

UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teachers

Good practice guidelines for teaching mindfulness-based courses

These guiding principles have been developed to promote good practice in teaching mindfulness-based courses. Mindfulness courses are intended to teach people mindfulness in ways that can help with physical and psychological health problems and ongoing life challenges. These guidelines cover secular mindfulness-based programs taught in mainstream settings normally over eight weeks.

These programmes are: Informed by a clear rationale; Teacher-led; Have been developed to be scaleable; Have a set curriculum, typically at least eight sessions with 30 – 45 mins daily home practice, incremental development and experiential learning; and have a clear commitment to be evidence-based.

Hence the courses covered by this Good Practice Guidance for teachers include but are not limited to those courses listed in Appendix 1.

A teacher of mindfulness-based approaches should have the following:

A. Mindfulness Based Teacher Training

1. Familiarity through personal participation with the mindfulness-based course curriculum that they will be learning to teach, with particular in-depth personal experience of all the core meditation practices of this mindfulness-based programme.

2. Completion of an in-depth, rigorous mindfulness-based teacher training programme or supervised pathway over a minimum duration of 12 months.

B. Training or background required in addition to mindfulness-based teacher training

1. A professional qualification in mental or physical health care, education or social care, or equivalent life experience, recognized by the organization or context within which the teaching will take place.

2. Knowledge and experience of the populations that the mindfulness-based course will be delivered to, including experience of teaching, therapeutic or other care provision with groups and/or individuals, unless such knowledge and experience is provided to an adequate level by the mindfulness-based teacher training itself. An exception to this can be when teaching with the help of a colleague who knows well the population to whom the course will be delivered and has a relevant qualification. They would also need to have an understanding of mindfulness-based approaches.

3. If delivering MBCT, knowledge of relevant underlying psychological processes, associated research and evidence-based practice, unless these are provided to an adequate level by the mindfulness teacher training programme.

4. If delivering MBCT or other mindfulness-based course with a clinical population, an

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appropriate professional clinical training.

C. Ongoing Good Practice Requirements

1. Commitment to a personal mindfulness practice through:

daily formal and informal practice

participation in annual residential teacher-led mindfulness meditation retreats

2. Engagement in processes which continue to develop mindfulness-based teaching practice:

ongoing contacts with other mindfulness practitioners and teachers, built and maintained as a means to share experiences and learn collaboratively

and

regular supervision with an experienced mindfulness-based teacher including:

i. opportunity to reflect on/inquire into personal process in relation to personal mindfulness practice and mindfulness-based teaching practice

ii. receiving periodic feedback on teaching through video recordings, supervisor sitting in on teaching sessions or co-teaching with reciprocal feedback.

3. A commitment to ongoing development as a teacher through further training, keeping up to date with the evidence base, recording and reflecting on teaching sessions, participation in webs forums etc.

4. Adherence to the ethical framework appropriate to the teacher's professional background and working context.

Appendix 1 List of Courses

- *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)* (www.umassmed.edu/cfm)
- *Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)* (<http://mbct.co.uk/>)
- *Breathworks* (www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk)
- *Mindfulness Based Living Course (MBLC)* (www.mindfulnessassociation.net)
- *Mindfulness Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP)* (www.mindfulbirthing.org)
- *Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP)* (<http://www.mindfulrp.com>)

It is also hoped that teachers of lower intensity mindfulness-based courses such as the Finding Peace in a Frantic World course will work towards these guidelines.