

More about
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Mindfulness just means being fully aware of something, in the moment with it, without judgment or resistance. That's all. Nothing more. Sound simple? Yes. Easy to experience? No. Here's why. The nature of the mind is to wander. It craves stimulation. In fact, without something to focus on, the mind tends to whirl nonstop. 21st Century living rewards the mind's relentless desire for mental activity. Increased dependence on technology combined with constant interruptions from fast-paced living insidiously swallows up opportunities to just *be*. Stress increases, negatively impacting our health, relationships with others, how we feel about ourselves and undermines our overall sense of wellbeing.

Practicing Mindfulness is a solution for an increasing number of people in the U.S. and abroad. Mindfulness is often described as being present, Mindfulness is an awareness of ones thoughts, physical sensations and surroundings. This level of awareness requires learning how to manage the mind. That's the purpose of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). It is a structured 8-week course on Mindfulness with research providing evidence that it reduces stress and promotes health and wellbeing.

Designed over 30 years ago by MIT trained scientist Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., MBSR was originally created for people suffering from chronic pain. Since then it's gone "mainstream" now benefitting people suffering from stress caused by mental, emotional, and physical suffering. In a recent 60 Minute interview, Jon Kabat-Zinn described Mindfulness as "*The awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.*"

The best way to understand Mindfulness is by experiencing it. A Mindful presence is cultivated over time through daily practice of sustained focus and self-regulation along with exploration of one's inner landscape. Skills to focus on the mind develop by repeatedly bringing attention to the mind, accepting whatever arises with loving kindness. Mindfulness requires us to learn how to refrain from doing so we can just *be*. No small challenge in a world full of people wondering what their purpose is in life, constantly thinking about they need to *do* next.

Throughout the course, instruction and support is provided to help participants learn how to develop a Mindfulness practice. Instruction is provided for Mindful meditation, body awareness, the body scan, mindful walking, and gentle yoga stretching. Each technique is practiced during class. Home practice is assigned weekly. Because the program is highly experiential, participants are asked to commit themselves to practice Mindfulness 30 to 45 minutes each day. This means setting aside time each day to bring awareness to your thoughts, physical sensations and surroundings by using different Mindful meditation practices. Creating a personal Mindful practice that works for you is the goal of this program.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to experience Mindfulness
- Increase your ability to relax and handle stress with less effort.
- Learn about the negative impact of stress on your mind and body.
- Discover how your perceptions contribute to stress in your life.
- Explore communication patterns to learn healthy strategies for responding to stressful situations.
- Practice formal and informal meditation techniques.
- Learn how to use Mindful meditation to bring awareness to your thoughts, physical sensations and surroundings.
- Enhance attentional control.
- Increase awareness of your mind-body connection.
- Practice Mindful movement and gentle yoga stretches to identify ones that work for you.
- Cultivate awareness and learn to embody mindfulness attributes of acceptance, trust, patience, beginner's mind, trust, non-judging, non-striving, letting go, generosity and compassion.
- Experience increased peace of mind and enhanced overall well-being.

Instructor: The course is instructed by Dr. Brenda Butterfield, founder of *Our New Experience* (O.N.E.), LLC. She is a licensed mental health therapist and a consultant with over 25 years of professional experience in mental health, chemical dependency and education. Dr. Butterfield provides therapeutic services for the body, mind and soul to clients of all ages. She is also an MBSR Teacher in Training at the University of California San Diego Mindfulness-Based Professional Training Institute.