

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Authorized Curriculum Guide[©]

2017

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University of
Massachusetts
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We offer a deep bow of gratitude to our colleagues who have shepherded, with great care and attention, the MBSR program curriculum into mainstream medicine and health care since 1979...

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Prologue

By
Saki F. Santorelli

Eight centuries ago, during the last twelve years of his life, the great teacher and poet, Jelaluddin Rumi, recited and wrote the *Masnavi* – six volumes comprising 64,000 lines of poetry. In this great work, one of the topics Rumi speaks about is what he calls the “variety of intelligences” and, as well, about “Universal Intelligence” - what he refers to as “The Mind of the Whole.” Like all good teachers, he urges us to “figure out how to be delivered from our own figuring.”¹

In another instance he comments on “personal intelligence”:

Personal intelligence is not capable of doing
work. It can learn, but it cannot create.
That must come from non-time, non-space.
Real work begins there.”²

He speaks, too, about what he calls “two kinds of intelligence”:

One that is acquired... one already completed
and preserved inside you.³

In the context of this Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Curriculum Guide these “two kinds of intelligence” may be well worth exploring.

Acquired Intelligence: The Instrumental Dimension of MBSR

Often enough people learning to teach MBSR ask me the question, “Has the MBSR curriculum changed much in 38 years?” I am keenly attentive to the silence that usually ensues between us when this question arises.

What is the answer? Yes? No? Yes and No? Neither yes nor no seems to me to be about as close to reality as I can land.

At heart, the MBSR curriculum has remained absolutely true to the form and formlessness that it entered the world with in 1979.

For now, the basic structure of the program, the sequencing of meditation practices, the underlying class themes and the memes permeating the program remain robust and intact.

¹ Moyne, J., Barks, C. (1984). *Open Secret*. Putney, VT: Threshold Books.

² Moyne, J., Barks, C. (1994). *Say I Am You*. Athens, GA: MAYPOP.

³ Moyne, J., Barks, C. (1988). *This Longing*. Putney, VT: Threshold Books.

In aggregate, these curricular components constitute the “instrumental” domain of the MBSR curriculum. This instrumental domain is what Rumi is referring to as “acquired” intelligence.

Acquired intelligence comes through practice, through repetition, attainment and the development of skills and competencies learned, understood, and experientially refined over time. Surely, the instrumental is of great value, comprising one domain of learning.

Seen through the perspective of the instrumental, this curriculum guide is akin to an operating manual - a class-by-class handbook. Understandably so, when someone is first learning to become an MBSR teacher, the curriculum is often approached in this way.

When viewed through the lens of the instrumental – the world of doing and becoming - then the answer to the question of whether the curriculum has changed leans towards “no”; the curriculum has not changed much at all since 1979.

Of course, herein lies one of the inherent dangers of publishing an “authorized curriculum guide.” Soon enough, it will be mistaken for a “manualized protocol.” Soon enough, people will become fastened to the form – bound tightly to the instrumental - because it provides a structure, a trajectory, and a map that is easily mistaken for the territory. While valuable and oftentimes comforting, this is also problematic because it is limiting.

Much of the time, we want the map to be the territory because we desperately want *constancy*. Surely it is so often easier for us to hold firmly to and be comforted by the instrumental - by the form.

Having established some sense of the instrumental dimension of intelligence, let’s now turn our attention to a wholly other domain of intelligence.

“Already Completed” Intelligence: The Non-Instrumental Dimension of MBSR

At the most basic level, you need a room to teach MBSR, a gathering place for people.

Of course, you already inhabit a room that is always with you. This is the room of your heart. Rumi calls this placeless place:

“The freshness in the center of your chest”... “The city inside your chest.”

This freshness is outside of space and time, outside of needing to get anything, outside of transforming yourself or anyone or anything - no attaining, no non-attaining, no completeness or incompleteness... simply *being*.

This is the *non-instrumental* actuality of MBSR, the intelligence that is already complete within you – and within those with whom you work. This intelligence does not need to be acquired but rather, *remembered*.

This is the *real* curriculum... the *real* guide... the deep spring from which MBSR flows out of you and makes its way into the world.

You might consider returning to this water whenever you need a reminder of who and what you are behind all the words and forms described in this Curriculum Guide. This “freshness” available to you whenever you become lost or tired, overextended or discouraged or simply in need of rest and ease and the refreshment of not needing to pursue any aim at all.

I suspect that if you allow yourself the room, you’ll discover for yourself that holding too firmly to the instrumental inevitably blinds you to the non-instrumental - to what is most essential about MBSR - because it is most essential about you and all human beings.

Like Russian Matryoshka dolls, the instrumental is *nested* within the non-instrumental. If this were not the case, how could you learn anything? How could you love anyone, if love were not an innate attribute of your being? How could you ache and feel tenderness in the orbit of another’s pain, if empathy wasn’t inherent? Surely, we can learn to become increasingly *familiar* with these attributes through deliberateness and practice. However, if they were not already part and parcel of who and what you *are*, you would have no reference point for loving, compassionating (as Walt Whitman says) or assuming your own measure of universal responsibility.

If MBSR is worth anything, its worth lies in its aliveness. Its aliveness rests in the basic ungraspability of the curriculum *as* MBSR. Seen from this vantage point – the vantage point of the non-instrumental - then the answer to the question, “has the curriculum changed” is yes. The curriculum has changed - because, like everything else, it is constantly changing. Likewise, who and whatever you think of as “you” is also continually changing. This dynamic flux is none other than the creative nature of Rumi’s “Universal Intelligence” reflected *through* you and embodied *as* you. And, of course, as you grow and deepen, the curriculum is changed, deepening and expanding into new expressions of itself, endlessly.

Ultimately, and in a very palpable way, the “curriculum” of MBSR is none other than *your* life and the lives of the people you’ll share in and engage with week by week in the classroom. The suffering, the inconstancy, the lack of a solid, concrete “self” - the wish for relief of suffering and the longing for wellbeing that you carry within you, and all the people you’ll ever work with carry within them - *is* the curriculum, the vital life of MBSR.

Now, as you turn the page and enter this MBSR Curriculum Guide, now and again, and over and over again, my invitation to you is to realize that the real guide to the MBSR curriculum is always available inside of you, always awaiting your attention, always resting in your completeness outside of any notions of here and now, past and future, time and space.

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Overview

As the place of origin of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), the University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness has, since 1979, conceptualized, developed, implemented and researched MBSR in the form of an 8-week, 10-session course comprised of 31 hours of direct instruction.

This 2017 version of MBSR Curriculum Guide is based upon our cumulative experience totaling more than one million hours of clinical care, more than 24,000 MBSR program completers, referred by more than 7,000 physicians, hundreds of other health care professionals, and through self-referral. In our view, maintaining the fidelity and integrity of MBSR as detailed in this Curriculum Guide will help insure the clinical efficacy, scientific validity, and educational rigor of this approach.

Adherence to the theoretical constructs and core elements of MBSR as described in this Curriculum Guide are based upon clinical experience and scientific investigations. As these investigations proceed and new discoveries are made, we welcome and are prepared to alter the MBSR curriculum.

Currently, there are a wide-range of mindfulness-based programs that have developed out of the basic structure and format of MBSR. We applaud these adaptations and experiments while strongly urging our colleagues to call what they do MBSR *only* if they adhere to the structure and standards described herein. Without such adherence, the veracity of MBSR will be diminished and the scientific results increasingly suspect.

At its core, MBSR is based on systematic and intensive training in mindfulness meditation and mindful hatha yoga. The curriculum, originally developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., is an expression and reflection of this core principle. Therefore, it is termed “mindfulness-based.” In continual development in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Clinic at University of Massachusetts Medical School, the curriculum is designed to guide MBSR program participants in the “how” of learning to practice, integrate, and apply mindfulness in their everyday lives. The primary intention of the MBSR curriculum is to create a structured pathway to relieve suffering and increase wellbeing for people facing a host of challenges arising from a wide range of medical and psychological conditions and the demands and stressors inherent in the everyday lives of human beings.

Embedded within the context of Mind-Body and Participatory Medicine, the MBSR curriculum focuses on the experiential cultivation of both “formal” and “informal” mindfulness practice as a means of familiarizing one self with awareness itself (mindfulness). The recognition of an innate, ever-present awareness is the foundation for the development of positive health behaviors, psychological and

emotional resilience, and an overarching sense of wellbeing that can be effectively cultivated and relied upon across the adult life span.

MBSR clinical and basic science research and our experience at the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School strongly supports the efficacy of MBSR as an effective clinical approach that can be utilized by participants far beyond completion of the program.

Orientation Session: Overview

(For an in-depth description of the Orientation Session as followed at UMass Medical School see Appendix A)

Overview	<p>The main intentions of the Orientation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Familiarizing potential participants with what MBSR is and is not ❖ Providing participants with an experience of mindfulness in an atmosphere of trust and non-judgmental awareness and exchange ❖ Educating participants about program procedures ❖ Assessing how participants interact in the group setting to determine whether the program is a good match ❖ Meeting with each participant individually for a brief screening interview ❖ Eliciting a commitment from participants to engage in active participation in the program, which includes weekly class attendance and a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour of formal home practice as well as informal practice throughout the day
Recommended Time Allocations	1:00 - 1:25 hours to cover all components in large group
Formal Practice	<p>Short Yoga sequence</p> <p>Sitting Meditation – Awareness of Breath</p>
Informal Practice	Following the Group Orientation Session, if participants are waiting their turn for an individual interview, an invitation can be offered to consider becoming aware—for brief moments—of the environment, bodily sensations, feelings of impatience or boredom, excitement etc.
Typical Class Sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Overview of orientation ❖ Brief history of MBSR and the Stress Reduction Clinic (SRC) (<i>adapt for local venue as needed</i>) ❖ Introduce Mindfulness ❖ Brief practice (yoga, short AOB) (<i>Practice is offered here just as it is done in the MBSR class, including guidance for taking care, self-assessing before taking part in any movement, and exploring one's current limits without pushing oneself beyond them</i>) ❖ Brief sharing of the immediate mindfulness practice experience with Orientation Session participants ❖ Class Logistics: Times, dates (including the All-Day class), the importance of attending each class and the commitment to daily practice

<p>Typical Class Sequence (cont)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Class Content: Experiential learning of formal and informal practices; recordings and home practice; class topics: Perception, stress physiology, stress reactivity and responding, communication ❖ Guidelines for Participation: Commitment, engagement with practice, no need to “believe” anything as a pre-requisite for participation, attentiveness to one’s experience as the primary “data.” Note that while participants are not required to speak in class, class dialogue in small groups and the larger group is a meaningful part of class time. ❖ Risks & Benefits: <p><u>Risks</u> – Physical, emotional, time, social; also note possible exclusions or areas to talk more with instructor during interview: Addiction, early recovery, untreated psychosis, acute depression, suicidality, PTSD, Social Anxiety, recent loss. These circumstances or conditions do not rule out the possibility of being in the class, but it is essential to share with the teacher during the interview these or anything that feels important to share. During the interview the teacher can offer suggestions for support and make recommendations for the most successful outcomes for participation in the MBSR class (Please refer to Appendix A for detailed information and procedures regarding candidate referrals to appropriate medical and psychological professionals and health emergency intervention.)</p> <p><u>Benefits</u> – Better coping, evidence-based, dependent on consistent practice, capacity to better care for self, no guarantees</p> ❖ Invite additional questions ❖ Individual Interview
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MBSR Orientation Session Logistical Details

Logistics of the MBSR Course:

Below are detailed logistics that are included in the CFM Orientation Sessions. Some logistics are adaptable depending on the venue and whether there is one class or several being offered in a given timeframe; options are indicated below. Please see Standards of Practice for more information on programmatic elements required to be considered “MBSR.”

- ❖ The course meets every week for 8 weeks, either in the morning or evening, for 2.5 to 3.5 hours (*adapt times for local venue*).
- ❖ There is an “All-day” class (a silent retreat day) between the 6th and 7th week on a weekend day, from 8:45 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. (*It is also possible to hold the All-day class between the 5th and 6th week if schedules demand*).
- ❖ **Formal and informal practices:** In each class participants will learn about and practice different forms of mindfulness including formal practices of yoga, sitting meditation, body scan, and walking meditation as well as informal practices such as mindful eating, speaking and listening, and mindfulness of daily activities.
- ❖ **Topics covered in class:** Participants will learn about stress, and explore the habitual, automatic behavioral, physical, emotional and cognitive patterns as well as investigate, in detail, more effective and skillful responses to the challenges and demands of everyday life. In parallel, we’ll also be exploring what it means to take care of ourselves and flourish, how to relate to ourselves and others more effectively and what it might be like to nourish behaviors and activities that express our innate capacity for wellbeing.
- ❖ In each class there will be periods of formal mindfulness practice, small and large group discussions and talks, as well as practices and exercises related to that week’s topics.
- ❖ **Recordings for Home Practice:** Participants will receive CDs or Mp3 downloads with guided meditation and yoga practices and a home practice manual, weekly handouts or email/online information with each week’s formal and informal practice assignments.
- ❖ **Class size:** There will be approximately _____ people in each class. (*Class sizes may vary from as few as 15 and as many as 40 depending on the venue, community, etc. See Standards of Practice for suggested class size.*)
- ❖ **What to wear/bring:** Comfortable clothing, loose at the waist that allows for unconstructed breathing, supports practice. There are no scheduled breaks during class; take care of personal needs as required (this includes bathroom, food, water, medications). Encourage eating lightly before class and avoid having food in the classroom, although if food is needed for medical reasons, individuals should be accommodated. Request refraining from use of scented personal care products (this may include detergents) due to others’ sensitivity.
- ❖ Daily home practice consists of 40-45 minutes of recorded formal practice in addition to other exercises, activities, or practice not requiring a recording. Total daily practice time is

60 minutes or more. Encourage participants to consider how they will set aside time for daily practice since this is an essential component to the program.

- ❖ Acknowledge stressfulness of participation in MBSR. This includes time commitment and other possible challenges.
- ❖ **Attendance:** Attendance at all 9 classes, including the all-day class is emphasized. If a participant misses a class, there may be possibilities for making up the class that week on another day if multiple classes are held at the site (*dependent on venue*). If someone knows they will miss 2 or more classes, encourage participation in a different cycle. If, during the course, a participant misses 3 or more classes, they are encouraged to drop out and take the entire program again in another cycle when they are able to make the time commitment. Emphasize the importance of arriving on time. Remind participants to call the teacher if they are unable to attend class, need to make up in another class, or know you will be late for class.
- ❖ **Weather policies:** Explain any inclement weather policy.
- ❖ **Informed consent - Class audio and video recordings for teacher development (if applicable; dependent on venue):** Explain the nature and use of video and audio recording of each class. Inform participants recordings are used solely to support ongoing teacher development and competency assessment. Have participants sign Informed Consent document before Orientation or the first class.

Explain the risks and benefits of the program. (Note: it is only after these have been explained that the participant can sign the informed consent agreement.)

Physical risks (If a brief yoga/movement practice is offered during the Orientation Session, as is suggested, these introductory points of guidance should be included during that movement experience and then reviewed in more depth here):

- ❖ The primary physical risk is connected to practicing mindful yoga.
- ❖ Knowing oneself and taking care of oneself is at the core of mindfulness.
- ❖ If a participant hears guidance that they know is not appropriate for their body or condition, or if anything causes pain, the correct action is to disregard the teacher and either modify the pose/movement, rest and imagine doing the pose/movement, or notice and acknowledge any thoughts or emotions that may be arising in the experience of not doing the pose/movement.
- ❖ Focus is on exploring one's physical limits, by going to the edge of those limits, but not beyond. This exploration is done slowly and with sensitivity, guided by the teacher.
- ❖ Being aware of the body from moment to moment and in everyday situations is an essential aspect of MBSR. The formal yoga sequences are a structured way of developing greater body awareness, and as such, are awareness practices rather than practices to develop a specific form or alignment that is often emphasized in other types of yoga.

- ❖ The teacher offers modifications or adaptations to poses/movements to meet the variety of capacities in the class (*as was demonstrated in the brief practice guided during Orientation session*).
- ❖ Participants with physical conditions or limitations should ask their healthcare provider to review the postures in the practice manual, and to suggest only those postures that are suitable.

Emotional risks:

- ❖ Feelings of sadness, anger, or fear, could seem or become stronger as practice develops, since paying attention in a conscious way—perhaps for the first time—can highlight emotions.
- ❖ A history of trauma, abuse, significant recent loss or major life changes, or addiction to substances may heighten emotional reactions. Please speak with the teacher if this occurs, and together you can determine the best course of action (i.e., modifying practice, dropping the course, waiting for another time when acute symptoms may be less).
- ❖ Participants may make discoveries about themselves that they may not like.
- ❖ Participants may be challenged and find themselves facing the unknown.
- ❖ Experiential learning is often non-linear; participants' symptoms can sometimes worsen, particularly in the early weeks of the program. Even with regular practice, participants may feel like “nothing is happening.” This is normal and a typical aspect of any learning process. Participants are encouraged to speak to their teacher with any concerns.

Other people in your life:

- ❖ It may be a challenge to set aside the space and time to do this practice; requesting assistance from family, friends and/or co-workers may be supportive.
- ❖ Participants may experience changes in reactivity, behavior and communication, and family, friends and/or co-workers may be uncomfortable with these new behaviors or attitudes.
- ❖ Participants may find that their relationships change as attention deepens and new behaviors evolve.

Time:

- ❖ Finding time to make a new habit of mindfulness practice can be challenging: it's normal to have the idea that there is not enough time for practice. Participants often find, counter-intuitively, that setting aside time for practice increases the sense of spaciousness in the rest of the day.

Benefits:

- ❖ Increased awareness and concentration
- ❖ Discovering new ways to cope more effectively with existing conditions difficulties, pain or suffering
- ❖ Learning to take better care of oneself
- ❖ Many physical, psychological and emotional health benefits of MBSR have been reported in scientific literature
- ❖ We cannot guarantee or promise any particular results from participation in the MBSR course. Rather, emphasis is placed on the participant's active engagement in the program. We encourage participants to assume the stance of a scientist investigating their area of interest: with openness and curiosity, suspension of judgement and a sense of healthy questioning. It is more important for a participant to experience for themselves whatever is happening, rather than for the teacher to tell them what may or may not happen as a result of their participation in the course.

Invite additional questions

Class One

Overview	This 3-hour session includes a review of the approach and the establishment of a learning contract with the participant/patient. The theoretical underpinnings of mindfulness within the context of Mind-Body and Participatory Medicine and the application of self-regulatory skills related to the individual's condition or referring diagnosis are also established. The participant/patient is experientially introduced to mindful eating, some standing yoga stretches, mindfulness of breathing and the body scan meditation. Home practice is assigned using the first guided recording (body scan meditation) as a means of beginning to learn to become familiar with mindful awareness of the body.
Theme	<p>From our point of view, <i>as long as you are breathing</i>, there is more right with you than wrong with you, no matter what challenges you are facing. Challenges and difficulties are workable. Mindful awareness, defined as the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, (Kabat-Zinn, J, Full Catastrophe Living, 1990, 2013) is fundamental to this approach since the present moment is the only time anyone ever has for perceiving, learning, growing and transforming.</p> <p>Building trust within the group and beginning to sense a community ; defining and applying mindfulness to our life experientially; opening and starting to explore; acknowledging alternative perspectives; trusting the possibility to see oneself with fresh eyes.</p>
Recommended Time Allocations	<p>Formal Practice – Approximately 1 hour (<i>much depends on the size of the group and how much time is allotted for the body scan</i>).</p> <p>Informal Practice – Approximately 20-30 minutes (eating meditation)</p> <p>Group Discussion – 1 hour + (depending on size of group and needs for group introductions)</p> <p>Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 30 minutes</p>
Formal Practice	<p>Opening Practice (brief, arriving)</p> <p>Body Scan</p> <p>Standing Yoga (It is recommended that a few poses from the Standing Yoga sequence be introduced in classes 1, 2, 4 and 5, so that by Class 5, when participants/patients receive the Standing Yoga recording, all Standing Yoga postures will have been introduced, eliminating the need to do the sequence in its entirety in class 5)</p>
Informal Practice	Eating Meditation

<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>Welcome and brief introduction of program by the instructor</p> <p>Opening meditation: becoming attentive to and aware of thoughts, emotions, and sensations in the present moment (may also include what is seen, heard, other senses)</p> <p>Class responses to opening meditation (can be just a few responses if it is a large class)</p> <p>Review definition of mindfulness, including entire time in class as an opportunity to practice moment-to-moment seamless awareness (not just in the meditations)</p> <p>Review of guidelines for participation i.e.: Confidentiality, self-care, communication with instructor, no advice-giving, no fixing or rescuing others, avoidance of scented products, etc.</p> <p>Guided individual internal reflection: What has brought you here? What is your intention? What do you really want? (Option: small group or dyad sharing about guided reflection before going into large group.)</p> <p>Group go-around: Provide participants with the opportunity to introduce themselves, what they are here for, and their goals and expectations for the program. The instructor may make instructive comments, observations, and welcoming remarks from time to time in response to individuals. This is not a discussion; avoid cross-talk between participants, and teacher may inform the group that s/he may need to interrupt to keep on time and maintain guidelines. Mindful listening and speaking may be introduced here. Encourage everyone to speak—even if only to say their name. Also encourage those who may be attending for professional training purposes (e.g. as the beginning of MBSR teacher training, for instance, or in order to introduce mindfulness to their patients or clients) to drop beneath the professional role to the personal aspects of their lives, to be authentic and willing to explore what is available for them, without pre-conceptions of this program solely as a training, but rather to see their full participation as an essential part of training.</p> <p>Yoga: Introduction to standing Mountain Pose and a few other standing poses (<i>See recommendation under “Formal Practice” on previous page</i>).</p> <p>Raisin-eating exercise: introduction to mindfulness meditation using the ordinary act of eating, followed by a dialogue about the experience. Focus on direct sensory observation – what can be seen, felt, heard, smelled, tasted. Observing and then slowly eating one raisin, with guidance from instructor, stopping for observations from participants. Bringing friendly curiosity to this investigation, then eating a second raisin in silence. Instructor is attentive to observations that are deductions, opinions and theories removed from the participant’s immediate experience. Group dialogue can be an inquiry into what is directly experienced through this practice. The instructor stays awake and alive to the recognition of past</p>
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<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>experience influencing the present; the interconnection of the raisin to - sun, soil, rain, energy of planting, harvesting, delivering the food, and then becoming the energy of the body; relationship between hunger, satisfaction, emptiness, and fullness; and what shows up when present for the full act of eating. Not needing to necessarily bring these topics forward, but allowing them to arise in the group.</p> <p>Abdominal breathing: Tie the moment-to-moment awareness of eating exercise to experiencing the breath in the same way. Introduce various comfortable postures for lying down: corpse pose, astronaut pose, or sitting in chairs if necessary. Focus on the <u>feeling</u> of the abdomen rising and falling with the in-breath and the out-breath, mindfully “tasting” the breath in the same way that the group tasted the raisin. Non-judgmentally observing one’s own breathing from moment to moment; and bringing one’s attention back to the breath and the present moment when the mind wanders.</p> <p>Body Scan: From mindfulness of breathing, move into guided body scan with people continuing to lie on floor or sitting in comfortable position. Finish with discussion of people’s experiences with the body scan and assign daily home practice. Give instructions for use of the 45-minute Body Scan recording for home practice during Week One.</p> <p>Review home practice. End with short Awareness of Breath (AOB) meditation.</p>
<p>Home Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Scan recording ≥ 6 days this week • Home Practice Manual: The 9 Dots Puzzle. Give instructions to work with the puzzle and also be attentive to how you approach the puzzle. • Eat one meal this week mindfully or at least a few bites during one meal • Optional informal practice (“small doses, many times”): Informally and intentionally notice or cultivate moments of awareness during the day—tuning briefly into the breath, body, sounds, what can be seen, and thoughts and emotions—whatever is present, noticing without judgment; recognizing directly that you can deliberately cultivate a <i>continuity of awareness</i> throughout your day as a way of beginning to access your innate resources for coping and meeting live in ways that are less conditioned and more appropriate to situations you are facing • Optional informal practice: Informally practice some of the mindful stretches you learned in class as a way to reconnect with the body and the present moment

Class Two

Overview	<p>This 2.5 hour session includes one hour of experiential mindfulness training and skill development, and one hour or more of focused dialogue and reflection on home practice and, thematically, on the role of perception and conditioning in the appraisal and assessment of stress. The pivotal role of self-responsibility in the positive development of short and long-term changes in health and health-enhancing behaviors is introduced. Home practice is assigned with an emphasis on the regular daily practice of the body scan for a second week, plus introduction of short periods of sitting meditation, and the application and integration of mindfulness into the participant's everyday life.</p>
Theme	<p>Perception and creative responding: How you see things (or don't see them) will determine in large measure how you will react or respond to them. This ties in with how people see their participation in the program; how they see their pain, their illness; the stress and pressures in their lives; the level of commitment they will bring to the program and to the personal discipline it requires. Make the connection to automatic habitual stress reactivity and recovery from acute stressors, and the principle that "It's not the stressors per se, but how you handle them" that influences the short and long-term health effects they may have on your mind, body and overall sense of health and wellbeing.</p>
Recommended Time Allocations	<p>Formal Practice – 1 hour Group Discussion – 40 minutes Didactic Presentation (nine dots) – 30 min including group discussion Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 20 minutes</p>
Formal Practice	<p>Opening meditation Sitting Meditation Standing Yoga - a few postures (optional) Body Scan (45 minutes) AOB sitting meditation (introduction with postural guidance)</p>
Informal Practice	<p>For home practice: Mindfulness of routine activities: Brushing teeth, washing dishes, taking a shower, taking out garbage, shopping, reading to kids, eating (participant chooses one).</p> <p>Continue including some of the yoga poses into your day. Become aware of repetitive movements in ordinary activities, i.e. getting into and out of the car, preparing meals, bathing children, taking a walk, etc.</p>

<p>Typical Class Sequence</p>	<p>Standing yoga</p> <p>Guided body scan</p> <p>Small and/or large group work: Discussion of the body scan experience both in the session as well as home practice with particular attention to how successful they were at making the time for it, problems and obstacles encountered (sleepiness, boredom, other), how they worked with them or not, and what participants may be learning and/or seeing about themselves from practicing the body scan.</p> <p>Establish the universality of the wandering mind and the notion of working with this recognition with curiosity, acceptance/ acknowledgment and deliberate, repeated, re-focusing of attention; explicitly letting participants know that this deliberate re-directing of mind and “coming back” is as much a part of the meditation practice as staying on the object of attention; noting (without analysis) where the mind goes and what is on one’s mind. Emphasize the importance of desisting from repressing and suppressing thoughts or feelings or forcing things to be a certain way. Best way to get somewhere is not to try to get anywhere, not even “relaxed.” The option is to “let be” or “let go.” This is a new way of learning. The body has its own language and its own intelligence. Non-conceptual.</p> <p>Discuss eating one mindful meal and/or the experience of their relationship with food this week.</p> <p>9-Dots Puzzle: Examine the experience of working with the 9-Dot Puzzle and the theme of expanding the field of awareness when facing familiar or new challenges or circumstances. Several subthemes may emerge out of this experience. These may include: ways someone problem solves, recognizing conditioned behavioral, cognitive and emotional patterns that arise when working with difficulties and challenges (including “solving” the 9-Dots Puzzle); beginning to recognize patterns that are self-defeating or non-productive as well as ways that the past influences the present (labels, beliefs, identities); along with the breakthrough “aha!” experience. (May connect any/all of these themes to practicing the body scan.)</p> <p>Option: Use the old woman/young woman or other trompe L’oeil or other perception-challenging visual aids to investigate different ways of seeing or not seeing.</p> <p>Sitting Meditation: Introduce sitting meditation with awareness of breathing (AOB) as primary object of attention. Begin by introducing and exploring postural options. Do a brief guided meditation.</p> <p>Discussion about the AOB meditation.</p> <p>Go over home practice. End with short AOB meditation.</p>
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Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Scan recording ≥ 6 times per week • AOB sitting meditation: 10-15 minutes per day – No recording for home practice. Participants/patients are instructed to practice on their own. This is not about controlling or changing the breath, but rather being with the breath and the bodily sensations of breathing, noticing when attention wanders, and deliberately returning attention to the breath • Fill out Pleasant Events Calendar for the week – one entry per day. Note: If no pleasant event is perceived on a given day, there is no need to fill out the calendar for that day • Choose one daily activity to bring full awareness to for the week: Brushing teeth, taking out the garbage, taking a shower, feeding a pet, etc.
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Class Three

Overview	In this 2.5 hour session, participants practice several distinct yet interrelated formal mindfulness practices – mindful hatha yoga (ending with a brief body scan), sitting meditation and optional walking meditation – for a minimum of 90 minutes. This extended formal practice period is followed by inquiry into and exploration of participants' experiences with in-class and assigned home practices. Typical topics include challenges and insights encountered in formal practice and in integrating mindfulness into everyday life.
Theme	There is pleasure and power in being present. Attending to and investigating the way things are in the body and mind in the present moment through the practices of yoga and meditation.
Recommended Time Allocations	Formal Practice – 70-90 minutes Group Discussion – 1 hour Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 20 minutes
Formal Practice	Opening meditation, which can flow into longer sitting practice of AOB with attention to posture Mindful Lying Down Yoga Walking Practice (If time): This practice can be introduced at any time from week three forward – It is strongly recommended that mindful walking be introduced at least one time prior to the all day-class. Closing meditation
Informal Practice	Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindful listening and speaking
Typical Class Sequence	<i>Class three options for increasing seamless continuity of practice include the possibility of moving directly from sitting to lying down yoga or from sitting to walking to lying down yoga, offering a longer period of formal practice. In this case, the group dialogue would include what was experienced in all the practices.</i> Sitting meditation with awareness of breathing. Specific guidance related to establishing a stable, upright and balanced sitting posture. Group discussion on sitting, body scan, and mindfulness in routine activities. Discuss the importance of being embodied through the sharing of participants' direct experience of feeling embodied (established in their somatic/bodily experience) or ungrounded and disconnected from the body. Optional: Introduce walking meditation.

<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>Lying Down Yoga: Slowly move through the sequence of postures on the Lying-down Yoga recording, with guidance and comments interspersed as required. Emphasis is on mindfulness and approaching one’s current limits with gentleness—learning to dwell at the boundary without overstepping and investigating what is sensitive and wise, moment- to- moment for each participant. Participants are encouraged to avoid any postures they feel would cause injury or a setback and, to experiment with caution and care when in doubt. Particular attention is paid to people with chronic musculoskeletal problems i.e. lower back, neck, joints and chronic pain in general. Verbal guidance is explicit and accurate (i.e. if lying on the floor: “...drawing the right knee up to the chest and wrapping your arms under the thigh...””) so that people know what to do without having to look at the teacher. We expect all MBSR teachers to actively demonstrate the yoga postures along with program participants. This may include offering chair options or other adaptations for people with physical limitations. Teachers are encouraged to respond to specific participant needs and tailor the postures accordingly. The teacher is encouraged to ask if anyone needs additional guidance regarding a posture, and if needed, the teacher can assist the participant, asking permission first before making physical contact.</p> <p>It is skillful and supportive to offer chair yoga adaptations for those who are unable to lie down on the floor. This may necessitate moving back and forth between the floor and a chair as you guide participants in the yoga.</p> <p>Group discussion about the experience of practicing the yoga postures.</p> <p>Go over Pleasant Events Calendar, being particularly attentive to exploring the ordinariness of experiencing a moment as pleasant.</p> <p><i>(Optional: before a formal group discussion with the participants about the Pleasant Events Calendar consider leading a short guided reflection that asks participants to select one pleasant event, focusing on physical sensations, emotions, and thoughts as they arise as memory, and then as they arise in the present moment.)</i></p> <p>Particular emphasis on mind/body connections, patterns, what people observed/learned about themselves in everyday circumstances. Also, wondering together if there were any pleasant moments experienced during the body scan in the past week (or sitting practice). Investigating what qualities in all of these pleasant moments or events caused them to be labeled as pleasant by the participant? What qualities do these distinct pleasant moments or events have in common for the participant? (This is an opening to acknowledge how habits are conditioned and our desire to want things to be a certain way that results in attachment, aversion etc. Note: this is not an opportunity for a ‘lecture’ but a weaving together of some of the ways our behaviors are patterned based upon the actuality of participants’ responses). Relate to observations that we miss many of our pleasant moments, perhaps focusing only on the unpleasant ones.</p>
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Typical Class Sequence (continued)	<p>Possible themes of connection, belonging, and contact being an important element of pleasant moments. Also, there may also be the perspective of not wanting anything, just appreciating what we already have and the possibility of having pleasant moments in spite of being in a crisis or in physical or emotional pain. (Option: Pleasant Events can be “unpacked” in Class 4, along with the Unpleasant Events Calendar, depending on time and inclination of the instructor.)</p> <p>Assign home practice, alternating yoga with the body scan. Emphasize the importance of getting down on the floor and working mindfully with your body every day, if only for a few minutes.</p> <p>Finish class with a short sitting meditation, AOB, expanding attention to the whole body.</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate Body Scan recording with Lying-down Yoga recording, every other day ≥ 6 days per week • Sitting meditation with AOB - 15 - 20 min per day • Fill out an Unpleasant Events Calendar for the week, one entry per day

Class Four

Overview	During this 2.5 hour session, participants engage in a combination of the three major formal mindfulness practices that they have also been practicing at home during the preceding three weeks. These include: mindful hatha yoga, sitting meditation and the body scan. In this class, a brief guided body scan can be practiced before the start of the sitting practice (this is optional and lying down is not necessary). Instruction emphasizes the development of concentration, embodiment, the capacity to train and re-direct attention, and the systematic expansion of the field of awareness.
Theme	How conditioning and perception shape our experience. By practicing mindfulness, we cultivate curiosity and openness to the full range of experience and through this process cultivate a more flexible attentional capacity. We learn new ways of relating to stressful moments and events, whether external or internal. Exploration of mindfulness as a means of recognizing and reducing the negative effects of automatic, habitual stress reactivity as well as the development of more effective ways of responding positively and pro-actively to stressful situations and experiences is addressed with increasing depth and dimensionality. The physiological and psychological bases of stress reactivity are reviewed and in-depth discussion is directed toward using mindfulness as a way of working with, reducing, and recovering more quickly from stressful situations and experiences. Daily practice aimed at recognizing and experientially inquiring into automatic habitual reactive patterns is assigned for home practice.
Recommended Time Allocations	Formal Practice – 1 hour and 10 minutes Group Discussion – 1 hour Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 20 minutes
Formal Practice	Opening meditation Standing Yoga Sitting meditation Closing meditation
Informal Practice	Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindfully listening and speaking
Typical Class Sequence	Standing Yoga postures (building from those done last week) Sitting meditation with focus on breath, body sensations (introduced via brief body scan while sitting), and the whole body. Particular emphasis on working with painful physical sensations. Introducing ways of working

<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>with discomfort/pain: shifting posture if pain is posture-related; using uncomfortable sensations as object of awareness by investigating quality, duration, and nature of sensations—highlighting the continually changing aspect of bodily sensations, and shifting attention to the breath if sensations are overwhelming. In addition, exploration of the possibility of bringing awareness to emotions or thoughts that might also be present with physical pain or other sensations (for instance, tightening or constricting when experiencing pain). This can also be expanded to emotional pain or discomfort. The same approaches can be offered with emotional pain: Knowing experience directly, using uncomfortable emotions as objects of awareness, and also shifting attention to the breath if emotions become too difficult or of prolonged intensity. To develop greater flexibility of attention, emphasis is placed on modulating attention to work more effectively with strong bodily sensations and emotions as a means of self-regulation and coping more effectively.</p> <p>Group discussion exploring the sitting meditation practiced at the beginning of this session. Inquire into the experience of working with physical sensations, the daily sitting practice, and yoga. Fine-tune yoga instructions as required. Invite exploration about the relationship between practicing yoga and the body scan. Connect to daily life experience.</p> <p>Optional: Before a group discussion with the participants about the Unpleasant Events Calendar, consider leading a short guided reflection that asks participants to select one unpleasant event, focusing on physical sensations, emotions, and thoughts as they arise as memory, and then as they arise in the present moment (this allows even those who may not have completed the home practice to participate fully).</p> <p>Review Unpleasant Events Calendar, being particularly attentive to exploring the familiarity of unpleasant moments. Emphasis on mind/body connections, patterns, what people observed/learned about themselves., and wondering together if there were any unpleasant moments experienced during any of the formal or informal home practices in the past week. Investigating any common attributes in all of these unpleasant moments or events that caused them to be labeled as unpleasant. What qualities do these distinct unpleasant moments or events have in common?</p> <p>(Note: if Pleasant Events were not investigated in class three, both Pleasant and Unpleasant Events may be explored in this session.)</p> <p>Group discussion: Continue exploring physical sensations, emotions, and thoughts associated with unpleasant events. Connect to experience of stress – How do we actually experience it physically, cognitively and affectively? Ask participants to name stressors –what is particularly stressful for you and what are you discovering about stress and stress reactivity through the practice of mindfulness? Explore with the class their</p>
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Typical Class Sequence (continue)	<p>experience of Automatic, Habitual Stress Reactivity (See: <i>Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living</i>, 2013, pgs 306-334). How does it influence mind, body, health, and their patterns of behavior? Association with expectations, not getting one's own way (what is my way, anyway?... would I know it if I got it? and how long would it last?) Definitions of stress and stressors (see, for example, evolving theories and studies about stress from Cannon, Selye, Lazarus, Sapolosky, McEwen.) Best to explore this through dialogue and reflection rather presenting didactically as a lecture.</p> <p>Assign home practice</p> <p>Conclude class with brief sitting meditation</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate Body Scan recording with Lying-down Yoga recording, every other day ≥ 6 days per week • Sitting meditation 20 minutes per day with attention to breathing, other physical sensations, and awareness of the whole body • Be aware of automatic habitual stress reactions and behaviors during the week, without trying to change them • Be aware of feeling stuck, blocking, numbing, and shutting off to the moment when it happens this week • Review information about stress in practice manual or handout

Class Five

Overview	<p>During this 2.5 hour session, participants engage in a combination of the three major formal mindfulness practices that have also been practiced at home during the preceding three weeks: The body scan, mindful hatha yoga and sitting meditation. This session marks the halfway point in the course. It emphasizes the capacity of participants to adapt more rapidly and effectively to everyday challenges and stressors. Experiential practice of mindfulness continues with an emphasis on <i>responding</i> (vs. reacting) to stressors and the value and utility of mindfulness in learning to stop, step back and see more clearly/objectively and to then be in a better position to make informed choices (responding) in meeting various situations. To further the capacity to respond, problem-, emotion-, and meaning-focused coping strategies may be delineated (See Lazarus and Folkman, and Folkman.) A central element of the session is oriented around the participant's capacity to <i>recover more rapidly</i> from stressful encounters when they occur. Strategies continue to be developed with emphasis on the growing capacity to attend more precisely to a variety of physical and mental perceptions and to use this awareness as a way of deliberately interrupting and intervening in previously conditioned, habitual behaviors and choosing more effective mindfulness-mediated stress responses. (See: Kabat-Zinn, <i>Full Catastrophe Living</i>, 2013, pgs 335-349). Neuroscience research may be appropriately included here, and is best introduced in relation to what is being reported by participants regarding their actual experience. Daily mindfulness practice is assigned, with an emphasis on the observation and application of mindful awareness in daily life.</p>
Theme	<p>Theme One</p> <p>Awareness of being stuck in one's life or in particular situations in one's life , highlighting the conditioned patterns often encountered in highly demanding situations in which one finds oneself (i.e. fight, flight, and freeze – stress reactivity/automaticity/mindlessness.) Investigation of the ways people often cope including: numbing, denial, passive-aggressiveness, suppression of feelings, substance dependency, thoughts of suicide etc. Recognizing and honoring the fact that these coping methods may have been protective and supported survival, and that they may now be counter-evolutionary and limiting, if not self-destructive. Note: These topics may have arisen in class four as automatic habitual stress reactivity and the biology of fight, flight and freeze were unpacked. This theme may continue as participants explore and describe what it was like to bring a close and caring attention to their automatic habitual stress reactions without trying to change them.</p>

Theme (continued)	Theme Two <p>Connect mindfulness with perception/appraisal in the critical moment (the moment of conscious contact), and with the arising of reactive physical sensations, emotions, cognitions and behaviors. Emphasis on attentiveness to the capacity to respond rather than to react to stressful situations. Explore the effect of emotional reactivity in health and illness. Acknowledge the full range of emotions and, when called for, to express them with clarity and respect for self and other. Explore as well the capacity to recover more quickly as a means of reducing the “wear and tear” on the body-mind that occurs when a reactive cycle of arousal persists.</p>
Recommended Time Allocations	<p>Formal Practice – 1 hour and 20 minutes</p> <p>Group Discussion – 1 hour</p> <p>Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 10 minutes</p>
Formal Practice	<p>Opening meditation</p> <p>Standing Yoga (a few poses)</p> <p>Sitting meditation (the longer, full sit is offered, including all five objects of awareness and more silence)</p> <p>Closing meditation</p>
Informal Practice	<p>Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindfully listening and speaking</p>
Typical Class Sequence	<p>Standing yoga</p> <p>45 minute Sitting Meditation attending to breath, body, sounds, and thoughts and emotions as “events” in consciousness, distinguishing the event from the content, and then opening to choiceless awareness/open presence, and returning to breath at the end, grounding in the body. Longer spans of silence during formal mindfulness practice are emphasized.</p> <p>From meditation move into guided reflection: The program is half-over today. How has it been going so far? Pause and take stock: What am I learning, if anything? How does it show up in my life, if at all? How am I engaging with this program in terms of commitment to weekly classes and daily practice? If I have been finding it difficult to practice at home and/or attend weekly classes, am I willing to recommit for the second half of the course? Note that growth is non-linear. Letting go of expectations for the second half based on experience of the first half of course. Invitation to practice and take each moment as a new beginning, a fresh opportunity to be fully engaged, fully alive.</p>

Typical Class Sequence (continued)	<p>Exploring these questions, Midway Assessment forms are handed out, as assessments are completed, participants move into dyads to discuss their experience of the program so far. (If no written midway assessment is used, dyads and a large group discussion can be substituted. However, when possible, we recommend the use of written self-assessments as it provides many participants with a useful form of self-reflection while providing the instructor confidential and candid responses from individual participants that can be followed up as another means of tailoring the course to each person.)</p> <p>Inquire into experiences practicing the meditation, body scan and yoga home practice, as well as the new meditation introduced at the beginning of class.</p> <p>Explore observations of reacting to stressful events during the week. Note habitual behavioral patterns, thoughts and emotions associated with the feeling of being stuck in these conditioned reactions. Include patterns that arise during meditation practice.</p> <p>Introduce and ask if people are also experiencing – even in small ways – a greater possibility of responding with awareness in these moments, rather than reacting automatically. In making the distinction between reacting and responding, emphasize that in many situations, reacting is skillful. It's not the stress but how you perceive and relate to it that dictates its effects on the mind and the body (within limits).</p> <p>Option: Review reacting vs. responding diagrams (from Full Catastrophe Living 2nd edition, 2013.) Mention evolving theories and studies about stress hardiness, coping, resilience (see, for example Kobasa, Antonovsky, Schwartz and Shapiro, Garmezy, Werner, Bonanno), and also neuroscience regarding neuroplasticity and default mode network (Hölzel, Farb, Brewer, and others). As in class four, it is best to explore this through dialogue and reflection rather presenting didactically as a lecture.</p> <p>Go over home practice assignment – Emphasize that the new Sitting recording has more silence on it to allow participants to practice more deeply on their own in between the guided instructions.</p> <p>Brief sitting meditation</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide participants new guided meditation practices (CDs or instruct on MP3 download if used)– Sitting Meditation and Standing Yoga Sequence. Alternate Sitting Meditation with Standing Yoga and either Body Scan or Lying Down Yoga (for example: One day practice sitting meditation, the next, practice standing yoga, the third day practice sitting meditation, the fourth day, practice the body scan, etc.).

Home Practice (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out Difficult Communications Calendar • Bring awareness to moments of reacting and explore options for responding with greater mindfulness, spaciousness, and creativity in formal meditation practice and in everyday life. Remember that the breath is an anchor, a way to heighten awareness of reactive tendencies, to slow down and make more conscious choices.
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Class Six

Overview	<p>In this 2.5 hour session, experiential training in MBSR continues with an emphasis on the growing capacity to self-regulate and cope more effectively with stress. Discussion is oriented around the continued development of "transformational coping strategies": Awareness, attitudes and behaviors that enhance the psychological characteristic known as "stress hardiness" or resilience. Theory is linked directly to the MBSR methods and skills being practiced and grounded in the actual life experiences of the participants. The emphasis continues to be on the broadening of participants' inner resources for developing health-enhancing attitudes and behaviors and the practical application of such competencies into participants' particular life situations and health status. Daily mindfulness practices continue to be assigned for home practice with an emphasis on the observation and application of these skills in everyday life. Participants engage in an in-depth exploration of stress as it presents within the domain of communications – particularly, difficult and challenging interpersonal exchanges. The focus of this strategy-building session revolves around the application of previously learned mindfulness/MBSR skills and methods in the area of communications. A variety of communication styles are examined both didactically and experientially, and strategies for more effective and creative interpersonal communication are developed.</p>
Theme	<p>Stressful communications; knowing your feelings; expressing your feelings accurately; developing a greater awareness of interpersonal communication patterns, and barriers to doing so are all explored. Interpersonal mindfulness: remaining aware and balanced in relationships, especially under conditions of acute or chronic stress, the strong expectations of others, past habits of emotional expression/suppression and the presentation of self in everyday life are investigated using a wide range of "embodied" methods. Based on the skills that we have been developing through the entire program, all instructional processes emphasize cultivating the capacity to be more flexible and to recover more rapidly during challenging interpersonal situations.</p>
Recommended Time Allocations	<p>Formal Practice – 1 hour and 10 minutes Group Discussion – 1 hour and 10 minutes Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 10 minutes</p>

Formal Practice	<p>Standing Yoga</p> <p>Sitting meditation</p> <p>Closing meditation</p>
Informal Practice	<p>Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindfully listening and speaking</p>
Typical Class Sequence	<p>Standing yoga</p> <p>Sitting meditation with less instruction/more silence: breath, body, sounds, thoughts and emotions, choiceless awareness/open presence, with option to return to breath at the end.</p> <p>Optional: return midway evaluations with comments. Possibility of using anonymous quotes from participants' evaluations to identify and share the experiences and learning discoveries of this particular group.</p> <p>Discuss the home practice, especially experiences with the recorded 45-minute sitting meditation. Explore: What did you notice about responding more creatively in life and in the meditation practice itself? Were there new responses? What surprised you? Where are you finding the integration of mindfulness in your everyday life particularly challenging or difficult?</p> <p>Discuss the upcoming "All Day" session. Explain the intentions underlying this session and describe in detail the structure and format of the day, including options for self-care and teacher availability. Discuss how to work with extended periods of silence and practice. Provide suggestions for preparing for the day, including what to bring: Lunch, loose fitting clothes (layers), mat or blanket etc.</p> <p>Optional: guided reflection – recall a situation from the Difficult Communications Calendar. Examine habitual relational patterns and how they are experienced in the mind and body and how they manifest as behavior.</p> <p>Optional: Discuss in small groups or dyads</p> <p>Activities and group discussion about difficult communications.</p> <p>There are a number of exercises that can be used to explore this topic. Emphasis of most of the communications exercises used in class is "embodiment" - engaging the body in its usual postural patterns including gesture and voice tone etc. when in difficult interpersonal situations as a means of exploring both familiar and more novel</p>

<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>approaches to moments of difficult communication. This embodying process tends to catalyze awareness, thereby making both habitual and new responses more readily available for self-reflection and inquiry. The dialogue and inquiry during these exercises allows a heightened awareness of habitual patterns and behaviors, not only in the realm of interpersonal communication, but also in one's intra-personal life. It is essential to pause and reflect together on these experiences and to notice how relational patterns are externalizations of internal mind and body states. Participants make connections between their present-moment experience of witnessing and/or participating in these exercises and the personal cognitive, emotional and behavioral patterns with which they have become familiar during the MBSR course. These exercises also provide an opportunity for participants to experiment with new behaviors and new ways of engaging interpersonally.</p> <p>The intention behind engaging in any of the following (or any other) communication exercises is the cultivation of awareness in intra- and interpersonal situations. The particular form these exercises take is less important than the essence of this intention and the potential of integrating more effective patterns of communication into everyday life (See: Meleo-Meyer, F, in D. McCown, D. Reibel, and M. Micozzi (Eds), Resources for Teaching Mindfulness: A Cross-cultural and International Handbook, 2017).</p> <p>Some of the options for communications exercises may include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>Speaking and listening interpersonal practice: In dyads, participants are given a topic based on class discussions and content. One speaks, one listens, then reverse roles. The power of active listening is highlighted as the listener reflects back what the speaker shared. Roles are then reversed.</p> <p>Experiencing and exploring patterns of communication by physically enacting and expressing different patterns and options (i.e. passive, aggressive, assertive, etc.), then having class participants adapt postures that express these communication options, possibly interacting in pairs, small groups or the entire class.</p> <p>Aikido-based “pushing exercises”: Two people demonstrating via role-play the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the initial contact when experiencing interpersonal conflict (taking the hit) • avoiding conflict/stepping aside/passive-aggressive • being submissive • being aggressive
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Typical Class Sequence (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaged in an equal struggle • assertive, “blending and entering,” meeting aggression, staying engaged and with eye and wrist contact, while stepping out of the path of potential harmful emotional aggression <p>Demonstrate with a co-teacher or volunteer (choose carefully, it may be beneficial to practice with the volunteer before class).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher invites class participants to share what is directly experienced as they watch each phase of the “pushing exercises.” The teacher highlights each option as a way of meeting challenges (not only interpersonal communication): Taking the hit, avoiding, aggressive—engaged in the struggle, and “blending and entering.” As participant safety is paramount, class participants are not invited to engage with each other to physically practice the Aikido. Emphasis on the importance of centering in the moment, taking a firm stand, not running away but not having to be in total control, the importance of “entering and blending” while simultaneously moving out of the direct path, making contact (hand to wrist), turning, acknowledging the other person’s point of view, showing one’s own point of view, staying in the process without knowing where it is going or being fully in control, maintaining mindfulness, openness, staying grounded and centered. • The teacher invites class participants to share what is directly experienced as they watch each phase of the Aikido “pushing exercises.” The teacher highlights each. • Verbal aikido role play – similar to above, but done with dialogue with volunteer. <p>Exploration of assumptions: Guided by instructor, participants face each other in silence, and are led into noticing differences between observation and assuming or interpreting/mind reading. This may be followed by structured dialogue between participants</p> <p>Assign home practice</p> <p>End with short AOB/sitting meditation</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate Sitting Meditation recording with Body Scan and/or Standing or Lying down Yoga recordings

The “All Day” Class: A Silent Retreat

Overview	The intensive nature of this 7.5 hour session is intended to assist participants in firmly and effectively establishing the use of mindfulness across multiple situations in their lives, while simultaneously preparing them to utilize these methods far beyond the conclusion of the program.
Theme	Cultivating a sense of presence from moment to moment, and being open to any experience, whether evaluated as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, as an opportunity to practice mindful attention.
Formal Practice	Yoga Sitting Meditation Body Scan Walking Meditation Mountain or Lake Meditation Eating Meditation (informal, at lunch) Optional: Fast/Slow Walking* Loving-Kindness Meditation Visual meditation followed by mindful walking, possibly outdoors, stopping and noticing one thing. Closing Meditation
Informal Practice	Seamless continuity of moment-to-moment awareness, whether in formal practice or transitioning
Typical Class Sequence	<p>Typical Class Sequence (Note: Times are suggestions. Size of class and other factors may increase or decrease the times listed. However, these are good approximations to keep in mind to both settle deeply into practice, and also to offer both stillness and movement practice to care for the body.)</p> <p><i>Morning session options:</i></p> <p>Brief sitting meditation in silence</p> <p>Welcome, introduction of teacher(s), and guidelines for the day, including silence, avoiding eye contact, self-care, availability of teachers, etc.</p> <p>Sitting meditation: focus on awareness of breathing (20')</p> <p>Guided Yoga, with the option of ending with short body scan (45'-55')</p> <p>Slow walking meditation: with introductory guidance (15'-30')</p> <p>Sitting meditation: less guidance, more silence (30'-40')</p> <p>Slow walking meditation: less guidance (20')</p>

<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>Mountain or Lake meditation -- These images are used to assist participants in their understanding about how to creatively work with themselves and use their innate capacity to cultivate particular human qualities. The “mountain” and “lake” are metaphors (rather than visualizations) used to connect to aspects of themselves – their innate, inner reservoirs of stability, sovereignty, flexibility and fluidity. The images are not intended to take participants out of the present moment to some other place or time. (25’-30’)</p> <p>Talk – an opportunity to give encouragement or inspiration, with the option of telling a teaching story or reciting a poem and drawing out one or more of the core teaching elements of the curriculum. (10’- 15’)</p> <p>Lunch instructions (5’)</p> <p>Silent lunch (45’ - 60’)</p> <p><i>Afternoon session options:</i></p> <p>Standing Yoga (30’) or</p> <p>Fast/slow walking exercise. The use of the Fast/Slow walking exercise may be eliminated entirely in favor of more silence and solitary practice (replaced with Standing Yoga), or used partially depending on the venue and population. We include it here for those who may have experienced it or been well-trained in guiding it. Participant/patient safety is the primary concern. In a work environment, it may be skillful to use the fast walking portions (first more mindlessly and automatically, then, moving—even very quickly—with awareness and intention) as an important point of learning and practice. This portion of the exercise can also be used in Class 7, when the application of mindfulness in daily life is highlighted.</p> <p>This exercise requires specific, well-paced verbal guidance by the teacher. Depending on the size of the group, assistants may also be needed to ensure safety. Include repeated instructions for noticing, in movement and stillness, various mind-body experiences. Emphasize options for meeting needs as they arise, and the possibility for moving in and out of the exercise. (Note: If people choose to sit out for part or all of the exercise, the teacher’s guidance includes suggestions for active participation by noting mind-body experiences while sitting and continuous connection by the teacher(s) with people sitting down, assuring and inviting them back into the exercise when it becomes slower if the speed of movement has kept them from active participation.) (30’)</p> <p>Begin with slow walking, gradually move to each person’s usual walking pace, pause... In the pauses, invite people to be attentive to body,</p>
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<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>thoughts and emotions... begin walking at a comfortable pace, incrementally increasing speed, with instructions to increase body tension (i.e. clench fists and tighten jaw) and moving towards deliberate (imaginary) objectives (for example, being late and needing to rush... continue increasing pace, changing directions, then stopping and inviting participants to be attentive to their entire experience. Then, begin walking again at a regular pace with instructions for staying present and open... increasing the pace, unclenching hands and jaws, calling to mind the same deliberate (and imaginary) objectives but this time, with presence and awareness, while continuing to walk faster, changing directions, and again stopping. Teacher asks participants to reflect on current mind-body experience and note if there are any differences between the previous round of walking. <i>(May end here or continue with next portion).</i></p> <p>Teacher gives instructions for very slowly walking forward with eyes closed, keeping arms and hands at sides, gently leaning in when participants make contact with others, pausing and experiencing the contact before moving in another direction. Doing this for several minutes, then stopping. The entire process can be repeated with participants walking backwards and very slowly. After one or both phases, teacher encourages participants to reflect on their mind-body experience. Teacher gives further instructions to orient to center of room (open eyes, notice where center of the room is, and “aim” the body towards that point, then return to eyes closed), and continues the invitation to walk slowly backwards, making contact with others and remaining in physical contact while moving towards the center of the room. (Note: in the interest of inclusion, provide options for stepping into contact or out of contact, as personal needs dictate.)</p> <p>Loving-Kindness meditation: guidance using minimal talking, emphasis on spaciousness, ending in silence. (This meditation is used to help people recognize qualities of Loving-Kindness, friendliness, warmth and compassion, towards self and others, that are already present and capable of being cultivated.</p> <p>Care is taken to recognize and affirm any resistance to the possibility that these qualities already exist within oneself or wished for others. It is not essential to offer classical phrases of Loving-Kindness practice as the feeling tone and sense of well-wishing can be conveyed more immediately and also more informally without specific phrasing. And simple phrases can also be introduced. (25’30’)</p> <p>Optional ending practices:</p> <p>“Noticing One Thing” visual meditation focusing on one’s hand, and seeing, as if for the first time. This is followed by mindful walking, possibly</p>
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<p>Typical Class Sequence (continued)</p>	<p>outdoors, with intention placed on moving slowly, noticing what draws one's attention, stopping and focusing on that object, lingering there, exploring the object with openness to see what unfolds as one stays with this object, then after some time, moving to another object that draws one's attention. Teacher rings bells to bring participants back to room and guides a contemplation on the memory of what was seen, followed by an open awareness meditation. (25'-30')</p> <p>OR: Walking practice—inviting participants to move outside, aware of the whole body, meeting the world, continuing the open receptivity of loving-Kindness into walking practice.</p> <p>OR: Brief sittings alternated with brief periods of walking and sitting in other places in the room normally avoided or desired (highlighting the possibility or invitation to feel grounded and in their “seat” even when change occurs and especially if that change is undesirable, or, if the change is desirable but not usually acted upon). This practice is akin to the “Changing Seats” exercise in class 7. See more instruction in Class 7 “Typical Class Sequence.”</p> <p>Whatever ending practice is chosen and before silence is dissolved, aim to have 10-15' of silent sitting.</p> <p>Dissolve the silence by whispering in pairs, then in groups of 4 (optional), discussing what was learned and experienced during the day and how the participants worked with challenges. (10'-15')</p> <p>Group discussion and dialogue -- Emphasize that the day is not meant to be pleasant or unpleasant, but how one meets and works with whatever appears. Invite participants who had difficulties to speak about them and feel supported, and assure everyone that there will be more time to speak about their experience in the next class. End with brief “going home talk” about transitioning to the rest of the day, evening, activities, etc. (20'-25')</p> <p>Sitting meditation (5')</p> <p>Closing circle - Standing in circle, making eye contact with others, tuning into feeling whole and embedded in the context of the larger group. Option to reflect and find one word to describe the experience of the moment. Encourage honest responses, acknowledging that this, too, will change.</p> <p>Good-byes</p>
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Class Seven

Overview	In this 2.5 hour session, experiential training in mindfulness continues. The All Day Class (silent retreat) is reviewed and discussed. There may be a continuation of the discussion of communication that began in class 6. Participants are asked to exercise greater personal latitude in the choice of formal mindfulness practices done as home practice during the week leading up to class eight. Emphasis is on maintaining 45 minutes of daily practice, without recorded instructions. Participants are encouraged to create their own blend of the various practices. (For example, 20 minutes of sitting, 15 minutes of yoga, 10 minutes of body scan.) The intention is to further maintain the discipline and flexibility of a personal daily mindfulness practice by encouraging people to become attuned to the changing conditions in their lives and to ask themselves questions like: “What is called for now/today? “What do I need to take care of myself now?”
Theme	Integrating mindfulness practice more fully and personally into daily life. Participants are asked to purposefully reflect on life-style choices that are adaptive and self-nourishing as well as those that are maladaptive and self-limiting.
Recommended Time Allocations	Formal Practice – 1 hour and 35 minutes Group Discussion – 45 minutes Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 10 minutes
Formal Practice	Sitting meditation options: Mountain, Lake or Loving-Kindness Other options: Yoga (class choices), window, walking
Informal Practice	Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindfully listening and speaking
Typical Class Sequence	Options include one or both of the following exercises: 1) Yoga Choices exercise: each participant does a standing body scan and identifies an area that needs attention. Individually and with the group, explore yoga poses that address that area of the body, or favorite yoga postures learned in the program. Each participant, with help from the teacher, if necessary, guides participants in their chosen pose. Emphasis is on using yoga in ordinary daily experience, not as a special, rarified activity. 2) Exploring the familiar and the unfamiliar - Changing Seats: After participants take their seats in the room, invite them to close their eyes and notice how it feels to be sitting where they’re sitting. Ask them to:

**Typical Class
Sequence
(continued)**

Pay attention to what's familiar—if this is a seat they choose often, or what's different if it's a new seat.

Notice physical sensations, thoughts, and/or emotions that may be present as they sit in this familiar or new place.

Then invite them to open their eyes, and get a sense of what the room looks like from this perspective. Is it the same room? Why did they choose to sit where they did when they came in? Scan the room for a seat in which they've never sat or where they think they won't like to sit. Ask participants to move to that seat, in silence, and to close their eyes and notice how it feels to be in the new place, with a new perspective, perhaps sitting near new people. Ask them to consider whether they tend to stay in the same places or to explore new places, making sure to emphasize that these are simply patterns, and that one pattern isn't better than the other. Can we be at home wherever we are? Mention awareness of choices of positioning oneself in a room, the idea of taking one's seat in the meditation (taking a stand when sitting, no matter where you are.) Invite awareness of attachment to place. Where am I in my life – in this moment? Where am I going? Possibly not knowing and knowing that!

This changing of seats may be repeated again or even several times. Finally, invite participants to find a seat and establish themselves in a posture for sitting meditation, consciously choosing to return to "their" familiar seat or to explore being in a different place.

Sitting meditation: Choiceless awareness, using the breath as an anchor if lost; also possible to include aspects of Mountain, Lake or Loving-Kindness practice. Allow more silence.

Discuss the home practice and the all-day retreat in relation to automatic habitual stress reactions and mindfulness-mediated stress responses in meeting whatever was encountered including likes and dislikes. What did you see? What did you learn about yourself? Invite responses to different aspects of the all-day session, and what participants experienced afterwards. Connect the discussion to the experience of engaging in both the formal and informal meditation practices this week. Emphasis on importance of making the practice one's own. This week, no recordings for home practice. Encourage people to maintain the frequency and duration of practice (45 minutes per day) while choosing for themselves how best to practice on their own.

Option: Questions and observations about communication stemming from last week's session. If necessary, there is the option of continuing to

Typical Class Sequence (continued)	<p>explore communication through the exercises that are related to this week's class discussion.</p> <p>Option: Introduce Fast/Slow Walking (see All-Day Instructions), using variations as appropriate for venue and population.</p> <p>Option: Discuss theme of what we take in, not only food but any kind of sensory experience, and patterns that are self-destructive and self-nourishing. This may include investigating choices around use of electronics and technology, cell phones, internet, and all media. May choose to look at choices around time, priorities and values, continually encouraging participants in their everyday lives to frequently experiment with asking themselves the question: "What's called for now?" Explore if and how mindfulness may impact seemingly neutral areas and habits of our lives, bringing about unanticipated changes and emotions.</p> <p>Assign home practice</p> <p>End with short AOB</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No recordings this week. Practice formal sitting, yoga, walking and/or the body scan on your own, every day for 45 minutes. (Note: if this is too difficult, suggest alternating between the recordings and self-guidance every other day.) • Practice informally when you are not doing the above formal practices by being as aware and awake as possible throughout the day.

Class Eight

Overview	<p>In this 3-3.5 hour session, experiential mindfulness practice continues and participants are given ample opportunity to inquire into and clarify any lingering questions about the various practices and their applications in everyday life. A review of the program is included with an emphasis on daily strategies for maintaining and deepening the skills developed during the course of the program. Time is also allotted for a satisfying closure by honoring both the end of this program and the beginning of living one's life informed with mindfulness. Participants have an opportunity to speak to the group much as they did in the first class, but this time, to acknowledge what has been most salient, what they are taking away, or what has been discovered. It is important for all participants to know that all their comments are welcomed in this segment of class 8. By example, nothing may have been "salient." Perhaps they were completely disappointed by the course... or found the instructor defensive or unavailable to them. This is not meant to be a time for testimonials but instead, for open, honest appraisal of their experience of MBSR.</p> <p>Note on length of last class: Even with smaller groups, a three-hour class offers ample time and opportunity for practice, discussion of home practice and how participants will continue after the course is over, as well as time for each person to speak to the whole group (Group Go Around) about their learning and discoveries (as they did in the first class about their intentions for attending). If class size exceeds 18, it may be more advantageous to lengthen the last class a full hour longer than usual, to 3.5 hours.</p>
Theme	<p>Keeping up the momentum and discipline developed over the past 7 weeks in the meditation practice, both formal and informal. Review of supports to help in the process of integrating the learning from this program over time: Local drop-in options, books, recordings, graduate programs, free all-day sessions for graduates; local retreat and yoga centers, and other pertinent resources available to support practice.</p>
Recommended Time Allocations	<p>Formal Practice – 60 minutes or more</p> <p>Group Discussion – 2 hours and 20 minutes</p> <p>Logistics (attendance, announcements, home practice) – 10 minutes</p>
Formal Practice	<p>Body Scan</p> <p>Yoga</p> <p>Sitting Meditation</p>
Informal Practice	<p>Reminder during class discussions (both small and large group) of mindfully listening and speaking</p>

<p>Typical Class Sequence</p>	<p>Body scan (coming full circle, since this is how class one begins.)</p> <p>Yoga stretching, either guided or self-guided.</p> <p>Sitting Meditation, mostly silent.</p> <p>Optional - Letter to Self:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Guided reflection – At the end of the formal meditation there can be a brief reflection invited about participation in the class. “What happened? What do you want to remember about your learning experience—in the class, with the practices, and in your life as a whole? What is essential, that you don’t want to forget? b. Option of setting three short-term (3 months) and three long-term (3 years or more) goals that come out of your direct experience in the program and with the meditation practice. Include potential obstacles to reaching these goals and your strategies for working with them. <p>Participants write letters that include one or both of these themes and then seal them in envelopes which they self-address. Instructor collects envelopes and will mail them sometime in the future.</p> <p>Guided reflection that incorporates some or all of the questions below. As each participant completes their letter they are placed in pairs by the instructor to discuss how the course has been for them. Examples of questions: (1) Think back to why you originally chose to participate in this program . What expectations di you have? Why did you choose to complete the course? (2) What did you want/hope for? (3) What did you get out of the program, if anything? What did you learn, if anything? (4) What sacrifices did you make? What were the costs to you? What obstacles did you encounter, if any, and what did you learn about yourself in working with these obstacles? (5) If you are motivated to continue to practice mindfulness how will you continue to practice when this program is over?</p> <p>Group dialogue and discussion: Discuss the experience of practicing without recordings this week. Review the entire course and focus briefly on salient features.</p> <p><i>Activities below can be offered in the order best suited to the class. There is merit in ending with community engagement (the Group Go-Round), having covered the more didactic and/or conceptual and informational sections beforehand, but this is up to the discretion of the teacher.</i></p>
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Typical Class Sequence (continued)	<p>Home practice, Hints and Reminders: Review of final home practice sheet (“the rest of your life”), directions for accessing ongoing resources (online, handouts, community, regional, internet, etc.)</p> <p>MBSR “Checklist”: Discuss the value of putting learning to immediate use for continued practice. Using index cards or printed sheets, have participants reflect on what critical items are necessary for continued practice, i.e., dedicated space; cushion, bench or chair; yoga mat, timer; etc. Individual time to write, followed by brief opportunity for group share of intentions to continue practice.</p> <p>Group Go Around: Each participant shares their experience of the course with the whole group, how they feel about the course ending, what they have learned, how they will keep the momentum of their practice moving and growing.</p> <p>Final meditation and acknowledgement of the ending of this particular group.</p>
Home Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go back to the recordings if you wish. Keep up the practice and make it your own • Continue to work with bringing seamless attention to all your moments in order to be more present in your life

Notes on The Curriculum

Centrality of Practice

Starting each class with a substantive period of formal practice can be very useful and expresses several intentions: It helps participants and the teacher to arrive and settle in to class, and familiarizes participants with the feeling of being present, awake, attentive and attuned to themselves and their surroundings. In addition, if a participant has not practiced at home, this formal practice period provides a strong and commonly shared experience from which participants can then speak and participate as fully as those who've engaged in the home practice more regularly.

This recommendation is not meant to be rigid or dogmatic. Rather, we are sharing with you a repeated observation in our MBSR classes at UMass. After a longer practice period, we have often noticed that the classroom dialogue is quintessentially different. It seems to us that the longer practice period provides people the opportunity to *settle*, i.e., 1) become grounded in the body, 2) listen more closely to body, mind and heart and 3) come to rest in one's own presence. This offers program participants more possibility of responding in ways that differ markedly from the usual "reporting" modes. People seem to more easily move from the *doing* mode to the *being* mode. This shared sense of *being* is enlivening; it tends to connect people to the actuality of their experience, enhances the sense of people recognizing our common humanity and assists MBSR participants to move out of their usual modes of speech to speech that supports and expresses transparency, insight and clarity.

Using the Curriculum

While the curriculum is meant to enhance and support MBSR teachers in their teaching of the 8-week MBSR program, it is essential not to mistake this written document as a formulaic or operational manual in any sense.

In MBSR teacher education and training programs, we often liken the curriculum to the banks of a river: Providing a form and container for the flowing water. Without banks, a river would be something else entirely. To be a river, there needs to be banks. And with deep, firm banks, the water has a place to collect and flow and find its own depth. Thus, the curriculum contains the "essence" of the program—in this analogy, the *water*—which, at its most fundamental, serves as a conveyance for non-conceptual, non-dual awareness and wakefulness. This shows up in participants' discovery of deep inner resources that include: a growing recognition that they are far bigger than their ideas and opinions about themselves. This leads to a sense of disidentification with conditioned habits and patterns usually internalized as "me"; a greater tolerance for these patterns as they arise and a budding sense that they are capable of responding in fresh and novel ways to both familiar and unforeseen circumstances and situations.

While it may be tempting to consider the addition of variations, options, and otherwise worthwhile and even evidence-based interventional elements or modalities, it is highly recommended that teachers *stay the course*, as outlined here. First, fidelity to the written curriculum form has enormous implications for the rigor of MBSR research. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the robustness

and depth of the program is most certainly not dependent on novelty or variation. Rather, it is here that the depth and robustness of the *teacher* and his or her own meditation practice and how the teacher has applied that practice over the course of one's life, vividly shows itself.

In experienced hands, the components of the 8-week MBSR curriculum come alive through the *person of the teacher*. What shows up in the classroom is the authenticity and immediacy of the teachers' own contemplation and "encountering" of the explicit and implicit curriculum content. It is the teachers' lived experience of mindfulness as well as the content themes as they've made or make themselves known personally and uniquely, that fosters the direct and intimate connection with participants. This connection and interaction—through the conduit of the teachers' practice and exploration—is what makes the curriculum come alive, and where the "water"—to return to our river analogy, flows, ever new.

While there may be an occasion to introduce a variation on a practice, course theme, or activity that may represent or amplify the curriculum, before doing so, we recommend you reflect for a time, considering your intention for such changes or additions while simultaneously reflecting on and testing your understanding of each element of the curriculum as it currently stands. In our experience, this takes years of teaching, years of practice, and years of working closely with a wide array of program participants. So we urge you to go slowly, taking time for reflection and dialogue internally and, as well, with other teachers and supervisors, before adding new elements to the curriculum.

The teaching of MBSR takes nothing less than our willingness to meet ourselves and our lives directly, surrendering to not knowing—over and over again—and of being willing to listen and learn, shoulder-to-shoulder, with those who enter the classroom with us, in a spirit of humble enthusiasm and wonder.

Appendix A: Conducting Orientation Sessions at the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society University of Massachusetts Medical School

Below is a detailed description of the Orientation Session as developed and delivered at the UMass CFM. This may be a useful guide. It is meant to provide offer a “taste” of how we conduct the Orientation Session rather than as a strict template to be followed mechanically. .Certain elements such as Teacher filming, the use of the Orientation Questionnaire and,participant interview procedures are unique to the Center’s goals and setting and may not neccesarily apply to you in your situation or setting. The Overview at the beginning of this document highlights the areas that should be addressed, and the section labeled: Detailed Logistics, focuses on the specifics that participants need to know in order to make an informed decision about their potential participation in the MBSR program. Different venues and constraints will necessitate modifications, and some of those have been noted in the text below.

Greet participants as they arrive in the room, and be available to answer questions.

- ❖ Remind people to stop filling out the paperwork at the STOP page on the Orientation Questionnaire (See page Appendix B)
- ❖ After around 15 minutes, or when a few people have reached the STOP page of the paperwork, you can begin the orientation
- ❖ Reassure people who have not finished the paperwork that there will be time after the orientation to complete it, and that you will give extra instructions for the pages after the STOP page
- ❖ Remind people where the bathrooms are, and to turn off their cell phones

Introduce yourself again, and welcome everyone.

Give an overview of the whole orientation, including the following information:

- ❖ There will be time at the end to complete the paperwork
- ❖ Everyone will meet briefly with you or with another teacher after the orientation (*a follow-up phone call at a future date may substitute for an inperson meeting*)
- ❖ Everyone must have a brief interview before enrolling in the program
- ❖ There may be some waiting before their interview
- ❖ Encourage people to use this time to meet other people in their class -- the experience of waiting can be a practice of mindfulness

Give a brief history of the Stress Reduction Program and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, health Care, and Society, including the following points:

- ❖ **First principle: Establish safety and confidentiality at the beginning of the Orientation Session**
- ❖ The program has always been considered a complement to medical treatment. It is not “alternative medicine.”
- ❖ It was founded in 1979 by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- ❖ Saki Santorelli is the current executive director
- ❖ There have been just over 24,000 graduates from the UMass clinic (*as of 2017*)
- ❖ UMass Medical School is a forward thinking learning community and teaching institution. Furthering the educational mission of UMASS, the CFM has a professional MBSR teacher education program under the banner of *Oasis Institute*. Therefore, there may be some “teachers-in-training” in your classes. Like you, they will be taking the program as participants. They will also be meeting in a small group seminar to learn more about teaching MBSR.
- ❖ Similarly, UMass is a research institution. This is why we ask participants to complete pre, post and follow-up assessments of the MBSR program. Many studies conducted here and at other academic medical centers have demonstrated the benefits of mindfulness and MBSR for people experiencing a wide range of conditions and life challenges and we remain keenly interested in improving our program content and processes.

Introduce mindfulness and mention some or all of the following points:

- ❖ Mindfulness is innate; it arises and is known as we pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally.
- ❖ In this practice, we cultivate a sense of curiosity, exploration, kindness and basic friendliness to whatever we experience
- ❖ Mindfulness helps us to wake up to our lives rather than being driven on auto-pilot
- ❖ In this practice, we notice how the mind moves to the past or future; as soon as this is noticed, we bring it back with gentleness and firmness, to an experience in the present moment, such as the feeling of the breath in the body. The movement of the mind involved in past and future thinking sometimes creates unnecessary suffering, unproductive striving, and a wasting energy that could be employed in healing, problem solving, and a greater enjoyment of life
- ❖ Offer **a short (a few minutes) guided meditation**, to allow people to have a “taste” of mindfulness. You can begin with some movement practice, offering the same cautions as one would with any yoga sequence offered in class. Can also guide participants to be

aware of sensations in the body, the breath, other sense perceptions, emotions and thoughts

Group introductions

- ❖ Explain that we will be going around the room and that everyone can take a moment to introduce themselves
- ❖ **Mention the strong emphasis on confidentiality and safety, both in this Orientation session and during the entire MBSR course**
- ❖ Encourage people to be brief, to say their names, where they're from, how they heard about the program, and/or to comment on the brief meditation
- ❖ You can interact with people as they introduce themselves, using this format as a way of connecting with program candidates and delivering more information about the program
- ❖ *Note: It's helpful to avoid asking people "why" they have come, since that will be explored in the first class of the program, and this will keep the orientation a bit lighter in tone. However, you may decide that you want to deepen the experience of the Orientation Session by making it more personal and asking people to be more self-revealing. There are positives and negatives to both approaches. The deeper questioning can lead to a strong bonding experience for the group. On the other hand, some participants may find a strongly emotional Orientation Session to be somewhat disorienting—expecting a more neutral or less emotional experience.*

Logistics of the MBSR Course:

- ❖ The course meets every week for 8 weeks, either in the morning or evening, for 2.5 to 3.5 hours
- ❖ There is an "All-Day" class (a silent retreat day) between the 6th and 7th week on a weekend day, from 8:45 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. (*Note: The all-day class begins at 9:00 AM, but given that our all-day class integrates as many as 150 participants and teachers from multiple MBSR courses, as well as past MBSR program "graduates"—we invite participants to arrive 15 minutes early to find a place to comfortably settle in for the day). It is also possible for the All-Day class to be conducted after Class 5, to accommodate scheduling conflicts.*
- ❖ In each class we will learn and practice different forms of mindfulness practice: yoga, sitting, body scan, walking meditation and mindful eating
- ❖ We will learn about stress, and explore our own behavioral, physical, emotional and cognitive stress patterns and more skillful responses to these reactive stress patterns, as well as more mindful ways to communicate and choose nourishing behaviors and activities
- ❖ In each class there will be periods of mindfulness practice, group discussions and talks, small group discussions, and practices and exercises related to that week's topics

- ❖ You will receive CD's or MP3s with meditation and yoga practices, and a practice manual, along with weekly home practice sheets with details of your home practice
- ❖ There will be around 25 – 35 people in each class. (Class sizes may vary to as few as 15 and as many as 40)
- ❖ Wear comfortable clothing, and avoid perfumed toiletries
- ❖ There are no scheduled breaks, but you can bring water, food or medicine as needed. We encourage you to have a meal before your class
- ❖ Expect your daily home practice to be at least 1 hour per day, or longer. Make sure that you can set aside this time for daily practice
- ❖ Highlight the commitment required, and that the program is challenging
- ❖ Encourage attendance at all 9 classes, including the All Day. If someone has to miss a class, there are possibilities for making up the class that week on another day. If someone misses or anticipates missing 3 or more classes, we encourage them to drop out and take the entire program again in another cycle when they are able to make the time commitment
- ❖ Emphasize the importance of arriving on time, noting any constraints around entering the building (e.g., at UMass CFM, the door to the building is locked in the evening after 6:30 PM)
- ❖ Call your own teacher if you are unable to attend class, need to make up in another class, or know you will be late for class. Your teacher will notify the teacher in the make-up class that you will be attending that class
- ❖ Explain the inclement weather policy, and encourage people to set aside two more weeks for class, especially in the winter cycle
- ❖ Explain about class recordings of teachers for ongoing learning and MBSR teacher competency development. Be explicit that this is only for teacher development and assessment and that only other MBSR teachers and teacher-trainers will be viewing. Let people know which classes that cycle will be recorded, and also that participants/patients will need to sign an Informed Consent document before the first class.

Explain the risks and benefits of the program. (Note: it is only after these have been explained that the participant can sign the informed consent agreement).

Physical risks:

- ❖ The primary physical risk is connected to practicing mindful yoga
- ❖ Taking care of oneself is at the core of practicing mindfulness
- ❖ If you hear guidance that you know is not healthy for your body or condition, or if you are feeling pain, please disregard the teacher and either modify the pose or rest and imagine doing the pose
- ❖ Explore your limits; go to your own edge, but not beyond

- ❖ Because we are embodied and Yoga is a tangible and direct means of teaching participants about mindfulness of the body, being aware of the body from moment to moment is emphasized more than proper form
 - a. The teacher can help you with making modifications
 - b. It's also a good idea to ask your doctor or physical therapist to review the postures in the practice manual, and to make an "x" through postures that are not suitable for you

Emotional risks:

- ❖ Feelings of sadness, anger, fear, could seem stronger at the beginning because you may be paying attention in a conscious way for the first time
- ❖ A history of trauma, abuse, significant recent loss or major life changes, or addiction to substances may heighten these reactions. Please tell your interviewer if this is true for you, and we can determine together whether or not it makes sense for you to take this class
- ❖ You may find that you make discoveries about yourself that you may not like
 - ❖ You may be challenged, and find yourself facing the unknown
 - ❖ If at any time during the course you notice strong emotions or heightened awareness that feels distressing or is a concern, contact your teacher. He or she may suggest adaptations to practice to support you. It may also be helpful for your teacher to speak with your therapist if you are seeing one, with your permission. This can assist your teacher in better supporting you.

Other people in your life:

- ❖ It may be a challenge to set aside the space and time to do this practice, so it's important to request support from your family, friends and/or co-workers
- ❖ You may find that you change patterns of reactivity, behavior and communication, and your family, friends and/or co-workers may be uncomfortable with these new behaviors or attitudes
- ❖ You may find that your relationships change

Time:

- ❖ Finding time to practice mindfulness can be challenging: it is normal to have the thought or idea that "I don't have the time to practice." Indeed, no one has the time; to follow through on your commitment to yourself in the context of this course, you'll have to "make the time" to practice. This will require an immediate change in lifestyle (i.e. less TV, less reading etc.) Interestingly, and counter-intuitively, people sometimes report that setting aside time for practice increases their sense of spaciousness during the rest of their day

Benefits:

- ❖ Increased awareness and concentrationNew ways to cope more effectively with your own condition, difficulty, pain or suffering
- ❖ Learning to take better care of yourself
- ❖ Some people report a quieter mind, a sense of balance and enhanced wellbeing
- ❖ Many physical health benefits have been suggested in scientific research, although there is no guaranteed health outcome

Invite additional questions.

Finishing the pre-evaluation forms (Orientation Questionnaire, Appendix B):

- ❖ Explain the last few pages of the pre-evaluation form (past the STOP page, listing their course goals)
- ❖ Ask that everyone complete all of their paperwork, including their registration form
- ❖ Encourage participants to take a few moments to pause and contemplate what they would have liked to accomplish at the end of the 8 weeks. *Make sure that the 3 goals are manageable and doable*
- ❖ Invite the interviewing teacher(s) into the room and introduce him or her to the group
- ❖ Explain that everyone will meet with one of the interviewing teachers to review their forms and have a brief, private conversation
- ❖ Once they have completed their interview, support staff will assist them in enrolling in the class time of their choice.
- ❖ Ask if there is anyone who is definitely not enrolling or is undecided, and suggest that they come in for a brief interview anyway to discuss their decision

Thank everyone for their presence and participation.

Individual Meetings and Review of Paperwork

The **main intentions** of the individual meetings and review of paperwork are:

- ❖ To determine whether the program is a good match for the participant/patient at this time
- ❖ To screen the participant for suitability for the MBSR program
- ❖ To allow the participant to ask questions that may not have been suitable or comfortable for them to ask about in the large group

- ❖ To ensure that the participant has all the necessary information to make an informed decision about enrolling in an MBSR course
- ❖ To review Orientation Questionnaire for pertinent information regarding concerns or issues related to the exclusionary criteria
- ❖ If the MBSR program is not appropriate for the candidate at this time, to provide therapy referrals and other resources that fit the candidates current needs

Conducting the brief individual interview

Introduce yourself again. Thank the participant for waiting, if necessary.

Explain that:

- ❖ You will be taking a few moments to **review** their Orientation Questionnaire to make sure that it is **complete**
- ❖ **You may ask the candidate questions** based on any responses to the Orientation Questionnaire that raise concerns about their participation in the program
- ❖ **The participant may ask any questions** that they did not want to ask in the large group
- ❖ If the conversation needs to be **longer than a few minutes**, because of concerns regarding the exclusionary criteria, ask if the participant can wait until after other people have been seen, to candidly speak with them about these concerns.
- ❖ Review the paperwork for **completion**
- ❖ Make sure that **the class day and time** is filled in on the front page
- ❖ If the Orientation Questionnaire is complete, place your initials on the front page. If it is not complete, ask the participant to complete the questionnaire. If there are several incomplete answers please have the candidate complete the questionnaire before commencing the interview
- ❖ Especially regarding **suicidality**: If someone is suicidal, ask if the person is currently having thoughts of suicide or has had them in the past day or two. If they are suicidal, ask if they have a plan (indicative of “active suicidality”). If the interviewing teacher does uncover active suicidal ideation with intent or plan, immediate action is required to have the person evaluated by a licensed mental health professional immediately. If one is not available, the interviewer is required to dial 911 to have the person transported to an emergency room for immediate evaluation, and have a teacher sit with the person until emergency personnel arrive. The interviewing teacher should ask if they are in therapy and if a release has been signed, notify the therapist. Explain the exclusionary criterion related to suicidality, and document the conversation.

- ❖ You may also discuss any sense you have of the person's **behavior in the Orientation Session** which may affect their full participation in the MBSR program. Observed behaviors such as agitation, interrupting, dominating the group, inappropriate behavior, extreme shyness or nervousness are important to follow up about with the person in question.
- ❖ Discuss any other concern(s) related to information on the Orientation Questionnaire, your sense of the participant, clinical judgment, and potential of the exclusionary criteria.

For an outline and explanation of the **exclusionary criteria**, see the list at the end of this section. If there is a **concern or a special need**, do the following:

1. ***If the participant will be in your own class***, ask them to wait until the end of the interviewing period so that you can take extra time to explain any concerns. If the participant understands these concerns, and seems strongly motivated and meets the exceptions to the exclusionary criteria, you may accept the participant into your class. If the exclusionary criteria is psychological in nature and the participant is in therapy, have the participant sign the release of information form so that you can speak with the participant's therapist. Attach the release of information form to the Orientation Questionnaire.
 2. ***Document your concerns*** and conclusions on the information form ("SRP interview notes") and attach it to the pre-evaluation form. For example, if someone has checked "suicidality" and you check for suicidality and find that there is no active suicidal ideation and no intention to commit suicide, make a note of this conversation, and sign your initials. (Note: In the interest of transparency, use language that is acceptable to the participant.) Attach the SRP interview notes to the pre-evaluation form
 3. ***If the participant will be in another teacher's class***, do the same procedure as in #1 and #2 above and also explain to the participant that they will need to have a second interview with the MBSR teacher whose course they will be attending.
 - a. ***Call the participant's teacher*** and give them the information about the participant on the phone or in person. For reasons of confidentiality, **do not put this information in an email, for reasons of confidentiality.**
 - b. ***Inform the support staff*** to await enrolling the participant until **after** the second interview.
 - c. ***The participant's teacher will notify the support staff*** after the second interview if they decide that the participant can safely enroll in the course.
- ❖ **Thank the participant** for taking the time to come to the Orientation Session and interview
 - ❖ Express your **appreciation** to them for their decision to assume greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
 - ❖ **After the interview**, the support staff will register appropriate participants, collect tuition and, if necessary, make adjustments to the financial agreement

Screening Criteria for Exclusion from the Stress Reduction Program

Lifestyle Issues:

- ❖ Addiction to substances
- ❖ Addicts new to recovery (less than one year)
- ❖ Inadequate comprehension of language in which course is taught

Exceptions: In terms of addiction, if someone is in recovery less than one year and seems highly motivated, or is in a supportive treatment environment, they may attend class.

If there is a problem with language comprehension, provisions can be made for interpretation services. The same holds true for hearing impairment.

Psychological issues:

Based upon psychological issues and presentation, if a teacher is NOT confident about accepting a participant, refer these concerns directly to the CFM Medical Director.

- ❖ Suicidality
- ❖ Psychosis (not treatable with medication)
- ❖ PTSD
- ❖ Depression or other major psychiatric diagnosis (if it interferes with participation in course)
- ❖ Social anxiety (difficulty with being in a classroom situation)

*Exceptions: Anyone who is highly motivated and receiving therapy and/or medication for these diagnoses may be permitted to sign up for the class. However, in these cases, it is essential that the teacher state clearly that they will establish, remain in, and have active and ongoing collaboration with the participant's current mental healthcare provider. **A release of information must be acquired.***

Attitudinal Issues:

- ❖ Inability to comprehend the nature and limitations of program (wanting a “quick fix” without investing time and energy)
- ❖ Inability to commit to attending classes (if someone is going to miss three or more classes they are referred to another cycle)

Physical Issues:

- ❖ Inability to physically attend classes (this does not refer to physical impairment, which is not an exclusion criterion, but to the simple inability to actually get to class, because of being bedridden or homebound)

Note: Final decisions regarding these exclusion criteria are subject to the clinical judgment of the instructor.

Appendix B: Orientation Questionnaire

DATE _____

Class Chosen: _____

Orientation Questionnaire (OQ)

Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, & Society™

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR)

**University of Massachusetts Medical School
Division of Preventive & Behavioral Medicine**

**Thank you, for filling out these forms.
We realize the personal nature of these questions.
Please be assured that the completed forms are kept
in strict confidence.**

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Telephone# Home () _____

Work () _____

Cell () _____

(Please indicate best tel. # to leave you a message)

Office use only

☐

Center for Mindfulness
in Medicine, Health Care, and Society



1. What is your main reason for participating in the MBSR Program?

2. Occupation: _____

3. Date of Birth: (MM/DD/YEAR) ____/____/____

4. Family Information: (please circle)

Single Married Not Married Living with Partner Separated Divorced Widowed

5. Do you have children? (Yes/No) _____

5a. If so, how many? _____ 5b. Ages? _____

6. Do you have close friends? (Yes/No) _____

7. Sleep quality: _____

8. Do you smoke? _____ 9. Caffeinated drinks per day: _____

10. Do you exercise? _____

11. Do you use drugs or alcohol? _____

How much? _____

12. Do you have a history of substance abuse? _____

13. Do you take prescription medications? (Please list): _____

14. Are you currently engaged in psychotherapy?

15. If no, have you been in therapy during the last three years?

16. Previous overnight hospitalizations? (Year)

Medical/Surgical

Psychological

During the last MONTH have you:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| a. Considered suicide? | YES | NO |
| b. Sought psychiatric help? | YES | NO |
| c. Had thoughts of death or dying? | YES | NO |
| d. Had urges to beat, injure or harm someone? | YES | NO |
| e. Had urges to smash or break things? | YES | NO |
| f. Had spells of terror or panic? | YES | NO |

Please take a moment as you respond to the following three questions.

17. What do you care about most?

18. What gives you the most pleasure in your life?

19. What are your greatest worries?

Date: _____

How did you learn about this program?

We are interested in knowing how you learned about our program. Would you help us by checking off any and all of the ways you first learned about the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program?

_____ Primary Care Physician
Physician's first and Last Name _____

_____ Other Health Care Provider

_____ Specialty Physician

_____ Psychologist/Social worker/Psychotherapist

_____ Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
Other Health Care Provider's First and Last Name _____

_____ Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

_____ Tufts Health Plan

_____ I received an appointment reminder with information
regarding the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program

_____ Jon Kabat-Zinn's Book

_____ Saki Santorelli's Book

_____ Friend/Relative that took the class

_____ Television

_____ Article from _____

_____ Google Ad

_____ Other (please describe): _____

Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society
University of Massachusetts Medical School



This is a good time to
STOP...
and await further directions from your
Orientation Session Instructor.

Please list three personal goals you have for taking the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program:

1)

2)

3)

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program
UMass Medical School**

Informed Consent Agreement

The risks, benefits and possible side effects of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program were explained to me. This includes skill training in meditation methods as well as gentle stretching (yoga) exercises. I understand that if for any reason I am unable to, or think it unwise to engage in these techniques and exercises either during the weekly sessions at UMMS or at home, I am under no obligation to engage in these techniques nor will I hold the above named facility liable for any injury incurred from these exercises.

Furthermore, I understand that I am expected to attend each of the eight (8) weekly sessions, the daylong session and to practice the home assignments for 40-60 minutes per day during the duration of the training program.

Date

Please Print Name

Participant's Signature

Parent or Legal Guardian
(If a Minor)

EMAIL COMMUNICATION CONSENT

As a participant in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program, you may wish to communicate with your instructor via email on occasion. In order to ensure your privacy, we request that you give written permission for this form of correspondence.

Please complete the form below and check one of the following options:

☐ I give my permission to communicate via email with my program instructor about any aspect of my Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program experience.

☐ I DO NOT give permission to communicate via email.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

