

News Column for Use Week of 2/10/2020  
Sonia Cooper, Extension Agent: Nutrition, Food Safety and Health  
River Valley Extension District  
2/6/2020

### **Join Us for “Everyday Mindfulness”**

Many of us start the new year with resolutions. Maybe you set a goal for yourself to be more active or to exercise more. Maybe you set a goal for yourself to lose weight. Maybe your goal is to eat more fruits and vegetables. Of course, these goals will improve one’s overall health and wellness.

Have you considered your emotional wellness? At some point in your life, someone has probably told you “Enjoy every moment. Life is short.” At this comment I have smiled and rolled my eyes at my relative or co-worker who I was speaking with at the time. The fact is, there’s something to it. Trying to enjoy each moment may actually be good for your health. The idea is called *mindfulness*. It means not living your life on “autopilot,” instead, you experience life as it unfolds moment to moment, good and bad, without judgment or preconceived notions. Studies suggest mindfulness practices may help people manage stress, cope better with serious illness and reduce anxiety and depression.

Many people who practice mindfulness report an increased ability to relax, a greater enthusiasm for life and improved self-esteem. Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and to adapt to change and difficult times. It’s the ability of being completely aware of what’s happening in the present, of all that’s going on inside, and all that’s happening around you. Becoming a mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Take some deep breaths. Breathe in through our nose to a count of four, hold for one second and then exhale through the mouth to a count of five. Repeat often.
- Enjoy a stroll. As you walk, notice your breath and the sights and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, note them, but then return to the present.
- Practice mindful eating. Be aware of taste, textures and flavors in each bite, and listen to your body when you are hungry and full.
- Find mindfulness resources in your local community. For example, stress reduction programs, and books.

Each person’s healthiest self is different. We all have different minds, bodies, living situations, and people influencing our lives. Each of these areas can impact our overall health. This means we each have a unique set of health needs. Take a moment and consider your emotional health.

“Everyday Mindfulness” is a program given by Sonia Cooper, River Valley District Agent, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health. It will be held in all four counties in the River Valley Extension District. First, on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> in Washington at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 10:00 a.m. A second session will also take place on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> in Clay Center at the Extension Office Meeting Room at 2:00 p.m. On Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, join us in Concordia at the Courthouse Meeting Room at 10:00 a.m. and lastly on Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> in Belleville at the Library at 2:00 p.m. There is no cost for this program, and it is open to the public. Take a moment, consider emotional health and wellness. For more information, contact Sonia by calling 785-632-5335 or emailing [srcooper@ksu.edu](mailto:srcooper@ksu.edu).