

Thank you for considering the upcoming Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course (MBSR).

By signing up for this course, you would be taking a step to learn life-long skills that may help you live your life with more ease and well-being, even when stressful events, illness or pain occur. The intention in writing this note is to provide more information about the course, explain situations for which this class may not be a good fit and specify expectations for participation which will enhance the learning and growth that can occur.

This class is highly experiential. Much of your learning and insight will arise from your direct experience during the class time and home practices. Throughout the 8 weeks, you will be consciously working with your own experiences, emotions, habits and thought patterns. My intention is to create a safe and supportive environment for this work and learning. The course includes:

- Guided instructions for a variety of mindfulness meditation & compassion practices
- Gentle stretching and mindful movement
- Small group and class discussions aimed at enhancing awareness in everyday life
- Individualized instruction and support in applying mindfulness to your situation
- Guided audio tracks to support daily home meditation practice (about 30-45 min)

Learning to be fully present is a skill, and like any skill, it takes practice. I strongly encourage you to make a commitment to daily mindfulness practice throughout the course. I know how busy life can be and I want to honor the fact that formal meditation practice is a real challenge. Life can be quite challenging, too, and a daily practice can be an anchor in difficult moments! Of course, each of us is responsible for our own practice. I will offer guidance, support and encouragement, but the rest is up to you. The good news is that we will be taking on this particular challenge together as a group! There is no required reading for the course, but *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) can be a helpful resource.

There are a few situations for which this course would not be a healthy choice. If you are currently seeing a psychotherapist, I encourage you to discuss this class with your therapist to determine if a mindfulness-based approach is appropriate for you at this time. Often it can be a great compliment to individual work with a therapist, but you and your therapist will be best positioned to determine if that is the case for you. If you are currently experiencing severe depression or are having thoughts of self-harm or suicide, this course is not appropriate for you right now and I encourage you to seek out the support of a trained mental health specialist.

Thanks for your interest in registering for this course. I am delighted to be offering it! Please don't hesitate to email me if you have questions at calhounb@uw.edu.

Warmly,

Becca Calhoun