

Introduction to

# Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy

---

Ruth Baer

Oxford Mindfulness Centre, University of Oxford

Goa, India

November 2019

# Mindfulness

---

What is it?

What are the benefits?

What is MBCT?



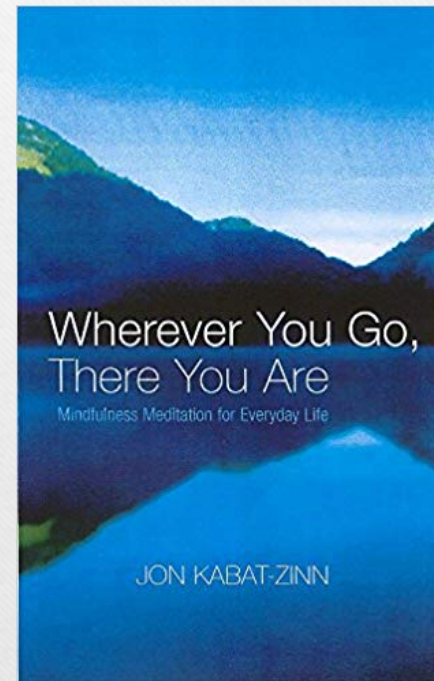
# Mindfulness

What and how

*Paying attention in a  
particular way:*

*On purpose,  
in the present moment,  
and nonjudgmentally*

Jon Kabat-Zinn



# Mindfulness: What

Attention to the present moment

Body and  
mind



Surroundings



Activity





# Mindfulness: How

## Qualities of attention

kindness

compassion

acceptance

openness

gentle interest

friendly curiosity

nonjudgment



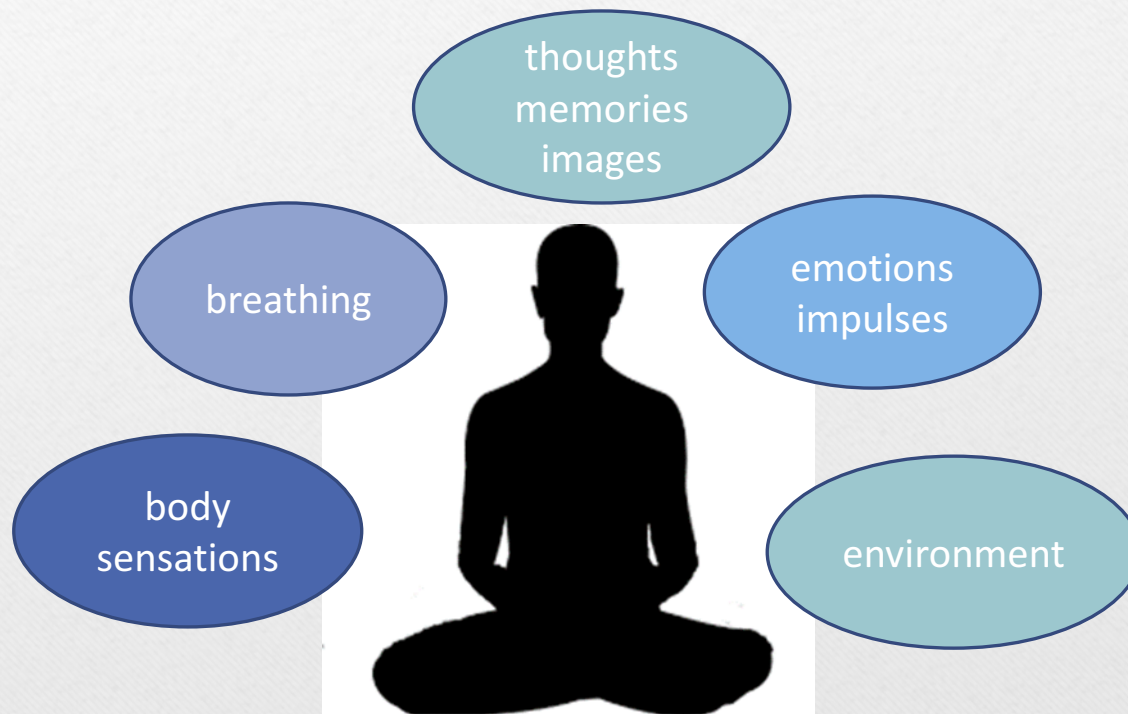
# Cultivating mindfulness skills





# Formal practice

---



# Informal practice

---



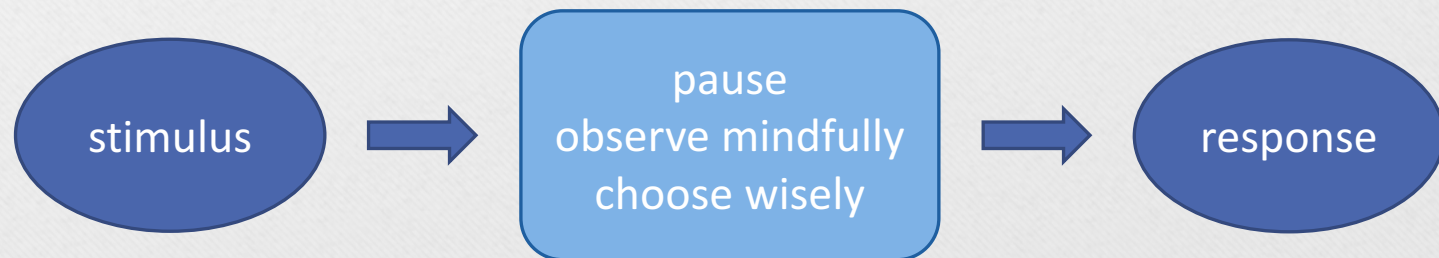


# What changes?

---

*"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is a choice about how we respond."*

Frankl



# General benefits

---

Responding wisely to life's difficulties



Less unhelpful  
reactivity



# General benefits

---

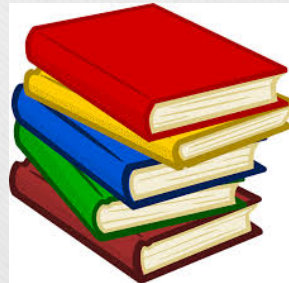
## Appreciating life



# General benefits

---

Sense of meaning, purpose





# Mindfulness in evidence-based health care

---



Marsha Linehan  
Dialectical behavior therapy  
(DBT)

Early  
innovators



Jon Kabat-Zinn  
Mindfulness-based stress reduction  
(MBSR)

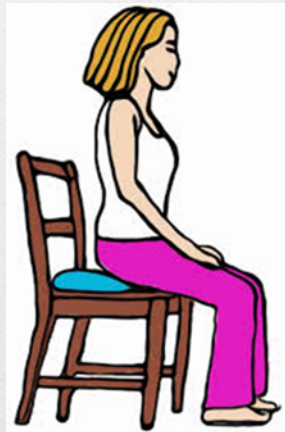
# MBCT

---

Elements of  
MBSR



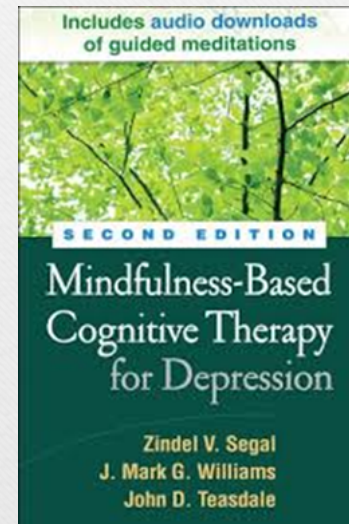
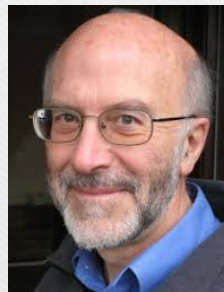
Elements of  
cognitive  
therapy





# MBCT

Originally for preventing relapse  
of depression



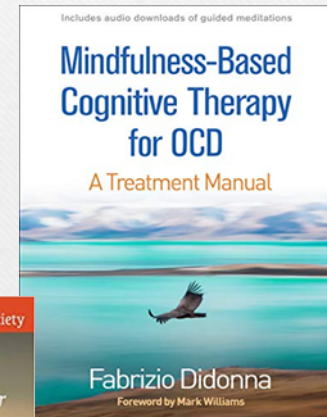
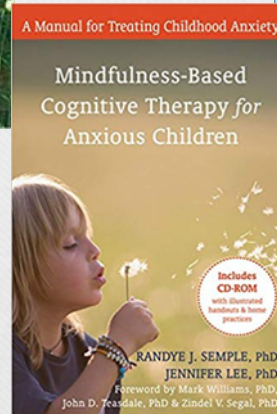
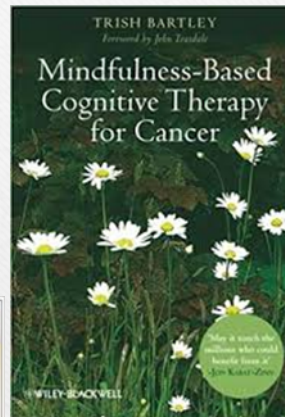
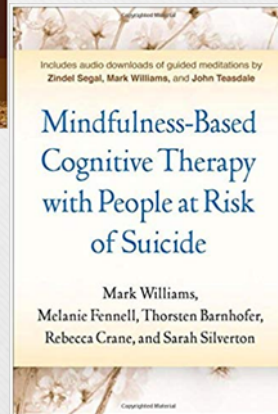
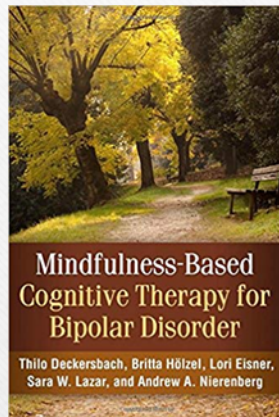
# MBCT

- **8 weekly 2-hour group sessions**
  - Mindfulness practice
  - Didactic teaching
  - Inquiry
  - Home practice



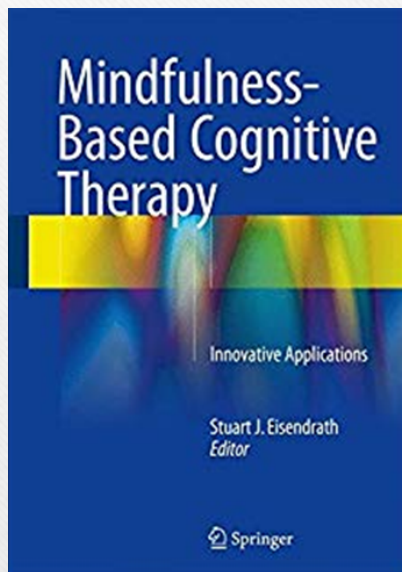


# Adaptations of MBCT



# Adaptations of MBCT

---



## MBCT for health conditions

Insomnia, cancer, chronic pain, HIV...

## MBCT for psychological disorders:

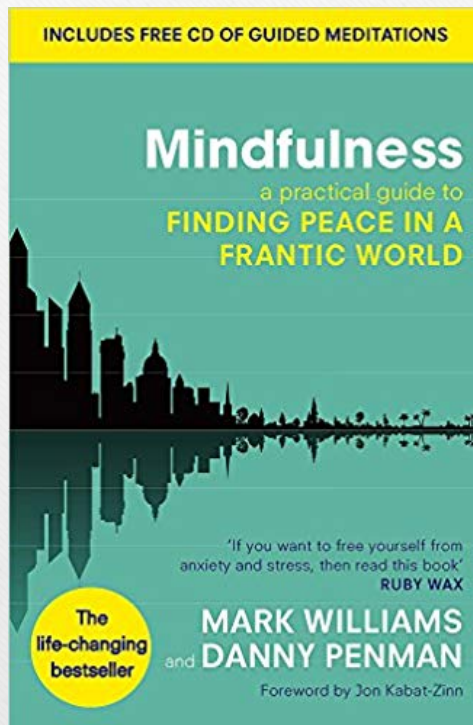
bipolar, GAD, health anxiety, PTSD...

Theory, research, clinical application



# Adaptations with new names

more on these later



# Integrity of adaptations

Warp and weft (Crane et al, 2017)

---

- Warp
  - Fixed vertical threads
- Weft
  - Transverse threads
  - Vary to create patterns





# Warp and weft in MBCT

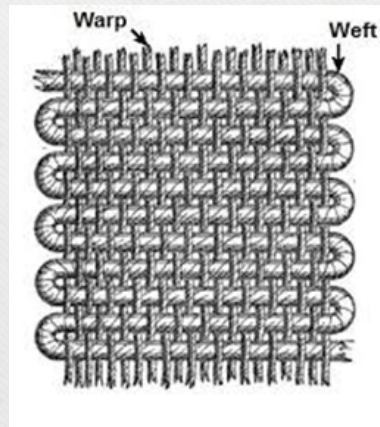
---

## Warp

Essential elements  
for any population  
or context

## Weft

Elements that vary  
with population or  
context



# Warp elements in MBCT

all adaptations

---

Theory	How we respond to present-moment experience
Teaching & learning methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mindfulness meditation</li><li>• cognitive-behavioural exercises</li><li>• inquiry</li><li>• home practice</li></ul>
Skills developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mindful awareness</li><li>• decentring</li><li>• compassion</li></ul>



# Meditative practice

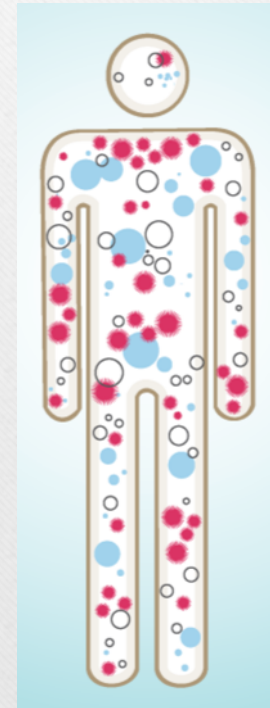
---

Short body scan

# Body scan

skills cultivated

- Engaging and disengaging attention
- Sensory awareness
- Friendly allowing of things as they are
- Responding to mind-wandering





# Why the body?

---

- Emotions have bodily components
  - Early warning signs
- Body awareness is an alternative to rumination



# Cognitive-behavioural exercise

---

Walking down the street



# Walking down the street

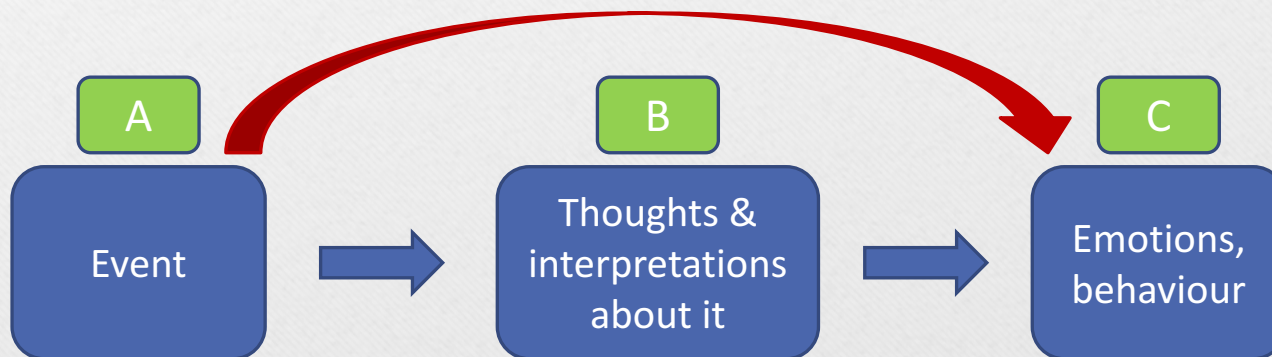
## Examples

Thoughts	Emotions	Sensations	Impulses
How could he be so rude?	Anger	Tension in hands, heart faster	Shout at him
She's upset with me	Anxiety	Stomach churning	Avoid her
She's worrying about her daughter and didn't see me	Concern for her	Movement in face, release of tension	Call her later and ask how things are going

# Walking down the street

Understanding the ABC model

How we interpret events influences the emotions we feel  
and our subsequent behavior





# Walking down the street

learning points

---

- **We constantly make interpretations**
  - They influence emotions, sensations, behaviour
- **Thoughts are not facts**
- **Mindfulness helps us see this**



# More about thoughts

---

- **Notice the images and ideas in your mind**
  - John was on his way to school.



# More about thoughts

---

- **Notice the images and ideas in your mind**
  - John was on his way to school.
  - He was worried about the math lesson.

# More about thoughts

---

- **Notice the images and ideas in your mind**
  - John was on his way to school.
  - He was worried about the math lesson.
  - He was not sure he could control the class again today.



# More about thoughts

---

- **Notice the images and ideas in your mind**
  - John was on his way to school.
  - He was worried about the math lesson.
  - He was not sure he could control the class again today.
  - It was not part of a janitor's duty.

# Sitting meditation

---

- Breath, body, sounds, thoughts





# Sitting meditation

skills cultivated

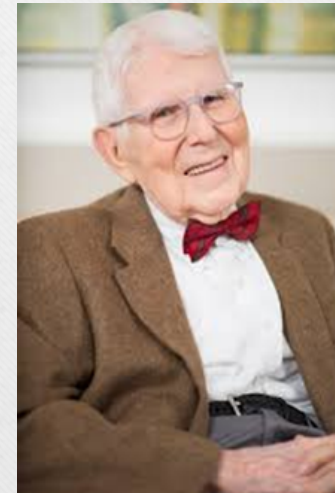
---

- Breath as anchor to present moment
- Recognizing mind wandering and coming back
  - with kindness, letting go of judgment
- *Decentring from thoughts*

# Decentring in CBT

---

- Seeing cognitions as mental events
  - Not reflections of objective truth or “me”
    - *“thoughts as psychological phenomena rather than as identical to reality”* (Beck, 1976)





# Images of decentring

Thoughts are like...

---



# Decentring in MBCT

---

- Also applies to emotions, sensations, impulses



# Decentring in MBCT

---

- Also applies to emotions, sensations, impulses
- Has qualities of gentle interest, friendly curiosity

*This being human is a guest house...  
Welcome and entertain them all...*

Rumi

# Decentring in MBCT

---

- Also applies to emotions, sensations, impulses
- Has qualities of gentle interest, friendly curiosity

*This being human is a guest house...  
Welcome and entertain them all...*

Rumi

- Shown in research to be a mechanism of change



# Theory of MBCT

---

Vicious cycles that keep us caught in distress

# Rumination

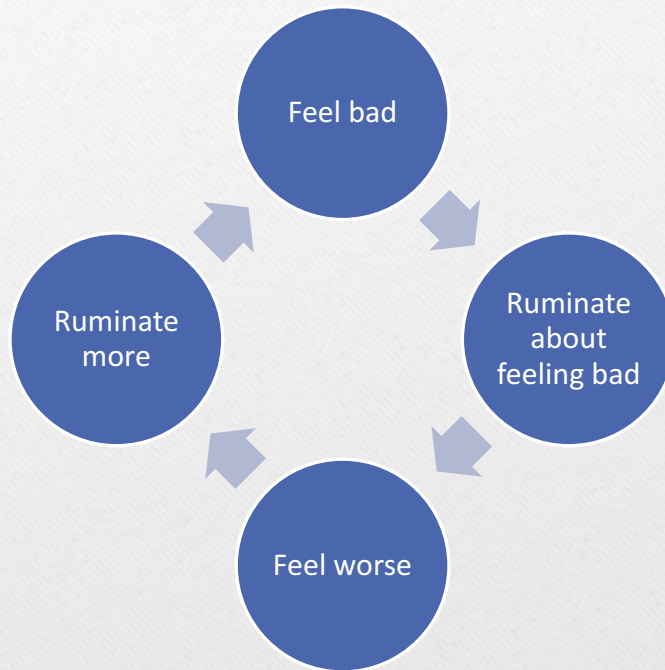
Vicious cycle





# Rumination

Vicious cycle



## Common process:

- Psychological disorders
- Stress
- General population

# Suppression of thoughts

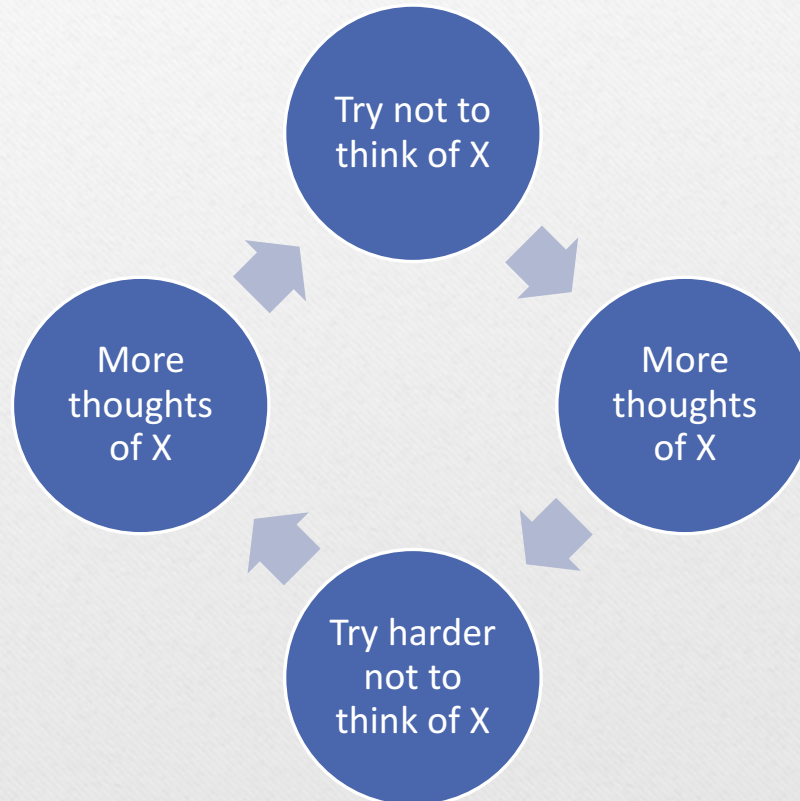
Don't think  
about white  
bears!





# Suppression of thoughts

Vicious cycle





Other forms of avoidance,  
distraction, emotion-driven  
behaviour





# Why do we do these things?



# Vicious cycles are everywhere

---

- We're all vulnerable to getting caught in the trap





# How we understand this in MBCT

---



# Vicious flower

---



Difficult thoughts  
emotions  
sensations  
impulses



- Attempts to escape distress
- Understandable, not helpful





# Vicious flower

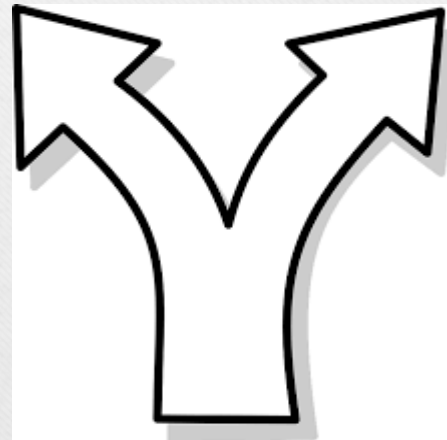
How mindfulness helps

---

- Train awareness
- Learn to see patterns
- Choose intentional responses

Respond  
wisely

React  
unwisely



**DISTRESS**



# Bringing mindfulness into daily life

Three-step breathing space

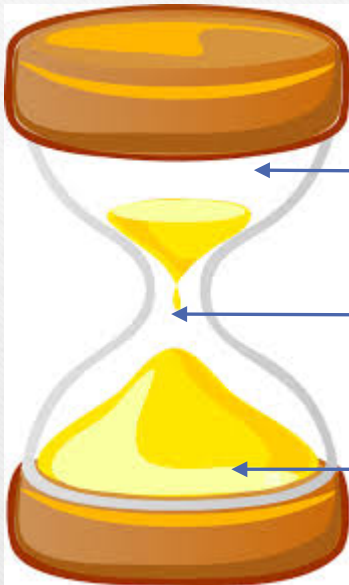
---



# Bringing mindfulness into daily life

## Three-step breathing space

---



Step 1: Acknowledging (thoughts, emotions, sensations, urges)

Step 2: Gathering attention to breath in the abdomen

Step 3: Expanding attention to whole body



# 3-step breathing space

learning points

---

- Step out of automatic pilot
- See clearly what is present
- First step in choosing how to respond
- **Not distraction, relaxation, or ‘fixing’**

# Research findings

---

Treatment outcomes

Mechanisms of change

Other questions



# Preventing relapse of depression

---

- **Meta-analysis (Kuyken et al, 2016)**
  - 9 randomized trials (1258 patients)
  - MBCT slightly better than medication, psychoeducation

# Effects in clinical populations

Meta-analysis (Goldberg et al, 2018)

---

- **MBSR, MBCT, adaptations**
  - depression, anxiety, addiction, etc
- **142 samples**
  - 12,005 participants



# Goldberg (2018)

---

- **MBPs superior to:**

Wait list	ES = .55 (medium)
Non-evidence-based treatment	ES = .23 (small)

- **MBPs not different from:**

Evidence-based treatment	ES = -.004
--------------------------	------------

# Treatment outcomes

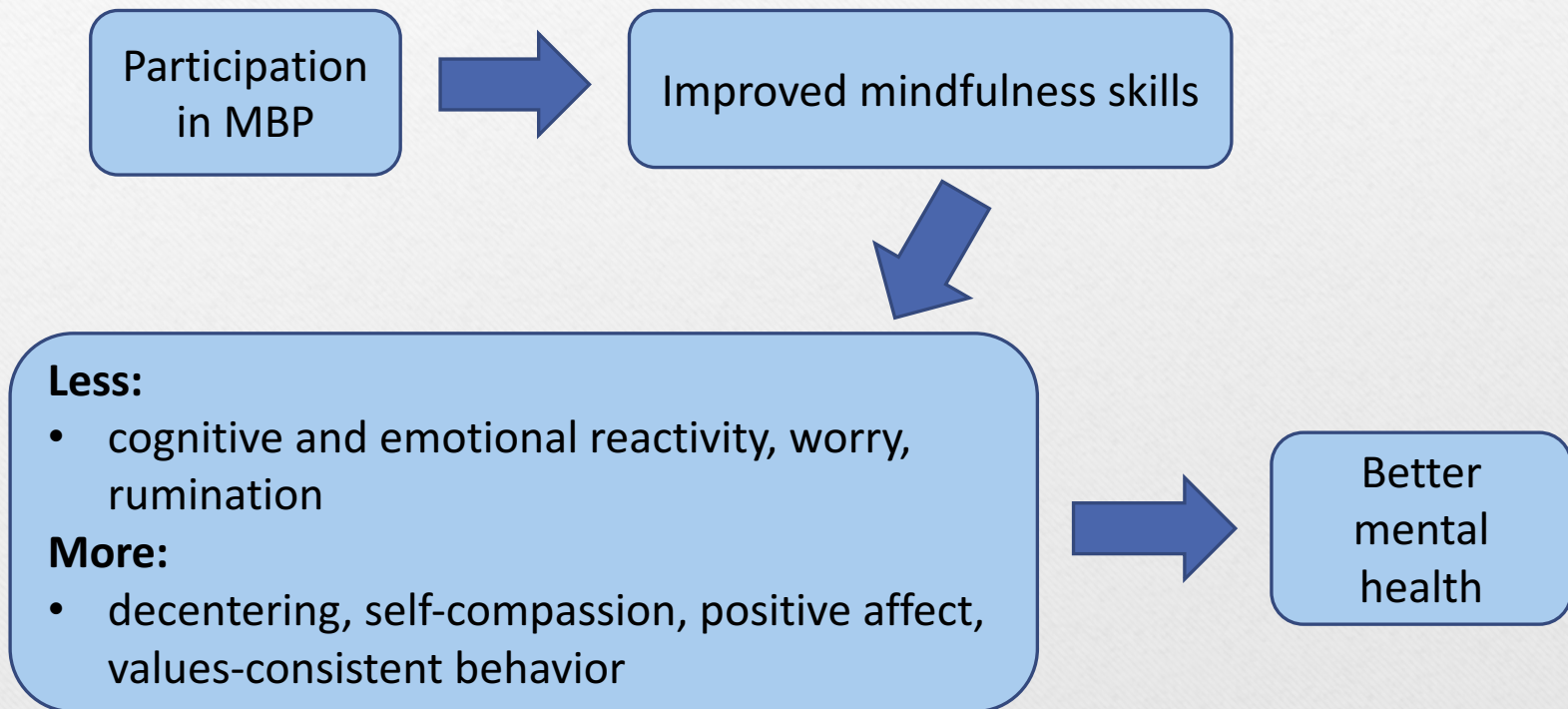
## Conclusions

---

- **MBPs**
  - moderate decreases in symptoms
  - as effective as other evidence-based treatment (CBT)
  - stronger effects than non-evidence-based treatments



# Mechanisms of change



# Other research questions

---

Home practice

Self-help and online programs

Effects on the brain

Can MBPs cause harm?



# Home practice

Meta-analysis (Parsons et al, 2017)

---

- **Is improvement related to home practice?**
  - 28 studies of MBSR, MBCT
  - N = 898
  - $r = .26$



# Self-help and online programs

Cavanagh et al, 2014; Spijkerman et al, 2016

- 
- Better than wait-list or online discussion groups





# Self-help and online programs

Cavanagh et al, 2014; Spijkerman et al, 2016

- 
- Better than wait-list or online discussion groups
  - Less effective than in-person programs



# Self-help and online programs

Cavanagh et al, 2014; Spijkerman et al, 2016

- Better than wait-list or online discussion groups
- Less effective than in-person programs
- Better outcomes with support from therapist





# Self-help and online programs

Cavanagh et al, 2014; Spijkerman et al, 2016

- Better than wait-list or online discussion groups
- Less effective than in-person programs
- Better outcomes with support from therapist
- High drop-out rates



# Cost effectiveness

---

- MBCT reduces healthcare use and absenteeism

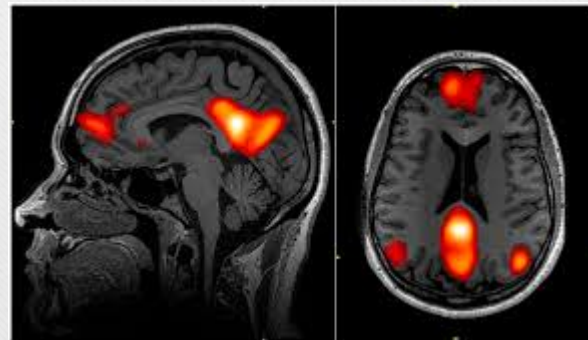
Shawyer et al (2016)



# MBPs and brain activity

Young et al (2018)

- **fMRI pre-post MBSR or MBCT**
  - 7 studies, N = 124
  - Populations: 4 clinical, 3 healthy



# MBPs and brain activity

Young et al (2018)

---

- **Central role for insula**
  - region of frontal lobe
    - self-awareness, interoception
- **Preliminary evidence**
  - role of ACC and midline prefrontal cortical regions
    - acceptance and meta-awareness



# MBPs and brain activity

Young et al (2018)

---

- **Mixed findings**
  - populations, sample sizes
  - treatment adherence
  - imaging tasks, analysis strategies
- need for greater consistency and quality in neuroscientific studies of MBPs

# Can MBPs cause harm?

---

- Other evidence-based approaches can cause harm

<b>Psychotherapy</b>	3% - 10% get worse
<b>Pharmacotherapy</b>	5% - 10% of hospitalized patients have adverse reactions
<b>Physical exercise</b>	Small percentage injured, occasional death



# Can MBPs cause harm?

- Meditation in contemplative traditions can cause harm
  - Psychosis, negative affect, mania, traumatic memories, suicidality



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### The varieties of contemplative experience: A mixed-methods study of meditation-related challenges in Western Buddhists

Jared R. Lindahl<sup>1\*</sup>, Nathan E. Fisher<sup>2†</sup>, David J. Cooper<sup>3‡</sup>, Rochelle K. Rosen<sup>4</sup>, Willoughby B. Britton<sup>3,4¶¶</sup>

# Can MBPs cause harm?

- **Meditation in contemplative traditions**
  - 1%-7%
    - quit meditation because of negative effects
    - sought professional help
    - or were hospitalized





# Can MBPs cause harm?

---

- **Meditation in contemplative traditions**
  - Many have unpleasant, difficult experiences
    - temporary, helpful, learning experiences

# Can MBPs cause harm?

---

- **Evidence-based MBPs**
  - Harm appears to be rare
    - 0 – 10.6% negative or unwanted effects
      - Most transitory, not clinically significant, not harmful, not attributable to MBP
  - Many studies don't monitor



# MBCT for the general population

---

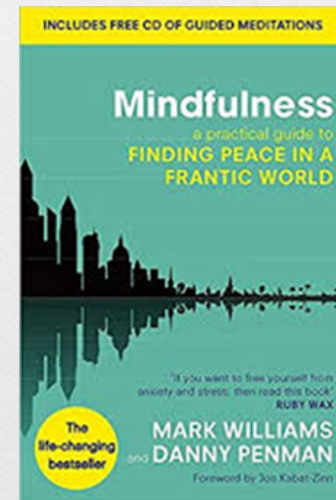
New curricula



# Mindfulness – Finding Peace

---

- **Lower intensity**
  - 8 weekly 90-minute sessions
  - Home practice 10-30 minutes daily
  - Developed for university students
    - Also university staff





# MBCT for Life (MBCT-L)

---

- Intended to be transformational
  - 8 weekly 2-hour sessions
  - Home practice 40 minutes daily



mbct for life

# Mental health

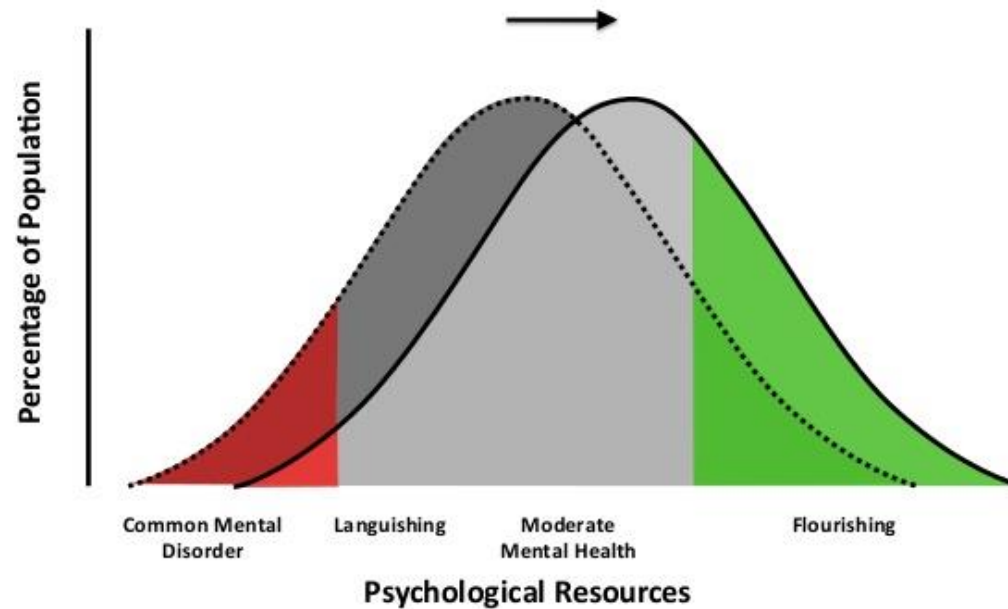
---

- More than absence of symptoms
  - Flourishing, wellbeing, resilience





## Moving the population towards flourishing



Source: Felicia Huppert, Cambridge Wellbeing Institute

# Practices for positive functioning

---

Examples from MBCT-L and Finding Peace



# Pleasant moments calendar

---



# Pleasant moments calendar

---

Pleasant moment	Thoughts	Emotions	Body sensations	Impulses
I saw someone playing with a puppy while walking home	"What an adorable puppy! Its fur looks so soft."	Delight, interest, love	Warmth, lightness, energy	To speak to the person and ask if I could pet the puppy



# Pleasant moments calendar

Skills cultivated

---

- Identifying components of experience
- Mindful awareness and savouring of pleasant experiences

# Ten-finger gratitude

---





# Ten-finger gratitude

Learning points

---

- **Attention has a bias to the negative**
  - We are wired for threat, not happiness
- **Appreciation & gratitude can be cultivated**
  - There are many good things in our lives
  - There is great value in noticing these good things
  - **We can train the mind to notice good things more often**

# Befriending meditation

---

- A kinder and friendlier way to relate to experience
  - Inclining the mind & heart towards well wishing





# Empirical foundations

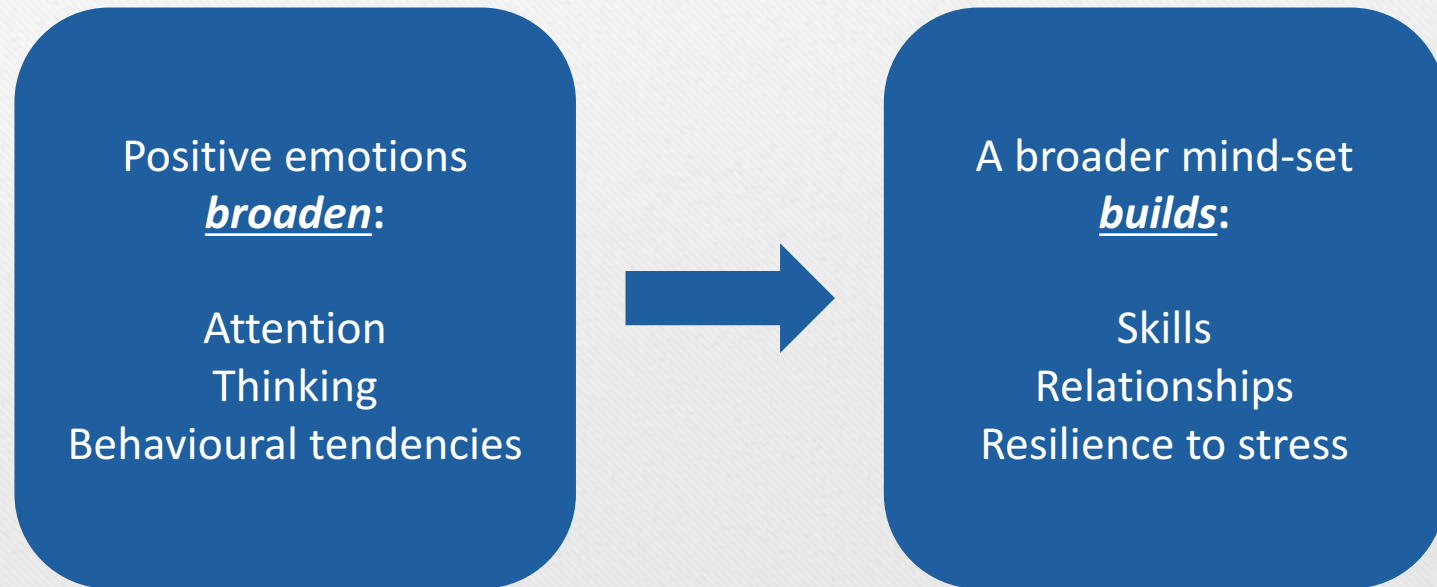
---

Positive functioning practices

# Broaden and Build

A theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998)

---





# Benefits of positive emotion

(Fredrickson, 2013)

---

- **Increases in:**

- Openness to new information
- Flexibility, creativity, and efficiency in thinking
- Perspective taking
- Kindness

Appreciation, gratitude, and befriending practices  
cultivate positive emotion

# Research on gratitude

Wood et al (2010), Davis et al (2015)

---

- **Dispositional gratitude**
  - noticing and appreciating the positive in the world
  - better health, wellbeing, relationships



# Research on gratitude

Wood et al (2010), Davis et al (2015)

---

- **Dispositional gratitude**
  - noticing and appreciating the positive in the world
  - better health, wellbeing, relationships
- **Gratitude interventions**
  - improve wellbeing
    - stronger research methodology needed

# Benefits of self-compassion

---

- Strong negative relationship with psychopathology
- Strong positive relationship with wellbeing

MacBeth & Gumley, 2012, Zessin et al, 2015



# Effects of befriending practice

Hofmann et al, 2011

---

- more positive and less negative affect
- stress reduction
- activation of brain areas
  - emotional processing, empathy

# Empirical support for MBCT-L

---

- **Randomized controlled trial**
  - 234 staff National Health Service
  - MBCT-L better than wait list
    - reductions in depression symptoms
    - increases in wellbeing and mindfulness skills

Strauss et al



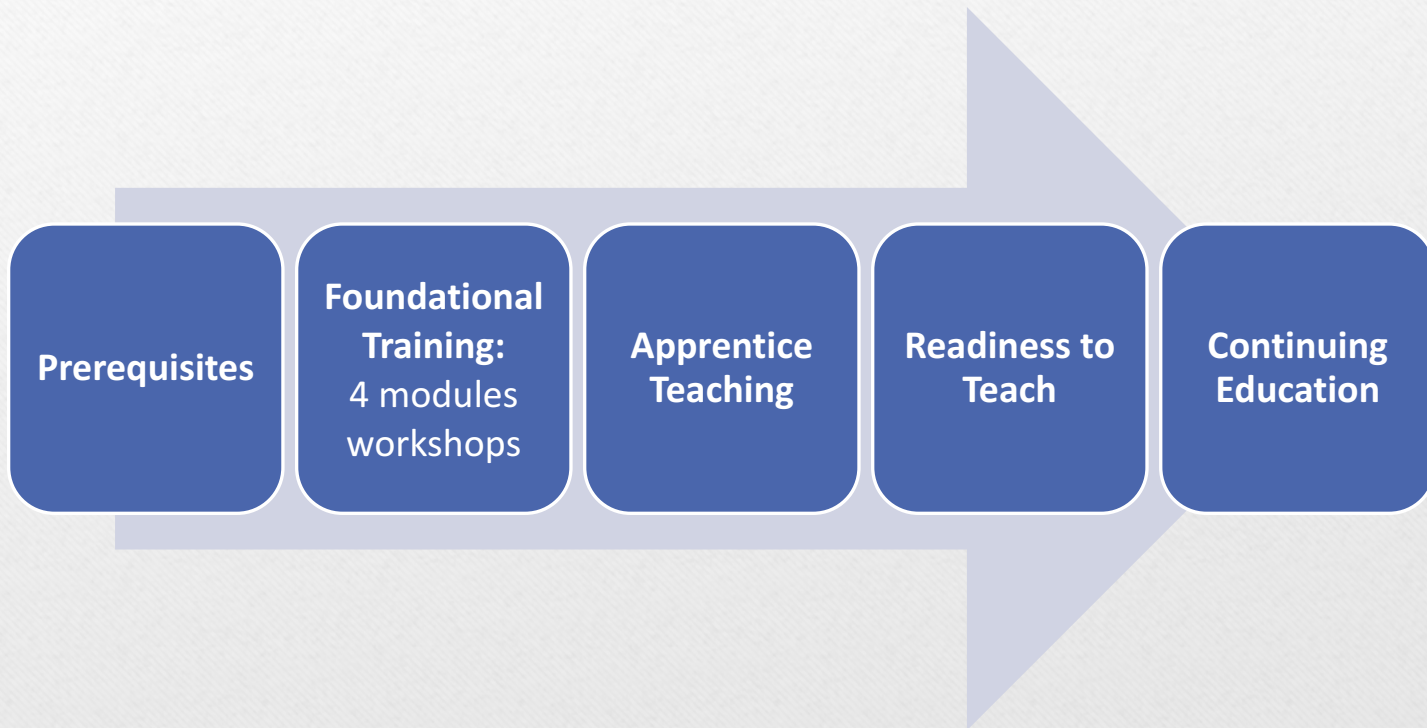
# Becoming an MBCT teacher

---

The OMC's teacher training pathway

# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

---





# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

## Prerequisites

---

- Regular personal mindfulness practice
- Completion of 8-week MBCT programme
- Knowledge and experience of population
  - teaching, therapy, or other care provision
- Skills for working with individuals and groups

# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

---

- **Step 1: Foundational training**

<b>Module 1</b>	MBCT as participant
<b>Module 2</b>	Developing teaching skills
<b>Module 3</b>	Retreat
<b>Module 4</b>	Further teaching skills
<b>Workshops</b>	Theoretical foundations Professional skills and competencies



# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

---

- **Step 2: Apprentice teaching**
  - Co-teach at least two MBCT courses with supervision
    - Standard MBCT or alternate curriculum
      - Finding Peace
      - MBCT-L

# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

---

- **Step 3: Readiness to teach**
  - Recommendation of supervisor
  - Based on Mindfulness-Based Interventions – Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI-TAC)



# OMC Teacher Training Pathway

---

- **Step 4: Continuing education**
  - Alternate curricula
  - Other contexts (workplace)
  - Additional masterclasses
  - OMC Summer School
  - Retreats
  - Conferences

# Questions and discussion

---





Do you have any training needs?

If you have any suggestions for training programs or workshops and would like us to organise the same, please let us know .

[antarman.goa@gmail.com](mailto:antarman.goa@gmail.com)

---

Sangath



Antarman

Centre for Psychosocial Wellbeing

