UK Mindfulness Centres Collaboration

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) Teacher Training for NHS Talking Therapies (formerly IAPT) Services

2027-2028

Background

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is an 8-week group-based programme. NICE recently recommended MBCT as a treatment for mild to moderate depression (NICE: 2022). Research trials have also shown that MBCT is at least as effective as anti-depressant medication at preventing the risk of relapse for people who are currently well with a history of recurrent depression (Kuyken et al., 2016). Because of this research evidence, since 2004, NICE has recommended that MBCT should be available to people who are currently well with a history of three or more episodes of depression. The NICE guidelines for wellbeing at work (NICE: 2022), also recommend that "all employees" should be given access to mindfulness courses to support wellbeing.

NHS England have been commissioning MBCT training since 2018 and we are now opening applications to our 9th cohort of the training for High-Intensity therapists working in NHS TT Services. This training course enables graduates to meet the training criteria required by the national Professional Standards and Good Practice Guidelines in teaching mindfulness-based approaches: https://bamba.org.uk/professional-standards/# and to register with the British Association of Mindfulness-Based Approaches (BAMBA). Joining this register is a requirement set by NHS England for all MBCT teachers in NHS TT. Please note that ongoing requirements for personal mindfulness practice, including retreat, supervision and CPD must be met each year to maintain BAMBA registration.

Overview of Training

Trainees will be CBT High-Intensity therapists already working in NHS TT with at least one year's post-qualification experience or fully BABCP accredited CBT therapists; or step 3 counsellors who have done the NHS TT counselling for depression training. It is expected that trainees will have a personal interest in Mindfulness before training, including personal experience of mindfulness practice and a commitment to regular personal practice. It is helpful if this has included participating in an MBCT group as a participant.

The training programme consists of 12 days of required training (plus 2 optional, recommended days), a 5 day residential retreat, daily personal mindfulness practice and reflection, and supervised teaching of 2 MBCT groups in trainees' own services. This takes place over one year, although sometimes due to personal events or service issues, this can take a few months longer.

Twelve teaching days

Ten days are held from March-July.

Day 1 orients trainees to the structure and key requirements of the Training and covers the theories and values underpinning MBCT: equality and diversity in mindfulness practice and the cognitive and contemplative underpinning theories.

Days 2-9 (usually face to face in local sites) cover each of the 8 sessions of MBCT using a tripartite format: trainers demonstrate key features of each group session and then explain the theoretical underpinnings and rationales for each element; this is then followed by trainees practising those same elements in small groups and receiving intensive feedback from peers and trainers.

Day 10 covers the Expert by Experience perspective, use of supervision, the research evidence for MBCT, outcome monitoring, recruitment to MBCT groups, teaching in different contexts (eg on different online platforms and face to face, adapting to make the programme neurodiverse-friendly, and assessment of competence.

In addition, there is a further day online, specifically focused on developing the skill of Inquiry in MBCT. This is often the area of teaching trainees find hardest so an additional day has been provided.

After teaching the first MBCT group, but before the second, there is a 1 day workshop. This allows trainees to consolidate what they have learnt having taught one MBCT group and to support the delivery of their 2nd MBCT group which will be submitted for assessment.

Additional optional support is provided through the following days: Foundations of Mindfulness with John Peacock or Christina Feldman and the Sussex Mindfulness Centre annual conference. SiTT Groups (https://www.sitt.community/) are also available to support the ongoing practice and reflection of trainee and qualified MBCT teachers.

5 day residential retreat

Trainees must attend a 5 day, mostly silent, mindfulness practice retreat. This is generously funded by NHS England. There is no commitment on the service to provide the time for trainees to do this although they may choose to do so. The bespoke retreat provided by the training programme will be funded by the training programme although trainees will be responsible for the payment of any cancellation fees.

Teaching 2 MBCT groups

Trainees teach 2 MBCT groups in trainees' services face to face or online under Supervision provided by the training programme. They teach the groups either with a fellow trainee from their service or with a more experienced BAMBA-registered, MBCT teacher if one is working in that service, or if not, then bought in by the service.

Detailed breakdown of Training

Day 1: The first training day will start with a welcome and introductions, getting to know one another and overviewing the training programme – its aims and timeline overview.

The day will then cover the theoretical rationale and scientific underpinnings of MBCT, particularly regarding cognitive theories of depression and depressive relapse. This will include an overview of:

- The research evidence showing that MBCT is effective for people who have, or have had, depression.
- The mechanisms through which MBCT is proposed to work – i.e. looking at why MBCT protects against depressive relapse.
- Cognitive and Contemplative foundations of mindfulness
- Equality and Diversity values and considerations

Day 2

Section 1 Morning:

Introductions; forming group exercises + 'Course Overview PPt' with discussion

Section 2 morning

- Intentions Practice and review (Looking at *our* intentions for training in MBCT). (Process: led grounding and reflection on intentions, discussion in dyads, then whole group)
- Importance of this aspect of Session 1 for participants and linking to the importance of 'Intention' in Mindfulness more generally (Process: input, discussion in 3s, + whole group)
- Safety and practical considerations including group process perspectives on 'starting the group' (Process: input, discussion in 3s, then whole group)

Section 3 afternoon

- Short Sitting Practice to reconnect with embodied learning
- What is Mindfulness? (Process: as would be done in a participant Orientation Session open discussion based on a short experiential 'taster')
- Contemporary and Ancient Foundations including issues related to secular/spiritual issues (Process: input, discussion in 3s, then whole group)

Section 4 afternoon

- Short Movement Practice… to reconnect with embodied learning
- The 'Seven Attitudinal Foundations' and the model of 'Doing and Being Modes of Mind'
- Process: carousel 3 questions rotating with each:
    1. What ignited me during the teaching? How was I aware of this?
    2. What part of the teaching or the home practice was particularly challenging?
    3. Any reactions to co-participants? To the teachers? What intrigued me? What did I want to avoid
- Ending of day process: what has ignited me today, what am I learning, and how do my intentions match my experience? (Process: pairs, then 4's then whole group brief plenary)

Day 3

Section 1 morning

Engaging in main elements of Session 1 + Session 2 (of 'The 8 Week Programme') as a participant

- Orientation 5
- Raisin Exercise + inquiry 20
- Body Scan + inquiry 40
- Walking Down the Street Ex. 25

Section 2 morning

- Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 1 & 2
- Practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations of 'Intentions Exercise' (10)
- Practical, pedagogic and theoretical considerations of Raisin Ex. 40
- Practical, pedagogic and theoretical considerations of Body Scan 40
- Practical, pedagogic and theoretical considerations of 'Walking Down the Street Ex.' 30

Section 3 afternoon: Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 1&2 of MBCT

'Teaching Practice' in triads (guiding + inquiry + feedback + brief discussion)

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads two practices with the brief inquiry; one of these is the Body Scan and one another element of Session 1 or 2 (10)

- Orientation + Intentions Ex (20)
- The Raisin Exercise (30: 10 + 10 + 5 = 5)
- Body Scan* No. 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
    - ❖ (Tea/comfort break in groups: 15mins …. Start again at 3.15pm
- Body Scan No. 2 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Body Scan No. 3 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Walking Down the Street Ex. (20: 5 + 10 + 5)
- Whole group naming of issues arising from teaching practice (10)

Closing section (5)

*(NB: each Body Scan teaching session has a 'beginning' and an 'end' with a section of the body starting with i/ legs ii/ pelvis back and trunk iii/ arms and head

Day 4

Section 1 morning

Engaging in the main elements of Session 3 as a participant

- Orientation to Session 3 (5)
- Mindful Movements with Inquiry (40)
- Stretch and Breathe with Inquiry (35)
- Pleasant Events Calendar review (20)

Section 2 morning

Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 1 & 2

- Mindful Movement: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (40)
- Stretch and Breathe: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations of this first sitting meditation (30)
- Pleasant Events Review: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (20)

Section 3 afternoon: Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 3

'Teaching Practice' in triads (guiding + inquiry + feedback + brief discussion)

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads 2 practices with brief inquiry; one is the Mindful Movement, other one is the Stretch and Breathe (NB: practice guidance 15m + 5m inquiry + 5m feedback + 5m discussion) (10)

- MM 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- MM 2 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- MM 3 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
    - ❖ 3pm Tea/comfort break in groups: 15mins …. Start again at 3.15pm
- Stretch and Breathe 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Stretch and Breathe 2 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Stretch and Breathe 3 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Overview on Sessions 3 and 4 (20)
- Closing section (5)

Day 5

Section 1 morning

Engaging in the main elements of Session 4 as a participant

- Orientation to Session 4 (5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation + inquiry (40)
- Unpleasant Events Review (20)
- The territory of depression: automatic thoughts questionnaire (plus) (35)

Section 2 morning

Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 4

- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (40)
- Unpleasant Events Review: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations of this first sitting meditation (20)
- The territory of depression: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (20)
- The 3 Step Breathing Space: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (20)

Section 3 afternoon: Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 4 of MBCT

'Teaching Practice' in triads (guiding + inquiry + feedback + brief discussion)

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads two practices with the brief inquiry; one is a section of the 4 Stage Sitting Practice, the other one is a Regular/Responding Breathing Space or the Territory of Depression Exercise

- Sitting Meditation 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Sitting Meditation 2 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)

- Sitting Meditation 3 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
    - ❖ 3 pm Tea/comfort break in groups: 15mins (Start again at 3.15 pm)
- Regular Breathing Space with introduction 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Territory of Depression Ex 2 (20: 10 + 5 + 5)
- Responding Breathing Space with introduction (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- Whole group discussion on safety and caution in Session 4 (20)
- Closing section (5)

Day 6

<u>Section 1 morning</u>

- Engaging in the main elements of Session 3 as a participant
- Orientation to Session 5 (5)
- The Guest House poem with discussion on 'Allowing letting be' (15)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation with focus on how we relate to harrowing experiences in the early 'breath body stages + introducing difficulty in the thought/feelings stage of the practice + inquiry (50)
- Responding Breathing Space with Inquiry (35)

<u>Section 2 morning</u>

Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 5

- Working with a Difficulty (focus) in Meditation (TTD): practical (+ safety) pedagogic and theoretical considerations (30)
- Inquiry: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations + how it develops over the 'arc' of the eight-week programme (40)
- Responding Breathing Space: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (20)

<u>Section 3 afternoon:</u> Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 5

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads a part of sitting meditation (each practice has the 'opening guidance and the 'ending' guidance) with a focus on how we relate to anything difficult/unwanted in practice + inquiry; (NB: practice guidance 15m + 10m inquiry + 5m feedback + 5m discussion) (10)

- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation 1 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation 2 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation 3 (30: 15 + 5 + 5 + 5)

<u>Section 4 afternoon</u> Inquiry Workshop and practicum in the whole group. Read chapter 12 of the green book (Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2013) to prepare for this.

- Inquiry demonstration with interactive processing (20)
- Inquiry practice in dyads: facilitator leads a short practice, trainee 'A' leads inquiry of trainee 'B' then feedback and discussion on this in the dyad (10m practice 10m

inquiry 5m feedback and discussion); this is then repeated. Then whole group plenary (10)

Discussion and closing section (10)

Day 7

Section 1 morning

Engaging in the main elements of Session 6 as a participant

- Orientation to Session 6 (5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation + inquiry (35)
- Thoughts are not Facts etc. (30)

Section 2 morning

Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 6

- Meditation *Introducing* a Difficulty: practical, pedagogic & theoretical considerations (45)
- 'Thoughts are not Facts' theme and exercises (alternative viewpoints/moods and thoughts exercise plus how to *work* with thoughts in a mindfulness context: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (30)
- Thought Door Breathing Space: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (15)

Section 3 afternoon Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 6 of MBCT

'Teaching Practice' in triads (guiding + inquiry + feedback + brief discussion)

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads a TTD meditation practise with more focus on inquiry; one is a section of the, the other one is a Regular/Responding Breathing Space or the Territory of Depression Exercise

- Sitting Meditation with TTD 1 (45: 25 + 10 + 5 + 5)
- Sitting Meditation with TTD 2 (45: 25 + 10 + 5 + 5)
- Sitting Meditation with TTD 3 (45: 25 + 10 + 5 + 5)

Whole group discussion on safety and caution in Session 6 (triads then 6's then whole group sharing

Closing section (5)

Day 8

Section 1 morning

Engaging in the main elements of Session 7 as a participant

- Orientation to Session 7 (5)

- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation with focus on 'self-care ('taking care throughout the practice') + inquiry (40)
- BA (Behavioural Activation) sequence of exercises and inquiry: nourishing and depleting ex.; exhaustion funnel and action plan (35)
- Breathing Space with Action Step (10)

Section 2 afternoon

Practical considerations and theoretical underpinnings of teaching in Session 5

- The theme of 'Self-care/kindness' in Session 7 and the 'back draught' effect (discrepancy monitor etc.)(30). Read chapter 8 of the green book (Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2013) to prepare for this.
- BA in Session 7: Nourishing-Depleting and Action Plan etc (40)
- Action Step Breathing Space: practical pedagogic and theoretical considerations (20)

Section 3 afternoon:Teaching Practice relating to Sessions 7

a/ 'Teach-backs' set up: timings, feedback process and perspectives. Each trainee leads a part of a 4 stage sitting meditation (each practice has the 'opening guidance and the 'ending' guidance) with focus on how self-care + inquiry; (NB: practice guidance 15m + 10m inquiry + 5m feedback + 5m discussion) (10)

- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation with self-care emphasis 1 (35: 15 + 10 + 5 + 5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation with self-care emphasis 2 (35: 15 + 10 + 5 + 5)
- 4 Stage Sitting Meditation with self-care emphasis 3 (35: 15 + 10 + 5 + 5)

Section 4 afternoon: Nurturing and Depleting + Action Step sequence of teaching

- Nurturing Depleting Ex (20)
- Action Step Ex. with Exhaustion Funnel (20)
- Breathing Space with Action Step (20)

Whole group discussion and closing section (30)

Day 9

Section 1 morning

Engaging in the main non-practice elements of Session 8 as a participant

- Orientation to Session 8 (5)
- Led reflection on the course then pairs and whole group 'Ending Process' with How to keep your practice alive planning etc. (25)

Session 2: Start of *Unit 2 Consolidation Process* lasting all day 9.25 am – 3.20 pm
NB: this extended session revisits the curriculum's main elements, leaving out some more specific aspects more familiar to CBT. Intention to create more of a 'real' teaching and inquiry process

- Body scan led by one trainee for the whole group (30)

- The inquiry led by another trainee (15)
- Mindful Movements led by one trainee for the whole group (25)
- The inquiry led by another trainee (15)
- Regular Breathing Space intro then guided, led by one trainee for the whole group (15)
- Territory of Depression Ex. + discussion led by one trainee for the whole group (25)
- 4 Stage Meditation led by one trainee for the whole group (30)
- The inquiry led by another trainee (15)

Section 2 afternoon

- Meditation: posture-breath-body then Introducing a Difficulty (30)
- The inquiry led by another trainee (15)
- Breathing Space Responding with introduction and inquiry (20)
- Session 7 Meditation in 4 Stages with emphasis on -Taking Care of Ourselves (30)

What are we learning, and what are my learning edges in all of this? Process: reference to MBI-TAC and start in pairs and then 4's (10 + 10), the then whole group (20) = (40)

Ending process: short sit and speaking headlines into the group

Day 10: The final training day will focus on assessment methods for MBCT, covering inclusion and exclusion criteria and outcome monitoring. This will focus on assessing for and monitoring MBCT outcomes (including completion of the NHS TT minimum data-set at 12-months following the end of the MBCT group). It will also cover practical issues in teaching face to face and online, how to establish fluent MBCT referral pathways in a TT service, issues in assessment of competence, the Expert by Experience perspective, adapting mindfulness teaching to be neurodiverse-inclusive. This training day will compromise a mix of teaching methods, including didactic teaching and small-group work.

Outline of the Day

- Welcome
- Expert by Experience perspective
- Neurodiverse-inclusive teaching
- Assessment of competence
- Embedding MBCT referral routes in your service
- Revisiting NICE guidelines for MBCT and the research evidence
- Assessment for MBCT for depression
- Outcome monitoring in IAPT and evaluating our practice
- Getting ready for Unit 4
- End

Pre-submission day

This day is delivered in Jan/Feb of the following year in between when most trainees run their first and second MBCT groups. This is an opportunity for trainees to return to the

material, having taught one course with real-life experience and questions that this day will make space to explore. There will be a particular emphasis on inquiry as to teaching MBCT that most people find hardest initially. The day will be primarily structured in response to the needs of the trainees attending.

Supervised MBCT Groups: Overview

In this unit, trainees will begin to teach MBCT in their workplace either with a fellow trainee on the training or with a more experienced MBCT teacher provided by the service, who should be present for all sessions. Trainees will access close supervision either alone or with their trainee co-teacher from a mindfulness supervisor approved and provided by the training programme. They will facilitate two MBCT programmes, either face to face or online, with 6 hours of supervision for each MBCT course .

Formal assessment takes the place of the recorded second MBCT group. This involves submitting video recordings of a whole eight-week MBCT programme, assessed for competency using the Mindfulness-based Interventions- Treatment Assessment Criteria (MBI: TAC).

Course completion

A minimum of 90% attendance is required for the 12 teaching days. In exceptional circumstances, attendance at fewer than 90% of training days will be accepted. Exceptional circumstances will be agreed upon by the site lead on a case by case basis. In this instance, the trainee would be expected to cover material missed in the training days through reading, videos or attendance at other training events.

Successful completion of the course would need confirmation of satisfactory progress by the training lead and the supervisor. Trainees' competence will be formally assessed using recordings usually from their second taught MBCT group.

If a trainee does not meet the criteria on MBI-TAC for their second MBCT group, the assessor will give them clear feedback on their learning needs. A plan will be made involving the trainee, supervisor and site lead to agree on what is needed to address learning needs. A subsequent group will be assessed using the MBI-TAC. Supervision should be funded by the trainee's service at the same intensity as the training programme to ensure the best possible learning experience. If minimum criteria are not met at this stage, the trainee would not be issued a certificate of competence and would have failed the training course.

In order to complete the training, trainees also need to register with the British Association for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (BAMBA) as required by NHS England https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-manual/. see p.100. They also need to send in evaluation data for the 2 MBCT groups they have run and complete a training programme evaluation.