**Mindfulness**

**Why are we suggesting turning towards difficult experiences:**

* Moving away from avoidance or a sense of trying to get rid of experience, of wanting it to be different in that moment to how it is, and inclining towards difficult experiences (thoughts, feelings, and emotions) with curiosity and gentle compassion. This can give them space to arise, display and pass. Staying curious and gentle. And always taking good self-care of ourselves in the process of turning towards challenge and difficulty and stopping when we have had our fill, and coming back when ready.

* Encouraging us to move out of the thinking mind alone and dropping into the body where it can be useful to work with difficult experiences. Acknowledging and working with difficulty more fully.

* The opposite of suppression – remember ‘what we resist persists’ and ‘What we can feel, we can heal’.

* People can be very unkind to themselves through self-criticism and harshness, often learnt at a young age. These learnt behaviour patterns can become automatic reactions every time we are faced with a difficulty. Through mindfully turning towards difficulty we can listen to and acknowledge what is there, in a gentle friendly way. This can break up the repetitive, aggressive tone and end up calming and soothing the self-criticism a little.

* We’re learning to become observers of our experience without adding to it. Allowing it to be there but not firing the second arrow into the wound (adding layers of secondary suffering).

* How you relate to your difficulties makes a big difference to the outcome.

* Cultivating the qualities of the Attitudinal foundations can support us in this process:

Non-judging, Patience, Beginners Mind, Non-striving, Acceptance, Curiosity, Kindness and self-compassion