



## **MBSR**

Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction  
8-week Course Overview

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## **Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Program**

MBSR is modeled after the pioneering work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts Medical Center's Stress Reduction Clinic and Center for Mindfulness.

Currently, MBSR is taught in over 700 health and wellness institutions throughout the U.S.

### **Course Outline**

1. The course duration is 8 weeks and there is a prior 2-hour free introductory/orientation session.
2. Participants meet for 2-1/2 hours once a week. The first and last sessions are slightly longer, due to intake and exit forms. Additionally, there is one all-day session after the sixth week of the program.
3. In between sessions, participants do home practice with audio recordings of meditation and movement techniques taught in class.

There will be optional assigned readings from the course text : A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook, by Bob Stahl, Ph.D. and Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D.

### **Course Content**

Each session contains three components:

1. **Experiential:** This component takes place in the first half of each session, which consists of 30 to 45 minutes of instructional meditation practice (Awareness of Breathing, Body Scan or Sitting Meditation) and 30 to 45 minutes of mindful movement (Yoga or Walking Meditation). The object is to develop non-judgmental, moment-to-moment awareness of the body and mind and to acknowledge any physical sensations and mental or emotional feelings as they arise.
2. **Didactic:** Through lectures and discussions, participants learn that their habitual reactions to stress may create and exacerbate anxiety, depression and illness. Instruction is provided to effectively change personal responses to stress.
3. **Group Support:** The final hour of each session is dedicated to group support; time for personal sharing, small group exercises and Q&A. Each participant has the opportunity to discuss their daily practice and gain insights into challenges and/or successes that ultimately assist in the deepening of the practice for the group as a whole.

## **Course Goals**

1. Learn specific skills to reduce symptoms associated with stress and illness.
2. Decrease the frequency and length of medical visits to hospitals and health care professional offices (particularly helpful with issues related to grieving, coping and self-care skills).
3. Decrease if appropriate and possible, the use of prescription and non-prescription medications.
4. Cultivate deeper levels of understanding and compassion in relation to health and illness and become more responsible and active in the management of personal well-being. This may even result in the reduction of physical and mental stress, as a contributing factor to disease.

## **Course Objectives**

After attending the program participants will:

1. Improve coping skills related to illness, pain and stress-related conditions. Participants will better manage stress, fear, anxiety and depression, improving quality of life in the workplace and at home.
2. Have learned specific meditation practices and mindful movement as a routine to improve the management of stress and symptoms of illness and disease.
3. Have practiced communication skills to improve relationships with family, friends, health care providers and co-workers.
4. Have improved sense of well-being and personal life control.

## **Appropriate Participants**

The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction program is specifically designed for people who are experiencing stress in their daily lives and wish to promote healthy living. It also complements the medical management of chronic or acute medical conditions. This program is an adjunct and not a substitute for professional medical care. Participants are encouraged to continue working with their regular physicians while cultivating their own inner strengths.

The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction program has served people living with such conditions as: a.d.d., allergies, A. I. D. S., anemia, anxiety and panic disorders, arthritis, asthma, atrial fibrillation, bereavement, cancer, cholesterol problems, Crohn's disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic pain, colitis, depression diabetes, divorce, emphysema, epilepsy, fibromyalgia, G. I. disorders, graves disease, heart disease, manic-depression, Meniere's disease, migraine headaches, multiple sclerosis, obesity, osteoporosis, peripheral neuropathy, post polio syndrome, post traumatic stress syndrome, psoriasis, raynaud's syndrome,

repetitive strain injuries, spinal cord injuries, spinal stenosis, spondylosis, stroke, substance abuse, tendonitis, tinnitus, TMJ, and stress related to work and home life.

### **Inappropriate Participants**

1. Those who are currently substance abusing
2. Those with extreme hearing loss
3. Those with serious mental disorders that are not stabilized
4. Those considering suicide. Our obligation is to notify the participant's therapist and/or M.D. The participant must be currently working with or under the care of a therapist/M.D. in order to participate in the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Program.
5. Those unable to follow through with the commitments of the course (attendance, practicing with instructional CD, and a sincere interest to participate)

### **Program Results**

The Medical Symptom Checklist (MSCL) is used pre and post MBSR course. Participants check the boxes of those physical and emotional complaints/conditions that they have experienced in the 2 months prior to the program. On the final day of class, participants are asked to fill out the MSCL a second time. Combined results from the program have shown an average decrease in overall symptoms of 40%.

### **Conclusion**

The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction program has helped improve the abilities of hundreds of participants to live and cope with chronic pain, illness and stress-related conditions. By learning to actively participate in the management of health and well-being, many participants report that they are better able to manage stress, fear, anxiety and depression both at home and at work. Participants have stated that they feel less judgmental and critical of them-selves and subsequently, others. Many also report a decrease in the frequency and length of medical visits to hospitals, emergency rooms and health care professional offices. Additionally, there has been a noted decrease in the use of prescription and non-prescription medications. In summation, participants are able to deal more effectively with the stresses of illness, pain and daily life.

**Note:** This program is suitable for adults with or without illness and disease, troubled or at-risk youth and physician-referred patients.