

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

8-week online course – what to expect



What people say about the course

"I would recommend this course to anyone who suffers stresses in their lives or simply wants to explore a gentler mindset. It equips you with ideas and tools to help you feel calmer and to analyse thoughts and emotions. The course was delivered professionally in a safe and non judgemental environment, Amy and Kate help people feel at their ease, with time for participation (if you choose to) and a deal of good humour. Our course cut across the COVID-19 outbreak; it is testament to Amy and Kate's dedication that the course was taken online and not derailed. I believe I have been helped onto a path in completing this course and am now equipped to for continued practice that will help me well into the future" - Jerry

"I attended the 8 week course at a point in my life when I was feeling particularly stressed and anxious, largely because of my job. From the first session, I was able to take away useful strategies to put into practice. A few weeks on, I am still practising mindfulness regularly, including when I am at work...I would thoroughly recommend this course to anyone; we all lead busy lives, and 21st century lifestyles can be stressful and fast paced. It's all too easy to live in the past or the future, and miss the very many wonderful things right here in the present." - Angie

"Amy and Kate provided an excellent introduction to Mindfulness-based stress reduction. I really found the course beneficial in learning techniques that help reduce stress and anxiety that can arise from both work and at home. Highly recommended!" - Rob

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is developed by purposefully paying attention in a non-judgemental way to your experience of your body, your mind and the world around you. Mindfulness is about being awake and aware and living in the present, rather than dwelling in the past or anticipating the future.

Staying in touch with the present in this way, from one moment to the next, may lead you to experience yourself differently, perhaps feeling less stuck, or recognising more strength, balance and confidence in yourself. Most people completing this type of programme report lasting physical and psychological benefits including:

- Greater self-confidence and more acceptance of life as it is.
- An increased ability to cope effectively with both short and long-term stressful situations.
- An increased ability to relax and experience calm.
- More energy, enthusiasm and appreciation for life.

What does the course involve?

You will be taught in a group of up to 12 people, online via Zoom. The course consists of eight sessions of two hours, and one day retreat: a six-hour session of mostly silent practice. The teaching is largely experiential: “learning by doing” - and consists of guided meditation practices, reflection on experiences, and small and large group work. See further below for information about the session content.

There will also be daily home practice taking 20-40 minutes. You will have handouts and audio files (MP3) to help you with your home practice.

Getting the most out of the course will require some work on your part. It requires a strong commitment to work on yourself through a gentle but rigorous daily discipline of meditation and movement practice. **Making the commitment to devote the time needed for this personal exploration can feel difficult, but most people consider it very worthwhile.**

MBSR online course dates Autumn 2021

Taster sessions

- Thursday 2nd September, 10.00-11.30am OR
- Thursday 23rd September, 10.00-11.30am

Taster sessions cost £10 each

Course dates

8 week course runs on the following Thursday mornings, 10am-12pm

- Week 1 - 7th October
- Week 2 - 14th October
- Week 3 - 21st October
(28th October – no session, half term)
- Week 4 - 4th November
- Week 5 - 11th November
- Week 6 - 18th November
- Week 7 - 25th November
- Week 8 - 2nd December

Plus retreat day Sunday 21st November 10am - 4pm

Taster session

It is important to learn more about the course before you commit yourself. Please attend one of the taster sessions where you will have the opportunity to experience short meditation practices similar to the ones you will be learning on the course; as well as ask questions and consider whether the course feels right for you. If you are unable to attend a taster session, we can answer any questions you may have individually.

Who is the course for?

The course is suitable for most people. We all experience stresses and strains in life, and the course teaches skills to help manage difficulty.

If you wish to book on to the course, please book a free consultation with Amy, to check that the course is right for you at this time. *Doing this course can be a stressful experience at times – things can feel worse before they feel better!* It is important that you are feeling relatively stable and well. Please note that this course is not a therapy group and not a substitute for counselling. There are some conditions that participants are encouraged to be under the care of a mental health professional or medical doctor, and in still other cases participants are encouraged to delay entering an MBSR program or seek other treatments.

A partial list of conditions or life situations may include: a history of substance or alcohol abuse with less than a year of being clean or sober, thoughts or attempts of suicide, recent or unresolved trauma, recent bereavement, as well as being in the middle of major life changes. The hope is that participants can complete the MBSR course at a point in their life where they are supported and able to gain full benefit from the mindfulness practices.

121 support during the course

After booking on to the course, you will be invited to book a 30-minute, 121 call with Amy half way through the course, this is for personalised support to help you get the most out of the course. Should you experience any difficulties in connection with the course in between the sessions, Amy will be available via email during the week, and can arrange a chat if needed. She will not be able to offer therapeutic support.

Technology Requirements

The course will be taught live online via Zoom video meetings. To ensure the best possible experience, you will need a desktop or laptop computer with speakers, microphone, and webcam, and a high-speed internet connection. Laptops work best because they come with all the necessary equipment and can easily be moved from room to room in your home or office to find a quiet place.

We want you to have the best experience possible, and so we only recommend using a mobile device if your computer is not working, or if you are in a location without access to a desktop or laptop at the time of your class. A significant part of the MBSR sessions is dialogue and supportive connection with your teachers and fellow participants about your experiences throughout the course. One of the great benefits of the online meeting room is the flexibility to see your fellow participants all together on screen. With mobile devices such as tablets and phones, your view of your classmates will be limited to just a few faces at a time, or just the person speaking. Mobile devices also make it more difficult to see the mindful movement being demonstrated, and other presentations by the teachers.

- Review the [system requirements](#) for the Zoom online meeting platform
- Try out a [test meeting](#)
- [Test your audio and video](#) in the meeting
- Watch a [video tutorial](#) about using Zoom

Course content

WEEK 1

Here you will receive an overview of the course, establish the group learning format, and be introduced to ways of caring for yourself and others in the course sessions and during your meditation practice. You'll be guided in mindful eating, mindful breathing, and the body-scan practice, with a special emphasis on what it means to be fully engaged in the present moment.

WEEK 2

Perception is key in mindfulness—how you see things (or don't see them) will determine in a large part how you respond. This week's session and practices will ask you to examine your perceptions, assumptions, and the way you view the world. You will learn to use the body-scan practice to cultivate a greater degree of awareness of how you react to stressful situations. Changing the way you perceive and respond to difficulties and challenges will impact the short- and long-term effects of stress on your mind and body.

WEEK 3

In this session, you'll practice several distinct yet interrelated mindfulness practices—mindful movement / yoga, sitting meditation, and walking meditation. This is an ideal time to share your insights about your experiences with formal practice and integrating mindfulness into your daily life. Exploring the potential pleasure and power in being present—you'll directly attend to and investigate how your experiences create such reactions as pleasure or discomfort in the mind and body.

WEEK 4

By practising mindfulness, we cultivate curiosity and openness to the full range of our experience, and through this process our ability to pay attention becomes more flexible. This week, your practice will focus on the development of your ability to concentrate and systematically expand your field of awareness. You'll learn about the physiological and psychological bases of stress reactivity, and experience mindful strategies for responding in positive, proactive ways to stressful situations.

WEEK 5

At the halfway point in this course, you should now be familiar with the foundations of mindfulness and able to focus on applying it more rapidly and effectively to specific challenges and stressors in your life. This week you will begin to pay attention to the places where you might be stuck in repeating, unhealthy patterns that you can disarm through mindful awareness. You will also learn how to apply mindfulness at the critical moment when you experience a physical sensation, intense emotion, or condition.

WEEK 6

Resilience or “stress hardiness” is our ability to return to equilibrium after stressful situations. This week, you will focus on transformational coping strategies to broaden your inner resources and enhance your resilience through mindfulness practice. You'll also learn the fundamentals of interpersonal mindfulness—applying awareness and presence at times when communication becomes difficult or fraught with strong emotions.

ALL-DAY RETREAT

This day-long guided retreat will take place between weeks six and seven. The intensive nature of

this six-hour session is intended to assist you in firmly and effectively establishing the use of MBSR skills across multiple situations in your life, while simultaneously preparing you to utilise these methods far beyond the conclusion of the program.

WEEK 7

Mindfulness is most effective when it is a lifetime commitment. This week, you will explore the many ways that you can integrate mindfulness more fully and personally into your life. While having a dedicated regular practice for mindfulness meditation is important and beneficial, it is just as important to bring a broader sense of awareness and presence to every moment in your life, and to use non-judgmental mindfulness in your self-reflection and decision-making processes. You'll learn how to maintain the discipline and flexibility of daily practice as circumstances change over the course of your life.

WEEK 8

In the final week of the program, you will have a complete review of everything you've learned over the course, with an emphasis on carrying the momentum you've built forward into the coming months and years. You'll learn about resources available to you to pursue mindfulness in new directions as your life and practice evolve, as well as the support systems that exist to help you continue to integrate, learn, and grow. The final lesson creates a satisfying closure by honouring both the end of this program and the beginning of the rest of your life.

Course fee

- **Standard rate** £275 – OR **early bird save £30, pay £245** if booked by 27th September
- **Concession rate** £150 – there are limited places available at this reduced rate. Please only request this rate if you are in receipt of benefits or you are on a low income and would find it otherwise inaccessible to attend due to the fee.

Cancellation and refunds

If you pay for the course and decide to cancel, you will only receive a full refund if cancellation is made 10 working days before the course start date. After this time, refunds will only be given in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the teachers).

If you start the course and then find you cannot attend for the remaining weeks, a refund will not be given – however if there are exceptional circumstances, you may be offered a place on a future course at a discounted rate (at the discretion of the teachers).

About your teacher

Amy West

Amy worked for 12 years in stressful desk-based jobs, then re-trained to teach yoga and meditation in 2013 – inspired by the way that these practices had supported her during difficulty, and wanting to share this with others. Since 2016 Amy has undertaken mindfulness teacher training with the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University, and is a teacher listed by the British Association for Mindfulness Based Approaches (BAMBA), demonstrating that she has achieved a high level of competency in mindfulness teaching. She is committed to following the good practice guidelines published by [BAMBA](#).

Confidentiality

Discussions between teacher and course participants will normally be held in complete confidence. The exception to this is if the teacher is sufficiently concerned about a matter with serious criminal, ethical or safety implications shared by a course participant, in which case Amy reserves the right to breach confidentiality by consulting with another responsible person. Every effort would be made to discuss this with the participant in the first instance.

Amy receives regular supervision for her work and therefore may discuss matters arising from the course in supervision. All reasonable care will be taken to ensure anonymity.

Complaints

If you start the course and are not satisfied, please do not hesitate to discuss any concerns with the teacher directly so that we can agree the best way forward.

Questions?

Please contact Amy if you have any further queries – details below.



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