



# MindfulnessUK

## Teacher Training

### **Week 1 MBSR supporting student notes**

#### **What is Mindfulness?**

John Kabat-Zinn describes mindfulness as Paying Attention, in a Particular Way, On Purpose, In the Present Moment & Non-Judgementally “as though your life depended on it.”

Mindfulness is sometimes also described as:

- Open Awareness
- Laying out the welcome mat for ‘moment to moment’ living
- Moving the thinking mind to the body
- Paying attention to all that life has to offer
- Sensing into life and its experiences

There are some wonderful articles and short video clips available via You Tube that you can access if you wish which will explain more about Mindfulness.

This Interview with John Kabat-Zinn (link attached) is a short extract and can give you a good overview of his description of Mindfulness. Why not take a look?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmEo6RI4Wvs>

#### **During this programme, we will practice:**

*Paying attention* - Bringing our attention and awareness to our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and physical experiences in the present moment as they arise and pass away.

*Paying attention, In a particular way & on purpose* - Doing so with intention, which includes renewing our awareness should we lose it.

*Being in the present moment* - Putting past experiences behind us, and not pre-living potential future experiences. Living life in the here and now by waking up to our present moment reality.

And learn to understand a little about what it is like to be *Non-Judgemental* - Not passing judgement or criticism on what we notice as we pay attention.

You might like to see this programme as a time to befriend your own mind and body from moment to moment. Exploring and deepening your ability to be still, quiet and rest in awareness with whatever might unfold inwardly and outwardly, in other words just relaxing into whatever might be, being ourselves and just being present.



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**A POEM - The Patience of Ordinary Things - by Pat Schneider**

It is a kind of love, is it not?  
How the cup holds the tea,  
How the chair stands sturdy and foursquare,  
How the floor receives the bottoms of shoes  
Or toes. How soles of feet know  
Where they're supposed to be.  
I've been thinking about the patience  
Of ordinary things, how clothes  
Wait respectfully in closets  
And soap dries quietly in the dish,  
And towels drink the wet  
From the skin of the back.  
And the lovely repetition of stairs.  
And what is more generous than a window?



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### **What is Mindfulness (cont.)?**

The origin of Mindfulness - Mindfulness is meditative in nature and is deep rooted in Buddhist tradition and history. Whilst there is no religious connection to mindfulness, but it is very much about waking up to life.

Mindfulness is the 7th Step of the noble eightfold pathway which can be routed back to the buddha who lived 2500 years ago.

1979 John Kabat-Zinn from the USA, a neuroscientist, professor of medicine and a long-term Yogi, visited Tibet on retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a global spiritual leader, poet and peace activist, revered around the world for his powerful teachings and bestselling writings on mindfulness and peace. His key teaching is that, through mindfulness, we can learn to live happily in the present moment—the only way to truly develop peace, both in one's self and in the world.

It was on retreat with Hanh in the 70's, that Kabat-Zinn came up with the idea of an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programme. Since then, Mindfulness has continued to grow in understanding, practice, development, evidence, awareness across the western world.

### **Autopilot**

Have you ever travelled from one place to another, arriving at the destination to your surprise? You would be forgiven for thinking "I have no idea how I just got here?"

Or what about the days that just come and go and are filled with tasks, chores and the 'to do list' where before we know it you are exclaiming to your friends and family "I can't believe I have been up since 6am this morning and its 8pm already!"

This is not uncommon. I have heard this from many students that I have worked with in applying Mindfulness to day to day life and it is what I refer to as autopilot or being on autopilot.

As in the previous notes (What is Mindfulness?), you could see Mindfulness as being the opposite of being on autopilot as we nurture our ability to sense into everything life has to offer by creating open awareness and use our senses to pull us into the present moment.



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### **The Body Scan Awareness Practice**

The Body Scan is the first of four Mindfulness Meditation Practices that we are going to explore as part of this Programme.

In the Body Scan, you may experience physical sensations in the body and will start to learn to create an open awareness of sensations in the body as well as a mind body connection.

As this is your first practice in this programme it is inevitable that you will experience the mind wandering and some inner chatter that distracts your attention from concentrating on the guidance being given. This is usual. When the mind wanders and as you become aware of it, bring yourself and your mind back to the practice at the point where the guidance takes you.

There are no objectives, goals, or outcomes that we are striving for when we take part in practicing mindfulness meditation.

As we practice, we are just being, allowing things to be as they are, there is no special outcome that we are looking for and we are not 'trying' to feel anything. This is about your experience, personal to you and only you.



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Take a look at the helpful notes below before moving into your first home practice

### The Benefits of the Body Scan

- Developing sensitivity in the body.
- Easily accessible for all.
- Helps us to cope with any pain, tension or discomfort in the body by bringing attention to it and work with such sensations.
- Builds awareness of mind and body connection.
- Can help to identify areas of tension, helping us to address these areas and release them.
- Allows the body to rest.

- You may like to gather some pillows and a blanket to help you settle into a comfortable position.
- Take your time to find a position that feels right for you.
- Complete this practice in a place where you won't be disturbed.
- Allow yourself 30 minutes for the practice.
- You may fidget or feel restless at first, it's ok, just bring yourself back to the practice each time.
- When the mind wanders, notice where it's went and then bring it back to the practice when you feel ready.
- You may feel some discomfort, tension or pain from laying down still.
- Take your time at the end of the practice to stretch and lay still until you feel ready to carry on with your day. This is a guided practice where you will be encouraged to lay down on a bed or the floor. This can lead to falling asleep.
- Keep a diary of what came up for you during practice that you can reflect on and that we can discuss when we meet each week.

### Things to consider before practice & what to be aware



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**I WOULD PICK MORE DAISIES – By Nadine Stair, age 85**

If I had my life over, I'd dare to make more mistakes next time!  
I'd relax, I'd limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip.

I would take fewer things seriously, take more chance, take more trips.

I'd climb more mountains and swim more rivers.

I would eat more ice-creams and less beans, and would perhaps, have more actual troubles than imaginary ones.

You see, I'm one of those people who lived seriously, sanely, hour after hour, day after day.

Oh, I've had my moments and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them.

In fact, I'd try to have nothing else, just moments, one after the other instead of living so many years ahead each day.

I've been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, hot water bottle, raincoat, parachute!

If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter this trip.

If I had my life over again, I would start going barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later into autumn.

I would go to more dances; I would ride more merry-go-rounds.

I would pick more daisies.



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**PRACTICE DIARY**

|                                         | <b>Day 1</b> | <b>Day 2</b> | <b>Day 3</b> | <b>Day 4</b> | <b>Day 5</b> | <b>Day 6</b> | <b>Day 7</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>WEEK 1<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 1<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 2<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 2<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 3<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 3<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 4<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 4<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 5<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 5<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 6<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 6<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 7<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 7<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 8<br/>Guided</b>                |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>WEEK 8<br/>Noticing<br/>Informal</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |



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**Suggestions for things to do at home during week one**

- Download the Body Scan Awareness Practice.
- Complete the Body Scan Awareness Practice every day between now and our next session (minimum 5 out of 7 days).
- Using the daily diary included in your week one notes or through journaling, write down a few words regarding what came up for in your body scan practice. This can be what you noticed in the body, mind or emotions or anything else that arises for you during your practice time. Do the same for your informal practice as discussed in today's session.
- Consider mindful eating once this week.



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**Week 2 MBSR supporting student notes**

**Session 2**

**Handling Stress**

“Psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing.”

Richard Lazarus. 1984, Stress Appraisal and Coping.

Stress effects people in different ways, our ability to cope with stress can depend on how we build resilience and find ways to cope.

Outlined here are a few differences that Mindfulness can make to us and how we live our lives Vs what life is like when we experience stress or are more stressed in our day to day living:

| <b>Living a Stressful Life Can Lead to:</b>       | <b>Integrating Mindfulness into Daily Life Can lead to:</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| An inability to focus or hold concentration       | The ability to pay attention                                |
| Below average listening skills                    | Becoming a better more attentive listener                   |
| Unable to manage or cope in difficult situations  | More resilient                                              |
| High heart rate                                   | Lower and improved heart rate                               |
| High Blood pressure                               | Lower and improved blood pressure                           |
| Poor sleep                                        | Better sleep & better quality of sleep                      |
| Low self-esteem                                   | Growing confidence                                          |
| Consumed by negative self-talk / limiting beliefs | Compassion towards one's self                               |

In the appendix of this week's student notes, you will find a full list of responses to stress from Palmer and Dryden, 1995. Evidentially, the proven scientific fact is compelling and makes for interesting reading.



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### **Breathing**

When we suffer with stress or anxiety, our breathing can become impaired or restricted in some way. Stress can cause rapid breathing or sometimes shallow breathing (which is commonly known as hyperventilation).

When the breath is rapid and shallow and moved predominantly by the upper chest, back and shoulder muscles, it is tiring as we are using muscles that were not designed for this purpose. Hyperventilation can cause some loss of carbon dioxide; this can result in our blood becoming more alkaline which affects the movement and flow of important elements in our blood.

If you imagine a little baby lying in their cot fast asleep, you'll see the gentle rise and fall of the abdomen as it breathes in and out. Somewhere along the line many of us have left this relaxed state and pattern of breath behind.

There could be several reasons for this, for example:

- 1) poor posture, rounding the shoulders and collapsing the front of the body
- 2) increasing stress in people's lives and a corresponding rise in associated hormones
- 3) sedentary lifestyles, weakening muscles used in effective breathing techniques
- 4) a history of asthma
- 5) tight and restrictive clothing

Because hyperventilation causes loss of carbon dioxide, which then results in our blood becoming more alkaline, this then causes a negative effect on the transportation of various important elements in our blood and can sometimes result in:

- Mental fuzziness
- Memory Lapse
- Headaches
- Poor Sleep
- Bad Dreams
- Chest Wall Tightening
- Chest Pain
- Palpitations
- Low Oxygen in cells which results in lowered cellular energy production
- Asthma or worsening of already existing asthma conditions
- IBS worsening or IBS symptoms
- Increased risk of blood clots
- Calcium imbalance
- Muscle fatigue
- Muscle Pain



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### **Some interesting facts about breathing**

One nostril works at breathing while the other rests and clears out debris. They change over in a regular cycle, with alternate nostrils blocked. If we sleep on our side, the lower nostril gets blocked and the body turns at intervals to alternate the nostrils. Irregular breathing patterns can cause too much or too little turning in bed.

Exercise helps vibrate the sinus cavities and keep them clear. For example, in aerobic exercise, running or even brisk walking, when the heel strikes the ground it creates greater blood circulation.

Did you know.....

Our breath is an indicator of our mood and our mood is an indicator of our breath. This means that if we change how we breathe we can change our mood. It also means that when our mood changes our breathing does too.

The lungs are enormous. The right lung is larger than left lung. The left lung is made up of two lobes while right is made up of three lobes. If you laid out the lungs flat, they would cover a tennis court (about 70 square meters!) ..... the lungs can take a lot of breath!

Getting up during the night to urinate is most likely due to breathing with the mouth open.

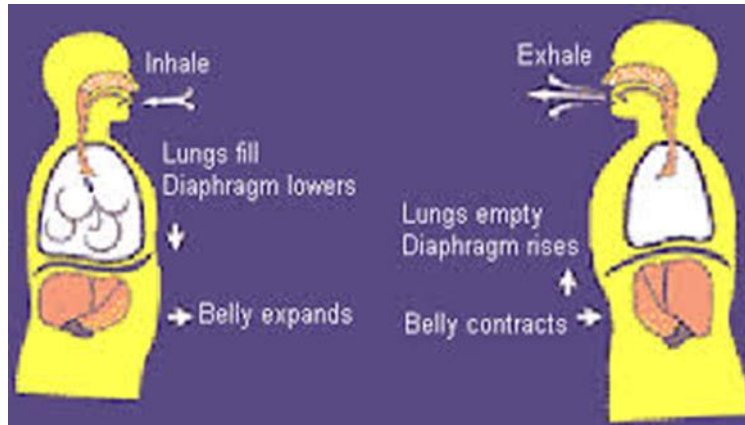
Breathing through the mouth causes the bladder to shrink, making one feel as though they need to head to the bathroom pronto!

### **Abdominal breathing**

Is also known as diaphragmatic breathing. The diaphragm is the large muscle located between the chest and the abdomen. When it contracts the dome is forced downwards, displacing the abdominal organs and causing the abdomen to expand. This causes negative pressure within the chest forcing air into the lungs quite naturally. The negative pressure also pulls blood into the chest improving the venous return to the heart. To breathe out, the diaphragm domes upwards, creating more space in the abdomen for the organs to return to their original position, flattening the belly and air out of the lungs.



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Credited to - diaphragmatic breathing | Éiriú Eolas

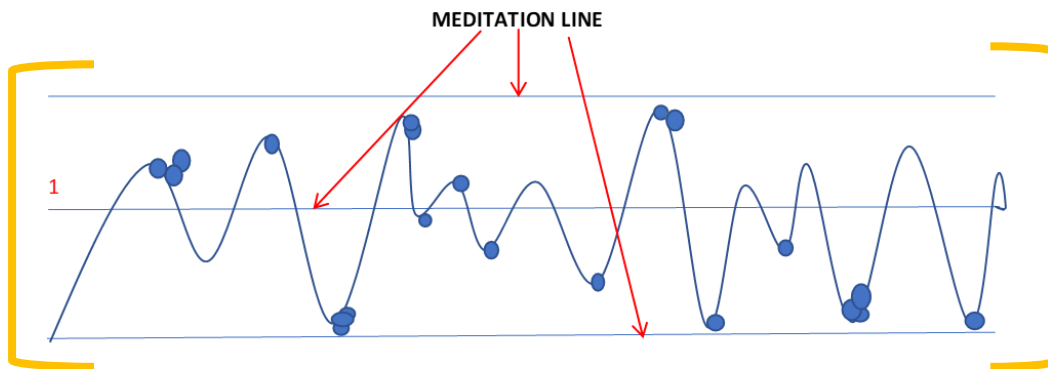
"For breath is life, and if you breathe well you will live long on earth." Sanskrit Proverb



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### The Meditation Line



We talked about the meditation line in today's session and we discussed state of meditation when our attention is held by the practice (the central line 1), and when we have a wandering mind (illustrated in the waved line that moves throughout the diagram). Imagine all the dots as 'thought bubbles' above the line or 'sleep bubbles' below the line.

We can practice mindfulness meditation every day, but the reality is that the mind will wander, and we will drift off from time to time to some of our thoughts and inner chatter going on in our minds. The dots might represent a worry about something that happened that day; something you have forgotten to do that pops into your mind unexpectedly; a pain or feeling of tension in the body or maybe a memory of the past that brings emotion drifts by. It might be that you drift off to sleep too, this can be quite a usual thing to happen in the body scan.

If you notice your mind wandering, bring your attention to this wandering distraction, notice it and then allow it to pass. Bring yourself back to the practice in a calm, kind, and compassionate way. If you notice you are falling asleep quite regularly, maybe consider the time of your practice or sit up for the practice, this may help.



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|                                                                       | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| What was your experience / pleasant event?                            |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| How did the body feel during the experience?                          |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| Describe the thoughts or images that accompanied the event?           |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| Describe your mood, feelings and emotions that accompanied the event? |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| What thoughts are in your mind now as you recall the event?           |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |

**Introducing the pleasant events diary:**

- Use the table to log pleasant events that take place in your day to day life over the course of the next 7 days.
- Notice what happens.
- Use the questions in the table above to focus your awareness on the detail of the experience as it happens.
- Try to write down and log your thoughts as soon as possible after the event has taken place.



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**Autobiography in Five Short Chapters - Portia Nelson (1994)**

Chapter One

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost...I am helpless.  
It isn't my fault...  
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter Two

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in this same place.  
But, it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter Three

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall... it's a habit... but,  
My eyes are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

Chapter Four

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

Chapter Five

I walk down another street.



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### **RESPONSES TO STRESS (Palmer and Dryden, 1995)**

#### **BIOLOGY**

Diarrhoea/constipation/flatulence

Frequent urination

Allergies/skin rash

High blood pressure/coronary heart disease (angina/heart attack)

Epilepsy

Dry skin

Chronic fatigue/exhaustion/burn-out

Cancer

Diabetes

Rheumatoid arthritis

Asthma

Lowered immune system

Flu/common cold

Poor nutrition, exercise and recreation

Biologically based mental disorders

#### **BEHAVIOUR**

Alcohol/drug abuse

Decreased/increased sexual activity

Avoidance/phobias

Eat/walk/talk faster

Sleep disturbances/insomnia

Sulking behaviour

Increased nicotine/caffeine intake

Frequent crying

Restlessness

Unkempt appearance

Loss of appetite/overeating

Poor eye contact



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Anorexia, bulimia

Aggression/irritability

Poor driving

Accident proneness

Impaired speech/voice tremor

Poor time management

Compulsive behaviour

Checking rituals

Tics, spasms

Nervous cough

Low productivity

Withdrawing from relationships

Clenched fists

Teeth grinding

Type A behaviour e.g. talking/walking/eating faster; competitive; hostile; Increased absenteeism

### **AFFECT (Emotions)**

Anxiety

Depression

Anger

Guilt

Hurt

Morbid jealousy

Shame/embarrassment

Suicidal feelings



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**SENSATIONS**

Tension

Headaches

Palpitations

Rapid heartbeat

Nausea

Tremors/inner tremors

Aches/pains

Dizziness/feeling faint

Indigestion

Premature ejaculation/erectile dysfunction

Vaginismus/psychogenic dyspareunia

Limited sensual and sexual awareness

Butterflies in stomach

Spasms in stomach

Numbness

Dry mouth

Cold sweat

Clammy hands

Abdominal cramps

Sensory flashbacks

Pain



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**IMAGERY Images of:**

Helplessness

Isolation/being alone

Losing control

Accidents/injury

Failure

Humiliation/shame/embarrassment

Self and/or others dying/suicide

Physical/sexual abuse

Nightmares/distressing recurring dreams

Visual flashbacks

**COGNITIONS**

I must perform well

Life should not be unfair

Self/other-damning statements

Low frustration statements e.g. I can't stand it.

I must be in control

It's awful, terrible, horrible, unbearable etc.

I must have what I want

I must obey 'my' moral code and rules

Others must approve of me

Cognitive distortions e.g. all or nothing thinking



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**INTERPERSONAL**

Passive/aggressive in relationships

Timid/unassertive

Loner

No friends

Competitive

Put other' needs before own

Sycophantic behaviour

Withdrawn

Makes friends easily/with difficulty

Suspicious/secretive

Manipulative tendencies

Gossiping

Reference - Palmer, S. and Dryden, W. (1995). Counselling for Stress Problems. London: Sage.

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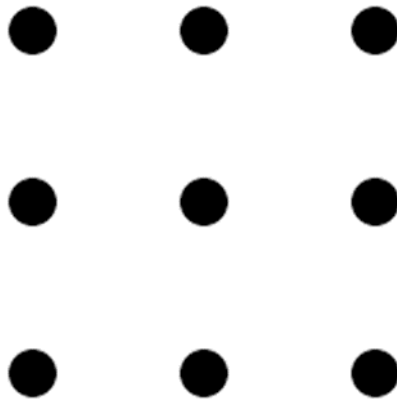
**Suggestions for things to do at home this week:**

- Complete the 9-dot challenge as attached (we will talk about this next week).
- Read the attached student notes.
- Continue with the Body Scan Awareness Practice each day along with your informal practice.
- Complete the pleasant events diary as discussed and attached.



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**The 9-dot challenge.**



Join the 9 dots together with just four lines, not taking the pen off the paper, or going back over the same line once drawn.

Make a note of how you felt, what you were thinking and any / all body sensations that you noticed before, during and after the challenge.



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**MBSR 8 WEEK PROGRAMME – STUDENT NOTES**

**Week 3**

**The Peace of Wild Things – Wendell Berry**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief?  
I come into presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.  
For a time, I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



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### **The 8 principles of mindfulness – mindfulness attitudes**

#### **1) Beginner's mind**

This quality of awareness sees everything as new and fresh, as if for the first time, with a sense of curiosity.

#### **2) Non-judgement**

This quality of awareness involves cultivating impartial observation in regard to any experience- not labelling thoughts, feelings or sensations as good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, but simply taking note of thoughts, feelings or sensations in each moment.

#### **3) Acknowledgement and Letting be**

This quality of awareness validates and acknowledges things as they are with no need to try and let go of whatever is present.

#### **4) Non-striving**

With this quality of awareness, there is no grasping, aversion to change, or movement away from whatever arises in the moment; in other words, non-striving means not trying to get anywhere other than where you are.

#### **5) Equanimity**

This quality of awareness involves balance and fosters wisdom. It allows a deep understanding of the nature of change and allows you to be with change with greater insight and compassion.

#### **6) Patience**

Patience is a form of wisdom. It demonstrates that we understand and accept the fact that sometimes things must unfold in their own time. To be patient is simply to be completely open to each moment, accepting it in its fullness.

#### **7) Trust**

Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings is an integral part of meditation training. It is far better to trust in your own intuition and authority than looking outside to others.

#### **8) Self-compassion**

This quality of awareness cultivates love for yourself as you are, without self-blame or criticism. Holding these qualities in mind- reflecting upon them and cultivating them according to your best understanding- will nourish, support and strengthen your practice. Developing these qualities is a way of channelling your energies into the process of healing and growth. These attitudes are interdependent; each influences the others, and by cultivating one you enhance them all.



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### **Stress Reaction**

*It's not the events themselves but how we handle them that influences the effects such events have on the body and mind.*

Mindfulness increases resilience. The more we practice Mindfulness meditation the more we will live out the benefits in our everyday lives.

Formal mindfulness practice heightens our ability to encounter the whole of our life with moment to moment awareness. When we practice regularly, Mindfulness will tend to naturally spill over in the various contours of our daily lives. Ultimately, you might find that your mind is altogether calmer and less reactive because of your daily practice.

We have discussed stress reactions and stress triggers recently and we know that what one person might find stressful, someone else may not. When we feel stressed or experience stress, we react to it and cope in a way that we feel we know best. Applying mindfulness techniques in daily life when we notice stress rising can help us to create space in such situations meaning we can choose to respond to stress in a less harmful, more compassionate, and effective way. One technique we can apply to our day to day living is the STOP technique.

### **STOP TECHNIQUE**

- S: When you notice stress rising, STOP in the moment and stand still.
- T: Take a few breaths, allowing the breath to come and go, paying attention to the breath, the rise and fall motion as you breathe.
- O: Observe your feelings, thoughts, and any emotion in this moment. Bring your attention to how you feel and allow those feelings to be there in a non-judgemental way.
- P: Proceed when you are ready in a Mindful way.



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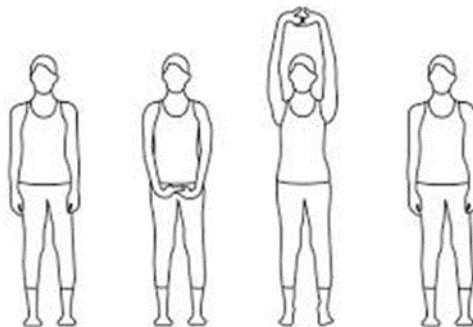
### **Mindful Movement**

This week we have spent some time looking at movement. Mindful Movement is the second of four guided practices we are exploring as part of our 8-week MBSR programme.

Mindful movement can help nurture a sense of coming home to the body. Often, we live far too much of our life from the neck up, so in Mindful Movement we can really sense into the body in a way that heightens our awareness of movement and as an outcome remind ourselves of the connection between the mind and the body as we live and move, moment to moment.

Tuning into the messages our body is trying to send us can be extremely helpful in broadening our senses and identifying what our body needs from time to time, i.e. rest, massage, stretching, sleep and so on. Mindful movement can help us to learn about ourselves in a deeper sense, regardless of our physical condition or levels of fitness.

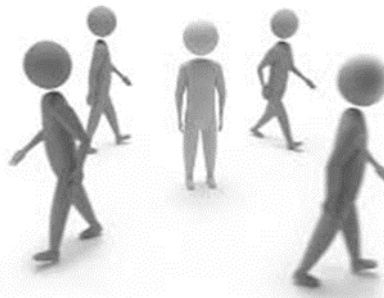
During the formal guided Mindful Movement practice, we are learning about the limits of our own comfort and experiencing our movement with open awareness whilst being patient and compassionate towards ourselves. Mindful Movement isn't about pushing yourself too far and causing yourself any pain or discomfort, it is simply about 'playing with the edge.'





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**Mindful Movement in day to day life, living moment to moment.**



We are always moving about at our own manageable pace. But when was the last time you noticed your movement, the way you are moving, the sensation of the movement, the connection of your feet to the floor? There are probably circumstances of one kind or another in your life which mean you will be walking, whether you like it or not. As we walk from place to place, we are walking with intention i.e. to put the kettle on; to walk the dog; to water the plants; to grab our keys and jump in the car. All these activities be opportunities in our day to day lives to heighten our sense of awareness and open our lives up to moment to moment living. We can see these walking moments as wonderful occasions, transforming them from dull or unconscious to something far richer and nurturing.

Sometimes, Mindful movement is taught as a Mindful Walking Meditation Practice, where we notice the sensations of the feet on the floor, every step, inch and millimetre of movement, every muscle, tendon and fibre related to the movement from the toes right through to the top of our heads.

We can practice walking at varying speeds and even practice walking very slowly. We can awaken our senses through a walking meditation practice where we pay attention to the mind and body and are anchored by our moment to moment movement. This is a quite different approach to how we might normally get wrapped up in moving from A to B as we run errands and keep ourselves busy during each spare minute of the day. You could try mindful walking this week for 2 or 3 minutes a day as part of your informal practice.

As with any Mindfulness Meditation practice, it is experiential. We focus on present moment awareness based on accurate and direct perception. By being non-judgmental, we are nurturing a sense of compassion towards ourselves and moving ourselves away from old habits so that we can discover new ground.



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**Unpleasant events diary**

|                                                                              | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>What was your experience / unpleasant event?</b>                          |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>How did the body feel during the experience?</b>                          |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>Describe the thoughts or images that accompanied the event?</b>           |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>Describe your mood, feelings and emotions that accompanied the event?</b> |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>What thoughts are in your mind now as you recall the event?</b>           |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |

**Introducing the unpleasant events diary:**

- Use the table to log unpleasant events that take place in your day to day life over the course of the next 7 days.
- Notice what happens.
- Use the questions in the table above to focus your awareness on the detail of the experience as it happens.
- Try to write down and log your thoughts as soon as possible after the event has taken place.



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### Benefits of Mindful Movement

It's wise to move within your range and any physical boundaries during the practice, taking care of yourself throughout.

Take your time, there is no need to rush from one movement to the next. After all we aren't trying to get anywhere.

If some of the movements in the practice feel uncomfortable then pause for a moment. There is no need to strive for each movement and it's good to remember that your body is exactly that, 'yours.' Make a choice to change the movement or come to it with a sense of care, reducing the impact wherever necessary.

As you progress through the Mindful Movement practice, do so in a non-judgemental way, bringing compassion to your movement. There is no need to judge the ease of your movement, the depth or preciseness of your movement. Just being, in the moment with awareness can heighten your awareness of the body and the mind body connection.

As always, it's inevitable that the mind will wander during practice.

You may experience some increasing sensations of pain, tension or discomfort

You might get a little warm or cool down during practice.

As we build on the foundations of the Body Scan Awareness Practice, we continue to learn how we can inhabit the body, bringing awareness to sensations and experience through Mindful movement.

The Mindful movement practice is about bringing awareness to the body in motion (as it often is in life).

We can benefit from enjoying and relating to what we are capable of in a physical sense, no matter of our limitations.

Through practice we can watch our habitual tendencies unfold as we move through the Mindful movement practice. This can be of particular benefit as we pay attention to our posture.

As we work with our physical boundaries we notice what this raises for us emotionally. This can enhance the mind body connection.

Through accepting and working with present moment movement and any physical limitations we may have, we begin to learn to relate to our bodies. The relationship with any pain we may have or tension we may feel can become accepted in a new and more self-compassionate way, nurturing a sense of self-care.

### Considerations of Mindful Movement



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**Suggestions for things to do at home this week:**

- Begin the Mindful Movement Practice every day between now and our next session (minimum 5 out of 7 days).
- Continue to pay attention in an Informal way as per last week.
- Continue to use your daily diary or to journal, writing down a few words regarding what came up for in your practice for week three.
- Use the unpleasant events diary each day between now and session 4 as per our discussions today
- Consider the use of STOP.



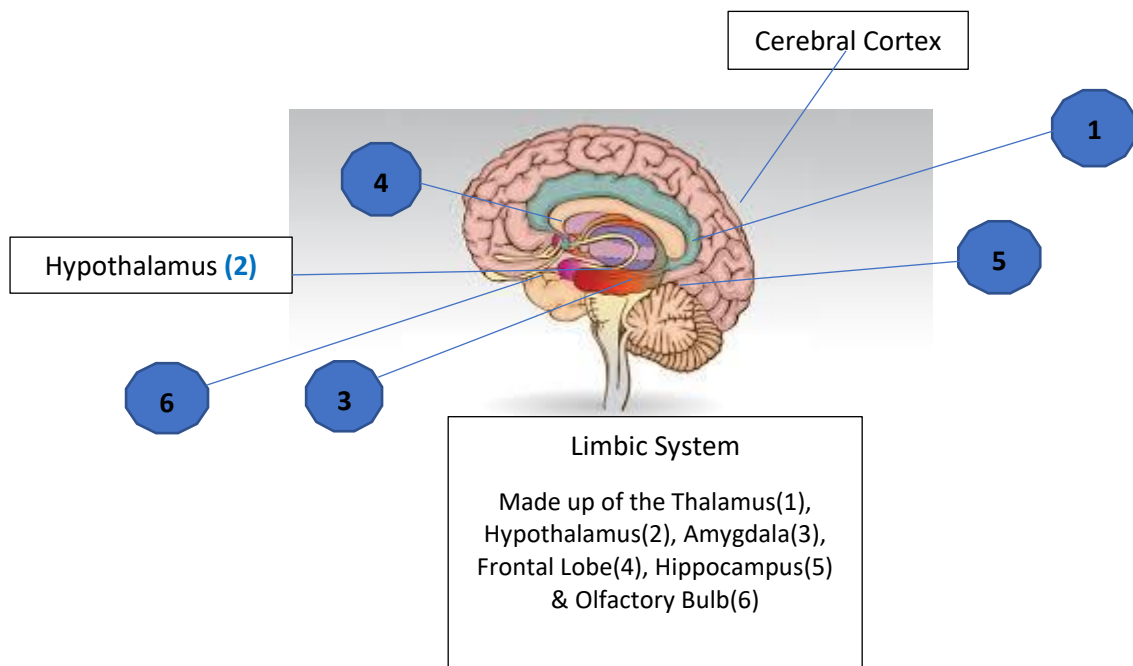
**MBSR 8 WEEK PROGRAMME – STUDENT NOTES**

**Session 4**

**Reacting to Stress – How we function as Human Beings.**

The mind is a busy place, taking in information from many sources every second of the day through our life events and experiences.

When we perceive we are in a threatening situation that we feel unable to cope with, different things start to happen in the neurological, emotional and hormonal systems. When this happens, messages are carried along nerves in the brain from the cerebral cortex (the place which regulates our thoughts processes) and the limbic (emotional) system to the hypothalamus.





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### **The Hypothalamus**

The Hypothalamus is an important regulatory centre in the centre of the brain. It controls the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) which, in turn, controls all of the automatic functioning of the body i.e. the functions that have no conscious control (such as heartbeat, blood pressure, breathing).

When we are stressed the Sympathetic branch of the nervous system is stimulated and this causes a release of adrenaline which leads to the 'fight or flight' response. When the body moves into fight or flight this causes:

- An increase strength in skeletal muscle
- A decrease in blood clotting time
- An Increased heart rate
- An Increase in sugar and fat levels
- Reduced intestinal movement
- Inhibits tears & digestive secretions
- The bladder to relax
- The pupils to dilate
- An increase in perspiration
- An increase in mental activity
- Our blood vessels to constrict, but dilates the vessels in the heart, leg and arm muscles

In direct contrast to this though, we also have a branch of the autonomic nervous system known as the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), this nervous system has the opposite effect on our body to the SNS. The parasympathetic nervous system is sometimes referred to as rest and digest.

### **So how does Mindfulness Help to reduce Stress?**

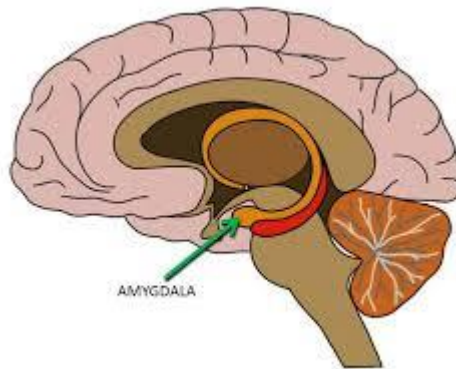
Through our increased awareness we can identify what causes us stress and this can help to reduce our exposure to stressful situations.

Mindfulness trains us to take conscious control over our breathing. Through practice we may learn to slow the breath for example which can be soothing for the body.

Mindfulness stimulates the PNS (parasympathetic nervous system), which is responsible for 'rest and digest' functions. Rest and digest gives us the opportunity to respond rather than react to stressful situations, if we continually stimulate the PNS and the rest and digest function we are turning down the volume of stress in the mind and body just like turning down the volume on a radio. Over time and with continued practice our bodies and minds become calmer as a result, causing far less stress.



## The Amygdala



The amygdala is part of the old lizard brain which developed millions of years ago and before the higher functions of thoughts and emotions developed.

The amygdala is primarily involved in our survival and it is still providing the same function in us today, always looking out for predators. What is worth noting though, is that whilst years ago as we lived on the savannas and we had to remain constantly vigilant, now in this modern day the amygdala still fires off even when our survival isn't threatened. It fires off in times such as when we worry about what the boss might say about our performance at work, or why our friend hasn't called, or if we are worried about our appearance.

When the amygdala is stimulated, a cascade of events are triggered via the pituitary gland, including adrenaline and cortisol secretion. This increases our blood pressure and heart rate and causes us to sweat and feel anxious.

### Memory

Our memories also play an important role in this fight and flight response of the ANS. We are constantly scanning our surroundings so that we can identify potential harmful threats. For instance, if we had a bad experience earlier in life where perhaps we didn't get on with a teacher at school that had a beard, we may move into a state of stress and amygdala arousal every time we meet someone who has facial hair.

With Mindfulness, we can override this very primitive unconscious reaction by identifying habitual reactions and by bringing conscious awareness and reasoning to the encounter.



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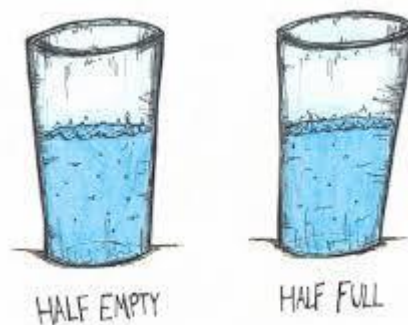
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### **The Negativity Bias.**

Humans are programmed to retain the more negative experiences and events of life and our minds are like magnets for such events and moments. Due to the way our brains are built and have been for millions of years, the mind is also like Teflon for taking in and retaining good memories and events.

Negative experiences stick like Velcro to the brain in microseconds, whereas it has been shown that more positive experiences can take at least 20 seconds of our attention to embed in the memory bank. This explains why sometimes we see life from a 'glass half full' perspective, but it's wise to remember that it's not our fault, we have been designed this way.

When we experience negativity, it embeds in the memory, so the more we experience the more is embedded. This often leads to depression and low mood. Depression creates changes in the brain which can make us more open and at risk of further depressive episodes. Mindfulness Meditation has shown to support healing of these brain changes in a positive way and medical research has proven that our brains have an extraordinary capacity to keep changing and adapting to new circumstances. The ability of the brain to reshape an alter itself throughout life is known as neuroplasticity.





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### **Habitual styles of thinking**

By becoming familiar with your own negative thought patterns, you can then become mindful of when you might be falling into your own traps.

These are some of the most common styles of thinking. See if you can recognise any of these in yourself and your responses to situations:

- 1) Catastrophising is a style of thinking that amplifies anxiety. It's a what-if game of worst-case scenarios. An example would be telling someone that it's raining pretty hard, and they respond with "yes, it seems like it will never stop. It's going to flood and we're all going to lose land."
- 2) Exaggerating the negative and discounting the positive. For instance, "I'm doing better at work but I'm still making mistakes." This discounts the positive and gives more power to the negative. Experiment with replacing "but" with "and" to give both aspects equal weight.
- 3) Mind reading involves convincing yourself what other people are thinking and feeling and why they act as they do, without actual evidence. For instance, you may incorrectly assume that someone doesn't like you. Such misinterpretations can lead to anxiety and depression.
- 4) Being the eternal expert is a recipe for heightened stress, as it necessitates being constantly on guard.
- 5) The shoulds are an all too common thought pattern that can lead to guilt or anger in addition to stress. You may apply your list of shoulds to yourself and others, and no one will reach your expectations.
- 6) Blaming involves holding others responsible for your own pain or holding yourself responsible for the problems of others. If you perceive the solution lies outside of you, you deprive yourself of the power to effect change.

### **If you can name it, you can tame it!**

By recognising these traits in your own behaviour, you have more power to put them to sleep.



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**A story – The Farmer and His Horse**

There is a Chinese Proverb that goes something like this...

A farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away, and their neighbours exclaimed, “Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so, maybe not. We’ll see.”

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a few wild mares back to the farm as well. The neighbours shouted out, “Your horse has returned, and brought several horses home with him. What great luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so, maybe not. We’ll see.”

Later that week, the farmer’s son was trying to break one of the mares and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, “Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so, maybe not. We’ll see.”

A few weeks later, soldiers from the national army marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys for the army. They did not take the farmer’s son, still recovering from his injury. Friends shouted, “Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!” To which the farmer replied, “Maybe so, maybe not. We’ll see.”

The moral of this story, is, of course, that no event, in and of itself, can truly be judged as good or bad, lucky or unlucky, fortunate or unfortunate, but that only time will tell the whole story.

Additionally, no one really lives long enough to find out the ‘whole story,’ so it could be considered a great waste of time to judge minor inconveniences as misfortunes or to invest tons of energy into things that look outstanding on the surface but may not pay off in the end.

The wiser thing, then, is to live life in moderation, keeping as even a temperament as possible, taking all things in stride, whether they originally appear to be ‘good’ or ‘bad.’

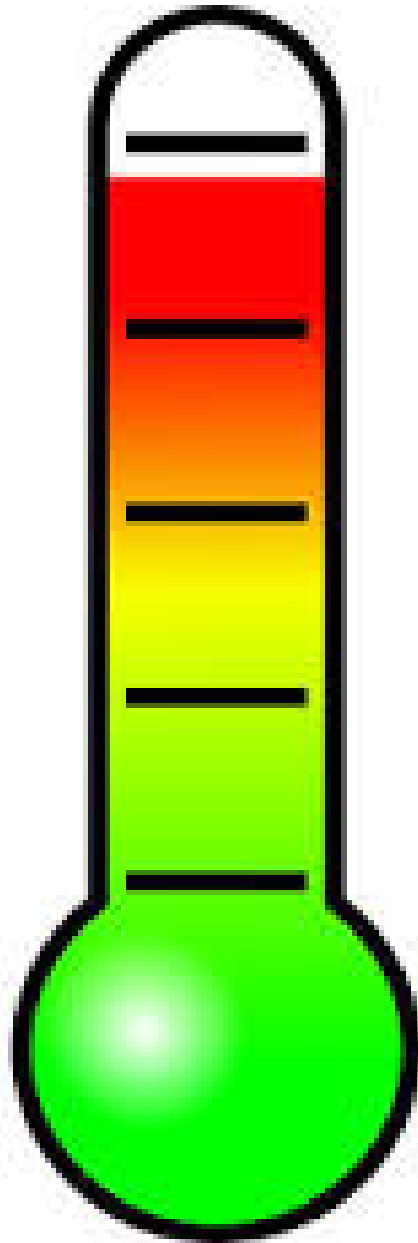
Life is much more comfortable and comforting if we merely accept what we’re given and make the best of our life circumstances. Rather than always having to pass judgement on things and declare them as good or bad, it would be better to just sit back and say, “It will be interesting to see what happens.”



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**The Stress Indicator**

Emotions  
Thoughts

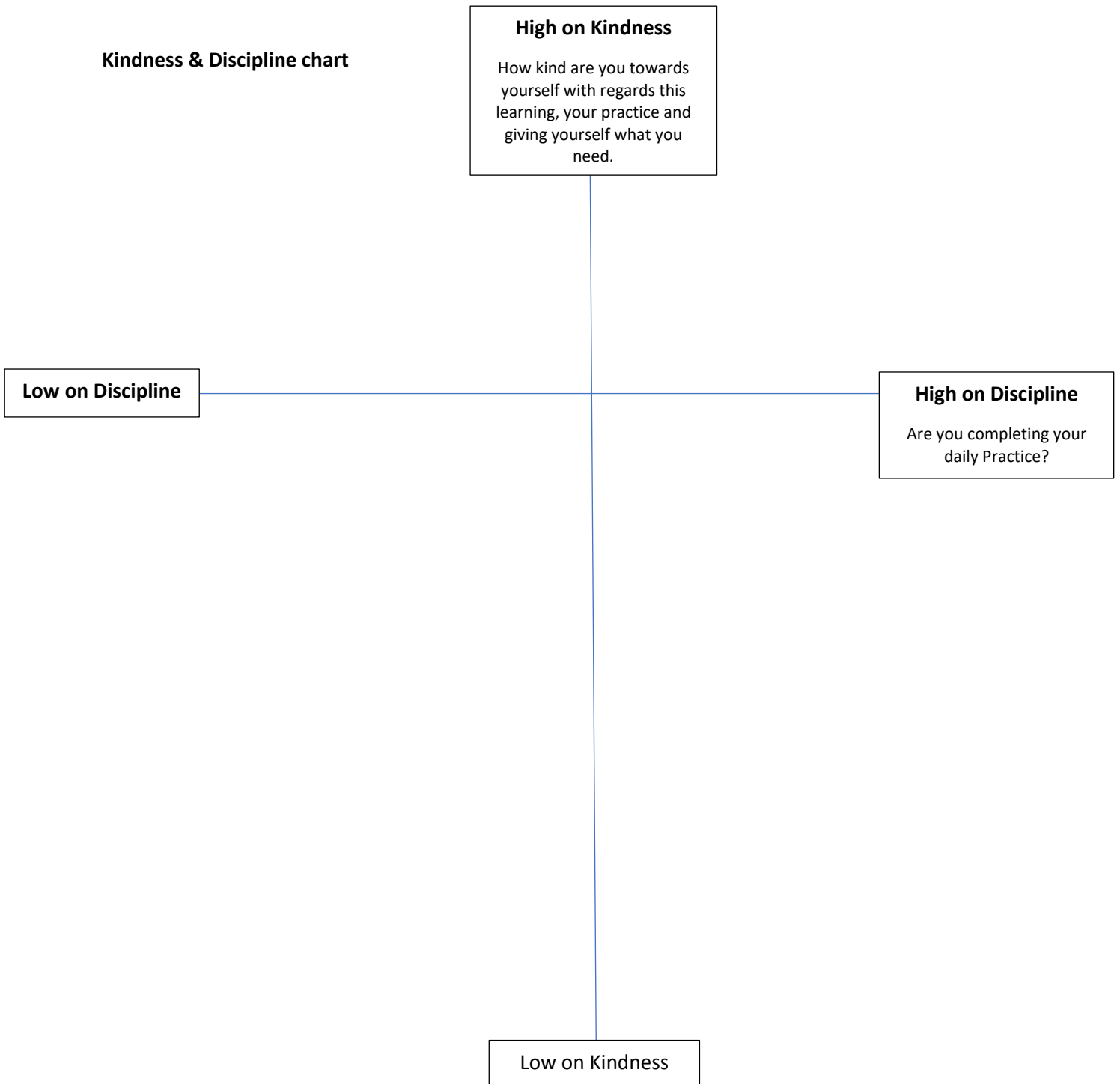


Physical sensations



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**Kindness & Discipline chart**



**Plot where you are on the chart for your Formal Practice and Informal Practice.**



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## GAP (3 step breathing space exercise)



- **G** – **G**ive full attention to whatever is happening for you right now – including your thoughts, feeling and physical sensations
- **A** – develop **A**wareness of your breath, use the physical sensations of the breath to anchor yourself in the present moment
- **P** – **P**erceive your body as a whole, bring softness to any areas of discomfort, pain or tension.

### **Suggestions for you to look at during the following week:**

- Choose your informal habit practice and pay attention to this for the next 7 days (journaling where possible)
- Mindful Movement continued for 1 more week
- Journaling regards what comes up in your practice (formal and informal)
- Continued practice of using STOP



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### MBSR 8 WEEK PROGRAMME – STUDENT NOTES

#### Session 5

##### **Mindful relationships**

Interpersonal Mindfulness, the art of mindful communication and listening can impact our relationships and support our health and well-being in a positive way.

Human beings, particularly in modern society experience life as separate entities, single souls with a single experience. When we practice Mindfulness, the practice of meditation brings us together as we share experiences and begin to see the world through the lens of common humanity.

We are social animals, so most of us spend a great deal of time interacting with others and as we do, each person we interact with, be it at home, work, socially or elsewhere provides us with a doorway to new experiences and a new world, whether the relationship is good or difficult.

Despite all of this, interactions with people can bring enormous stress to our lives. Negative feelings such as, dislike, hate, being critical of others or being judgemental, anger, resentment, intolerance, envy or jealousy have firm roots in feelings of separation. Positive emotions, however, help us feel connected.

Sometimes it's the people we are the closest to or the most intimate with that cause us heightened stress. This heightened stress can be caused by the sense of responsibility we carry for those who are close to us or can be caused by how well these people know us because they know how to 'press our buttons.'

##### **Behavioural patterns that can affect relationships**

- Blame
- Resentment of past events
- Judging based on hearsay
- Dislike due to social opinion
- Criticising other people's values, taste, principles
- Jealousy of status or success





## MindfulnessUK Teacher Training Centre

### **Taking in the good**

Taking in the good is a Mindfulness technique that can help us to learn how to consciously build positive mental and emotional strengths as we spend time and focus our attention on savouring our current experiences in the moment or even recalling pleasant memories or positive experiences from the past.

The reality is that we spend so much time rushing around in this modern world that we live in, that we often if not always, miss what is there, right under our noses in front of us.

I met a woman once who asked me about what it means to be a Mindfulness Teacher and as we talked a bit about what Mindfulness is and how it helps us to bring a sense of calm to our lives waking up to moment to moment living rather than allow life to just drift by as we rush from place to place in our busy world, she responded that her mother once said to her “when I was young we were all very busy then, just as busy as the modern world today... we just didn’t rush.” The power in this story will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Rick Hanson, the creator of this valuable technique says, “the brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for the positive.”

By resting our attention on positive experiences, we are increasing our ability to deal with stress and how we react to stress which helps us to become more responsive to life’s challenges as we strengthen the immune system, rewire our brains and ultimately lead ourselves to a greater sense of happiness.

### **Taking in the good - Exercise 1**

Spend around 30s or more allowing your attention to focus on a memory of an experience that made you very happy. Invite as many senses into the memory as you can, for instance: in your memory what can you see; what are the colours like; who you were with; where were you; how did it smell, taste, feel to be there? When you finish recalling the memory, take a moment to sense into how you feel at the end of the short practice.

You can do this short practice when something good is actually happening, such as taking the time to look at a beautiful flower on a warm summer’s day or the taste, smell and touch of a cup of coffee and savour the whole experience in the moment.



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### **Gratitude**

At the end of your day, as you lie in bed and revisit what happened during your day, notice if you find your attention being drawn to all the things that maybe didn't go so well or according to plan. Maybe you will think of the things that people said to you that day, maybe how someone hurt you or made you angry or sad. You might even spend time criticising what you didn't get done that you hoped that you would have.

This way of thinking is all part of the brain's natural response, it's usual. The good news is though that we do have the capacity to change!

### **Taking in the good - Exercise 2**

At the end of each day, think of 5 small events or experiences for which you are grateful for. Think small like the smile from a stranger, the warmth of a good brew on a cold day, the sound of a bird singing. Rest your attention on these small events and experiences for several seconds as you recall each of these moments, this will ensure they are lodged in your memory bank.

Continue with these types of practices every day, create a good habit and even include others in your taking in the good exercises if that feels comfortable for you.



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### **Responding to Stress – Full Catastrophe Living, John Kabat Zinn**

The very first and most important step of breaking free from a lifetime of stress reactivity is to be aware of what is 'actually' happening while it is happening.

At any moment in time a person may be encountering internal or external stress that will trigger a cascade of feelings and behaviours which are known as 'habitual or automatic stress reaction'. When we respond to stress as opposed to react to it, we are dealing with stress in a healthier way.

### **Reacting to stress**

Unconscious, uncontrolled, just surviving

Engaging the sympathetic nervous system i.e. fight or flight

### **Responding to stress**

Conscious, considered, use of techniques and tools to manage stress effectively

Engaging the parasympathetic nervous system i.e. rest and digest



### **The guest house – Rumi:**

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still,  
treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.



### Sitting with the Breath – Breathing Practice

#### Benefits of the breathing practice

- The breath is always with us
- Identifying healthy & unhealthy breathing patterns
- Stabilise a focused mind
- Developing quietness
- When we identify movement related to the breath and the movement in the diaphragm this brings a sense of control
- Creates and anchors awareness, developing coping strategies
- A tool to manage reactions and learn to respond
- Settling / Calming
- Instils a sense of one thing at a time, one breath at a time
- Connects mind to body
- Skilfully deals with the wandering mind
- Encourages curiosity

- Falling asleep
- Wandering thoughts and mind
- Restlessness and fidgeting
- Can increase sensations of pain when seated
- Panic or fear arising from the attention to the breath
- Tightness in the chest created or symptoms of palpitations
- Space for negative mental habits to arise
- Feeling tired or achy
- Getting cold
- Boredom
- Impatient – wanting something to happen
- Sense of failure connected to a lack of sensation

#### Things to watch out for in the breathing practice

Moment to moment non-judgemental awareness, allows us to engage in and influence the flow of events

and our relationship to them at the very moments we are likely to react automatically and plunge into hyperarousal and maladaptive attempts to try and keep things under some degree of control.

Tools to support us in times of stress



- Seeking refuge in the breath
- STOP
- 3 step breathing practice
- Taking in the good
- Listening and not responding
- A moment of grounding, feeling the feet on the floor
- Creating space between the stress and your response: physical space; emotional space; psychological space.

**Suggestions for you to consider for the next week:**

- Re-reading notes from this week, and previous weeks as a rec-ap where time allows.
- Taking in the good, try this at home (Page 2 and 3)
- Breathing practice for the next 2 weeks (see next page for notes)



## MBSR 8 WEEK PROGRAMME – STUDENT NOTES

### Session 6

#### **Suffering**

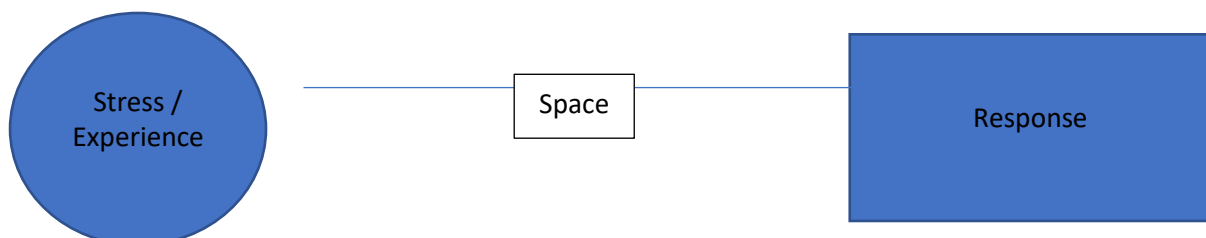
Mindfulness is not suppression. It is not about changing who you are as a person, your opinions, beliefs or values. Mindfulness is, about being present with your feelings, emotions, physical, sensations and experiences and living now in the moment rather than being on auto pilot. Often students tell me they feel they have ‘failed’ in mindfulness practice because they felt moody and irritated. This is not the case.

Mindfulness is about honesty. It’s about being aware and paying attention to what is happening for you and what your experience is in the moment. Mindfulness isn’t about painting on a false layer of calmness and composure in a stressful situation just because you feel like you should, or because you should be being ‘mindful.’

If you feel grumpy, tired, distracted or poorly in a practice, the practice is about being aware of your feelings, sensations and emotions and not judging yourself because of it.

**Acknowledgment** of feelings, sensations, pain, emotions, and inner chatter helps us to find space around our experiences as they arise. If we don’t acknowledge our experiences, then we can’t give ourselves space to deal with them (remember the Victor Frankl quote “between stress and response there is space”). What then happens is our experience often escalates out of control which then turns into blame, negative self-talk and inner chatter, self-pity and rage.

Mindfulness is about **noticing what your experience is** and when it happens. When feelings arise, we take the opportunity to encourage a better self-state, have less self-suffering and become kinder to ourselves as an outcome.





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### Primary and Secondary Suffering - The first arrow and the second arrow

#### **The first arrow - Primary Suffering**

Primary suffering or the first arrow is when something happens to us emotionally, physically, mentally that hits us like an arrow. It strikes us, shocks us, hurts us (mentally/physically/emotionally), it causes a reaction.

#### **Primary Suffering is unavoidable**

We are constantly surrounded by events that cause our stress levels to rise. Small, simple examples of **Primary Suffering and the First Arrow** might be:

Someone pulling out in front of you at a busy junction in the car

Someone says something that hurts your feelings

It might even be that you stub your toe on the bed post

#### **The second arrow - Secondary suffering**

The events that follow your first arrow are always **avoidable**.

If someone did pull out in front of you at a busy junction, do you just behave in a calm manner, bringing a sense of compassion to the moment? Or do you sound your car horn and wave at the driver frantically out of the window?

If someone did say something to hurt your feelings, do you shrug it off or do you allow yourself to get upset, angry or maybe even retaliate?

If you stub your toe on the bed post, do you sit down and soothe yourself, maybe holding a cold compress on the area to heal the immediate pain, or do you jump around disturbing the rest of the house hold, screaming at the top of your voice about the pain you are in and blaming the bed for being there in the first place?

The stress that our environment, society and other people around us places on us is unavoidable in the most part. However how we react to stress and if we allow a second arrow to come our way is totally down to us, our decision, our choice. Mindfulness helps at times of heightened stress and gives us coping mechanisms when the first arrow hits in order we don't bring further suffering to ourselves in the form of a second arrow.

We can create a sense of calm and control the second arrow through Mindfulness Techniques. Being aware of our underlying negative thought patterns is the key to gaining control over them so that we can elicit change and rewire our brain so that, over time we no longer respond this way.



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**SUFFERING**

| UNAVOIDABLE | AVOIDABLE |
|-------------|-----------|
|             |           |

What do you experience in your life that causes suffering?

Start with the things in life that cause suffering which are unavoidable and make a note in the table above under the 'unavoidable' heading.

When we bring to mind that suffering, take a moment to consider what would have been happening at that time in your mind (what were your thoughts), what may have been happening in your body (physically), how you would have felt emotionally. Make a note of these things in the avoidable suffering column.

The second column is where we have a choice. We can use mindfulness to respond to stress in a more supportive and helpful way, creating space between the first arrow and the potential second arrows that cause secondary suffering. Mindfulness helps us to pay attention to first arrows, notice they are happening and then make a choice on how we want to be in response to them.



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From Living well with Pain and illness: Vidyamala Burch (2008)

**PRIMARY SUFFERING**

(First Arrow)

Chronic Pain / Illness (in the sense of basic unpleasant sensations)



**RESISTANCE**

**SECONDARY SUFFERING**

(Second Arrow)

**BLOCKING**

Hardening up to unpleasant events

Restlessness

Inability to stop

Feeling Driven

Addiction (of all kinds)

- Food
- Cigarettes
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Excessive talking
- Excessive working

Being emotionally brittle and edgy

Anxiety

Anger and Irritability

Denial

Living in the head and not in the body

Overly Controlling

**DROWNING**

Feeling overwhelmed by unpleasant sensations

Exhaustion

Physical inactivity

Giving Up

Lack of interest / vagueness

Emotionally dull and passive

Depression

Self-Pity

Tendency to catastrophise

Dominated by physical experience

Loss of initiative, withdrawn, isolation



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**Suggestions for you to consider for the next week:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the Mindful Breathing Practice
- Application / consideration of the first and second arrow and how this might come up for you in the next 7 days
- Continued use and building into daily life your informal practice / noticing / attention to habits



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**MBSR 8 WEEK PROGRAMME – STUDENT NOTES**

**Session 7**

**Nurturing Self-Compassion.**

**Identifying your life choices - Sustainers & Drainers**

Sustainers – All of the things that sustain you i.e. the things that helps you to feel supported, more relaxed and able to cope with life. The things you do that bring more enjoyment to life and help you to feel good.

Drainers – The things that drain your energy and make you feel worse, tired, stressed, unhappy. Drainers might be related to activity that puts you under pressure or places demands on you; it might be doing something for too long or too frequently; it could be related to the food or liquids consumed, the way you sit or stand, lack of sleep or any other emotional demands you feel impact you and drain you of your resources.

An exercise:

In the box below to the left, make a note of all of things you do to ‘sustain’ yourself.

Then in the box on the right, make a note of the things that drain you of your resources and make you feel stressed, worried, tired, anxious, poorly.

| SUSTAINERS | DRAINERS |
|------------|----------|
|            |          |



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Now that we have created our list, think about how you could do less of the draining activity and more of the sustaining activity.

This exercise will help to create a sense of self-care and can support our ability to nurture self-compassion in day to day life more of the time. Bringing your attention to your own needs and becoming openly aware of what's happening for you in moment to moment living, ultimately leads to becoming mindfully compassionate.

### **Cultivating Compassion in Relationships**

We all need to attend to our relationships to help them flourish and grow, like the cultivation of a garden. When relationships become strained or difficult, bringing Mindfulness & Compassion can potentially prevent them from withering away.

Goldstein and Stahl (ref) suggest six qualities that they consider essential in cultivating interpersonal mindfulness and dramatically improving relationships:

#### 1) Openness

Similar to beginner's mind from the 8 principles of Mindfulness, this is a quality where you are open to seeing the other person and the relationship as new and fresh. You are open to the other persons perspective.

#### 2) Empathy

The first step to empathy is first to identify your own feelings and then you can do this with the other person. Trusting your own intuition in respect of how others are feeling can be effective

#### 3) Compassion

This quality combines empathy and a wish to ease the suffering of another. Imagine the person as your own child and how you would comfort them.

#### 4) Loving Kindness

This is a quality where you truly wish others well – to be healthy, safe. Free from harm and free for fear.

#### 5) Sympathetic Joy

This is a quality in which you delight in the happiness and joy of others

#### 6) Equanimity

This is a quality of wisdom, an evenness and steadiness of mind that comprehends the nature of change. Equanimity gives you more balance and composure in understanding the interconnectedness of all life.



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**Planting lettuce – quote ‘Thich Nhat Hanh.’**

“When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change”





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## The Loving Kindness Awareness Practice



This practice helps to build a sense of compassion for oneself as well as building compassion and empathy for others.

It can be a helpful practice in supporting you to develop a sense of tenderness and kindness towards yourself and others as we soften and soothe through the sensations of the breath.

Try to begin your practice in a warm, quiet and peaceful place away from any disturbances or interruptions.

If the mind wanders, bring it back to the practice at the place you are being guided towards. Notice where your mind has gone, but bring it back with a sense of care, kindness and compassion towards yourself.

### **Suggestions for things to consider at home this week:**

- Complete the Loving Kindness Awareness Practice each day (minimum 5 out of 7 days)
- Consider spending time on your Sustainers and Drainers exercise to understand what changes you might want to make in order to be more supportive towards yourself.
- Read over your student notes for this week.



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### **MBSR – Session 8**

#### **Reading List for your Consideration and to support you with your Continued learning journey.**

I have made a list of recommended books and readings for your ongoing interest in the field of Mindfulness. The books that have been referenced throughout our teaching can be identified by a \*

#### **Reference list for suggested books:**

|                                                    |   |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Full catastrophe living                            | - | John Kabat Zinn*         |
| Self-Compassion                                    | - | Kristin Neff*            |
| Mindfulness for Dummies                            | - | John Wiley and Sons      |
| Radical Acceptance                                 | - | Rider                    |
| How to train a wild elephant                       | - | Shambhala                |
| Mindful Path to Self-Compassion                    | - | Guildford Press / Germer |
| Budda's Brain                                      | - | Hanson*                  |
| Brain based parenting                              | - | Norton                   |
| Loving Kindness-The Revolutionary Art of Happiness | - | Salzberg                 |
| Mindfulness -finding peace in a frantic world      | - | Williams*                |

#### **Sustaining practice and your continued Mindfulness Journey**

We talked today about how Mindfulness Practice can be sustained now as you go forward after your 8-week MBSR journey. Some of the things to consider might be:

- Continuing to set aside space and time each day to assist your practice to continue to happen.
- Revisit the material, notes and reading from the MBSR as frequently as you can. This could help re-focus your mind and give you a sense of grounding.
- Keep a journal of practice, this could help you to keep an eye on the frequency of practice and your commitment.
- Consider using the loving kindness and discipline chart to review your practice progress informal and formal.
- Check out local classes which can help support your continued growth and practice.
- Follow MindfulnessUK FB page, often there are practices posted here and there are also some saved practices you can dip in and out of where you would like to.



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## Sustaining practice and your continued Mindfulness Journey

We have come to the end of our formal 8-week MBSR Programme so it's a great opportunity to reflect on all that we have learnt together throughout the teaching process

