

Sussex Mindfulness Centre News: Spring 2020

Mindful Self Compassion Workshops & Training

Due to Covid-19 our 2020 MSC Core skills workshop with Kristin Neff and Chris Germer is going to be delivered online and the face-to-face event has been postponed until 11-12 July 2021.



Live Online MSC Core Skills Training July 2020
with Kristin Neff and Chris Germer
4 sessions: 15th, 19th 22nd 26th July 2020
4-7pm BST

Book your place via Eventbrite:
[https://liveonlinemsc-
neffandgermer.eventbrite.co.uk](https://liveonlinemsc-neffandgermer.eventbrite.co.uk)

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) Teacher Training

Monday 15th March 2021 – Sunday 21st March 2021

Led by Ali Lambie and Vanessa Hope at the Ammerdown retreat centre near Bath

2-day Core Skills workshop in Mindful Self Compassion

with Kristin Neff and Chris Germer

Sun & Mon 11th and 12th July 2021 at the Old Ship Hotel, 31-38 Kings Road, Brighton
BN1 1NR

Book your place via Eventbrite: <https://2daycoreskillsmcscjuly2021.eventbrite.co.uk>

For further information on compassion oriented events please visit:

<https://sussexmindfulnesscentre.nhs.uk/events/compassion-oriented-events/>

Staff Drop Ins

DUE TO COVID-19 STAFF DROP INS ARE CURRENTLY OFFERED ONLINE – No experience required – all welcome

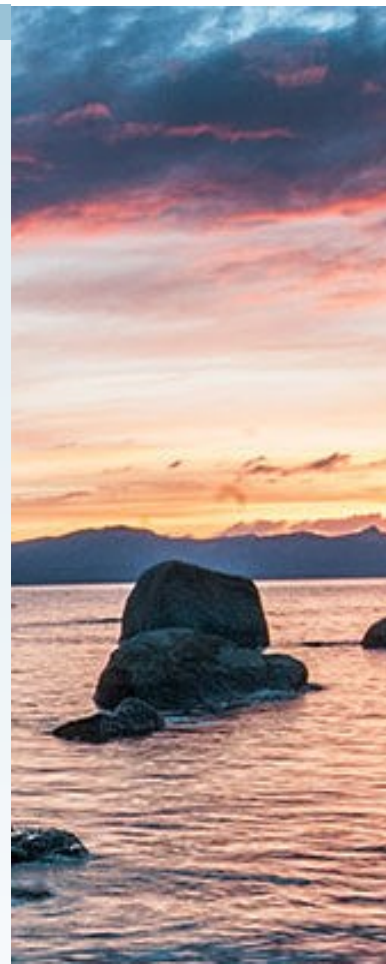
See staff intranet calendar or email SMC@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk for a booking link.

Lunchtime mindfulness. First Tuesday of the month - 1.30-2pm with Lucy Edwards.

Thursday morning 8.15-9.00am with Fergal Jones and others.

<https://sussexmindfulnesscentre.nhs.uk/events/drop-ins/>

“In a sense we are all on a retreat. A retreat for our minds and our hearts while we’re indoors” Jon Kabat-Zinn



MINDFULNESS RETREATS & ALL DAYS

Day retreats or all days are held on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm (usually at Sussex Education Centre, but are currently offered online). If you have attended an 8-week MBCT or MBSR course and are a current or previous Sussex Partnership service user or Sussex Partnership staff member, please join us.

Saturday 20th June 2020

This will be offered online – please see SUSI calendar or contact us for a link to join.

Interview with Lynn Ley

Lynn Ley is a Sussex Mindfulness Centre Trust-employed teacher who has been facilitating Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy Groups (MBCT) within Sussex Partnership's Health in Mind Service since 2008.

What do you enjoy most about teaching mindfulness?

I enjoy the amazing connections with people and their feedback. Seeing people flourish is remarkable and seeing the way that people on the course connect with each other.

Could you tell us a bit about your career history and how you came to teach mindfulness?

I trained as a general nurse in 1975 and became a social worker qualifying in 1992. I later studied at the Tavistock and Portman Institute, obtaining a postgraduate PGDip in working with groups and organizations. I was managing a group work service in Brighton & Hove and was made aware of Dr Brenda Roberts' (now retired) MBCT work.



“There is something so special about people realizing that they are not the only one and that others have a similar experience too. I am really sold on group work.”

“I ran some of my very first MBCT groups for patients and staff with Lynn around 15 years ago when we were supervised by Brenda Roberts. Lynn saw the beginnings of mindfulness in Sussex Partnership and has probably run more MBCT groups for the Trust than any other person. She has led the mindfulness service in Health in Mind with great passion for the approach, and there will be many people for years to come who will continue to benefit from having been introduced to mindfulness by Lynn.” Robert Marx

She was so supportive, inviting me to run some courses with her. At the same time in 2008, I enrolled at Bangor University on their Mindfulness-Based Approaches course. I was really blessed that I could study at Bangor and also be running courses with Brenda. It is all about experiential learning so doing the teaching and the course at the same time was really useful. It is not something you can teach by just reading about it or talking about it, you need an embodied approach and that can take a while.

What made you particularly interested in group therapy?

There is something about the power of groups. There is something so special about people realizing that they are not the only one and that others have a similar experience too. I am really sold on group work. And the other thing that is really important is that it can be fun. It is really heartfelt, but you can have fun at the same time.

Could you talk about any teachers you particularly admire?

In the beginning it was Jon Kabat-Zinn. Then I was lucky enough to do a three-day workshop with Mark Williams. I was struck by his humility and gentleness, but there was also an underlying firmness. I also admired Cindy Cooper, one of my teachers at Bangor. When I knew her she had been diagnosed with cancer and she has since passed away. She spoke to me about her beliefs which I found inspirational.

Another inspirational teacher was my supervisor at Bangor, David Elias. I remember speaking to him about the body scan and saying "I fell asleep and missed parts of the body!" He said "When you woke up, and you noticed you had been asleep, how was that? Did you do that kindly? Next time that happens see if you can slow that down, come gently back to the body". Through his guidance I was able to really notice the difference. When I brought my attention back harshly, my body tensed up and went into shock. When I was able to do it in a softer way, my attention just flowed back. This has helped me when teaching others.

You teach many courses per year. What helps you alongside the teaching to keep you grounded?

A really good work-life balance, the supportive relationships around me, my personal practice and my supervision. Five years ago my daughter very sadly died. When I came back to work, I was able to teach the parts of the course that I felt I could manage, gradually integrating back into it. Through my mindfulness practice, I was able to be with my grief. I was distraught, but I wasn't terrified. My practice changed, it was different, but it held me together. I trusted in impermanence - I could really feel my pain and my grief and that level of pain and grief would pass. The fact that I was able to talk to my supervisor and explain how my practice had shifted made a big difference.

Could you tell us about your personal practice?

It has varied over the years. In the beginning it was very much linked to the practices in the green book, but now it has changed and is more eclectic. It varies in length, sometimes I will practice unguided and other times I feel supported by having some guidance. I also practice mindful walking in nature.

You attended the SMC conference where Rebecca Crane talked about the opposing pulls of sticking to the curriculum and allowing for the non-instrumental whilst teaching a mindfulness course. How do you balance this in your courses?

I think it is really important to protect the integrity of the course, because this is where the evidence is and this is why we are teaching it in the NHS. I do try to be very flexible in my teaching - for example if someone has pain, I make sure there is a place for them to lie down during meditation if they need to. Going off-piste, trying new practices, supports my personal practice. I try many different practices - sometimes I use Calm app, do metta practices, listen to Vidyamala Burch from Breathworks, and contemplate equanimity.

You were interviewed in 2015 and you said you would like more mindfulness groups for staff and more compassion focused courses. What are your hopes now for the future?

My hopes are that training should continue to develop and expand. I hope that mindfulness will not lose its integrity. Nothing stands still - there should be room for teachers to bring themselves into the teaching, it should not be too rigid, whilst maintaining its integrity. I hope that mindfulness becomes even more widely available across the country. I would also say that my belief is that we cannot be teaching MBCT without compassion being at its very core.

You have had such a varied and exciting career! What are your plans for retirement?

My plans are to continue to supervise mindfulness teachers and trainees and hopefully to continue to offer some courses for staff. I don't want to retire and then teaching and supervision is just gone! I would like to have more free time, and space in my life, do some craft work and some painting and walk more in the countryside. Being in nature for me is so healing.



“Research has shown that mindfulness can **improve wellbeing** and **reduce levels of work-related stress**.”

Are You Interested In Learning to Practice Mindfulness?

We have a great opportunity for Sussex Partnership staff to look after their wellbeing and learn to practice mindfulness by trying the HEADSPACE app for free! THE PROMISE STUDY: PRedictors Of MIndfulness-based Self-help Engagement



Researchers at the University of Sussex would like to invite Sussex Partnership Staff to take part in a study investigating the effects of mindfulness mediation, provided by the well-known course, **Headspace**.

By taking part in this study you will receive a **free annual subscription to Headspace, worth £71.88!**

For more information or to participate go to the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2P72o8A>



MINDFULNESS DROP-INS for patients/staff

All drop-ins are free of charge and there is no need to book. These drop ins are for staff and service users who have completed an 8-week MBCT course.

All drop-in sessions are held on **the first working Monday of the month** from 5pm to 6pm. **These drop ins will be delivered online – see SUSI calendar/ contact us for a link to join us.**

6 July Robert Marx and Hannah Denton

Mindfulness For Adults With Learning Disabilities In Sussex Partnership

It still seems to be early days for mindfulness interventions which try to address the particular needs of people with learning disabilities/intellectual impairment. Many of the published papers have focused on helping people learn a 'Soles of the Feet' practice to cope when they find life difficult, and an excellent Youtube video shows how members of a Self Advocacy group have learned and begun to share their knowledge about mindfulness (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCgTjnO22FI>). The University of Bangor have produced some very helpful guidelines for people working in this area: 'Good Practice Guidelines: mindfulness based programmes for people with learning disabilities' (<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/mindfulness-for-learning-disability.php.en>).

In Sussex Partnership, groups have already taken place with children/young people with learning disabilities, and some of us working with adults have completed the Trust's Mindfulness Based Interventions training with the Sussex Mindfulness Centre, and have liaised about how to develop our work. We have received regular supervision from Bridgette O'Neill, which has helped us think through a number of different relevant issues. Two of us work in a team which regularly supports a local L'Arche community, and they agreed to be a pilot site to help us develop mindfulness groups. An initial group was run in the Summer of 2019 (reporting back in a workshop at the annual Sussex Mindfulness Centre conference in October 2019). A second group started in February 2020, but has not yet completed due to the coronavirus.

Some of the things we have been doing

- We have tried to 'distil the essence' of both the MBCT and MBSR traditional eight week mindfulness courses into our own simpler eight week format, and hope to produce a group protocol and adapted participant pack when the group ends
- We have borrowed and created several different accessible resources for mindfulness practice, such as visual/sensory prompts to help explain concepts and simplify practices. We are aware of the need for ongoing creative development of these resources
- We have recruited a local Self-Advocate with an interest in mindfulness, and some prior experience. She has been participating in the most recent group and supporting facilitators, and is interested in helping with groups in the future
- We have liaised with others working in other areas of the country
- We attempted to evaluate our groups, but have not yet found a meaningful way to do this. We are planning to invite people to take part in interviews when we are able to finish the current group.

Some of the things we have been learning

- We need clearer 'home practice' recordings – the people in the pilot groups have been practising regularly in daily life but have found existing practices too wordy. Excellent support from staff in the organisation has been key to home practice, as well as to the functioning of the groups
- Some of our adapted resources have helped us all to be more mindful – like passing round a pictorial 'Feelings Keyring' to notice how each of us is feeling right here, right now
- People differ in how they have engaged with the groups - for example, some people have loved blowing bubbles to notice what it is like to breathe out, but one person definitely didn't like this. We wondered if some, less verbal group members were finding the format of the group too abstract, but noticed that they took part in practices appropriately, and appeared to benefit from the overall experience
- Some people have told us they really looked forward to the groups. One person said '*it really helps me to feel calm*'
- Two staff members have told us they appreciated learning about mindfulness for themselves and now use it in daily life.

Finally a word from Amy Pound, Assistant Psychologist who co-facilitated the most recent group

Curiosity, kindness and togetherness felt integral to this group, as we explored practicing and incorporating mindfulness within people's daily routines and the wider community, with support from staff. Adaptability and choice in practice felt important, ensuring learning was accessible and relatable for each individual.

Celia Heneage, Gill Hurren, Martin Stent, Amy Pound – May 2020



"For men and women alike, this journey is a the trajectory between birth and death, a human life lived. No one escapes the adventure. We only work with it differently." Jon Kabat-Zinn

MASTERCLASSES FOR TEACHERS

Buddhist Foundation of Mindfulness

Led by John Peacock

9.30am – 4.30pm,

Friday 4th September 2020

Sussex Education Centre, Mill View Hospital, Hove

Mindfulness Trauma and Dissociation

Led by Dr Alistair Wilson

9.30am – 4.30pm,

Friday 2nd October 2020

Sussex Education Centre, Mill View Hospital, Hove

Mindfulness: the evolving story

Led by Rebecca Crane and Clara Strauss

9.30am – 4.30pm,

Friday 6th November 2020

Sussex Education Centre, Mill View Hospital, Hove

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Due to COVID-19 we have cancelled our conference in Brighton this year but will rearrange another date in 2021.

Mindfulness in the workplace - Maximising the efficiency and wellbeing of the workforce

As we all know, sometimes problems from home can make it difficult to cope and focus on work. We work with companies to deliver mindfulness training to their employees as mindfulness is known to build resilience and performance. So when problems do arise, staff are equipped with the tools and techniques to deal with them.

As part of the NHS, we bring together mindfulness practice, research and training to give people the skills to cope with life's stresses. We've been delivering evidence-based mindfulness to our staff and patients at Sussex Partnership since 2006 and this experience makes us well-placed to deliver mindfulness to staff in other organisations. Our teachers are highly-trained, well-supervised and maintain a consistently high level of up-to-date training.

The business case for mindfulness

Work-related stress is the biggest cause of sickness in the UK and mindfulness can help reduce sickness and also improve staff engagement. It can help reduce stress, reactivity to stress and improve focus....we can't change the stress, but we can change the way staff deal with it, and give them the ability to pause and not simply react, which can only be good for business!

Fitting mindfulness into the work schedule

We are delighted to have Paula Bellers', Julia Powell's and Brett Davis' expertise enabling us to think more widely about developing the provision of SMC mindfulness groups to staff in other organisations. With over 50 trained teachers working with us, we can offer bespoke mindfulness training, (from taster sessions to 8-week courses at various times in the day) to suit the needs of each business and workforce. If required, we can offer continuing support to maintain the positive effects. To find out more, please contact us on E: smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk

Clearing

Do not try to save
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there
patiently,
until the song
that is your life
falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know
how to give yourself to this world
so worthy of rescue.
Martha Postlewaite

Contact us

If you want to get in touch or join our mailing list here are ways to contact us:
Sussex Mindfulness Centre
E: smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk T: 0300 304 2057 Twitter: @smcmindful_SPFT
Newsletter created by Paula Bellers and Katie Medhurst

