

MINDFULNESS BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY (MBCT) COURSE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When is the course?	<p>Mondays, 1-3pm</p> <p><u>Course dates:</u> 23 Sep (orientation session) 1pm-2.15pm</p> <p>30 Sep, 7 Oct, 14 Oct, 21 Oct, 4 Nov, 11 Nov, 18 Nov, 25 Nov – all 1pm to 3pm (NB there will be no session on 28 October – half term)</p> <p>If you cannot make the orientation session, this can be re-arranged on a 1:1 basis.</p>
Where is being held?	<p>The Beach Studio, Natural Fitness & Therapies Centre, Royal Parade, Eastbourne BN22 7AQ</p>
What is the cost?	<p>The course fee is £285 per person.</p> <p>If after attending the orientation session you do not wish to continue with the course, you will be offered a full refund minus the small administrative charge made by the payment provider (2.5%).</p>
How can mindfulness help?	<p>How often have you driven somewhere without being aware of actually driving? Or been watching TV only to find you've missed what's happened because you were lost in your thoughts? Life consists of millions of moments, but so often we're unaware of them because we're thinking about something that happened in the past or planning or worrying about something in the future.</p> <p>Getting caught up in our heads not only takes us away from experiencing our lives, but it can also get us lead to negative thought spirals that drive and maintain stress, anxiety and depression.</p> <p>Research has shown that mindfulness practiced regularly can help with a range of physical and emotional difficulties including stress, anxiety, depression, pain, immune function, blood pressure and sleep difficulties. Many people also report that completing a mindfulness course leads to a greater sense of wellbeing; more honest, open and satisfying relationships; more energy; more creativity; and more enjoyment of life.</p>
What is MBCT?	<p>MBCT (Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy) is an 8 week course that combines mindfulness practices with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). MBCT is recommended by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) as a means to prevent depressive relapse, but is being used increasingly widely with people who experience anxiety and stress.</p> <p>The course introduces practices and skills that aim to bring about a different way of relating to experience. Rather than trying to 'fix' or escape our thoughts and feelings, this course teaches us how to become aware of them, without becoming immersed and swept away by them. In doing so, it offers some space for us to decide how to</p>

respond and best take care of ourselves, rather than just react in familiar and automatic ways that so often maintain stress, anxiety and low mood.

What happens in a mindfulness session?

Each session is made up of a mixture of 'skills practice', discussion about this practice and exercises from cognitive therapy. At the heart of each group will be a guided mindfulness practice and an opportunity to talk about it. Everything is 'invitational' and you will not be required to speak in the group if you would prefer not to.

This is not a therapy group so you will not be expected to share details of your personal life and the focus is on your experience in the present. The core of the MBCT approach is practice and experiential learning. The sessions mostly focus on teaching skills to develop awareness of body sensations, feelings and thoughts, as well as how we respond internally to these.

How big is the group?

Each course group will be made up of between 6 and 14 people.

N.B. if there are fewer than 6 people the course will not run and you will be issued with a full refund.

Is there homework?

Home practice is an important part of this course. Our patterns of the mind have been around for a very long time and it requires effort and time to change them. For this reason, the course asks for a commitment of 30-40 minutes a day of home practice (a mixture of formal and informal mindfulness exercises).

It can be challenging to carve out this time each day, but MBCT is an experiential course - it is by doing the practices that participants gain the most positive effects from the course. A useful attitude to adopt is 'I'll give this a go, with an open mind'.

What if I miss a session?

The course comprises eight, two hour weekly classes, and a shorter orientation session. Because each week new ideas are developed and new practices introduced, which build on the work of previous weeks, it is recommended you attend all the sessions.

We appreciate it can sometimes be difficult to make it to all the sessions of a course. If it's not possible to attend them all, we recommend that you try not to miss more than one. If you know you will miss more than two sessions, it is suggested you try and find another course that better suits your availability. If there are up to one or two sessions you know you will be unable to attend, please let the course teacher know about this in advance.

Is the course suitable for me?

The course is designed for anyone who wants to reduce stress, build awareness and improve resilience and wellbeing. It does encourage participants to gently move towards difficult experiences and this can be challenging, as well as helpful. If you have current mental health problems, such as a major depressive episode, severe anxiety, untreated post-traumatic stress disorder or psychosis, or are in a period of major life challenge (e.g. recent bereavement, active substance addiction or current trauma), mindfulness may not be right for you at this time.

Participants are asked to complete a short questionnaire when applying to the course to evaluate whether the course is suitable. If you are unsure and would like a

conversation about your specific circumstances before applying for the course, please contact Pippa Menzies at pippa.mindgardeners@gmail.com.

I may struggle with the movement or sitting practices	The movement practices are very gentle and participants are encouraged to work within their physical limitations. With all practices, participants are given a range of options and encouraged to adapt the practices in whatever ways works best for them.
Do I need to bring anything?	No – chairs, mats, blankets and cushions are all provided, along with all course materials. Links to guided audios are provided by email – please let us know if you have any difficulties with accessing emails or the Internet.
I'm concerned about being in a group	It isn't unusual to be concerned about being in a group. We seek to create a safe and welcoming environment for all. Everything is 'invitational' and you will not be required to speak in the group if you would prefer not to.
Is there a minimum age?	Yes – participants need to be 18 or over to attend the course.
Can I join a course part-way through?	<p>Unfortunately, new participants can't join a course part-way through. The weekly sessions build on prior sessions and the course is experiential in nature, so participants need to attend the full course.</p> <p>If spaces are available, it is sometimes possible for participants to join after the initial orientation session subject to an individual orientation taking place (on Zoom).</p>
How do I book?	A £50 deposit will secure your place and full payment is due one month prior to the course start date. The deposit and remaining balance can be paid either by bank transfer, or by debit or credit card through the website.
Cancellation policy	<p>The following proportion of your fee will be refundable if you cancel your place on the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 6 days before the first session starts you will receive a refund of any course fees paid, less a 2.5% per cent administration charge, which is made by the payment system provider. This allows you to attend the orientation session without cost to ensure the course is suited to your needs.• If cancelled within 6 days of the start date, I cannot refund any of the fees paid.• Refunds will not be given after the course has commenced e.g. if you decide to leave the course early. <p>A full refund will be provided if the course needs to be cancelled or postponed by Mind Gardeners Therapy Services.</p>
