

Ageing Well Series

Mindfulness and Ageing

Dr Susanna Summer
Clinical Psychologist
Summer Psychology Services



The Open University



SUFFOLK
Community
Foundation



Supported by
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AGEING WELL
Mental wellbeing Joy
Breakfast Swimming Exercise
Joy Nutrition Pharmacokinetics
BONE CHANGES Bone changes Dinner
Pharmacokinetics
Joy Malnutrition
Eat well Hydration Morning
Atrophy AGEING WELL Walking LUNCH
EXERCISE WALKING Fitness
Joy AGEING WELL Morning
OSTEOPOROSIS Atrophy Joy Fitness
Muscle changes Dinner
Physical activity Nutrition Exercise
Swimming Lunch Physical activity Muscle changes
Joy Breakfast Pharmacotherapy PHARMACODYNAMICS
Pharmacodynamics Ageing Nutrition
Learning new things Osteoporosis MORNING
Hydration Meeting friends
Learning new things

2020/21 Series plan

- ***Are we prepared to live longer?***
- ***Ageing brain***
- ***Learning languages and digital technologies in older age***
- ***Disenfranchising grief and caring while ageing***
- ***Nutritional needs while ageing***
- ***Pharmacotherapy while ageing***
- ***Mindfulness and ageing***
- ***Move it and breathe***
- ***Standing tall***
- ***The things we don't talk about – Intimacy and ageing***

For more information and live streaming links follow:

[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2021-22/5493216](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2021-22/5493216)

Overview



- What is mindfulness?
- The three minute breathing space
- What is the benefit of it?
- How does it work?
- Summary and Questions



Five pillars facilitating Ageing Well

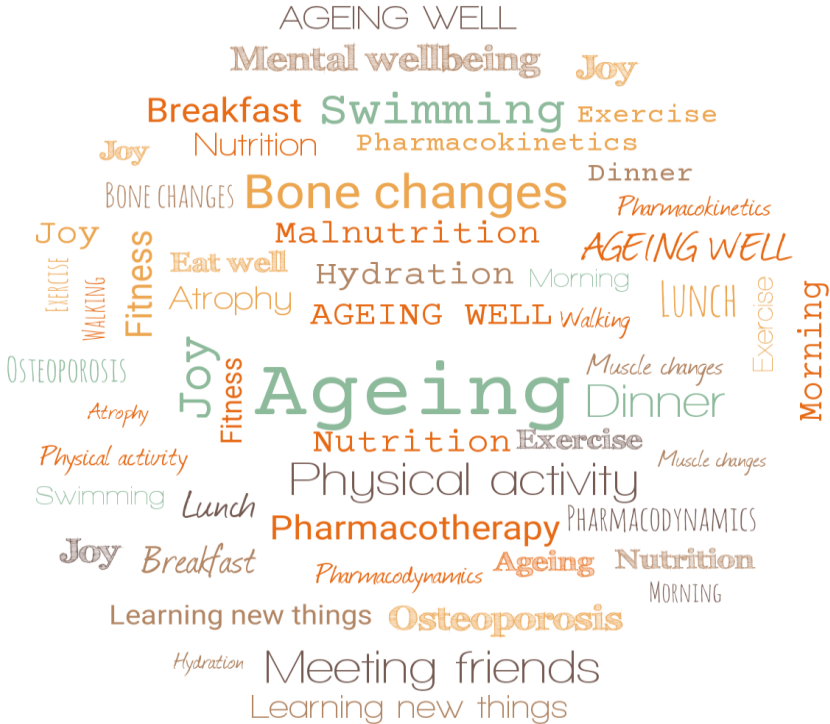
Nutrition

Hydration

Physical stimulation

Social stimulation

Cognitive stimulation





Five pillars facilitating Ageing Well

Nutrition

Hydration

Physical
stimulation

Social
stimulation

Cognitive
stimulation

Depending on the format, mindfulness works across physical, social and cognitive stimulation levels:

- Mindful movement
- Attention and memory stimulation
- Group delivery

*The opportunities of the later stage
of life....*

*“Why do we practice mindfulness?
.....So you can enjoy your old age.”*

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi



The best way to learn about mindfulness is to practice



- The three minute breathing space is a brief grounding practice, which was developed to help people anchor themselves in the present moment.
- I will guide you through the practice for the next slide.
- It is completely optional.
- Helpful attitudes to bring to the practice are ones of openness and putting to one side hopes or expectations.
- Any questions?

The 3 Step / Minute Breathing Space



1. Acknowledging

- Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting a dignified posture. Then ask: 'What's going on with me at this moment? What thoughts, feelings and body sensations am I experiencing right now?'
- You could put your inner experience into words, for example, say in your mind, 'A feeling of anger is arising' or 'self-critical thoughts are here' or 'my stomach is clenched and tense.'

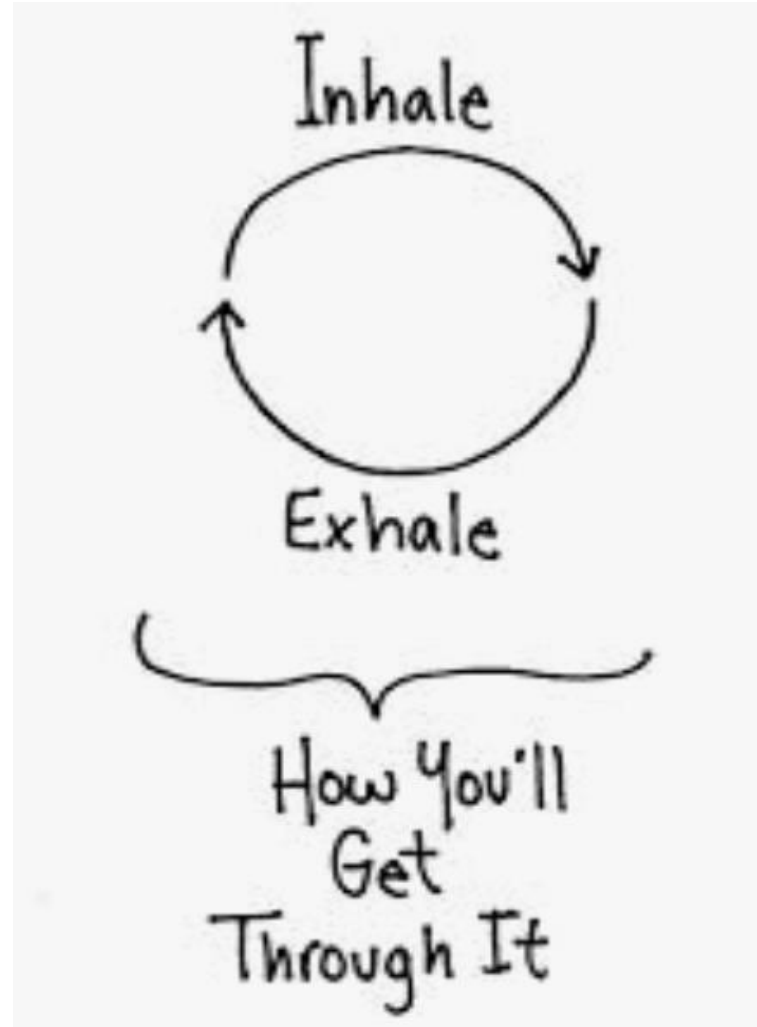
2. Gathering

- Gently bring your full attention to the breathing. Experience fully each in-breath and each out-breath as they follow one after the other. It may help to note at the back of your mind 'breathing in...breathing out', or to count the breaths. Let the breath function as an anchor to bring you into the present and to help you tune into a state of awareness.

3. Expanding

- Expand your awareness around the breathing to the whole body, and the space it takes up, as if your whole body is breathing. Especially take the breath to any discomfort, tension or resistance you experience, 'breathing in' to the sensations. While breathing out, allow a sense of softening, opening, letting go. You can also say to yourself 'it's ok to feel whatever I'm feeling.' Include a sense of the space around you too. Hold everything in awareness. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness into the next moments of your day.

Thoughts/Reflections?



There has been a huge explosion of interest in mindfulness....



The evidence base typically applies to these courses....



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) www.umassmed.edu/cfm

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) <http://mbct.co.uk/>

Breathworks www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk

Mindfulness Based Living Course (MBLC) www.mindfulnessassociation.net

Mindfulness Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) www.mindfulbirthing.org

Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP) <http://www.mindfulrp.com>

These programmes are: Informed by a clear rationale; Teacher-led; Have been developed to be scalable; Have a set curriculum, typically at least eight sessions with 30 – 45 mins daily home practice, incremental development and experiential learning; and have a clear commitment to be evidence-based.

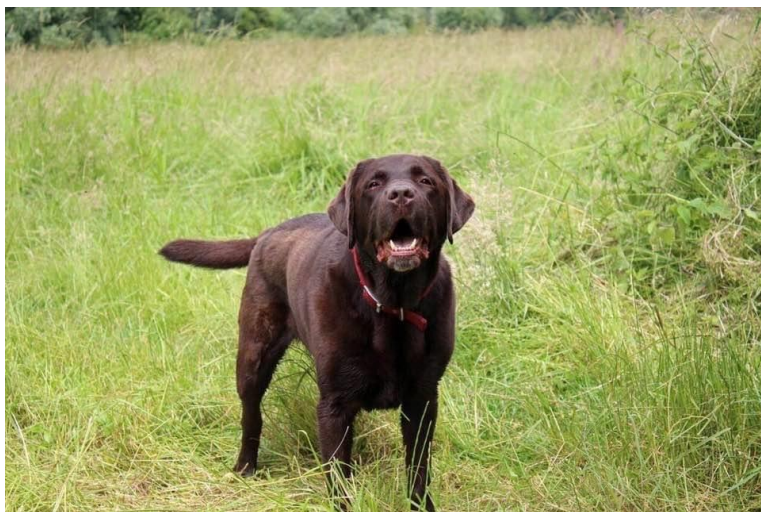
Training Centres and Regulatory Bodies



- UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations *setting standards for mindfulness-based teaching* www.mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk
- UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teachers Good practice guidelines for teaching mindfulness-based courses
www.mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk/pdf/UK%20MB%20teacher%20GPG%202015%20final%202.pdf
- The Universities of Bangor, Exeter and Oxford Mindfulness-based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC) www.mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk/pdf/MBI-TAC%20manual,%20summary%20&%20addendums%2005-16.pdf

Why be mindful?

**“In today’s rush we all think too much – seek too much – want to much – and forget about the joy of just being”
Eckhart Tolle**

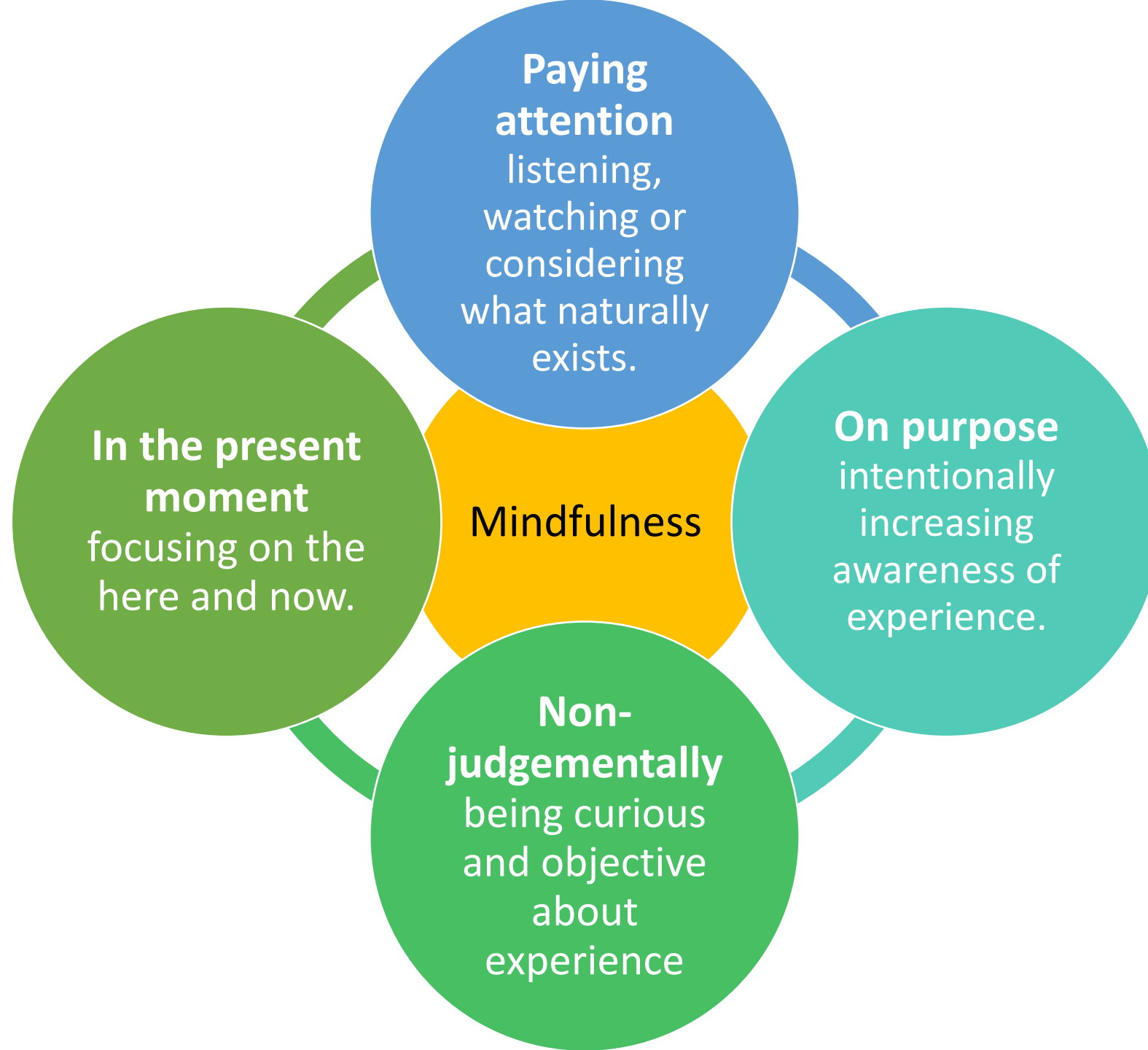


“Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different.

Enjoying the present without holding on when it changes. (which it will)

Being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way. (which it won’t)”

James Baraz



Is mindfulness thinking about nothing?



- NO! Mindfulness meditation is paying attention in a systemic way to whatever you decide to focus on, which can include awareness of your thoughts.
- By listening to your thoughts, you discover your habitual patterns.
- Your thoughts have a large impact on your emotions and the decisions that you make so paying attention to them is helpful.



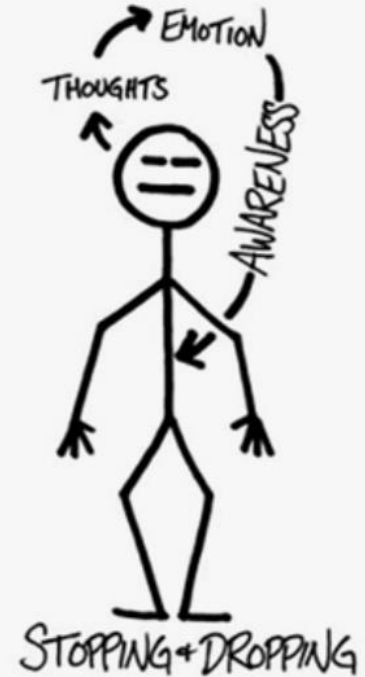
I REALIZE I'VE ONLY BEEN AT IT FOR 5 MINUTES, BUT MEDITATION ISN'T BRINGING ME THE PEACE OF MIND I WAS PROMISED.

Do you meditate to relax?



- The aim of mindfulness isn't to make you feel more relaxed. Trying to relax only causes more tension.
- Mindfulness is accepting your moment by moment experience.
- So if you are tense, mindfulness is being aware of that tension
 - Where do you feel tense? What's its shape, colour, texture?
 - What's your reaction to this tension, your thoughts?
- Doing this often leads to relaxation, but it is not the aim of the practise.

GROUNDING



How does mindfulness help us to age well?



- Mindfulness can reduce chronic pain and the emotional reaction to it. Recent research suggests that pain 'unpleasantness' levels can be reduced.
- Clinical trials suggest that mindfulness improves mood and quality of life in chronic conditions such as fibromyalgia and lower back pain, in chronic functional disorders such as IBS, and in challenging medical illnesses, including multiple sclerosis and cancer.
- Mindfulness enhances mental and physical stamina and resilience.
- Meditation and mindfulness can improve control of blood sugar in type II diabetes.
- Meditation can improve heart and circulatory health by reducing blood pressure and lowering the risk of hypertension. Mindfulness can reduce the risks of developing and dying from cardiovascular disease and lowers its severity should it arise.

How does mindfulness help us to age well?



- Mindfulness can improve clinical-level depression. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is one of the preferred treatments recommended by the UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.
- Mindfulness can reduce addictive and self-destructive behaviour. These include the abuse of illegal and prescription drugs and excessive alcohol intake.
- Meditation can enhance brain function and increase grey matter in areas associated with self-awareness, empathy, self-control and attention.
- Mindfulness may reduce ageing at the cellular level by promoting chromosomal health and resilience.

Mindfulness as a preventative intervention

- Mindfulness has been demonstrated to enhance many forms of cognition that are known to decline with age such as working memory along with many forms of attention.
- Researchers have proposed that given mindfulness' ability to strengthen attention, there is good justification for developing mindfulness groups to halt the deterioration from mild cognitive impairment to dementia (Robertson, 2015)
- It reduces some of the thinning of certain areas of the brain that naturally occurs with ageing, and increases hippocampal volume.
- Meditation improves the immune system. Regular meditators are admitted to hospital far less often for cancer, heart disease and numerous infectious diseases.

Mindfulness for carers

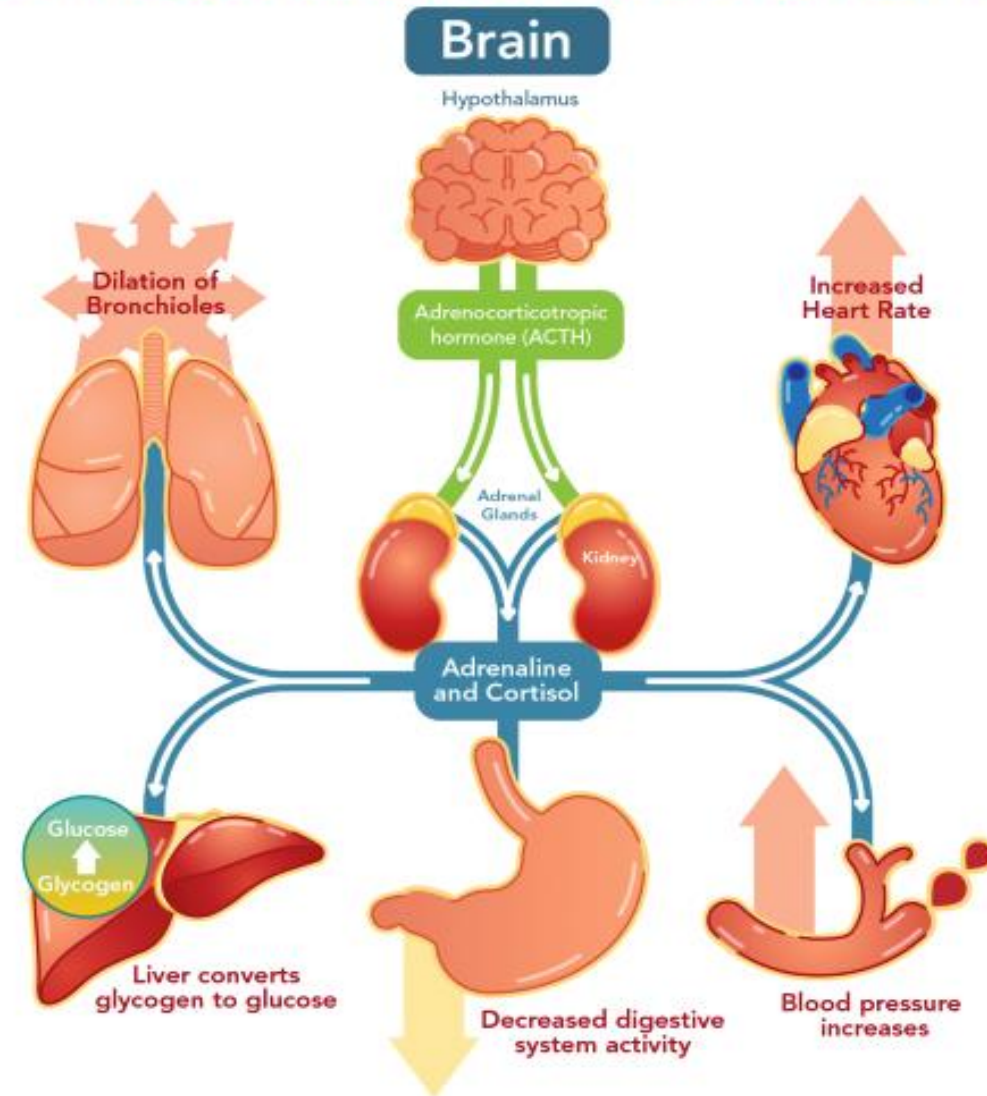
- Dementia care giving presents serious cognitive, emotional, relational, and role challenges to family caregivers (e.g., Savla, Roberto, Blieszner, Cox, & Gwazdauskas, 2011)
- Confers psychological and physical health risks, including higher risks of both psychiatric morbidity and mortality (Capistrant et al., 2012)
- Interventions that contribute to maintaining the mental and physical health of family caregivers can contribute to greater quality of life (Mittelman, 2005).

Does mindfulness work for everyone?

- No intervention is helpful for all people all of the time
- Some people find it difficult or impossible to turn off the self-critic
- People with trauma who are usually emotionally disconnected might find themselves feeling overwhelmed
- It might just not feel helpful for you
- If this is the case for you Don't worry, consider other ways of being more present in your life such as when active/doing something creative



STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM



How does mindfulness work on all these areas at once?

Stress Response

Central Nervous System

Perception - Narrowed

Memory - Coarse, Imprecise

Learning - Blocked

Conditioning - Defense

Tendency - Regress or Perseverate

Tone – Fight or Flight

Muscular System

Tension

Ready for Action

Jaws Clench

Body Braces for Action

Autonomic Nervous System

Heart rate increases

Blood pressure increases

Oxygen need increases

Breathing rate increases

Palms, face sweat

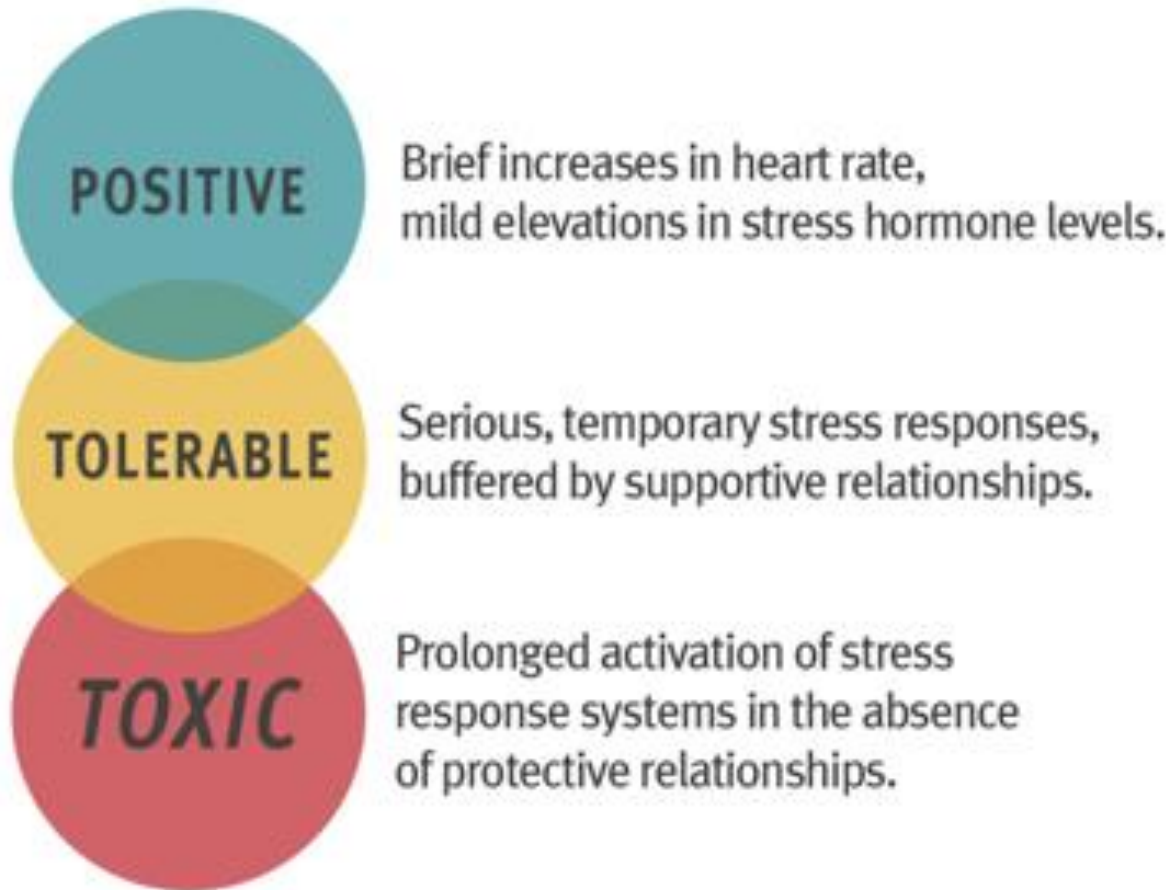
Blood sugar increases

Adrenalin flows

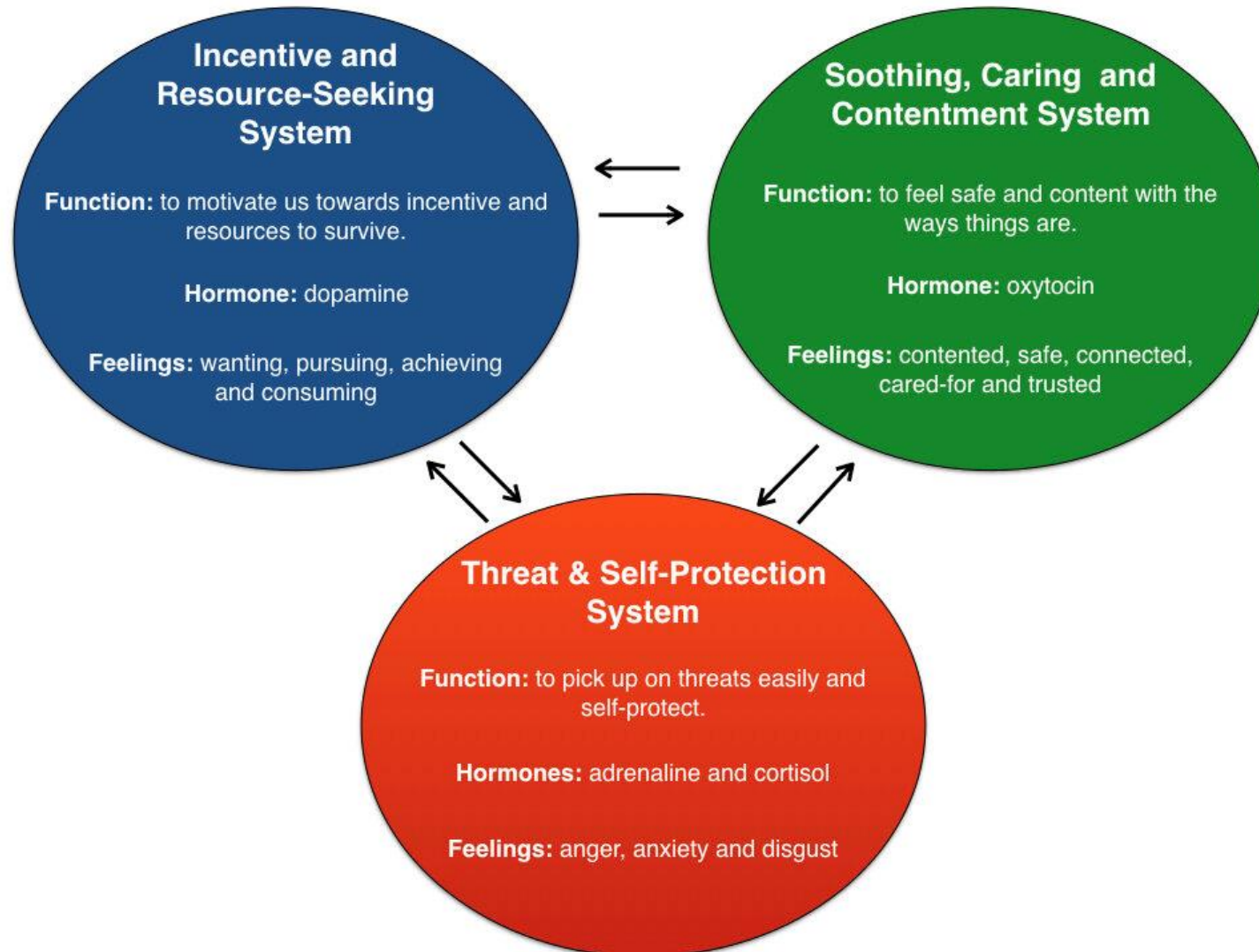
Digestive tract shuts down blood to muscles

Blood vessels constrict in hands, face

Is all stress bad?



Paul Gilbert's Three Circles Model of Compassion

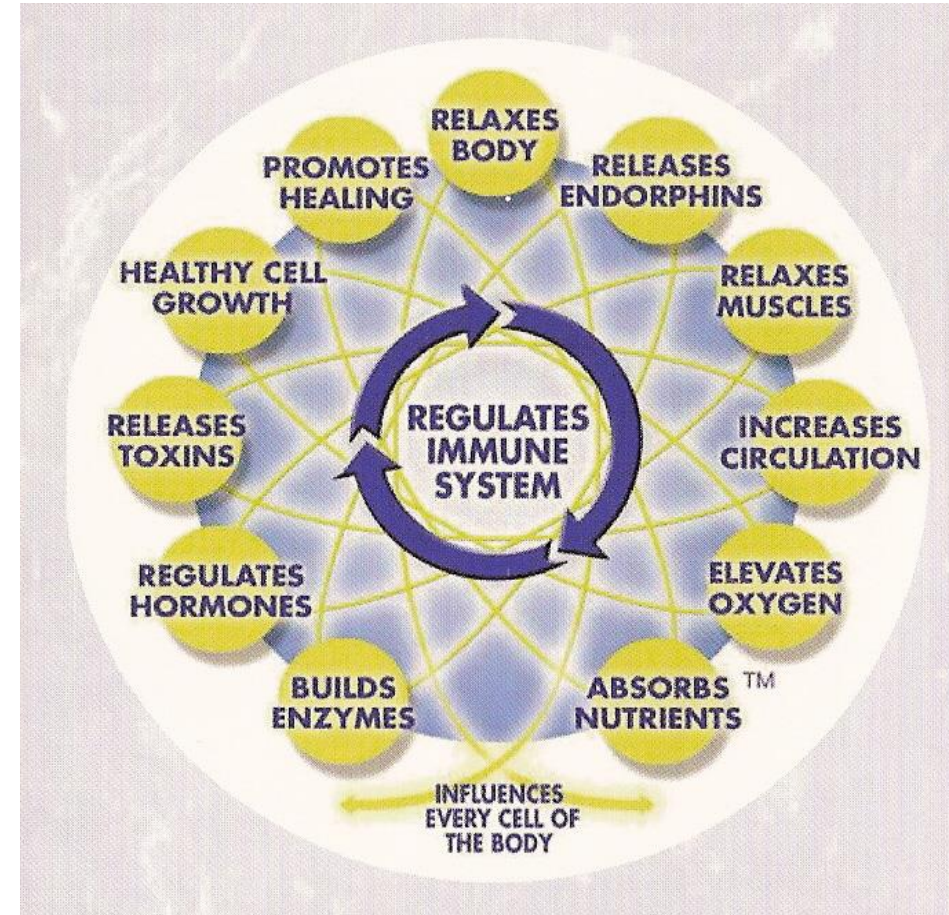


Resetting the stress response

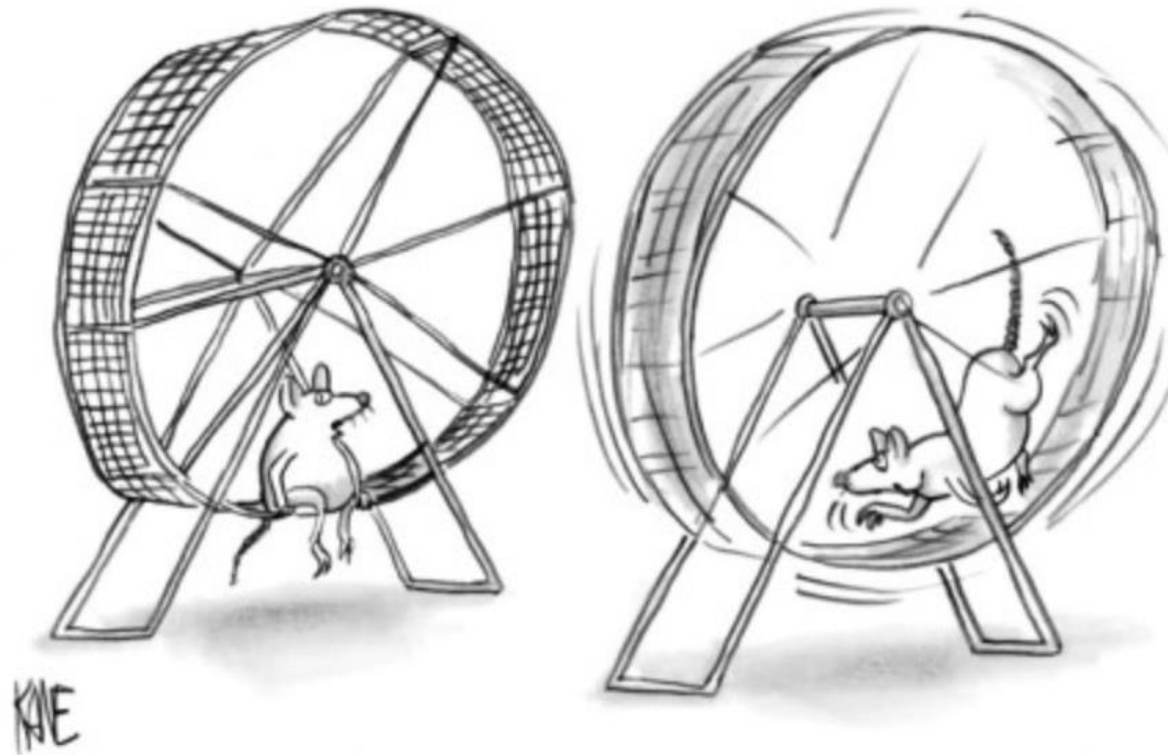
Relaxation

"The relaxation response is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional responses to stress... and the opposite of the fight or flight response."

-- Herbert Benson, M.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School



Mindfulness for later life group



"I had an epiphany."

Mindfulness for later life

- Six sessions delivered online during the three COVID-19 national lockdowns
- For patients, carers and the general public
- Supports people to develop their own home practice
- Teaches a range of mindfulness practices in a systematic way
- Based on the MBSR programme, with some adaptations for older adults.



Outcomes from the groups

- **Marked improvement in compassion for self and others**
- **For people with clinically significant levels of depression, these typically dropped from the moderate to severe range to the mild range.**
- **For people without depression the scores either stayed the same or they reported increased awareness of sad mood, but remained in the subclinical range**
- **For people whose memory difficulties were anxiety or depression related, they showed an improvement in working memory scores**
- **All participants showed an increase in mindfulness skills and awareness**

Feedback from the groups

“I began to open up my own mind and be less scared about everything.”

“... Having been shielding... It’s been relaxing. You know, and I thoroughly enjoyed it and I’m grateful for it’

“I’m beginning to find all kinds of things to be grateful for”

What was it like attending the group online?

“I felt more comfortable being in my own surroundings”

‘because of my chronic condition it’s hard for me to stick to stuff and actually go out and do it so I found it really helpful.’

“it’s a strange sort of dichotomy in a way because in one sense we were less together because we were not face-to-face, but on the other hand were in everyone else’s home, so I kind of in a sense felt more connected.”

Buddha quote...



“ the secret of health for the mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.”

Where can I access Mindfulness Courses?



- British Association for Mindfulness based approaches holds a list of UK registered mindfulness teachers. <https://bamba.org.uk>
- Many courses are now being run online due to COVID restrictions. Look for courses that are based on MBSR or MBCT.
- If you have some cognitive or attention difficulties, look at one of the courses which has shorter practices, such as finding peace in a frantic world
- There are several books with CDs which can help you to establish your home practice. “Full catastrophe living” by Jon Kabat Zinn outlines the MBSR approach. Danny Penman and Mark Williams have written “Finding Peace in a Frantic World.”

Thank you for your attention 😊

You can contact me if you have questions
sue@summerpsychologyservices.co.uk

Acknowledgements

- **Gatehouse Charity East Anglia**
- **Suffolk Community Foundation**
- **Norfolk Community Foundation**
- **West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group**
- **Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice – University of Bangor.**



The Open University



Move it and breathe 18th May 2022 - Jitka Vseteckova & Declan Ryan

Summary of related resources to The Ageing Well Public Talk Series

Podcasts

- Vseteckova J & King J (2020) COVID-19 Interview podcast for The Retirement Café: '[Ageing Well Under Lockdown](#)'
- Vseteckova J & Broad E (2020) Podcast – Open University & The Parks Trust [Keep Me Walking - researching with people living with dementia and their carers](#) -
- Vseteckova J (2020) Podcast - [Areas of research with The Open University](#)
- Broad E, Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - [Spotter sheet and mindful walking](#).
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Preventing brain decline while ageing](#)
- Methley A, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Walking therapy](#)
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Understanding our memory](#)
- Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [Engaging with our environment](#)
- The above podcasts can be also seen on [The Parks Trust YouTube Channel](#)

OpenLearn Resources:

- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Well Public Talk Series** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-well-public-talks>
- Vseteckova J (2019) **5 reasons why exercising outdoors is great for people who have dementia** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/5-reasons-why-exercising-outdoors-great-people-who-have-dementia>
- Vseteckova J (2019) **Depression, mood and exercise** https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/depression-mood-and-exercise?in_menu=622279
- Vseteckova J (2019) **Five Pillars for Ageing Well** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/five-pillars-ageing-well>
- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Brain** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-brain-use-it-or-lose-it>
- Vseteckova J (2020) **Ageing Well Public Talks Series II. Plan for 2020 – 2021** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/ageing-well-public-talk-series-plan-2020/2021>
- Vseteckova J (2020) **Walking the Parks with The OU and The Parks Trust** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/keep-me-walking-people-living-dementia-and-outdoor-environments>
- Vseteckova J, Borgstrom E, Whitehouse A, Kent A, Hart A (2021) **Advance Care Planning (ACP) - Discuss, Decide, Document and Share Advance Care Planning (ACP) - Discuss, Decide, Document and Share - OpenLearn - Open University** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/advance-care-planning-ACP-Discuss-Decide-Document-and-Share-OpenLearn-Open-University>

- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Lucassen M (2021) **The benefits of mindfulness and five common myths surrounding it** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-mindfulness-and-five-common-myths-surrounding-it>
- Vseteckova J, Broad E, Andrew V (2021) **The impact of walking and socialising through 5 Ways Café on people living with dementia and their carers: A volunteer's perspective** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-impact-walking-and-socialising-through-5-ways-cafe-on-people-living-dementia-and-their-carers>
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Lucassen M (2021) **The benefits of mindfulness and five common myths surrounding it** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-mindfulness-and-five-common-myths-surrounding-it>
- Methley A, Vseteckova J, Broad E (2021) **Outdoor Therapy: The Benefits of Walking and Talking** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/outdoor-therapy-the-benefits-walking-and-talking>
- Vseteckova J, Methley a, Broad E (2021) **What happens to our brain as we age and how we can stop the fast decline** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/what-happens-our-brain-we-age-and-how-can-we-stop-the-decline>
- Methley A & Vseteckova J & Jones K (2020) **Green & Blue & Outdoor spaces** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-outdoor-green-and-blue-spaces>
- Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) **Understanding our memory** [What do we need to know about our memory? - OpenLearn - Open University](#)
- Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) **Engaging with our environment** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/engaging-our-environment-what-are-the-benefits>

COVID-19 related

- Vseteckova J, **How to age well, while self-isolating** (2020) <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/how-age-well-while-self-isolating>
- Vseteckova J, (2020) **SHORT FILM - Ageing Well in Self-Isolation** <https://youtu.be/LU4pXFgcGos>
- Vseteckova J, (2020) **ANIMATION - Keeping healthy in Self-Isolation** <https://youtu.be/M9yUC-MUugA>
- Vseteckova J et al (2020) **COVID-19 The effects of self-isolation and lack of physical activity on carers** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/the-effects-self-isolation-and-lack-physical-activity-on-carers>
- Taverner P, Larkin M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) **Supporting adult carers during COVID-19 pandemic** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/how-can-adult-carers-get-the-best-support-during-covid-19-pandemic-and-beyond>
- Robb M, Penson M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) **Young carers, COVID-19 and physical activity** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/young-carerscovid-19-and-physical-activity>
- Penson M, Vseteckova J et al. (2020) **Older Carers, COVID-19 and Physical Activity** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/older-carers-covid-19-and-physical-activity>
- Vseteckova J & Methley A (2020) **Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help carers in challenging COVID-19 times** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/how-can-acceptance-and-commitment-therapy-help-carers-challenging-times-such-the-covid-19-pandemic>

'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2021/2022 repository on ORDO Collections

<https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2021-22/5493216>

'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2020/2021 repository on ORDO Collections

<https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing Well Public Talks 2020-21/5122166>

'Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2019/2020 repository on ORDO Collections

<https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.rd.c.4716437.v1>

OpenLearnCreate Course on 'Ageing Well' 2019/2020

<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=5016>

Home exercise no equipment – no problem *Blog*

<https://selsdotlife.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/home-exercises-for-older-adults-no-equipment-no-problem/>

Ageing Well series of Public Talks

“Being mindful of eating well, hydration, physical activity, learning new things and social connections can delay the decline caused by ageing.

Come and join us for the series of public talks with the title “Ageing Well”



Dr. Jitka Vseteckova

Senior Lecturer, Health and Social Care



Ageing Well series of Public Talks - topics



- ***Are we prepared to live longer?*** (Jitka Vseteckova) **September 22nd 2021**
- ***Advanced care planning*** (Barbara Gale) **October 20th 2021**
- ***Ageing brain*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Marco Calabria) **November 17th 2021**
- ***Learning languages and digital technologies in older age*** (Ursula Stickler) **December 15th 2021**
- ***Disenfranchising grief and caring while ageing*** (Kerry Jones) **January 19th 2022**
- ***Nutritional needs while ageing*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Alan Hastings) **February 23rd 2022**
- ***Pharmacotherapy while ageing*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Sonal Mehta) **March 23rd 2022**
- ***Mindfulness and ageing*** (Abi Methley) **April 20th 2022**
- ***Move it and breathe*** (Jitka Vseteckova & Declan Ryan) **May 18th 2022**
- ***Standing tall*** (Jitka Vseteckova) **June 22nd 2022**
- ***The things we don't talk about – Intimacy and ageing*** (Andreas Vossler) **July 20th 2022**

Useful resources:

https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2020-21/5122166