

Introduction to Mindfulness Group Session 1

Welcome to the Introduction to Mindfulness group! In this group series we will be exploring a variety of mindfulness and compassion practices that may support your wellbeing. We will be meeting for 8 sessions, each about 1 hour and 45 min long. We will spend most of our time practicing together and discussing what you noticed in your practice. Each session will have one longer meditation practice period which will usually be about 15-20 min long.

You will get the most out of this group if you are able to do some regular daily practice between sessions. There will be suggestions on what you may be trying each week but you are welcome to find what works best for you at this point in your life and tailor the form and length of your practice accordingly. Please keep in mind that daily mindfulness practice has both aspects that are formal (set aside time for a specific practice period) and informal (bringing mindful awareness to an activity you would be doing anyways).

Formal meditation practice can be challenging when depression or anxiety is strong. In these times, it may be helpful to try to be especially gentle with your expectations and adjust the length and type of practice to be more supportive. Sometimes mindful movement, awareness of the external senses and informal mindfulness of pleasant and soothing activities can be helpful. Please feel free to let me know about any challenges arising in practice so we can discuss possible strategies that are available.

Generally, formal meditation practices are most accessible for us to practice when we are in the zone of workability, so I would encourage you to be responsive to where you are in a given moment on the dial of emotional intensity. Feel free to take a break when needed, and use the skills you have learnt in the CBT skills group to best support you when you find yourself to be out of the zone of workability.

It is helpful to have on hand any materials like cushions, blankets or a yoga mat you would like to use to be comfortable either sitting or lying down for the mindfulness meditation practices. You are welcome to choose the posture of your choice for the practices and modify or opt out of any that do not feel like a good fit for you.

We will also be doing a mindful eating practice together in our first session, so please bring something edible you would like to sense and savour for this practice. It could be anything of your choosing and a small amount is all you need (eg fruit, nuts, chocolate, cheese or crackers etc).

This first week you may find it helpful to review Chapter 2 of the CBT skills workbook pages 34-41

Topics for discussion in Session 1

- What is mindfulness?
- Why might it be helpful to practice?
- How do we practice it?

Practices we will do in session

- Mindful eating
- Body scan

Week 1 suggested home practice

Informal practice: try some mindful eating each day (might be choosing one meal a day to intentionally practice mindful awareness, or some other cue that feels helpful for you to remember your intention)

Formal practice: Try doing a body scan once or twice daily. I would highly recommend using an audio track to guide you at first. The length of practice is up to you depending what is practical for you right now.

sources for audio tracks for home practice:

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

- there is also a free app called UCLA Mindful with the same tracks
- 3 min short body scan and 13 min body scan for sleep in Basic Guided Meditation section, 14 min body scan in Health and Wellness Meditation section

<http://www.sharingmindfulness.com/audio/>

- 15 and 35 min body scan track

<https://cih.ucsd.edu/mindfulness/guided-audio-video>

- variety of body scan tracks 10-45 min in length

<http://franticworld.com/free-meditations-from-mindfulness/>

- 4 min chocolate meditation
- 14 min body scan

Centre for Mindfulness Studies free app (<https://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/get-the-app/>)

- selecting MBCT and MBSR 30 and 40 min body scan tracks

Breathr free app (<https://kelymentalhealth.ca/breathr>)

- 5 min body scan
- 6 min eating a raisin

Notes: