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## Body Scan

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NOTE: This handout is intended as an educational and informational aid, and is not intended to be used for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment. Diagnosis and treatment of emotional or behavioral problems, and related disorders and conditions, should be provided by a licensed mental health professional.

During a body scan exercise you will cultivate awareness of the present moment by systematically bringing attention to different parts of the body. This technique encourages a non-judgmental observation of bodily sensations, promoting relaxation, stress reduction, and a deeper connection with the self.

Begin by finding a quiet and comfortable space. Sit or lie down in a relaxed position, ensuring that your body is well-supported. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself. Pay attention to the natural rhythm of your breath. Inhale slowly through your nose, allowing your lungs to fill, and exhale gently through your mouth.

Direct your attention to the top of your head. Slowly and deliberately, bring your awareness to different parts of your body, moving gradually down. You can follow the sequence: head, face, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, back, abdomen, pelvis, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, and feet.

As you focus on each body part, notice any sensations – warmth, coolness, tension, relaxation, or tingling. Allow your attention to rest on each area for a moment, acknowledging any feelings without judgment.

If you encounter areas of tension or discomfort, take a deep breath, and as you exhale, imagine releasing the tension with your breath. Picture the tension dissolving and the area becoming more relaxed.

If your mind starts to wander or you become distracted, gently bring your attention back to the current body part. Use your breath as an anchor to the present moment. Continue the body scan until you reach your toes. Take a few moments to observe your body as a whole. Notice how you feel, both physically and emotionally.

When you are ready to conclude the practice, slowly bring your awareness back to your breath. Take a few deep breaths, gradually becoming aware of your surroundings. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

### Tips:

- Practice regularly for maximum benefit.
- Experiment with the length of your body scan, starting with shorter sessions and gradually increasing as you become more comfortable.
- Use this technique as a tool for self-compassion and stress reduction.