

How can I find out more?



Visit the webpages for the Exeter Mindfulness Network at <http://www.exeter-mindfulness-network.org>

You can also look at the following websites:

- [www. http://www.exeter.ac.uk/mooddisorders/acceptclinic/](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/mooddisorders/acceptclinic/)
- www.bemindful.co.uk
- www.mbct.co.uk/

or these books:

The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Full Catastrophe Living: How to Cope with Stress, Pain and Illness Using Mindfulness Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

AccEPT Clinic at the Mood Disorders Centre, Washington Singer Building, Exeter University. Tel 01392 723493

Referral through your GP, see <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/mooddisorders/accept-clinic/>



Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Approaches

Q & A for Patients

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way:

On purpose

In the present moment

And non-judgementally.

-Jon Kabat-Zinn



'If I'm distressed by something my pre-mindfulness way was to ruminate on the problem, going over and over in my mind what was said or done, trying to work out what I should have said, how I should have acted, formulating replies, letters, emails which take hours in an attempt to 'get the right words' and 'work it out'.

If I do a mindfulness practice it's like everything settles and seems less important; more in perspective. I feel calmer, clearer and nothing seems as big. Often I decide I don't need to 'do' anything, or I may decide to wait 24 or 48 hours and see how I feel then. I may then decide to act, but it's out of a far less reactive place.'

Course participant

Mindfulness explained

This booklet gives an overview of Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for patients who are interested in participating in a course in Devon through the service provided by the AccEPT Clinic.



What is depression and how can MBCT help?

Depression is very common, affecting 20% of adults at some point in their lives. Depression can last for weeks or months, leads to problems with appetite, sleep, and libido, and can significantly impair ability to function in everyday life and work.

Depression can be caused by stressful life events or major losses, and some people appear to be more vulnerable to depression than others, perhaps because of difficulties in their childhood and upbringing and/or because of biological and genetic susceptibility.

Even when people have had treatment for depression, it tends to recur periodically in their lives. Psychological research suggests that this is because people who have been depressed in the past are more prone to fall into negative, repetitive patterns of thought and behaviour.

'I've been keen to do the course for many years...When I asked my GP to refer me this time I was absolutely determined to do the course as I've had 7 episodes of serious depression and severe anxiety. This was a repeating cycle and I felt I couldn't, and didn't want to, keep going through this...'

Course participant

MBCT helps people to become more aware of these unhelpful patterns of ruminative thought and self-defeating behaviour, and to learn to respond to difficult feelings and moods in a different way. Instead of being caught up in these old habitual tendencies, they can learn to become more aware of the early warning signs of depression and to deal with them more effectively. It is useful to attend an MBCT course when you are feeling well (with possible residual symptoms) MBCT can help to prevent the recurrence of depression, and enhance the quality of everyday life.

What does MBCT consist of?

MBCT courses are taught over eight weeks, in sessions lasting 2 ¼ hours, in groups of up to 10-15 people. During the course regular meditation, gentle movement and other practices form key features which help you to have a more present moment focus and develop a particular non-judgmental stance. From this point of awareness you can make choices about ways of responding to your experiences and taking care of yourself. As well as the practices you will learn ways to bring mindfulness and awareness into the everyday activities of life. This will be supported both by dialogue in the sessions and by practising at home with the help of CDs of meditation practices and written handouts. Prior to committing to the course you will be able to meet the teacher individually to hear a little more about what is involved and ask any questions you may have.

Courses are run at the University in Exeter and in North Devon.

Do I need to attend all the classes?

The course is structured so that each session builds on the previous ones. It is therefore beneficial to attend as many weeks as possible; however if you have to miss one your teacher will help you stay involved.

Do I need to practice at home?

Like any new skill, mindfulness is cultivated by consistent practice. Research and clinical experience show that people who commit to regular practice at home generally benefit the most from MBCT. During the sessions your teacher will discuss with you ways to fit this in, which can be adapted if you have a very busy schedule of work and/or family responsibilities.

Do I need to be religious to practice?

No – mindfulness can be practiced by people of any religion or none. Although many spiritual traditions include meditation, this course does not require or teach any religious beliefs.

What support is there after the 8-week course has finished?

At the end of the course you will be invited to attend regular 'reunion' sessions. In these sessions you will meet people from your group and previous courses, and will be offered a refresher of mindfulness practice and a chance to discuss how it has been going, share what you have learned, and ask questions about any difficulties arising.

AccEPT

Accessing Evidence-Based Psychological Therapies