



## Introduction

Rather than escaping emotional pain we deal with it through the practice of awareness and acceptance. Emotional responses are often rooted in the animal level of our being; hence one of the most effective ways of dealing with them is through mindfulness of the body. The key attitude is that of being present with emotional pain, neither suppressing nor acting on it. This approach is equally valid for dealing with very strong states such as fear or depression, by simply coming face to face with the moment-to-moment reality of our symptoms. The results of scientific research show that mindfulness and meditation (sometimes combined with CBT as in the MBCT course) is as effective as maintenance anti-depressants in preventing a relapse into depression, and more effective at enhancing peoples' quality of life.

## In this session

In this session we have introduced the following concepts:

- Key to working with emotional pain – awareness and acceptance. We deal with emotional pain by being present in the body in the moment when it arises, not thinking about it in the abstract.
- Be gentle, compassionate and patient. Treat the pain as you would a scared and injured animal. Be aware that the situation and your reaction to it are actually two different things.
- “That which sees suffering is not itself suffering.” – Obaku
- Principal barrier to mindfulness – lack of willingness to see things as they really are.
- Mindfulness and meditation very effective in helping with depression. Present moment acceptance of things as they are is key. Extensive research demonstrates effectiveness.
- Building the strength and clarity to be present and aware of your emotions means you can do the same with others. You can become genuinely helpful to others in difficulty.
- Key point: The more practice you build up in relatively good times, the better shape you will be when hard times come.
- Walking meditation: clasp your hands in front of your body, have your body upright and relaxed. Walk slowly, maintaining your awareness of your breath.

## Commitment

Committing to 20-30 minutes of practice every day for the duration of this course, including still meditation, writing a meditation diary, movement practices, and daily mindfulness exercises.



## Homework

Continue the practice counting the breath meditation every day and note your experiences in your meditation diary. In addition, take some time to practise walking meditation and record each day at least one or a few pleasurable experiences.

### Counting the breath reminder

Practice of keeping our attention on one object of meditation, the breath. Also here we begin exploring sitting meditation. Sitting either on a chair, kneeling with a cushion or bench (knees apart), or cross legged on a cushion. Establish your triangular foundation between your sitting bones and two knees. Make sure your spine is as upright as you can manage, your neck long with your head tilted down slightly. Hands in your lap, eyes resting down, open or closed, tongue soft and resting on roof of mouth. Become aware of your breath as low down as possible, ideally in your belly. Begin mentally counting your breath: in-breath, one, out-breath, two, in-breath, three, outbreath, four. And so on, up to ten - when you can start again at one. Allow any thoughts, feelings, memories, or anything at all to arise and pass. Stay with the sensation of the breathing and counting in your belly as best as you can. Anytime you get distracted or lose count, without any judgment, start again back at one. Counting in-breath one, out-breath two...