People watch, describe what they are doing. Be specific and use facts, avoid opinion or judgment.

Watch your thoughts, notice them as they pass and label them...“I am noticing a thought, ‘I cannot stand this.’”

Describe your baby’s feeling out loud. “You look very happy, eyes wide, a big smile and hands out.”

PARTICIPATE

Throw a dance party, sing along, remain in the moment, notice the experience, speak out loud about your experience to your baby or dance along with your child.

Make a commitment to engage in something safe, but uncomfortable. Nervous about breastfeeding in public? Find a quiet place to practice.

Difficulty getting out of bed? Commit to an upright position, feet on the floor and notice your body moving. Throw your full attention to the task of standing.

HOW SKILLS: PRACTICE IDEAS

Once you have practiced what to do to be mindful, we then have to figure out HOW to go about doing that. We are all guilty of observing a moment and immediately placing judgment or our opinion on it. It can be difficult to suspend our evaluation of something as good or bad. In fact, we need to use judgment; it's an important skill that lines us up with our value system. However, in the process of practicing mindfulness, we attempt to suspend this opinion or judgment. During the perinatal period this element of judgment is even more pervasive with social media, television ads, movies, commentary from friends and family, input from health care providers and strangers! Additionally, judgment towards yourself or others may increase. This is where the HOW skills come in handy.

NONJUDGMENTALLY

Describe your pregnancy or postpartum experience. Write about your wishes, feelings, facts and events. Avoid labeling as good or bad.

Notice your judgments throughout the day. Take an hour to observe and make a check mark for each judgment you notice.

Describe your baby's wants or needs, notice your feelings as they arise, acknowledge your experience, while avoiding evaluation of good or bad.

ONEMINDFULLY

When you are feeding your child, notice what is happening. Speak out loud about your observations. Notice your five senses.

If pregnant, notice when your baby kicks, imagine what their body may look like inside of you, notice the sensations, talk to your baby about what you feel.

Commit to a short practice by coloring, doing a puzzle, knitting, walking, breathing.

EFFECTIVELY

Think of the minimum of what you need to do to be effective in the situation.

Notice your body sensations and observe emotions. Pay attention to any refusal to accept your reality. Loosen your muscles in your face.

Attempt a small challenge, remind yourself of your goal: Do only what is needed to achieve one step of your goal.