



Mindfulness-Based
Professional Training Institute

MBSR Mentorship Documents



Mindfulness-Based Professional Training Institute

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Description and Guidelines for MBSR Mentorship

Definition of Mindfulness Mentorship: *A contractual arrangement between a mentor and mentee which focuses on a mentee's mindfulness-based teaching in secular settings and supports the on-going development of personal practice. The purpose of this arrangement is to promote competency and best practice skills for teaching mindfulness in secular settings and to encourage the relevance of applying the principles of mindfulness in everyday life.*

The following outlines the role of a mindfulness-based mentor:

- Mentorship of a mentee as they participate in training as a mindfulness-based teacher.
- Support a mentee's personal meditation practice as it relates to teaching MBSR.
- Support and strengthen the teaching of mindfulness meditation practices.
- Support and strengthen the inquiry process.
- Discussion and exploration of the embodiment of mindfulness.
- Provide feedback and evaluation.
- Articulate the ethical underpinnings of mindfulness-based teaching.
- Uphold clear ethical and professional boundaries.

Mindfulness mentorship is therefore multifaceted and an organic evolving process. Suggested guidelines for consideration as an approved mentor in the MBPTI:

- Experience of teaching MBSR group interventions in secular settings.
- Teacher training skills and proficiency in assessment.
- Demonstrated competence and skill in making evident the relevance of a continuing personal mindfulness practice and the importance of mindfulness in everyday life.
- A long-standing foundation of personal on-going mindfulness meditation practice.
- A personal commitment to self-awareness using the ethical principles of mindfulness.
- Ability to articulate the interface of Buddhist philosophy/psychology with western psychology.
- Regular attendance at teacher-lead meditation retreats.

Mindfulness-based mentorship is focused on the delivery and process of teaching MBSR. As such, mentorship will cover the implementation and teaching of the 8-week MBSR program. Preferably a mentor's professional training will provide a match for the mentee's professional background and for the teaching context of the MBSR program. All mentors will limit their mentorship to their own professional expertise and to their experience of teaching mindfulness-based interventions. Any clinical responsibility is to be the responsibility of an outside clinical supervisor (if one is required). If a mentor does not share the professional background of the mentee and have specific experience of the context of the MBI, she/he will limit supervision to the content and process of mindfulness practices.



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Good Practice Guidelines for Trainers and Mentors of MBSR Teachers

1. Certified as an MBSR teacher through the MBPTI or equivalent.
2. Will have had full teaching responsibility for at least 8-10 MBSR courses over a period of five years.
3. Will have trained to be a trainer via an apprenticeship with a more experienced trainer and demonstrated competency in training others.
4. Continue to teach mindfulness-based courses to the general public.
5. Be in peer supervision in relation to teaching mindfulness-based interventions.
6. Attend annual mindfulness meditation retreats.
7. Stay up to date with the current and developing evidence base for mindfulness-based interventions.
8. Be up to date with current methods of assessing mindfulness-based teaching competency and maintaining good practice.
9. Be steeped in the practice and understanding of mindfulness which is informed by both relevant current scientific and/or clinical understanding as well as its historical antecedents from relevant spiritual and philosophical traditions, the most common example of which is the Buddhist tradition.
10. Be a compassionate and strong team player - willing to operate in the context of a training team and in connection with others who are training teachers in MBSR.

In general Mindfulness-based teacher trainers need well developed skills, understandings and attitudes in the following areas:

1. An experientially gained understanding of the complexity of mindfulness as an approach and its transformational potential.
2. An in-depth understanding of the aims and intentions of the full range of curriculum components within the mindfulness-based course they are training others to teach.
3. An understanding of the underlying theoretical principles of the mindfulness-based courses they are training others to teach.
4. Understand and have the capacity to train others in the principles underpinning the adaptation of mindfulness-based courses to different contexts and populations.
5. Skill in working with groups, especially the creation of a safe and challenging learning environment.
6. The ability and skill needed to support trainees in identifying their strengths and learning needs, and providing feedback which facilitates new learning.
7. An understanding of the complex interface between MBIs taught in a therapeutic context and mindfulness as taught in traditional or specific cultural contexts and a commitment to being transparent in regard to which context(s) mindfulness teaching/training is being offered.

The trainer will work within the ethical framework of her/his profession or training and will additionally have particularly developed sensitivities in relation to:

- Only training within the limits and boundaries of competence
- Only asking trainees what is asked of self in relation to informal and formal mindfulness practice

Acknowledgement: We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to our colleagues in the UK for allowing us to use their Good Practice Guidelines as a template for this document. http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/our_resources.php.en



Good Practice Guidelines for MBSR Teachers

The following description has been developed to promote and support good practices in the teaching of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). MBSR was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD and colleagues at the Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Worcester, MA. MBSR is an empirically supported 8-week psycho-educational group intervention. The program teaches mindfulness meditation skills as a way to develop a different relationship to stress resulting from chronic physical illnesses and psychological disorders. Research outcomes have demonstrated positive improvements in physical and psychological symptoms, as well as changes in health attitudes and behaviors.

An MBSR teacher will demonstrate the following:

Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training

1. Participation in an 8-week MBSR program.
2. Completion of Teacher Qualification and Certification.

Training and background required in addition to MBSR teacher training

1. A professional qualification in mental or physical health care, education, social welfare, law. An equivalent life experience, recognized by the organization or context within which the MBSR teaching will take place, can be taken into consideration and will be reviewed on an individual basis.
2. Knowledge and experience of the populations that the MBSR program will be brought to. This shall include teaching experience, therapeutic or other care provisions with the group and/or individuals. An exception to this can be taken into consideration and will be reviewed on an individual basis when co-teaching with a colleague who is a certified MBSR teacher, has experience of this population and relevant professional qualification in this area.

On-going Good Practice Requirements

1. Commitment to a personal mindfulness practice through daily formal and informal practices and participation in annual residential teacher-led silent mindfulness meditation retreats.
2. Adherence to the ethical framework appropriate to the MBSR teacher's professional background and working context.
3. Commitment to continuing education in the field of mindfulness meditation research, theory and practice. Sustaining on-going contact with other colleagues involved in the practice and teaching of mindfulness; one that offers mutual support and promotes collaboration.
4. Regular mentorship with more experienced MBSR teachers which includes the following:
 - a) The opportunity to reflect on and inquire into personal process as it relates to teaching MBSR. In addition a willingness to share, discuss and inquire into personal mindfulness meditation practice.
 - b) Receive periodic feedback on teaching MBSR. This can be through audio/visual tools, mentor sitting in on teaching sessions or through co-teaching with reciprocal feedback.

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Mentorship Agreement

This is an agreement between _____ (Mentee) and
_____ (Mentor)

Effective Date: _____ Frequency of Meetings: _____

Number of Sessions: _____ Duration of Each Session: _____

This agreement is entered into voluntarily by the above parties for the purpose of providing mentorship in teaching the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. These mentorship sessions are for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements for MBSR Teacher Qualification and Certification in the Institute.

1. Purpose, Goals and objectives of Mentorship:

- a) To fulfill MBSR training requirements leading to MBSR teacher qualification and certification.
- b) To promote the development of mentee's competency and good practice skills in the teaching of the MBSR program.

2. Content and context of mentorship:

- a) The content of mentorship will focus on the acquisition of mindfulness-based knowledge, theoretical and experiential teaching competencies, and best practice skills.
- b) The context will ensure the understanding of good practice guidelines, and appropriate professional boundaries, codes and ethics, as stated in the MBPTI Good Practice Guidelines.

3. A mentorship record form will be used to document key features of each mentorship session. Feedback will be provided at the close of each session. Mentorship notes may be shared with mentee.

4. Rights and responsibilities of both parties:

Mentor's rights:

- 1. To inquire into mentee's MBSR teaching.
- 2. To provide mentee with constructive feedback on her/his MBSR teaching.
- 3. To listen to and observe mentee's MBSR teaching through the use of audio/visual tools and give constructive feedback.
- 4. To write a letter of recommendation (when deemed the relevant time) to the MBSR review committee for the purposes of teacher Qualification/Certification.

5. Mentor's responsibilities:

1. To uphold good practice guidelines and an ethical framework appropriate to mentor's professional background and working context.
2. To keep a record of the meeting; date, time and relevant session notes.
3. To provide evaluation and feedback to mentee.
4. To monitor mentee's teaching performance.
5. To support mentee in developing MBSR teaching competencies and best practice skills.

Mentee's rights:

1. To uninterrupted time during scheduled sessions.
2. To Mentor's undivided attention, guidance during scheduled sessions.
3. To receive feedback.
4. To set part of the agenda.
5. To ask questions.
6. To have, within the context of this MBSR mentorship, reasonable development/training needs addressed.
7. To challenge ideas and guidance in a constructive way.

Mentee's responsibilities:

1. To uphold good practice guidelines and an ethical framework appropriate to mentee's professional background and working context.
2. To be prepared to discuss MBSR teaching issues and dilemmas.
3. To be open to change and the use of alternate methods of teaching.
4. Maintain on-going commitment to continuing education in mindfulness-based theories and techniques.

5. Finances:

The agreement to an hourly rate for mentorship of _____ to be paid to the mentor prior to each session via check, PayPal or other mutually agreed-upon means.

This contract is subject to revision at any time, upon the request of the mentor or the mentee.

Both parties agree that the mentor's role includes what is described above and that the mentor DOES NOT hold any responsibility for any clinical delivery of services by the mentee nor to those people the mentee may instruct, teach individually or in a group regardless of the setting. This agreement is not a supervisory relationship, but instead describes a mentoring relationship. We agree, to the best of our ability, to uphold the guidelines specified in this mentorship agreement and to manage the mentorship relationship and process in an ethical and professional manner.

Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Mentee: _____ Date: _____



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Suggested Mentoring Session Outline

PHASE 1 for Qualification

General structure:

1. Review of the previous taught class.
2. Where is the teaching currently? Comfort levels, successes, challenges, teaching edges.
3. Review of the next class.

Topics to review:

1. Review of the MBSR class structure.
2. The teaching of the mindfulness practices.
3. Teaching of the didactic pieces.
4. Review of the group process.
5. Review of the skills of mindful inquiry.
6. The “person of the teacher” – discussion of how teaching MBSR includes the practice of mindful inquiry and embodying mindful presence.

In addition, review of:

- Audio and/or audio/visual recordings of mentee guiding mindfulness meditation practices; mindful yoga, teaching a didactic portion of the MBSR program and leading inquiry.
- Submission of mentee teaching materials which will include all participant handouts.

PHASE 2 for Certification

Some suggestions for this phase of mentoring.

Firstly having familiarity with the 6 domains of the MBI:TAC. Sharing the MBI:TAC with the mentee so that these domains become topics for discussion. These domains cover the following areas.

1. Coverage, pacing and organization of the session curriculum.
2. Relational skills.
3. Embodiment of mindfulness.
4. Guiding the mindfulness practices.
5. Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching.
6. Holding the group learning process.

Secondly at this point in mentorship, the discussions will include a focus on the delivery and practice of mindful inquiry and the embodiment of mindful presence. For mindful inquiry this can include the following areas:

- A clear ability to demonstrate a present moment focus; language that is simple and clear; an ease with participants observations and responses, one that facilitates individual experiences and learning; “being” mode of mind vs. teaching to, fixing or problem solving; at ease with the

universal principles of mindfulness meditation and able to facilitate learning based on these principles; an empathetic and compassionate learning platform for participants; acceptance and understanding when faced with participants difficulties with the meditation practices; relating well to the challenges emanating from participants difficulties with meditation practice; an ability to facilitate group cohesiveness.

For mindful embodied presence this can include a discussion of the following areas:

- Mindful awareness; the intersection of personal practice and the teaching of mindfulness in secular settings; the attitudinal foundations; humility; kindness and compassion.

In addition there will be a review of the following:

- Video recordings of mentee teaching two half-hour segments of mindful inquiry, one from the first half of the MBSR program, the second, from the second half of the program.
- Video recording of mentee teaching a 40-minute sitting meditation practice and a mindful yoga practice.
- Video recording of mentee teaching a didactic portion of the MBSR program e.g. Session 4: Stress Reactivity.
- Submission of mentee audio recordings of a 40-minute body scan, a 40-minute sitting meditation practice, a walking meditation, and a 30-minute mindful yoga practice. These are the recordings that the participants listen to at home.

Helpful resources

MBI: TAC www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/documents/Supervisionfinalpublished.pdf
[http://www.academia.edu/3205977/The Bangor Exeter and Oxford mindfulness-based interventions teaching assessment criteria](http://www.academia.edu/3205977/The_Bangor_Exeter_and_Oxford_mindfulness-based_interventions_teaching_assessment_criteria)



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Specific Structure for Allocation of MBSR Mentorship Hours

Phase 1: 18 sessions (mentees who completed the 10-week Online MBSR TTP)

9 hours allocated for the first time teaching the 8-week MBSR program. This could include the following.

- 1) 30-min of mentoring prior to teaching the 8-week MBSR course. This would cover administrative details, general questions etc.
- 2) Eight hours of mentorship during the time the mentee is teaching the MBSR program.
- 3) 30-min after the MBSR program has finished for review of teaching, general discussion and what to focus on the next time mentee teaches etc.

9 hours for the second round of teaching the MBSR program. This could include the following.

- 1) Six- hours of mentorship during the time the mentee is teaching the MBSR program.
- 2) Two-hours to review audio recordings of the mentee teaching. 40 minute Body scan; 30 minutes of standing yoga or 30 minutes of lying down yoga; 40 minute sitting meditation and 20 minutes of inquiry; 20 - 30 minutes of teaching a didactic portion of the MBSR program. All of this reviewed with the mentee as she teaches the 8 week MBSR program.
- 3) One-hour to review mentee's participant handouts and review with mentee.
- 4) Write letter to support mentee's application to review committee.

Phase 1: 22 sessions (mentees who didn't take the 10-week Online MBSR TTP)

10 hours allocated for the first time teaching the 8-week MBSR program. This could include the following.

- 4) One hour of mentoring prior to teaching the 8-week MBSR course. This would cover administrative details, general questions etc.
- 5) Eight hours of mentorship during the time the mentee is teaching the MBSR program.
- 6) One hour after the MBSR program has finished for review of teaching, general discussion and what to focus on the next time mentee teaches etc.

12 hours for the second round of teaching the MBSR program. This could include the following.

- 5) Eight hours of mentorship during the time the mentee is teaching the MBSR program.
- 6) Three hours to review audio recordings of the mentee teaching. 40 minute Body scan; 30 minutes of standing yoga or 30 minutes of lying down yoga; 40 minute sitting meditation and 20 minutes of inquiry; 20 - 30 minutes of teaching a didactic portion of the MBSR program. All of this reviewed with the mentee as she teaches the 8 week MBSR program.
- 7) One hour to review mentee's participant handouts and review with mentee.
- 8) Write letter to support mentee's application to review committee.

Phase 2:**10 hours allocated.**

- 1) Five hours of mentorship as mentee teaches an MBSR program.
- 2) Three hours to review DVD/audio recordings of mentee teaching the following.
Two 30 minute segments of mindful inquiry, one from the first half of the MBSR program, the second from the second half; 40 minute sitting meditation; 30 minute yoga practice; teaching a didactic portion of the MBSR program e.g. Session 4: Stress Reactivity. Feedback will be given to the mentee, after the mentor has reviewed these recordings of the mentee teaching.
- 3) Two hours review audio recordings of 35 minute body scan; 40 minute sitting meditation practice; 30 minute walking meditation practice, 30 minute yoga practice. These recordings are the recordings the participants listen to at home. Feedback given to mentee.
- 4) Write letter to support mentee's application to review committee.

The review of any recordings is done by the mentor who then shares their observations and suggestions with the mentee.

The above structure is a directional outline for mentors and mentees. However it is important to note that at times mentoring a mentee concurrently as they teach sometimes runs into scheduling issues.

MBI Teaching Self-Assessment Form

For Mentorship in Phase Two of the UCSD MBPTI

Adapted from: The Bangor, Exeter & Oxford Mindfulness-Based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC)
for assessing the competence and adherence of mindfulness-based class-based teaching

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Using the MBI-TAC requires reflection, care and skill. We believe that using the six domains along with the generic definitions of overall competence in discussion with the mentee will be a useful aid in the mentoring process. We are not proposing that this instrument be used as a rating system. Rather we are suggesting that this could be a rich and productive two-way dialogue that looks at the on-going development of teaching skills and competence.

| Domains of MBI Teaching Competence | Rating |
|---|--------|
| <p>Domain 1: Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</p> <p>Overview: The teacher adequately addresses and covers the curriculum content of the session. This involves creating a skilful balance between the needs of the individual, the group and the requirements of teaching the course. The teacher is well organised with relevant course materials and teaching aids readily available and the room appropriately prepared for the group. The session is well 'time managed' in relation to the curriculum. The session is well paced with a sense of spaciousness, steadiness and lack of time pressure. Digressions are steered back into the session curriculum with tact and ease.</p> | |
| <p>Domain 2: Relational skills</p> <p>Overview: Mindfulness-based teaching is highly relational – mindfulness practice engages us in a process of developing a new relationship both with ourselves and our experience. The qualities that the teacher brings to participants and the teaching process mirror the qualities that participants are learning to bring to themselves during the MBI programme. Mindfulness is the awareness which emerges through paying attention to experience in a particular way: on purpose (the teacher is deliberate and focused when relating to participants in the sessions); in the present moment (the teacher has the intention to be whole heartedly present with participants); and non-judgmentally (the teacher brings a spirit of interest, deep respect and acceptance to participants) (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).</p> | |
| <p>Domain 3: Embodiment of mindfulness</p> <p>Overview: Mindfulness practice permeates the teacher and is expressed through two interconnected aspects to embodiment – 'present moment focus', and bringing the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness to moment by moment experience. Embodiment of mindfulness involves the teacher sustaining connection and responsiveness to moment by moment arising (within self, within individuals and within the group) and bringing the core attitudinal foundations of mindfulness practice to all of this. These attitudes are non-judging, patience, beginner's mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance, and letting go (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).</p> | |
| <p>Domain 4: Guiding mindfulness practices</p> <p>Overview: The teacher offers guidance that describes accurately what the participant is being invited to do in the practice, and includes all the elements required in that practice. The guidance enables participants to relate skilfully to mind wandering (seeing this as a natural mind process, working gently but firmly to cultivate the skill to recognise when the mind has wandered and to bring the attention back). The guidance suggests the attitudes to bring to self and experience throughout the practice. The practice balances spaciousness with precision. Skilful use of language is key to conveying all this.</p> | |
| <p>Domain 5: Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</p> <p>Overview: This domain assesses the <i>process</i> through which the course themes are conveyed to participants. These are at times explicitly drawn out and underlined by the teacher and at other times emerge implicitly within the process. The domain includes inquiry, group dialogue, use of stories and poems, facilitating group exercises, orienting participants to session/course themes, and didactic teaching.</p> | |
| <p>Domain 6: Holding the group learning environment</p> <p>Overview: The whole teaching process takes place within the context of a group, which if facilitated effectively becomes a vehicle for connecting participants with the universality of the processes being explored. The teacher creates a 'container' or learning environment that 'holds' the group and within which the teaching can effectively take place. The teacher works responsively with group process through bringing an appropriate leadership style to the teaching; through taking good care of managing group safety, trust and boundary issues; through employing a teaching style which takes account of the individual within the context of the group, and balances the needs of both; through using the group process to draw out universal learning themes; through working with and responding to group development processes by managing the various phases of group formation, development and ending. The teacher is able to 'tune into', connect with, and respond appropriately to shifts and changes in group mood and characteristics.</p> | |

Levels of Mindfulness-Based Teaching Competence

(adapted from the Dreyfus Scale of Competence, 1986)

| Generic definition of overall competence level | Competence band | Rating |
|---|---|----------|
| Key features are not demonstrated. The teacher makes consistent errors and displays poor and unacceptable teaching, leading to likely or actual negative therapeutic consequences. No real evidence that the teacher has grasped the fundamentals of the MBI teaching process. | Incompetent <i>Absence of key features, or highly inappropriate performance</i> | 1 |
| At least one key feature present in most domains, but numerous substantive problems and overall lack of consistency require considerable further development. | Beginner <i>Aspects of competence demonstrated but significant problems evident</i> | 2 |
| At least two key features at a competent level in most domains, but one or more major problems and/or significant inconsistencies that require further development. Teachers adequately take care of participants' emotional and physical safety. Teacher would at a very basic level be considered 'fit for practice' as co-teachers / under supervision – the participants would not be harmed and are likely to have opportunities for learning. | Advanced Beginner <i>Evidence of some competence, but numerous problems and lack of consistency</i> | 3 |
| Most key features are present in all domains, with possibly some good features, but a number of problems and/or some inconsistencies are present. Teacher demonstrates a workable level of competence and they are clearly 'fit for practice'. | Competent <i>Competent, with some problems and/or inconsistencies</i> | 4 |
| All key features are present in all domains, with very few and very minor inconsistencies and evidence of good ability and skill. The teacher is able consistently to demonstrate these skills over the range of aspects to MBI teaching. | Proficient <i>Sustained competence demonstrated with few or minor problems and/or inconsistencies</i> | 5 |
| Expected key features are present with evidence of considerable ability. The teaching is particularly inspirational and excellent. The teacher no longer uses rules, guidelines or maxims. He/she has deep tacit understanding of the issues and is able to work in an original and flexible manner. The skills are demonstrated even in the face of difficulties (e.g. challenges from the group). | Advanced <i>Excellent teaching practice, or very good even in the face of participant difficulties</i> | 6 |