

mindfulness



User Guide

What is the MindfulNest?

The MindfulNest offers a relaxing space for WCTC students to quiet their mind, reduce stress and restore themselves. Located in the Counseling Services office (Co22), the room is available for use Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm. If you are interested in using in the room, or have questions, please stop by Counseling Services or call 262.695.3440.

Who may use the MindfulNest?

The room is available to WCTC students. The room is a quiet place to enjoy a few peaceful moments and melt stress away. We encourage visitors to refrain from eating, drinking, or talking. Students do not need to be a current client of Counseling Services to access the room, but must bring a current WCTC student ID with them to use the room.

Guidelines:

- Silence and mutual respect are expected at all times.
- The space may be used for either a 30 or 60 minute timeframe.
- The door to the room must be left unlocked.
- This is a quiet space. Cell phones should be on silent.
- Food and beverages are not permitted.
- Candles, burning oils, incense or any other flammable items are not permitted.
- Please do not remove anything from this room.
- Please leave the room in the same condition as it was prior to use.
- Should a guest's time be over, and they have not left the room, a staff member will knock on the door and check – in.

Resources

Light therapy lamps: These 10,000 lux lamp gives off bright light that mimics natural outdoor light. Light therapy is thought to affect brain chemicals linked to mood and sleep and has been proven to ease sleeping disorders and depression symptoms. Do not look directly into the lamp. See page 3 for additional guidance.

Weighted blankets: There are two weighted blanket options: 20 lbs or 10 lbs. Weighted blankets are meant to provide a sense of comfort, security, and pressure to decrease over arousal and anxiety. Close your eyes, draw, do whatever you'd like to feel calm.

Buddha board: Buddha Board is inspired by the Zen idea of living in the moment. You simply paint on the surface with water and your creation will come to life in bold design. Then as the water slowly evaporates, your art will magically disappear leaving you with a clean slate and a clear mind, ready to create a whole new masterpiece.

Sand garden: Add some tranquility and mindfulness into your day by gently creating patterns in the sand.

Fidget toys: These provide extra sensory input and can help improve concentration and attention. Use with another activity or by itself.

Yoga mat: Practice at your own pace or enjoy some simple stretches. Please use an antibacterial wipe to clean the mat after you are finished.

Massage mat: Take some time to unwind with a massage.

Adult coloring books and colored pencils: Coloring is known to reduce stress and anxiety while improving mindfulness. Get creative and feel free to take your design with you.

Water fountain: Plug in the fountain to enhance the relaxing ambiance of the room.

Finger Labyrinth: A finger labyrinth is similar to a full sized labyrinth you would walk except it is on a much smaller and more portable scale. The user traces the path to the center using your finger rather than with their feet.

How to do a Finger Labyrinth Meditation:

- Take deep breaths to begin to relax and focus on the entrance to the labyrinth.
- Place your pointer finger from your non-dominant hand on the entrance of the labyrinth. If you find this too awkward at first, use your dominant hand. However, over time, keep trying your non-dominant hand. This helps keep the mind focused on the meditation due to the challenge it presents.
- Slowly trace the pattern of the labyrinth with your finger allowing your mind to clear from extra thought and focus solely on following the path of the labyrinth.
- "Walk" to the center of the labyrinth and rest momentarily, taking deep breaths observing how you are feeling.
- Retrace your path out of the labyrinth.
- Sit back, breathe deeply and relax. Observe how you are feeling again.

Light Therapy Lamps

Light therapy is a way to treat seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and certain other conditions by exposure to artificial light. SAD is a type of depression that occurs at a certain time each year, usually in the fall or winter. You may want to try light therapy for a number of reasons:

- Your mental health provider or doctor recommends it for seasonal affective disorder or another condition.
- You want to try treatment that is safe and has few side effects.
- You want to increase the effectiveness of antidepressant medication or mental health counseling.
- You want to avoid antidepressant medications during pregnancy or while breast-feeding.
- It may allow you to take a lower dose of antidepressant medication.

Light therapy is generally safe. If side effects occur, they're usually mild and short lasting. Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing any lasting side effects.

During light therapy sessions, you can sit or work near a light box. To be effective, light from the light box must enter your eyes indirectly. You can't get the same effect merely by exposing your skin to the light. While your eyes must be open, don't look directly at the light box, because the bright light can damage your eyes.

Light therapy is most effective when you have the proper combination of light intensity, duration and timing.

- **Intensity.** The intensity of the light box is recorded in lux, which is a measure of the amount of light you receive. For SAD, the typical recommendation is to use a 10,000-lux light box at a distance of about 16 to 24 inches from your face.
- **Duration.** With a 10,000-lux light box, light therapy typically involves daily sessions of about 20 to 30 minutes. But a lower-intensity light box, such as 2,500 lux, may require longer sessions. Your health care provider may suggest you start with shorter sessions and gradually increase the time.
- **Timing.** For most people, light therapy is most effective when it is done early in the morning, after you first wake up.

Light therapy probably won't cure seasonal affective disorder, non-seasonal depression or other conditions. But it may ease symptoms, increase your energy levels, and help you feel better about yourself and life. Light therapy can start to improve symptoms within just a few days. In some cases, though, it can take two or more weeks.

(adapted from Mayo Clinic)

Relaxation Apps



The **Oak** app offers a minimalistic approach to tranquility. Focused on breathing, Oak teaches you to guide yourself and eventually become stronger and independent on your meditation journey.



Created by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, **Mindfulness Coach** app teaches how to be present in the moment without passing judgement. The app provides 12 gradual, self-guided trainings that allow you to set and track your personal goals as you become a mindfulness master.



Create your own relaxing melody by combining any soothing sound, bedtime story, breathing technique, or sleep meditation together. **Relax Melodies** app offer over 100 meditations created specifically to help you relax and sleep.



The **Yoga Workout** app features numerous challenges, such as the 21-day Yoga Challenge and the Yoga for Beginners 30-Day Challenge, to keep you motivated. Whether you're at work, traveling, home, or even in bed, this app makes it easy to do yoga in various situations.