

Cindy ([00:00:01](#)):

Thank you, Olivia. Welcome back, folks, and welcome if it's your first time joining us. This is our third of four sessions, so some of you have heard this introduction before, some of you are new. Welcome to the call with us today. As you can see, there's a lot of folks in the chat. There's going to be a lot of activity in there. If it gets distracting, you can close the chat, but I encourage you to open that back up once the introductions and the welcomes are done and folks are done checking in, because that does slow down a bit once we get into discussion and content sharing. Maybe you've already found your reaction button. It's great to see that during Zoom webinars instead of WebEx and those reactions pop up on the screen. Thank you. I can see those coming through now. Feel free to use that to give Jennifer and the NACHC staff feedback as you go through today. Thanks, all.

([00:00:57](#)):

We're not going to be using breakouts today due to the number of people that we have. However, we are going to be using the workbook and keeping you very engaged throughout the whole session. If you weren't able to print out the workbook or don't have that PDF handy, just keep a notebook or a piece of paper handy. That's available online. We'll post that link again for you and share the PDF in the chat as we go. You'll see, as Jennifer goes through her slide, the first couple have NACHC's pillars and missions. That is just for information for you to get you started, let you know where we're focusing our efforts at NACHC and a link to tell you more information about that. But I don't want to spend a lot of time on that today. I want to get us into our content.

([00:01:40](#)):

I'll move right into the honor of introducing our faculty member Jennifer Hughes. For those who haven't met Jennifer with us before, Jennifer is the vice president of CEEK and a NACHC partner in offering coaching sessions to health center staff. She is an international coach, federation and resilient leadership certified coach and often focuses her efforts on topics like communication, collaboration, leadership, culture and wellness. She's been working with NACHC for over two years now, is getting to know our health centers and our health center staff and is going to be leading us through our session today.

([00:02:21](#)):

Without more delay, Jennifer, take it away.

Jennifer ([00:02:25](#)):

Thank you, Cindy. I want to say hello to all my friends out there. This is the third session, so if you've joined us, you've heard my voice. I'm excited today. I feel like there's so many things from today's session that I am going to try, I'm going to do myself, I have been trying. I can talk about what I've learned, but really hoping to share some good things with you today about how to improve your focus and attention. I also think just with the pandemic, that this is something that may be improving.

([00:03:01](#)):

Focus and attention is at an all time high for some of us, not everyone. The pandemic just forced us how to change how we've always worked. With that came new ways of working and maybe new attempts at multi-tasking or what we'll talk about today, switch tasking. Those things have occurred more than ever and we're probably seeing that our ability to focus and pay attention has become more difficult even if you didn't change how you work. If you were back at the same job every day, I think that our minds and our attention was being pulled in multiple directions, because we had a stressor that we haven't experienced before. I think that impacts our ability to pay attention and focus.

[\(00:03:45\)](#):

My hope is today you will get some good nuggets that you can take with you to help yourself improve your attention and your focus. With that, we're going to get started.

[\(00:03:59\)](#):

This is what we're doing today. We are going to really define what focus and attention, what those two things mean, how they're different. Also, looking at ways that we have been impacted in regards to our ability to pay attention and focus. Then we're actually going to do a bunch of learning. We're going to learn a lot of techniques and tools so that we can try some things out to better pay attention and to focus more effectively. In fact, we are going to practice some things today. I think today will be a fun day of learning, in regards to different things that we can do.

[\(00:04:35\)](#):

As the prior two sessions, this is roughly how we're going to spend our time together today. You're going to see that we're going to have some time again teasing out what focus and attention are, really looking at some work done by Dr Amishi Jha around what our attention systems are and that's three parts. We're going to dive into that a little bit. We're going to look at tools and techniques that we can use to increase our attention and focus and then also practice some of that. That's roughly what we're going to be doing.

[\(00:05:07\)](#):

With that, let's move into a video where we're going to look a little bit more at focus and attention. I'm going to have you watch this video. For those of you who have seen this before, do not spoil it. Okay? You can't spoil this for anybody. So we're going to watch this video. It's going to tell you what to do throughout the video, so just pay attention and then we'll dissect a little bit afterwards.

Speaker 3 [\(00:05:40\)](#):

The monkey business illusion. Count how many times the players wearing white pass the ball.

[\(00:06:20\)](#):

The correct answer is 16 passes. Did you spot the gorilla? For people who haven't seen or heard about a video like this before, about half missed the gorilla. If you knew about the gorilla, you probably saw it, but did you notice the curtain changing color or the player on the black team leaving the game? Let's rewind and watch it again.

[\(00:06:54\)](#):

Here comes the gorilla and there goes a player and the curtain is changing from red to gold. When you're looking for a gorilla, you often miss other unexpected events and that's the monkey business illusion. Learn more about this illusion and the original gorilla experiment at theinvisiblegorilla.com.

Jennifer [\(00:07:21\)](#):

I love seeing that. For some people, this was probably the first time. A lot of people have seen this. It sounds like you've used it in different environments. At the end of the day what we did was ask you to pay attention to the players in white, but to focus on the passes that they made. What happens when you do that? You miss other things. I just felt like this was such a great example of being asked to pay attention and asked to focus somewhere and seeing what you might have missed. At the end of the day, the main finding is knowing that there's unexpected events might occur and that you might miss some things, but how do we then pull out a little bit when we're asked to focus in a specific area, how might

we pull out? I just thought this was a great way to get us started on what we're trying to do today, which is to focus and pay attention.

[\(00:08:24\)](#):

We're going to get to our first reflection, just like our past two, if you've been with us, we are going to have moments where I just take a little break and give you a couple of minutes to reflect on what you experienced. Since we can't do breakout rooms, because there's just way too many of us, this is our opportunity to do that reflection. I'm a big believer that what you put in is what you're going to get out, so really take a look at these questions and do your reflection. The workbook, you can actually type in there. If you don't have the workbook, you can get a piece of paper, you can get a pencil. If you don't have that, then just sit in the moment and think about this and reflect.

[\(00:09:02\)](#):

Here's our first question or first reflection is; what did you notice about your attention from that video? What did you pay attention to? Anything surprise you in that? We're going to just take two minutes to have you reflect on this. We'll take about another minute.

[\(00:11:08\)](#):

Take about 10 more seconds to wrap up.

[\(00:11:25\)](#):

I love seeing some of the comments come through. First of all, you make me feel like I'm not alone. Even though I've seen this video multiple times, I continue to miss when the color of the curtain changes. I don't know what that says about me, but I've watched it many times and still have that. Again, just notice what it is you missed. Notice what happens when you're told to focus in a certain area. Again, just like our prior session, self-awareness is key in the learning.

[\(00:11:57\)](#):

Let's talk about attention. What is attention? Attention is really where you're placing your mental, physical, or emotional energy. We could say that in that video we were really paying attention to the players in white. That was kind of the broader sense of where we were paying attention. We were then asked to focus. Focus is attention but with intention. I like to say we were, again, paying attention to the players who were in the white t-shirts, but then we were focused, and I heard many of you talk about this in the chat, we were focused on counting the number of passes. What happens when we get that hyper focused is we may miss a lot of the things that are going around.

[\(00:12:46\)](#):

I know this session is about improving our attention and focus, but I think it's good to know what the two of those things mean so that we know when it's best to use them. If we become hyper-focused, what happens to us? It's good to know what happens in those senses. There may be times where being hyper focused is going to be beneficial, but then there may be times where if we're hyper-focused we may be missing some things. We've got to be aware of that.

[\(00:13:16\)](#):

There's this great quote, not the one that's on the screen, I kind of doctored this one a little one. There's a great quote from Pedro Sorrentino who is a venture capitalist at 1VC I think was the name of it. I believe he is from South America. He is also the author of a newsletter, that it seems to be growing, called Stoic Capital. He has a great quote that says, "If you don't guard your time, people will steal it from you." I'm going to change that slightly to what you see on your screen, which is; if you don't guard your attention and focus people, your phone, your mind, whatever it might be, you can fill in the blank

there, will steal it from you. This, I think, is really embodied no better than by anyone but Steve Jobs who said, "People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on, but that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas or distractions that there are." You have to pick carefully.

[\(00:14:20\)](#):

I'm going to pull in our last session. We talked about setting boundaries and what do you say no to? Thinking about that, upgrading your no doesn't mean that you're never going to say yes. It just means that you default to saying no and you only say yes when it really makes sense. There's another great quote by this investor, Brent [inaudible 00:14:43], "Saying no is so powerful, because it preserves the opportunity to say yes." I'm going to read that again. Saying no is so powerful because it preserves the opportunity to say yes. There is ton of work out there from many different people, some new folks like Adam Grant who has come out to Covey who has talked about things around being very aware of what you're saying yes and no to. So keep that in mind.

[\(00:15:14\)](#):

I'm going to keep us going here. We also hear this all the time that we are now at the point where we have the attention span of a goldfish. Unfortunately, it's actually worse than that. According to a study from Microsoft, people, human beings now generally lose concentration after eight seconds. The notoriously ill focused goldfish lasts nine seconds. We can now say we are worse than a goldfish when it comes to attention span. But you have to think of your mind as a muscle. If you're not going to work your mind ... On my other screen, I have the emojis that are coming up, your reactions to things. I was a little surprised by the goldfish thing too. If we don't work our mind, if we are not going to think of our mind as a muscle, it's going to get weak. We have to work to increase that focus and attention.

[\(00:16:19\)](#):

The good news, I think there's a lot of techniques that we can use to build that muscle that actually don't take a lot of time. We're going to jump into those later in the session today. Before we get into some of those things, we're going to talk a little bit more about what it means to pay attention and be able to do that. The truth about attention and focus. There's a lot of truths here. It is a limited resource. I love this one. I won't read each of these. You can look at some of them.

[\(00:16:49\)](#):

One of the ones I want to pull out of here to just ping a little bit more is this idea of paying attention being an investment. If you thought of paying attention like it was spending. What if you had to pay \$5 every time you used your attention on something, that you had to pay someone? Would that change your behavior and where you would spend your attention? I know if I were doing, that, yes I would. I probably think differently about where I was spending my money in order to pay attention.

[\(00:17:24\)](#):

I also like the one bullet on here about where we're focusing. What you look for is what is going to take your attention. Are you in a job where you're looking for reasons to get out? Because guess what? You're going to find them. That's what you pay attention to, that is what you will see. You can also say the flip of that. Are you in a job and you're looking for reasons to stay, because you will find them if that's what you're paying attention to. The same thing goes with relationships. It can go with our home, with other decisions we might be making. Really think about what are you paying attention to, because that's also what you are going to see.

[\(00:18:06\)](#):

In addition, there's a lot of benefits to paying attention and focusing. Some of them are; improves your memory, you become more patient. We actually do things more thoroughly and more efficiently. We can also improve our relationships. There are also the opportunities, we'll see more of them. This is just a short list of some of the benefits that you can receive if you increase your ability to pay attention and improve your focus area. Just again, a couple of them. I am positive if you were to go out and look, you're going to find a lot more.

[\(00:18:47\)](#):

We're going to get to another reflection. I want you to take a look at this list of benefits. If it improves your memory, you can become more patient, you'll do things more thoroughly, more efficiently. You can improve your interpersonal relationships and you may see more opportunities available to you. I want you to take two minutes and pick one of these that you feel like is really important to you and just jot down why. Okay? Thinking about your why on that. Again, we'll take two minutes to do this. About one more minute.

[\(00:20:24\)](#):

Take about 10 seconds.

[\(00:21:37\)](#):

I see lots of great things coming in. A lot around time management. Remembering that what you say yes and no to impacts that time. In the work that I do, we talk about not saying time management, but changing that to commitment management. What are you committing to? You can't really change time, but you can change what you're committing to, so thinking about that. We're going to keep moving.

[\(00:22:09\)](#):

We've defined focus, we've defined attention, we know some of the benefits of improving these. We want to look at some of the things that impact our ability to pay attention and focus. What is it that makes us feel so scattered, foggy, overwhelmed? There's a lot here. It's less about turning on our attention, but more about saying no. We've talked about this. It's less about our goals and more about our process. I think this is a really impactful thing to think about. That it's not these goals that we're setting in life, it's about the process that we're using to reach those goals. If we think about changing the process a little bit, that is what may impact our ability to focus and pay attention a little bit more.

[\(00:23:06\)](#):

I talked about Dr. Amishi Jha, that's J-H-A. She is the author of Peak Mind: Find Your Focus, Own Your Attention, Invest 12 Minutes a Day. This book, if you haven't read it, take a look. There's also some podcasts out there that she has spoken on. There's one in particular between her and Brene Brown on Brene Brown's podcast. She reveals some really easy to adapt, flexible 12 minute a day exercises. She says this is to lift the fog, declutter the mind and strengthen focus so you can experience more of your life. I have resources at the end of this. So I see some things coming in about her name and her book and all these great things. At the end of this there's a resources slide. If you have the workbook, you have that in there. Just want to let you know that that's out there.

[\(00:24:07\)](#):

She also says that research is showing we're missing 50% of our lives. I'm going to repeat that. We are missing 50% of our lives. Why is that? It's because we're not paying attention, we're getting distracted. She talks about that We have these three attention systems, and we're going to go through these. The first one's called our flashlight. Think about the flashlight and what a flashlight does. When you point your flashlight, it becomes brighter. You're highlighting what's right in front of you. Whatever is not in

that flashlight beam, that information is suppressed, it's dampened, it's dimmed, or maybe even blocked out completely.

[\(00:24:56\)](#):

They call this particular the flashlight, they call this our orienting system. It's what we use to select information. Think about this webinar right now. Are you focused on this slide? If you're focused on this slide, then you may not be noticing if something's going on behind you. I'm going to have a kid who'll come from school soon and he could go right behind me and I not even notice it because I'm focused on doing this webinar. The question is, where are you focusing? What if I started talking to you about this delicious almond croissant that I had the other day? Where are you focusing now? Are you on the slide? Are you considering how to get to your bakery to give nice tasty croissant? It just goes to show that the flashlight is a powerful tool. It can keep you focused - on a specific area, but it's only effective if you can keep it pointed in the right direction.

[\(00:25:55\)](#):

What's the next one? What's the next attention system? This one's called the floodlight. This one's more about noticing. Where the flashlight is really narrow and focused, the floodlight, which is also called our alerting system, is more broad and open. It has a more broad, receptive, you're taking in more information. You're not quite sure what you're looking for, but you're looking for something and you're ready to move quickly to deploy your attention to any particular area, meaning turn your flashlight on if you need to.

[\(00:26:30\)](#):

Have you ever been walking and you just maybe walking at night and you have that weird sense that someone might be watching you or following you? What happens to your attention when that happens? You get really broad. You start to notice everything around you. You could talk about the dog and the person walking the dog that's coming a hundred yards ahead. You can talk about the street lamp that's coming up, but you're taking a much broader stance. You have a heightened sense of awareness of your surroundings. You even notice, internally, maybe your heart rate is moving faster. You're thinking about that you may physically be moving faster. All this noticing all these things around you. This is what your flood light is. At some point though, if you operated in this floodlight, this noticing constantly, it's probably not very good for you. You need to calm down a little bit, shut that flood light down have certain things that you're able to focus on. That is the second attention system.

[\(00:27:35\)](#):

The third attention system is called the juggler. This is where you plan and manage your behavior. The juggler is the one that directs, oversees, it manages everything we're doing moment to moment as well as ensuring that the actions we take are aligned with what we're aiming to do. The juggler is the kind of overseer, if you will, to make you stay on track, make sure that the actions you take align with the goals that you say you want. This is also referred to as your executive function. For those of you who have heard that word, that's the juggler, your executive function. We're actually going to dig into executive function just a tad bit more so that we all have a full understanding of what that is. I just want to make sure we understand we have three different attention systems. The flashlight; narrow and focused, the floodlight; broader, noticing a lot more around us and the juggler where we can plan and manage our behavior or our executive functioning. We're going to dive a little bit more into that executive function.

[\(00:28:43\)](#):

There's really eight mental processes that allow us to organize, regulate our lives and activities. We each have our own capacity for each of these executive functions. Our capacity in each of these, it has been

largely influenced on our ability to focus and attention. I love this visual, because it's helpful to think about this in the terms of a pitcher of water and each of these executive functioning areas being a glass that we can fill up. If we each have one of these glasses to fill up and we each have our own pitcher of water and that represents the energy, so that water is our energy that we need to put into our executive functions. The executive functions are planning, initiation, our working memory, our effort, our emotional regulation, our attention, flexible thinking and self monitoring.

[\(00:29:45\)](#):

Now, what happens when we need to engage a function is that we need to put a little energy in that, or pour a little bit of water in that. Sometimes one area or function might demand a lot more out of that pitcher than somewhere else. For example, let's say that you've had a very upsetting argument with someone who is close to you and you need to pour a ton of water into that emotional regulation cup just to keep yourself together at work for the rest of the day. That's going to be a very full cup of emotional regulation. Again, just to keep yourself together while you're at work that day. What does that do to the rest of the glasses? It means you don't have as much to pour into the other seven functions, including attention, because you are now consumed by pouring all that energy into your emotional regulation glass. You don't have as much.

[\(00:30:48\)](#):

We may find on those particular days, if something like this happened to us, that we have a more difficult time or it's a lot harder for us to focus. We maybe aren't as consistent as we usually are, because there just isn't enough water to pour into those other glasses. Again, we are going to dig into this about what are some things we can do, what are tools and techniques that we can use to help us be able to manage that, when we need to pull back that water a little bit.

[\(00:31:21\)](#):

I hope you guys found this visual and that explanation really helpful. It was really helpful for me to say, "Wow. No wonder when I'm upset, when I have some upsetting news, for example, that I have difficulty paying attention to a certain area at work or I have difficulty not getting upset about something else that occurs at work because I'm already upset. I don't have that ability to regulate as well." I just thought this was a great way to demonstrate that.

[\(00:31:53\)](#):

How can we do this? How can we improve our focus and our attention? Now, that we've defined it, we have some benefits, we want to get moving on how do we improve it. That's what we're here for. Number one, your lifestyle. Step one is to look at your lifestyle. Our lifestyle affects our cognitive abilities. If you can eat well, if you can get your healthy dose of exercise, whatever that might be for you. If you can also get that healthy dose of sleep, this is not just hours, this is not about saying I sleep eight hours, it's talking about good sleep. Again, good sleep is different than saying, "I'm sleeping for eight hours." If you can manage your stress, this is going to impact your ability to be more focused and to be able to pay attention.

[\(00:32:51\)](#):

We're going to get into a little bit of reflection here. I want you to take three minutes and think about your lifestyle. Is there something that you feel like you need to change? Maybe you already know this, right? But is there something you feel like you need to change that can support you in improving your attention and focus? If so, what is something you're willing to do? Okay? What is something you're willing to do? Again, we're going to take three minutes on this one.

[\(00:33:46\)](#):

This might be one where I would encourage you to share and chat if you're comfortable. One of the things is this gives folks ideas of what they might be able to do as well. You guys have a lot of wisdom in this space, let's use it. If there's something that you feel like you could do and implement, put that in there. What could you do? I really want to hear about what it is you might be able to do to make that change. Again, we'll take about two more minutes, Take about one more minute.

[\(00:36:19\)](#):

10 more seconds.

[\(00:36:31\)](#):

I can share that I have one thing that I know impacts me greatly, it's the exercise piece. If I can get that exercise in, and it doesn't have to be an hour and a half at the gym, if I can get a 30 minute to 45 minute some sort of activity, in I sleep better, so I'm already feeling physically better, but I sleep better. It also encourages me to eat better. I'm watching what I'm eating. I usually go for at least a walk that also helps me with de stressing thing. Almost one thing that I could do makes the rest of those fall into place a little bit better. Think about that as you're thinking about things you can do. I'm going to keep us moving.

[\(00:37:20\)](#):

Step two; this is look at your environment. Take control of what you can control. If you find yourself in an environment that's distracting, it's going to be difficult for you to pay attention and focus. There was a study that was done that found that the typical person checks email once every five minutes and that, on average, it takes 64 seconds to resume that previous task after checking your email. These two visuals on the screen talk about multitasking, but I would ask, are you multitasking or what Dr. Amishi Jha talks about, which is task switching? I had to really think about this. I thought I was so good at doing these multitasking. When I read this part I was like, I think for me, this is very true that she states multitasking is a myth. What we're generally doing when we think we're multitasking is actually just switching between tasks.

[\(00:38:25\)](#):

Think about how often you might do this a day from working on something to then checking your email to then checking your text messages, the to then checking something else, to looking at social media, whatever it might be. This can be exhausting, because your entire brain is recalibrating to a new task and that takes energy. Really have to think about what it is you're doing in your environment and how you might ...

[\(00:38:55\)](#):

I'm going to call attention to the last session we had on setting boundaries. What boundaries might you need to set in your environment? Are there distractions or even enhancements you might be able to make. Example for me, I am downstairs in our home. This part of the house is colder, so I have a little heater under my desk that keeps me a little bit more comfortable, from a temperature perspective. Thinking about what are those things you might be able to do? We talked about setting boundaries in regards to your stress. This goes back to step one. Also, thinking about what interruptions are you getting throughout the day?

[\(00:39:35\)](#):

Are there things that you could do blocking your time, doing time blocking, maybe color coding your calendar. Maybe you need to get more clarity on what expectations are. There's some other things we'll talk about when we get to some of the tools and techniques. And then I'm going to bring up another great person in regards to some really good techniques that you could learn from, James Clear, the author of Atomic Habits. He talks about building healthy habits so that you can be more productive in

life. He's the one who talks about your systems. I love this quote, "You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems." This systems, if they're not supporting you and focusing and paying attention, you're going to have difficulty. He also has so much good stuff around habit, when you build habits upon habits and things like that. Just a lot of good stuff in his book. Again, I have resources at the end of this, so don't feel like you have to quickly write things down. Great book on that.

[\(00:40:37\)](#):

Question for you, Do you think you're multitasking? If you think you're a good multi tasker, maybe you need to take a step back and say, am I task switching? If I am task switching, how quickly am I really able to get back onto that other task? How much time might I be wasting if I were to able to focus and pay attention a little bit better? Reflection. Again, we're going to take two minutes on this one I think. Yeah. We're going to take two minutes on this one. What, in your environment, might be impacting your attention and focus? What one environmental change or boundary are you willing to try? Again, two minutes. Take one more minute. All right. Again, if you think you are multitasking, when I think of multitasking, I think of that as being able to do multiple tasks at the same time, think again. Dr. Amishi Jha [inaudible 00:43:31] it's a myth that we can actually do that, that our brain actually stops what it is we're doing to refocus on another task. She refers to that as task switching. We use this word multitasking like, "Oh. They're such a good multi tasker." I just want to caution us, are we truly multitasking? Multitasking to me means I'm able to do multiple tasks at once. Whereas, if our brain is not capable of actually doing that, then we are task switching and using a lot of energy to do that, to go from one task to another, to another, to another, to then come back. So just think about it. This doesn't mean some people may not be way better and spend less energy doing that, but just something for us to consider.

[\(00:44:19\)](#):

All right. Step three. Manage your energy. When you're managing your energy, I want to just point back to step one, your lifestyle. That can definitely impact your energy. But I think what we want to talk about here is really what is your body rhythm, if you will. When are you most effective? When do you feel like you have the most energy in your day? When do you feel like you have the least energy in your day? Have you ever even thought about it? Have you paid attention to when you might get your good work done, versus when you might need to hold off?

[\(00:44:59\)](#):

I know for myself that I tend to have more energy in the morning in regards to I'm a crisper thinker in the morning. It doesn't mean I can't do certain tasks in the afternoon, but it just means that if I want my best thinking that's going to be in the morning. I know that around three o'clock every day, so you guys will actually get to watch this happen, not true because I have some steps that I do. But after about three, when I start to lose my steam, as I refer to it.

[\(00:45:29\)](#):

I know if I need to have energy for something that's going to happen after three o'clock, [inaudible 00:45:37] a good brisk walk will help me. I also know that my eating habits impact that. If I already am going to have lower energy after three o'clock, if I need to do some things that are going to require me to be a little bit more higher energy around that timeframe, then I change my eating habits a little bit. I tend to try and eat much lighter lunches on those days where I have to do things that require me a little bit more energy, or I may even do smaller meals as a way to help me manage that energy.

[\(00:46:11\)](#):

We're all very different. So this is something that you need to investigate for yourself as to figuring out when do I have energy, when do I not have energy? We have a lot of questions on the next reflection that are going to get you to think about that a little bit. We're going to jump into that. I know it's a lot of questions. We're going to give you three minutes to do this one because I do think some of them are pretty quick answers. When do you have the most energy? When do you have the least? Would starting or ending your day at certain times or with certain activities help you benefit, in regards to focusing things like that?

[\(00:46:50\)](#):

How should your breaks throughout the day to help you with those energy fluctuations? Have you noticed if those breaks revitalize you or do they drain you? Again, just recognizing, doing a little bit of reflection on this. What do you feel like gives you energy or gives you those positive vibes? Then thinking outside of the box, what are some things that you could do? How might you change your day so that you can be more present and fulfilled and, therefore, pay more attention and be more focused?

[\(00:47:19\)](#):

Again, three minutes to think about these and run through your answers. Again, if you have your workbook, you can type them right in. If you have a piece of paper, jot them down. If you're not in a place where you can do either one of those, then just sit back, look at the slide and reflect on this a little bit.

[\(00:49:14\)](#):

Take about another minute.

[\(00:49:45\)](#):

About 10 more seconds.

[\(00:50:23\)](#):

All right. Thank you. I see some things coming in the notes. I feel like you're giving teasers for what we're going to get to. Some of the things that you're doing are some things that I'll be mentioning. See, I told you there's a lot of wisdom in this space. All right.

[\(00:50:40\)](#):

Step four: practice. If it was as easy as being reminded to pay attention, then we would all just be focused machines. If we want different results, guess what? We've got to try different things and we have to put the time in. I do not have magic dust. I apologize. They did not give that to me. You can't expect to attend this webinar and then walk away and be more focused and pay more attention. You have to be willing to put the work in. You've got to practice. You've got to try new things and practice those. You've got to invest in that. Figure out what works for you and what doesn't. I know you all came today hoping that I would just go [inaudible 00:51:26] with my magic focus and attention dust. Sorry, guys. Not happening.

[\(00:51:31\)](#):

What do we do? We've looked at these four steps to improve our focus and attention. We're going to dig into some tools and techniques. I love this visual, it's just great. Are you mindful full? Are you mindful? On average, we experience probably 87 interruptions per day. Okay? 87. Just want to put that out. 87. Did you know that 58% of smartphone users don't go one hour without checking their phones? This was from a Huffington Post article. 58% of smartphone users don't go one hour without checking their phones. If we want to be better about being focused and improving our attention, then mindfulness is the antidote to interruption. It is worth the investment. Okay?

[\(00:52:37\)](#):

We're going to keep going. Again, Dr. Jha, she's done a ton of research about this. She calls mindfulness a brain training tool. Mindfulness, it's the power of staying present. It's paying attention to that present moment experience without any conceptual elaboration or emotional reactivity. She did this great study with division one football players and asked ... Of course, there's a control group and all of these good things, but there was a group where they had to do 12 minutes of mindfulness practice each day. The key here was the more you practice, the more you benefit. That doing 12 minutes today may not reap you rewards, but do it 12 minutes per day for five days a week for at least two weeks and you're going to start to see improvement in your focus and intention.

[\(00:53:26\)](#):

In this division one college football player piece, she got them during their high demand preseason summer training, that takes place just before they come into school. They were randomly assigned to receive this either mindfulness training program or relaxation training program. This study demonstrated that sustained attention and emotional wellbeing are at risk during periods of those high demand, such as that period of intensive, athletic training. What she noticed was that greater engagement in the mindfulness training was associated with less decline in sustained attention during their training period and that if you had greater engagement in mindfulness training and relaxation training that you protected against decline in your wellbeing. That gets to your wellbeing.

[\(00:54:23\)](#):

This study suggests that when you consider those benefits, it's important that we talk about the practice. Going back to the this isn't about doing one mindfulness training activity today and then expecting huge results, but that practice over time is what will give you the benefits that you're looking for. Just like we do physical exercise, it must be performed with this regularity in order to train the body for performance success. Again, for these division one athletes, they had to do this training regularly. The mental exercises must also be practiced with some sort of regularity so that you can benefit your attention and wellbeing. I just thought this was a really powerful study in how mindfulness was helping not just in that attention piece but in wellbeing overall.

[\(00:55:16\)](#):

What do people report after practicing mindfulness? I'd love to say that you try mindfulness training for two weeks and report back to me, but that's not how this is working. I'm going to give you benefits that are out there. 89% improved ability to reduce stress. 91% improved ability to remain calm. 85% increased ability to connect with others. 79% increased energy levels. 91% enhanced clarity of mind. I am going to speak from my own personal experience, and I can admit too that I fall off the wagon, but when I am practicing mindfulness regularly, daily basis every day for at a minimum two weeks, I am better at everything I do. I feel like I'm a better colleague. I feel like I am better at work. I feel like my work products are better. I think I'm a better parent. I think I'm a better friend. All of these benefits.

[\(00:56:20\)](#):

There's some other benefits that practicing mindfulness can also give you; decreased depression. I mean that's huge. Increase in your ability to emotionally regulate, to regulate your emotions when something comes at you. You could also have cognitive improvements. I personally noticed this, better physical health. Again, practicing small amounts of mindfulness. Dr. Jha says 12 minutes a day. We all have 12 minutes a day we could be putting on mindfulness.

[\(00:56:55\)](#):

Guess what? We're going to do 12 minutes today. We're going to listen to a couple of mindfulness activities. These are just to give you some examples of things that you could do. The first one is a grounding meditation. I really want you to hopefully be in a place where you can sit in a chair, have your legs on the floor and listen to each of these. Again, these are just some different options for you. You don't have to take these and do them. We just want to introduce you to some tools and techniques today. Again, we're going to go with our first one. This one is a grounding meditation. They'll tell us what to do.

Speaker 4 ([00:57:35](#)):

Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale. Sit comfortably in your chair with both feet on the ground. Sit with a straight, but relaxed posture and close your eyes if they aren't closed already. Now, focus on the feeling of your feet on the floor. Now, in your mind, visualize or imagine a tree standing tall and steady in a peaceful setting in nature. Observe this tree. Notice its leaves and branches. Notice the texture of the trunk of this tree and then notice how the tree is connected to the earth. Then, imagine the roots of this tree, that exist below the ground and its vast root system that spreads through the earth. Then imagine yourself in this place in nature with your feet directly on the earth and feel a physical connection to the earth below you.

([00:58:53](#)):

Through this connection, discharge anything from your body or mind that you want to let go of right now, sending it into the earth knowing that the ground beneath you is there to support you in any way that you need. Then imagine your own energetic roots grounding into the earth like roots of a tree, keeping you steady and bringing nourishment to your body and mind. Allow your body to receive what it needs and allow the earth's energy to move up your body so you can feel your whole body connected to the earth.

([00:59:36](#)):

Now imagine soft rays of sunlight shining on the top of your head, the same way light hits the leaves of a tree to keep it alive and growing. Allow the gentle warmth of this light to move down and through your body, providing you with energy and comfort. Let the energy of the sunlight from above and the energy from the earth below meet and stabilize in your core. Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale. Keeping your eyes closed, gently let go of the imagery, coming back into your body and into the present moment. Sit with yourself here, feeling steady, strong, and centered. Now, take a deep breath in through your nose and as you exhale, gently open your eyes.

Jennifer ([01:00:57](#)):

That is a grounding meditation. That was a little over three minutes. I'm curious if you feel different after that. No need to say anything, but just pay attention. Pay attention to if you feel different after going through that, versus when you started. Okay? We're going to try another one. This one's called a body scan. I see so many great things coming in, Chad, in regards to what folks are using. Keep sharing. There's, again, a lot of wisdom in our space today. This one's called a body scan.

Speaker 5 ([01:01:59](#)):

Welcome to this three minute guided body scan. Start by sitting comfortably with a straight back and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths in and out to ground you in this moment, feeling your breath as it enters your body and as it leaves your body. As the breath flows in, follow it in. Then as the breath

flows out, follow it through to its completion. With each out breath, let your body become heavy, sinking deeper into your chair.

[\(01:02:48\)](#):

Now, bring your attention to your head, feeling into your scalp, the forehead and temples. Observe your eyes, cheeks, your ears, jaw and chin. Breathing in and out, letting all tensions release. Now, lower your focus to the neck and shoulders, letting them soften. Bring awareness to your arms, extending it down towards the wrists, the palms and fingers, observing any sensations that arise on the surface of the skin or deeper within. Now, come to the chest and torso area, being aware of the abdomen. Then bringing your awareness around to the back, observing your upper back and lower back. If you notice any intensity here, try directing the breath into those areas, letting them soften. Then, bring your attention to your pelvis and hips. Scanning the legs, the ankles, the feet and the toes. Direct your breath into these areas, relaxing into stillness.

[\(01:04:43\)](#):

Notice how paying attention to the entire length of your body feels. Then, when you're ready, bring your attention back to the room and slowly open your eyes. Enjoy this relaxed, peaceful state and take it with you into your day.

Jennifer [\(01:05:11\)](#):

Again, I just want you to notice how you're feeling. I noticed when I was going through that one, I had a lot of tension in my jaw, probably because I'm speaking to all of you. Again, do you feel different than when you started? Did you like one more than the other? Did you like the body scan more than the grounding? Start to [inaudible 01:05:37] of where you feel like it's helping you the most.

[\(01:05:40\)](#):

This next one that we're going to go through is one that I share with so many of my clients, because it's such an easy one to do at any point in time and it keeps your ability to pay attention and focus very fast. It's called box breathing. They're going to walk us through it. This one's only a minute. The idea is that you're going to breathe in for four, you're going to hold it for four, you'll breathe out for four, you will hold that for four. This will walk us through a minute of doing this. It's just called box breathing. One minute. What I love about the box breathing is that you quickly ... I can't do anything else because I'm counting, while also holding breath and pushing out breath and breathing in breath. Love this one. The last one I'm going to tell you about, there's no video for, so it's just me, is one that I learned in a coaching program that I was in that you can do anywhere to bring you back into the present. I think I might have named it incorrectly, but that's okay. Fingerprint feeling. I'm not sure that there was a name for it so I made this one up, which is where you are rubbing your pointer finger and thumb together so softly but intently that you are actually trying to feel your fingerprints.

[\(01:08:14\)](#):

You can do this without people noticing. If you find your attention is wandering or that you need to bring yourself to the present moment, this physical touching is one way to do that. With an intention of trying to feel your fingerprints, very focused, it can bring you back to the present moment. We're just going to get everybody to try this and we're going to give ourselves about a minute to see about trying to feel your fingerprints. Again, you're rubbing your fingers and if you want to do your thumb and your middle finger, that's fine too, but to rub your fingers together so lightly that you are just trying to feel your actual fingerprints.

[\(01:09:31\)](#):

Take about 10 more seconds.

[\(01:09:45\)](#):

All right. I told you we were going to get some practice. We got some practice. I'm going to keep us going. Sorry. It's going to play all my videos. All right. There are some other tools as well. I've seen some great things coming through chat. This meditation mindfulness task, chunking. Being very mindful of the task that you're doing. A brain dump. This is the act of just writing everything down that comes to mind, on a particular topic, so that you can get all thoughts and ideas out. There's something called straw breathing where you're going to exhale fully through a plastic drinking straw. I know we're probably not supposed to have plastic drinking straws anymore, so you can get one of your metal ones. Try and get all of that air out and then inhale normally not through the straw, but then exhale fully through that and do that for a few minutes.

[\(01:10:39\)](#):

Fidget items. I think I saw some things about tapping, rubber bands, there's TheraBands [inaudible 01:10:46] you can use. There's these clicking cubes, if you find yourself needing to something like that. Having a ball chair really makes you focused in the moment of sitting, because if not, you could literally fall off of it. Get yourself a standing desk. These are things that are helpful with people. I saw something come in on the Pomodoro technique, we're going to talk about that next. I'm not going to leave that one, but that's something that I use regularly.

[\(01:11:12\)](#):

I also heard a lot of great things. I know we like to talk about our phones being distracting, but our phones can also help us. There's a ton of apps out there. Forest, Serene, Freedom, we talked about Calm, other ones that came up. There's a ton more out there, find one that works for you. I have an Apple watch that you can set up to vibrate when you need to add a little mindfulness into your day, so you can set those things up. We talked about boundary setting, where you can do time blocks or phone rules or things like that. You can also implement a reward system, that if you do these things and you get certain rewards for them. Again, this is not a full list of things that you could be doing. I think our group has that full list probably in the chat at this point, but what works for you. Try things out, practice some things so that you can figure out what's going to be best for you to help you with attention and focus.

[\(01:12:12\)](#):

Then I talked about the Pomodoro technique and I'm going to pull this one out because it's something that I do regularly. Choosing a task, setting a timer, and working on that task for a specified amount of time. When the timer goes off, take a short break. Then you can keep coming back to that. Now, I'm going to admit to everyone here that 25 minutes is too long for me, so I do 20 minutes. Figure out the time that works for you. If 25 minutes you just feel like you get distracted and it doesn't work, then go shorter until you can get a longer amount of time. That's the Pomodoro technique.

[\(01:12:54\)](#):

There's a lot of digital distractions out there and we can manage them. Some things that I'm using, that are working for me, is I do a to-do list every single day. I now physically write it down. There's something about that brain to physical get it out of your body that's helpful for me. Maybe try a to-do list every day if you're not already doing that. Leaving your phone in another room so that you don't get distracted by it. Setting your schedule, when you can be on electronics and when not to be. Maybe you need to go through and unsubscribe from all the emails and newsletters and all the things that you're getting. A lot of folks that I work with color code their calendar so that they know how to use things. I don't personally

do that. Maybe you need moments of unplugging completely. Maybe it's a weekend, maybe it's a full day, whatever it might be, but determining if there's time where you just need to unplug.

[\(01:13:49\)](#):

A lot of phones and other electronics have the do not disturb or the focus. I actually have mine on right now so that I don't get the emails that fly in while I'm doing this webinar. Then allow other apps to manage your apps. There's something called Antisocial, which can limit your amount of time on social media apps. You can also utilize email filters. I am sure there is a ton of other things that can help you with the digital distractions, but they're real. These digital distractions are real. They're impacting our ability to pay attention and to focus and we need to control some of those. Again, just a few for you to think about.

[\(01:14:31\)](#):

I want you to do another three minute reflection. Looking at some of the options that are over here, as well as the one digital distractions we just talked about, what are two that you're willing to try? What are two that you would commit to, to improve your focus and attention? Then I want you to get detailed about that. What specifically are you willing to do to incorporate that first one? What specifically are you willing to do to incorporate that second one? We are going to take three minutes to do this. Take about another minute.

[\(01:17:11\)](#):

So many good things coming in through chat. I even see some great things from our last session on boundary setting.

[\(01:17:25\)](#):

About 10 more seconds.

[\(01:17:46\)](#):

I'm going to keep us moving. Some top takeaways; I think you can improve your attention and focus, if you're willing to put the practice in. Don't forget that your executive functions, remember that emotional regulation, planning, there's eight of them, they affect your ability to pay attention and focus. If something happened in your day that you had to pour more into that emotional regulation that is going to impact your ability to pay attention, to focus. They're more about what you say yes to and no in every moment. That's that attention and focus. There's a lot of tools and techniques, from your lifestyle changes to your environmental changes. All of that impacts your ability to focus and attention. Make sure you're looking at what's going on in your life.

[\(01:18:54\)](#):

Love that quote around, that you don't rise to your goals, you fall to your systems and thinking about what systems do you have in place to support you. Fall in love with the process. Discipline dominates motivation every time. Lastly, practice, practice, practice, practice, practice, practice, practice, practice.

[\(01:19:12\)](#):

I mentioned that I had a lot of resources. We've got a lot of questions in the last two webinars in regards to resources that are available. Again, this is just what I used for this webinar. I pulled from different pieces. These two books are just fantastic. Highly recommend those. Lots of good things on the links, how I built this. I have to say, we've done three webinars to date, but there is something about doing a webinar and being able to get some of my own mindfulness practice in, that really [inaudible 01:19:46]. Super excited that we could practice that together. That is all I have.

[\(01:19:52\)](#):

I'm going to turn it over to you, Cindy. Thank you, all.

Cindy ([01:20:00](#)):

Jennifer, thank you for your time today and your wisdom. I am actually really relaxed after some of those techniques. I'm actually looking forward to a quick walk outside and then jumping back into some things. Appreciate you so much. I appreciate all of you on the webinar today. I know that our days are crazy and we saw that in the chat with some of the things that you were sharing and you took 90 minutes out of your day to spend with us to learn some techniques to take home with you. I hope that you are able to do that.

([01:20:33](#)):

If we can move the slide forward one more ... The recording will be available in about a week's time. We do have one more session coming up next week. The link that you have for your workbooks is also the same for your recordings, the chat logs. We've tried to post as much as we can there for you, so that way you have access to all the comments and the resources. We do have a FAQ that's going to be coming out from Jennifer with some of the questions that we've had through the first couple of sessions. If we didn't get to those in the chat, we will get back to those.

([01:21:08](#)):

This is just a slide with some additional resources for you. Again, that that link on the left hand side on the bottom takes you to the library for this webinar series. Then our right hand side gives you some additional resources for you to click through that NACHC has available to you.

([01:21:25](#)):

With that, have a wonderful afternoon. As you close out, you'll be taken to a evaluation. Please take a few moments to fill that out for us so we know how to continue to support you and your health center. Have a great day. Thank you.