

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

at Sharbot Lake Family Health Team

– A Backgrounder–

Led by Jill Dunkley –Sharbot Lake Family Health Team Health Promoter
8 Week Virtual Program: Thursday, October 5th-December 6th

Evening Program: 6:00-8:30 pm

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully responsive to the present moment rather than being overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is happening to us.

Mindfulness is a quality that is already inherent in us, you just have to learn how to access it.

Mindfulness is an approach to self-care that helps deal with stress, pain, illness, and everyday demands of life that can sometimes be difficult to treat in a medical setting.

WHAT IS THE MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR) PROGRAM?

The MBSR course teaches people to focus awareness on body sensations, thoughts, and emotions in a nonjudgmental way.

MBSR is based on the following tenets:

non-judging, non-striving, acceptance, letting go, beginner’s mind, patience, trust, and acceptance.

These attitudes are cultivated and practiced throughout the eight-week program.

The MBSR course taught at the Sharbot Lake Family Health Team is modeled on the program pioneered by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in the 1970s. Kabat-Zinn’s program is evidenced-based and the “gold standard” in mindfulness training.

According to Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is a universal human capacity that can foster clear thinking and openheartedness. The goal of mindfulness is to maintain awareness moment by moment, disengaging oneself from strong attachment to beliefs, thoughts, or emotions, thereby developing a greater sense of emotional balance and well-being.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

MBSR uses a combination of mindfulness meditation, body awareness, and gentle movement to help participants become more mindful, learn how to take good care of themselves, develop their own internal resources, and integrate the benefits of mindfulness into their everyday life.

Family Health Team

Each class includes the introduction and cultivation of both formal and informal aspects of mindfulness meditation practices.

Formal mindfulness practices include:

Body Scan Meditation, Sitting Meditation, Yoga and Walking Meditation.

Informational mindfulness practices include:

awareness of pleasant and unpleasant events, interpersonal communications, mindfulness of activities throughout the day e.g., eating, showering, brushing teeth, washing dishes, etc.

Classes:

Approximately 30 hours of virtual, in-class instruction will be provided.

8 Weekly Classes: Classes will start Thursday, October 5th and run until December 6th, 2023

Classes are 2.5 hours long (6:00 -8:30 pm) and take place on Zoom.

Retreat: half day Saturday, date to be determined

Home Practice:

Participants in the MBSR program are asked to do some home practice every day, while they are in the program.

Why Home Practice?

The cultivation of knowledge and the development of any skill requires practice. The transformational backbone of MBSR is through the daily home practice.

What is the Home Practice?

Participants will be asked to spend around 30 minutes a day, 6 days a week, engaging in “formal” mindfulness practice, doing the activities that are taught in class. These activities include: the body scan, sitting meditation, walking meditation and mindful movement. You will also be asked to keep some brief, written notes about your experiences.

We ask that all participants do their best to complete the assigned practices and simply take ongoing notice of what they are feeling and thinking. Participants are often reminded, in the words of Jon Kabat-Zinn “You don’t have to like it; you just have to do it.” This is truly the heart of the practice, and the heart of what we are teaching in MBSR: that is, to embrace the whole spectrum of our experience (and not just the pleasant parts) with curiosity and compassion.

Program Expectations:

In order to experience the full benefits of the program, each MBSR candidate who enrolls in the program is encouraged to actively commit themselves to an informal learning contract that includes:

- Completion of Intake interview to determine whether the program will benefit the applicant
- attending all weekly classes
- engaging in daily home assignments
- participating in the afternoon silent retreat
- Completion of outtake interview at the end of the program

This commitment is important and prospective participants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire form prior to an intake interview to determine if it is the right time and place for the individual to participate in the program.

Course Facilitator and Support

Jill Dunkley, Course Facilitator – Jill is a Health Promoter at the SLFHT, a certified MBSR instructor and is a certified Yoga Therapist with the International Association of Yoga Therapists (CIAYT).

Laura Baldwin, Program Support -Laura is the Program Coordinator at SLFHT.

Virtual Class considerations:

Please note that this class will be delivered virtually, via Zoom. Zoom is a simple internet platform to use and requires no special software or computer expertise to use.

In order to participate effectively, participants must have access to a laptop, desktop computer, tablet or cell phone with a camera and internet. It is also important to have a quiet place in your home where you are free from distraction and where group confidentiality can be maintained.

Cost:

There is no cost to participate in this program.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS MBSR?

Studies have shown that participating in an MBSR program can reduce stress and promote relaxation.

Studies of people with chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, chronic pain who have participated in an MBSR program have shown that the skills learned have helped some participants cope better with symptoms and improve their quality of life.

Research also shows that participation in MBSR programs can help improve sleep and ease symptoms of depression and anxiety.

MORE INFORMATION ON MINDFULNESS AND MBSR:

History

The concept of mindfulness has existed for over five millennia. Many credit the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course for introducing mindfulness to mainstream Western culture.

In 1979 Kabat-Zinn founded the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts and nearly twenty years later, the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine.

Both these institutions have supported the successful growth and implementation of MBSR into hospitals and health centres worldwide. Today close to 80% of medical schools offer some element of mindfulness training and research and education centers dedicated to mindfulness have proliferated.

If you are interested in participating in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program at SLFHT or would like more information about this program, please contact us at: programs.slft@gmail.com