**Mindfulness**

**The 3-Stage Breathing Space**

**Step 1: Awareness.** Reflect on the following questions, pausing for a few seconds between each one:

* *What bodily sensations am I aware of at the moment?* Feel your posture, become aware of any aches or pains, or any pleasant sensations. Just accept them as they are, as far as you can.
* *What emotions am I aware of at the moment?* Notice the feelings in your heart or abdomen area or wherever you can feel emotion.
* *What thoughts am I aware of, passing through my mind at the moment?* Become aware of your thoughts, and the space between your thoughts rather than becoming caught up in them.

**Step 2: Breathing.** Nowfocus your attention in your abdomen area, the lower abdomen. Notice the sensations here as you breathe in and out. Perhaps noticing the stretching of the skin on the abdomen on the in breath, and the gentle release on the out breath. You don’t need to change the rate of your breathing – just become mindful of it in a warm, curious and friendly way. Notice how each breath is slightly different. If your mind wanders away, gently but firmly guide your attention back to your breath. Appreciate how precious each breath is.

**Step 3: Consciously expanding.** Nowexpand your awareness around the breath to include a sense of the body as a whole –breathing. Just being aware of whatever is here: the breath, sensations in the face, your posture, sensations in the body. An awareness of the whole body, from your outer skin to your centre and the breath.

As you sit here with a sense of spaciousness, see if you can take this into your next moments as you gently open your eyes and bring the practice to a close.

*You can do this 3- stage breathing space anywhere and anytime you feel like you need to ground yourself. Our breath goes with us wherever we are and we can use it as an anchor to the present moment.*