Training to Become a Certified MBCP Teacher

Background

Many healthcare professionals from a variety of backgrounds have expressed interest in training to teach mindfulness-based programs in order to decrease the suffering and enhance the well-being of the populations they serve. Moreover, there is a robust field of research regarding stress in the perinatal period which is increasingly being informed by the research on the physiological and psychological mechanisms that underlie the practice of mindfulness and stress. Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) is an evidence-based program that serves emerging families and their communities.

The Training

Becoming an MBCP Instructor is a process that, by its very nature, asks for commitment, dedication, individual responsibility, creativity, imagination and patience. 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 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 Instructor is indeed a path you would like to follow at this time. Many of the listed background experiences will enable you to begin or deepen your own mindfulness practice and more deeply understand this way of teaching, as well as support you in providing effective and ethical mindfulness instruction for the population you wish to serve.

For details of our current training, please visit www.mindfulbirthing.org/teach.

Recommended Background for Applicants to the Online MBCP Teacher Training (MBCPTT) and Certification

Mindfulness for families, especially during the perinatal period, is an emerging field and we are keen to support the development of practitioners who are ideally placed to introduce this in communities underserved by mindfulness around the world. If you do not meet the criteria below yet feel you have exceptional circumstances and can demonstrate commitment, enthusiasm and the means to carry this work forward, please approach us for a conversation about your particular situation.
While there may be some flexibility, it is important to know that our online course is a popular one and places in the trainings are limited. Applicants who have the recommended background will be given preference in the selection process.

If this work has captured your imagination, but you’re not ready yet to apply, why not take time to fulfil these criteria and come back next year?

**Required Prior Experience**

- 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 locale, an online course is acceptable.
- A personal daily mindfulness meditation practice, including both formal and informal practice of 6 months or longer.
- 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. The Mindful Birthing and Parenting Foundation is developing a module on perinatal health which will fulfill this requirement. The module will be available during the upcoming 2018-2019 course.

- An ongoing commitment to one’s own meditation practice, sustained by yearly attendance at a 5-10 day silent teacher-led retreat for as long as one is actively engaged in classroom teaching. Ideally you will have attended at least one mindfulness meditation retreat prior to training.
- Knowledge and experience of working with women and families during pregnancy, childbirth and early parenting beyond one’s own personal experience.

**Experiences That You Are Expected to Gain Before Completion of Training**

- Attendance of women and families during the birth process.
- Experience of and/or training in group facilitation, including an understanding of group dynamics and processes.
  - MBPF is developing a module on group facilitation and process skills which will be available during the 2018 – 2019 Training and will fulfill this requirement.
- Some familiarity with and understanding of the scientific research that provides evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness practice and mindfulness-based programs.
  - Visit the American Mindfulness Research Association [www.goamra.org](http://www.goamra.org)
### Additional Recommended Learning Experiences

- Attendance at a Mind in Labor weekend workshop for healthcare professionals and/or a 9-week MBCP course and/or a 6-day MBCP Professional Training Retreat if available.
  - Visit [www.mindfulbirthing.org](http://www.mindfulbirthing.org) for information on Mind in Labor courses in your region.
- Professional Foundational Mindfulness Trainings offered by any of the following:
  - UCSD Center for Mindfulness [http://mbpti.org](http://mbpti.org)
  - UMass Medical Center’s Center for Mindfulness (CFM) [http://www.umassmed.edu/CFM](http://www.umassmed.edu/CFM)
  - Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP) Bangor University [https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness)
  - Oxford Mindfulness Centre, University of Oxford [http://oxfordmindfulness.org/course/training](http://oxfordmindfulness.org/course/training)
  - European Center for Mindfulness, Freiburg, Germany [https://www.mbsr-freiburg.de/home](https://www.mbsr-freiburg.de/home)

### Silent Mindfulness Meditation Teacher-Led Retreats

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

Two options in the US are:

- Insight Meditation Society (IMS), Barre, MA [www.dharma.org](http://www.dharma.org)
- Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, CA [http://www.spiritrock.org/home](http://www.spiritrock.org/home)

### Online Resources:

- **Mindful Birthing**: [www.mindfulbirthing.org](http://www.mindfulbirthing.org)
- **UK Mindfulness Network**: good practice guidelines for those wishing to teach mindfulness-based courses: [https://www.ukmindfulnessnetwork.co.uk](https://www.ukmindfulnessnetwork.co.uk)
- **American Mindfulness Research Association**: A professional resource to the sciences and humanities, practice communities, and the broader public on mindfulness from the perspective of contemplative practice [www.goamra.org/](http://www.goamra.org/)

For more information on the Online MBCP Teacher Training program, please send an email to mindfulbirthingandparenting@gmail.com. To apply online, visit [http://www.mindfulbirthing.org/apply_mbcptt](http://www.mindfulbirthing.org/apply_mbcptt).