

# Be MINDFUL

AN INNOVATIVE MINDFULNESS BASED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MENTAL  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 BE MINDFUL&ACT TRAINING COURSE
- 2 ARTICLE: MINDFULNESS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

## BE MINDFUL&ACT TRAINING COURSE

Be Mindful&ACT training protocol aims to combine action mechanisms traditionally attributed to interventions based on mindfulness with the last years' advances in elements that have proven to be enriching in protocols directed at augmenting the Psychological Flexibility from the perspective of the functional-contextual science.

The protocol uses a metaphor of maritime navigation to refer to going through life- the ship serves as an analogy of the body and the weather conditions represent the thoughts, feelings and sensations.

The development of the Part 1- self-practice- of the Be Mindful&ACT training course has been finalized and the training materials are currently being translated into all partners languages. Next thing, all the materials will be uploaded on the Be Mindful&ACT e-learning platform for the start of the testing course foreseen for February.

The Part 1 Be Mindful&ACT training program is composed of the following five modules:

*Module 1: Introducing mindfulness (the art of navigation)*

*Module 2: Differentiating our internal experience and learning about the control (i learn about the ship and weather conditions)*

*Module 3: Differentiating my internal experience and who i am (the compass. Where do i want to go?)*

*Module 4: Accepting my experience (navigating the storm)*

*Module 5: Summarising*





## ARTICLE: MINDFULNESS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

---

Nearly all the people who suffer from various clinical disorders also suffer from the loss of the present moment. Let's take for example people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Many of our clients are tormented day in, day out by re-experiencing their traumatic memories. A similar loss of the present moment can accompany other clinical disorders, e.g. -anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder...

While we may position the clients experiencing psychopathology at one extreme of the spectrum, I have been asking myself: "Aren't we all, to a certain extent, experiencing and suffering from this lack of being in the here and now?"

I have observed that I am often not living my life fully in the here and now. I catch myself thinking about things I did in the past, for example how I argued with a colleague or what would have happened if I had made a different decision now and then. I also obsess about the future: "How could my life be better in the future? What bad things may happen if I do this or that?"

I often don't really hear and see my loved ones when they need me. I don't fully taste the food I am eating, or I fail to see the beauty of the nature while travelling.

This is how we lose touch with the present moment. We are not really living our lives - our lives are LIVED.

And so I ask myself: "Isn't the misery of everyday life connected with not living the present moment?" The subject of Mindfulness is intimately connected with the PRESENT MOMENT.

Jon Kabat Zinn defines Mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally." I also like the definition of a Slovenian psychologist Miha Črnetič: 'Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, accepting awareness of what is going on in the present moment.' In the last years, mindfulness has become a very important concept in the field of psychology and psychotherapy.

*"We can even conceptualize mindfulness as a common factor among the different psychotherapy schools. It can be seen as one of the integrating concepts in contemporary psychotherapy."*

**Assoc. prof. Gregor Žvelc**

Numerous articles have been written on Mindfulness and its application in psychotherapy. Behavioral psychotherapy tradition has shown particular interest in Mindfulness and the present moment which, I think, is logical, because in the past this tradition did not give the same importance to the present moment as for example the humanistic psychotherapy tradition. In behavioral tradition we now find the so called THIRD wave of behavioral therapies, focused on the processes of mindfulness- acceptance and compassion.

Mindfulness based cognitive therapy has for example integrated mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy for preventing depression episodes. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is another example of empirically validated treatment which integrates mindfulness principles in psychotherapeutic work with clients. In ACT mindfulness is used in relationship with clients and doesn't necessarily involve intensive home meditation practice.

However, the present moment centered awareness has been conceptualized as a healing factor by most of the humanistic schools from its very beginnings. Extensive psychological research in mindfulness in the last years confirms and extends pioneer work of humanistic psychotherapy writers as Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers, Eric Berne and others. Mindfulness is also gaining interest in psychoanalytic literature, where the notion of 'observing ego' has already been an important concept. Likewise, in integrative psychotherapy, which is my field of expertise, mindfulness has become one of the main concepts and processes.

In view of the above, we can even conceptualize mindfulness as a common factor among the different psychotherapy schools. It can be seen as one of the integrating concepts in contemporary psychotherapy.

Introducing mindfulness in the work with clients is not straightforward. I believe that, first of all, practitioners need first-hand experience of mindfulness.

For that, the Be Mindful program can be an

excellent way for the first steps in learning mindfulness and using it in psychotherapy practice.

Practicing mindfulness provides several advantages for the therapist:

1) Working with personal reactions and experiences during therapy

Mindfulness helps us to become truly aware of our personal reactions and experiences during psychotherapy session (countertransference experience). It helps us to embrace a decentered perspective toward thoughts, emotions and physical sensations that emerge during psychotherapy session. It prevents us from harmful acting out with the clients and helps us to process and integrate our experience.

2) Embodiment of presence and inner peace

It is crucial for both, developing an attuned therapeutic relationship and inviting the client to be in contact with the present moment. Being present as a therapist in the therapy room helps clients to become present with their experience as well. Besides benefits for the clients, practicing mindfulness can bring numerous benefits for the therapist as well. It helps to prevent burnout and builds inner peace and presence in therapist's everyday life.

*Assoc. prof. Gregor Žvelc, clinical psychologist, Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy and Counselling, Ljubljana*

*"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."*

