Explorations in Mindfulness

facilitator guidebook

*“The mind is like water. When turbulent, it's difficult to see. When it’s calm, everything is clear.”*

*-Prasad Mahes*

Dear Mindfulness Facilitator,

Welcome to **Explorations in Mindfulness**, a four-session program Powered by Masterpiece. This program is a mindfulness and meditation experience that discusses the science-backed benefits of developing a mindfulness practice. New practitioners will learn the foundations for meditation, and seasoned meditators will leave with tools for deepening their existing practice. Each experiential session includes a short lesson followed by a meditation and the opportunity for discussion.

Throughout the program, we will explore numerous topics including: the history and benefits of meditation and mindfulness, practical applications of mindfulness, overcoming roadblocks and tools to enhance the meditation experience. To begin, we ask that you take a few minutes to review this Facilitator Guidebook from start to finish. You will find helpful instructions to prepare for each session, such as what materials and equipment you will need, as well as suggestions for creatively enhancing this program based on individual needs and interests.

**On behalf of your Masterpiece Team, welcome to Explorations in Mindfulness!**

Preparing for Explorations in Mindfulness

**What You Will Need:**

* A strong Internet connection (if streaming)
* A projector and large screen or TV screen
* Audio hookup for computer (to viewing source)

**Before each session:**

* Review the appropriate section(s) of the Facilitator Guidebook, Handout Packets for the session, recorded lesson and meditations. (It is helpful to print packets before each session.)
* Every session has a recorded lesson and two meditations to use or choose from. Each lesson and meditation has three links (Vimeo, YouTube or Spreaker) so you can pick the one that works with your technology. Vimeo has the highest resolution and the downloadable option. YouTube has closed captioning with standard resolution. Spreaker is an audio-only file.
* Each session has discussion questions for the lesson and different discussion questions to use before and after the mediation. The meditation questions are interchangeable and can be used for any meditation, so pick the questions you think will initiate the best discussion and self-reflection.
* Set up audio/visual equipment and chairs in a way that allows for discussion.
* Here are two program layout suggestions:
  + Schedule one session each week including the recorded lesson and selected meditation.
  + Schedule three 30 to 45-minute “classes” each week for each session:

1. Recorded lesson and discussion

2. First meditation and discussion

3. Second meditation and discussion

1st Session: Foundations of Mindfulness and Meditation

**Objectives/Overview:**

* The General Benefits of Meditation
* Practical Applications of Mindfulness and Meditation
* Meditation in History
* Differences Between Mindfulness and Mediation
* Three Types of Meditation Practice

**Materials:**

* Copies of each for every participant:
  + Pre-program questionnaire
  + 1st session Handout Packet
* **Recorded lesson (12 minutes):**
  + Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/555672875/1f90580fc3>
  + YouTube: <https://youtu.be/a9F-eR21SIE>
  + Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/e/TuvKjf3sj4p>
    - **Discussion Questions:**
      * In what ways have you already been incorporating either mindfulness or meditation into your life?
      * Based on what we’ve learned so far, what areas of mindfulness or meditation are you most curious about? (Or, what areas of mindfulness or meditation would you like to try that you haven’t yet?)
* **Meditations:**
  + *3-Part Breathing* (7 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559972089/090da90c43>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/-3f6TnaY-PI>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/2SfHl8A>
  + *Ocean Breathing* (7 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559975156/7cdf79a3d1>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/9WSR0G5eGog>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/34Xr3UK>
* **Meditation Discussion Questions:**
* **Before Meditation:**
  + What word describes how you are feeling?
  + What’s your weather report? (i.e., emotional check-in; is it stormy insides? sunny?)
* **After Meditation:**
  + What word describes how you are feeling today, after this meditation? (What changed?)
  + What’s your new weather report?

**Additional Resource:**

TED Talk: [How Mindfulness Changes the Emotional Life of Our Brains](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CBfCW67xT8) (18 minutes)

"Why is it that some people are more vulnerable to life's slings and arrows and others more resilient?" In this eye-opening talk, Richard Davidson discusses how mindfulness can improve well-being and outlines strategies to boost four components of a healthy mind: awareness, connection, insight, and purpose.

**Optional Discussion Questions:**

1. What are your thoughts on the “four challenges” Davidson talks about? (Distractibility, Loneliness, Negative Self-Talk, Meaning & Purpose) Could you relate to them in your own life?

2. How do you feel about Davidson’s suggestion that we start by meditating three minutes a day? (Or, if you already meditate regularly, what are your goals for your meditation practice?)

2nd Session:

Overcoming Roadblocks to Meditation and Developing a Practice

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Roadblocks to Meditation
* Posture and Process

**Materials:**

* A copy of the 3rd Session Handout Packet for each participant
* A copy of the Meditation Script (for facilitator)
* **Recorded Lesson (10 minutes):**
  + Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/558214769/aaa3eb8fad>
  + YouTube: <https://youtu.be/IvKqnTl9Ixs>
  + Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/e/w2jUaqKXpZC>
    - **Discussion Questions:**
      * What roadblocks to meditation have you encountered, and what has worked for you to overcome them? (Or, if this program is your first experience meditating, which – if any – of these roadblocks were a challenge for you?)
      * For those who meditate already, could you share more about your practice? (e.g., Do you meditate at the same time, in the same location and set up any specific items to enhance the meditation experience, etc.)
* **Meditations:**
  + *Music Meditation* (10 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559981792/642f410071>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/dMUxM_hVopA>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3ipURRQ>
  + *Open Monitoring Meditation* (19 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559964692/b6ba4b7023>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/cMcFZ9aNxdo>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3ipad8U>
* **Meditation Discussion Questions:**
  + **Before Meditation:**
* What positive experience have you had so far today?
* What are you “leaving at the door” today?
  + **After Meditation:**
* During open monitoring or mind wandering, did you notice any recurring themes? (e.g., stories, colors, imagery, smells, etc.)
* Did you notice any worries or negative thought patterns creeping up? How might mindfulness and meditation support you in recognizing them and shifting and/or working through those thoughts/emotions?

**Additional Resource:**

[Ellen Langer: Mindfulness Over Matter](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XQUJR4uIGM) **(22 minutes)**

Ellen Langer is an artist and Harvard psychology professor who authored 11 books on the illusion of control, perceived control, successful aging and decision-making. "We have many, many studies that suggest that the limits we assume are real are artificial, and that we don't have to accept them at all."

**Optional Discussion Questions:**

1. What thoughts do you have about Langer’s statement, “*We have many, many studies that suggest that the limits we assume are real are artificial and that we don't have to accept them at all."*

2. Which of the research studies that Langer talked about did you find the most interesting (and why)?

3rd Session: The Science and Research Supporting Mindfulness

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Effects of Chronic Stress on the Body and Mind
* Research on Meditation
* Daily Forms of Mindfulness and the Positive Impact on PTSD Sufferers.

**Materials:**

* A copy of the 3rd Session Handout Packet for each participant
* A copy of the Meditation Script (for facilitator)
* **Recorded Lesson (12 minutes):**
  + Vimeo:  <https://vimeo.com/558219484/2afbf27a4f>
  + YouTube: <https://youtu.be/FpQ5FAU5cL4>
  + Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/e/98Ezmestnks>
    - **Discussion Questions:**
* What surprised you the most about the research on how mindfulness changes our brains? (Or, what did you find the most interesting?)
* How do you currently manage stress in your life? (Or, aside from mindfulness and meditation, what stress-reduction tools work for you?)
* **Meditations:**
  + *Autogenic Relaxation* (11 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559985512/d827dd986a>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/b4kPTPjt-UE>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3pvwC5W>
  + *Metta Meditation* (15 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559997810/93d205ebc0>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/wInB4TtCvnE>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3ghmgT3>
* **Meditation Discussion Questions:**
* **Before Meditation:**
  + On a scale of 1-10, how stressed are you right now? (10 being the highest)
  + What are you most grateful for today?
* **After Meditation:**
  + On a scale of 1-10, how stressed are you after the meditation?
  + What physical or emotional shift have you noticed?

**Additional Resource:**

**TED Talk:** [How Mindfulness Meditation Redefines Pain, Happiness & Satisfaction](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVwLjC5etEQ) (16 minutes)

Kasim teaches and presents on the use of mindfulness for creating healing, transformation, and peace. He is passionate about enhancing people’s sense of joy, authenticity, and presence. Kasim also teaches and speaks about the use of laughter and laughter yoga for improving wellness.

**Optional Discussion Questions:**

1. In what ways does the “negativity bias” help us? Hurt us?

2. What are your thoughts on Kasim’s LOST acronym when we encounter an obstacle in our lives? (Or, do you have a different method to share?)

4th Session:

Tools for Enhancing the Mindfulness and Meditation Experience

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Tips from Dr. John Kabat-Zinn
* Additional Expert Meditation Recommendations

**Materials:**

* Copies of each for every participant:
  + Post-program questionnaire
  + 4th session Handout Packet
* A copy of the Meditation Script (for facilitator)
* **Recorded Lesson (9 minutes):**
  + Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/558221773/7a21d0dc99>
  + YouTube: <https://youtu.be/KZo3vjgD60o>
  + Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/e/re6QDGCPaCn>
    - **Discussion Questions:**
      * Which of the extra meditation tools that were discussed today did you find the most helpful? (Or, which meditation tool are you most interested in trying on your own?)
      * Are there tools you have used in your own practice that were not mentioned that you find helpful? (Or, how might you use these mindfulness tools in day-to-day life, outside of a formal meditation practice?)
* **Meditations:**
  + *Moving Through Emotions* (7 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559954864/9517f44aef>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/yXN5B5XzVLI>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3v1oFXB>
  + *Beach Visualization* (14 minutes)
    - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559991876/0c606c60de>
    - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/7iQwnEzjMtI>
    - Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3gg4QGv>
* **Meditation Discussion Questions:**
  + **Before Meditation:**
    - What is happening in your body right now? Or where do you notice tension?
    - If you had to choose a word to focus on during meditation, or to remind you to be mindful, what would it be?
  + **After Meditation:**
    - As we experiment with different meditation techniques, are there certain ones that stand out for you? (e.g., guided vs. non-guided, breathwork, music, etc.)
    - If your mind wanders, what technique for coming back to the practice works best for you (e.g., turning thoughts into clouds and watching them float by, drawing awareness back to your breath)?

**Additional Resource:**

[Jill Bolte Taylor: My Stroke of Insight](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU) (20 minutes)

Jill Bolte Taylor got a research opportunity few brain scientists would wish for: She had a massive stroke, and watched as her brain functions -- motion, speech, self-awareness -- shut down one by one. An astonishing story.

**Optional Discussion Questions:**

1. What are your thoughts and feelings about Taylor’s experience, and what is your favorite takeaway?

2. What do you think of her belief that we can ‘all find Nirvana’ in this life?

# Bonus Meditation:

* *Color Journey* (15 minutes)
  + Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/559960297/da256fb5fe>
  + YouTube: <https://youtu.be/PFGQFS7USLU>
  + Spreaker: <https://bit.ly/3uXS1pO>
* **Meditation Discussion Questions:**
  + **Before Meditation:**
    - What meditations have you tried on your own that worked for you in the past?
    - What is your focal point? Watching the breath, staring at a candle or spot on the floor, focusing on a favorite word or phrase?
  + **After Meditation:**
    - How was your overall meditation experience?
    - What surprised you about this meditation? Or, what did you find challenging versus easy?