Intro

Introduce myself and have ppl meet the others.
It's always nice to begin the session with an ice-breaker.

Make sure ppl are comfortable and feel safe.
Explain what guided meditation is and how it's used. Tell them what they can expect so they can begin without worry.

Meditation

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally

Invitation

Beginner's Mind: see what it would be like to meet each moment with fresh eyes.
Be Present: take a break from email, snacking, rumination, and other distractions. If you need to come or go early, support the group by doing so quietly.
Kindness & Curiosity: invite these attitudes towards yourself and others.

Create a judgement free space and this includes putting judgment on yourself.
Let the energy flow and remember I'm serving others. My purpose is to help people relax and move within themselves. Be the light that guides the way.

Starting the Meditation

Encourage people to lightly move around or stretch to loosen up and raise their energy level a little before sitting

Model good posture!!

- Do what works for your body. Everybody is different, and everybody should be comfortable (but not slacked or slumped over).
- Sitting still helps the mind to calm down. But if you feel you need to move, do it purposefully. Try to play with not moving and see what happens.
- Find a posture of "dignity and ease."

- Tuck the chin slightly in, or imagine that you are being pulled up at the crown of your head by an invisible string—this relaxes the neck.

Instructions:

Vary pause lengths during the practice from **two breaths to eight or more** (counting them helps!). If in doubt, talk less.

- Keep them **present** not future/past
- Keep the as inclusive and supportive as possible
    - "If it feels right in this moment, allowing the eyes to close. If you choose to have your eyes open, softly gazing down on your cheeks."
- E.g. “Feeling the sensations of the breath” or “If you notice attention is not on the breath, gently guiding it back.”
- You're asking people to listen, not do
- Instructions tell them what to focus on

Give examples after instruction:

- Body Scan
    - “Now feeling into your lower legs. What is here to notice? Pressure? Temperature? Position? Maybe nothing at all? There is no need to evoke a sensation. We are just showing up for whatever is already here. Or what is not here.”
- Emotional states:
    - “Now bringing attention to any emotions that might be present right now. There might be some anxiety or restlessness. Or maybe sadness. Or joy. Whatever it is, it's okay.”
- Acceptance / Acknowledgement:
    - “As you feel into your legs, there might be a feeling of appreciation. Or there might not.” Or “Inviting a sense of acceptance into the present moment” or “Opening to a sense of acceptance, if that is available to you right now.”

Cueing / Spacing

- **Cueing** reminds ppl to bring back their attention
    - For beginners:
        - Normalize the wandering mind and any judgments that might arise
- **Space** is the silent time given to put into practice what you ask ppl to do
- Example cues:
    - “Where is the mind now?”
    - “If the mind wanders, just noticing it and gently bringing it back to the breath.” (This is an example of an instruction that is also a very common cue.)

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Cue from the middle:

- In the pauses between your sentences or cues, really connect with your body, your breath. Feel it.
- Then say the next sentence.
- Then feel back into your body, your own present-moment experience.
- Practice this back and forth until it feels natural and not like a back and forth anymore.

Debrief (10 min)

Closing the meditation with a few moments of silence and then open the room up for a few questions or the sharing of thoughts/experiences about what came up for them during the practice

Why come together?
If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together..

- Groups give structure & accountability, which helps build a habit of practice
- Practicing with others can foster the experience of a deeper practice
- Sharing insights and/or challenges with others helps gain more perspective about the practice
- Building a mindful community supports the sustainment of practice

Closing (2 minutes)

Thank the group for coming, share any logistics about future sessions.

Optionally, you can invite the group to each share in one or two words how they are feeling at the end of the meeting.