

## ORIENTATION: About Mindfulness & MBSR

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### ABOUT MINDFULNESS

- Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, to our present moment experience.
- Mindfulness encourages self-awareness of body sensations, emotions, and thoughts (triangle of awareness) as well as patterns of sensations, emotions, and thoughts.
- Non-judgment and curiosity are helpful.
- We notice & experience what is, rather than resisting, avoiding, or telling ourselves stories about what is. Life tends to become more manageable.
- We experience mindfulness in “formal” and “informal” practice time.
  - “Formal” practice time: choosing a practice and focusing on the practice for a period of time.
  - “Informal” practice: applying mindfulness to daily activities during the course of our day (walking, driving, eating, talking to others, etc.).
- Mindfulness is the primary practice taught in several variations: silent sitting, body awareness, mindful movement, mindful eating, mindful communication, loving-kindness.
- Mindfulness is not about getting the mind to stop thinking. We simply notice the mind’s tendency to experience thoughts and patterns thereof.

### ABOUT MBSR

- MBSR was established by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, at University of Massachusetts in 1979 (now guided by the Center for Mindfulness [CFM] at UMass).
- Kabat-Zinn and now 1000s of others have demonstrated clinically the stress-reduction benefits of the MBSR curriculum.
- The MBSR curriculum is a well-established methodology and generally universally understood amongst MBSR teachers as containing a certain set of fundamental practices and teachings.
- MBSR is taught world-wide in hospitals, universities, public schools, and workplaces. Therapists and many others are using the MBSR curriculum.
- This course will be taught in the lineage of Jon Kabat-Zinn and the CFM as taught by the Mindfulness Institute at Jefferson university.
- The course includes guided practices, paired and small group dialog, full-group inquiry, stress anatomy and physiology, compassion & loving kindness.
- Secular language is used to guide well-established techniques, with inclusion of more modern techniques based on anatomy and physiology, and non-violent communication.
- We hope you’ll discover a practice or two that you can use daily, both formally and informally, to be aware of life and to reduce stress for the long-term (i.e. beyond the 8-week course).
- *Mindfulness & MBSR support a different way of living.*

### WHAT MBSR IS NOT

- This is not therapy. It is about practicing present moment awareness and being with all that is. What it means to you and how it relates to your past are issues to explore more deeply with a licensed therapist.
- This is not an escape from life challenges. This is a practice of looking at them more directly.
- MBSR does not “take away” pain or anxiety. We learn to be with what is.

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### MBSR BENEFITS

- Simply Speaking:
  - Increased self-awareness
  - Increased concentration
  - Empowered decision making
  - Self-care practices that can be used daily & in daily life.
  - Decrease in the symptoms of stress, depression, chronic pain, etc.
  - Life seems more manageable
- As we notice more about our lives, we notice our thinking, our emotions, and our bodily sensations more. We “wake up” to the experience of life in and through us.
- Mindfulness is empowering, since participants are paying attention, on purpose, to the experience of their life – and making more conscious decisions based on this increased awareness.
- The nature of “mind”: We notice that the mind, left on its own, is perpetually looking back or ahead. With practice, our capacity to experience “now” is increased. Experience reality more and more, rather than rehashing the past or fantasizing the future.
- We acknowledge what is actually in our present moment experience, rather than resisting it. Once we experience it and explore in this moment, we can make a more informed choice of what to “do” next, if anything.

### PRACTICES TAUGHT IN MBSR

- Breath awareness versus breathing consciously
- Body Scan
- Sitting Meditation (awareness of breath)
- Sitting Meditation (expanding awareness)
- Mindful Movement (yoga)
- Mindful walking
- Mindful eating
- Mindful communication / listening
- Lovingkindness Meditation (metta)

### Additional Information

- Mindfulness: What it is and how to practice it.
- Mindfulness: Benefits
- Perception Vehicles: Sensations, Emotions, Thoughts (the Triangle of Awareness)
- Physiology of Stress and Relaxation
- Perception and it's Influence on Decision Making
- Relaxation Techniques using the Breath
- Responding versus Reacting (choosing responses consciously versus reacting on auto-pilot)
- Mindful Communication

### ANSWERS TO FAQ'S ABOUT MBSR & MEDITATION

- “Sitting like a yogi”: Do I have to sit on a cushion cross-legged and meditate? No, this is about ways you can incorporate the techniques into daily life so several kinds of meditation are offered.
- “Busy Mind”: My mind is too busy to meditate. Will this work for me? Yes, this is about paying attention to what is with acceptance and curiosity. This tends to calm the mind and produces many benefits. This is not about making the mind or thoughts “do” anything or change.

### About the Course

- Class periods will involve experience, discussion, and information.
- 8 2.5-hour class sessions, plus one 7-hour day of practice.
- Home practice of 20-30 minutes recommended 6-7 days a week.
- Audio recordings will be provided to support home practice.
- A “buddy system” will be offered to support home practice.
- Let the facilitator know if you will not be coming to a class session.
- If you miss a class, continue with the home practice as suggested in the syllabus.

### Bring to Class

- This workbook.
- Yoga mat, blanket, towel (something that helps you be comfortable being on the floor)
- Blanket or towel to cover yourself if you tend to get cold.
- Comfortable clothing to be sitting or moving.
- Clothing layers to be comfortable regardless of room temperature.
- Please avoid wearing/using scented personal-care products.
- Pen or pencil.
- Journal if you wish to take notes during the break or after class (we encourage you to not take notes during class so that you can practice focusing on the moment rather than writing about it).

### Downloading Audio Recordings & Written Materials (Confidential)

- Visit this location and click on the file to download (consider direct download to your phone, mp3 player or tablet):
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### EMAIL

- Look out for and “whitelist” emails from bobpileggi@yahoo.com, bob@bobpileggi.info, and from eventbrite.com.

### Dates, Times, Locations, Fees

- Mondays, February 4 – March 25, 2013, PLUS full-day
- Location: 724-A Wolcott Drive, Philadelphia PA 19118
- Full-Day: Saturday, March 16, 2013. 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
  - Bring a lunch (other details will be provided closer to the day)
  - Guided practices for 30-45 minutes periods; the day ends with discussion.

### Typical Gatherings

- Gathering / Grounding awareness in the present moment
- Practice
- Debrief that practice and home practice
- Break
- Information on some aspect of practice, stress physiology, etc.
- Learn a new practice

## **ORIENTATION: Participation Suggestions**

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### **PARTICIPATION SUGGESTIONS: Preparing to Participate**

- Put the dates in your calendar
- Try not to schedule anything during the evening of the full-day practice.
- Maintain your intention for participating.
- Let your friends/family know you are participating and will be doing your best to focus attention on the course experience.

### **PARTICIPATION SUGGESTIONS: During the Course**

- Focus on the experience of the course rather than reading about mindfulness.
- Ask for support as needed – from a class “buddy” or from the facilitator.
- Come in to class or the Day of Meditation, even if you are late. Just come in.
- If you will not be in attendance, please let Bob know by calling, emailing or texting: 646.246.5404, bob@bobpileggi.info.

### **BEING WITH CHALLENGES**

- Time: make a commitment to your self-awareness, growth, and care - adjusting your schedule to allow for class time and home practice.
- Relationships: time focused on practice will impact relationships; be proactive.
- Thinking Mind: may judge your practice or abilities or worthiness. Notice with curiosity.
- Opening Heart: We notice more, not less – this includes challenging emotions. Early on it may seem like practice “isn’t working” because you’re experiencing more heart-ache. This isn’t so. It is part of a process of becoming more aware. Keep noticing with curiosity.
- Stretching Body: mindful movement is about becoming more aware of our body and learning to live with what we discover, not increasing athleticism. While following the facilitator’s guidance, adjust experiences as your body needs to not increase pain.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Due to the sensitive nature of awarenesses we may have and the sharing that may take place in the classroom or between class participants outside of the classroom, we invite you in to confidentiality.
- Consider sharing only what you have experienced with others who are not participating in class, so that we all know you will not be speaking of experiences that are not your own – neither by identifying ideas classmates have expressed nor who expressed them.

### **ANSWERS TO FAQ’S ABOUT THE COURSE**

- Food: you may bring it for break times.
- Water & beverages: in closeable containers.
- Attendance: Plan to attend all classes and if you need to miss one, it’s ok. Follow the home practice schedule and continue with the next one.
- Practice: Do I have to practice every day? Daily practice is encouraged and will produce the most benefit out of the course. Even one or five minutes a day will help maintain consistency.
- Timing: Will we go the full time? Not necessarily, but allow that possibility.
- “Busy Mind”: My mind is too busy to meditate – will this work for me? Yes, this is about noticing the state of mind with acceptance and curiosity – not making thoughts stop.