



8 – Week Course in Mindfulness – 2010

**Evaluation Report
for
Health Promotion
NHS Fife**

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Introduction

The Fife Mindfulness Group (which is a partnership between NHS Fife; Health Promotion, Psychological Services and Playfield Institute; St. Andrews University and independent therapists) has been meeting since 2007 to explore developing the use of mindfulness as a tool for improved health and well-being. All of the members of the group have themselves completed an 8-week course in mindfulness and continue with a regular mindfulness practice.

Funding was obtained from NHS Fife Health Promotion to provide a pilot 8-week course in mindfulness for people working in Fife who were interested in finding out more and keen to develop a regular practice. The group's intention was that participants would learn to bring elements of mindfulness into their daily lives to help manage personal stress and increase their personal sense of well-being, thereby improving their overall quality of life. As a large majority of the research into the benefits of mindfulness has been carried out with clinical populations it was felt strongly by both the funders and the group members that a robust evaluation of this 8-week course be required, to show both the efficacy and benefits of mindful practice within the working population.

The eight week mindfulness course was held at the Playfield Institute between 1st February 2010 and 22nd March 2010.

Background

Mindfulness, very simply put, is being fully aware in the present moment. It is about being in touch with what is going on, inside ourselves, through our feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and outside ourselves through our connections with other people, nature and the environment. By being fully present in the moment we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings and our relationship to them. Rather than being caught up in the emotion of our thoughts and feelings we can, over time, develop a compassionate awareness of them. This in turn allows us to make more informed choices about the way we live our lives. "Mindfulness approaches offer much, not just as a tool for developing our health and well-being, but also as a way to foster qualities such as insight, empathy, tolerance and discernment"¹. It is not a new approach as it has been practiced in many forms through ancient and modern religious and philosophical traditions.

Mindfulness and meditation practices are perhaps best known as aspects of the Buddhist tradition, however there has been increased interest in the benefits of regular mindfulness practice in the mental health field. This originally developed from Jon Kabat-Zinn's work at the University of Massachusetts's Medical Centre in the 1980s². Kabat-Zinn developed the Mindfulness-based stress reduction programme (MBSR) which is an 8 week course (one two hour session weekly and one full day). This has been further developed by incorporating elements of cognitive therapy into an 8 week course entitled "Mindfulness-based cognitive Therapy (MBCT)" by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal³. This course was primarily intended for patients who have had three or more depressive episodes to prevent relapse. The elements of these two courses continue to form the basis of mindfulness training in Britain. It is worth noting that the evidence base for MBCT is such that NICE guidelines recommend it for people who are currently well but have experienced previous episodes of depression. The Scottish Government has responded to the NICE guidelines by providing funding to train mental health professionals to deliver MBCT.

In the last decade or so there has been an increase in peer reviewed published research evidencing the benefits of mindfulness practice. Initially this development was in the area of moderate to severe depression but further studies have shown benefits to health in

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relation to stress, anxiety, chronic pain, smoking cessation and specific illnesses⁴. More recently, studies have looked at the effects of mindfulness on more general health and well-being in non-clinical studies. Interestingly, the results from these studies showed “that meditation can produce increases in relative left-sided anterior activation that are associated with reductions in anxiety and negative affect and increases in positive affect.”⁵ Meditators also showed a more robust and effective immune response.”⁶ It is also important to note from these studies that the benefits gained continued well after the period of the study.

Description of the eight week Mindfulness course

The mindfulness course, run at the Playfield Institute, adhered closely to the 8 week mindfulness based cognitive therapy training which is described fully in the book “The Mindful way through Depression” by Williams et al⁷. The course involves elements of meditation practice; sitting, walking, guided and silent. It also includes teaching of the body scan, which is relaxing quietly and tuning in to the sensations and feelings in the body as they arise. Mindful movement is introduced using gentle easy to follow flowing movement, that stretch the body and move the energy through the body. Poems are shared to enhance learning and space for discussion both in small groups and the larger group is built in to the course structure. Homework is given to participants on a weekly basis, which is, discussed on return to the group. For a brief week by week summary of the elements of the course see appendix 1.

Built into the thinking behind the course, is the intention that all of the practical elements are able to be carried out at home at the end of the course, thereby ensuring that any benefits derived from it can be continued. One major component of the course is that the trainers must also have a personal practice of mindfulness, so that they are in a position to share experiences with participants. On this course we had three trainers who facilitated the course, all of whom have extensive experience of working therapeutically, with both individuals and groups.

Method

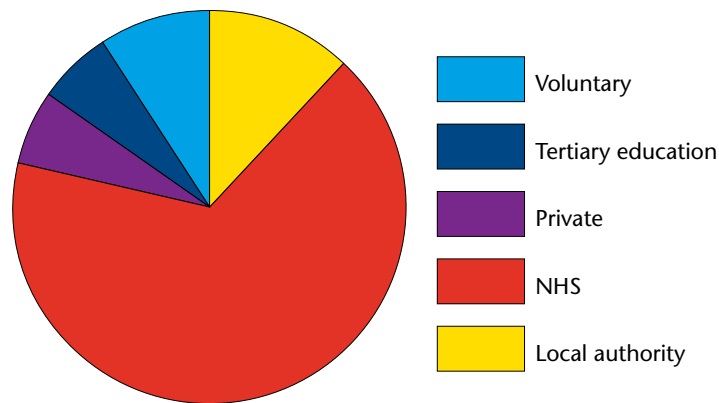
Participants

The course was advertised throughout Fife by emailing the course leaflet and application form (appendix 2) via NHS Fife Communications, FISH, St. Andrews University and CVS Fife. As the course was a pilot course, funded by underspend monies provided by NHS Fife Health Promotion, there was a requirement to organise, advertise and complete the course in a short space of time. This will have had an impact on the final participant list, both in terms of who saw the course advertisement and also, who at short notice, were able to attend all eight sessions.

As a result of the email advertisement thirty three people working in Fife applied for a place on the course. The table and chart below show the breakdown of numbers applying for a place on the 8-week course and their respective employment sector.

Applicants by Employment Sector		
Sector	Number	Percentage
Local Authority	4	12%
NHS	22	67%
Private	2	6%
Tertiary Education	2	6%
Voluntary	3	9%

Applicants by employment sector



The Fife Mindfulness Group took the view that the course should have a maximum of 20 participants due to both the physical size of the venue and the ratio of trainers to participants. The Group met to shortlist the applicants and the following criteria were used:

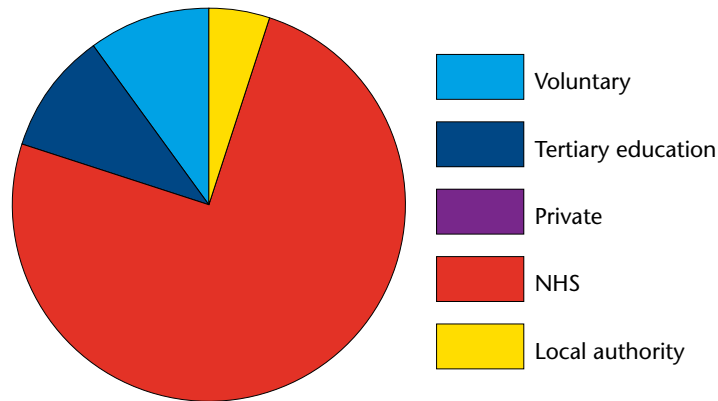
- *Signature of Line Manager*
- *Availability to make all eight dates*
- *The reasons for application were examined, to ensure that applicants were not currently experiencing personal difficulties and distress that they were looking to the course to solve, this was felt to be beyond the scope of the course to fulfil.*

If all three criteria were met then the decision was based on a first come first served basis.

20 participants were selected and offered a place on the course leaving a waiting list of 13 for any future courses. All 20 applicants selected to attend the course started the course with 17 (85%) completing it. Of the 17 participants completing the course, 16 were female and 1 was male. The tables and charts below show the breakdown of participants and their employment sector.

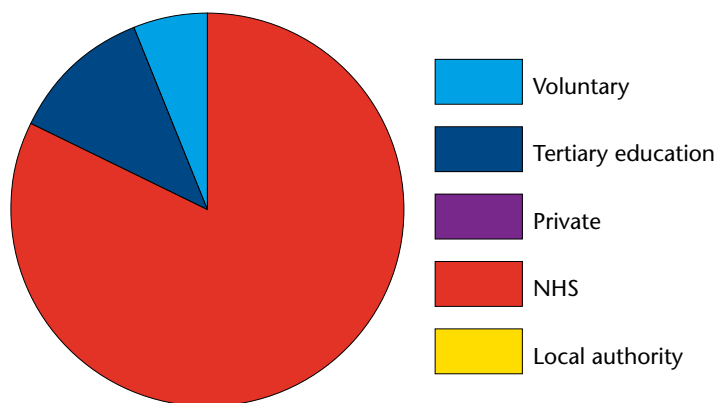
Participants by Employment Sector		
Sector	Number	Percentage
Local Authority	1	5%
NHS	15	75%
Private	0	0%
Tertiary Education	2	10%
Voluntary	2	10%

Participants by employment sector



Participants completing course by Employment Sector		
Sector	Number	Percentage
Local Authority	0	0%
NHS	14	82%
Private	0	0%
Tertiary Education	2	12%
Voluntary	1	6%

Participants completing course by employment sector



Procedures

The design of the evaluation and the gathering of data was organised by Dr Wendy Simpson from NHS Fife, Playfield Institute. St Andrews University Psychology department ethics committee reviewed the study and granted ethics approval. The evaluation was also put before the NHS ethics committee, who reported that the evaluation did not require approval. Dr Simpson met with all the course participants at the beginning of session one and outlined the reasons for the evaluation and the format it would take. Participants were asked if they would be willing to take part in the evaluation, but were assured that taking part was completely voluntary and that all contributions would be strictly confidential. Participants were handed out an envelope containing an explanatory letter (Appendix 3) and three short tick box questionnaires (Appendices 4, 5, and 6) which they were asked to fill in. At the end of session eight, the same three questionnaires (Appendices 4, 5, and 6) were distributed in envelopes to each participant. Time was given within the session for completion of the questionnaires if the participants wanted to take part. Ms George, researcher from Playfield Institute analysed the questionnaire data using SPSS.

A focus group discussion was held after the end of the eight week course, in order to gather qualitative data for the evaluation, in addition to the quantitative data collected by the three questionnaires. Volunteers were requested to meet with two researchers from the Playfield Institute to take part in the focus group discussion. This discussion group was held one week after the end of the course and five course participants took part. A full transcript of the discussion held can be found in appendix 7.

The training facilitators also asked participants to complete their personal evaluation form at the end of session eight. The full collation of responses can be found in appendix 8.

Measures

The concepts measured were derived from previous research investigating meditation training in a population of working adults in the US⁸.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) (Appendix 4) was used with course participants to measure the change in their perceived wellbeing, between the start of the course, and at the end of the eight week course. WEMWBS is a relatively new measure and is characterised by the use of only positive statements. It is a fourteen statement scale where participants are asked to rate the statements by ticking one box under the headings of 'none of the time', 'rarely', 'some of the time', 'often' and 'all of the time'. The scale is designed to measure the change in mental well-being of the group as a whole, after the intervention of the course. Changes in the mental well-being of the group of participants on this course are measured by examining the differences in the mean scores between the start and the end of the course.

The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) shortened version (Appendix 5) was used with course participants to measure the change in mindfulness of individual participants between the start of the course, and at the end. The shortened version of the FMI was used as it requires no previous knowledge, from the participants, of either Buddhist or meditation practice. The FMI shortened version is a fourteen statement scale where participants are asked to rate the statements by ticking one box, under the headings of 'rarely', 'occasionally', 'fairly often' and 'almost always', with one of the statement scores being reversed.

The Life Orientation Test - Revised (LOT-R) (Appendix 6) was used with course participants to measure the change in self-assessed optimism between the start of the course and the end. LOT-R is a ten statement scale where participants are asked to rate the statements by

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ticking one box under the headings of, 'I agree a lot', 'I agree a little', 'I neither agree nor disagree', 'I disagree a little' and 'I disagree a lot'. The LOT-R has four filler questions in it, which can be ignored. The negatively worded items require to be reverse scored. The final score will be a number out of 24, the nearer the score of the individual to 24, the higher their rate of optimism.

Results

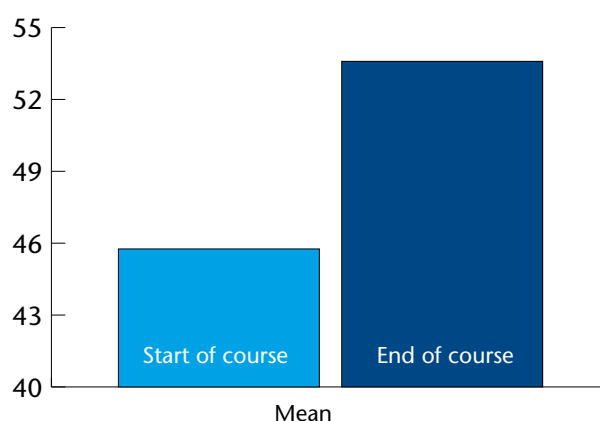
Statistics

Data comprised of the questionnaires completed by the 17 participants who attended the whole course. SPSS was used to perform statistical analyses on the data.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

WEMWBS Score for Participants				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Start of course	32	60	45.76	7.53
End of course	38	61	53.59	7.22

WEMWBS score for participants

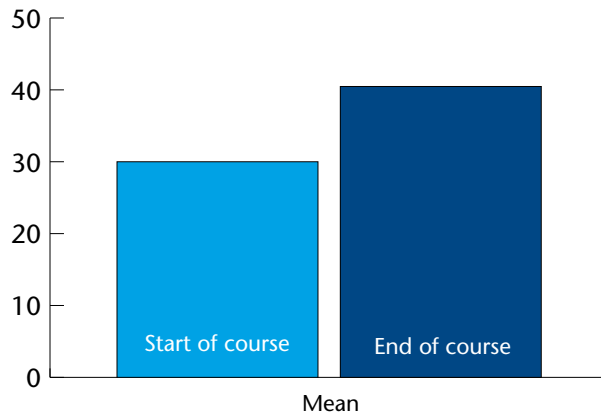


A Wilcoxon test was used to compare the WEMWBS scores from before and after the course (as the scores were not normally distributed). The WEMWBS scores were found to be significantly higher after the course than before the course ($z = 3.37$; $p < 0.01$).

The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) shortened version

FMI Score for Participants				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Start of course	19	42	30.00	6.55
End of course	20	51	40.47	6.86

FMI score for participants

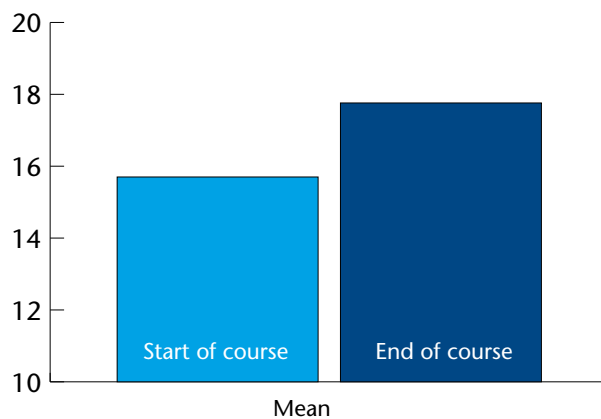


A Wilcoxon test was carried out to compare the FMI scores from before and after the course (as the scores were not normally distributed). The FMI scores were found to be significantly higher after the course than before the course ($z = 3.51$; $p < 0.001$).

The Life Orientation Test - Revised (LOT-R)

(LOT- R) Score for Participants				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Start of course	4	23	15.70	6.39
End of course	7	23	17.76	5.10

(LOT-R) score for participants



A t-test was used to compare the LOT-R scores from before and after the course (as the scores were normally distributed). The LOT-R scores were found to be significantly higher after the course than before the course ($t(16) = 2.21$; $p < 0.05$).

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Summary of Focus Group Discussion

The following is a summary of the comments made by the participants that took place in the focus group listed under the questions asked. (See appendix 7 for a full transcript of the discussion)

Question 1: *Can I ask you first of all why you came on the course? What were your expectations of it?*

The overwhelming response was that it was personal interest that attracted them to the course and a desire to use mindfulness personally as a tool for increased well-being. Additionally the majority of respondents were also aware and interested in its clinical application.

Question 2: *Tell me about what you thought of the overall presentation of the course? Things like the length, the format, the facilitation, the materials.*

After a discussion on the size of the group, the consensus appears to have been that it was too large to facilitate group debate, and that 9-10 people would have been a better number. A smaller room would have helped the feeling of intimacy and improved group dynamics, or perhaps splitting into smaller groups when it came to discussing issues. The point was also made that the course was largely experiential and that a lot of group discussion was not required. There were both pros and cons to the fact that not a lot of written information was provided and this seemed to come down to individual preference, however, it was widely agreed that more emphasis should have been put on the experiential nature of the course in any pre-course literature. A unanimous preference was also expressed for just one course facilitator and for the sessions to be slightly longer.

Question 3: *What do you think about the relevance of mindfulness to your daily life and work? Does it feel relevant to you? Is it something that you're now going to use in your daily life or in your work life, and in what way?*

The participants overwhelmingly felt that the course was extremely useful on a personal level, "course gives a firm foundation", and are now interested in learning more to bring these tools into their working lives.

Question 4: *You obviously feel that this is a firm foundation. What is the next step? What do you feel you need now, do you need any more support from us, or do you just feel like you need to go and do more reading? How would you like to see things develop?*

Respondents felt that the onus was now on them to keep the practice up and that a support group would be useful to assist this. It was agreed that once a month after work would be the most useful frequency and time for such a meeting.

Question 5: *Is there anything else that you think could be improved for future courses? Any expectations that you had that weren't met? What would you see as the ideal course?*

The consensus was for a slightly smaller group, with slightly longer sessions and more continuity with facilitators, together with more explanatory information at the start of the course about the experiential nature. There was also a general feeling that keeping the diary of pleasant and unpleasant events was not useful and distracted from the experience of the course.

Question 6: *Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you feel that you need to say about the course?*

There was an overwhelming agreement that the course was very good and that the participants felt "lucky" to have been able to take part. An important point was made about the nature of the course, because of the course being experiential, it can touch on negative thoughts and feelings as well as positive. The latter requires to be handled sensitively, ensuring that a balance is found between the course not being seen as a therapeutic course, but also being able to put measures in place to cope with an individual's distress, if it arises. One suggestion made was that the well-being suite at the Playfield Institute could be used for this.

Summary of Course Feedback Forms

The following is a summary of the comments made by the participants of the course on the feedback forms at the end of the course. Seventeen participants completed the course and all completed a feedback form. (See appendix 8 for the full collation of responses)

How important has this course been to you and why?

There was a consensus of opinion that the course was very important for personal reasons i.e. "calming down", "quietening the mind", "relaxing", "coping with work stress", "accepting self" and "care of self". Recognition was also given to the point that if you are more mindful then this will have a positive impact on your work practices.

What have you gained from the course?

Participants gained many new skills and practices from the course, which enabled them to develop "inner calm" and recognise the "need to stop and find a way to be with myself, accept and feel comfortable". Many comments were made that reflected the point that mindfulness was a new skill to be learnt and brought into daily practice, so it is also about taking personal responsibility.

What aspects of the overall course did you specially enjoy?

All aspects of the course were mentioned, with the most mention by far being positive comments about the mindful movement element of the course. "This is the technique I've been motivated to practice the most at home".

What aspects challenged you (if any)?

Similarly to question three – all aspects of the course were mentioned with the aspect most mentioned as challenging being the mindful walking followed by the day of silence.

What aspects do you think you will take into your everyday life?

Most of the aspects of the course were mentioned, but the emphasis from the responses to question five were about the discipline of building elements of practice into your daily life. There was consensus of comments on the fear that the benefits of the course would be lost, and the vigilance required to slow down and make time for practice.

What improvements do you think could be of consideration for the improvement of mindfulness courses in the future?

In order to improve the course for the future, small changes were mentioned such as having smaller groups, slowing everything down and having slightly longer to practice, perhaps at a different time of the day. The temperature of the room was mentioned as being too cold and the venue was not, central enough relative to the rest of Fife. There was also an agreement about the need to have follow up sessions, or an on-line support

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group, and for work places to consider providing facilities for staff to go for quiet time.

Any other comments would be welcomed.

Grateful thanks for the opportunity to attend the course and for the funding being made available were made by all respondents. Requests were made again for a follow up group.

Cost Analysis

The total budget for the eight week mindfulness course was £5,000. £4320 of the total budget was for the payment of trainers/facilitators fees. Each of the three trainers was paid £1440 for the course. The remainder of the budget £680 was spent on the hire of premises and refreshments. The cost per participant for the eight week course was £250 per person based on the course capacity of 20 people. The actual cost per participant who completed the course (17 people) was £294.

Staff time from NHS Fife – Health Promotion and Playfield Institute, was contributed in kind. Staff time was necessary to prepare:

- *Designing the evaluation*
- *Statistical analysis of questionnaire data*
- *Writing and advertising the leaflet and application form*
- *administration for venue booking and making available refreshments*
- *communication with all applicants*
- *answering queries from applicants*
- *short listing applicants*
- *communication with all three trainers*
- *writing the evaluation.*

As this course was a pilot course more time was required in pulling the information together than would be required for any subsequent course.

Discussion

We set out to show the efficacy and benefits of using mindfulness practice within the working population to improve overall wellbeing and quality of life. The evaluation has demonstrated, through both the quantitative and qualitative measures undertaken as part of this pilot project, a wholly positive response. The statistical analysis shows a significant upward trend across all three scales used, which measured; wellbeing, mindfulness and optimism. Feedback from the focus group and the evaluation forms indicates an overwhelming positive response as to the beneficial impact of the course on personal wellbeing and stress levels with some participants also mentioning that this filtered through to their working lives. As work-related stress is estimated to be the second biggest occupational health problem in the UK, then using mindfulness in the workplace would appear to be an approach for further consideration. The costs of £294 per person for the 20 hour long course (approximately £15 per hour) would appear to be modest when compared to the outcomes achieved.

It has to be pointed out that although the results from this evaluation are overwhelmingly positive the numbers involved in the study are very small and it is a one off evaluation. There would be merit in continuing to evaluate any future mindfulness courses over time to build up a consummate body of evidence. In addition the impact the course has on

participants over a longer time frame warrants further investigation.

Clear recommendations for future courses were made by the participants and require to be considered if any further courses are to be delivered. The recommendations were:

- *A smaller group size would improve the quality of sharing experiences. Alternatively splitting into smaller groups for discussion would help.*
- *Pre-course information has to make the experiential nature of the course implicit*
- *More continuity and fewer facilitators*
- *Make individual sessions slightly longer (21/2 rather than 2 hours)*
- *On-going support group required to maintain practice*
- *Room must be warm to facilitate relaxation.*

In conclusion, the results from this evaluation would suggest that mindfulness can be an extremely useful, cost effective, tool in improving overall health and wellbeing. As such mindfulness can be seen as a valuable part of the health promotion training portfolio.

Susan Scott
Mental health Promotion Officer
June 2010

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Appendices

1. Weekly summary of course
2. Course leaflet and application form
3. Evaluation of Mindfulness Course – Information sheet for Participants
4. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)
5. Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)
6. Life Orientation Test (LOT) – Revised
7. Full transcript of Course Focus Group Discussion
8. Full collation of Course Feedback Forms.

Appendix 1:

Week	8 Week Mindfulness Programme Practice and Themes at a Glance
1	Sitting and listening – Guided Meditation – observation Tapping Body – Feeling and listening – note experience Mindful Movement with the breath Themes : Mindfulness V Auto Pilot Beginners Mind
2	Pleasant Events Calendar – Feedback Tapping - Mindful Movement Body Scan Sitting Meditation Themes : Overcoming Obstacles Mindfulness Qualities: Non Striving/Compassion/Letting Go
3	Pleasant Events Calendar Mindful Movement Sitting Meditation – with sounds 3 minute Breathing Space Mindfulness Dots Themes: Staying with the Breath / Staying Present/Embodiment Mindful Qualities: Acceptance & Non Judgement
4	Mindful Movement Routine & Breathing Walking Meditation & Sitting Meditation 3 Min Breathing Space Awareness of pleasant & unpleasant events Themes : Staying with what is difficult What are our habits / our patterns? Mindfulness Qualities: Allow – Letting Be – compassion
5	Mindful Movement or Walking Meditation Mindfulness of breath & body – exploring difficulty 3 Min Breathing Space - Opening the Body Door Events Calendar Themes: Working with Thoughts & Emotions Mindfulness Qualities: Non Judging
6	Mindful Breath & Body Experience – Sounds and Thoughts Three Min Breathing Space Opening the through door Events Calendar Day of Silent Practice Guided Meditations & Practice encompassing what we have learned
7	Alternate daily 1 meditation of choice 40 mins a day Body Scan – Sitting – Movement – Walking Mindfulness of breath Or Mindful Movement with Breath Work Theme: How can we best take care of our self? Life Style – Diet – What we take in Mindfulness Qualities: Kindness and Wise- Mind
8	The rest of your life: choose a sustainable pattern of formal and informal Mindfulness Practice Ending and Continuation of Practice

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Appendix 2: Copy of course leaflet and application form

Application Form

I would like to attend the 8 week Mindfulness course on 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd February and 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd March 2010

Name:
Job Title:
Organisation:
Address:
Postcode:
Tel: Email:
Special requirements:

Please give a brief description of why this course would be of benefit to you:

For completion by your Line Manager:

I authorise the above member of staff to attend this training course:

Name:
Email:

Please return or email this form by 25th January 2010 to Morna Scriven, Administrator, Playfield Institute, Stratheden Hospital, Cupar. Tel. 01334 696257 email morna.scriven@nhs.net.

Data Protection

Fife Mindfulness Group is a partnership between Health Promotion Fife, Psychological Services NHS Fife, Playfield Institute, St Andrews University and individual private therapists. Information gathered from this form will only be used for the administration and evaluation of the services provided by the Fife Mindfulness Group.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness very simply put is being fully aware in the present moment. It is about being in touch with what is going on, both inside ourselves through our feelings, thoughts and physical sensations, and outside ourselves through our connections with other people, nature and the environment.

Most of us live busy and stressful lives where we are under pressure to get things done or be somewhere by a certain time. Our minds are full of what needs to be done or even sometimes going over what has been. We rarely pause to appreciate the present moment. This constant 'busyness' if not relieved, can lead to various health problems. Both physical and mental health along with general well-being can be improved by mindful practice and the qualities of mindfulness can be developed in our lives in the same way as learning a new skill.

The basis of this training is the 8 week course described by Jon Zabab Zinn in the book "Full Catastrophe Living".

Mindfulness can help you:

- Calm your mind
- Deal with anxiety
- Become more creative
- Develop more confidence
- Learn to concentrate better
- Get more in touch with yourself
- Positively influence your moods
- Learn more about how your mind works
- Be more aware
- Appreciate life more
- Feel better about yourself
- Improve your relationships with others
- Sleep better



8 Week Course in Mindfulness

- Monday 1st February 2010 2pm – 4 pm
- Monday 8th February 2010 2pm – 4pm
- Monday 15th February 2010 2pm – 4pm
- Monday 22nd February 2010 2pm – 4pm
- Monday 1st March 2010 2pm – 4pm

- Monday 8th March 2010 10am – 4pm

- Monday 15th March 2010 2pm – 4pm
- Monday 22nd March 2010 2pm – 4pm

Venue **The Playfield Institute,
Stratheden Hospital, Cupar**

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course participants will have:

- A clearer understanding of what mindfulness is
- The ability to establish a regular practice at home
- A way of being that helps us tackle life's problems – physical, mental, social and emotional.
- The ability to relax more deeply
- Heightened self-confidence and enthusiasm for life

Who should attend?

Anyone who is interested in mindfulness, keen to develop a regular practice and interested in bringing a mindful attitude into their working lives.

The 8 week course in mindfulness is designed as an introductory course. You will learn how to bring elements of mindfulness into your daily life whether for managing personal stress, deepening a sense of well-being or improving quality of life.

Although this course does not equip participants to teach mindfulness techniques it is recognised as the very first step towards this, alongside the development and deepening of your own practice.

Further information

Please contact Morna Scriven. Tel: 01334 696257 or email: morna.scriven@nhs.net if you require any further information.

Facilitators

Members of the Fife Mindfulness Group
Marie Lamont, Nick Berman and Zinaida Lewczuk

Appendix 3: Evaluation of Mindfulness Course

Information sheet for Participants

As part of this mindfulness course for workers in Fife we are carrying out an evaluation. We would like to ask you if you would be willing to help us by taking part in this evaluation.

This is because we want to know about your views on the course. We want to know if the course meets your expectations; to see if it has an effect on your own wellbeing; and to see if it has any effect on your working practices. This is because we want to know if this course has benefit for staff working in Fife and their clients and to know whether we should continue funding such courses.

What will the study involve?

We will ask you to complete three questionnaires in the first week of the course. These will look at your wellbeing, your experience of mindfulness and a personal resource – optimism. We are using these questionnaires because they have been used before with workers in similar settings. The questionnaires should take only about 10 minutes to complete all three.

We will ask you to complete all three questionnaires again in the last week of the course.

We will also ask you if you would be willing to take part in a focus group at a date that suits you following the course. This will take no longer than one hour and will be facilitated by a researcher. We plan to audio-tape this discussion with your consent.

We will analyse the scores on the questionnaires and look at any general changes in the group as a whole. We will also analyse the general themes from the focus group. The results will be used in a report to NHS Fife health promotion department who have funded the course. You will not be named in any report and your answers will be strictly confidential.

If you have any questions about the study

Please speak to Dr Wendy Simpson at any point over the course if you have any queries about the aims of the study or how the data will be used.

Wendy can be contacted on 01334 696015 or w.simpson@nhs.net

Appendix 4: The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
I've been feeling useful					
I've been feeling relaxed					
I've been feeling interested in other people					
I've had energy to spare					
I've been dealing with problems well					
I've been thinking clearly					
I've been feeling good about myself					
I've been feeling close to other people					
I've been feeling confident					
I've been able to make up my own mind about things					
I've been feeling loved					
I've been interested in new things					
I've been feeling cheerful					

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) © NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006, all rights reserved.

Appendix 5: Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)

	Rarely	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Almost Always
1 I am open to the experience of the present moment.				
2 I sense my body, whether eating, cooking, cleaning or talking.				
3 When I notice an absence of mind, I gently return to the experience of the here and now.				
4 I am able to appreciate myself.				
5 I pay attention to what's behind my actions.				
6 I see my mistakes and difficulties without judging them.				
7 I feel connected to my experience in the here-and-now.				
8 I accept unpleasant experiences.				
9 I am friendly to myself when things go wrong.				
10 I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.				
11 In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.				
12 I experience moments of inner peace and ease, even when things get hectic and stressful.				
13 I am impatient with myself and with others.				
14 I am able to smile when I notice how I sometimes make life difficult.				

Appendix 6: Life Orientation Test (LOT) - Revised

Please be as honest and accurate as you can throughout. Try not to let your response to one statement influence your responses to other statements. There are no “correct” or “incorrect” answers. Answer according to your own feelings, rather than how you think “most people” would answer.

	I agree a lot	I agree a little	I neither agree nor disagree	I DISagree a little	I DISagree a lot
1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.					
2. It's easy for me to relax.					
3. If something can go wrong for me, it will.					
4. I'm always optimistic about my future.					
5. I enjoy my friends a lot.					
6. It's important for me to keep busy.					
7. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.					
8. I don't get upset too easily.					
9. I rarely count on good things happening to me.					
10. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad					

Appendix 7: Mindfulness Course Focus Group Transcript

Interviewer 1: *Can I ask you first of all why you came on the course? What were your expectations of it?*

Participant 1: Received e-mail and was quite keen. I made a case in terms of my clinical practice and personally. It's an anxious time for me, applying for my doctorate. Course was useful for putting things in context.

Participant 2: Had heard about it and was interested. To develop a skill for myself.

Participant 3: Motivated from a personal point of view. Aware of use by clinical psychology.

Participant 5: Personal interest. Had been to a previous workshop - wanted to develop the skills. To progress as a person as well as a professional.

Participant 4: Have used mindfulness as a technique through 7 Habits. Never taken it in a group setting. I practise meditation so it's good to go further into mindfulness component. Professionally, mindfulness seems a good tool to get people to be more aware of their expectations in terms of their anxiety or depression. Interested in how to apply it therapeutically.

Interviewer 1: *Tell me about what you thought of the overall presentation of the course. Things like the length, the format, the facilitation, the materials.*

Participant 5: This room (Activities Room) would have been nice!

Participant 3: It was a big group. Too big for some things. It didn't feel comfortable or appropriate discussing some things. The expectation was to feed back to the large group (after small group work) - maybe better without this expectation.

Participant 4: I think you get most out of a group up to 9-10 people. Overall literature - not much guidance as to what was expected.

Participant 3: Very little literature.

In response to a question about what was wanted:

Participant 4: Maybe a programme, but even a page for each week would have been good.

Participant 3: About the themes and background.

Participant 1: Perhaps a note of the quotes.

Participant 3: It's a very experiential course.

Participant 2: Encouraged to take notes, but it wasn't really appropriate.

Participant 5: They encouraged a mindful approach, rather than a theoretical one. It's a very self-generated practice, rather than something given to you. Given the techniques but it's up to you to use them.

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In response to a question about seating arrangement:

Participant 3: We sat in a circle.

Participant 1: Rows would have been very prohibitive. There was a bit of an atmosphere of not wanting to speak up. Small groups would have helped, but the large group was quite good - the anonymity was quite useful.

Participant 5: Need to weigh that up.

Participant 4: Maybe sharing is not as appropriate, as mindfulness is an intensely personal process. If you're in the process you can't actually describe it. Personal journey - everyone's experience is different.

Interviewer 1: Did you prefer not to have to give much feedback?

Participant 1: It seemed sometimes that feedback was asked for because it's what you do in groups (not because it was necessarily needed).

Participant 5: Mindfulness is essentially a non-judgmental practice - we were almost being asked to judge. Not having too much literature didn't impose - there are for and againsts for everything.

Interviewer 2: When I did the course we didn't have any introductions at all - we didn't know who we were with. Do you think it's useful to know who the others are?

Participant 5: We introduced ourselves and said where we worked and that was it. And that was enough.

Participant 4: Because mindfulness is so personal, you don't need to share. You're doing it for yourself.

Participant 1: The important stuff was shared.

Participant 5: From a professional point of view, you can think do I really need to know x, y and z to make a change (in practice) - is it necessary?

Interviewer 2: It's about experiencing who we are rather than explaining who we are?

Agreement to this

Interviewer 1: Would it have helped to have more preparation beforehand?

Participant 1: Need to learn as you experience it - no need for preparation before.

Participant 5: Some people prefer background reading, but it could give preconceived ideas. Could be something in the introduction to say that if this is your learning style, then you can look at this beforehand, but we would encourage you to experience the actual practice before you do the reading...

Participant 3: Just to put it into context.

Interviewer 1: *Preparing people that there wouldn't be a big introduction and lots of paperwork?*

Participant 3: That it will be very experiential.

Interviewer 1: *Would it have helped to know this in advance?*

Agreement to this

Participant 4: Preconceived ideas through reading beforehand.

In response to a question about the facilitators:

Participant 4: Better to have one facilitator. Having three breaks up the relationship between the facilitator and the rest of the group somehow. If there are three, it would be good for each to do a chunk of three weeks each, rather than swapping about.

Participant 1: There was a different dynamic with each facilitator.

Participant 5: Would probably have been more feedback if there had been one facilitator for the whole eight weeks - get to build trust and rapport. There's an element of feeling safe.

Participant 4: All three relaxed much more at the end (this would have come sooner if just one).

In response to a question about the length of the course:

A few responses of "too short!"

Participant 3: Sometimes felt rushed between activities in the afternoon.

Participant 1: Would have been nicer to finish at 5pm - finishing at 4pm meant to me that I had to go back and do stuff, which ruined the feeling (?). 4.30pm maybe better.

Participant 5: 4.30pm may have given the facilitators some leeway, because they were very conscious of time.

Interviewer 1: *What you think about the relevance of mindfulness to your daily life and work. Does it feel relevant to you? Is it something that you're now going to use in your daily life or in your work life, and in what way?*

Participant 4: "Note to self" very useful.

Participant 3: Very good technique.

Participant 5: Triggers, coloured dots - really good. Even just a case of stopping or doing breathing techniques or something. Would use with colleagues.

Participant 1: Would help with relationships with self and colleagues. Just a starting point, much more learning to be done. Am able to implement it. More learning needed for working with or training others. Have used it with a friend who found it very useful.

Participant 2: Now able to relate with others who have done it - I understand the theory.

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Participant 5: It's very powerful. Course gives a firm foundation. Any change in yourself would lead to a change in you as a practitioner.

Participant 3: There's an element that you could use with clients. I have dots around the house but not at the office.

Interviewer 1: You obviously feel that this is a firm foundation. What is the next step? What do you feel you need now, do you need any more support from us, or do you just feel like you need to go and do more reading? How would you like to see things develop?

Participant 5: Over the weeks you notice that you're doing things more mindfully - so you're in a process of change that will automatically develop you as a practitioner. There were a few of us who thought that it would be quite nice to do a monthly catch-up. Almost like a top-up to keep the momentum going.

Participant 3: There's a mindfulness group in Fife isn't there?

Interviewer 1: Yes - the group's structure and what the group is about is in question at the moment. We're going to have a meeting to determine where to take the group. So if you have any good ideas about developing it?

Agreement that a support group would be good.

Participant 4: It's about personal discipline - need to keep doing it. A small support group would be good.

In response to questions about timing and format of the group:

Participant 5: Experiential and discussions. Monthly.

Participant 4: After work or in lunch hour would be good.

Participant 1: For people travelling, after work would probably be better. Monthly probably too often. Six-weekly?

Interviewer 2: If something was happening every month and you could choose to come along...?

Participant 1: ...yes.

Interviewer 1: Is there anything else that you think could be improved for future courses? Any expectations that you had that weren't met? What would you see as the ideal course? Sounds like maybe a slightly smaller group and slightly longer sessions.

Participant 3: More continuity with facilitators.

Interviewer 1: But not necessarily just one facilitator, just not swapping about week by week?

Participant 4: Yes, I think that upset them a wee bit.

Interviewer 2: And you were saying about a bit more to say that you might not get a lot of explanation.

Participant 3: Just a bit of information at the beginning about putting it all in context. Don't expect to get taught and get lots of handouts, and that it's a very experiential course.

Interviewer 2: *Maybe it's a bit like a painting course - where you learn by doing?*

Agreement to this

Participant 3: Maybe it's not a "training" course as such.

Participant 1: The diary over the first few weeks was hard. Because of the way it was structured and doing it on a daily basis.

Participant 5: It was looking to judge something rather than accept it. I'm a reflective person, so it didn't fit. Mindfulness is about not judging, it's about just being.

Participant 4: I had a reluctance to fill it out. Writing about an event would destroy the event.

Participant 5: It was interfering.

Participant 4: It's difficult to write about your experiences.

Participant 1: Hard to put it into language.

Interviewer 1: *Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you feel that you need to say about the course?*

Participant 4: It was brilliant.

Participant 5: We're very lucky to have participated. Well worth it. Would recommend to others.

Participant 4: Good links with 7 Habits.

Participant 5: Fits into change management. About an awareness of who you are.

Participant 4: Mindfulness as a process for improving mental wellbeing. Maybe need to inform people that it might touch on negative stuff, for example, being aware of unpleasant thoughts and negative emotions.

Participant 3: It's very personal, so may throw up a lot of stuff.

Participant 1: I know Susan was there and you could speak with her if you needed to, but I don't know if I'd have felt comfortable doing it in that environment - going away to speak with her was showing that you were having difficulties. Don't know of a better way of dealing with that - maybe make someone available after the course to talk about these things.

Participant 5: Maybe the wellbeing suite could have been used. Only saw that on the last week.

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Interviewer 2: Important that people didn't think this was a therapy process. Make sure people didn't think they had a support that was going beyond the bounds of the course. Just finding the balance.

Participant 5: Using the room would just give you time to gather your own thoughts.

Appendix 8: Mindfulness 8 Week Programme

Collation of course feedback/evaluation form comments

How important has this course been to you and why?

It was important to attend this course as I've had considerable work stress (past).

The course has helped me to calm down, take time to think and be more at peace with myself.

Very important to come along because for the first time in a long while I'm happy being me.

Very important. It has started me on a journey of not only self-discovery but also of being kinder to myself.

This course has been beneficial in 'quieting' the mind and giving myself permission to relax and think things through for myself.

Very. It has given me an opportunity to learn and practice mindfulness skills at a time that would otherwise have been strongly nerve-wracking for me. It has given me the chance to learn to accept myself and learn what it is like to be at peace (albeit briefly perhaps it is a good starting point).

Very important, I feel calmness in my life that I haven't had for many years. It has been a journey of self discovery.

It has reinforced my own practice and has given me tools / permission to use them at work.

Quite important – I have been considering mindfulness for a while, since doing 7 habits of highly effective People Course, and realising that I needed to do more to take care of self.

Fairly important, interested to learn and understand mindfulness practice.

Helped me to relax more. Appreciate time out to try new techniques.

Gave greater insight into mindful practice, theory, and implementation into daily life.

This course has been very important to me as it has helped me increase my mindfulness in daily life, which does not only benefit me, but other people in my personal and working lives.

Very – will be using mindfulness in my studies so was extremely important for me to attend.

Very important. I noticed over the last couple of years in particular of low feelings about myself and life / work in general.

Overall it's been good to take the time out each week and learn some techniques to enable me to develop my practice.

I feel this course has been very valuable to me. I find that I am just much more aware of my thoughts, feelings and how my body reacts which I think is really positive.

What have you gained from the course?

Unsure, was hoping to have been "changed" but now aware that only I can bring about change. That is very hard to do after a lifetime of "wrong" practices.

Peace of mind, the ability to think things through and not go into 'panic mode'.

It has allowed me to recognise the value of giving myself permission to be "me".

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Insight into how mindfulness practice could fit into daily life and how it can benefit not only one personally, but others around you.

I feel calmer; I am more observant and feel more empathetic to those who seem to be 'chasing their tails'.

See above. Also useful skills to start practicing and finding out more in the future, for the future (although present of course)!

Self awareness, ongoing strategies i.e. meditation, breathing, mindful movement.

Giving myself permission to use mindfulness at work and not feeling the time spend as being non-productive / wasteful.

*Personal level – some tools to incorporate into my daily life to help me look after self.
Professionally – I have realised that I could try some of these 'tools' with some of my caseload of clients – or at least be aware of the mind / body connection.*

Understanding of basic principles, practice of breathing and meditation.

Experienced how to do meditation techniques for coping with stress. Practicing the mindful movements.

Different practices of mindfulness.

I have gained an inner calm from daily practicing mindfulness. The course has made me more disciplined and I have gained a lot from it.

Ability to meditate, really wasn't good at it at the start and although am still far from perfect I do feel that I have improved.

This course has given me the opportunity to see how I can be when relaxed and have the time to think. I am much more positive about life and have seen an increase in self awareness and confidence over the past few weeks.

That I need to stop and find a way to be with myself, accept and feel comfortable.

Well, as I said above I have gained more self awareness. Additionally I think I have been much less judgemental and kinder to myself which is good too.

What aspects of the overall course did you specially enjoy?

Enjoyed mindful eating, seated meditation, mindful movement

The relaxation and mindful movement.

Mindful movement really brings me to the here and now, fully relaxing my body and mind, feeling ready to live through the days experiences.

Liked all of the course. Enjoyed body scan and the full day event. Liked the idea of using coloured dots as a trigger.

Meditations and body scans. Also enjoyed everybody else's views.

Day of meditation at home. Mindful movement. Guided meditations, meditating with others present.

Relaxation and mindful movement. The full day was wonderful, like going to a retreat for the day. I didn't bring my mobile or wear a watch for the day.

Silent retreat and eating lunch on the same day. Doing the movement exercises.

Mindful movement, enjoyed day of silence more than anticipated.

Mindful movement, sharing experiences with other group participants.

Relaxation and meditation techniques. Thoughtful movements.

Mindful movement, mindful practice including visualisation or listening to sound. Mindful eating, day of silent practice – gave an opportunity to reflect on your life challenges and also very calming day.

I enjoyed the mindfulness movement and sitting meditations. I also liked practicing mindfulness in a group and hearing other peoples experiences.

Sitting meditation and mindful walking. Meditation – find relaxing and easy to do when have spare 10 mins. Walking – Insightful – had never noticed how different surfaces feel to walk on e.g. soft grass vs. pavement. Eye-opening – have never noticed before and have been walking for how many years??

I enjoyed all of the course, particularly the day of 'silence'. A new experience for me and a pleasant one. Mindful eating, meditation with the flower – all very peaceful.

Mindful movement particularly – this is the technique I've been motivated to practice the most at home. Quite enjoyed the day of silence.

Well I guess the general ideas. I also really enjoy the mindful movement.

What aspects challenged you (if any)?

Was worried that some negative feelings which had been dealt with (son had leukaemia) were resurfacing again and how was I going to "park" those feelings again. Course was not going to help with "aftermath" of training session. Became very upset with connection to object – brought on all day session.

The all day silence.

No challenges from course content, however, life events constantly struggling to push in on my mindful practice.

Maintaining the practice. Trying to fill in the diary – as it made me far too analytical – so gave up as it was interfering with my practice of being mindful.

Found mindful eating difficult being within the group but would have been easier on my own.

Day of silent meditation, occasionally feeling as if I had no right to be here, anxiety, calm.

I didn't like the mindful walking.

Walking meditation and doing the diary.

Still find it difficult to keep mind coming back to present and self during meditation.

Duration of mindful walking outside, conscious of appearance and distracted with cold ears (should have brought a hat!)

Day of silence.

Body scan – difficult to practice due to problems with my back and environment – room was

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often very cold. Mindful walking – did not enjoy experience either indoor or outside.

At the beginning it was allowing myself to be in a large group. But as the weeks went on I found it easier to sit mindfully and not be self-conscious.

Silent day – really didn't like this and found it very stressful. Had expected to learn something new i.e. new meditation technique, but felt we simply extended previous practices. I did gain from the experience but overall found it stressful and unpleasant: too busy to take a full day off to repeat exercises I had done before.

Walking round the field during 'mindful walking'. I would much rather walk a route although I understand the concept and would give it another go.

The straight meditation with the focus on the breathing – I find really being with myself in this way difficult and began to feel some anxiety. I found it difficult to stay with this – it's a challenge to be accepting that this is me and not get into an internal battle. The movement techniques use of sound are easier as they are more of a distraction.

I honestly found getting into practicing by myself more difficult. However, it did get easier over time.

What aspects do you think you will take into your everyday life?

Try to incorporate some mindfulness into work life.

Taking time to be mindful and think about things before reacting.

Not to react to a situation but to step back and respond to it instead. I will be accepting that I am not going to be able to be mindful every minute but to strive to include it in my life.

I think eventually all of it at some point – just reminding oneself to be kind and it is okay to have some space – even at work!!

I will try not to rush into tasks and think carefully about what I am going to do. I will allow myself more time to relax and I will try to encourage others to do so.

Meditation, acceptance, non-judgemental, being in present moment, gave validity to being open to express in a childlike manner.

I hope I will use it everyday in my work and home life. Living in the here and now and appreciating the moment.

Movement exercises/mindful awareness.

Would hope that I will do mindful movement every day. Would like to join a mindful meditation group. Use body scan to keep in touch with myself.

Kind to self, non-striving, increased awareness, breathing and mindful movement. Share learning with colleagues.

Try to keep up with meditation practice, being more focused and mindful at work.

Mindful movement, mindful practice, especially accompanied with sound or guided visualisation.

I will continue in my mindful movement and sitting meditations. Also I will include the body scan from time to time as I find this enables me to sleep better.

Being aware of everyday occurrences e.g. mindful driving / walking. Hope to continue to

practice but am worried that I won't make the effort to make the time now that the course has finished.

*Meditation – going to try very hard to give myself 10 – 15 minutes a few times every week.
Breathing – mindful walking to clear my head and give me time to think clearly.*

Mindful movement. Using dots to stop and take a breath. Being mindful of my walking and eating at times. Continue to try and meditate and get past the anxiety.

Well, I think just overall I am more mindful and less judgemental which is something I would like to continue. I would also like to continue more formal practice, especially movement type stuff but even the other types, even if in short sessions.

What improvements do you think could be of consideration for the improvement of mindfulness courses in the future?

Having follow up sessions from time to time

Work providing areas like those in Playfield House where you can go and take some short time out.

To have maybe a half day of silence with lunch instead of the full day.

No improvements needed. An excellent 8 weeks, enjoyed in the company of 3 fantastic friends / facilitators.

Perhaps smaller groups.

No comment.

Perhaps a follow-up group or establishing an on-line follow up support group for people who have attended the course.

None

Probably less people, say 9 – 10 of 16 – 18. An email reminder weekly rather than a workbook. Outline of the day in advance, linked to email above.

I felt it took a few weeks to settle in – not sure how this could be avoided. ?? Even pre-course suggested reading.

Difficult time of day to leave work due to busyness (personal to me). Morning slot would have been more beneficial however, would likely not suit majority.

Venue could be improved as it took 2 hours travelling time to get to Stratheden (1 hour each way).

Possibly a more central venue in Fife. Possibly a smaller group – 21 was quite large, felt intimidating if one wanted to speak of more difficult things that course raised up in oneself.

It may be worth considering smaller groups e.g. maximum 12 people.

Is at a difficult time of day as by the time I get back to the office, I only have 30 minutes left. Would therefore have preferred it a bit later e.g. 3 pm. Maybe more practice of mindful eating – was eye-opening.

A warm room is essential to allow complete relaxation and the room was at times cool.

The focus is on taking time and slowing down and at times it felt as though we were

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rushing from one activity to another. Also with mindful movement, because the movement is in time to breathing. I think people need more opportunity to do this in their own time – I often felt like I was 'rushing' to catch up which really defeats the purpose.

I can't think of anything specifically now.

Any other comments would be welcomed.

Valued being able to have a drink at break times.

The walking outside during the full day was good for me but I did not want to come back to more meditation.

Thank you so much for all your time and commitment to this course, allowing us the pleasure of your experience.

An excellent course. Great course leaders. Well done. Ideas, tips and continuation of practice – is there follow up? Is there a group to join for get-togethers?

I would like to think I shall continue my mindfulness throughout my private and professional life.

A clipboard may have helped make my writing more legible! Thank You!!

Lovely setting, very peaceful.

Very good person centered course. Thanks to the organisers and course leaders for providing such a forward looking course. Thanks also to NHS Fife and Health Promotion for funding such a course given the financial background in NOT funding other therapy training courses.

Enjoyed the course. Thanks to all leaders. Nice venue, lovely for outdoor walking on silent day!

Thoroughly enjoyed course – Thank You! Apologies for frequent lateness.

Has made me think about going back to doing yoga practice.

None

I feel honoured to have been involved in the course and to receive all the support from the course facilitators. I am also grateful that I have been given their time every Monday to discover more about myself.

Am glad I did the course and have learned a lot – have definitely benefitted.

A very positive experience and if I get the opportunity would love to join a mindfulness group to continue the practice (or dip in) every once in a while.

This was a very large group and I felt it was too big to be able to talk about some of the difficulties I was having although I was able to do this in smaller groups – especially when so many people were finding it so beneficial.

Really enjoyed thanks!

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