

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

Home Practice Manual & Support Guide

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imagine mindfulness



Welcome to Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

We are grateful that you've taken an active part in your own health by joining us for this program. Making the decision to commit to 8 weeks of discovery, you are resolving to live with less stress, quieting the mind, and greater awareness that can make life richer. We're happy to be embarking on this journey together.

Guidelines for participation in the MBSR program

Attending the orientation, 8 sessions, and the all-day Retreat.

We ask that you try to attend all sessions. If you have to miss a class, please let us know by text or email. You are taking this course for yourself: to receive benefit, requires your daily participation and involves learning from the 'inside out'.

Daily mindfulness home practice 5-6 times per week is essential.

Mindfulness practice can lead to great benefits with regular daily practice. You might like some of the practices better than others but we encourage you to give all of them a real chance.

Mindfulness is a skill that improves with practice. Talking or reading about it is great and it will help you to understand but mindfulness is a lot like swimming: you need to jump in the water and practice :-)

All of us have busy schedules and making time to practice can be very difficult. We just don't have time, we must make time: committing to making practice a priority (only you can decide this). We encourage you to create a daily practice, even for few minutes a day. (Saki - "it's better to practice 5 minutes 5 times per week instead of 30 min once per week")

We are here to guide you in class, provide materials to help you along the way, and will be there for you to answer questions at any time during the program. We encourage you to make this practice your own for the next 8 weeks and beyond.

If a practice causes any discomfort or pain, please stop and let us know.

It is important that you listen to your body and do not push yourself over any limit. We are there to help and guide you through but only you can feel your own body and your own limits. Listen to your body. There are ways to modify these practices so please let us know how we can help.

Creating a consistent place for meditations

Finding a place where you can sit quietly without disruption is important. Discover a place where you feel safe to sit with your eyes closed where you won't be disturbed by the phone, a pet, or person. Creating a consistent time and place to sit will help you create a ritual, making it easier to add to your daily routine.

You might want to keep your handouts or a journal close by to write down thoughts and observations. Dress comfortably taking temperature into account and maybe having blanket available for warmth. You can use a meditation cushion, a chair or anything else that you can sit on comfortably with a straight spine with knees lower than hips. You might want to use a yoga mat or a soft, but not too soft, mattress where you can lay on comfortably for a 30-45 minute body scan.

Approaching your practice with a curious attitude.

What can you find out? Where can you experiment? What is the bigger picture? What do you see when you zoom in? Your only objective is to observe, like a scientist, developing an awareness of 'things as they are'. This will cultivate an open mind that can result in kindness, compassion, gentleness.

Mindful listening and speaking

We invite you to see all the interactions during class as an exercise in mindful communication. When you listen, really listen (not planning what you'll say next)! When you want to speak, take a second to ask yourself why you want to share what you want to share (or not share). An acronym that might help here, is W.A.I.T: "Why Am I Talking?". Of course, this could also be "Why Am I Not Talking?".

This course is a co-creation with all of you and we want to hear your experience and insights. You will get opportunities to speak. If you do not want to share, you can always pass.

We ask you to refrain from giving advice. Advice could be seen as an act of care and sharing your knowledge, experience and point of view. It can also take away the opportunity for the speaker to find their answers within themselves. Very often, being listened to is all the speaker needs in the moment.

Putting specific goals on hold

A curious attitude is just waiting to see what will happen, without longing for a specific outcome (relaxing, pain relief, inner peace). You might find unexpected benefits or unseen outcomes, or you find the ones you were looking for and more.

Intention and a personal commitment to your mindfulness practice

Formal practices This is what we normally think of as meditation. It's the specific time we set apart for specific meditation practice (Awareness of breathing, body scanning, meditation in motion, sitting, and walking meditation). In the MBSR program, we do these formal practices for 20-45 minutes daily, 5-6 days per week for the next 8 weeks.

Informal practices can be anything in your daily life that you bring awareness to.

Mindful eating, answering the phone, driving, breathing, interactions, social-media-use: you can bring mindfulness to any of your daily activities. It is the

conscious act of remembering and bringing attention to the present moment in your day-to-day activities. It can be of great benefit and only takes a second (or two).

Both practices are equally important, support each other, and support us in bringing mindfulness into our lives.

Confidentiality

What we share in the course, stays in the course. We ask that participants respect the confidentiality of each person in the course. Personal information or participant's comments should not be shared outside the classroom. If you would like to talk to another participant about something they brought up, first ask them if they are interested in doing so.

I commit, to myself, to practice the mindfulness practices daily, each week, for the next 8 weeks.

I intend to practice for ____ (min) to ____ (max) minutes per day, ____ days per week. (Please consider your schedule and be realistic)

I understand that what's most important is to cultivate a practice that I can and will do.

I will return to this intention periodically, and re-adjust to doing what I can and will do, rather than insisting on adhering to a notion of what I should do.

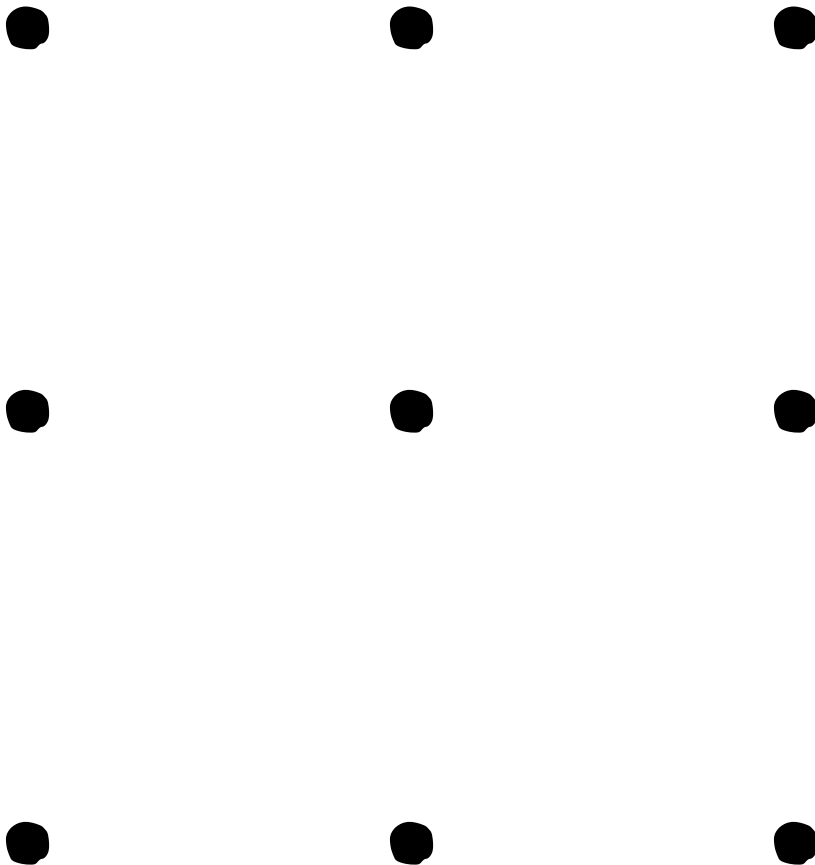
_____(signature) _____(date)

Home Practice Notes

What practice were you doing?	How did your body feel as it was occurring?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts were present?	What are your thoughts or feelings right now?
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			

Nine Dots

***Instructions:** Placing your pen or pencil on the page only once, draw four (4) straight lines that pass through all nine (9) dots without lifting your pen or pencil from the page.*



Pleasant Events Calendar

What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feeling while it was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, as it was happening?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				

Unpleasant Events Calendar

What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feeling while it was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, as it was happening?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				

Bringing Awareness to Reactions/Responses

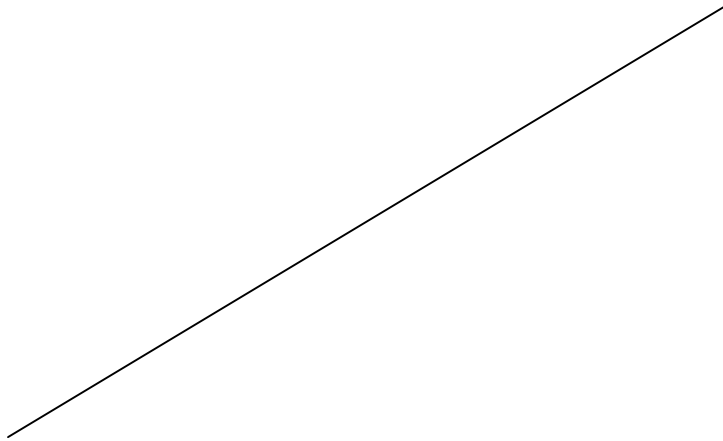
Describe Situation	Describe emotions and body feeling as situation played out.	Describe what you were thinking before, during and after	What was the outcome of the situation? What would you advise yourself for the next time?
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			

21 Ways to Reduce Stress During the Day

1. Waiting in any line, you can focus on your breath and noticing the sensations.
2. Take a few minutes in the morning to be quiet and sit, lie down, or meditate and be with yourself, listen to the sounds of nature or take a slow quiet walk.
3. Before starting your car, take a moment to center yourself with your breath before proceeding.
4. While your car is warming up, take a moment to quietly pay attention to your breath.
5. When driving, decide not to play the radio and just be with yourself.
6. Be mindful driving: relaxed but awake and alert. Keep attention on the road and avoid doing anything else other than driving.
7. Stay in the right lane and go 55 miles per hour on the freeway.
8. When stopped at a red light, pay attention to your breathing, to trees or the sky.
9. After parking your car take a moment to orient yourself to the new location.
10. Try to “stop” for 1 to 3 minutes each hour to regroup and recoup.
11. Use everyday cues to in your environment as reminders to “center” yourself. e.g. the telephone ringing, closing a door, etc.
12. Chose to eat a snack or meal in silence a couple of times a week.
13. At the end of the day, nonjudgmentally recount your daily activities, acknowledging and being grateful for what you accomplished.
14. Turn your cellphone off for at least one hour during the day. If this isn’t possible, try turning off the ringer.
15. Bring your attention to each activity of the day as you do it.
16. Avoid multitasking.
17. Each time you return home, take time to reorient yourself after parking but before entering your house.
18. In large parking lots, park away from your destination and mindfully walk there.
19. While waiting in the car, sit in silence and enjoy a meditation time.
20. Put on sunglasses and put in earbuds, connect to your phone, and stream a guided meditation or an unguided (bells with silence) meditation from Imagine. No one will know!
21. Drive to a lookout, open space area, or park and breath as you enjoy the beauty.

Difficult Communications Calendar

What was the experience?	Were you aware of the difficult communication while it was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, as it was happening?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				



You have to draw the line somewhere