

MBSR Practice Teaching Intensive (PTI)
AT
Center for Mindfulness, UMass Medical School, Shrewsbury, MA

Welcome, Schedule, and Guidelines for Community
(rev Jan 2019)

Welcome to the MBSR Practice Teaching Intensive (PTI) at CFM!

We want to warmly welcome you to the upcoming PTI training and give some important information to support ease and a sense of what you are entering. This document has a lot of information that is important to consider prior to your arrival. You may wish to print this out so you can make notes and refer back to it.

The Nature of the Training

While this is not an explicitly named *retreat* experience, due to the content and context of the training, the PTI is perhaps best viewed as a “*retreat training*.” We will meet ourselves—participants and teachers alike—over and over: In the practices, certainly, but also in our interactions with others, in the group process, in the small group interactions, in leading and being led, in the learning activities, in the pauses, in the formal sessions as well as all the transitional moments... at the hotel, the car, while out for a walk—all of it. In that light, as with any practice experience, the intensity allows us to meet aspects of ourselves that may be new and unfamiliar—and also all too familiar! The opportunities for deep learning, deep listening, exploration and revelation are embedded in the personal, experiential and educational activities we’ll be engaged in. Unlike a training that is about something outside of us—you are asked to enter fully *as yourself*. This is an explicit value we hold and share with you now to begin with as much clarity as possible.

Trainings at the CFM

For some of you who attended the MBSR Fundamentals at the CFM or other gatherings, the PTI will be a return to a place you are familiar with. But for many of you, this may be the first time you’ve come to the CFM in Shrewsbury. Whether you have been here before or are anticipating this first visit, we want to convey information that will allow greater ease and comfort for all the PTI participants as well as the CFM staff.

Hosting trainings at the Center is a joy and an honor. It is a great opportunity to have trainees come directly to the CFM—often traveling great distances to attend and we take our role as host seriously. However, the Center for Mindfulness is not a dedicated retreat site. We are pleased that there are hotels nearby that have worked with us through the years and adapted their offerings to provide housing for trainees. In addition, in our current location, we have beautiful grounds for your enjoyment: Walking, eating outside, resting under a tree... there is beauty and a sense of spaciousness and light. We will give you more information once you have arrived about how your group will interface with the daily activities going on at the Center during your training, but for now, some information will help you pack and plan for your stay.

Clothing: Dress for the PTI is casual and comfortable. In packing, along with checking a weather app for Worcester, MA, keep in mind that our building runs very hot and cold, and there is not much leeway in adjusting. It is advised you pack layers (including a sweater, socks and a shawl or blanket). There will be an area where you can leave your things overnight. We have a small supply of blankets available—along with plenty of meditation cushions and yoga mats (there is no need to bring your own props, although if you wish to practice yoga outdoors you could bring a dedicated blanket or mat for that purpose). Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing will accommodate both practice sessions and the more informal teaching sessions throughout the day. You may wish to include athletic shoes for walking or other exercise at the hotel (some hotels have pools and/or saunas).

Unscented Products: Please refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes or any scented personal care products. This includes essential oils or other natural ingredients.

Food and Meals: A catered dinner will be provided on the first and last evenings of the PTI, along with all lunches. Vegetarian, vegan and non-gluten options are included in all menus. The dinners for all the other evenings will be on your own. The rooms at the Residence Inn include small kitchens that will support cooking and meal preparation. There are grocery stores and restaurants close by, and we will have that information available when you arrive to register.

Breakfast foods are available at the Residence Inn at 6:30 am. This does not leave a lot of time before the morning practice (which begins at 7 am). You are welcome to bring food with you for the morning pause after practice. Coffee, tea and a light breakfast snack will be offered at the CFM during that pause.

Please keep in mind that we have very limited refrigeration options so any food you bring to the Center for your daytime use should not need refrigeration. Very limited refrigeration space is available for those with medically-based dietary needs.

We will provide hot water and an assortment of teas each day. And while there will be paper cups available, bringing your own unbreakable, closed container for beverages during the day is highly recommended. A thermal container that can keep cold liquids cold and hot liquids hot is ideal. UMass Medical School provides recycling bins to help lower environmental impact. This allows us to cut down on paper and catering waste.

Before the Training: Readings and Assignments

Please review the items in the reading list and print and bring with you the following documents:

- MBSR Curriculum Guide 2017 Final
- Giving and Receiving Teach Feedback
- MBI-TAC Domains
- Intentions and Skillful Means
- Revised Yoga Poses
- MBSR Standards of Practice

These will be supportive to have with you, available in a form that is easily accessible. For most people, having the printed document is easier than the electronic version for ease of note taking.

Also, before you arrive, along with reading through all the documents, there are four specific assignments, some reflections, and a recommendation:

- Read and review the newest 2017 Authorized 8-week MBSR Curriculum
- Read and review J. Kabat-Zinn's, "The Origins of MBSR and the Trouble With Maps," (included in the reading list). Most if not all of you should have read this for the Practicum. Please reread in preparation for the PTI, noting what is of particular attention to you now, in this phase of your training and development.
- Read chapters 6 and 7 in "**Mindfulness: Diverse Perspectives on its Meaning, Origins and Applications**" (Mark G. Williams and Jon Kabat-Zinn, eds). Chapters 6 and 7 are titled, "*How does mindfulness transform suffering? I The nature and origins of dukkha*" and "*How does mindfulness transform suffering? II: The transformation of dukkha.*" **You will need to purchase this book (available on amazon.com).**
- Listen to the talk by Matthew Brensilver, "Feedback in the Context of Dharma Practice" (Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Jan 26, 2015). Here is the link:
<http://dharmaseed.org/teacher/496/talk/26154/>

Reflections... Give these some thought and consideration in an open way. Hold them in your mind and heart in the coming weeks, and see what arises...

- *Who am I as a teacher?*
- *What personal qualities and attributes enhance my teaching?*
- *What personal qualities and attributes hinder my teaching?*
- *What are my deepest intentions in teaching MBSR?*

And a recommendation:

- If the MBSR formal practices are not part of your regular meditation practice, it is recommended that you use the MBSR recordings provided to re-acquaint yourself with these specific practices.

For learning sessions, it is helpful to have a journal, electronic device or at least paper and writing materials for notes. Art materials are also welcome.

The PTI Schedule

The training is rigorous. The experiential nature and the depth of material demand a high degree of discipline and steadfastness of intention. We request that you clear your schedule during the training to avoid having work or other commitments interfere with this dedicated time. Sometimes, of course, there are exceptions that must be made, but it is suggested to start out with as much spaciousness for your effort and engagement as possible.

Dinner will be provided the first night (registration and orientation) and the last full day of the training, and all lunches. On the other days, we will maintain a rigorous schedule as set out below. In addition to the lunch period, there are two 30-minutes times in the day you'll have to refresh yourselves: Resting, walking, yoga—whatever is needed. These times are important since the days are long.

Please make travel arrangements to *encompass the entire course*: From the first night's orientation through lunch. While we understand that occasionally travel schedules demand an earlier departure, this is not optimal. Before making travel arrangements please speak with someone in the Oasis Team if this arises for you. Thank you for this consideration of both your own learning and the entire group.

Below is the general schedule. The first afternoon and evening are a time to register, check in to your hotel, settle in and then gather for a catered dinner at the Center and the evening's orientation.

First night:

5:00 - 6:00 pm	Registration
6:00 - 7:15 pm	Dinner
7:30 - 9:30 pm	Orientation session

Days 2-7:

7:15 - 8:15 am	AM practice
8:15 - 9:00 am	Silent Pause – light breakfast snack offered, along with coffee, hot water and tea. You are welcome to bring your own breakfast to eat during this time.
9:00 - 12:30 pm	AM Session
12:30 - 2:00 pm	Lunch (catered)
2:00 - 5:30 pm	PM Session
5:30 - 6:00 pm	Silent Pause (Tea, walk, yoga, rest)
6:00 - 7:30 pm	Evening session* - This last period of the day will sometimes be shorter, but there is no anticipating this. We will often need some finishing up time in this period, so we ask for your understanding. We want to stay attuned to what is most necessary, the energy of the group, and adjust accordingly.
7:30 pm	Dinner on your own

Day 8: Dinner will be provided the last full day and the time will shift, eliminating the Silent Pause. The evening session will begin later and go later. Teachers will review details during the training.

Day 9:

The final morning will end with a catered lunch, same times as above.

Please note that this is the typical daily schedule but is subject to variation based on the needs of the group. Evening sessions may be with the entire group, or self-directed times for study and preparation. Instructors will give more information each day.

This is a lot of information, but we want you to be well informed, so you can prepare and pack appropriately. If you have any questions about the content in this email, please contact cfm.oasis@umassmed.edu.

We look forward to seeing you soon, and wish you well in your preparation.

Kind regards,
The Oasis Team