FACILITATOR NOTES

Walking with Awareness

A 55-minute introductory workshop and draft guided practice

This workshop introduces walking meditation as a practice of attending to movement and surroundings, noticing distraction and returning. Participants need not become calm or stop thinking. Adapt the route, pace and duration to the group. Use an accessible, familiar space away from traffic and difficult terrain, with seating and an indoor option. Keep eyes open while moving. Do not ask people to read, write or close their eyes while walking. Participants may stop, sit, use a mobility aid or opt out without explanation. For remote delivery, offer the seated version first and let participants choose their own safe setting.

What setting and adaptations will this group need?

Check access, surfaces, weather, seating, hearing and how the group will stay together.

What will I say about choice and comfort?

Explain that sharing is optional and attention can rest on external sounds or sights instead of the body.

SESSION PLAN

A simple sequence: 55 minutes

0-8 minutes: Welcome, purpose, consent and practical arrangements. Ask participants what they understand by meditation; clarify that a wandering mind is expected.

8-15 minutes: Offer a seated or standing arrival practice. Notice contact with a seat or the ground and sounds nearby. Allow silence.

15-30 minutes: Introduce the guided practice on the following pages, with pauses and several minutes of self-directed walking or seated attention.

30-40 minutes: Offer a quiet return and individual reflection.

40-50 minutes: Optional discussion of experience, distractions and adaptations.

50-55 minutes: Choose a manageable way to try the practice again and close.

What will I adjust in this sequence?

Shorten movement before increasing effort. Build in time for access needs and transitions.

What would count as a useful introduction?

Look for understanding and choice, rather than a required emotional outcome.

GUIDED PRACTICE: OPENING

Arriving and beginning to move

Read slowly and leave the pauses. This is an original draft for Nicholas to adapt, not a recording already available.

Find a position that feels steady. Keep your eyes open and stay aware of what is around you. There is no particular feeling you need to create. [Pause 20 seconds.]

Notice where your body is supported. If it is comfortable, notice a breath without changing it. You can also listen to a sound nearby. [Pause 30 seconds.]

If you are walking, begin at a pace that feels natural and safe. Notice something about the movement: contact with the ground, the shift of weight or the movement of your arms. Choose just one point of attention. If you are seated, notice the support beneath you or the movement of air around you. [Pause 60 seconds.]

Delivery notes

Which phrases sound natural in my voice? Where do I want more silence?

Adaptations to offer

How will I include people who stay seated or prefer external points of attention?

GUIDED PRACTICE: CONTINUING

Returning without criticism

Your attention may have moved to plans, memories or a conversation. When you notice that, there is nothing to correct. Let the thought be there and return to your chosen point of attention. [Pause 60 seconds.]

Now allow your attention to include the space around you. Notice a sound, the light, or the feeling of air on your skin. You do not need to name or collect what you notice. Stay aware of your route and the people nearby. [Pause 60 seconds.]

Continue for a little while in your own way. If attention to breathing or your body feels uncomfortable, choose a sound or something you can see. You can stop or sit whenever you need. [Pause 90 seconds.]

When you are ready, come to a comfortable stopping place. Notice how things are now, without deciding whether the practice was successful. Take a moment before moving on. [Pause 30 seconds.]

Recording notes

The pauses across these two script pages total nearly eight minutes; allow extra time for speech.

What should I change after a practice recording?

Listen for rushed instructions, unexplained transitions and assumptions about mobility.

PARTICIPANT REFLECTION

What was the experience like?

Write after you have stopped somewhere comfortable. You may have felt settled, distracted, bored, interested or uneasy. A different experience from the one you hoped for can still give useful information. Consider what point of attention was available to you and whether any instruction made the practice easier or harder. You do not need to share private material with the group. Keep the discussion focused on the experience of practising and what you would adapt.

What did I notice about attention and distraction?

Which point of attention suited me? What did I do when my mind wandered?

What would make another attempt more comfortable?

Consider setting, pace, duration, company, a seated option or choosing not to repeat it.

CONTINUING IN DAILY LIFE

A practice small enough to repeat

If you would like to try again, choose an ordinary opportunity and a short duration. A few minutes can be enough to explore the practice. Do not combine inward attention with crossing roads, driving, cycling or negotiating difficult ground. Return full attention to practical safety whenever needed. If focusing inward increases distress, stop and orient to your surroundings; the practice may not suit you at this time. General wellbeing resources do not replace individual care. The NHS mindfulness guidance offers further background; the accompanying Breathing on a Walk worksheet provides a gentle optional extension.

My optional next practice

Where, when and for approximately how long? What would I adapt?

Facilitator review after the workshop

What did participants find clear or difficult? What should change before delivery?

Further reading: NHS - Mindfulness
Read the NHS guidance online