

Information for Those Interested in Becoming a MBCP Instructor

Since the founding of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center over 30 years ago, mindfulness courses and programs intended to teach people practical life skills that can help with physical and mental health challenges have increased exponentially. The Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) Program is one of these programs.

The effectiveness of these programs and the investigation of the physiological and psychological mechanisms that underlie the practice of mindfulness is a robust field of research. Perhaps related to this, there is a growing interest by health professionals from a variety of backgrounds to gain training in mindfulness-based interventions in order to decrease suffering and enhance wellbeing in the populations they serve. This includes professionals who provide care for expectant parents and young families, some of whom are finding their way to the MBCP program.

Becoming a Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) Instructor is a process that by its very nature takes patience, commitment, dedication, individual responsibility, creativity and imagination. MBCP teacher training is firmly grounded in the principle that the authenticity and effectiveness of one's teaching can only come through one's own personal mindfulness practice. Embodying the practice both inside and outside the classroom is key and this can only be developed through one's own personal formal and informal mindfulness practice.

In response to requests for training to become an MBCP Instructor, formal MBCP Teacher Training Programs are being developed both in the US and abroad. Though these programs are still very early in their development, it is anticipated that such programs may begin as soon as the autumn of 2013. For those who would like to begin preparing to enter a formal MBCP Teacher Training program suggested guidelines are given below. Our hope is that these educational experiences will be helpful in exploring whether becoming an MBCP Instructor is indeed the path for you at this point in time. Many of these educational experiences will enable you to begin or deepen your own mindfulness practice, your knowledge of the population you will be serving, enhance your potential for greater understanding and embodiment of the practice both inside and outside of the classroom and support you in providing ethical and effective service to the population you intend to serve.

## **Suggested Background / Personal Development for Potential MBCP Instructors**

- Completion of an 8/9-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy or Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting course
- A personal daily mindfulness meditation practice, including both formal and informal practice
- Attendance of at least one (or more) 5-10 day silent, teacher-led mindfulness meditation retreat(s)
- An ongoing mindful movement practice, such as yoga
- A recognized core professional qualification in physical or mental healthcare (for example in medicine, nursing, midwifery, psychology, childbirth education, infant development or a related field) including subsequent specialist training in perinatal healthcare if this was not integral to the core professional training
- Knowledge and experience of working with women or families during pregnancy, childbirth and early parenting, beyond one's own personal experience
- If you intend to teach MBCP within a specialist group of expectant parents (e.g. those experiencing clinical levels of anxiety or depression, drug or alcohol use, high-risk pregnancy, teens, etc.) you should have knowledge, experience of, and professional training in working with this particular group
- Attendance of women and families during the birth process: 10 births within the last 3 years optimal
- Experience of and/or training in group facilitation, including an understanding of group dynamics and processes
- Some familiarity with and understanding of the scientific research that provides evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based programs. For a helpful resource, go to Mindfulness Research Monthly (see website below).

Some of the experiences detailed above may be gained prior to beginning formal training in MBCP or explored alongside a formal MBCP training course. Some of these experiences may also be part of the formal MBCP training courses when they are finalized, such as participation in an MBSR / MBCT / MBCP course as a participant-observer and group facilitation skill development. Exploring some or all of these experiences before applying for formal MBCP teacher training, however, is advised, as

they will help you determine whether teacher training in MBCP is the right path for you at the present time.

Training to be an MBCP instructor is fundamentally different from many other professional trainings where one 'ticks-off' accomplishments as one progresses through a set curriculum. Mindfulness is a way of being and ultimately, the curriculum is your life. No matter how long you have been meditating, we are all always beginners. In that sense, completing certain learning experiences prior to, during and following training is seen as an advantage--and sometimes a necessity-- as each experience is an opportunity to deepen your mindfulness practice and inner knowledge. If and when you undertake formal training in MBCP, there will be the opportunity to explore your own personal mindfulness meditation practice and your development as a mindfulness teacher with experienced teacher-trainers, in order to support navigating this path.

### **Other Recommended Learning Experiences**

- Mindful Birthing: 6-Day professional training retreat with Nancy Bardacke, CNM (see University of California, San Diego website links below). This will provide an introductory experience in Mindful Birthing methodology and practices
- 7-day professional training with Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, Saki Santorelli EdD or other trainings sponsored by the Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical Center (see The Center for Mindfulness (CFM) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMASS) website link below) or the University of California, San Diego Center for Mindfulness
- Annual International Scientific Conference sponsored by the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society, UMass Medical Center, Worcester MA (see The Center for Mindfulness (CFM) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMASS) website link below)
- Mindfulness meditation retreats are offered in numerous locations throughout the US. For more information see Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, MA <http://www.dharma.org/> or Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, CA <https://www.spiritrock.org/home>
- For those living in the UK and Europe, training to become an MBCP instructor is offered through the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. Please consult their website for further information. <http://oxfordmindfulness.org/science/projects/what-is-mbcp/>

## Recommended Reading

### **Books:**

Bardacke, N. (2012). *Mindful Birthing: Training the Mind, Body and Heart for Childbirth and Beyond*. Harper Collins, New York. (ISBN: 006196395X). See Appendix B for additional information and recommended reading.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. Dell Publishing, New York. (ISBN 0-385-30312-2).

Kabat-Zinn, M. & Kabat-Zinn, J. (1997). *Everyday Blessings. The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting*. Hyperion, New York. (ISBN: 0-7868-8314-6).

Santorelli, S. (2000). *Heal Thy Self: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine*. Crown Publications, New York. (ISBN: 0609805045)

Williams, M. & Penman, D. (2011). *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World*. Piatkus, London. (ISBN: 978-0-7499-5308-9).

### **Research Papers:**

Duncan, L. G. & Bardacke, N. (2010). Mindfulness-Based childbirth and parenting education: Promoting family mindfulness during the perinatal period. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19(2), 190-202.

Duncan, L. G., Coatsworth, J.D., Greenberg, M. T. (2009). A Model of Mindful Parenting: Implications for Parent–Child Relationships and Prevention Research. *Clin Child Fam Psychol Rev*, 12, 255–270. (DOI 10.1007/s10567-009-0046-3).

Hughes, A., Williams, J. M. G., Bardacke, N., Duncan, L. G., Dimidjian, S., Goodman, S. H. (2009). Mindfulness approaches to childbirth and parenting. *British Journal of Midwifery*. 17(10), 630 – 635.

Warriner, S., Williams, M., Bardacke, N. & Dymond, M. (2012) A mindfulness approach to antenatal preparation. *British Journal of Midwifery*. 20(3), 194 – 198.

## Recommended Websites:

### **Mindful Birthing: Programs for Mindful Family Living**

This is the home website for Nancy Bardacke and the Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting Program. <http://mindfulbirthing.org/>

**Mindfulness for Pregnancy iPhone App:** <http://itunes.apple.com/app/id504778562>

**The University of California, San Diego, Center for Mindfulness**  
<http://cme.ucsd.edu/mindfulness/index.html>

Includes details of the MBCP Introductory Retreat for Professionals  
[http://cme.ucsd.edu/mindfulness/mbc\\_p\\_011313\\_home.html](http://cme.ucsd.edu/mindfulness/mbc_p_011313_home.html)

**The Center for Mindfulness (CFM) at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical Center.** Home of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program established by Jon Kabat-Zinn and now under the directorship of Saki Santorelli:  
<http://www.umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=41252>

**Mindfulness Research Monthly (MRM)** An excellent website for scientific papers on mindfulness research. You can sign up for a monthly newsletter.  
<http://www.mindfulexperience.org>

**The Oxford Mindfulness Centre (OMC), Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, UK:** <http://oxfordmindfulness.org/>; including: professionals training in mindfulness-based approaches: <http://oxfordmindfulness.org/train/>; details of the Oxford UK MBCP project: [http://oxfordmindfulness.org/science/projects/what-is-mbc\\_p/](http://oxfordmindfulness.org/science/projects/what-is-mbc_p/)

**The UK Mindfulness Trainers Network:** <http://mindfulnessteachersuk.org.uk/> includes UK good practice guidelines for those wishing to teach mindfulness-based courses:  
<http://mindfulnessteachersuk.org.uk/pdf/teacher-guidelines.pdf>