

**Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction 8-week Programme** “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Jon Kabat-Zinn 2017.)

Mindfulness is noticing what we might not normally notice, because we are on ‘autopilot’. Our thoughts are often busy in the past or in the future whilst we are going about our day, thinking about what we need to do, should do, or what we have already done. Mindfulness can help train us to be less in this ‘autopilot’ and ‘doing’ mode, whilst bringing awareness to the present moment and the ‘being’ mode. In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts. He recruited patients with chronic pain, to participate in his newly formed eight-week stress-reduction program, which we now call Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

By the end of the treatment programme, both the MBSR and CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) groups had improved significantly more than a group receiving usual care (Cherkin et al., 2016). <http://oxfordmindfulness.org/news/is-mindfulness-safe/>

### **About the Course**

**This is an 8-week course run weekly over 2 hours per session. It is not psychological therapy.**

Mindfulness is a lifestyle change that can bring about positive changes with regular practise. With mindfulness, there is no right or wrong way of doing things, rather doing things in a kinder and more compassionate way.

Mindfulness can help you to:

- Increase your awareness of your thoughts and feelings (self- awareness)
- manage unhelpful thoughts
- develop more helpful responses to difficult feelings and events
- be kinder towards yourself
- feel calmer and able to manage stress better
- apply mindfulness skills to daily life, which will increase your general wellbeing
- manage some physical health problem, like chronic pain

Sometimes Mindfulness makes you notice things that are challenging for you, which can feel unpleasant. However, it addresses how things are for you, rather than ignoring them or using distraction methods, which can lead to unhelpful behavioural responses and flare ups of pain. Noticing these changes and how they come and go is a part of the learning process.

**The Mindfulness course is not suitable for everyone. If any of the situations below apply to you, please seek advice from your pain specialist, as to whether or not the course is likely to prove beneficial for you at the current time.**

- If you are going through a very stressful time, or dealing with major life changes such as a recent bereavement, house move, change in jobs, divorce or separation
- If you are very concerned that trauma, distressing thoughts or experiences from the past may challenge you through the mindfulness awareness practises
- If you are currently working with a therapist
- If you have any concerns about working within a group environment

### **Preparation for the course**

- Bring a bottle of water
- A cushion, a small blanket and yoga mat if you have one and are able to get on and off the floor unaided. The mat is optional as you can practise the mindfulness meditation on a chair if you prefer
- Wear comfortable clothing

### **Opting in for the course**

1. Please contact the administration team by telephoning 01823 344147 or 343151 to be added to the waiting list and to give them your email address so we can send you the relevant information and handouts. Someone will contact you near the time of the course with full details
2. By opting in for the course, you are consenting to participate in the 8 week, 2 hour sessions, bearing in mind the information above. You will be expected to continue practicing the daily short and longer exercises that will be explained on the course.
3. If you have any questions or require any further details, please contact us on the above number or email us on [painservice@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:painservice@tst.nhs.uk) We look forward to seeing you on the programme.