

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) Course Information

What skills will you learn during the MBCT Course?

- MBCT is a skills-based course rather than group therapy.
- To develop a better understanding of the workings of your mind.
- To recognise patterns / mental habits – and realise that there are alternatives.
- To stand back a little from distressing thoughts and feelings.
- To recognise early warning signs and take helpful action when you spot them.
- To put less effort into trying to ‘fix’ things and strive for results.
- To be kinder and more gentle towards yourself.

What actually happens during an MBCT Course?

- Group gathers together (introductions, what brings us here? Receive all course materials in first week).
- Sessions normally begin with a **meditation practice** (e.g. attention to breath or body).
- **Reflection** on experiences of the practice.
- **Feedback** on experiences of **home practice** during the previous week.
- Discussion of the **theme of the session**.
- Another short meditation practice and/or cognitive therapy exercise.
- Reflection on the practice / exercises.
- Discussion of home practice for following week.
- Opportunity to speak to the teachers individually at the beginning or end of each session.

What does Home Practice involve?

- Approximately **1 hour each day, over the 8-week course**.
- You **may need to reorganise other aspects of your** life to fit the home practice in and talk to family or friends about what is involved.
- **Experiment with practicing at different times of the day** if you find things hard.
- **As best you can, keep an open mind** – you may notice that your experience changes from one day to the next and one week to the next.
- If things are difficult or something interferes with your practice – **don’t give up**. You can always start again (and again, and again!!).

What are the challenges?

- **At first, practicing meditation may feel strange or unfamiliar** – as best you can, try to keep an open mind.
- **It is not obvious at the outset which practices will be helpful** – you may not see the benefits immediately –try and persevere, even if you find things difficult at first. People respond differently, at different rates.
- **It can seem very daunting to be asked to practice for an hour a day**. However, by endeavouring to do this you have the best chance of benefiting from the course.
- **You may find yourself wanting to give up at times**. This is common. Please speak to your course teacher to discuss any particular issues that are making it difficult for you.

- **Some people feel apprehensive about being in a group.** However, there can also be immense benefits from learning from other people with similar experiences and seeing that you are not alone.
- **During the course you may face emotional issues that you would prefer to avoid.** Difficulties you might experience during meditation are often informative. You will learn a different way of responding to these difficulties

Practicalities of the MBCT Course

- **It is important to try to attend every session,** as the sessions build on each other. Please let the teachers know, or email the OMC, if you are unable to attend, and the teachers will help you catch up on things that you have missed.
- **It can sometimes feel difficult to come back if you have missed a session – come anyway!**
- **The course can be challenging - there may be times when you do not feel like coming -** Please email the OMC to ask for one of the teachers to contact you, to discuss any problems you are experiencing.
- **Practical difficulties can get in the way of sessions and home practice –** please feel free to discuss this with your teachers.
- **Physical concerns can make people feel daunted –** for example if you experience pain you may be worried about sitting still for long periods. Please discuss this with the teachers – it is always possible to adapt practices.

Arrival on the day: We ask that you arrive a little before the class start time, if possible, to ensure a prompt start. However, we are aware that Oxford traffic can be unpredictable so please do still come along even if you are late arriving. Please note that parking on site is restricted during working hours. We advise using public transport. Please see the Travel Information document for further details. There will be tea & biscuits available before each session.

What to wear: Since the sessions involve spending quite some time sitting and also doing some simple yoga and stretching exercises, please dress comfortably and preferably in layers so that you can adjust for feeling warm or cool. If you have your own yoga / exercise mat and blanket you are welcome to bring these along, otherwise mats, cushions, blankets, etc. are available here.

Practice-Day (*Saturday 10am-4pm on the 8-week course, Day 4 on the 5-day course*)

The Practice Day, from 10am-4pm, offers the opportunity for extended period of practice. Much of the day will be spent in silence to support the practice, and familiar guided meditation practices will be led by the course teachers. There will be opportunity at the end of the day to reflect on the experience and ask any questions participants may have. As the day will involve spending quite some time sitting, walking and a period doing some simple stretches, please dress comfortably.

Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available throughout the day, but no planned breaks, other than lunch time. Please bring your own lunch, which will also be spent in silence. (Please note that the Warneford Hospital canteen/shop is not open on Saturdays.) Please let family and friends know that you'll be spending the day in silence and not be contactable (unless in emergency) during this time.

Terms and Conditions: Please ensure you have read our full terms and conditions, including cancellation policy, prior to booking on the website.

Please get in touch with us, using the contact details below, if you have any further questions.