

Mindfulness Practices: tools for everyday use

Led by Ratnadevi

This course offers effective methods for dealing with stress, anxiety and depression in our daily lives. It is based on Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) - programmes that combine contemporary medical research with traditional Buddhist approaches to well-being. The course offers a systematic training in mindfulness which is a way of being present to our moment-by-moment experience with an attitude of acceptance and curiosity. The main part of the training is done during home practice.

How exactly does mindfulness help me?

Mindfulness practice helps us to do the following;

- notice habitual, ruminative thought patterns and disengage from them
- prevent mild states of distress from spiraling out of control
- stop the inner battle and self-judgement
- develop a more body-centered, grounded awareness
- open up a sense of inner peace and perspective
- respond wisely and creatively to life's circumstances
- improve our self-esteem
- enhance our enjoyment of life - rather than being on automatic pilot

The mindfulness approach also helps us see the patterns of our mind and gradually come to recognize the links between unpleasant experience, negative thoughts and distressing moods. But rather than trying to change the content of our thoughts, or trying not to think (a misconception of meditation), the emphasis is on changing our relationship with our thoughts, seeing them as turbulence on the surface of a still ocean or like clouds in a clear blue sky. You learn to rest in the present moment without having to ruminate about the past or worry about the future. There will still be unpleasant experience (because life will always offer us both pleasure and pain), but you can lessen the suffering that is the result of unhelpful, automatic reactions to it.

What are the main components of the programme?

The main methods are mindful movement (a gentle form of yoga), bodyscan meditation (lying down) and sitting meditation. In each class, you have an opportunity to talk about how you got on with the home practices, the obstacles that inevitably arise, and how to deal with them skillfully. Each class is organized around a theme that is explored through both group inquiry and mindfulness practice.

Who is this course for?

A large body of research over the past 2 decades has found MBCT and MBSR to be effective for people who experience stress, anxiety and depression, as well as a variety of chronic pain conditions. It is ideal for people who are looking for methods of self-empowerment and personal change and are prepared to put in the required time (on average 1 hour daily). (If you are looking **primarily** for help with pain management, we recommend the *Breathworks* Living well with Pain and Illness course also run at the Glasgow Buddhist Centre).

I have a busy life - do I really need to practise at home?

Changing old patterns of thinking and behaviour is not easy and requires commitment to practising on a daily basis, for 30 –90 minutes. From week to week there is a slightly different combination of suggested practices. Cds and written hand-outs will support your efforts, as well as receiving help in the group to identify and deal with common hindrances to regular practice.

How many people will be in the class and will I need to speak in a group?

The maximum number will be 18. As a means of support for your training, there will be opportunities to explore your experience within small groups but nobody is required to speak. We will not dwell on past experience or search for psychological explanations, but investigate our present experience.

Do I need to be interested in Buddhism?

No. When Prof. Dr. John Kabat Zinn began to explore the mindfulness approach within the context of Western medicine 20 years ago, he based it on his personal practice within the Buddhist tradition. However, the course is secular in nature and is open to anyone, regardless of belief.

Who is the teacher?

Ratnadevi is a member of the Western Buddhist Order and has been practising and teaching Yoga and Meditation for 20 years. She has worked with MBCT and MBSR since 2004 and holds a teaching certificate from the Mindfulness Centre in Bangor. As a member of Mindfulness Scotland she is involved in training mindfulness teachers. See www.ratnadevi.talktalk.net.

Before the start of the course, Ratnadevi will telephone you to talk over any questions you may have about whether this course is right for you. If she then recommends that a different approach might be more helpful for you, the Glasgow Buddhist Centre will happily transfer or refund your payment.