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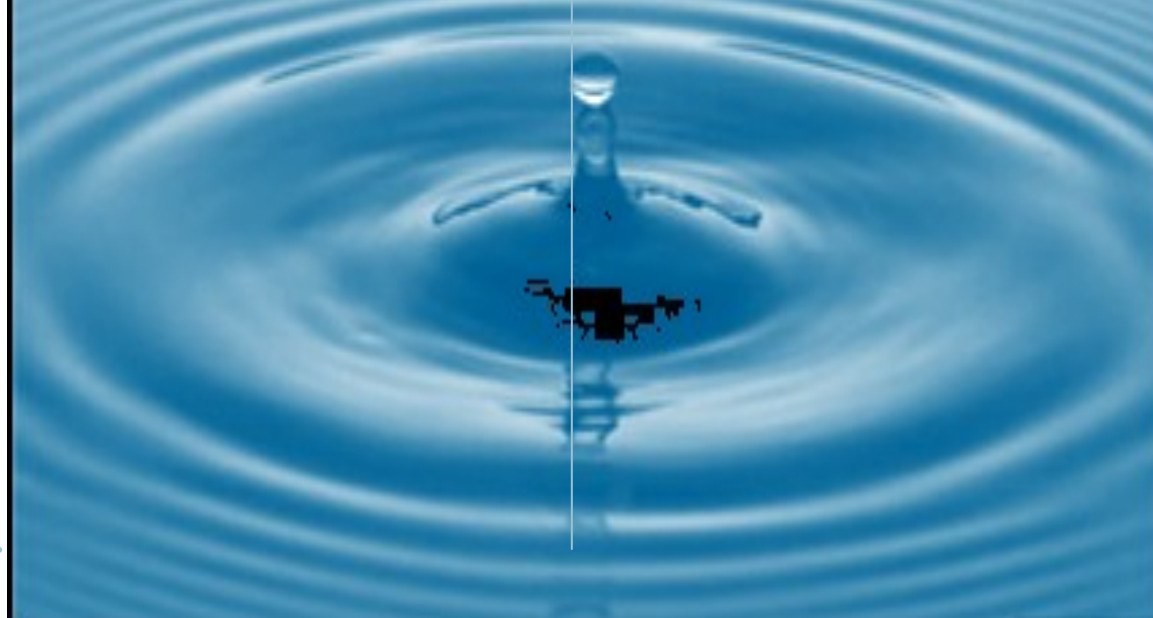
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Mindfulness Meditation Training

at SBU

The University Counseling Center understands the value of living and working in a caring and mindful community and is dedicated to enhancing MINDFUL AWARENESS on the SBU campus. In order to do this, we offer a number of different programs to teach and develop mindfulness to students, staff and faculty. Our website hopes to answer initial questions about mindfulness and mindfulness meditation, highlight the various trainings available in mindfulness and provide resources for you to further your inquiry into what mindfulness meditation has to offer.





WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

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John Lennon captured the essence of *non-mindful* living when he said, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans" (*Beautiful Boy*). It is so easy, and so natural, to live on "autopilot", in your head, thinking about the past or planning for the future, all the while missing the aliveness of the present moment. Whole lifetimes can go by this way, and they often do. This kind of automatic living reflects a "dis-connect" between mind and body and contributes to over-thinking and intensified stress.

Mindfulness has to do with particular dimensions of attention and attitude that facilitate conscious living. It means paying attention to the present moment in a particular way: on purpose and nonjudgmentally. This kind of attention helps us to be aware of what we are thinking, feeling and doing in the moment. It helps us to be in our life, rather than in our "head", and nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality.

DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS

ON PURPOSE: Mindfulness has to do with paying attention *on purpose*. Are you able to direct your attention with *intention*? Can you hold your attention on *these words*, or on any other chosen activity, in a conscious way?

PRESENT time sense: being right here, right now. As you read these lines, is your attention *here*, right here on *this word*, or are your thoughts drifting off to some other place and time? Are you awake to *this* moment? If your attention is right **HERE**, then you are demonstrating some mindfulness.

ACCEPTANCE: allowing an experience to be, as it is, without evaluating it as good or bad or wishing it could be different. This includes noticing a feeling and allowing it to be there, just as it is. This nonjudgmental quality proves to be difficult for most of us, as we have well-developed faculties for analysis, criticism and judgment. What would it be like to let go of judgment for a while and simply observe?

Mindfulness helps us develop conscious awareness of ourselves in the present moment so that we can respond to situations with choice, rather than react automatically.



CAN I DEVELOP MINDFULNESS?

YES! Mindfulness is a universal quality that can be cultivated and anyone, with the intention to do so, can learn to practice and develop mindfulness. Mindfulness is not the same as intelligence, although it certainly is intelligent to be mindful! Mindfulness involves specific attentional and attitudinal skills can be nurtured and developed, and that may, in turn, contribute to increased intelligence. The concept of mindfulness is simple, although its development requires intention and practice.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION?

Mindfulness Meditation is a way to practice and develop mindfulness. It is, in a sense, the laboratory class for the development of mindfulness.

There has been an explosion of empirical research on the benefits of mindfulness practice. In brief, the following findings have been documented.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS:

- Stress hardiness, immune system booster
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Decrease in experience of chronic pain
- Psoriasis alleviation

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS:

- Increased ability for attention, concentration
- Decreased depression
- Decreased anxiety
- Emotional regulation

For more complete references on the benefits of mindfulness meditation, go to "Resources" and "Research".



Mindfulness Training at the UCC

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The UCC offers several different kinds of training in Mindfulness Meditation (MM), free of charge, to undergraduate and graduate students. When possible, we may provide training for staff and faculty.



For Undergraduate & Graduate STUDENTS:

8-Week Beginning Mindfulness Meditation Groups for Academic Success & Well Being

Offered at the beginning of Fall & Spring semesters, these groups provide a logical, step-by-step sequence of instruction and practice. We provide handouts & CD's to facilitate learning the skill of mindfulness & to develop a home practice. Groups are small & meet

For more information about this service: Brochures (listing group times) & registration forms come out early each semester and can be obtained from the UCC or by calling **632-6720**. Please be sure to register early, as groups fill quickly.



For STUDENTS who have some experience with Meditation

Continuation Meditation Groups

For those students who have had some experience with MM, we offer 8 week ongoing groups that provide continued training in the philosophy and practice of meditation. Readings, instructions and practice are provided. Call 632-6720 for additional information about these groups.



For HSC STUDENTS

A variety of different mindfulness groups are offered at the HSC's satellite counseling service. Call 444-7760 for additional information



OUTREACH PROGRAMS

As part of its commitment to developing a mindful community on campus, groups, the UCC extends its trainings to various student and faculty groups, upon request. Various types of meditative workshops are available. A sampling of past workshops include presentations to Residence Life, BSPG, EAP, Academic Departments, Habitat for Humanity, and others.

Outreach workshops run from one to 2.5 hours and need to be requested and scheduled well in advance. For further information about our Outreach Programming, please contact 631-632-6720.

RESEARCH

The UCC is involved in a research project to investigate the clinical and academic impact of our particular 8-week model of MM. Participation in the research is voluntary and anonymous. Dimensions being measured include attention, concentration, depression, perfectionism, self-identity, and "mindfulness".



BEGINNING MINDFULNESS INSTRUCTIONS

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Sitting Practice Instructions (10 minutes)

Sitting practice involves three components: Posture, Focus on the Breath, and Labeling Thoughts. The purpose of sitting practice is to slowly cultivate a gentle and observing mind, without judging or evaluating.

Posture

- Sit on a cushion or chair, with your body in a relaxed and upright position. Feel "grounded" and stable as you sit.
- If you are sitting on a cushion, cross your legs at the ankles. If you are sitting on a chair, sit to the front of the chair with your feet relaxed, touching the floor. Relax your arms and place them loosely on your thighs or knees.
- Your back is straight yet relaxed.
- Your head is resting on top of your spine.
- Your chin is tilted slightly downwards.

Your eyes are open and your gaze is soft and relaxed, about 2 - 4 feet in front of you. Feel relaxed and grounded as you sit in this posture. Be there. This posture invites wakefulness and a sense of dignity.

Focus on Breath

- The breath is an object of focus and an anchor for you in meditation. Place your attention on your breath in a gentle way.
- Breathe naturally, in and out.
- Follow your breath naturally, bringing your awareness to your breath.
- Relax with your breath and observe your breath and follow or notice your breath. Feel your body breathing.
- Stay with your breath with gentle attentiveness. Notice the quality of your breath.

Labeling Thoughts

- As you pay attention to your breath, it is natural that thoughts arise in your mind as you breathe. You will notice the tendency for thoughts to naturally arise—we always think, and think, and think. In fact, it's the mind's job to think.
- When a thought arises in your mind, gently invite that thought in, label that thought "thinking," let go of that thought tenderly, and return your attention to your breath.
- When you notice that you have drifted off, gently label that drifting off as "thinking" and return your attention to your breath.
- Each time you label thoughts "thinking" and return to the breath, you are experiencing a moment of mindfulness!
- Each time you bring your attention back to the breath after you've wandered off, you are developing your ability to concentrate and are giving yourself a "fresh start." This means that each moment is a brand new moment.

Don't struggle. Be gentle and easy with yourself. Relax

Helpful hints

It is often helpful to meditate in a quiet location. Pick a specific time to meditate each day. Begin sitting for 10 minutes each day and gradually increase your sitting time to 20 minutes, then to 30 minutes. Each meditation sit is different—try to be accepting of your practice and not compare it to other meditation sits. Practice with a non-judgmental and accepting attitude towards yourself. Label any judgments as "thinking," and let them go. If possible, find a teacher or Mindfulness Meditation group with which to practice mindfulness meditation. The University Counseling Center offers 8-session Introductory Mindfulness Meditation groups for students (see page 3 of website). You can inquire about them by calling 632-6720.



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Mindfulness Resources

Basic Introductions: Mindfulness and Meditation Practice

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness. Jon Kabat-Zinn (Delta, 1990).
Comprehensive introduction to Mindfulness Practice for Stress Reduction. Outlines components of innovative programs used at UMASS Medical Center.

Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. Jon Kabat-Zinn. (Hyperion 10th Anniversary Edition, 2005).
Easy to read introduction to philosophy and practice of Mindfulness from one of the most trusted voices in the field.

Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness. Jon kabat-Zinn, 2005.

Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation. Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield. (Shambala.1987)
Two expert Western teachers provide a complete introduction to insight meditation and guidelines for cultivating one's own personal practice. Includes exercises, tips, and answers to common questions.

Mindfulness in Plain English. Bhante Henepola Gunaratann (Wisdom Publications, 2nd Edition, 2002)
Practical, "how to" guide for beginning meditators. Written by a monk from Sri Lanka, but aimed specifically at American students.

Meditation For Dummies (Book and CD). Stephan Bodian (For Dummies Publishing, 2006)
Clear, straightforward overview of various types of meditation, practical instructions and tips on beginning a practice and dealing with some common pitfalls. Written by former Editor-in-Chief of Yoga Journal.

Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness. Sharon Salzberg, 1995. Boston: Shambhala.
A wonderful book on the art and practice of cultivating lovingkindness toward oneself

Zen mind, Beginners mind. Suzuki, D.T., 1974.
A classic book by the Zen master who brought Zen meditation to the United States.

MINDFULNESS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living. Pema Chodron.

(Shambala Publications, 1994).

Described as a "Buddhist nun for regular folks", Pema Chodron's simple and powerful book

is based on insights from the Tibetan tradition and focuses on transforming one's

relationship to painful emotions and life experiences through mindful awareness.

The Miracle of Mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh, (Beacon, 1975).

Vietnamese Monk and Nobel Prize Nominee teaches philosophy and

practice of mindful living through stories and exercises.

At Home in the Muddy Water: A Guide to Finding Peace within Everyday

Chaos. Ezra Bayda (Shambhala, 2003).

Teachings about modern, everyday concerns such as trust, money & sexuality. Book focuses

on cultivating "the willingness to open ourselves to whatever life presents-no matter how

messy or complicated ".

A Path with Heart. A guide through the promises and perils of spiritual life.

Jack Kornfield. (Rider, 1994)

American Psychologist and meditation teacher provides a warm and

friendly guidebook for navigating the path of personal growth through

meditation.

Slowing Down to the Speed of Life. How to create a simpler, more peaceful

life from the inside out. Richard Carlson, Joseph Bailey.

. Practical guide to staying mentally present and dealing effectively

with thoughts while living a busy and productive life or more simply:

"How to live in the fast lane without losing your sanity".

STORIES, POETRY, LITERATURE

Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that heal. Rachel Naomi Remen. (Pan 1996.)

Physician and survivor of chronic illness relays "down home" stories.

The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the search for meaning.

Ernest Kurtz & Katherine Ketcham. (Bantam, 1993).

Stories and commentary around themes of acceptance, humility,

forgiveness and release. Much of discussion is through the lens of 12-

step recovery systems such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Essential Rumi. Jelaluddin Rumi, Coleman Barks, John Moyne, and

A.J. Arberry. (penguin Classics, 2004).

Transcendental poetry by a Mystic from the Sufi tradition of Is lam.

AUDIO BOOKS.

Mindfulness for Beginners. Jon Kabat-Zinn (Sounds True, 2006). Audio

CD (see also other audio selections uom Jon Kabat-Zinn).

Out of Your Mind: Essential Listening From the Alan Watts Audio Archives

by Alan Watts (Sounds True, 2004) - Audio CDs. (see also other audio

selections by Alan Watts)

HEALING, STRESS, ILLNESS AND MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression. A New Approach to Preventing Relapse.

Segal, Z.V., Williams, J.M.G. & Teasdale, J.D. 2002 Guilford Press

Eating Mindfully: How to End Mindless Eating and Enjoy a Balanced

Relationship with Food. Susan Albers. (New Harbinger Publications, 2002). . Stress, Diet and

your Heart. Dean Omish, Holt, Reinhard, (Winston, 1983). . Beyond Illness. Larry Dossey. (New

Science Library. 1984).

The Relaxation Response. Herbert Benson. (Avon 1976)

Stress without Distress. Hans Seyle. (Signet. 1979).

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Empirical Foundations of Mindfulness Meditation

The Mindfulness Meditation program at Stony Brook is part of an emerging fusion between modern psychology and ancient meditation traditions. While modern science has specialized in rigorous observation and analysis of the natural world (physics, astronomy, neurology, etc.), meditative traditions around the world have, for thousands of years, developed systematic methods to observe and study the subjective world - the "inner space" of the human mind. Both traditions are empirical in that each employs careful, systematic observation and relies on direct sensory experience to gather knowledge. The union of the "objective empiricism" of modern science with the "subjective empiricism" of meditative introspection is an exciting cultural development and one that has great potential for benefiting the lives of our students.

Context

The past decade has seen an explosion of empirical research on the therapeutic value of mindfulness meditation. This explosion was triggered, in large part, by the success of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Since then, mindfulness based programs have been implemented at hundreds of hospitals, clinics, university counseling centers, and business settings throughout the world.

The Program at Stony Brook University

The Mindfulness Meditation Program at SBU is rooted in the evidence-based psychological literature on mindfulness and empirically supported treatment programs such as MBSR. In fact, SBU Mindfulness Program has recently begun a research program of our own which seeks to measure the effectiveness of our meditation groups and further the development of mindfulness as a scientific construct.

Active Learning

We encourage students to actively engage in learning about the empirical foundations of mindfulness meditation by reviewing the growing body of research first hand. Our own library is an excellent place to start: <http://sunysb.edu/lib-library/index.html>

Recent Scientific Findings

Mindfulness training modifies subsystems of attention. Jha, A. P., Krompinger, J., Baime, M. J. (2007) Cognitive, Affective & Behavioral Neuroscience, Vol 7(2), Jun 2007. pp. 109-119

8-week mindfulness training shown to improve attention-related behavioral responses by enhancing functioning of specific subcomponents of attention

Mindfulness-based stress reduction as a method for personnel development: A pilot evaluation. Walach, Harald; Nord, Eva; Zier, Claudia; International Journal of Stress Management, Vol 14 (2), May 2007. pp. 188-198. [Journal Article]

In the treatment group, positive strategies of coping with stress increased and negative strategies of coping decreased

Effects of meditation on frontal a-symmetry in previously suicidal individuals. Barnhofer, Thorsten; Duggan, Danielle; Crane, Catherine; Neuroreport

findings suggest that MBCT can help individuals at high risk for suicidal depression to retain a balanced pattern of baseline emotion-related brain activation

Teaching self-care to caregivers: Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on the mental health of therapists in training. Shapiro, Shauna L.; Brown, Kirk Warren; Biegel, Gina M.; Training and Education in Professional Psychology, Vol 1(2), May 2007. pp. 105-115

study found participants in the MBSR program reported significant declines in stress, negative affect, rumination, state and trait anxiety, and significant increases in positive affect and self-compassion

A pilot randomized control trial investigating the effect of mindfulness practice on pain tolerance, psychological well-being, and physiological activity. Kingston, Jessica; Chadwick, Paul; Meron, Daniel; Journal of Psychosomatic Research, Vol 62(3), Mar 2007. pp. 297-300.

Participants in a 6-week mindfulness skills training showed significantly improved pain tolerance compared to those trained in guided visual imagery techniques.

Randomized Controlled Trial of Mindfulness Meditation Versus Relaxation Training: Effects on Distress, Positive States of Mind, Rumination, and Distraction. Jain, Shamini; Shapiro, Shauna L.; Swanick, Summer; Annals of Behavioral Medicine, Vol 33(1), Feb 2007. pp. 11-21.

compared with a no-treatment control, brief training in *mindfulness* meditation or somatic relaxation reduces distress and improves positive mood states. However, *mindfulness* meditation may be specific in its ability to reduce distractive and ruminative thoughts and behaviors

Consequences of mindfulness meditation for emotional flexibility and psychological well-being. Ortner, Catherine Nicole Marie; Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, Vol 67(7-B), 2007. pp. 4138

Only participants who received *mindfulness* meditation training showed improvements in the ability to disengage their attention from unpleasant stimuli, reduced ratings of feelings of intensity in response to unpleasant stimuli, and signs of reduced physiological arousal. Furthermore, the *mindfulness* meditation group showed increased scores on self-report measures of *mindfulness*, psychological well-being, and self-compassion. Together, these findings suggest *mindfulness* meditation may produce an increase in emotional flexibility, which may in turn account for improvements in well-being.

Promotion of mindfulness in psychotherapists in training and treatment results of their patients. Grepmaier, Ludwig; Mitterlehner, Ferdinand; Rother, Wolfhard; Journal of Psychosomatic Research, Vol 60(6), Jun 2006. pp. 649-650.

results indicate that the promotion of *mindfulness* in therapists in training could positively influence their patients' therapeutic courses and treatment results.

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for prevention of recurrence of suicidal behavior. Williams, J. Mark G.; Duggan, Danielle S.; Crane, Catherine; Journal of Clinical Psychology, Vol 62(2), Feb 2006. pp. 201-210.

Pilot study reports encouraging evidence for mindfulness-based treatments as a means of preventing suicidal behaviors.

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Related Links

<http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/counseling/mindfulness/aboutus.html>

Mindfulness Practice Center at the University of Vermont: Website has helpful audio exercises to guide your practice.

<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/index.aspx>

Website for the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society , Jon Kabat-Zinn's homebase. Helpful information on mindfulness training, conferences and research references.

<http://ny.shambhala.org/>

The Shambhala Center of NY has many beginning and advanced training opportunities. Check it out, it's excellent!

<http://oprah.com>

Click onto Oprah's "Soul Series". Every week, she interviews a renowned person in the field of meditation, spirituality, health. Her guests have included Eckert Tolle, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Elizabeth Lesser. You can download her programs to your ipod or computer, as well as related exercises her guests often provide.

<http://www.meditationmovie.com/movie.html>

A brief movie of ocean waves to aid in your relaxation

<http://www.eomega.org/>

Website for the Omega Institute, a holistic health center in Rhinebeck, NY. Many wonderful weekend and weeklong programs in mindfulness, yoga, health, creativity and the arts.