Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society

Stress Reduction Program

A Place for Learning, Growing, and Healing
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If you want to learn how to take better care of yourself and discover a deeper sense of ease and peace of mind—and if you are willing to actively engage in your own health and well-being, we welcome your participation in our eight-week program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Since 1979, more than 17,000 people have completed this well-respected program. They have been referred by more than 5,000 physicians, by hundreds of other health care professionals, and through self-referral. These participants have been strongly motivated to do something for themselves—something no one else could do for them—by learning how to draw upon their inner resources and natural capacity for greater health and balance, ease and peace of mind.

Our Approach: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

The UMass Stress Reduction Clinic introduced meditation into mainstream medicine in 1979. MBSR is based on a form of meditation known as mindfulness. Mindfulness is a basic human quality, a way of learning to pay wise attention to whatever is happening in your life that allows you a greater sense of connection to your life inwardly and outwardly. Mindfulness is also a practice, a systematic method aimed at cultivating clarity, insight, and understanding. In the context of your health, mindfulness is a way for you to experimentally learn to take better care of yourself by exploring and understanding the interplay of mind and body and mobilizing your own inner resources for coping, growing, and healing.

Nearly three decades of scientific research here at UMass and at medical centers all over the world suggest that training in mindfulness and MBSR can positively and often profoundly affect participants’ ability to reduce medical symptoms and psychological distress while learning to live life more fully.

Center for Mindfulness
in Medicine, Health Care, and Society

The Center for Mindfulness is an innovative leader in mind-body medicine and mindfulness-based treatment and research investigations, pioneering the integration of meditation and mindfulness into mainstream medicine and health care. Our Stress Reduction Program continues to expand its influence worldwide with hundreds of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) clinics and free-standing programs attracting tens of thousands of people on five continents.

Directed by Dr. Saki F. Santorelli, the Center for Mindfulness is a multi-dimensional endeavor in the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, within the Department of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The Medical School is one of five campuses of the University of Massachusetts system.

Established in 1995 by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the Center is an outgrowth of the acclaimed Stress Reduction Clinic, the oldest and largest academic medical center-based stress reduction program in the world. The Stress Reduction Clinic was founded in 1979 by Dr. Kabat-Zinn.

Our work has been featured on PBS in Bill Moyers’ documentary, Healing and the Mind, which was seen by more than 40 million people; on NBC’s Dateline; on ABC’s Evening News and Chronicle programs; on The Oprah Winfrey Show; and in hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles.

Stress Reduction Program

Mindfulness is not something that you have to “get” or acquire. It is already within you—a deep internal resource available and patiently waiting to be reawakened and used in the service of learning, growing, and healing.

Who will benefit

The Stress Reduction Program has benefited people reporting a variety of conditions and concerns:

- **Stress**—including work, school, family, financial, illness, aging, grief, uncertainty about the future, and feeling “out of control.”

- **Medical conditions**—including chronic illness or pain, high blood pressure, fibromyalgia, cancer, heart disease, asthma, GI distress, skin disorders, and many other conditions.

- **Psychological distress**—including anxiety, panic, depression, fatigue, and sleep disturbances.

- **Prevention and Wellness**—including health enhancement and wellness focused on prevention and learning the “how” of taking good care of yourself and feeling a greater sense of balance.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction is highly respected within the medical community. It is not offered as an alternative to traditional medical and psychological treatments but as a complement to these approaches. Our experience over nearly three decades suggests that doing what you can for yourself, coupled with what your physician can do for you, can be far more effective than either approach used on its own.

What to expect

The program consists of eight weekly two-and-a-half-hour morning or evening classes and a one-day retreat (on a weekend) between sessions six and seven. Courses are offered in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Highly participatory, supportive, and structured, this program will provide you with:

- guided instruction in mindfulness meditation practices;
- gentle stretching and mindful yoga;
- group dialogue and mindful communication exercises to enhance awareness in everyday life;
- individually tailored instruction;
- daily home assignments; and
- home practice materials including guided mindfulness practice CDs and a workbook.

The program is challenging and life-affirming. The instructors are accomplished and skilled at creating a safe, supportive, and deeply engaging experiential learning environment. They will assist you in learning these methods, providing both group and individualized instructions and directions for how to learn, practice, and integrate mindfulness into your everyday life.

Participating in the Stress Reduction Program requires an ongoing commitment to yourself. You will be asked to attend all classes, including the one-day weekend retreat, and to practice daily home assignments for 45-60 minutes a day.

“*The class was an unexpectedly warm and supportive environment. I felt safe and comfortable.*” George

“*The Stress Reduction Program became my life line. It literally saved my life.*” Amy

“*The class spoke to me in a very personal way.*” Mary

mindfulness@umassmed.edu
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How to begin

All class participants are required to attend a pre-program orientation session before participating in the eight-week MBSR class. Sessions are free of charge and give you a firsthand taste of mindfulness, an opportunity to better understand the course and explore whether the program is right for you, and a chance to meet course instructors. For your convenience, morning and evening orientation sessions are available.

The Stress Reduction Program is a self-pay program that offers 31 hours of direct instruction plus course materials. We offer a sliding scale based on family income. Payment plans are available.

For more information on the Stress Reduction Program, including a schedule of classes and orientation sessions, costs, payment options, and class locations, please visit www.umassmed.edu/cfm and click on “Stress Reduction Program” or call us at 508-856-2656.

“In this very moment, no matter what your condition or situation, you have within you all the resources you need for growing, healing, and working with stress, pain, illness, and the everyday challenges you are facing. A growing body of scientific evidence supports the reality of a profound mind-body connection and now recognizes that learning and practicing mindfulness can positively affect your sense of health and well-being physically, mentally, and emotionally, while simultaneously offering you a means of discovering a deeper sense of ease and peace of mind.”

Saki F. Santorelli, EdD, MA
Executive Director, Center for Mindfulness
Director, Stress Reduction Program
Associate Professor of Medicine
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Research and Outcomes

Since 1979, the Center for Mindfulness has been dedicated to investigating and understanding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) through pilot investigations, small studies, and large-scale research funded by the National Institutes of Health. Since the inception of the Stress Reduction Clinic, MBSR research at UMass and other academic medical centers has shown consistent, reliable, and reproducible demonstrations of major and clinically relevant reductions in medical and psychological symptoms across a wide range of medical diagnoses, including chronic pain conditions, over the eight weeks of the MBSR program. Maintenance of these changes continues, in some cases, up to four years of follow up.

For more information about our research efforts, visit www.umassmed.edu/cfm and click on “Research.”

“This is the first time I have been relatively pain free in five years.” MaryAnn

“The problems and issues haven’t gone away, but the way I choose to handle them has changed…I feel so much more positive about this life.” Betty

“The program at UMass has opened doors to a more productive day for me. My concentration levels are up, my stress is more controlled, and the need to seek a level of balance in my life has been met.” Paul

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