

# Emotional Awareness

During the day, when you feel an emotion, acknowledge it. Feel the emotion within you and deal with it either then, or when you have time later in the day. i.e. note it, let yourself feel it, and recognise why you are acknowledging it. You might want to rush off a few words about it on a scrap of paper, leave it until later and write more fully in your journal, or just sit quietly with the feeling and acknowledge the emotional feelings that way.

The exercise below provides a very brief way to help you acknowledge how you are feeling in any particular moment by sitting quietly for a few minutes to be mindful. This can help you cope better with your reaction to the day to day stresses, stopping them from building up, which can potentially result in symptoms. This strategy can also be a helpful tool to use when your pain escalates or changes in some way, even if you are not sure why, because it allows you take time out to acknowledge how you feel.

## **Exercise:**

Sit somewhere quietly with as few distractions as possible, then begin with three or four slow deep breaths to stimulate your parasympathetic nervous system to calm things down.

Sit quietly and allow your focus to rest on your body and how it feels generally. If thoughts come into your mind, acknowledge them, but let them pass on by without becoming attached to them. Scan your body, noting how each area feels and consciously letting go of areas that feel tight.

Now allow your attention to go inside your body, observing how you feel in your chest, abdomen and pelvis. Don't try to change anything, just notice any area that feels tense or different in some way and allow your attention to settle on this area. Just observe it as you would a bird in a tree, allowing it to be there without any resistance. If an emotion bubbles up, allow it to evolve and welcome it, even if you don't know what it was relating to. You might even find it helpful to allow the emotion to flow out of you each time you breathe out.

Finally finish by developing a feeling of compassion and allow this to expand to fill your whole chest and abdomen. Alternatively, imagine a clear, bright, positive white light surrounding you which gradually infiltrates your whole body as it flows into you each time you breathe in.

**N.B.** This is about acknowledging the emotion, rather than understanding and can be effective in even just 2 minutes.