

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Winter 2024 Course

Overview

This 8-week, 9-session MBSR curriculum is based on systematic and intensive training in mindfulness meditation. The core curriculum, developed over the course of four decades at UMASS Medical School & Brown University, is designed to teach you how to practice, integrate and apply mindfulness in your everyday life to a range of ordinary and extraordinary challenges.

You will learn how to draw on your own inner resources and natural capacity for greater health and balance, ease and peace of mind.

Class Logistics

- The MBSR Course option for Winter-2024 is a Tuesday evening class.
- The All-Day Retreat will be held on Sat. Mar 16 at Trinity Episcopal Church.
- Free Information Session (*required for course participation*):
 - Tuesday, Jan 30 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church-Asheville
 - *If you cannot attend the Info Session, you must make alternate arrangements with the instructor prior to Jan 23.*
- MBSR 8-Week Winter-2024 Course:
Tuesday Evenings:
 - Classes meet on Tuesday every week (Feb 6 – Mar 26) for 2 hours and 30 minutes (6:00 pm – 8:30 pm). Classes 1 & 8 may last longer and Class 2 (Feb 13) will be via Zoom.
 - An All-Day Silent Retreat will be part of this course held on Saturday (Mar 16) from 9:30 am – 4:00 pm.
- The bulk of each class will be spent learning different forms of mindfulness practice: yoga, sitting, body scan, walking meditation, mindful eating and communication.
- We will discuss stress physiology & psychology (no surprise!). You will be invited to explore behavioral, physical, emotional and cognitive stress patterns and more skillful responses to those reactive patterns.
- Each class will contain periods of mindfulness practice, group discussions, small group discussions, and practices/exercises related to the weekly topic.
- You will receive audio files of guided meditations via Dropbox to support your home practice. Home Practice sheets will be provided in .pdf format every week.
- Wear comfortable clothing and we recommend eating a light meal before class.
- Bring a yoga mat or blanket if you are able to do practices which involve being on the floor.
- Plan to set aside **30-60 minutes for your daily home practice**. This is a critical part of integrating mindfulness in your life.
- If you know you'll have to miss more than 2 classes during the series, please sign up for an 8-week series at a later date.
- There are no guarantees with MBSR, nor is it a quick fix. It is an intensive exploration of the human capacity to direct our attention to the present moment, nonjudgmentally, and has been the basis for decades of research on the benefits.
- If you can't attend a class or know you will be late, please contact Scott MacGregor at 828-551-1142 (scottmac321@gmail.com).

- At any time and at the sole discretion of the instructor, any in-person MBSR session offered by AML may be switched to online with at least 24-hours notice.
- All participants agree *not* to attend any in-person session if you feel ill (fever, cough, chills, etc.), and/or if you have been exposed to COVID/Flu or have reason to believe you may be infected.

Cost & Registration

The Information Session is free. The 8-week class is offered on a sliding scale: \$395, \$495, or \$595. If you have additional financial need, you may request one of the scholarship seats for a reduced fee below \$395. Please pay more, if you can, to help support those less able to pay. Refunds are available after orientation, before the first session. Thank you. Registration opens about 8 weeks prior to the Info Session.

- If you have paid for the course and, after attending the Information Session decide the course is not right for you for any reason, you will receive a full refund less the PayPal admin fee of 3.5%. However, you must notify the instructor via email by noon on Feb 1.
- *Note: There is a fee if you cancel within 7 days of the Information Session and/or do not attend the Information Session.*

Potential Program Benefits and Risks

Benefits

- Research has linked MBSR to a number of health outcomes, including improved sleep, immune system function, memory, emotion regulation, cognitive acuity, decreased anxiety and depression, and healthier relationships.
- Increased awareness and concentration, e.g. less mind wandering
- A quieter mind, a sense of ease and balance
- New ways to cope with difficulty, pain, stress, or suffering
- Improved self-care, and a reduction in work stress/burnout

Physical, Emotional or Social Risks

- The primary physical risk is connected to practicing mindful yoga. If you hear guidance that you know is not healthy for your body or condition, or if you are feeling pain, please practice self-kindness and don't push beyond your limitations.
- If you're currently working with a doctor or physical therapist, it can be helpful to discuss yoga pose limitations in advance with them.
- Feelings of sadness, anger or fear could seem stronger at the beginning of the course because you may be paying attention in a conscious way to these for the first time.
- A history of trauma, abuse or addiction may heighten these reactions. Please tell me if this is true for you, and we can determine together if this is the right time for you to take this class.
- It may be a challenge to set aside the space and time to engage in home practices, so it's important to request support from family, friends and/or coworkers.
- You may find you relate to others in new ways. Sometimes people are uncomfortable with the "new you."

Time

- Finding time to make a new habit of mindfulness practice can be challenging. It's normal to think there isn't enough time to practice. However, we sometimes find that setting aside time for practice can increase the sense of spaciousness in the remainder of your day.
- Please arrive for each class early to allow you time to settle in before we begin. Classes will begin promptly at the scheduled start time.

Thank you for your interest in MBSR. Even if you recognize this isn't the right time, or program, for you, we appreciate your willingness to investigate it as an option for greater health and well-being.