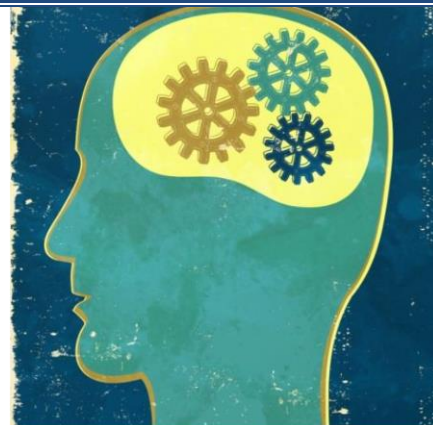


# Mindfulness Education Group



## ***What is mindfulness?***

*Mindfulness is a life-skill, which involves paying attention to our experiences in the present moment with flexibility, openness and curiosity. It is a process of directing awareness, which activates the body's relaxation response. It is also an ancient concept found in the world's major faith and wisdom traditions.*

## ***How to practice mindfulness?***

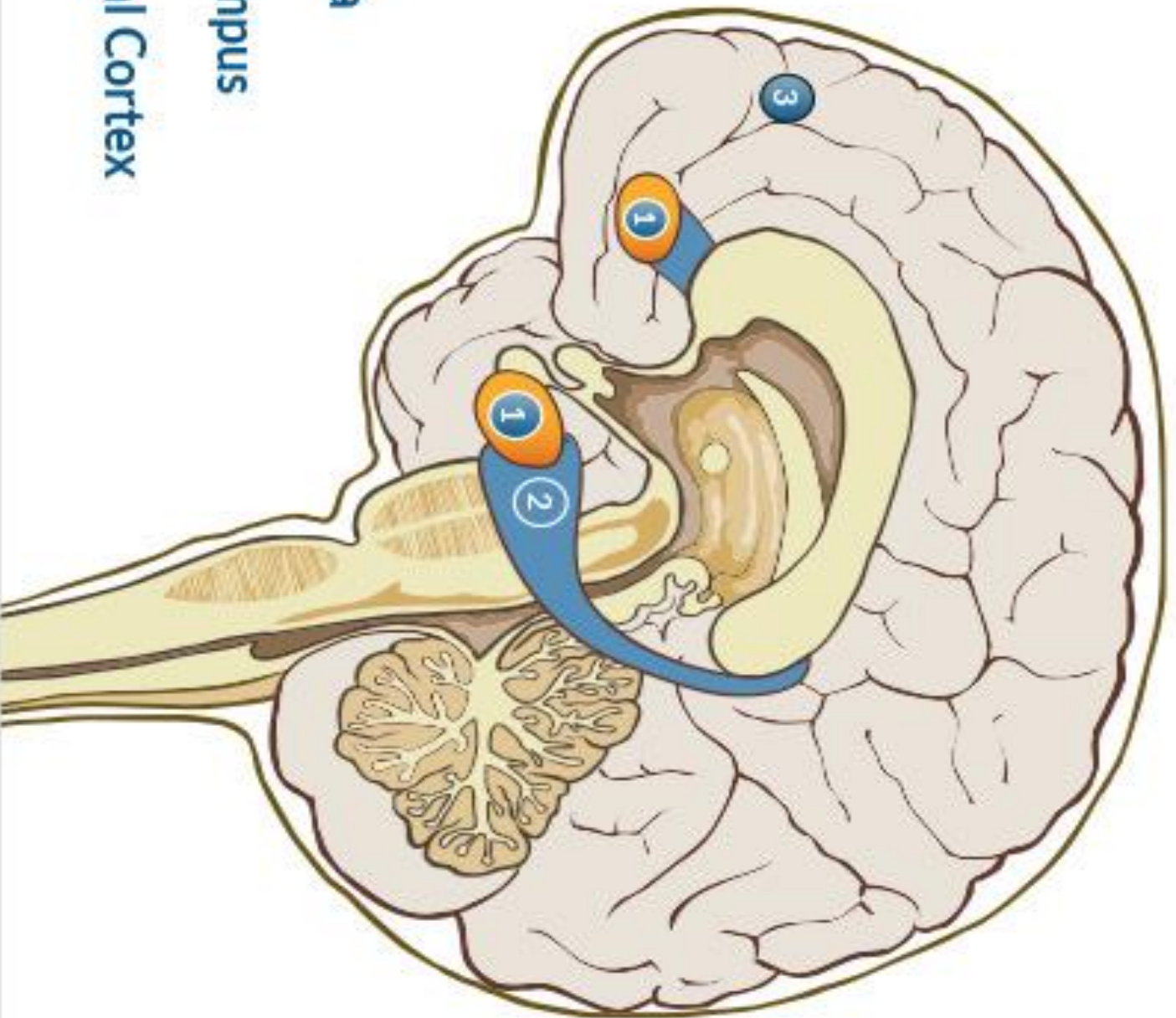
- ❖ **Intentionality:** *living with purpose and awareness of the present moment*  
(“Waking up” from automatic or rote behaviors to participate and be present but also consciously and purposefully directing awareness to the past or future)
- ❖ **Non-judgment:** *without judging or assigning a label to ourselves and others*  
(Noticing facts and letting go of evaluating enhances our ability to choose our present moment that can be discerned as helpful or healthy in the longer run)
- ❖ **Acceptance:** *without attachment to nor rejection of the moment*  
(Allowing experiences to come and allowing them to go; assenting to the reality of a situation and letting go of resistance to that which is beyond our control; forgiveness)
- ❖ **Grounding:** *using the 5 senses to redirect awareness to the present moment*  
(“Tuning in” to what is happening in the present moment; examples include listening to music as if for the first time, observing clouds pass, or conscious deep breathing )

## ***Why use mindfulness?***

*Research shows that mindfulness practice is effective in reducing stress and pain and in treating many psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety. MRI studies of the brain confirm that mindfulness calms the amygdala, which is involved in the fight/flight response and intense emotions, and strengthening the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in executive decision-making and memory. These measurable changes in the brain correspond to better health, longer life and more happiness.*

### **References:**

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Newberg, A.B. & Iversen, J. (2003). "The neural basis of the complex mental task of meditation: Neurotransmitter and neurochemical considerations. *Medical Hypotheses*, 61(2) 282-91.



1 Amygdala

2 Hippocampus

3 Prefrontal Cortex