Big Sky Workshop
Mindfulness and Meditation for Stress Reduction
Syllabus

We are delighted that you have set aside time to learn how to use mindfulness based skills, including meditation, to manage stress and learn about yourselves. Mindfulness skills can play an important role in helping you improve the quality of your life.

“If we can take a stand here, and let go into the full texture of now, we may find that this very moment is worthy of our trust. From such experiments, conducted over and over again, may come a new sense that somewhere deep within us resides a profoundly healthy and trustworthy core, and that our intuitions, as deep resonances of the actuality of the present moment are worthy of our trust.”


Some Requests
Please let us know if are unable to attend a workshop class. Please turn off your cell phones before entering class and please be on time! The workshop will be on (dates to be announced) and will begin at (time to be announced) and end promptly at (time to be announced) in the Wellness Center. To facilitate your learning, please:

- fill in your meditation log daily and bring it to the next class
- practice a skill/meditation for at least 10 minutes every day
- read the required chapters in the book

Schedule of Classes
- Class 1: breathing exercises
- Class 2: walking meditation
- Class 3: guided imagery
- Class 4: eating meditation

Description of Skills

Belly or Diaphragmatic Breathing
Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Place one hand on your abdomen in order to feel it rising and falling. Bring your focus/awareness to your breathing. In order to deepen and slow your breathing, you may wish to count to 4 as you inhale, making sure that your abdomen is rising, and then exhale to a count of 4.

Dynamic Breathing
This is easier to do standing. Keeping your mouth closed, breathe quickly and deeply. Placing your fists at armpit level, use your arms as bellows, pumping as you breathe on your exhalation your arms are pushing at your chest. Breathe as rapidly as you can but also deeply. Try not to tense your neck and shoulders. Do this for just a few minutes. After you stop, you may want to put on some dance music and move freely for a few minutes to the music.

Walking Meditation
Find a place where you can walk comfortably back and forth for 10-30 steps. Begin with standing, centering yourself, and closing your eyes. Feel the bottom of your feet. Then open your eyes and walk very slowly, with a sense of ease and dignity. With each step, feel the sensation of lifting each foot off the floor. Be aware as you place each foot on the
floor. Feel each step mindfully. When you reach the end of your path, pause, center yourself, and carefully turn around. You can experiment with the speed, walking at whatever pace keeps you most present.

**Guided Imagery**

Assume any kind of relaxing position and close your eyes. Bring your attention to your breathing, and let it be even and comfortable. Now, see yourself in a very special place, a place in which you feel completely comfortable and safe. Appreciate it with all of your senses. Hear the sounds, smell the aromas, feel the air and ground. Notice what you are wearing, what time of year it is and what time of day, how old you are, whether you are alone, what colors are visible, and what the temperature is.

Look around to see if there is anything else that would make this place more safe for you, perhaps something you need to remove or add. Take time to enjoy this feeling of safety in your special place. Thank yourself for taking this time and reassure yourself that you will visit this place or some other place on your own whenever you need to do so.

**Eating Meditation**

Prepare to take a bite and first look carefully at the food, noting its shape and color. Notice your body: Are you salivating? How does your body anticipate eating this food? And now, be aware as your arm brings the food to your mouth. Experience the food in your mouth. Chew slowly and focus fully on the taste and texture. Notice what you feel as you prepare to swallow. Swallow and notice how far into your body you can feel the food as it goes down.

**Resources**

- Calming music: "Alina" by Arvo Part, CDs by Steven Halpern, flute music by J*. Carlos Nakai
- *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook* by Martha Davis, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, and Matthew McKay
- *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook* by Bob Stahl and Elisha Goldstein
- Center for Mind-Body Medicine: [http://www.cmbm.org](http://www.cmbm.org)
- Good books on mindfulness by Stephen Levine, Cheri Huber, Eckhart Tolle, Thich Nhat Hanh, Bhante Ghunaratana, Pema Chodron, and Sharon Saltzberg
- CD sets and other books by Kabat-Zinn

**Reading**

Please read at least the following parts of the text for this course, Jon Kabat-Zinn's *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (1994):

For class 2: pp. 1-34, 101-134, 145-148
For class 3: pp. 35-99
For class 4: pp. 195-216