

MINDFULNESS: INFORMATION SHEET



What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is an integrative, mind-body based approach which involves paying attention to our thoughts and feelings so we become more aware of them, less enmeshed in them, and better able to manage them. It is not positive psychology, a means of escaping unpleasant feelings or a relaxation exercise, but an approach to life that can help people relate more skilfully to thoughts, emotions and body sensations as they arise. Although commonly associated with Buddhism, developments in psychology and neuroscience support mindfulness as being an inherent part of the human mind that can be developed and enhanced through non-religious meditative practice.

Some common misconceptions

Mindfulness is **NOT**

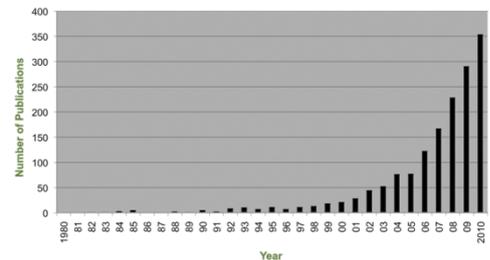
- Emptying our minds
- Becoming emotionless
- Escaping pain
- Withdrawing from life
- Seeking blissful states

Mindfulness **IS**

- A valuable life skill
- Understanding the impact of stress on our bodies, thoughts, emotions and relationships
- Befriending our minds and our emotions
- Working with pain
- Living life to the full

What is the evidence for mindfulness?

As the graph shows (Mindfulness Research 2011) research into mindfulness has grown exponentially in recent years. Our understanding of the brain has been completely rewritten over the past three decades with advances in technology and neuro-scientific evidence continuing to support the beneficial effects of mindfulness on both mental health and physical health.



Delegates completing mindfulness courses report benefits including

- Improved ability to cope with the effects of chronic illness
- Less worry, anxiety and depression
- Improvements in fatigue levels
- Enhanced emotional control, resourcefulness and resilience
- Greater capacity for relaxation and calmness
- Better quality sleep

Who will benefit from learning mindfulness?

Living with illness can challenge our whole sense of self and way of being in the world. It can be easy to get stuck in circles of loss, fear or frustration resulting in either withdrawal and apathy or an all-consuming search for a cure. Mindfulness offers an excellent means of relating differently to our experiences. Learning mindfulness is ideal for people who see their health as their personal responsibility and who like to learn from their experiences, rather than those who are looking for a quick solution or who expect healthcare professionals to provide all the answers.

Personal commitment to the course

It is important that individuals understand that mindfulness courses are not designed to be relaxation classes, a group therapy session or a “quick fix”, but are courses which teach a valuable life skill, the development of which is generally nurtured through attendance at an 8 week course. As with any new skill learning it will be most beneficial if you are able to practice regularly. Each week we will therefore suggest tasks that will help you to develop mindfulness skills, and we strongly recommend that you put aside some time for these tasks each day, so as to support the integration of mindfulness into daily life.

Finding out more

If you would like to find out more about our mindfulness courses please visit <http://yorkmbsr.eventbrite.co.uk/>, email us at relax@yorkmbsr.co.uk or call 01904 634710.

If you would like to find out more before committing to an 8 week course we would recommend one of the following books

- Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world by Prof Mark Williams and Danny Penman
- Mindfulness for Health: A practical guide to relieving pain, reducing stress and restoring wellbeing by Vidyamala Burch and Danny Penman

The Northern Centre for Mindfulness and Compassion offer a range of courses and events for individuals, healthcare professionals and organisations centred on the practice of mindfulness meditation.

Please see www.yorkmbsr.co.uk or call 01904 634710 for further details.