

TRAINING TO BECOME A CERTIFIED MBCP TEACHER

SUGGESTED BACKGROUND DOCUMENT



INTRODUCTION TO MBCP

Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) is an evidence-based childbirth education program grounded in mindfulness practice that serves expectant families and their communities. Many healthcare professionals from a variety of backgrounds are interested in training to teach MBCP in order to decrease suffering and enhance the well-being of the parent populations they serve. A growing and robust field of research is documenting the effects of stress in the perinatal period on both the developing baby and the expectant parents, as well as the physiological and psychological mechanisms of mindfulness practice that might contribute to decreasing that stress.

THE TRAINING

Becoming an MBCP Teacher is a process that, by its very nature, asks for deep personal commitment, dedication, patience, individual responsibility, creativity, and imagination. The MBCP Teacher Training is firmly grounded in the principle that the authenticity and effectiveness of one's teaching can only come through one's own personal mindfulness practice, both formally and in daily life. Embodying the practice both inside and outside of the classroom is key to becoming an effective mindfulness instructor.

Our hope is that the recommended background outlined here will be useful to you in exploring whether becoming an MBCP Teacher is indeed a path you would like to follow at this time. Many of the experiences listed here will enable you to begin or deepen your own mindfulness practice and assist you in understanding this way of teaching and being, as well as support you in providing effective and ethical mindfulness instruction for the expectant parents you wish to serve.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCES PRIOR TO APPLICATION

- **Completion of an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) course.** If attendance in one of these courses is not available in your location, an online course is acceptable. *Contact us* for recommendations.
- A **personal daily mindfulness meditation practice**, including both formal and informal practice. **At least 6 months** of prior practice is ideal.
- An ongoing **mindful movement** practice, such as yoga or qigong.
- A recognized **core professional training in physical or mental healthcare**, such as medicine, nursing, midwifery, psychology, childbirth education, infant development, or a related field.

If specialist training in perinatal health is not integral to your core professional training, additional learning and study is required. This will include understanding the physiology of childbirth as well as its social and cultural dimensions.

- Knowledge and experience **working with women and families during pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenting** beyond one's own personal experience.
- Some knowledge and experience of **teaching adults in groups**.

ATTENDANCE AT BIRTHS

Childbirth is a very particular experience, both for those experiencing birthing and for those attending. **Attendance at births is a crucial experience for those teaching MBCP.** Having direct understanding of the challenges that the birth experience presents to all in the birthing room is essential.

All MBCP Teacher Trainees are expected to accompany a number of families during birth if that is not already part of their professional experiences. If this requirement will be a challenge for you, please *contact us* to discuss your options.



SILENT RETREATS

An ongoing commitment to one's own meditation practice, sustained by yearly attendance at a 5-10 day silent teacher-led retreat, is expected for as long as one is actively engaged in classroom teaching. Although retreat attendance is not required before entrance into the MBCP Teacher Training program, attending at least one mindfulness meditation retreat prior to your training would greatly enhance your experience.



Resources:

Mindfulness meditation retreats are offered in numerous locations throughout the world.

Two options in the United States are:

- Insight Meditation Society (IMS) | Barre, MA | www.dharma.org
- Spirit Rock Meditation Center | Woodacre, CA | www.spiritrock.org

Contact us for additional recommended retreat locations.

OTHER HIGHLY RECOMMENDED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Attendance at a MBCP Intensive weekend workshop for healthcare professionals, a 9-week MBCP course, and/or a 6-day Introduction to MBCP Professional Training retreat.
- Foundational mindfulness trainings for professionals offered by any of the following organizations:
 - Center for Mindfulness at the University of California - San Diego | mbpti.org
 - Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts | umassd.edu/cfm
 - Mindfulness Center at Brown University | www.brown.edu/public-health/mindfulness/home
 - Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University | bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness
 - The Mindfulness Network | mindfulness-network.org
 - Oxford Mindfulness Centre at the University of Oxford | courses.oxfordmindfulness.org/learn-categories/
 - European Center for Mindfulness in Freiburg, Germany | mbsr-freiburg.de
 - Association for the Development of Mindfulness, France | association-mindfulness.org
 - Italian Association for Mindfulness | mindfulnessitalia.it
 - Mindfulness Training Institute Australasia | mtia.org.au
 - Hong Kong Center for Mindfulness | mindfulness.hk
 - British Association of Mindfulness-Based Approaches | bamba.org.uk

FINAL NOTES

Mindfulness for families during the perinatal period is an emerging field, and we are keen to support the development of practitioners who are well placed to introduce MBCP to communities around the world that have little or no access to mindfulness instruction.

While there may be some flexibility in our admission process, our online MBCP Teacher Training courses are very popular and space is limited. Applicants who have the recommended background will be given preference during the selection process.

Not quite ready to apply? Why not take some time to work on the prerequisite material and come back next year? Feel as though you have exceptional circumstances that might prevent you from fulfilling the above criteria, but can demonstrate the commitment, enthusiasm, and means to carry this work forward?

Please contact us at mbcptt@mindfulbirthing.org.



**APPLY
NOW**

