

Mindfulness Skills: Pre-course Preparation

These are the prerequisites for attending the Mindfulness course:

- ✓ **I have read these pre-course preparation notes**
This preparation is to give you an understanding of the mindfulness course and what it involves. It is for self-reflection only. Also available online: [Pre-course Preparation](#)
- ✓ **I have the course handbook**
You need to read the first four chapters before the first class, and then one chapter per week: *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World* by Mark Williams and Danny Penman (Piatkus, 2011). You can also receive a discounted copy of the course book at Heffers for £10.00 by showing your student card.
- ✓ **I can manage at least seven of the eight weekly sessions, arriving punctually and attending the full 75 minutes.** If not, please consider doing the course at another time.

Please take your time to reflect on the questions below, as they give you a chance to explore your motivation, and to double check whether now is a good time for you to learn mindfulness.

- If you are unsure, please read this document: '[Is mindfulness right for me, just now?](#)'
- For FAQs see our Mindfulness at Cam website: [Learning Mindfulness](#). And see our document, *Information for learning MINDFULNESS in Person and Online*.
- Feel free to contact Dr. Elizabeth English, Mindfulness Teacher: elizabeth.english@admin.cam.ac.uk

Note for disabilities and access:

- Where classes are in person, we aim to hold them in venues with disabled access, but because of the nature of the older colleges, cannot manage this for every class. Please check to see whether the course you wish to attend has disabled access, and inform me, Dr Elizabeth English, by email of your particular needs
- Please note: Some of the classes involve gentle movement, and moving around the room. If you wish to discuss this with me, please email in advance.

1. What is your motivation for learning mindfulness?

How do you think it will help in your study; in life? List three goals or reasons for learning mindfulness just now:

2. How important is this course for you at this time?

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 = not important, 10 = extremely important)

1 _____ 10

3. If you have you done any mindfulness practice before, are you still practising it?

None

A little

A fair amount

Lots

4. Do you have any other kind of practice or hobby which might overlap with mindfulness? (E.g. activities that encourage awareness, such as some kinds of sports, creative work, bodywork practices such as yoga or tai chi, contemplative prayer or self reflection.)

5. How will you create time for mindfulness meditation?

Each week of the course you are given 'home practice', varying from eight minutes twice a day, to longer periods building up to 25-30 minutes altogether. Consider two factors which will support you to find the time to practise.

1.

2.

6. Can you manage all eight classes of the course?

If you have to miss a class unexpectedly during the course, please email me to let me know. It is not necessarily a reason to withdraw from doing the course. However, it is important to attend every class because the course sessions are sequential. Remember, if you are tempted to miss a class because you feel "too busy" or "too stressed", this is often the best time to practice mindfulness! Attending a class at a difficult moment may be exactly when you gain the personal insights you need. If you do have to miss a class because you are ill, you will be able to read the course book for that session, and you will receive the handouts over email.

Given your schedule this term, please consider how many of the classes you **can** realistically attend in good time to start punctually.

If you cannot attend at least seven of the eight classes, please postpone doing the course at this time.

7. Do you have any physical health or medical problems which might affect your participation in the group? (e.g sitting, stretching or hearing)

Please do not come to a session under the influence of drugs or alcohol, as it will interfere with learning mindfulness. It will enhance your learning if you can moderate your intake 24 hours before a session.

8. Are you experiencing any stresses or life events which might get in the way of learning mindfulness?

Some things make it difficult to practice the deep inner listening that meditation requires, e.g. disruption to your daily schedule, a difficult relationship breakup, grieving for a loved one, major financial worries. These may not stop you learning meditation just now, but it is worth reflecting whether the time is right for you. If there is anything that you would like me to know about in particular, please feel free to contact me on: elizabeth.english@admin.cam.ac.uk

9. Are you unsure whether this is the right time for you to learn mindfulness?

This eight week mindfulness course is not a clinical intervention, but a course intended to support well students to study and thrive.

Guidance: When NOT to learn mindfulness

You are advised not to learn mindfulness at this time if you are:

- *Currently suffering from severe periods of anxiety or depression*
- *Experiencing hypermania or psychotic episodes*
- *Following recent bereavement or major loss (of about six months to a year, depending on your own judgement)*

If you feel unsure, you might wish to talk it over with your course organiser or college nurse. Or you can contact me, Elizabeth English: elizabeth.english@admin.cam.ac.uk

10. If you want to sign up ...

- Complete the questions above. These are for your benefit, for self-reflection only.
- Acquire or borrow a copy of the course book, and read the introductory chapters (chapters 1-4) in preparation for your first class: *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World* by Mark Williams and Danny Penman (Piatkus, 2011)
- NOTE! A reduced cost copy of the course book can be bought from Heffer's bookshop if you show them a printout from the Mindfulness webpages on the Student Gateway.

[Mindfulness Web Pages](#)

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