

How to Practice R-A-I-N

RAIN is a mindfulness exercise that can support us in dealing with difficult emotions, thoughts and experiences that cause distress. It's an easy-to-remember tool that provides us the opportunity to cultivate compassionate attention to our suffering, enabling us to respond effectively. RAIN is an invitation to lean into discomfort with a supportive honesty.

Prepare: Find a quiet, comfortable space, where you can give yourself a few moments to settle into your body and attend to your discomfort with care. Start with a few deep, cleansing breaths, and then gently guide yourself through the following steps:

Recognize:

Begin with naming what is going on by bringing a kind-hearted, mental whisper to the unfolding experience. Recognize your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.

Allow:

Open the heart and provide an opportunity to slow down, pause, and deepen your attention by mentally whispering: "I'm ok... this is where I am right now, and it makes sense that this is what I'm feeling."

Investigate:

As if coming upon something for the first time, gently probe: "How is this showing up in my body? Where is this felt most strongly?" De-emphasize concepts and reasoning; focus on the arising bodily sensations. Since thoughts, particularly negative ones, often spiral in directions that fuel more difficult emotions, staying in the body can be helpful. "Am I feeling heat? Is there tension in the head or neck? Tightness in the chest? A sinking feeling in the stomach?"

Nurture:

Experiment with an act of self-comfort and kindness. Give yourself a comforting message, such as "I love you," "you are okay," or anything else you need. For some, it may also be helpful to support yourself physically, through touch, holding or squeezing your hand, or patting your chest reassuringly.

After RAIN: After completing the exercise, bring a sense of gratitude to this moment, appreciating the effort you have taken to see yourself. Notice if you feel any shifts in the body and in your mind, honoring the experience, and moving forward, with intention. Though you may continue to carry challenging feelings after completing RAIN, you have processed and released some of this, and most importantly, you have not made the situation worse for yourself or others.