

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

An 8 week course in Mindfulness

Teachers: Susannah Crump and Gwennie Fraser

Orientation evening: Tuesday 1st May, 6.30-8.30pm.

Course starts: Tuesday 8th May, 6.30-8.30 pm.

Orientation session Tuesday 8th May

Session 1 : Tuesday 8th May

Session 2: Tuesday 15th May

Session 3 : Tuesday 22nd May

Session 4: Tuesday 29th May

(NB No meeting 5th June due to school half-term)

Session 5 : Tuesday 12th June

Session 6 : Tuesday 19th June

Session 7 : Tuesday 26th June

Session 8 : Tuesday 3rd July

Day of practice: Saturday 30th June 9.45 am to 3.45pm

Newton and Bywell Community Hall, Newton, near Stocksfield NE43 7UL.

Course teachers

Susannah Crump and Gwennie Fraser have trained in mindfulness-based approaches at the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, University of Wales, Bangor, where they engage in an ongoing process of supervision and professional development. They have both found great personal benefit from developing mindfulness in their own lives.

Since 2005 they have taught mindfulness-based courses to NHS staff and patients as well as members of the general public. They are both approved supervisors of students on the MSc/MA in Mindfulness-Based Approaches at The Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor .

Cost

The course fee is £250. There are a small number of concessions available for people on state benefit or low income.

The fee includes an orientation session with your class teachers, eight course sessions, between session phone contact with your teachers if you need support with the course work, learning materials and a set of five practice CDs. It also includes an experiential day of mindfulness practice which will be held after week 7 of the course on Saturday 30th June, from 9.45 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., in the beautiful setting of Newton and Bywell Community Hall, Stocksfield, 15 miles

from Newcastle. This day provides an opportunity to experience an extended period of practice in a quiet, natural environment, and to deepen, develop and integrate your mindfulness practice and learning from the course with others who have completed the 8 week programme.

Course aim

The programme we teach is based on both Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). MBCT was originally developed to help people who have experienced depression develop strategies for preventing further episodes, whereas MBSR was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues to help people deal with stress from a variety of causes. The curriculum that we follow is focused on integrating the mindfulness-based learning into daily life challenges and stress.

The aim of the course is to bring more awareness and acceptance into everyday life by establishing a daily mindfulness practice; to deepen understanding of the way we think, feel and react to stress; to understand and practice mindful responses to stress.

- It teaches us to take better care of ourselves so that we are able to live our lives in a fuller and healthier way.
- It promotes a way of being that helps us tackle life problems –physical, mental, social and emotional. The focus of the mindfulness practice is to learn to be aware of the small changes in the physical sensations in your body; what is happening in the world around you (using your physical senses) and your thoughts, emotions and moods.
- The course programme encourages us to develop the skill of being aware of our experiences (good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant) from moment to moment -so that we can learn to respond more skillfully to situations rather than simply reacting automatically.
- Overall, the course is often helpful in dealing with an ongoing difficulty – the problem may not change but we can learn to relate to it differently.
- Staying in touch with the present, from one moment to the next, may lead you to experience yourself differently, perhaps feeling less stuck, or recognising more strength, balance and confidence in yourself.

Most people completing the programme report lasting physical and psychological benefits including:

- Greater self-confidence and more acceptance of life as it is.
- An increased ability to cope effectively with both short and long-term stressful situations.
- An increased ability to relax and experience calm.
- More energy, enthusiasm and appreciation for life.

Who is the course for?

The course is suitable for most people. The programme is known to benefit people with a range of physical and psychological health problems, but it is not necessary to have a specific health problem to find it helpful. We all experience difficulty in our lives and the course can teach skills to help manage difficulty. Illnesses or difficulty may not change, but the way in which we deal with our experience can shift, making it all feel easier. Being more aware and accepting of our thoughts and feelings means we are in a better place to make wise choices, and deal with difficulties more effectively.

Some participants come to the course because of a specific physical or mental health problem or to learn how to manage existing health difficulties; others come to help themselves with more general stresses and an interest in living life more fully and skillfully, and a strong interest in learning how to establish a daily mindfulness practice. Sometimes people want to do the course for professional reasons as a first step towards learning to use the approach to help others. You do not need to have any previous knowledge or experience of mindfulness, or meditation, to come on the course.

A Note to Those in the Helping Professions

We welcome on this course healthcare students and professionals who are interested in mindfulness for professional reasons. However, to become familiar with mindfulness and its use in working with others you must first experience the course on a personal level. It is important that everyone fully participates as themselves and not as an observer. This course is about all of us (including ourselves as teachers) experimenting with relating differently to our experience, including our pain and our suffering. The benefits of increased awareness and compassion for oneself extend naturally to others, and clients and patients are best served by those who embody mindfulness themselves.

The 8 week course is a pre-requisite for those interested in going on to train in mindfulness-based approaches for use with clients. Information on further training in teaching mindfulness-based approaches can be found on the website for the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University (www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness). You can access a link to the national Good Practice Guidelines for Teaching Mindfulness-Based Courses via a link on the Resources page, or via the website www.mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk.

Orientation Session

This is an important opportunity to learn more about the course, and to meet your course teachers and other course participants. There will also be the opportunity to experience a short mindfulness practice similar to the ones you will be learning on the course. There will be time to ask any questions you may have, and to speak individually with one of the course teachers if you would like to.

It is important to consider whether this is the right time in your life to undertake this course. The course teachers will help you with these decisions and may wish to speak to you individually, before the orientation session or shortly afterwards, if the teacher feels it necessary. Very occasionally we consider that the time is not right for an individual to attend the course. If this is the case your teachers will discuss it fully with you.

Home Practice

The most important learning on the course is experiential and needs your active participation and commitment in order for you to get the most benefit from it. Home practice is an important part of the course and involves listening to CDs and practising exercises we have done during the classes, which involve lying down, walking, or sitting, or doing gentle stretches.

You will be asked to commit to up to one hour of mindfulness practice every day at home. This involves approximately 40 minutes guided mindfulness practice using the CDs provided, some informal mindfulness practices which are woven into daily life, and reflecting on these practices. Finding this time for practice involves a shift in routine and can initially seem like a challenge, but it is in the home practice that people gain the lasting benefits of the course. It is helpful to develop a commitment to doing the practices, even if you sometimes find them boring, or have preferences for some rather than others, or might feel you have better things to do!

During the course you will be supported in the process of establishing a personal mindfulness practice, and in developing your learning from it. You will have the opportunity to personally explore and reflect on your experiences of the practices in small groups, or in the whole group.

Support during the course

Should you experience any difficulties in connection with the course in between the sessions, your course teachers will be available via email during the week and you can also make contact with them on the phone. It is important to use this as a resource rather than get stuck in any difficulty.

During the course there will be discussion, but most of our talking together will be in relation to the specific practices we have been learning. There will not be time to discuss the content of ongoing individual problems and difficulties. The course teachers will not be able to offer therapeutic support. It is therefore important that you take responsibility for caring for yourself during the course. It can be a good idea to ask for particular support from someone you can turn to amongst friends and family members.

Approaching the course

We hope you will find the course enjoyable and beneficial, and that learning in a group is mutually helpful, encouraging and inspiring. The learning and discovery of this course is an individual process which unfolds in different and sometimes subtle ways. Bringing curiosity and an open mind to the course is the best way of approaching it, rather than having fixed expectations.

The course includes some gentle stretching and body awareness exercises. Some of the exercises can also be done by sitting, so those of you who are not able to do certain exercises can still benefit by doing what you can. If you have any concerns about participating in these exercises due to physical health problems or a personal history of body trauma, please feel you can discuss this with us.

There is evidence to suggest that mindfulness training can help people who have suffered from repeated episodes of depression to reduce their risk of relapse. If you have suffered from depression in the past it is important that you are currently well enough to manage the demands of the course. Please discuss this with us if this is of relevance to you.

The course involves learning to turn towards our difficulties and can therefore be challenging at times. It is probably not a good time to do the course if there are significant current changes or if it is a time of particular crisis in your life.

Mindfulness cannot magic away our difficulties. It is a way of learning to relate differently to the difficult things in life, and being able to do this offers us a lot, sometimes in very simple ways. By relating to difficulty differently, the way we feel about it can change, which in itself can be beneficial.

Attendance

The learning of the course is structured to help build and develop a personal mindfulness practice through the progressive stages of each week of the course. Regular attendance is therefore important if you wish to derive the most benefit from the course.

If something arises and you cannot attend a session, then please phone either of us in advance to let us know. If you have any difficulties with the meditation practices and the difficulties will not wait for the next session, then please do contact us by phone to talk things through or get in touch by email. Our phone numbers and email addresses are given below. You can always leave a message and we will return your call.

What to wear

Clothes in which you will be comfortable moving, sitting and lying down and some warm layers, including warm socks.

What to bring

Curiosity and an open mind! A light blanket, or something warm to cover yourself with when lying down. A cushion if you need one for support sitting in a chair.

How to book

Please fill in the application form and send together with a deposit of £125/£90 to Gwennie Fraser at the address given below. Before or after applying, you may email and arrange a time to speak with one of the course teachers by phone, if you have any questions, or if it would be helpful for us to explore with you whether this is the right time for you to be enrolling on the course.

Full payment is required after the orientation session and before the start of the course. Please note that the balance of the full fee is due by Tuesday 8th May.

Contact details

Gwennie Fraser
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E: gwennie.fraser@zen.co.uk
www.mindfulnessinlife.co.uk

Susannah Crump
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Application forms to be sent to:

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