



Mindfulness For Health & Well Being

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

PRACTICE RECORD & WORKBOOK

SESSION ONE: Awareness and Automatic Pilot

*Mindfulness means paying attention in a
particular way;*

on purpose

in the present moment

and

non-judgementally

to things as they are.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

These hand-outs have been developed by Mindfulness Practitioners and Mindfulness Service User Volunteers, using a range of resources that include Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1991), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale (2013), The Mindful Way through Depression by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2007) and The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal (2014).

SESSION 1 MAIN PRACTICES AND DISCUSSIONS

- What is mindfulness?
- How to develop awareness and the pitfalls of automatic pilot
- Raisin exercise
- The 'Body Scan'
- Brief Sitting Practice

GROUND RULES WHEN WORKING IN A GROUP

- Try to be on time - we will start on time
- Respect the private nature of what is discussed within the group
- Feel free to ask questions at any time
- No one expects you to always have something to say
- Let others have a chance to speak before you speak for a second time
- Take an opportunity to practice the skill of really listening to what is being said
- Those who choose to say little in class, contribute much to the class by their very presence, as well as by using their gift of listening
- Remember everyone has the right to an opinion and to have these opinions respected
- Encourage others in the group; we need each other's support
- Let the facilitator(s) know if you are going to miss a session
- Don't go away with unanswered questions - if you don't feel you can speak in front of the group, the facilitators or volunteers will be available to speak privately at the end of each session
- Be kind to yourself, learning mindfulness skills is hard work and change takes time.
- Enjoy the course
- As a courtesy, please switch off mobile phones

Oh, I've had my moments and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day.

'Nadine Stair'

GUIDANCE ON HOME PRACTICE

Home practice is the way to help make yourself more aware of how you live your life. Practicing daily between sessions will help improve your confidence and skills in using mindfulness.

SESSION ONE: Awareness and Automatic Pilot

- **Record on the Daily Practice Diary**, each time you do a practice. Take time to complete the sections in the diary. See if you can notice thoughts, sensations and emotions which arise during your practice. Perhaps make a note of anything that comes up in the home practice so that we might talk about it at the next meeting.

GUIDED PRACTICE:

- Do the **40 minute body scan practice six times** before we meet again. Don't expect to feel anything in particular from doing the practice. In fact, give up all expectations about it. Just let your experience be your experience. Try not to judge it, just keep doing it and we'll talk about it next week.
- Use the USB stick for Practice Guidance and Practices

EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS:

- **Try to eat at least part of a meal mindfully during the next week.** Note any times when you find yourself able to notice what you eat, in the same way you noticed the raisin.
- **Choose one routine activity in your daily life and make a deliberate effort to bring moment to moment awareness to that activity each time you do it,** just as we did with the raisin practice. See Practice Handout (USB) for examples of everyday mindfulness practices.

Use the space below to make a note of an activity that you may wish carry out mindfully.

An activity I will carry out mindfully is:

During this activity I may pay particular attention to

WEEK 1 - Daily Practice Diary

Each day, write a few notes in the following spaces, about what you were aware of during the body scan practice.

What were you **thinking**?

What **sensations in your body** did you notice?

What **emotions or feelings** did you experience?

Day 1:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I kept wondering if I was doing it right, why can't I relax? Why is nothing happening?

Most people experience these thoughts in the beginning.

These are just different forms of judging, the mind wanting to take charge and run things.

As best you can just acknowledge these thoughts or judgements and then gently bring the attention back to the body that the instructions are focussed on in that moment.

There's no 'Right way' to practice a body scan. As best you can, allow whatever you experience to be your experience, however that may be.

Day 2:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I just keep falling asleep when I do the body scan.

During early practices of the body scan it's quite normal to fall asleep.

Don't get disheartened if this happens; just keep practicing, even if it seems that you're spending most of the practice asleep.

After a few practices the sleepiness may get less. If it doesn't then you might like to try the practice with your eyes open in a relaxed gaze, prop your head up with a pillow or try the practice sitting up or at a different time of day. Learning a new skill takes time and practice.

Day 3:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I felt really relaxed in that practice, it was great. It was as if I weighed nothing at all.

Sometimes during a practice you may feel a sense of being very relaxed. When this happens it can give us more confidence that we are able to feel a deep sense of peace and calm.

But it's helpful to be careful about expecting or wishing for this to happen every time we practice. Every practice is different and it may or may not happen. Although relaxation is not the point of the body scan feel free to enjoy it when it does happen.

Perhaps surprisingly the intention of the body scan is not to try to be relaxed or to achieve any special state. It doesn't matter what sensations we become aware of during a practice.

The important thing is to, as best you can, tune in to the sensations themselves rather than thinking about them.

Day 4:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I struggled to focus because of all the background noise, my kids running around, doors slamming. I got really frustrated. I didn't feel like I was getting anywhere

Being unable to focus because of background noise, the phone ringing or people banging on the door can be frustrating. It can be almost as if you're spending a lot of time getting nowhere.

But when you experience emotions of frustration or boredom, see if it's possible to just acknowledge these emotions for what they are - passing states of mind- perhaps just saying to yourself, "here's boredom" or "here's frustration", etc. and then rather than trying to ignore or block these emotions out come back to the practice, bringing your awareness back to wherever the instructions are inviting you to focus your awareness in that moment.

Day 5:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I tried to relax, but I kept noticing all the tension and aches in my body. If it doesn't feel pleasant I must not be doing it right, must I? It's really uncomfortable!

Sometimes during practice all we notice are aches or tension in the body. With Mindfulness, as our awareness develops, we can become more aware of what's happening in our body.

If you're experiencing discomfort, try to let go of judging whether or not you're doing the practice right and as best you can focus your awareness where the instructions suggest.

If the instructions take you to an area that is tense or uncomfortable, explore those physical sensations, as gently as you can and let them be the focus of your awareness until the instructions ask you to move and refocus your awareness.

It can be helpful to remember that you don't need to 'feel good' now to get the best out of this practice, the benefits of this practice may well be felt at a later time.

If you find yourself repeatedly experiencing overwhelming emotions from past experiences or you find the memories of distressing events coming back, please talk to your MBCT instructor.

Day 6:

Thoughts

Sensations

Emotions

I found myself in floods of tears and I didn't know why.

When we tune in to the sensations in the body, we may reconnect with emotions that, at some time, the mind chose not to fully experience. Although this can be startling, allowing these feelings to be present can be profoundly healing. As best you can, see if it's possible to continue to follow the guidance and focus your awareness on the body sensations in that moment. That way you can learn to 'steady' yourself in the face of strong emotions.

At the end of the week you may like to reflect on your experience of the following reactions to the practice. Jot down any experiences that come to mind.

Judging

Sleepiness

Calm/Relaxation

Physical discomfort

Frustration/ Boredom

Emotional Upset

Other, please specify

Adapted from *The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress* by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal (2014).

SESSION 1 THEME: Awareness and Automatic Pilot – In session one, we recognise our tendency to operate 'on automatic pilot' and how this prevents us from attending to what is real, each moment. In this class, we begin to practice intentionally shifting our attention within the body. This will show how simple, yet also how hard, maintaining mindfulness can be.

AWARENESS AND AUTOMATIC PILOT

In a car we can sometimes drive for miles "on automatic pilot", without really being aware of what we are doing. In the same way, we may not be really "present" moment-by-moment, for much of our lives, we can often be "miles away" without knowing it.

On automatic pilot, we are more likely to have our "buttons pressed" by events around us. Feelings, sensations and thoughts in the mind (of which we may be only dimly aware) can trigger old habits of thinking that are often unhelpful, and may lead on to worsening mood.

By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and body sensations, from moment-to-moment, we give ourselves the possibility of greater freedom and choice; we do not have to go down the same old "mental ruts" that may have caused problems in the past.

The aim of this programme is to increase awareness so that we can respond to situations with choice, rather than react automatically. We do that by practising becoming more aware of where our attention is and deliberately changing the focus of attention, over and over again.

To begin with, we used attention to eating the raisin to explore how to step out of automatic pilot. We then used attention to different parts of the body as a focus to anchor our awareness in the moment. We will also be training ourselves to put attention and awareness in different places at will. This is the aim of the Body Scan exercise, which forms the main guided practice for this week. Adapted from: Segal, Williams and Teasdale. (2013)



Summary of Intentions for the Raisin Practice

- Noting the contrast between mindful awareness & automatic pilot
- Seeing how paying attention in detail can reveal things we had not noticed or had forgotten
- Paying attention in this way can transform our experience
- Noticing our mind wandering as normal

WHAT MINDFULNESS IS NOT

- *Mindfulness* is not about trying to relax or achieve any particular way of feeling, some people find practice relaxing others do not.
- *Mindfulness is not a religion.* Although mindfulness has been practised by Buddhist nuns and monks for over 2,500 years, any purposeful activity that increases awareness of moment-to-moment experience is a mindfulness practice.
- *Mindfulness* is not about changing ordinary life experiences. Simple things can become very special with this type of awareness. For example, the flavour of the food or the colour of a rose will be enhanced if you pay close attention to it.
- *Mindfulness* is not emptying the mind of thoughts. The brain will always produce thoughts - that's what it does.
- *Mindfulness is not easy.* You shouldn't feel disheartened when you discover that your mind wanders incessantly. That's the nature of the mind.
- *Mindfulness is not about escaping from pain but working differently with our pain.*

• Adapted from Christopher K. Germer (2009).



A PARTICIPANT'S REPORT: PRACTICING THE BODY SCAN.

This patient had been hospitalised for depression four years before, following which, her husband and children left her. There had been no further contact except through lawyers. She had become very depressed and lonely, although had not been in hospital again. She was now over the worst of her depression and started to use the **body-scan tape** to help prevent her mood from deteriorating. These were her comments looking back after eight weeks:

"For the first ten days it was like a burden. I kept "wandering off" and then I would worry about whether I was doing it right. For example, I kept having flights of fantasy. When the CD mentioned Massachusetts I would think of a trip to Boston with the family five years ago. My mind was all over the place. I tried too hard to stop it, I think.

Another problem at the start was him saying, "Just accept things as they are now". I thought that was totally unreasonable. I thought to myself "I can't do that".

Eventually I just put it on and expected to go off into a realm of thoughts. I didn't worry if concerns came in. Gradually the forty minutes passed without me losing him and from then on, the next time was more effective.

After ten days I relaxed more, I stopped worrying if I was thinking about anything else. When I stopped worrying about it then I actually stopped the flights of fancy. If I did think of something else, I picked up the practice again when I stopped thinking. Gradually the flights of fantasy reduced. I was happy to listen to him and then I started to get some value from it.

Soon I had developed it so that I could actually feel the breath going down to the base of my foot. Sometimes I didn't feel anything, but then I thought, "If there's no feeling then I can be satisfied with the fact there is no feeling".

It's not something you can do half a dozen times. It's got to be a daily thing. It becomes more real the more that you try it. I began to look forward to it.

If people have got to structure the time for the forty-five minutes for their practice, it may be easier to structure other things in their life as well. The practice in itself would prove an impetus".

Adapted from: Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2013).



IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER

I'd like to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax, I would limber up.

I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day.

I've been one of those people who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter than I have.

If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the autumn. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies.



Nadine Stair
85 years old
Louisville, Kentucky.

Adapted from Kabat-Zinn (1991)

IT'S OK TO COME TO MINDFULNESS SCEPTICAL

- JUST HAVE AN OPEN MIND -

Below are quotes from people who have completed the MBCT course in Burnley, they were asked "what it was like to start to practice mindfulness."

Craig age 29: *"HARD. I didn't fully understand until about the third or fourth week. I still find it difficult to be in the moment and to bring myself back when a thought enters my head. The easiest way I have found to do this is to concentrate and become aware of my breathing."*

Sandy age 19: *"My initial feelings toward the mindfulness practices were mainly sceptical. Although I still experience lots of difficulties, it has become a lot easier to step back from negative thought patterns and be more aware of the present moment, which prevents me getting too deep into the negativity."*

Fred age 22: *When I started to practice I found it really difficult and hard to keep focussed. Each week practicing became easier."*

Dennis age 61: *"I found it very difficult to find the time and space to practice outside of the group, but when I did it was very calming and strengthening."*

Brenda age 52: *"It was easier at the group session than on my own at home. I wondered if I was 'doing it right'."*

Spencer age 27: *" I found it really difficult as I was not convinced I would benefit from anything (I felt the damage was already done). But as the course went on I started thinking and acting more mindfully. I noticed that I started to pick the techniques up quicker."*

Stella age 34: *"Interesting and boring at the same time! A one-off session or two would not have enabled me to gain sufficient understanding to incorporate it into my life. I really love the whole ethos of the experience, being and not judging."*

At the end of an eight week course participants were asked, what advice they would give to future participants attending at session one... "Whatever happens stick with it. It may not seem relevant to you now, but it may be at some point. Remember you don't have to enjoy it, you just have to do it."

Written by Lisa Graham, with special thanks to participants (names changed) on the MBCT pilot study (REC Ref. 06/Q1309/136).

EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS – Waking up to routine activity

We carry out guided mindfulness practice to learn the skill of being mindful, of watching our experience, without judgement and bringing our attention back when it wanders. As important as these practices are, in order to benefit from mindfulness more fully, we can introduce aspects of mindfulness into our existing daily activities. By practicing this everyday mindfulness, we are able to bring awareness and choices into everyday life.

It is possible to carry out any routine activity mindfully. Remember that the point in being mindful is not to think about your experience but simply to notice it. Here are some examples.

- Eating breakfast without reading, listening to the radio or watching TV. Noticing your experience of the food - taste, texture, and temperature. Noticing the movements your body makes in the process of eating.
- Washing dishes - being aware of the action of your body as you do this, the scent of the washing up liquid, the feel of the soapy water, the sound the water makes as it moves around the bowl or sink.
- Taking a shower - the movement of your body as you get undressed, the difference in temperature you experience, the sound of the shower as you turn it on, the feel of the water on your skin, the change in temperature as you step out of the shower, the feel of the towel used to dry your skin.

You Reading This, Be Ready

Starting here, what do you want to remember?
How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?
What scent of old wood hovers, what softened
Sound from outside fills the air?

Will you ever bring a better gift to the world
Than the breathing respect that you carry
Wherever you go right now? Are you waiting
For time to show you some better thoughts?

When you turn around, starting here, lift this
New glimpse that you found: carry into the evening
All that you want from this day. This interval you spent
Reading or hearing this, keep it for life-

What can anyone give you greater than now,
Starting here, right in this room, when you turn around?

William Stafford

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