



Hosting MBSR in the Workplace Commonly Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest in hosting a Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course in your workplace. As you consider whether this course is relevant to your workplace's needs, you may have many questions. The following Q&A outlines some of the more common inquiries. If your questions are not answered by this, please feel free to contact CMHA with your individual inquiry.

Q: What is MBSR?

A: MBSR is an approach to self care that can assist in managing stress, pain, and illness. The practice of meditation is used to learn to focus awareness on body sensations, thoughts, and emotions in a nonjudgmental way. Through this practice, participants are invited to explore their inner world of mind/body, recognize and mobilize their inner psychological resources, and take better care of the self.

Based on the methods of Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, author of *Wherever you go, there you are*, the MBSR course has been modelled after the Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

Q: What should we consider before hosting an MBSR course in our workplace?

A: Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- MBSR is practice focused and requires a significant commitment of time and effort. Are we prepared to attend and participate in eight weekly sessions (first and last session of 3 hours, all other sessions of 2.5 hours), a full day session, as well as commit to a home practice of 45 minutes per day?
- Can our workplace ensure a consistent message (at all levels) of the importance of participants fully committing to the process and attending all sessions?
- Can we ensure there will be a quiet, uninterrupted space for the course to take place in, particularly for the day of mindfulness?
- If part of our purpose for hosting this course is to better support our own clientele, will we want to schedule a session following the end of the course to debrief and discuss how we might use mindfulness practices within our agency?

Q: Will we talk about how to teach MBSR to our own clientele?

A: You may be considering taking this course for professional reasons—hoping it will assist in your work with others. It is important to recognize MBSR is not an informational or content based course. Rather, it is focused on building a personal **practice** of mindfulness. So while it may prove to **inform** your work (in practicing mindfulness ourselves, we can potentially be more present to our clients), participating in the course will not prepare you to teach MBSR. If there is a wish to have a conversation facilitated about integrating mindfulness practices into your workplace or work with clients, this can be arranged to follow the end of the course.

Q: What will I be expected to disclose about myself to my peers?

A: The process of this course asks for you to hold an open and curious stance to your experience, from moment to moment. While there are regular invitations to explore and share aspects of your experience as it unfolds, you are not expected to share anything you are uncomfortable with. It is also important to know that the intention of sharing is more about the **process** of your experience than it is about the **content**.