**Mindfulness Review**

**Mindfulness** – learning to be in the present moment without judgement.

**The Brain**

The limbic system controls emotions and motivations from deep inside the brain. A key player of the limbic system is the **amygdala.** The amygdala is a pair of almond-shaped structures that reacts to fear, danger and threat. It activates the **automatic reflexive response of fight, flight or freeze.**

Information from the limbic system is fed to the **prefrontal cortex** – the learning, reasoning and thinking center of the brain. It controls decision making, focuses our attention and allows us to read, write, compute, analyze, predict, comprehend and interpret.

The **hippocampus** assists in managing our response to fear and threats and is a storage vault of memory and learning.

**RAS – Reticular activating system** – the attention focusing center.

The neurotransmitter **dopamine** is the pleasure of feel good chemical while **cortisol** is the stress hormone

**Sleep tips**: set times to go to bed and to wake up; exercise; set the stage for sleep (make your room and bed comfy, find the right temperature, turn off the lights, cut out noise); use your bed only for sleeping (avoid watching TV., using the internet, being on your phone, reading or studying in bed); unwind 30-60 minutes before bed (turn off your phone and TV., dim the lights, turn on soothing music, do something relaxing); wake up to bright lights in the morning (turn on your lights, open your blinds)

**Things that interfere with sleep**: naps, stimulants like caffeine, sugar, energy drinks, nicotine; blue light (phones, computers); worrying

**Physical effects of stress**: increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, increased muscle contraction/tension, increased shallow breathing, decreased blood vessel size, decreased digestive action, increased body temperature

What do you do to reduce stress?

**Anger warning signs**: clench fists, face turns red, fast breathing, body or hands shake, pace, throw things, grit teeth, feel sick to your stomach, scowl or make an angry face, cry, throw things, punch walls, mind goes blank, sweat

**Anger management skills**: recognize your anger early; take a timeout, deep breathing, exercise, express your anger once you’ve calmed down, think of the consequences, visualization.

**Anxiety triangle/triad:**

Thoughts Feelings Behaviour

**B**= Body

**R**= Reflections

**E**= Emotions