

MINDFULNESS AND A PATH OF WELLBEING.

**LEADERS GUIDELINES FOR AN 8 SESSION GROUP PROGRAM
CONDUCTED IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.**

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Adapted from longer mindfulness based programs for stress anxiety and depression written by Malcolm Huxter.

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OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

Session One: Stress, depression and anxiety, and ways to be free with mindfulness.

- 1) Introduction to the group.
- 2) Enquiry and psycho-education what stress anxiety and depression.
- 3) Introduction to mindfulness and relaxation as two skills to manage stress, and enhance well being.
- 4) Exercises - mindful eating and Progressive Muscle Relaxation or mindfulness of sound

Session Two: Having purpose and direction.

- 1) Ensure that participants understand how to use mindfulness and that questions are answered adequately.
- 2) Emphasize how that when we begin a journey it is important to have a direction or a sense of where we are going.
- 3) Provide clarity about the usefulness of goals, valued directions, and helpful intentions or choices and commitments.
- 4) Explore and understand the dangers of being lost in goal directed behaviours, which are not SMART.
- 5) Clarify how intentions can be directed towards behaviours which are in accordance with valued directions.
- 6) Provide clarity about how mindfulness of appropriateness, suitability and timeliness of actions is a sub-domain of mindfulness of body and a way to live in accordance with helpful life directions.
- 7) Experiential exercise - crossing the floor, the differences between goal and intention-directed behaviour
- 8) Provide instruction in “body scan” and how to practice mindfulness in everyday activities-introduce noting..

Session Three: Wisdom, healthy lifestyles and Meditation

1. Grounding movement exercises
2. To introduce “meditation” as being part of a way to freedom
3. To clarify how meditation is mental training that involves cultivating energy/motivation, mindfulness and concentration.
4. To clarify how traditionally meditation is taught as part of context that includes wise understanding and healthy non-harmful lifestyles.
5. Discussion around the meaning of being emotionally balanced, wisdom and psychological flexibility. How it includes clear thinking and making decisions and commitments to that which is important. Depending on context may include discussion about: Problem solving skills, helpful sleep routines.
6. Introduce Calm and Insight meditation as a way to cultivate wisdom.
7. Introduction to noting and mindfulness in daily activities.
8. Introduction to mindful walking and mindfulness of breath.

Session Four: Mindfulness of thoughts and the choice to buy into them or let them pass by.

- 1) Grounding movement exercises
- 2) Working with thoughts and unhelpful thinking patterns
- 3) Psycho-education about delusions.
- 4) Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as a way to develop clear thinking and acting skilfully
- 5) Thought-challenging exercise - changing the content of thoughts
- 6) How Mindfulness and CBT work together
- 7) Using mindfulness to deal with difficult thoughts
- 8) Changing the relationship to thought with acceptance and “defusion”
- 9) Meditation exercise: mindfulness of sound and thought
- 10) Experiential exercise: Exercises to defuse identifying with thought and clarify the insight that “thoughts are not facts to be believed”

Session Five: Mindfulness of emotions. Choosing the helpful and abandoning the unhelpful

- 1) Grounding movement exercises
- 2) Discussion about contemplating heart-mind - letting go of destructive emotions and cultivating healing emotions
- 3) Discussion around the natural function of emotions and how some destructive emotional reactions may be conditioned
- 4) Conditioning and the way the brain learns and de-conditions
- 5) Emotional regulation and distress tolerance - why it is important to tame destructive emotions
- 6) What are healing emotions (eg gratitude, compassion, peaceful joy and calm) and how to cultivate them
- 7) Meditation exercise - Mindfulness of heart mind and/or a calm meditation practice such as peace and joy with the breath or “going to your special place” or other self-soothing practices

Session Six: Reactive Cycles and urge surfing

- 1) Reactive cycles and how to break them
- 2) The balance between being active and doing nothing.
- 3) Urge surfing - not being lost and dumped by the urge waves
- 4) Emotional sailing - navigating through the mires and swamps of depression
- 5) Exercises - mindfulness of feeling/letting go of painful emotions/sitting still and watching urge waves

Session Seven: Caring for self, caring for all beings

- 1) Grounding movement exercises to music
- 2) Caring kindness for oneself and others
- 3) Discussion about what it means to care for oneself and how to practise this
- 4) Drawing on social supports – Constructing “Support Trees”
- 5) Experiential exercise - group circle walking in synchrony to music.
- 6) Meditation exercise - loving kindness meditation

Session Eight: Progress and relapse prevention. Equanimity: Finding the still point in the eye of the storm

1. Grounding movement exercises
2. Wholesome relationships - Being at peace with the world and oneself (equanimity)
3. Discussion about what it means to be stable and centred in the midst of life's changes
4. Review of coping skills learnt – “Bag of Tricks”
5. Relapse prevention – “Lapse” vs “Relapse”
6. The meaning of progress
7. Summarising the program
8. Evaluation of program
9. Meditation exercise - Equanimity meditation

SESSION ONE: STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, AND WAYS TO BE FREE WITH MINDFULNESS.

Overview:

1. Introduction to the group.
2. Enquiry and psycho-education what stress anxiety and depression.
3. Introduction to mindfulness and relaxation as two skills to manage stress, and enhance well being.
4. Exercises - mindful eating and Progressive Muscle Relaxation or Mindfulness of Sound (use mindfulness of sound if the majority of participants may be prone to panic)

Introduction – 10”

1) Practical Matters:

Start the session by introducing leaders, outlining the times of the group, that it will go for about 2.5 hours and may run 10 minutes overtime. Explain where the toilets etc are and where tea will be. Go around the group and quickly say everyone's name.

2) Participation:

Explain to the group that there will be chances for them to get involved both through discussion and activities and that participation is voluntary but both valuable and greatly appreciated. If a person feels overwhelmed at anytime then they are welcome to take some time out outside the door and that usually a leader will follow them to check they're ok.

3) Respect:

Explain that groups are based on mutual respect and kindness. This may include being patient, being a good listener, giving other people a go and respecting people's confidentiality. If a participant becomes disruptive, they will be asked to leave that session and return the next time. Explain this to the group and make sure they understand the reasoning behind such a rule.

4) Learning:

This programme is designed to inform and develop skills through mutual sharing of information and techniques. It is not designed to replace one-to-one therapy or to discuss the personal day-to-day problems of all the participants.

5) Commitment:

The techniques in this programme often build on one another. Therefore it is important that members commit to attend as regularly as they possibly can. If they cannot attend one week, they must ring and let the leaders know. All of the techniques will require regular practice if a participant wants to get better at them and achieve benefit from them.

6) Introductions:

Ask participants to very briefly introduce themselves in not more than 30 seconds by firstly stating their name, what they would like to achieve by attending the group (avoid asking why they are attending), and (optionally) something positive about themselves such as an interest or a hobby. If participants begin to describe their problems, try to steer away from this because, at this point in the session, it is usually not helpful. The group leaders can be first with the introductions and, in this way, also model the brevity that is required.

Interactive discussion-Stress, depression and anxiety (20”)

Say: “We will be presenting many ideas during this course. These ideas will not be right or wrong. If they help, use them. If they don't, let them go. The way we know anything is mostly from our own experience. In addition, we can also learn from everyone else. I would like to begin by asking

you how you experience stress, anxiety and depression. The aim of this discussion is not to get depressed about depression, stressed about stress or anxious about anxiety but to get to understand the nature of the beast that we are dealing with". Emphasise the need to be objective about these topics.

Brainstorm (20")

How do we experience stress?

What are some of the effects of stress?

How does stress make you feel physically and emotionally?

How do we experience anxiety?

How do we experience depression?

What would it be like to be free from stress, anxiety and depression?

What is happiness? What is peace? What is contentment? Etc., (descriptions of the possibility for freedom make them closer to being a reality).

Jot down responses on a white board. Draw connections between stress anxiety and depression then also highlight freedom or happiness as the opposites to feeling overwhelmed.

State that there are many different ways to understand stress and explain an interactive model of stress with reference to the diagram in the handouts for session one.

Presentation: Depressive and anxiety disorders and using mindfulness to be free with them (15")

If the information was not discussed, present the information as it is summarised in the handouts for session one under the headings: "Anxiety and depressive disorders", "Anxiety and depression", "The causes of anxiety and depression", "Mindfulness" and "the four foundations of mindfulness".

Emphasise how anxiety and depressive symptoms arise because of a number of factors but a large component is learned or conditioned. Mention reinforcement as one way things are learned. Mention that reinforcement can occur when we follow old habits and/or if we avoid things when we don't need to avoid them. Say that if unhelpful habits are learned then they can also be unlearned or de-conditioned. In addition, learning basic coping skills can help to reduce the impact or eliminate many anxiety and depressive symptoms. Also mention that the possibilities for freedom are a reality that is possible to realise.

Explain that much emotional and mental suffering arises in a cyclic manner which is driven by automatic thinking like auto pilot, acting and emotional patterns (which may have been learned). Mindfulness can help to short circuit automatic patterns, mindfulness can lead to freedom. .

Very briefly clarify terms adding that throughout the course these ideas will be clarified with experiential exercises.

- Define mindfulness.
- Clarify four domains of mindfulness.
- If time permits mention the related skills and attitudes of mindfulness.
- State that we usually begin by learning mindfulness of body first because this is more tangible.
- Emphasise that mindfulness is always with actual experience and not with that which is conceptualised.

Experiential exercise: hand gripping (5-10”)

Say that during this course there will be many experiential exercises because experience is a very good way to learn something. Say that it is best to consider all the exercises as experiments. That is, you try something with objective curiosity and see what results. There are no rights or wrongs, and individuals must discover for themselves the results of what they do.

Then, invite them to participate in an experiment. Ask participants to stand up, find a partner and describe to each other, one at a time, their left hand in a conceptual manner. For example: “my hand is very useful, it does this and that, it has freckles on it, but last year the freckles were more faded.....etc”. After both have done this for about 1 minute, ask them to really describe their left hand as it is experienced and not how it is conceived. Have participants grip their hand and then un-grip it. Ask participants to describe this experience to their partner. After the exercise ask participants what they noticed with their experiment. Clarify the difference between concept and experience. The difference being that there is actual experience of tension, movement, etc. whereas with concept it is just that. State that that being aware of sensation is a mindfulness of body practice.

Then get participants to move (slow movements of the body) shifting and stretching. Ask participants to notice the difference between concepts of the body moving and the actual experience of moving the body.

Mindful eating exercise (15”)

Explain that mindfulness can be used in all circumstances including the simple activity of eating. Explain that participants need not eat if they are allergic or they do not wish to eat for some reason or other. Be sensitive to eating disorders and social phobic participants. Have participants sit in chairs and close eyes. Ask them to be mindful of their bodies as they sit and put their hands out. Place suitable food onto participants' outstretched hands. Ensure the food is hygienic by using a clean spoon or that it is pre-wrapped. For example, use at least three or four raisins, sultanas or dates etc.,

Guide participants through a mindful eating exercise. Encourage them to eat as if they have never eaten or seen food before. Have them open their eyes and be mindful of the objects with the sense of seeing first. Ask them to “see” these things as if looking at a piece of art, fresh and new, noticing the colours shapes nuances etc., Then ask them to notice any intentions to move the morsels to their mouths. Then as they move the objects to their mouths how the movement of the arms is experienced. Guide participants through the whole process of slowly and meticulously eating a small portion of food, being attentive to the details of physical sensations, tastes, sounds, intentions etc., and noticing how these experiences change. Guide through the process two times then allow participants to eat mindfully in silence for a few minutes.

Mindful eating is one example of how we may bring this practice into our daily activities. This involves being aware of the moment to moment experience of consuming food, sighting or seeing it, reaching for it, the sensations of touch, placing into the lips, chewing, tasting, swallowing etc. It helps to do one thing at a time and this involves just eating when eating. That is, not talking, or walking or reading or watching TV or something else while eating. It also helps to slow down the eating process so that the experience can be “savoured”. See it explore the nuances of the raisin. Feel it. Note the intention to bring to mouth. Be slow. Feel the arm. Touch. Be aware of the intention to chew. You can close your eyes. Chew and let intention to swallow arise then follow the impulse and feel the sensations.”

Tea break (10’')

Discussion of eating exercise (5’-10’)

Get feedback about the mindfulness eating exercise. Ask, for example: How was the experience or experiment before the tea break? What did they notice? Did they become calm, interested, bored, restless or other? Was this a new experience or have some people perhaps already practiced mindfulness sometime before? How do people think that this type of activity could be therapeutic?

ACTIVITY THREE - RELAXATION – 25 mins

Need – Progressive Relaxation Script

“Everyone is different and different factors can contribute to episodes in different people. We will talk about this further next week. However, one factor that people often mention is stress. One of the things that happen to us when we’re stressed is that the muscles in our bodies become tense leading us to feel tired and sore. Over the course of this programme we will be learning a variety of techniques, which may help in coping with stress or difficult emotions. Today we will be looking at Progressive Muscle Relaxation.

This technique has been used for a long time by a variety of people for different purposes. It involves tensing various muscle groups and then letting the tension go. It would be good if you could try to bring your attention to the experiences of doing this exercise, what it feels like in your body to be tense and what it feels like to be relaxed. If a noise or a thought distracts you, just acknowledge that distraction and refocus your attention to the sensations you are feeling in your body.

For some people, concentrating on the sensations in their body can lead them to feel more anxious rather than more relaxed. One way of dealing with that at the moment is to direct attention to experiences outside of oneself like external sights and sounds.

Be kind to yourself and if you feel pain when you tense a certain muscle group, just release the tightness in that muscle group and wait until we move onto the next muscle group. Try not to tense for more than 6 or 7 seconds and then relax on an out-breath. You can say to yourself ‘relax’ or ‘let go’ as a cue to let go of tension as you breathe out. As you become more familiar with what it’s like to tense and relax your muscles, you may be able to do this in your everyday life. For example you might be walking down the street and realize that your shoulder muscles are very tense, you can then use this tension as a cue to breathe out, say ‘let go’ and relax those muscles”

Progressive Relaxation Script.

Find a quiet place to sit or lie down. Loosen up any tight clothing or other constrictions and remove any jewellery that may cause discomfort. Make yourself completely comfortable.

Have the intention that for the next 15-20 minutes you will not be concerned about anything except being mindful in the moment and practicing relaxation.

Do not be disappointed if you don’t reach zero tension. With time and practice this may occur. More importantly, be happy and content with the process and enjoy this present moment as it is. Remember that you cannot “will” relaxation to occur but it is a process of “letting go” or “giving up” of tension. Also remember that relaxation is more likely if you have a non-striving and accepting attitude.

Firstly, close your eyes and focus on your breathing, keeping it slow and even. Say the words "let go" to yourself a few times as you breathe out.

Bring your attention to your right arm and as you take a breath in, tense the muscles in this arm gripping your fist as tight as you can. Notice the tension as if you had a tension thermometer where 10 was the tightest you could feel and 0 was no tension. Explore with a curious mind how this tension feels, hold it at 10 for a period so that you know how it feels to have tense muscles. Then, on an out breath, release the tension. Notice how it feels to release the tension. As you release the tension it drops from 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, and so on. As you release the tension your arm becomes very heavy. Now, bring your attention to your left arm and fist and tighten it as tight as you can on the in breath. Hold it for a period, then, on an out breath, release the tension and notice how it drops on the tension scale. As you release the tension you can say to your self "relax relax" or "let go let go". Focus on and enjoy this feeling of letting go of tension. Continue to let go in sync with your out breath letting both your arms feel heavy and relaxed.

Bring attention to your right leg and when I say tense up your right foot, calf and thigh as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels.Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it. Hold it, hold it then release, with an out breath. Let the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let your breathing be natural and use your out breath help you let go of the tension in your right leg.

Now bring attention to your left leg and when I say tense up your left foot, calf and thigh as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels.Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it. Hold it, hold it then release, with an out breath. Let the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let your breathing be natural and let your out breath help you to let go of the tension in your left leg.

Now bring attention to both buttocks and when I say tense up your buttocks as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels.Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it. Hold it, hold it then release, with an out breath. Let the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let go of tension in your buttocks. Let your breathing be natural and let your out breath help you to let go of the tension in your buttocks.

Now bring attention to abdomen and chest as well as your lower, mid and upper part of your back. When I say, tense up these parts of your body as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels. Notice how the tension feels with a curious and detached manner....Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it as tight as you can. Explore the quality of the experience. Hold it, hold it then release, with an out breath. Let the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let go of tension in your torso and back. Allow your breathing to be natural and use the out breath help you to let go of tension. Every out breath the tension is reduced a bit more.

Now bring attention to your neck and shoulders. When I say, tense up these parts of your body as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels. You can tighten your shoulders as if you were pulling your head into your shoulders and trying to touch your ears with your shoulders. Notice how the tension feels with a curious and detached manner....Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it as tight as you can. Explore the quality of the experience. Hold it,hold it..... now release, with an out breath. Let the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let go of all tension in neck and shoulders. Allow your breathing to be natural and use the out breath help you to let go of tension. Every out breath the tension is reduced a bit more. Feel the pull of gravity and let your shoulders become heavier and more relaxed.

Now bring attention to your face and head. When I say, tense up these parts of your body as best and tight as you can and notice how this feels. You can screw up your face, frown your forehead, tighten your lips and jaw and even push your tongue up against your teeth. Notice how the

tension feels with a curious and detached manner....Now, breath in and tighten. Feel it and hold it as tight as you can. Explore the quality of the experience. Hold it,hold it..... now, with an out breath, release. Let the tension around your head and face melt away. Allow the tension thermometer come down and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Let go of worrying about the face you put on for the world and if you want you can open your mouth and let your jaw droop. Allow your breathing to be natural and use the out breath help you to let go of tension. Every out breath the tension is reduced a bit more. On every out breath the fibres of your face feel the pull of gravity and it relaxes. Your forehead smoothes out, your mouth opens, your jaws drops and hangs. Enjoy the feeling of relaxation and let your attention focus upon this enjoyment.

Now that you have finished tensing your body you can scan with attention throughout your body finding areas of left over tension. When and if you find these areas just release the tightness by letting go. You can use your breath to help you and on the out breath tension is released. If there is no left over tension and your body feels relaxed and pleasant nurture these feelings by bringing attention to them and enjoying them. If you want you can bring attention to your body as a whole and it may feel as if it is floating as if it is on clouds. Let your self become deeply relaxed and refreshed with these feelings.

(silence)

When you are ready to end the exercise. Firstly make note of how you are feeling and be aware of how you achieved this feeling. Also realize that if through out the day today or in the future you wish to be relaxed all you have to do is remind your self of this state by breathing out and saying to your self “let go” or “relax”.

Now remember where you are in the room, slowly move your fingers and toes, shift your arms and legs. Slowly open your eyes and go about your daily activities feeling relaxed, revitalized and refreshed.

Mindfulness of sounds-instructions

- Make yourself comfortable, sitting upright and relaxed.
- Scan your body and release what ever tension you may feel.
- Make the determination that for the period of this exercise, you will not to follow concerns about things other than being here and now and what you are doing. Remember that for 20-30 minutes you don't have to do anything other than practicing mindfulness of sound.
- Also make the intention to maintain a stance of willingness, receptivity and openness to experience as it comes to you, arising and passing away.
- Now turn your mind to sound.
- Be attentive to sound as sound or vibration.
- Bring attention to the sound of your own body, the close vicinity around you and also sound that seem off at a distance.
- Be alert but relaxed and receive sound as it comes to you. There may be sounds of your
- breath, the ring in your ears, your body as it moves, the sounds of birds, cars, traffic, air conditioning, wind, rain or just the hum of silence.

- Notice how you may create images and labels around the sound such as: dog barking, traffic, birds or whatever. Don't struggle with the labelling and the pictures but distinguish the sound from the label. Let the labelling or pictures be on the periphery of your awareness and direct your attention to sound as vibration.
- Notice also how some sounds are pleasant, some sounds are unpleasant and some sounds are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Notice and note the judgements and without struggle let them go by bringing attention back to sound as sound.
- Sound arisingchanging...and passing away. Notice, if you can, the beginning, middle and end of each sound. Listen closely, attentive to every nuance, every subtle shift and change. Notice how vibration may itself also be made up of other vibrations.
- Listen to sounds as if you are listening to an orchestra of life where you are the passive listener and the music of life plays around you.
- Notice how one sound connects and interplays with other sounds.
- When your attention shifts away from sounds notice the shift then bring it back. Resting comfortably with sound as your primary object of meditation.
- When you are ready to finish the exercise, bring attention back to that which you need to do.
- If mindfulness of sounds was helpful to you remember that you can be mindful of sound whenever you need and it is suitable.

Homework

- Practise progressive relaxation once or twice a day for about 20 minutes. If a recording is supplied, use it.
- Begin to slow down and do one thing at a time with some of your daily activities

SESSION TWO: HAVING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION.

Overview:

- Ensure that participants understand how to use mindfulness and that questions are answered adequately.
- Emphasize how that when we begin a journey it is important to have a direction or a sense of where we are going.
- Provide clarity about the usefulness of goals, valued directions, and helpful intentions or choices and commitments.
- Explore and understand the dangers of being lost in goal directed behaviours, which are not SMART.
- Clarify how intentions can be directed towards behaviours which are in accordance with valued directions.
- Provide clarity about how mindfulness of appropriateness, suitability and timeliness of actions is a sub-domain of mindfulness of body and a way to live in accordance with helpful life directions.
- Experiential exercise - crossing the floor, the differences between goal and intention-directed behaviour
- Provide instruction in “body scan” and how to practice mindfulness in everyday activities-introduce noting..

Begin by saying that we will start each session by doing grounding movement exercises. Preface the movement exercises with the statement: “Posture and movement are important components of mindfulness practice. The gentle movements we show are demonstrated as some ways you can be mindful of posture and movement. They are voluntary and you must use your own discretion about their appropriateness or inappropriateness for you and your body. Please do not do anything that causes pain or you feel may be damaging. You need to judge and be responsible for your self. Remember, these movement exercises are completely voluntary and you can sit out if you wish.”

Have the class stand as in a tai chi stance and ask them to bring awareness to their bodies. Instruct them to scan the body for tension and let it go, maintaining just enough tension to stay erect. Say: “Ensure that your posture is relaxed, upright and dignified. Your head should also be upright and your gaze not scattered or at your feet but ahead at the floor or ground a few metres in front of you. Place your hands where they will be comfortable. Don’t lock your knees and stand relaxed, composed and fully at ease. Be aware of sights, sounds and what is happening around you but also be restrained from letting your attention follow these events. Let your awareness be open but start to focus your attention what you are doing and how this is experienced. Let ‘standing’ be the centre of your awareness. Turn your mind to standing by being aware of bodily sensations. With curious interest notice the sensations in your feet, your legs, your hips, your abdomen, your back, your chest, your shoulders, your head and your body as a whole standing there. Relax your legs your feet, your knees, your hips, your lower back, your torso, your shoulders, your arms, your neck and your head. Let go of unnecessary strain and maintain just enough muscle tension to remain upright in a relaxed yet dignified manner. Enjoy the simple activity of standing by being with this experience moment to moment. Simply standing you can note to your self ‘standing-standing’”

(silence for a few moments).

State that: “we will start moving our bodies and as you move your bodies bring attention to what you are doing and let thoughts, emotions sounds etc., be on the periphery of your awareness but let your central focus be with your body and how the sensations change. You can also be aware of the general postures you have and bring a general awareness to the what you are doing.”

Clarify that we will not be checking whether people are doing the exercises “Correctly” as the aim of the exercises are to develop mindfulness of body. Remind people to take care of themselves and not to do anything that is painful or beyond their ability. themselves.

Instruct in standard “Chi Kung” arm lifting exercise. (raising the arms up and down in front of the body coordinating with the breath).

Do a series of slow body movements, which can include Chi Kung/Tai Chi movements.

After about 10-15” of slow mindful movements return to the standing posture for a minute. Then, while participants are standing quietly say: “before we go on with the session I would like you reflect on what is important for you in various domains of your life such as work, relationships, family, health, community, society, spirituality etc., This type of reflection is best if it comes from your heart or as if it is a gut response rather than from your intellect or head. Ask your self ‘what is very important to me, how would I like things to be and what do I really want? What direction do I really want my life to take?’ For the moment, just reflect on these questions and we may talk about them later.”

Review homework – 15 min

Ask if anyone managed to practice relaxation during the week and if so, how they found the experience. Share as a group. Discuss what may get in the way of doing homework and ways to overcome these barriers. Discuss possible benefits of doing it, including giving it a “good go” in order to be able to have a good idea of whether this exercise is useful for the individual. Stress that it is not compulsory and if the participants manage to do it a couple of times in the week, that is far better than not at all.

Presentation/discussion on purpose and direction (30-40”)

Explain that the topic for this session is to understand about how important it is to have purpose and direction in life especially if we are suffering with symptoms of anxiety and depression. Also state that this session includes learning how to bring mindfulness to our every day activities as well as how to practice one formal mindfulness practice called “Body scan”.

State that there are many points that are important to consider during this session. Read out the aims of this session before the discussion begins in order that participants are aware of where discussion questions may be heading. Or, make a clear statement about the desired take home message from this session. State that if we know what is important for us, or that, which we value, it is easier to be able to act in a purposeful manner. Be careful about any discussion regarding values because it is easy for different group members to disagree about “values” and the discussion can easily be hijacked by disagreement. Emphasize personal life directions rather as an alternative to the term values. However, if values are discussed, emphasize that even if we don’t always agree with another persons values but it is important, in a course directed towards managing stress anxiety and depression, we practice tolerant kindness to one another.

Possible discussion questions:

- Why is it important to have goals? Given our understanding of anxiety and depression can anyone understand how goals can be helpful to manage these tendencies?
- Why is it important that the goals are clear and achievable?
- What are the dangers of unrealistic goals?

- What is time management? What does it mean? What are some ways to manage our activities?
- What are values?
- Why is it important to clarify valued directions?
- What is the difference between valued directions and goals?
- What do people notice when someone lives according to their values? Do they have vitality? Are they happy?
- How can we get to know our valued directions? What are ways in which we can become clear about what is important for us?
- How can we be present and also act in a manner that is purposeful or that has a valued direction?
- What is the difference between intention directed behaviour and goal driven behaviour?
- What does it mean to be motivated?
- Why is motivation important to manage stress, anxiety and depression? How can we develop motivation?

As much as possible let the group discussions bring forth the points outlined in the aims of this session. If not forth coming during the discussion, explain the importance of values, intentions, purpose, and clear comprehension of activities as outlined in the handouts for this session. Be aware that not all points may be covered during the allotted time period. If this is the case, be mindful to ensure that a least a few minutes is spent summarizing the main points so that the experiential exercise becomes meaningful.

Experiential exercise-(10’)

If there are enough people in the group to make it meaningful the following exercise is useful to clarify, experientially, the functions of intentions, direction, goals and the need to hold goals lightly.

Have participants stand and form a circle. State: “we will be doing an exercise to demonstrate some to the things we have been talking about. As we are standing here, look across to the other side of the room and choose a chair that you would like to sit on. It is like sitting on that particular chair will be your goal. With a clear intention of aiming towards your chair we will endeavour to walk towards it but we will have to make adjustments along the way such as dodging other people and remembering our purpose. We will be required to use mindfulness to maintain our direction. Please remember, however, that we may not achieve our goal because someone may beat us to our chosen chair. If so, try to be flexible with your goals and choose another chair”

When the exercise has finished ask participants what they noticed by doing that exercise and whether it was helpful as a way to help them understand the things that were discussed.

Tea break. (10’-15’)

Presentation: Mindfulness in daily activities and using noting as a tool of mindfulness. (10-15”)

State that within the four foundations of mindfulness there are sub-domains. Being mindful of postures and being mindful of activities are two separate sub-domains and mindfulness of daily activities involves these two sub-domains. With mindfulness of activities, in particular, there is an emphasis on being mindful of the appropriateness, timeliness and suitability of the action you are doing. If appropriate, make a humorous example of how if an icecream van drove past and, following urges, you left the class mid sentence and went and got an ice cream, that would be inappropriate to time, place and purpose of what you may be doing (i.e., conducting a mindfulness session). With mindfulness it is possible ensure that the activities are in line with one's values and purpose. Show how one can be mindful doing simple activities such as moving around, opening doors, brushing teeth, washing up, sweeping, etc.,

Refer to the handout titled “Noting a tool to develop mindfulness” and explain noting according to the handout. Then demonstrate how noting can be used by doing a simple activity.

Body scan instructions and practice. (20”-25”)

Give warning about body scan. Be upfront about how some people get panicky when they focus on various parts of their body. Do not make people anxious about body scan but give them a sense of being empowered if there is an untoward reaction. Simply say that “sometimes people react to this exercise. If you find that it makes you feel uncomfortable, place your attention elsewhere. You can, for example, sit up, open your eyes, look out the window etc.,” Do not make a fuss about possible reactions but give participants empowering options to counter self focused attention and being able to divert attention.

Body scan - instructions

- Find a place to lie or sit down and make you self completely comfortable.
- Make the intention that, for the next 15 or so minutes, you will try not to fidget or move unnecessarily or be too concerned about anything other than being here now and bringing attention to the feelings in your body.
- When thoughts, emotions, sounds or other things pull your attention away from physical sensations do not struggle. Let these things come and go and put them on the edge of your awareness
- Let physical sensations be the main thing you will focus on.
- At first bring awareness to your body as a whole and be aware of the in and out breath.
- Let your out breath help you let go of tension.
- Let go of tension in your legs
- Let go of tension in your body,
- Let go of tension in your hands and arms
- Let go of tension in your face head
- Simply let go of tension.
- Now bring awareness to the top of your head. Be open minded can feel the sensations as they are without adding stories to them.

- Notice sensations as they are, without thinking that they should be any different than the way they are.
- Then begin to scan with your awareness so that it covers all of your body from the top of our head to the tips of your toes. Just like getting a massage from the top your head and downward, let your awareness touch part by part and bit by bit the whole of your body.
- Be aware of your forehead and as you are aware it relaxes and opens up.
- Then bring awareness to your face, your eyes, your nose, your cheeks, your mouth, your jaw and your whole face. Feel the experience. Without tryingallow all the tension to drop and melt away.
- As mindfulness of the various parts of your body becomes clearer it is as if, without trying, whatever tightness, that may have been there earlier just dissolves and melts away.
- Bring awareness to the physical sensations at the back of your head and the top of your neck. Your neck your throat, the top of your chest and the top of your shoulders.
- Move attention around every corner and curve of your shoulders letting your awareness touch every sensation.
- Be really curious and careful not to miss any sensation...
- Bring awareness to your arms, the inside of your arms the outside of your arms your biceps, moving down your arms to your elbows, your forearms, your wrists and your hands.
- Know and be aware of physical sensations with an interested and relaxed calm mind.
- Bring awareness to the top of your chest, upper back, your whole chest.
- If there is any pain or discomfort, try to be gentle, kind and compassionate. Let any discomfort be soothed and healed with your awareness. .
- Be aware of your belly and let it move with your breath. Freely up and down. Every out breath your whole body becomes deeply relaxed.
- Slowly let awareness scan down your legs, in your thighs, to your knees then down to your shins, your calves, your heels, your ankles, toes, top part of the feet, and base of the feet.
- Then bring attention to the whole of your body.
- Bring kind and caring attention to your whole body. It might feel like it is relaxed, calm and humming with energy and good vibrations.
- If you are feeling relaxed and it feels good, sit or lie back and enjoy these feelings. When your mind wanders off somewhere simply remember to bring it back to the nice feelings. Continue to do this for a few minutes.
- As you end the exercise slowly move your fingers and toes, then your hands and feet, become aware of the room that you are in, open your eyes, give yourself a stretch, and go about doing what you need to do.....(pause). Remember that by being aware of your body and allowing it to relax is one way that you can feel peaceful and relaxed during your daily activities.

Feedback and homework setting (5-10’)

Give people enough time to reorient and, depending on the circumstances, ask for feedback. How did it go? How did people feel about that exercise? Were there any problems?

Give homework as it is written in the handouts.

SESSION THREE: WISDOM, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND MEDITATION

Session overview:

1. Grounding movement exercises
2. To introduce “meditation” as being part of a way to freedom
3. To clarify how meditation is mental training that involves cultivating energy/motivation, mindfulness and concentration.
4. To clarify how traditionally meditation is taught as part of context that includes wise understanding and healthy non-harmful lifestyles.
5. Discussion around the meaning of being emotionally balanced, wisdom and psychological flexibility. How it includes clear thinking and making decisions and commitments to that which is important. Depending on context may include discussion about: Problem solving skills, helpful sleep routines.
6. Introduce Calm and Insight meditation as a way to cultivate wisdom.
7. Introduction to noting and mindfulness in daily activities.
8. Introduction to mindful walking and mindfulness of breath.

Centring Exercise: Slow movement. (15-20”)

Begin by having participants practice a mindful standing exercise as it was instructed in the last session. Then, guide in either a series of Chinese Chi Kung type exercises or a short yoga sequence. Invite participants to bring attention to the body and its sensations. Ask them to be particularly aware of change in sensations. Suggest focusing attention on the body and allow other objects of attention to be on the periphery of their awareness. Focus attention on the whole of the body or on predominate experiences. Finish the series of movement exercises with a very short relaxation in either in upright or supine posture.

Homework review. (15-20“)

Use the homework review as a way to explore progress and any problems with the practice. Model the quality of curious investigation with questions directed at “what” happened and “how” it changed. Such questioning could include the following questions: Could anybody bring attention to a daily activity? What activities could they bring attention to? Was it difficult/easy? Did mindfulness help with the smooth unfolding of this activity? Did anyone complete the values and goals questionnaires? Was this a useful activity? If it was helpful how was it helpful? Did anyone manage to do any pleasant activities? Could they bring clear comprehension to their daily activities? Did anybody find the discussion about valued direction last week helpful? If so, how? Could anybody slow down with some activities and just do one thing at a time? What did they notice? Was slowing down helpful or unhelpful? Did everyone manage to practise body scan? If not what caused the obstacle? If so, was body scan helpful or unhelpful? Did anybody use noting? Was this helpful or unhelpful and how was it helpful or unhelpful?

Discussion: Wisdom supports lifestyle, healthy lifestyle supports meditation, meditation cultivates wisdom. (15-20”)

Say that the aim of this session is to introduce meditation and how meditation occurs in a context. Say that time spent on discussion will be limited so that more time can be devoted to practising the skills. Add that as this session is an only an introduction, more details about meditation will be given in following sessions. Say that it is not possible to cover everything that is written in the handouts and we encourage reading over the handouts as an activity to do between sessions.

The most important discussion is about the relationships between actions and consequences, so prioritise time suitably and endeavour not to get bogged down in discussion about healthy diets, physical exercise and sleep.

Say: “The way we experience the world and our selves depends upon many factors coming together. Our mind affects our body and vice versa. In additions, our lifestyle and our actions influence the way we feel and our capacity to practice mindfulness and concentration”.

Say:: “traditionally meditation is taught as part of a triad which includes an interaction between wisdom and the actions that are based on wisdom”. Then say: “To clarify the context of meditation we have a series of discussion questions”.

Possible discussion questions may include:

- Has anybody noticed the relationship between mind and body? If so what have they noticed?
- What happens when they get a flu, or sleep is disturbed or they do not look after their diets?
- Does this influence the mind or their mental state and does the mind influence the way the body feels?
- What happens to our bodies when we are stressed?

Emphasise the connection between mind and body and how working with the body can help the mind and if the body is not cared for it can affect the mind.

Experiential exercise (experiment):

Invite participants to slouch forward in a twisted posture and say to themselves “I feel great I am so happy etc., (or something similar)” Then, ask them to sit erect, in a relaxed way, open their chest, hold head high and put a half smile on their face then say the same thing. The differences in mental state based on posture should be self-evident.

Mention that posture is very important in formal meditation practices and demonstrate useful meditation postures.

Enquiry

Ask the group whether they think that actions have consequences? Then ask the group what types of actions of body mind and speech are conducive to peace and happiness and what types of actions seem to make life more stressful?

- What are some things that people do that seems to make their stress worse?
- What are some unwise actions?
- What types of actions seem to complicate lives and situations?
- What are the types of actions that people often regret doing?
- What are wise actions?
- What types of actions seem to lead to happy and peaceful states of mind?
- What is wisdom?

Do not moralise or try to convince participants about a particular viewpoint. Rather, try to summarise and reflect the points being made from the group discussion. If it is not evident from the discussion clarify how actions have consequences and if actions are done with harmful intent then the consequence is usually distressing for one’s self and or others. In addition, actions driven by greed, ignorance and hatred are also often followed by unfavourable consequences. Highlight that if someone is plagued with a guilty and remorseful states of mind it is often difficult to focus and cultivate mindfulness. If relevant, consider that actions motivated with generosity,

kindness and wise understanding often result in favourable outcomes. Emphasise that when one's behaviours are blameless it is easier to focus and be mindful. Point out the cyclic effect according to the handout titled "Wisdom and understanding that actions have consequences". What we do, affects the way we feel and this impacts on those around us.

If possible tie in the relationship of wisdom to actions, and how the cultivation of our minds with concentration and mindfulness can lead to wisdom.

Mindfulness Continues – Mindful walking and standing – 25 min

"Last session we talked about being mindful, or remembering to bring attention to the present moment in an open-minded manner. This week we will practice mindfulness by being aware of our bodily sensations when we are standing and walking. Remember to let thoughts come and go, you may find that noting can help you." Remind participants about noting.

What is "Noting"?

"Noting" is simply labelling thoughts or emotions in an open and non condemning way. For example, attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen while breathing can be labelled "rising, falling". Thoughts of the past can be labelled "remembering", and thoughts of the future, "planning". Emotional tendencies can be identified and labelled appropriately such as "anger", "worrying", "fear", "sadness", "joy", "peace" "excitement" etc. Actions also can be labelled accordingly. One may, for example, use the note "brushing" for brushing one's teeth, or "reaching" for reaching for a door handle.

Putting a name to distressing experiences can often diminish the destructive power of these experiences. Noting can therefore help to give us mental or emotional space from destructive habitual patterns and give us the possibility to choose alternatives.

"Noting" is only a tool used to develop mindfulness. Noting can become an obstacle when individuals become more preoccupied with trying to find a descriptive name for an experience. Noting can also become a problem if we become too serious or pedantic with it. In these cases we lose a relaxed openness to experience, which can become an obstacle to mindfulness. In these cases it is best to be very simple with the noting process.

Describe mindfulness of breath (as it is in the handout). Explain that it can cultivate both calm and insight. Explain that it is also one way to integrate mind and body.

Make clear that very occasionally people find mindfulness of breath anxiety provoking. This difficulty can become a very useful challenge. Initially, however, it is possible to choose another object of attention, such as strong sensations in one's hands or feet or the pressure against one's buttocks. Mindfulness of sounds, sights or movement can also be helpful.

Mention that mindfulness of walking is very similar to mindfulness of breath and in some cases you can combine mindfulness of walking with slow breathing. With mindfulness of walking, however, one needs to apply intention and effort. Do not be concerned about the details of meditation at this point. If participants start to ask too many questions explain that these question will be answered in due time. As session time is limited it is important that there is some practice and that ultimately the best way to understand meditation is with practice.

Demonstration of walking and then mindful walking practice (10-15")

Show participants the different ways to practice mindful walking. Describe and show how to use different speeds and how to use noting. Also describe how with fast walking the attention is broader (i.e. whole body attention) and the slower it becomes the more narrowly focused attention also becomes (i.e. sensations in the base of the feet). If the room is large enough, have

the group line up in parallel rows and guide them through a mindful walking practice. If the room is small, form a circle and practice mindful walking in a circle stating that if people want to pass slower walkers they may do so with the understanding that each individual has their own pace.

Give instructions roughly in accordance with the script. Adapt the instructions according to available time and situation. If leaders prefer they can play the recorded track called “Mindful standing and walking” but be aware that this recording lasts for about 20 minutes. At the end of the mindful walking period ask the participants to stop and slowly sit in their chairs then ask them to bring the same mindful attention to their breath as it rises and falls in the abdomen, as they did their steps walking. Then practice mindful breathing in silence for a few moments before taking a mindful tea break. Adjust the time practicing mindfulness of breath. If the mindful walking period begins after the tea break it is possible to shift seamlessly in to mindfulness of breath period, as it is described and scripted below.

Mindful Walking-instructions

- Ensure that there is space enough to walk for at least a few paces in front of you and set the intention that for the next 20 minutes or so you will commit to being present here now, as you stand and walk.
- Begin by standing and bringing attention to your posture. You should be relaxed upright and dignified, with eyes open looking few metres in front of you. Let your chest be open, relax your shoulders, making sure your knees are not locked and place your hands where they are comfortable
- Become aware of sight, sounds and what is happening around you and, without rejection, let these things be on the periphery of your awareness. With curious interest, notice the sensations in your body standing, letting go of unnecessary muscle tension.
- Let “standing” be the centre of your awareness.
- For a minute or two, be present with the simple activity of standing
- Then allow your attention to focus on your feet and the sensations in them, bringing attention to temperature, pressure or other physical experiences that you may be feeling.
- When you are ready, notice the intention to take a step.
- Notice the changing sensations as you shift your weight onto one foot and pick the other one up.
- Notice how your foot feels as it travels through the air and the changing sensation of pressure as you place it on the ground.
- If you wish you can use noting such as “lifting, moving, placing” or if you wish to walk a bit faster you may use “left, right”
- Walk at a pace and find a rhythm that is comfortable for you.
- If you are walking at a slow pace, attention will be more focused on your feet, at a faster pace, the attention can be broader such as your legs or the whole of your body.
- When thoughts, sounds, sights and emotions pull your attention away from walking, simply note the experience and refocus your attention.

- When you come to the end of your walking pathway, stop, be aware of turning, then walk back mindfully back along your pathway.
- If you feel comfortable you can gradually slow the pace and the rhythm down.
- Continue walking for a period that is suitable then let the mindfulness cultivated during mindful walking carry over into your daily life.

Mindfulness of Breath-instructions

- Loosen any tight clothing or other constrictions.
- Allow yourself to be as comfortable as you can, either lying face up or preferable sitting on a chair or cushion
- When you sit ensure that your back, neck and head is upright and straight in a dignified and relaxed posture. You can close your eyes, or if they remain open, let their focus be diffuse
- Make the resolve that, for the next 20 minutes or so, you will endeavour not to fidget or move unnecessarily. Nor will you be too concerned with future goals or anything other than being here now and bringing attention to your primary object.
- Bring attention to your body as a whole and let go of tightness. You can briefly let your awareness scan throughout your body, finding tension and letting it go using your out breath to help you.
- As you let go of tension, it is as if your awareness of your bodily experience becomes clearer and sharper
- As you sit or lie there, you notice the movement of your breath in your abdomen. If you can't feel the movement in your abdomen, be attentive to the movement in your chest or in both your chest and abdomen.
- Don't force your focus, rather let your mind be open and sensitive
- Keep your breathing natural, neither speeding it up nor slowing it down. Let yourself be accepting of the breath without judgement that it should be other than it is.
- You can use noting such as "rising" or "falling" to help you bring attention to the movement of your abdomen or chest as you breathe.
- Pay attention to the beginning, middle and end of the rising movement and the beginning, middle and end of the falling movement
- Do not struggle with thoughts, feelings or other experiences but let them arise and pass away, bringing your awareness back to your breath.
- You can use noting to help be mindful of the things that draw attention away from the breath. Such as "thinking, thinking" or "remembering, remembering" or "hearing, hearing" etc.,

- Allow your open, yet focused, mind to notice just one breath at a time, connecting mind and body. It is as if the knowing of the breath and the breath are not separate.
- When you finish the period of purposefully cultivating mindfulness with the breath, extend the quality of this awareness into your daily life.

Feedback and homework setting (15’)

Check welfare of participants. Give homework for the week according to the handouts. Provide encouragement if mindfulness of breath did not suit the individual and encourage participants to utilise those practices that they resonate with. At this point in the course they can choose between progressive relaxation, body scan, mindfulness in daily activities, mindfulness of breath or walking. Strongly encourage practising or training with one of these exercises at least once a day. If they feel inclined that can alternate between them.

Mention the hindrances to meditation. List and describe them and suggest to group members to look in the handouts. Emphasise that working with the hindrances is the business of meditation. Say that the hindrances are normal and when the hindrances arise it is an opportunity to work with them. State that more detail will be given about the hindrances as the course progresses.

SESSION FOUR: WORKING WITH THOUGHTS. THE CHOICE TO BUY INTO THEM OR LET THEM PASS BY.

Overview.

- Grounding movement exercises
- Working with thoughts and unhelpful thinking patterns including delusions.
- Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as a way to develop clear thinking and acting skilfully
- How Mindfulness and CBT work together
- Using mindfulness to deal with difficult thoughts
- Changing the relationship to thought with acceptance and “defusion”
- Meditation exercise: mindfulness of sound and thought
- Experiential exercise: Taking the mind for a walk or other exercises to defuse identifying with thought and clarify the insight that “thoughts are not facts to be believed”

Homework review – 5 min

Discuss whether anyone had a chance to practice mindful walking or mindfulness of the breath. Has anyone tried doing everyday activities more mindfully. Ask if this made a difference to the feelings they had while they were doing it or what they did afterwards? Share ideas as a group. Also review how individuals digested the information about valued directions, goals and wisdom, and whether or not they completed the response/reaction record.

Presentation and discussion.

Say that the main focus of this session is about learning how to cope with difficult thoughts as well as exploring our relationship with thoughts in general. Say that mindful investigation is useful to help understand how to deal with difficult thoughts. Provide a brief explanation of what mindful investigation entails, as it is explained in the handouts. State that in the current discussion thinking can involve messages in pictures and words. Sometimes thoughts are random and make no sense. Or they string together as if we are talking to ourselves. The internal chatter may be working something out, planning something, remembering, judging, evaluating, commenting, analysing and so on.

Possible discussion questions:

- Ask (humorously) has anyone noticed thinking during their formal meditation periods?
- How is thinking helpful and how is it unhelpful?
- Has any one been able to stop thinking, if so how?
- Are thoughts an accurate reflection of reality or are they a distorted filter?
- Ask participants if thinking ever gives them difficulty?
- Do they ever experience unwanted or problematic thinking?
- How is it problematic?
- How is thinking helpful?
- Can we control our thoughts?

In response to the last question do the white bear, white elephant or fluffy shark exercise. This exercise involves purposefully thinking about one of these things and then after a minute or two, trying to stop thinking about the object. Encourage thinking about one of these objects with visualisation or imagining in some way or other. Then after a few moments of purposeful thinking, say to participants: “OK now just stop thinking about it. Just stop thinking”. After a few moments,

ask participants if they managed to control thoughts and if so how. This exercise can lead into discussion about ways to manage difficult and unwanted thoughts.

Make the point that it can be very difficult to control or stop thinking. It is possible, however, to manage difficult thoughts by choosing to engage or not engage with them. Say that some people are able to stop thinking about something by not engaging with the thought. Sometimes this involves focusing on something else and sometimes it involves seeing the thought for what it is. That is, it is just a thought and not necessarily a fact to be believed.

If it becomes relevant discuss delusions as extreme thoughts, and make reference to some delusions that are common with Bipolar disorder (as listed in the handouts).

Emphasise that thinking can impact on how we feel and how we experience the world. State that thinking can be distorted and there are thinking styles that are unwholesome or unhelpful. Mention that CT or CBT is a therapy that utilises this understanding.

Presentation: The ABC of thoughts-10”

Present the ABC of thinking and say that Cognitive Therapy aims to change, with reason or rational thinking, the B or beliefs of the ABC so that they may be more in line with what is really happening rather than being unrealistic or distorted.

Draw three columns with each column corresponding to: A- Antecedent /Activating event, B-Belief or thoughts, C-Consequences or emotions. Then, describe a scene to elucidate the ABC of thinking. For example, a scene where someone that you met at a party the week previously walks straight past you without acknowledging you and, as a result of not being noticed you feel angry or sad. A-is the event, C-is the sadness or anger which is experienced but ask participants what the B-could be. Explore possible alternatives of the B and the resultant change in the emotional consequences. Discuss the basic principles of cognitive restructuring according to CBT.

Mindfulness is very helpful in this process in that it helps to catch the irrational thoughts and monitor the arising of unhelpful thoughts. Sometimes mindfulness coupled with investigation can also help to uncover unhelpful beliefs. Say that with CT there is a tendency to challenge unhelpful thoughts and replace them with more helpful alternatives.

Say that another way to cope and work with difficult thoughts is by changing our relationship to them.

Presentation/Discussion: Changing the relationship to thought (15”)

Say that unhelpful relationships to thoughts can be changed with insight and wisdom. Then, add that mindfulness of thoughts can help us begin to see thoughts in a way where we do not necessarily buy into or belief every thing that our thoughts seem to be saying. State that to clarify this statement you would like participants to do another exploratory exercises. Say that in this exploratory exercise, you would like everyone to treat their mind like a laboratory where the objects of investigation are thoughts. Say that the aim of the exercise is to use mindful enquiry to find out about the nature of thoughts and thinking processes. Ask participants to think about something very neutral such as what they had for lunch yesterday or seeing a street in a the local town. Spend a few moments “thinking”. Thank participants and ask the following questions:

1. What happened to the thoughts about the white elephant? Did that thought change? What happened to those thoughts? Where do thoughts come from and where do they go? What about the thoughts you were just having have they now changed to something else? Do thoughts change? If thoughts changed that means that something we can say about

thoughts in general is that they change. Discuss. After a short period ask participants to bring to mind the street, lunch or something.

2. Then ask: Is lunch or the particular town here right now? If it is not here right now can we say that a thought of something is a mental event and not the actual thing? If that is so, can we say that thoughts are thoughts and not necessarily facts to be believed? Discuss. After a period ask participants to purposefully think again.
3. Then ask: When we think about something is there a sense of observing or watching or listening? If there is a sense that we can observe or listen to thoughts does that mean that we are not our thoughts? How do we know that we are thinking? Discuss.

This last question can give rise to perceiving “awareness”. We know we are thinking because we are aware of it. This is one way to defuse identify from the content of thought. That is, we are not our thoughts.

Go over the points of the handouts under the heading: “Changing the relationship to thoughts with insight”. Clarify the nature of control and that how it is important not to feel dis-empowered with the feeling that we can’t control our thoughts. Clarify that this feeling of disempowerment or being out of control is part of a depressive or anxious process. Encourage, however, that we can reclaim our sense of power by choosing to follow or not follow various thought processes. Emphasise that mindfulness helps us to engage with helpful and disengage from the unhelpful.

Mindfulness enhances our ability to choose. Mindfulness becomes like a doorman at an expensive hotel. He gracefully greets guests with respect but does not follow them up to their room. He also lets guests depart but does not follow them out on to the street.

Highlight that mindfulness ultimately develops “meta cognitive insight” or the insight that “thoughts are thoughts and not necessarily facts to be believed”.

Say that people often use analogies for thoughts in order to gain a wise perspective about them. Some of these analogies have included: Like clouds across the sky either drifting or flitting past; like birds flying across the sky; like leaves flowers or bits of garbage floating down in a river; like objects on a conveyer belt; or like signs in a parade; like a bus coming down a hill; like traffic on a highway or like being a doorman at a hotel.

With the parade analogy, for example, the aim is to stay on the footpath and not join the parade. With the stream analogy the aim is to not dive in and get caught up in the current. With the highway analogy it is like we can play in a park nearby and not be bothered by the traffic analogy. The bus analogy the emphasis is about not getting on the bus that has the sign where you don’t want to go. The doorman analogy is about warmly greeting people and letting them go without following them to their rooms or out on to the street.

Brief exercise (5’):

Ask participant to leave their eyes half open and let their gaze fall to the floor. Notice seeing for a few moments. Be aware of seeing as if one was looking a piece of art, noticing shapes and colours. Then ask participants to turn attention to the contents of their minds, as if to observe objectively the thoughts that arise and pass away. Invite participants to watch and observe thoughts as it is described in the participants workbook under the heading: “mindfully watching thoughts”. Be silent for about 3 minutes. Then thank participants for their efforts and invite them to participate in a tea break.

TEABREAK – 15 min

Experiential Exercise “Mindfulness of sound and thought” or “Mindfulness of thoughts: Listening to and watching the show”

Clarify that thoughts are not usually consciously brought up in mindfulness practice. The way they are understood is when they arise in formal practice or in daily life and we need to be mindful of them or deal with them if they are causing suffering. State that normally one would have a primary object of meditation, such as mindfulness of breath, then utilise strategies to deal with thoughts as they arise in the context of meditation. The same attitude, however, can be carried over to our daily lives.

Very occasionally we can make them the primary object of our meditation practice and we can use an investigating mind to understand their changing and interdependent nature. Understanding the content of thoughts is helpful but being able to develop meta-cognitive insight with mindfulness is most helpful.

Emphasise that though some people use this track as a guided meditation it is more instructions on how to investigate thoughts and how to manage difficult and unwanted thoughts when they may arise. Play prepared CD recording, read the script using the sounds of bells the natural ambient sounds and guide participants through mindfulness of sounds and thoughts. Emphasise developing the bystander, witness, or doorman perspective.

Mindfulness of sounds and thoughts –instructions

- Make yourself comfortable, sitting upright and relaxed.
- Scan your body and release what ever tension you may feel.
- Make the determination that for the period of this exercise, you will not to follow concerns about things other than being here and now and what you are doing. Remember that for 20-30 minutes you don't have to do anything other than practicing mindfulness of sound and thoughts.
- Also make the intention to maintain a stance of willingness, receptivity and openness to experience as it comes to you, arising and passing away.
- Now turn your mind to sound.
- Be attentive to sound as sound or vibration.
- Be alert but relaxed and receive sound as it comes to you. There may be sounds of birds, cars, traffic, air conditioning, wind, rain or just the hum of silence.
- Notice how you may create images and labels around the sound such as: dog barking, traffic, birds or whatever. Don't struggle with the labelling and the pictures but distinguish the sound from the label. Let the labelling or pictures be on the periphery of your awareness and direct you attention to sound as vibration.
- Notice also how some sounds are pleasant, some sounds are unpleasant and some sounds are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Notice and note the judgements and without struggle let them go by bringing attention back to sound as sound.

- Now arisingnow changing...now passing away. Notice, if you can, the beginning, middle and end of each sound. Listen closely, attentive to every nuance, every subtle shift and change. Notice how vibration may itself also be made up of other vibrations.
- Let your mind be as if it is the sky. Open expansive and clear and let sounds arise and pass through.
- With same open and spacious perspective, now shift your awareness to thoughts.
- Notice thoughts as if they are clouds passing across an expansive sky. Arising, changing, passing and disappearing from view.
- Or, observe thoughts like birds flying across the sky, sometimes flitting around then moving on. Sometimes just gliding through space. They leave no trace.
- Thoughts are just changing objects against the backdrop of spaciousness.
- Use noting to help you be aware of the changing nature of thoughts.
- Note commenting, evaluating, appraising, judging, planning, calculating, day-dreaming, remembering, catastrophising, overgeneralising, personalising or what ever type of thinking you may experience.
- Sometimes there are too many thoughts to note. Sometimes it is as if thoughts babble on like a never-ending stream. Step back from the stream and notice the stream pass by. Notice the thoughts but resist the temptation to dive in and follow the thought.
- Sometimes, thoughts are like placards in a parade. Each having a message, each inviting you in to join the parade. Resist the urge to join the parade and notice messages as thoughts just passing by. There is no need to get caught up in the drama.
- Let the thoughts come and go. Step back to a place of witnessing and watching the show.
- Notice how some thoughts are pleasant and some thoughts are unpleasant. Notice how some thoughts have a charge and others don't. Notice thoughts about the past or the future. Notice thoughts seem to come back again and again and again. Notice how thoughts may tell a story, like a drama, and how we are always in a leading role.
- Notice how we may desire to think because not thinking may be unfamiliar and frightening.
- Notice how some thoughts lead to emotions and some emotions lead to thoughts. Notice and be receptive even to those thoughts that may lead to fear.
- Try not to struggle with thoughts, no matter how frightening they may be. They are only thoughts. Thoughts only have the power of action if we choose to give them this power.
- Try as best you can to be open to thoughts without preference or condemnation. Develop a curious interest about the passing parade.
- They are not you. You are not your thoughts. Thoughts are thoughts. And they change. Let painful thoughts change without getting caught up in the struggle.
- Step back into awareness. Step back from being caught up and entangled.

- At the end of the formal cultivation of mindfulness, go about your daily activities using thinking as a helpful tool but remembering not to be deceived by the sometimes illusive nature of thoughts and harmful thinking patterns.

Mindfulness of thoughts: Listening to and watching the show -instructions

- Make yourself comfortable and make the intention that for the next 10 or so minutes you will cultivate awareness of thoughts in order that you may understand them and use them in a way that is helpful and not harmful.
- To begin with open your senses to sounds and sight. Without looking around and letting your eyes settle on the space in front of you, leave your ears and eyes open to the experience of the present moment. Firstly of all listen to the sound of the bell and use this sound to help you settle and be aware...just listen here and now. As the sounds of the bell changes open your senses to sound, whatever the sound may be. Be open and receptive to both the subtle and the gross...just listen you...bells, birds, cars people talkingwhatever is happening your leave your ears open and receptive..... In the same way that you are open to hearing, without looking around be open to seeing and notice the shapes and colours.....
- Now, with a calm mind turn your attention to the inner world of thoughts...listen and watch with an open mind.
- Sometimes you can listen to thoughts like you would listen to a babbling stream, or a noisy talk back radio program...just words blah blahing in the background.
- Sometimes you can be aware of thoughts as if you are watching them on the screen of your mind.....
- Sometimes it is like you are watching and listening to the movie of your mind...the trick is to not get caught up in the story as if it is real.
- Sometimes the thoughts seem to suck you in and you believe them to be real...but remember these movies of the mind our just mental creations.
- Sometimes they are like a horror movie, sometimes like a comedy, sometimes a tragedy, sometimes they are boring, sometimes scary sometimes sad, sometimes funnyremember that thoughts are just thoughts and let them be.
- Remember you can change channels, or turn the volume down but most of all remember that they are just thoughts. And they come and go and they are not necessarily facts to be believed...
- Let your mind be like an open sky and notice thoughts as if they are clouds passing across an expansive sky, arising, changing, passing and disappearing from view.
- (silence for a at least one minute)

- Listen to thoughts without getting caught up by them.
- Notice the comments, the judging, the hassling and the fantasies. Notice the planning and the remembering and the imagining of all things....
- Sometimes there are too many thoughts to single out more than just a babbling stream there may be so many thoughts that it feels like a cascading waterfall. Notice the hundreds of thoughts but resist the temptation to dive in and taken away by the current.
- Sometimes, thoughts are like placards in a parade. Each having a message, each inviting you in to join the parade. Resist the urge to join the parade and notice messages as thoughts just passing by. There is no need to get caught up in the drama.
- Let the thoughts come and go. Step back to a place of witnessing and watching the show.
- (silence for a at least one minute)
- Try not to struggle with thoughts, no matter how much they may try to convince that they are true. Thoughts only have the power of action if we choose to give them this power.
- They are not you. You are not your thoughts. Thoughts are thoughts. And they change. Let painful thoughts change without getting caught up in the struggle.
- Remember that thoughts are not necessarily facts. A thought about something is not the reality of that thing. Step back from being caught up and lost in the blah blah of thought.
- When you have had enough of watching the show, listening and observing thought.....remember that one way to deal with thoughts is to simply put your attention somewhere else. Step back into awareness. Step back from being caught up and entangled.
- (silence for a at least one minute)
- If you find watching and listening to thoughts interesting you can continue with this practice. Otherwise, you can bring attention to an anchor such as sounds, physical sensations, or the breath.
- When you finish the period of formal meditation try to maintain general awareness during your daily activities. When you go about your daily activities using thinking as a helpful tool but remembering not to be deceived by the, sometimes, illusive nature of thoughts and harmful thinking patterns.
- Remember that thoughts are just thoughts and you can be at peace with them, no matter what message they may invite you to believe.

Review – 5 min

How did participants find this exercise? Did the participants notice any thoughts arising and were they able to let them come and go? Discuss how difficult this can be.

SESSION FIVE: MINDFULNESS OF EMOTIONS. CHOOSING THE HELPFUL AND LETTING GO OF THE UNHELPFUL

Overview

- Grounding movement exercises
- Mindfulness of heart-mind - letting go of destructive emotions and cultivating healing emotions
- Discussion around the natural function of emotions and how some destructive emotional reactions may be conditioned
- Conditioning and the way the brain learns.
- De-conditioning unhelpful emotional reactions.
- Emotional regulation and distress tolerance - why it is important to tame destructive emotions
- What are healing emotions (eg gratitude, compassion, peaceful joy and calm) and how to cultivate them
- Meditation exercise - Mindfulness of heart mind and/or a calm meditation practice such as peace and joy with the breath or “going to your special place” or other self-soothing practices

“Managing emotions can be very difficult because we so often identify them with ourselves. In fact, if we can manage to step back from the immediate emotion we can grant ourselves some choice about whether to engage in a particular emotion or not. This stepping back does not involve dissociating from an emotion, it does not deny that the emotion is real and part of you. It is simply allowing some room between yourself and the emotion. Granting yourself this room can allow you to investigate emotions and realise that an emotion is an emotion; it is not you. In this way, we can allow the emotion room to come and go without being swept away by it. “

Aims:

- To clarify the third foundation of mindfulness (mindfulness of mind)
- To clarify the meaning of “heart-mind” and how emotions are also considered as states of mind.
- To provide strategies for cultivating mindfulness of heart-mind/emotions. emotions.
- To provide rationale for the benefits of tolerating distressing emotions when there is no need to act on these emotions.
- To clarify how to use mindfulness related strategies for emotional regulation and distress tolerance.
- To provide general understanding and skills on how to reduce the suffering associated with destructive emotions and enhance skills for cultivating healthy emotions.
- To reduce the tendency to identify with painful and destructive emotions.
- To short-circuit unhelpful emotional reactivity.

Strategies

- Present information on how mindfulness of heart-mind includes mindfulness of emotions.
- Discuss the natural function of emotions
- Discuss how sometimes emotions become dysfunctional
- Emphasise the need to regulate destructive emotions
- Explore how dysfunctional emotions can be learned (i.e. with anxiety) and if they are learned they can be unlearned or more correctly de-conditioned .
- Clarify the process of “extinction” as it is understood with learning principles.
- Explain the principles behind exposure-based therapies.

- Clarify ways of being mindful of states of mind and link this to ways to cope with painful emotions
- Guide with experiential exercises where participants can practice being mindful of states of mind and clarify how this approach can be used for emotional regulation and distress tolerance.

Centring exercise 20-25”

Choose a yoga, chi kung, tai chi, shiatsu stretch or Do-in (self massage) sequence. Follow this by having participants lying supine and doing a relaxation exercise releasing tension with the breath. That is, breathing in relax, breathing out relax etc.

Homework feedback 10”

Review the homework associated with mindfulness of thoughts session. Could any participants note a thought or thinking pattern? What happened to the thoughts as they were noted? Were any of the participants able to choose to disengage from thoughts? How did they do this? Did anybody note an intention? Did any of the participants use the mindfulness of sound and thought recording, if so how did they find it?

Presentation/discussion-Mindfulness of heart-mind and letting go of painful emotions 45”

Say that the aim of this session is to learn how to develop mindfulness of heart-mind and use mindfulness to reduce the suffering and reactivity related to destructive and painful emotions. Suggest that knowing how to cope with difficult physical sensations helps with managing difficult emotions because the two usually arise together and emotions are “embodied”.

Explain that managing painful states of mind are often difficult because we tend to identify strongly with them. Like thoughts we tend to fuse our identity with the state of our heart mind, which can include painful emotions. Being able to let go of painful emotions is a process of defusing or disentangling. (Use hand motions to visually describe that fusing is like one hand covering the other. It grips and holds on tight. Defusing is like being able to let go of the grip and distinguish one hand from the other. – take one hand from the other). State that we often confuse who and what we are with the state of our mind. We use language like “I am angry” or “I am sad” as if these emotions are all we are. Emotions, however, change and when we can be aware of how they change we are less inclined to identify with them and can be less reactive with them. When we cultivate mindfulness of heart mind we become more aware of that which knows the emotions or awareness itself. Being more familiar with “awareness” can become a refuge from which to cope with painful experience. When we become more aware of emotions we have more ability to cultivate helpful emotions and let go of unhelpful emotions.

Say that you would like to give “the take home message” from this session before the discussion just to be sure that it is covered. The take home message is that states of heart mind, which include emotions, have natural functions and purposes. The way we relate to and utilise emotions, however, becomes crucial in whether emotions lead to happiness and well-being, calm and insight or they are destructive. It is possible to reinforce destructive emotions and it is also possible to cultivate and develop healing emotions. The focus of this session is about being able to let go of destructive and painful emotions and latter sessions will focus on how to cultivate healing emotions. Mindfulness of heart mind is one way that we can gain some peace and freedom with destructive states of the heart including emotions. Either read out or go through point by point the handout titled: “coping with painful emotions” below. Emphasise that the focus of today’s session is about HOW to work with difficult emotions. And it is not a session focussed on processing individuals’ deeply painful and or destructive emotions. This type of work requires different circumstances like a different type of group, the support of a suitable environment or a skilled individual therapist and it is not necessarily appropriate in the current group format.

Coping with painful emotions (from handouts)

During formal meditation practices or during daily activities some ways to cope with painful and possibly destructive emotions include:

- *Honour emotions. They arise for a reason and they may indicate that we need to act in a particular way. Act on emotions if this is needed.*
- *Note and name the emotions. Say to your self something like: “(the name of the emotion)has arisen”. Name the emotion with a tone of voice that is not the same as the emotion you are noting. For example, if anger is there, name it in with a tone of voice that is not angry. Naming an emotion helps to create space with it. There are lists of words referring to some basic emotions at the end of this chapter. Reference to this list may be helpful to provide some alternative words for the emotions you experience.*
- *Give emotions space. As much as possible we let them be without rejecting or suppressing them. If it is painful do not suppress the experience. Let it be. Giving space to emotions is like accepting them and embracing them with kindness.*
- *Step back from falling into and becoming entangled with the emotion. Step back from them into a space of awareness. Step back and get unstuck by being aware.*
- *See emotions like waves coming and going. In this way try not to block them or amplify them. Rather we let them roll on by.*
- *Remember that we are not our emotions but rather they are changing events passing though like visitors. Remember you need not identify with or take emotions personally.*
- *Practice openness, willingness, allowance and acceptance. Remember that acceptance does not mean it is necessary to act on emotions.*
- *See the emotions as an opportunity to develop understanding or insight.*
- *Remember that all experiences change and emotions have a natural time frame.*
- *Be aware of the thoughts related to the emotion but try not to get caught up in them. Relax into the felt sense of the emotions or how it feels in the body rather than trying to work it out by thinking.*
- *Enquire into the emotion. Look directly at emotions and see them for what they are rather than what we construct them to be, in this way they are deconstructed from something that is frightening to something that is workable. Investigating the emotions can also reveal what may be driving the emotion, such as an unhelpful thought pattern, assumption, belief, judgement or expectation.*
- *Cultivate healing emotions such as compassion, acceptance etc.*
- *Unlearn unhelpful responses by not reinforcing old reactive habits.*

- *Use helpful self-talk. Voicing, to yourself, helpful insights about emotions such as “It’s OK, this will change”, “I am not my emotions” or “This will pass” or “It is understandable that this emotion has arisen, and I don’t need to take it personally”.*
- *Distract yourself from the pain when all else fails.*
- *When the emotion has passed bring your attention back to a primary object of attention (i.e., the breath, walking, mindful action etc.,)*
- *Remember to be here now.*

Discussion 20”:

Before the discussion begins clarify what is meant by the term “heart-mind” and also define emotions. These terms are clarified in the participant’s workbook. States of heart mind include emotions, moods and subtle states of mind such as calm or mild irritability.

Then use relevant questions to draw out ways that we can work with destructive and often painful emotions.

- What are the functions of emotions?

(Draw out how emotions are natural responses to life experiences and that they have had an evolutionary and survival function. Emphasise that as emotions have served a function we should honour them).

- Are emotions always functional?
- How can we let go of destructive or dysfunctional emotions?
- How can we cultivate healing emotions? (Note that specific strategies to cultivate wholesome emotions will be explored in later sessions)

Discuss conditioning and how extinction of conditioned responses can occur.

Discuss the role of the brain in the learning process, if appropriate. Use the following or similar example to explain how dysfunctional emotional responses can be learned and also de-conditioned.

Imagine a little 2 year old boy called Jack walks down the road and he is confronted with a big angry and vicious dog. He becomes very scared and this fear is experienced at mental, biological and neurological levels. Next time he walks down the road he may want to avoid that side of the street. Imagine also that Jack’s mother is naturally protective and every time she goes down the street with Jack she become protective and avoids that side of the street and the dog. Avoidance behaviour, which is natural for survival is reinforced in all sorts of ways. As time goes on Jacks fear of one particular dog could become generalised to all dogs or even walking on streets in general. Not only are there biological fear processes working but also he has developed, through many different ways, beliefs about himself, and the world. When Jack grows up he still has the fear to walk down the street and all dogs even though he need not be afraid any more. Jacks reactions have been conditioned.

- How does Jack overcome this fear? How do we de-condition learned emotional responses?

Endeavour to have participants to explain their lay understanding about the process of extinction through gradual desensitisation from a perspective that is meaningful to them. Explore the value

of being able to tolerate difficult emotions, so that there is a rationale for being able to stay with and track changing emotional experiences. Explain, however, how exposure is one strategy to overcome the effects of traumas. Emphasise, however, that exposure must be gradual or there is the danger of re-sensitisation.

If it is relevant clarify the strategy of “stepping back into awareness”, as being a more stable refuge than being lost and identified with states of mind or emotions. Possible questions to awaken a more expanded perspective of experience could include: How do we know we are experiencing an emotion? What is it that is aware?

Experiential Exercise 10-15”

Use one or all of the following options as ways to practice the third foundation of mindfulness, Contemplating heart-mind

Option 1: Say we will do an experiment with states of mind or emotions. Just as we learnt last week that thoughts and language can impact very strongly on how we feel. This week we will experiment at seeing if we can name states of mind or our emotions in a way that is very objective and accurate, as they are.

Say: “I will say a number of words and all you have to do is name, to your self, the state of mind that arises in response to these words and bring mindfulness to this state of mind” “Bring awareness to the state of mind in a way that isn’t caught up or reactive to it but just very mindful of how you experience the state of mind and how it changes”.

Say “I will endeavour not to say any distressing words but as everyone is different some words may trigger negative reactions. If that is the case, use it as a practice run for dealing with distressing emotions”. In general ask participants to be allowing, soft and open to the experience and cultivate curious enquiry with questions such as: What am feeling? What is happening here? How does this experience change? What are my reactions or responses?

Read an arbitrary list of words and towards the end of the exercise endeavour to have words that may remind participants of wholesome and uplifting states of heart-mind. Make gaps between the words long enough that they may be able to register emotional states.

For example: bananas, dogs, anguish, sheep, work, torment, steel, mowing lawns, compost, money, bills, relationships, John Howard, mud, shops, clothes, nappies, alarm clocks,

Green trees, waterfalls, ocean, sky, deep, warmth, cool, shade, breeze, motion, dance, song, calm seas, fresh air, compassion, kindness, peace, joy, contentment.

Freedom, Peace.

Option 2:

Begin by asking listeners to establish moment to moment awareness with a primary object of awareness and then be silent for a few moments. Then ask group members to think about a pleasant event anywhere in one’s memory. If a pleasant event cannot be remembered imagine one. For example: “think about or imaging an event that brings happiness, joy or peacefulness to your heart”.

Say “Imagine as if the event is occurring and bring the sounds, images, etc., to mind and eventually bring attention to the type of emotion or mind state that has arisen. Name it as “peace”, “happiness”, “joy” or what ever it is. After a few moments ask participants to bring attention to the way the body feels in relation to the experience. Eventually let go of the memory and maintain awareness of the state of mind by saying the word that corresponds to it to oneself, as we do with noting.

Then say: “Just as you would shine the spot light on an a stage to focus on various actors, shine the spot light of mindfulness to the dimension of the state of your heart-mind””what is the state of my heart mind right now? What am I feeling? What is the flavour of this experience? What is happening? Can I feel this mind state in my body , if so what is it that I am experiencing?” “try to bring a sense of allowing and spaciousness to the experience and settle back and “be with” the experience.” “as much as possible bring open minded curiosity and kindness to the experience give it space and step back into a sense of awareness”.

After about 20 to 30 seconds of silence say: “Now bring attention back to this present moment and ask your self; What is present now? How is the heart now? What is the state of my heart mind now? How does this experience change? What feeds it and what flows from it?

Be silent for a few moments then finish the exercise stating that a longer mindfulness of mind exercise will be repeated after the tea break.

Option 3

If appropriate direct participants through the exercises as it is explained in option 2 then say:

“Now, with that same sense of “observing”, bring attention to a MILDLY unpleasant recollection such losing your keys or spilling coffee on your pants. See the images related to it and let thoughts about it arise. Ask yourself what is the mind-state I am experiencing right now? What is happening? Try to note and name the experience. Try to be open and allowing and bring kind and curious awareness to the state your heart-mind in response to the recollection. Try not to get entangled in thoughts about the experience but try to experience the state of your heart mind directly and accurately. Can you feel this response in your body? If so how does it feel? How would you describe the sensation? Can you step back and get out of the road of the experience and let it be with kind acceptance? Give the experience space and let it be and let it change” .

Eventually bring awareness back to a primary object.

Explain that the process of not reacting to and tolerating distressing emotions is not easy. If the process becomes too overwhelming and it feels as if it is re-sensitising rather than desensitising encourage participants to distract attention away from the distressing emotion.

Check the welfare of participants.

Tea break 15”

Guided exercise 20-25”

Emphasize that the following exercise may sound like guided meditation but it is really instructions and ideas for how to cope with difficult emotions when and if they arise. State that, reference to emotions and mind states will be made but if mind-states or emotions are simply not present do not force them to arise. Rather, bring attention to a primary object of attention. Emphasise that if individuals feel overwhelmed they can distract themselves, open their eyes and bring attention to something that seems outside themselves, and if needed get the attention of the assistant.

Read or adapt either the “Cultivating Mindfulness of heart-mind” script or “Letting go of painful emotions” script. Preface and inter-space the reading with periods of silence where participants can be aware of a primary object of awareness.

Contemplating the heart-mind- script (adapt the script to situation and circumstance-the whole script need not be read verbatim).

Ensure that you are at ease with your posture and your body is free from constriction and discomfort. Set the intention that for the next 15 to 20 minutes that you will first ground yourself with mindfulness of body practices then shift your attention to monitoring and contemplating the heart mind. Know also that being mindful of mind can include being aware of emotions as they arise and pass away moment to moment.

Let awareness centre on a chosen primary object. It may be sitting or the rising and falling of your abdomen. It could be strong sensations in your body or sounds. Whatever you choose let that object be like an anchor or a place of reference where you can bring your attention back to when you need. Allow your attention to be open and accepting and be with experience moment to moment. Use noting if this is helpful to bring about direct and clear moment-to-moment awareness in a non-judgmental manner.

Note what ever is happening in a soft, yet clear and distinct manner.

(Silence-2 minutes)

Just as a stage may have many performers and props but a spotlight can focus on one part of the stage, let the spotlight of your awareness focus on the state of your heart-mind. Do not reject other experiences, but let the state of your heart-mind be the focus of attention. You can shift your attention as if it is resting around the area of your chest if you wish, but let the central focus on the state of your mind or the general flavour, colour or atmosphere of your mood.

Just as a caring and kind healer may pay attention to the state of your being, bring kind and curious attention to the state of your heart mind. What are you experiencing right now in the domain of moods, emotions, and mental states. Tune into your heart and ask your what is happening here right now. In a manner that is kind, spacious and allowing, ask your self what am I experiencing in this moment. Try not to identify with the experience. Do not take it personally but see it as it is as a changing event. Try not to be hijacked by thoughts about the experience and tune in, as best you can, to the state of your mind.

Is your heart peaceful and calm, or is it disturbed by craving, and longing.

Is the state of your mind contracted and frightened or is it open and expansive with qualities of generosity and kindness.

Is the state of your mind, aversive, prickly, frustrated or angry, condemning and judgmental. Or is it loving, open, kind, soft and accepting.

Is the predominant state of mind, sad, depressed and miserable. Or is it buoyant, light and joyful.

Is it confused and uncertain, restless and distracted. Or is it clear, confident, calm and focused.

What is the state of your heart-mind right now? Be allowing and open and try to note and name the state of mind objectively and accurately.

(silence)

Once you have identified the current state of your mind, monitor how it changes.

If there are some physical sensations, strong or subtle, related to the state of your heart-mind, tune into how this feels in your body and notice how this experience changes. Sometimes the

state of mind may intensify, and sometimes it may subside, be content with whatever happens. Try not to grasp after the pleasant or reject and condemn the unpleasant, simply be allowing and see states of mind as they are without making them more than what they are by thinking unrealistically about them.

Notice how the experience arises and passes by.

Rest in awareness of the changing aspects of the heart-mind. Simply be present for the heart of your experience and let it come and go by taking refuge in the quality of awake awareness.

Resting in awareness you can hold and cradle any painful experience with kindness and care. Simply let painful states of mind be. Remember that they are not you and that they change. Let go of struggle and let the experience be. When you give the experience space it is as if you take refuge in awareness. Firmly grounded in mindfulness you can be deeply peaceful with all experience.

By taking refuge in awareness it is possible to tolerate pain. Take refuge in your awareness and allow awareness be your stable point of reference. It is as if this witnessing is deep and still within the roots of your being. Let awareness be like a solid and stable mountain in the midst of a windy storm. Let awareness be like the still depths of a lake when the surface is turbulent or like a solid island rock in the middle of a rough ocean with strong waves.

The states of mind like waves- coming and going, arising with a distinct energy then rolling on by and changing to something else.

Note the presence of the emotion and name or label them if you can.
Because they change they are not you.
Step back get unstuck from the experience, give it space.

Let it be and let it change. Be at peace with the experience

Silence

Without being caught up, develop curiosity about what is happening when this emotion arises. Also notice how your body feels in response to the emotions. Use noting to help you step back and investigate the experience. Look at and see the experience for what it is as it is rather than getting caught up in its story.

If the experience is painful or uncomfortable allow the power of compassion to help you bear and tolerate the distress. Let compassionate awareness be like an open house and see the state of mind like a visitor. Honour it and let it be felt in the body. But then let the door open and let the state pass through.

Silence

Resting in a perspective of awareness nurture and nestle wholesome states of mind. Try not to grasp after them. Without you getting in the road, joy and peace can arise naturally and without effort.

Whether the changing states of your heart mind are wholesome and pleasant or painful and difficult to bear. Be kind and spacious with the experience.

Simply stay present and note the experience with openness, compassion and care.

Be like a solid rock island in the ocean.
Be like the still depth of a lake.
Be like a solid mountain.
“Be” with the experience and let it roll by.
Be present completely here and now practicing mindfulness of heart-mind.

When you lose mindfulness simply remember to focus your attention, notice how things change then with equanimity monitor the changing states of the heart.

Silence 2-3 minutes.

In a few moments this recording will come to a close. If you have found it useful you can continue to practice that which was helpful during formal meditation or during your day to day, moment to moment activities.

May mindfulness of the heart-mind bring peace and joy to all.

Letting go of painful emotions with mindfulness- script (alternative to the above)

Ensure that you are at ease with your posture and your body is free from constriction and discomfort. Set the intention that for the next 15 to 20 minutes that you will practice the four domains of mindfulness with a kind, compassionate and open mind. Know that with this intention you will use mindfulness of body as your primary object and anchor. However, as the need arises you will be particularly aware of mind states including emotions as they arise and pass away.

Let your awareness centre on your chosen primary object. It may be sitting or the rising and falling of your abdomen. It could be strong sensations in your body or sounds. Whatever you choose let that object be like an anchor or a place of reference where you can bring your attention back to when you need. Allow your mind to be open and accepting and be with experience moment to moment. Use noting if this is helpful to bring about direct and clear moment-to-moment awareness in a non-judgmental manner.

Note what ever is happening in a soft, yet clear and distinct manner.

As your awareness becomes more and more present and centred allow this awareness to be your refuge. Though very illusive, it may seem as this awareness comes from a stable centre or a “knowing” frame of reference. Take refuge in this quality of witnessing and let the experience that it knows change according to nature. Let sounds, physical sensations, smells, sights, and tastes all change according to nature. Also be aware of mind states and mental objects such thoughts and emotions and let them come and go with out struggle or resistance.

It is as if this witnessing is deep and still within the roots of your being. Let awareness be like a solid and stable mountain in the midst of a windy storm. Let awareness be like the still depths of a lake when the surface is turbulent or like a solid island rock in the middle of a rough ocean with strong waves.

Take refuge in your awareness and allow awareness be your stable point of reference.
Now ask yourself “what is the state of my heart-mind right now”.

If there seems to be an emotions that you can name present, try to name it clearly and distinctly.

See emotions like waves- coming and going, arising with a distinct energy then rolling on by and changing to something else.

Note the presence of the emotion and name or label them if you can.
Try, as best you can, to cultivate a detached interest in how the emotion arises and passes.
Because it changes it is not solid. Because it changes it is not you.
Step back get unstuck from the emotion.
Try not to block the emotion or suppress the emotion.
Try as best you can, try not to condemn the emotion or push it away.
Also try, as best you can, not to be caught up in emotion. Don't try to keep it around and try, as best you can, not to hold onto or amplify it.
Silence

Remember that you are not this emotion. Be mindful and observe the emotions from the frame of reference that is still deep and centred in your roots. Practice willingness and radically accept your emotion

Like riding and directing a powerful horse, be willing to connect but know that you are not the emotion.

Without being caught up, develop curiosity about what is happening when this emotion arises. Notice all the thoughts that also arise with the emotion. Also notice how your body feels in response to the emotions. Use noting to help you step back and investigate the experience. Look at and see the emotion for what it is as it is rather than getting caught up in its story. It is as if the emotion is fabricated from thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and other experiences. Notice how one experience triggers another and new stories evolve and change. Bring mindfulness and wisdom to the experience and notice how it all changes. Because it changes it is not you.

If the experience is painful or uncomfortable allow the power of compassion to help you bear and tolerate the distress. Remind your self that this will pass and that tolerance and perseverance will eventually heal the pain. Let awareness be like an open house and see the emotion like a visitor. It won't stay long. Honour it and let it be felt in the body. But then let the door open and let the emotion pass through. Be with the physical experience of the emotion rather than trying to sort it out with thinking.

Silence

Be like a solid rock island in the ocean.
Be like the still depth of a lake.
Be like a solid mountain.
Remember that you are not your emotion
Remember that you don't need to act on your emotions if this does not serve your values.
Remember to cultivate compassionate tolerance.
"Be" with the experience and let the emotion roll on by.
Remember to remind yourself about the truth of this emotion
Remember to use self talk if this helps. Say to yourself things like "It's OK, this will change".

When the emotion has passed bring your attention back, as always, to now.
Remember to be here now and bring attention to experience in a direct, honest, non-judgmental and open-minded manner. As you need, anchor your attention back to your primary object and be with experience as it presents itself.

As this recording comes to a close you may choose go about your daily activities. If this exercise has helped you to let go of painful emotions then remember how you achieved this. As you shift your posture and go about your daily activities remember to be aware of emotions and how to cope with painful ones. Also remember how to cultivate wholesome emotions, and enjoy the peace that can be found with being mindful.

Feedback, check welfare and homework setting 10-15”

Check the emotional status of participants in a discrete and respectful way. Ensure that participants know how to cope if any distress arose during the exercise and it continues to be distressing. Reiterate strategies that may be helpful to cope with difficult emotions should they arise during the next week. Use clinical discretion and, if appropriate, provide contact numbers should participants feel overwhelmed, unable to cope and have the need to contact someone during the week.

If it seems timely and appropriate it is possible to finish this session off with a poem called the “The Guest house” A poem by a medieval Sufi mystic and poet called Jalaluddin Rumi (in Colman Barks (2003) “Rumi the Book of Love” New York: Harper Collins. pages 179-180).

SESSION SIX: REACTIVE CYCLING AND URGE SURFING.

Session overview.

- Reactive cycles and how to break them
- The balance between being active and doing nothing.
- Urge surfing - not being lost and dumped by the urge waves
- Emotional sailing - navigating through the mires and swamps of depression
- Exercises - mindfulness of feeling/letting go of painful emotions/sitting still and watching urge waves

This session is extending from previous sessions by bringing awareness to cyclic patterns. It begins as usual by doing mindful movement, which is followed by a relaxation exercise and a serenity meditation. The meditation practice may focus on calming with the breath, peace and joy with the breath or a creative visualisation going to a special place. Then, there is firstly a reflection on that which gets in the road of progress on the path of finding balance and components of reactive cycles. This reflection is done in pairs, after which each member practices mindful listening and speaking and shares their reflections if they feel comfortable with this. If we can be aware of urges then there is more opportunity to follow those that may be helpful and restrain from those that may be unhelpful. With depression, the lethargy cycle is highlighted and the importance of being active, by using something like the pleasant events schedule, is emphasised. Then other reactive cycles are explored with discussion about the types of patterns that lead to stress and mindfulness of intentions and urge surfing is explained.

The ending exercise involves meditation where there is some instruction in mindfulness of feelings and urges and sitting completely still watching urges for a few minutes. If it seems that group participants are able to cope leaders may continue this silent and still exercise for a longer period of up to 20-30 minutes.

Alternatively leaders can guide participants through a general meditation of choice such as one of those scripted below.

Mindful movement

Eg self shiatsu, yoga or Chi Kung followed by relaxation

Discussion about previous week.

If appropriate divide the groups in to pairs and ask them to reflect on:

How did participants go with noticing emotions and not getting entangled with destructive ones.

Have they been able to practice the meditations as instructed?

What have been the hindrances? That is, what have people identified with in them selves as barriers to progressing on the path of benefiting from mindfulness.

Ask to listen and speak with mindfulness and bring this back to the larger group.

Discussion about the obstacles to practice and reactive cycles- 20 mins.

Utilise the following questions to initiate discussion about obstacles and reactive cycles.

Discussion can occur in pairs after which the results of the discussion can be brought back to a larger group format or the discussion can come straight into the larger group.

1/What internal tendencies seems to block progress on the path of finding balance-

2/Do you notice patterns and reactions seem to happen in cycles? If so what are the various components of these cycles?

Listen and speak. Ask participants whether they have noticed that they can get caught in unhelpful cycles. Ask participants if they ever noticed that stressful reactions ever happen in cycles? If so, what are some of the components and patterns of these cycles? Write up on the white board for all to see. Some of the triggers could include the warning signs of mania or depression.

Explore with the group how patterns are sometimes habitual and sometimes they may be repeated because they feel more familiar than risking an encounter with the unfamiliar or uncertain. Allow plenty of time for general discussion about the cycles that people notice in their lives. Emphasise that all the elements in the cycle are interdependent, relying on each other to perpetuate or escalate the cycle. Refer to the “Reactive and Cyclic Patterns” sheet in the handouts. Run through the diagram. Explain that “Feeling” in this context refers to the affective tone of something or simply to whether or not something is pleasant/unpleasant/neutral. It is not the same as an “Emotion” which refers to the many different emotions we experience such as happy, sad, angry, frustrated, regretful, joyful, content etc. Dependent on the “Feeling” we have about something, we might experience an “Urge”. Dependent on whether something feels uncomfortable, comfortable, or neutral we may want to push it away, move towards it or do neither. Say that sometimes following the urge or what we feel we want to do is not in our best interests. Discuss urge surfing as explained in the handouts and as it is relevant for the group.

Urge Surfing

‘If we feel like following an urge will not lead us where we want to go, then we can “surf the urge”. The urge can be seen as a big wave, which arises, washes over us and passes away. To surf the wave means to “ride it out” or to allow it to come and go without being “dumped” by its force. Being “dumped” can sometimes happen when we struggle against the wave instead of allowing it to come and go with grace. In practice, “surfing the urge” usually refers to refraining from indulging in unhelpful habits so that they are not reinforced. Surfing an urge may mean doing something other than the habitual response or it may simply involve doing nothing but noting the urge and allowing it to come and go.’

Healing Painful Emotions – 20 min

Ask the group how they think the surfing analogy could also be applied to dealing with difficult emotions. Share ideas. Emphasise that being “dumped” by a difficult emotion involves getting hijacked or seduced by it when we do not need to engage with it.

Meditation exercise.

In particular individuals will be asked to make the intention to completely still for five minutes. If they absolutely need to move then it is ok to move. However, they are asked to bring attention to the urges and watch how they come and go. Other interesting options can be used for watching

urges, such as placing a small piece of food in ones mouth and just watching the urge to chew or swallow.

Another option for this exercise is to do walking meditation where the individual becomes very aware of the intention to take a step.

Guided meditation scripts:

Use one of the calming meditation scripts for a beginning session exercise and one of the scripts related to emotions, urge surfing or mindfulness of feelings for an exercise after the discussion about urges.

Calming the body with mindfulness of breath-script.

Listen to these instructions and use them to help develop mindfulness and concentration on the breath

Find a quiet and peaceful space and loosen up any tight clothing and be comfortable sitting on a chair or cushion.

Sit erect and ensure that your back, neck and head is upright and straight in a dignified and relaxed posture.

Make the resolve that, for the next 20 or so minutes, you will endeavour not to fidget or move unnecessarily.

Also make the resolve that for the period of this exercise you will put aside hankering after things not here or concerns about future goals or anything other than being here now and bringing your attention to the primary object of your attention. Let thoughts and experiences other than the breath and calming your body be on the periphery of your awareness and let the breath be your central focus.

Bring your attention to your breath and be aware of inhalations and exhalations. When you breathe in know that you are breathing in. When you breathe out know that you are breathing out.

Breathing in, note to your self "Breathing in"Breathing out note or say to your self "Breathing out". Don't try to control the breath but let it be as it is. If it is long let it be long. If it is short let it be short. If it is shallow let it be shallow. If it is long let it be long. Know and understand that you are breathing.

Concentrate upon what you are doing, sustaining your focus with single minded attention. Experiencing your whole body, be aware of the beginning, middle and end of each breath.

Breathing in, be aware of your whole body breathing out be aware of your whole body. If your mind gets pulled away from attending to the breath, note it and bring it back remembering your resolve to bring single minded attention to the breath and relaxing the body.

(30 secs silence)

Now with the in and out breath calm and tranquillise your body. Breathing in relax your body..... breathing out relax your body. Breathing in and relaxing know that that you are breathing in and relaxing..... Breathing out, know you are breathing out and relaxing. Breathing in relax tight parts of your body.....breathing out relax tight parts of your body

Breathing in be aware of tight parts of your body and let go of tension. Breathing out be aware of tight parts of your body and let go.

(30 secs silence)

Breathing in relax your whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body

Let go of thoughts about things other than what you are doing right now and let your mind be steadied and quietened..... stilled and concentrated. Be ardent and resolute making breathing and calming the body be the primary object of your attention. Sustain the thought I am breathing in and relaxing the bodyI am breathing out and relaxing the body.

Breathing in sooth discomfort breathing out sooth discomfort
Breathing in soften tight spots in your body.....Breathing out soften tight spots in your body.

2-3 minutes silences

Breathing in harmonise the body.....Breathing out harmonise the body.

Breathing in relax your whole body and know that you are relaxingBreathing out relax the whole of your body and know you are relaxing.

Breathing in relax whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body

Acknowledge distractions and without struggle but bring your single minded attention back to what you are doing.

Breathing in sooth discomfort breathing out sooth discomfort
Breathing in sooth discomfort breathing out sooth discomfort
Breathing in sooth discomfort breathing out sooth discomfort

Breathing in relax whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body
Breathing in relax whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body
Breathing in relax whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body

(silence 5 minutes)

In a few minutes we will end this exercise. If you have found that this practice has helped to sooth and calm your body and mind remember how you achieved this state. Remember what seemed to work for you. Also remember that you can do this practice throughout daily activities by bringing awareness to your breath and with the breath relaxing and soothing your body.

When you are ready slowly move your fingers and toes, shift your body and mindfully go about your daily activities.

Cultivating joy and peace using mindfulness and concentration on the breath-script

Listen to these instructions and use them to help develop concentration in order for peace and joy to arise.

Find a quiet and peaceful space and loosen up any tight clothing and be as comfortable as possible sitting on a chair or cushion.

Sit erect and ensure that your back, neck and head is upright and straight in a dignified and relaxed posture.

Make the resolve that, for the next 20 or so minutes, you will endeavour not to fidget or move unnecessarily.

Also make the resolve that for the period of this exercise you will put aside hankering after things not here or grief about things done that can't be changed. As much as possible, seclude yourself from concerns about the world and future goals or anything other than being here now and bringing your attention to cultivating joy and peace by concentrating on the breath. Let thoughts and experiences other than the breath and cultivating joy and peace be on the periphery of your awareness. Begin by letting the breath be your central focus.

Bring your attention to your breath and be aware of inhalations and exhalations. When you breathe in know that you are breathing in. When you breathe out know that you are breathing out. Do not force the breath in any way. Rather, let the rhythm of the breath be completely natural. Know and understand that you are breathing.

Concentrate upon what you are doing, sustaining your focus with single-minded attention. Experiencing your whole body,

Breathing in be aware, breathing out be aware. . be aware of the beginning, middle and end of each breath.

(30 secs silence)

Now with the in and out breath calm and tranquillise your body. Breathing in relax your body..... breathing out relax your body. Breathing in and relaxing know that that you are breathing in and relaxing..... Breathing out know you are breathing out and relaxing. Breathing in relax tight parts of your body.....breathing out relax tight parts of your body

(30 secs silence)

Breathing in relax your whole bodyBreathing out relax the whole of your body
.....

Let go of thoughts about things other than what you are doing right now and let your mind be steadied and quietened..... stilled and concentrated. Find somewhere in your body that feels good as you breathe. It could be the relaxing feeling in your muscles as they relax, it could be a sense of lightness in your whole body. It could be a sense of pleasure focused somewhere in your body such as your belly. It could be a sense of buoyancy around your chest area or the pleasant feeling around your face as it forms a gentle smile. Disregard any discomfort and bring all your attention to focus on the enjoyment in your body.

Breathing in feel enjoyment and know you feel enjoymentbreathing out feel and know enjoyment

Breathing feel pleasurebreathing out pleasure

(Silence 2 minutes)

Acknowledge distractions but without struggle bring your single-minded attention back to what you are doing.

Focus and become absorbed into the experience.

Breathing in feel and know pleasure breathing out feel and know pleasure

Silence 1 minute

Now bring attention to your state of mind. Discover, if it is there a sense of gladness embedded in the pleasant physical sensations.

Let luminous and bright awareness shine

Be wakefully alert and put craving and grasping aside. Also put ill-will, worries and doubts aside. Focus all your attention on breathing and cultivating joy. Bring all your attention to any sense of gladness no matter how small.

Breathing in feel and know gladness breathing out feel and know gladness.

Silence 2 minutes.

Nurture the feeling of simple happiness by bringing attention to it and sustaining attention on it.

Put aside worries and doubts. Disregard distractions.

Let your self become completely absorbed in this present moment and feeling a simple sense of happiness.

Bring your focused attention to this happy mind-state by pairing it with the serene and pleasant feelings in your body.

Breathing in feel tranquil and know joy, breathing out feel tranquil and know joy

Breathing feel and know joy breathing out feel and know joy

Silence 1 minute

Now bring attention to any sense of contentment. Put aside the “yes buts.....” let doubts be on the periphery of your awareness, on a shelf and out of view. BE here now. Here now, nurture contentment will simple presence and the way things are. Be happy with simple happiness. Focus and let yourself fell contentment here now.

Breathing in be content breathing out be content.

Bring sustained attention to contentment.

Breathing in say to your self “content” breathing our say to yourself “content”

Silence 1 minute

Breathing in be peacefulBreathing out be peaceful

Say to yourself the word peace and connect and resonate with the meaning of this word.

Breathing in P E A C E

Breathing out P E A C E

Breathing in P E A C E

Breathing out P E A C E

Breathing in experience deep P E A C E

Breathing out experience deep P E A C E

Breathing in experience deep P E A C E

Breathing out experience deep P E A C E

(silence 5 minutes)

In a few minutes we will end this exercise. If you have found that this practice has helped you experience some simple peace and joy in this present moment imprint in your memory how you achieved this state. Imprint on you mind how it felt and remember what seemed to work for you. Also remember that you can do this practice throughout daily activities by bringing awareness to your breath and with the breath reminding yourself of simple joy and deep peace.

When you are ready slowly move your fingers and toes, shift your body and mindfully go about your daily activities.

Cultivating well being with mindful reflection- script.

Ensure that you are at ease with your posture and your body is free from constriction and discomfort. Set the intention that for the next 10 to 15 minutes you will practice contemplating themes of peace and happiness and cultivating a peaceful and happy heart. If feelings of peace and happiness do not arise don't struggle or judge your self harshly. Rather, accept the natural ebbs and flows of the mind and allow your self to be fully present with what ever arises with a quality of accepting awareness.

Make the resolve that for the period of this exercise you will put aside hankering after things not here or grief about things done that can't be changed. As much as possible seclude yourself from concerns about the world and future goals or anything other than being here now and bringing your attention to cultivating happy and peaceful mind states. As much as possible, find a place away from busy circumstances and where you won't be disturbed.

Bring you awareness to relaxing your body and feeling comfortable. Perhaps you can scan for tension and let it go.

Let go of tension

Be comfortable

Let go of tension

Be comfortable.

Bring to mind the theme of simple happiness.

The kind of happiness that arises from giving up emotional burdens, or the kind of happiness that is un-entangled with complicated conditions.

Also bring to mind the theme of peace. The kind of peace that arises when your life is hassle free and your mind is not afflicted by destructive patterns. This peace is worry free.

You can use your imagination and bring to mind how such peace and happiness could be.

Perhaps you have had times in your life when you have had glimpses of this peace and happiness. Or, if you can't identify such times use your imagination. Reflect upon and bring to mind how such peace and happiness could be.

If there is a situation or a place related to these thoughts place yourself in this time and place as if it is happening now. Use your imagination and pretend that you can hear, see, smell, touch and feel this happy and peaceful situation as if it is happening right now. Pay attention to the details and let your mind find interest in these details. Be curious about what you may be seeing, what you may hearing, what you be smelling, what you may be feeling.

You could be with kind and loving friends, or somewhere special in nature such as on your favourite beach, or in a beautiful forest.

Don't be tempted by distraction. Let distraction be on the periphery or be put aside for the moment. Remember you resolve and bring focus back to what you determined to do.

Pay attention to the details and tune in to what is there. Feel the air, smell the wind, or feel the love. Let your self remember or connect feelings of simple happiness and peace. If you feel a sense of universal compassion let your self connect with this feeling.

As you connect with this theme notice how you feel in you body. Notice if by reflecting on peace and happiness you body feels good focus upon this experience. Notice also if your emotional heart is feeling calm and peaceful.

Now without forcing it to go let the imagery of a special place or situation drop away and nurture the experience of peace and happiness by focusing upon pleasant feeling that may have arisen in and around your emotional heart.

As you bring attention to this feeling add words to this experience. Let the words be consistent with the experience.

Words such as Peace or hearts release may be appropriate.

Words such as Happiness or joy may also be appropriate.

Words such as love and compassion may also be appropriate.

Focus on the themes by being attentive to how it feels and repeating the words.

Peace, peace peace

Happiness happiness happiness.

Love /compassion.

Don't be tempted by distraction. Let distraction be on the periphery or be put aside for the moment. Remember your resolve and bring focus back to what you determined to do.

Let thoughts about other things come and go or put them aside.
Put doubt, and worry aside and focus on what you are doing.

Do not force your attention but let your mind become absorbed in the experience because it is enjoyable.

Let your self enjoy the experience focus on the sense of well being

Peace peace peace

Contentment contentment

Happiness, happiness.

Silence 2 minutes

Let your body feel very relaxed and light. Let your mind feel bright and serene. Sink your attention into object of awareness. Let feelings of peace and happiness pervade every cell of your body like a sponge soaking up warm water.

As the feelings pervade your body and mind nurture it by saying to yourself

Peace peace

Contentment contentment

Happiness happiness,

Silence 3 minutes

In a minute we will end this exercise. If wish to continue you can by sustaining your attention on the themes of peace and happiness.

As you get ready to finish the exercise let your self feel refreshed and revitalised by the nourishment of the exercise. Know that you can bring this nourishment into the world and your life as you need. Know also that you can replenish it by finding the time and the place for the practice of cultivating peace and happiness.

Bell.

Letting go of painful emotions with mindfulness- script

From previous session.

Mindfulness of feeling-practice

- Endeavour to be attentive to experience in a non-judgemental manner.
- Be open and aware to life experience either during formal meditation practice or during day-to-day activities.
- Notice and investigate the quality of pleasantness, unpleasantness and/or neutrality as you come into contact with experience both during formal times of meditation practice and in day-to-day activities.
- Ask yourself whether or not an unhelpful emotional reaction triggered the feeling or was triggered by a feeling.
- On some occasions make a decision to pay specific attention to feelings.
- Tune into or spot light your awareness on this specific domain of experience.
- Notice other domains of your experience, such as the things that seem to lead to feelings, but let feelings be central in your awareness.
- Stay tuned, monitor and note the experience appropriately.
- Use noting words that seem suitable such as: pleasant, unpleasant, comfortable, uncomfortable, etc., Or “unpleasant feeling accompanied by hatred” , “pleasant feeling accompanied by grasping” etc.
- Notice the tendency to hold onto or be drawn into pleasant experiences, push away or step back from unpleasant ones, and space out or ignore the neutral.

- If the experience is pleasant enjoy it, but notice how it changes and try not to cling to the experience.
- If the experience is unpleasant, endeavour to be open-minded and investigate how this experience also changes.
- If the experience is neutral, cultivate interest and notice the details of the experience.
- Experiment tuning into this domain during formal meditation periods.
- Experiment at specific times during your day-to-day activities when you can focus specifically on feelings.
- In general, when feelings prevail during formal meditation periods or during your day-to-day life, note and be mindful with them as they arise.

Urge Surfing-practice

- Try to be mindful during all your waking hours.
- When an urge arises note it accordingly.
- It could be noted as “wanting....wanting”, “craving...craving” or “rejection.....rejection”, “urge...urge”, or “pushing awayaversion” etc., .
- Make a decision about whether or not the urge needs to be acted on.
- If acting on the urge is not necessary, or is not in line with what is valued, try “surfing the urge”. Just like a passing wave let the urge arise and pass on by.
- Like holding onto a something firm in the ocean when buffeted by waves, maintain awareness as an urge wave comes to towards you, builds in energy, tries to pull you along and then passes you by. Do not follow the urge and let it pass by.

HOMEWORK setting as described in the handouts for this session.

SESSION SEVEN: CARING FOR SELF, CARING FOR ALL BEINGS.

Overview

1. Grounding movement exercises to music
2. Wholesome relationships – discussion about four states of mind that are very helpful in relationships both with oneself and the world.
3. Caring kindness for oneself and others and how to practise this.
4. Drawing on social supports – Constructing “Support Trees”
5. Experiential exercise - group circle walking in synchrony to music.
6. Meditation exercise - Equanimity meditation and/or loving kindness meditation

Aims:

- To provide participants with ways that mindfulness and related practices can be integrated into their relationships with others.
- To clarify how the sublime states are ways of relating to oneself and other people as well as Calm meditation practices.
- To clarify how loving-kindness is opposite to hatred and an antidote for ill will.
- To clarify that caring for self is being able to cultivate loving kindness to self.
- To provide ways that this quality can be recognised, awakened and nurtured.
- To provide understanding about how the sublime states have near and far enemies.
- To provide strategies on how to practise the sublime states both as meditation practices and in daily relations with oneself and other beings

Strategies

- Movement exercises opening up the heart to music.
- Explore the nature of the four sublime states by asking participants to reflect on their own experiences with these states of the heart-mind.
- Explore how loving-kindness can be cultivated.
- Practise a guided meditation/ exercise where one or all of the sublime states may be cultivated
- Do a walking in synchrony to music as a group.
- Give instructions on how the sublime states can be cultivated both with formal meditation and during day-to-day activities.
- Loving kindness meditation

Centring exercise 20-25 ”

Begin, as usual, with a short mindfulness of body exercise where participants quieten their minds and establish mindfulness in their bodies.

Do a guided relaxation. Draw attention to the area around ones chest. Allow attention to be open with whatever the sensations that are present. Try to relax feeling the sensations with acceptance and if possible a quality of warmth and kindness. Bring to mind the memory of someone who has been very kind (to the participant) or a time when the participant may have been kind to someone else. Encourage participants to be mindful of whatever physical sensations, thoughts and emotions arise.

After a short relaxation do some physical movement exercises.

Option 1: Go through a series of stretches where one's chest is opened up and one's arms are stretched. Pay particular attention to stretching the heart and heart constrictor meridian (inside the arms) and self-massaging the areas on the inside of the forearms. Finish with lying face up and relaxing. Bring attention to relaxing the area around the chest. Encourage participants to use their imagination and they can imagine that they are breathing soft blue purple or green light into their chest area. If they are not visual types, encourage participants to relax the area around their chest.

Option 2: Stand and centre as above. Do some arm stretches then explain that this session movement exercise will be like a dance. Say that there will be music (i.e., Fleetwood Mac – Albatross) Give clear instructions that the tune will go for about 7 minutes and that the movement will be in time with the beat. The movement starts with hand on the chest then there is a step forward as the arms go out after which they return to the beat of the music. When the hands are on the chest one can imagine giving oneself feelings of warmth and acceptance and on the outward movements the warmth is shared with the world in the direction that they are moving their hands. Instruct that every eight beats we turn in the four directions.

Say that the aim of the exercise is to become aware of the chest area and in some ways free up tensions in that area. Explain also that, as usual, they should be mindful of movement. Show participants the movement then play “albatross” leaving the first eight beats with hands on one's heart /chest.

Homework review 15”:

First ask for feedback about the above exercise. Did they find by doing those physical exercises that they cultivated a sense of peacefulness? Relaxation? Calm? Physical release?

Then have participants split up into pairs and ask them to reflect on the last week. Then share their reflections with their partner using mindful speaking and listening.

Choose one or two questions to reflect on in order to check about progress and homework from the previous week.

How have they been going with their mindfulness practice?

Were they able to identify any reactive cycles and short circuit them?

Was the information from last week's session meaningful?

Were they able to cultivate peaceful states through Calm meditation?

Were they able to urge surf, or be active when the desire was absent?

What insights did they have during the week?

Then ask participants to bring the reflections and what was listened to back to the larger group forum and explore the themes of the previous weeks practice:

Were they able to let go or short circuit the tendency to proliferate and perpetuate negative emotions?

What did they notice? Could they use any of the strategies described last week? Did they discover any other strategies that they would like to share with the group? Were they able to prevent negative mind states from arising and cultivate the arising of wholesome mind states and, in particular, calm and concentration and joy?

Presentation/Discussion 30-40”

Explain that the previous sessions have been about how to let go of painful and destructive thought and emotional patterns and that last week we talked about short circuiting reactive cycles. One way to help the letting go of destructive patterns is by cultivating their opposites. Clarify how that when negative emotional states are abandoned, what is left are states of the mind that are consistent with helpful /wholesome tendencies such as peace, calm, joy, loving kindness,

compassion, joy at others successes and equanimity. State that this session is about cultivating four sublime states of mind that are particularly helpful when we engage in relationships. State that these states of mind are inherent with all people and that at some level or other we know these states of mind. For some individuals of these states are very familiar. Other individuals may need some reminders to awaken these qualities. This week we will talk about one of these sublime states next week in our final session we will talk about equanimity as a particular state of mind that can provide us with the ultimate sense of balance in the midst of the ups and downs of life and bipolar disorder.

If appropriate explain that Loving kindness not the type of love related to attachment or the type of love one exchanges for comfort or security. Rather, it is the cultivation of and capacity to offer unconditional care.

“Loving-kindness is an acknowledgment of the interconnection of all living things. Loving-kindness has the power to melt divisions or feelings of separateness and alienation both within ourselves and between ourselves and the world around us. Loving-kindness is the binding element of a harmonious community. Loving Kindness also enhances general well-being.”

If necessary and relevant say that compassion and loving-kindness are very similar but with compassion the aspiration is for freedom from suffering. Compassion is based around suffering and it can arise when we bear witness to or bring attention to suffering. Loving-kindness is different in that is based on happy emotions. It arises when we see the goodness in our self or others.

Like compassion loving kindness can be transforming and healing.

Use paired reflection and speaking /listening to enhance the possibly that loving kindness may be cultivated.

Ask group to pair up again and choose one or two of the following questions for reflection then sharing with mindful speaking and listening. Emphasise that being truly listened to can be powerfully healing. After reflection and sharing, bring the discussion back to the larger group and shape the discussion so that other questions may be address and the nature of loving kindness and possibly compassion by be clarified.

Facilitate a discussion based around the following questions:

- *What is self-care?*
- *How might self-care assist in preventing relapse?*
- *How are people kind to themselves?*
- *What stops people from being kind and caring for themselves?*
- *What does it feel like to be cared for?*
- *How does it feel to give love-kindness and care to someone else?*
- *How have they felt when they have experienced loving kindness by either directing it from themselves to others or feeling it directed towards themselves.*
- *What sorts of experiences encourage qualities of care and kindness?*
- *What kind of experiences are examples of acts of care and kindness.*
- *How can the four sublime states be cultivated?*
- *What is kindness?*
- *What are the opposites of loving kindness? (eg hatred, bitterness, resentment etc.,)*
- *What are the near enemies of Loving Kindness? (ie attachment, dependency, clinging, neediness, confusing sexual intimacy with love etc.,)*
-

If not mentioned during a discussion explain that equanimity is considered to be very important for the cultivation of genuine loving kindness, compassion, and joy. The reason for this is

because with equanimity we can clearly see that ultimately individuals are responsible for their own thoughts and feelings.

If relevant say that these states are called sublime because they are comfortable (mind states) places to be.

IEmphasise the natural ebbs and flows of the four divine abodes and that these mind states should never be forced. If they don't seem to be happening do not struggle and be mindful.

If relevant and it has not emerged from the discussion say that cultivating the four sublime states can occur formally or spontaneously. Some factors that help them to arise spontaneously include:

- Association with the wise, kind and compassion.
- Letting go
- Being mindful with an accepting and open mind.
- Bringing attention to one's emotional heart with acceptance
- Placing ones seelf in situations where enjoyment or joy and compassion may arise. (e.g., pet shops, in nature, with good friends, having fun, charity work etc., being around kind people, being in awe inspiring situations, listening music etc.,

Sometimes just having a pet to care for and be loved by is a wonderful way to cultivate the four divine abodes.

If not addressed during the discussion explain that there are many ways to cultivate loving-kindness both during meditation and daily life. In meditation and one can use one's imagination, visualisation, reciting phrases that are meaningful etc.

Mention that there are natural ebbs and flows of loving-kindness and it should never be forced. If it doesn't seem to be happening do not be concerned and be mindful."

ACTIVITY– SISTER ANGELA'S WALK – 10 min .

Do Sister Angela's walk to music (Pacobels Cannon or Cat Empires-The Crowd or other culturally relevant music with a 4/4/ beat) . (Angela's walk refers to forming a circle and making three steps forward and one step back in synchrony with other people in the circle. This movement is done to music in particular Pacobels Cannon or Cat empire "The Crowd".) Ask group participants to form a circle and explain that some people have found this exercise useful to cultivate loving-kindness. Others have not found it useful. Consider it as an experiment. If it works enjoy it. If it becomes boring or difficult be aware and note these mind-states. If some members are un-coordinated try to be humorous about it.

The steps are three steps forward and one step back in time to the four beats of the music. It may be very inappropriate to have physical contact within the circle, especially if there is a history of abuse with one or more of the members (which is very likely). If appropriate, however, physical contact can be made with the person in front by touching the back or placing a hand lightly and gently on the persons shoulder. (the appropriateness of physical contact depends very much on the comfort of group members). The physical contact is helpful if members choose to close their eyes. Generally, however, it is better to leave eyes open. When the music stops, stop walking and just be present for a few moments. If group member don't want to do the exercise they can sit to the side and listen to the music. The music by The Cat Empire is more upbeat than Paccobels Cannon and it participants can put more of a spring in their step. ,

"Sometimes this exercise helps to cultivate a sense of cohesiveness. Sometimes people who do this exercise also comment that they become peaceful and a sense of synchrony, warmth and kindness arises for others in the circle. Sometimes it is just enjoyable to walk to music and this joy

can be shared amongst us all. Even if some group members may be uncoordinated it we simply cultivate warm acceptance of them”.

Explain three steps forward two steps back with the music.

Tea break

Meditation exercises: Loving kindness meditations

Choose one option or conduct a guided meditation that is appropriate and suitable in order to cultivate one or all of the sublime states. The following scripts can be adapted according to need and context.

Loving oneself loving all beings-script

Ensure that you are at ease with your posture and your body is free from constriction and discomfort. Set the intention that for the next 20-30 minutes you first settle your mind and remember to be present here now in an open and non-judgmental manner. Then you will form the intention to practice loving-kindness in order to benefit all beings including yourself. Also prime yourself to feel indifferent or OK with whatever arises from this exercise. If feelings of loving-kindness do not arise don't struggle or judge your self harshly. Rather, accept the natural ebbs and flows of the mind and allow your self to be fully present with whatever arises with open acceptance.

Bring your attention to the present moment and anchor yourself in this moment by bringing attention to that which is predominant in the here and now. Allow your self to settle and be at peace with present moment experience.

Silence 2-3 minutes.

Bring to mind themes of happiness. Perhaps you can remember a time when you have felt happy or if not, how such happiness could feel. If you can bring to mind a happy event this can help you connect with the feeling of happiness. Contemplate a happy event as if it is happening right now. Imagine you can see the scene, hear the sounds, smell the smells and generally feel the ambiance. As you bring to mind the happy recollection your heart may respond by opening to this happiness. Let the feeling bloom and grow, and put the word “happiness” to the flourishing feeling.

It may feel like light buoyancy in your heart. Be curious about how this feeling is experienced, and nurture it by bringing attention to it. Note and name the experience as “happiness”.

Silence 1 minute

Bring attention to this feeling and let the thoughts about the happy event grow. Do not force your attention but let the feelings of happiness grow so they fill your chest and spread to every cell of your body and every part of your being and life.

Let it grow by bringing gentle and delicate attention to the area around your chest.

Say to yourself and connect with the words.

May I happy

May I truly be happy

Completely let go of resistance and struggle and let happy feelings grow and flourish, and soften and melt with these feelings. Feel nurtured and healed by the feelings of happiness in whatever way that they seem appropriate to you.

May I be happy

(Silence 1-2 minutes)

Now bring to mind thoughts of peacefulness. Peacefulness includes the sense of being completely free from the burden of ill will and resentment. A heart liberated from bitterness and hatred is a heart at peace. Perhaps you can cultivate this feeling by thinking about someone who is peaceful or remembering a time when you were peaceful. Bring this time or person to mind and let peace be your heart's response.

Let peacefulness fill your heart and spread to every part of your being. When your attention wanders do not struggle but merely bring attention back to the feeling of peacefulness and let it grow.

May I be peaceful.

May I be peaceful

Silence 1-2 minutes.

Bring to mind thoughts of safety. Being safe means being protected from all harm. Perhaps you can think of a special place or event or situation where you felt completely at peace because you are safe in this place or in this situation. Bring this event or situation to mind, as if you go there and you connect completely with the sights, sounds smells, sensation and thoughts of the experience.

Silence 1-2 minutes

Let the sense of safety fill your being. Connect with this sense of safety and the words.

May I be safe, free from all harm

May I be safe, free from all harm

Silence 1-2 minutes

Reflect on what it may mean to be healthy in body and mind. Perhaps you can tune into the feeling of vitality and ease here now as we meditate, or you can bring to mind how such feelings could be. A healthy mind may be one that is free from remorse and regret, uplifted and at peace. A healthy body may feel relaxed and energised, vital and pain free. Whatever a healthy body and mind may mean to you, reflect and contemplate the idea of freedom from troubles of mind and body. If, as you contemplate a healthy mind and body, it becomes the reality of your being, here now, gently connect with this reality and let it fill your body mind. Otherwise, tune into how such feelings are and be open to resonate with these the feelings of health.

May I be healthy in body and mind.

May I be healthy in body and mind.

Silence 1-2 minutes.

Now, with a mind filled with self-love, project your thoughts into the days, weeks or months ahead. See your self going about your daily activities and meeting the challenges and joys that life brings. If, as you project into the future, you see a heart constricted with fear or gloom, bring kind understanding to these projections. Realise projections of the future are not necessary the reality of the future. Remember that mindfulness, actions directed by wisdom, compassion, joy and warm kindness have the power to transform suffering. Remember that wise actions of body, mind and speech can protect your happiness. Here now, in this present moment cultivate the aspiration to take mindfulness, wisdom, compassion, joy and warm kindness with you as protectors as you move through life. Perhaps you can see yourself moving through life meeting the challenges of life with wisdom peace and joy, calmly and with ease.

May I be able to protect my own happiness.

May I be able to protect my own happiness.

Silence 1-2 minutes

Reflect on what it means to love one self by opening your heart to yourself. Realise that all other beings are also in your heart and that by bringing warm kindness and compassion to your self you also bring warm kindness to other beings.

Say and connect at a feeling level the words;

May I happy

May I be peaceful

May I be safe, FREE from harm

May I be healthy, FREE from troubles of mind and body

May I be able to protect my own happiness.

May all beings be happy

May all beings be peaceful

May all beings be safe, FREE from harm

May all beings be healthy, FREE from troubles of mind and body

May all beings be able to protect their own happiness.

Cultivate feelings of loving kindness

Silence 5-10

Bell.

Guided meditation: The hearts release through Loving kindness-script

Adjust script depending on the nature of the group time etc.,

Ensure that you are at ease with your posture and your body is free from constriction and discomfort. Set the intention that for the next 20-30 minutes you first settle your mind and practice general awareness and openness with the way things are. After that bring the intention to practice loving kindness in order to benefit all beings including yourself. Also prime yourself to feel indifferent or OK with whatever arises from this exercise. If feelings of loving-kindness do not arise don't struggle or judge your self harshly. Rather, accept the natural ebbs and flows of the mind and allow your self to be fully present with what ever arises with a quality of accepting awareness.

Bring your attention to the present moment and anchor yourself in this moment by bringing attention to that which is predominant in the here and now. Allow your self to settle and be at peace with present moment experience.

Silence 5-10 minutes.

Realise that a mind filled with ill will and hatred is a mind entangled with suffering and set your intention to let go of this affliction. Turn your undivided attention to the cultivation of goodwill and loving-kindness. Know that deep within the hearts of all beings there is the potential for kindness. Connect with this quality within your own heart. You can connect with this quality of friendliness by using any means that works for you. You can use visualisation, reflection or by repeating words or phrases that are meaningful for you.

Reflect upon times when you have been kind to another or someone has been kind to you. Let that reflection awaken a memory of how loving-kindness feels and gently focus upon it. Remember the feeling of kindness and being loved and bring attention, free from ill will, to this feeling.

Know that somewhere, deep inside your heart, there is a soft and loving quality and let it grow. You may see it as a warm ember that gets stronger and stronger or a soft flame, or an opening flower or just a warm glow.

Relax with warm acceptance to whatever physical sensations are present in the area around your chest.

When you are aware of kindness in your heart sustain by remembering to return your focussed attention to it.

Let it grow by bringing gentle and delicate attention to the area around your chest.

Say to yourself and connect with the words.

May I happy

May I be peace I

May I be safe, FREE from harm

May I be healthy, FREE from troubles of mind and body

May I be able to protect my own happiness.

May my heart be filled with loving kindness. May my heart be filled with genuine care and acceptance. May barriers melt and may I feel connected both within myself and to all beings. May I truly be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be FREE from all troubles of mind and body. May I abide in joy and harmony with all things.

Silence 2-3 minutes

As these aspirations tumble around in your heart allow loving-kindness to grow from your chest area to include the whole of your body mind. Touching upon every cell. Touching upon every organ every part of the body and the mind. You may see it a warm growing glow, or feel it as a general melting or a loosening of tension. You may just know that it is happening.

What ever seems to work for you let it be and let it grow. Sustain it by returning open and focussed attention, without struggle, to the process.

May I truly be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be healthy in mind and body. May I abide in joy and harmony with all things.

May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be FREE from all troubles of mind and body. May I abide in joy and harmony with all things.

Silence 2-3 minutes

Bring to mind someone who is still living that you have unconditioned care and un-entangled love for.

Think..... May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be FREE from all troubles of mind and body. May you abide in joy and harmony with all things.

Perhaps you can see them receiving your loving kindness, smiling and being filled with the healing energy of Loving kindness.

May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be FREE from all troubles of mind and body. May you abide in joy and harmony with all things.

Silence 3-5 minutes

Bring to mind other beings and share your loving kindness with them.

May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be FREE from all troubles of mind and body. May you be able to protect your own happiness.

Let the energy of loving kindness shine out beyond the confines of what we usually call ourselves into your surroundings and out into the world around you. Let this loving kindness energy touch the hearts of other beings, people in the streets, people as they work, beings in the skies and in the oceans. Being in other lands and beings who are very different to us.

Whatever beings there are:

May their hearts be filled with happiness.

May their hearts be peaceful

May they know joy that knows no sorrow

Let this soft and gentle kindness spread around our precious planet and universe.

May the hearts of all beings be filled with loving kindness.

May all beings , be at peace.

May all beings be truly happy

May all beings be FREE from conflict and hardship

May all beings abide in joyous harmony.

May all beings be happy

Silence 2-5 minutes

Now come back to being aware of your self your own heart and where you are in this room.

Realise that you can access this quality when you need. Realise you can radiate loving kindness in daily activities in contact with the world around you or during periods of formal meditation practice. You can practice simple acts of kindness in many different ways.

If you wish you can stay sitting radiating loving kindness or you can begin to shift your body and go about your daily activities.

May all beings be happy

Ensure that everyone is OK- Give homework ask them to complete the question s on how to cultivate self care, and also the support tree.

SESSION EIGHT: PROGRESS AND RELAPSE PREVENTION. EQUANIMITY: FINDING THE STILL POINT IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Overview:

- Grounding movement exercises
- Wholesome relationships - Being at peace with the world and oneself (equanimity)
- Discussion about what it means to be stable and centred in the midst of life's changes
- Review of coping skills learnt – “Bag of Tricks”
- Relapse prevention – “Lapse” vs “Relapse”
- The meaning of progress
- Summarising the program
- Evaluation of program
- Meditation exercise - Equanimity meditation

Strategies

- Discuss/enquire with the group about what they think progress may mean.
- Discuss the idea and necessity of ongoing practice
- Question the group members about how they think they may prevent relapse should symptoms re-emerge.
- Discuss strategies for relapse prevention.
- To clarify how the four sublime states are a natural progression of mindfulness practice and a way that this practice can be expressed-general discussion about equanimity .
- Provide options for ongoing practice

Centring exercise 15-20”

Mindfulness of movement of participants' choice and relaxation.

Another option for the physical exercises is to repeat the movements and stretches used in the session on loving-kindness.

Homework Review 15”

Reflection question –in pairs.

How have you been going in the last week?

Did you endeavour to cultivate and or practice loving kindness in the last week? If so how did you go? What did you notice?

This may lead into a broader group discussion.

Elicit how the participants coped with the homework. Could they be attentive to states of the heart mind without getting caught up in their drama? Could participants generate a quality of open kindness to themselves or others? Did they notice that generating a quality of loving kindness was helpful? Did they notice that people responded with them differently? Could they in fact move and be in the world with a greater sense of ease and peacefulness? Did they find that there were barriers? Could they be ok with themselves even when loving kindness or compassion was not evident? Could they generate a sense of self-acceptance?

Make a statement about how this is the last session of this course and that we will cover tips on how to use the skills in an ongoing manner to help prevent relapse. We will also discuss equanimity as a balanced state of heart-mind and a way to maintain balance.

ACTIVITY ONE – “Bag of Tricks” – 15 min

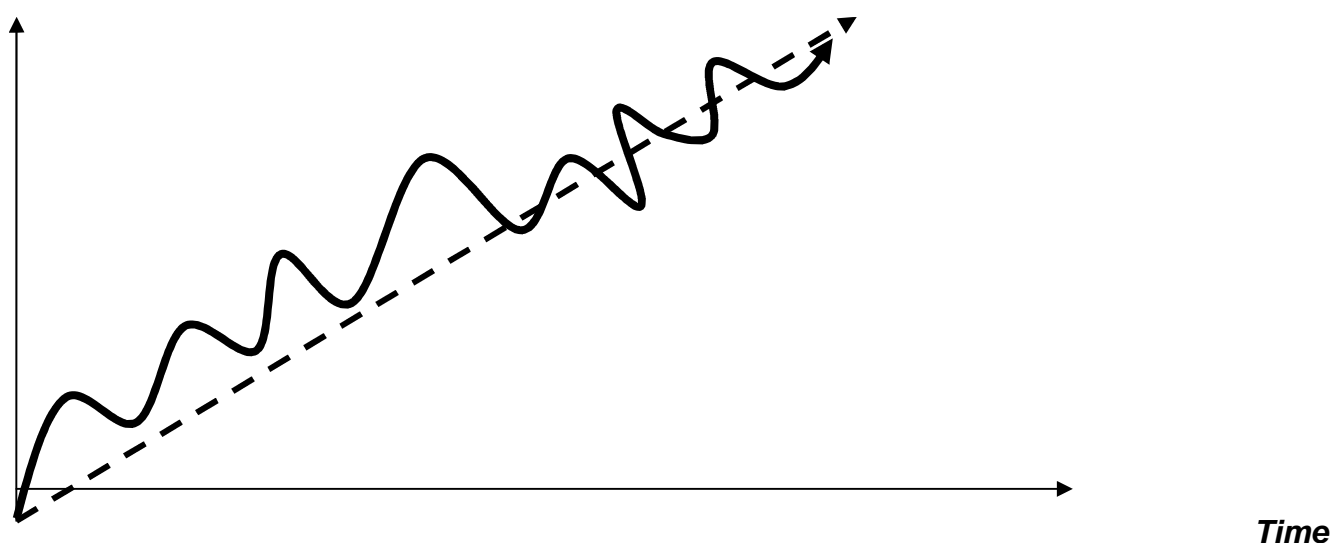
Need: Butcher’s Paper, Handout, Pens.

Explain that we’ve learnt a wide variety of strategies for staying well during this program. Then ask the participants to find a quiet corner and come up with their top 5 coping strategies they have learnt. Ask them to write them in their “bag of tricks” along with the description of when they would use them. Come back together and share some ideas. Or write them up on a board.

RELAPSE PREVENTION – 10 min

“When we began this program, we spoke about how it would not be a magic wand that would make all problems disappear, but has anyone noticed any positive effects from the skills we’ve learnt?” *Discuss this with the group.*

Draw a similar diagram to this one on the board:



“Improvement never goes like the dotted line, straight up. When people get better they do so in a way that is more like the solid black line, there are many ups and downs. But how do we know we are just in a trough and not sliding back down to how we used to be permanently? What makes the difference?”

Discuss various ideas with the group. Try to emphasise that the group now knows things they never did before as demonstrated by their “Bag of Tricks”. Discuss participants’ fears, if any, of relapse. Go over ways to maintain the practice.

Cover the issues of relapse prevention, progress and maintenance of balance.

- Ask questions about progress, relapse prevention, the need for ongoing practice, etc., and engage in discussion about these points. Follow the information in the handouts if necessary.
- Ask for general feedback and comments and respond to any questions that individuals may have.
- Be sensitive to participants’ possible disappointment that the course is ending.
- Ensure and give information that may enhance confidence about ongoing practice.
- Provide options for how to continue meditation practice such as times and places for group meditation meetings.

Presentation/discussion: Equanimity

Lead into a presentation or discussion about equanimity.

If time divide in to pairs and ask them to reflect on what would it be like to be unshaken by praise and blame, loss and gain, pain or pleasure and fame or being socially insignificant.

OR

Discuss equanimity using questions and prompts to awaken understanding about the four sublime states. Possible question to begin discussion:

- Has anybody heard the joke about the social workers and changing light globes? (How many social workers does it take to change a light globe? A: It doesn't matter but the light globe has to really want to change).
- Has anyone ever tried to change the way another person act or behaves?
- Is it possible to change other people by telling them to change? Sometimes people change but often they don't. Why is this the case? (A: because people need to change themselves).
- If people need to change themselves can we ever accept full responsibility for the way other people think, feel and act? If not, why not?
- What is equanimity? For those who have never heard this term what could it mean?
- What does the phrase "being unshaken in the face of adversity" mean?
- What does being centred mean?
- How can we be peaceful when we are faced with inevitable ups and downs of life?
- How could equanimity be useful with bipolar disorder?
- How could we deal with the ups of mania and the downs of depression with equanimity? What would be example of this in practice.
- Are wisdom and equanimity related?
- How can equanimity be cultivated?
- What is compassion?
- What sorts of experiences bring forth compassion?
- What is the difference between true compassion and compassion that is based upon arrogant pity or rejection of pain?
- Is compassion the same or different from rescuing another person from their suffering?
- What are the near and far enemies of compassion?
- What is sympathetic joy?
- In what types of situations would sympathetic joy arise?
- What could be the near and far enemies of sympathetic joy?

Evaluation 10-15"

Hand out evaluation questionnaires and scales.

Invite participants to do the evaluation questionnaire and quantitative measures as a mindfulness exercise, expressing that it is a way to assess change over time and that it becomes an awareness exercise in itself. Handout evaluation forms before morning teas, so that participants can complete forms during morning tea if they wish. Do not wait till the end of session to handout the evaluation forms. Frame the evaluations as a mindfulness exercise where participants can reflect over the past eight weeks and the progress that may have made.

Tea Break 10"

Final exercise

Leaders need to choose an appropriate final exercise. A few possible equanimity meditations are scripted below. It may be more appropriate to do “Sister angelas walk” as explained in the previous session.

Guided meditation: Equanimity-Like a mountain in an ocean-instructions.

Make your self completely comfortable. If you can sit on the floor on a cushion endeavour to find stable points that may act like a fulcrum. Find that central point that moves through your body from the crown of your head to the base of your spine. Become stable around that point. Then make an imaginary fulcrum or support that goes from the base of your neck to the floor behind you supporting the back of your body and keeping you centred and stable. Then find a stable central point somewhere in your body-mind and centre your self around that point.

Feeling stable and centred imagine that you are like a mountain rising up from the ocean. Solid and stable, strong and unshaken by storms or rough seas-even unshaken by sunamis and hurricanes---you like a stable mountain are unshaken you are unshaken by all these assaults.

Like a stable mountain you are unshaken by the winds of life. You are stable as a mountain in a storm unshaken by praise and blame, loss and gain, pain and pleasure and fame and social insignificance.

Dwell in the sense of being like a stable mountain unshaken by the natural ups and downs of life.

Dwell in the peaceful heart of equanimity.

Equanimity or acceptance for young people-script/instruction.

Make yourself completely comfortable and set your intention that for the next 10-15 minutes that you will tune into being at peace and balanced within yourself. Equanimity is one term that is used for this balanced sense of being centred and set the intention to nourish this quality so that it is a nice state of mind to hang out in. Know also that developing and meditating on equanimity will ultimately benefit other beings.

So first relax and settle your mind and remember to bring attention to the present moment without struggle or tension. Be open and carefree about whatever comes up....be that sounds, smells tastes, sights and physical sensations. Also be open to, and carefree about thoughts and feelings as they arise here now.

Silence for about 1-2 minutes

Reflect on the hassles related to getting over reactive to people, places, events, situations or things. Even though many situations require a wise response, sometimes over reaction can be destructive. Resolve to courageously changing the things that need to be changed, accepting the things that can't be changed and having the wisdom to know the difference. Aim to develop a centred and balanced heart mind.

Think about equanimity. Equanimity is very peaceful, centred, stable, emotionally balanced and unshaken in the midst of life's changes. Like a flexible bamboo in the wind, equanimity is not

broken by the winds of getting blamed and then praised for things, equanimity is ok with whether you get or lose things, equanimity is at peace with things regardless of whether they are painful or pleasant. Equanimity is also totally cool and unshaken about whether you become famous or nobody hears about you. Equanimity is like a mountain buffeted by storms.....it is strong, stable and unshakable.

Equanimity is like the still point in the eye of the storm...still and peaceful. Equanimity is the spacious stillness of mind that arises when we wake up to things like the understanding that actions will always have consequences and that people need to be responsible for what they do.

(silence 20 seconds)

Equanimity is peaceful. This quality is deep with in the hearts of all human beings. See if you can find it within your self. Perhaps you can remember a time when you were completely peaceful. Or you can think of someone who is wise, centred and emotionally balanced. When you think about this person, your heart may vibrate with theirs and be peaceful. Even if you can't find any memories of peace...just know that it is there within the hearts of all beings including you.....

Feel nourished by being aware of the peace that is deep in your heart. This peaceful heart is untouched by hassles. This place is still, quiet and peaceful. It is at peace with whatever happens. You can dwell in this peaceful space of your heart and take refuge in it....nothing can get to you there.

As you dwell in the peaceful heart....it is like it grows to protect you with a buffer zone.....you can feel safe within the buffer zone.

Perhaps using meaningful words may be helpful.
Think...

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by hassles....

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by what people say that is both unhelpful or untrue.....

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by getting or losing things...

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by the inevitable ups and downs of life.

.....

May I have the peacefulness to accept the things I cannot change, change the things I need to change and the wisdom to know the difference.

May I be peaceful.....

May I bring the spacious stillness of my heart to all things....

May I be at peace connecting with the spacious stillness of my heart.....

Repeat one or two phrases and truly connect with the meaning the words.

(silence 2-3 minutes)

Be at peace dwelling in the heart

As we bring this meditation to a close, reflect on what worked for you to help awaken the peace of equanimity. And remember that you can bring the awakened spacious stillness of equanimity to every encounter of your every day life.

Thankyou.

Experiential exercise: Equanimity meditation (longer version) .

Place yourself in a comfortable posture free from discomfort and at ease. Make the intention that for the next 20 to 30 minutes you will first establish mindfulness and focus on a on a chosen object in order to be aware with a calm, still and stable mind. Then, you will contemplate equanimity so that this sublime quality may arise and be an object of meditation.

Begin by settling your mind and body and establishing general awareness of this present moment with an open and accepting mind. Be present for experiences as they arise without clinging or rejection but with interested and curious attentiveness. Be open to sensory physical experiences such as sounds, smells, tastes, sights and physical sensations. Also be open to, and carefree about mental experiences such as thoughts and feelings as they arise in this present moment.

Relax and settle into this present moment without resistance or tension and be aware of your chosen object or objects.

Silence for about 5 minutes

Reflect on the burden of being entangled in emotional over reactions to people, places, events, situations or things. Even though many situations require a response, reflect on the destructiveness of unwise and often habitual and cyclic overreactions to these situations, events or things. Reflect on the suffering involved in clinging to views and patterns of over reactions and resolve to let go of destructive habits. Resolve to incline yourself toward peacefulness. Resolve to incline your mind towards courageously changing the things that need to be changed, accepting the things that can't be changed and having the wisdom to know the difference. Incline the mind to a centred and balanced perspective.

Bring to mind and ponder the quality of being emotionally centred with equanimity. Equanimity is an uplifted sense of being centred, stable, emotionally balanced and unshaken in the midst of changing life events. Equanimity is a state of mind that is unshaken by praise and blame, loss or gain, pain or pleasure, fame or disrepute. Equanimity is a wise state of mind that remains unshaken by social rejection or others harsh and unrealistic judgements. Equanimity is like a stable mountain buffeted by storms. It is the opposite of being emotionally over reactive to changing life events or feeling responsible for other peoples' actions and taking things personally. It is not disinterested indifference, feeling flat or a cold impartiality. Equanimity is an a sense of engaged understanding about change.

Equanimity is a stable and unshakable quality of mind. It is even minded and able to let go attachment to expectations. Equanimity is the spacious stillness of mind that arises with wisdom. With equanimity we realise that situations are often the result of previous choices and that each and every different individual must be responsible for their own actions.

(silence 1-2 minutes)

Equanimity is peaceful. Access this quality within yourself with what ever means is useful to you. Perhaps you can think of someone within whom equanimity is a powerfully stable centre. Someone who is wise, centred and emotionally balanced. When remembering this person the qualities of equanimity may arise in you.

(silence 1-2 minutes)

Or perhaps you can remember a time or circumstance when and where equanimity was a state of your mind. Remembering this time may rekindle this quality of mind for you.

(silence 1-2 minutes)

Perhaps you can reflect on change and the laws of cause and effect. The wise heart knows that every action has a consequence. The wise mind knows that actions performed with wholesome intentions are more likely to have wholesome consequences than actions done with the intent of harm.

The wise mind knows that all beings are the owners of their actions, born of their actions, related to their actions, abide supported by their actions. Whatever actions they shall do, of those actions they will be the heirs.

(silence 1-2 minutes)

If and when equanimity arises dwell on the still and centred peacefulness of this quality. If words or phrases help to cultivate and nurture this quality use such phrases to keep you focused.

As you say phrases that are meaningful to you, become focussed and absorbed with the meaning of the words. Be unconcerned about distractions. Put aside the hindrances and without struggle or strain bring single minded attention to the quality of equanimity,

Choose one or two phrases and repeat them over and over, connecting with their meaning.

May I openly accept things as they are.....

Other beings' joys and sorrows are related to their actions and do not depend on my wishes.....

Things are just the way they are.....

May I be peaceful and accepting with the way things are.....

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by praise or blame, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, fame or obscurity.....

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by the inevitable ups and downs of life.

.....

My actions are my only true belongings

My actions are the ground on which I stand.....

May I have the serenity to accept the things I cannot change

May the peace of acceptance fill my being

May I be peaceful.....

May I bring the spacious stillness of my heart to all things....

May I be at peace connecting with the spacious stillness of my heart.....

Repeat one or two phrases and truly connect with the meaning the words.

(silence 5-10 minutes)

As we bring this meditation to a close, reflect on what worked for you to help awaken the peace of equanimity. And remember that you can bring the awakened spacious stillness of equanimity to every encounter of your every day life.

The four sublime states –recitation-script

Settle into being comfortable and at ease. Make the intention that for the next 10 to 15 minutes you will practice reciting phrases related to loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. To not struggle with these state of mind but nurture their arising in a natural non-forceful manner by listening to the following phrases then saying them to your self in a manner that is sincere and honest.

Loving Kindness

May I be free from ill-will and hatred

May I be safe

May I be happy and peaceful

May I be healthy and strong in body and mind

May I be able to protect my happiness and care for myself joyfully

Think of someone else or a group of other beings and say the same phrases replacing “I “ with “you”. Then radiate loving kindness in all directions and replace “I “ with “all beings”.

May I be free from the burden of ill-will and hatred

May my heart be filled with loving kindness for myself and all beings

Compassion

May I be free from suffering

May I be free from stress

May I be free from worry and fear.....

It is possible to replace “worry and fear” with particular tendencies or habits that cause oneself to suffer. It is important, however, to focus or dwell on the quality of “freedom”, and not the tendencies that one would like to be free from.

Later, or if it is more suitable, replace “I” with “you” and finally “all beings”

May my heart be filled with compassion for myself and all beings

Sympathetic Joy

May I have joy at others’ successes

May I celebrate in others’ achievements

May I (or they) never cease from enjoying happiness and freedom.

Equanimity

I am the owner of my actions

Heir to my actions

Born of my actions

Related to my actions

Abide supported by my actions

Whatever actions I shall do, of those actions I shall be the heir

I am what I have done

I will be what I do

All beings are the owners of their actions

Heirs to their actions

Born of their actions

Related to their actions

Abide supported by their actions

Whatever actions they shall do, of those actions they shall be the heirs

Other beings’ joys and sorrows are related to their actions and do not depend upon my wishes.

Things are just the way they are

May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by praise or blame, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, fame or obscurity.

In a few moments we will end this exercise. If you noticed that loving kindness, compassion sympathetic joy or equanimity was, even in a small way, somehow awakened remember that which seemed to bring it forth. Know that at times in future it will be possible to awaken these qualities when and as they are needed. Know also that you can bring these qualities into your life as you mix and interact with others.

Ensure everyone in the group is ok. Remind participants to return for a follow up session in a month or so.

MINDFULNESS FOR WELL BEING COURSE.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

Please read and answer the following questions and use them as a way to reflect on how this course in mindfulness was for you.

Your name: _____

Today's date: _____

The main aims of this course were help you reduce the distress of stress, anxiety and depressive experiences.

1. To what extent has this course helped you address these aims?
(Please circle)

not at all			somewhat				completely		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What has been helpful and how has it been helpful?

What has not been so helpful and what suggestion do you have for improvements?

2. On reflection what do you feel you will be able to take away from this course and use in the future? Or put another way, what helpful qualities do you feel you have begun to cultivate and nourish?

To what extent have you been able to cultivate these helpful qualities?

not at all			somewhat				completely		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

On reflection what destructive patterns do you feel that you have been able to let go of or begin to let go of? Put another way, what unhelpful habits have been reduced in their power over you?

To what extent have you been able to let go of unhelpful habits and patterns?

not at all

somewhat

completely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. If you have had positive changes over the period of the course, to what extent do you think you could attribute these changes to attending the course and developing mindfulness, kindness and wisdom?

not at all

somewhat

completely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you have any further comments?

5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the course that you attended?

not satisfied at all

somewhat satisfied

very satisfied

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you have any general comments?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.