FIU Mindfulness Program Orientation Packet

(645) 216-7620 mindfulness@fiu.edu

Welcome to the FIU Mindfulness Program!

Thank you for joining our mindfulness program. This 8-week course is designed to help you develop greater awareness, manage stress, and build practical tools for well-being. This packet provides helpful information on what to expect in the program, our class guidelines, important resources, and what mindfulness is all about.

Emergency Contacts & Crisis Resources

- In case of emergency, **call 911 immediately.**
- **24/7 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988
- **For a list of FIU Resources:** https://cbri.fiu.edu/student-resources/

Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting

Your privacy is important to us. Please feel free to share personal reflections in class, but also know that:

- We ask that you keep all group discussions confidential outside of class.
- As facilitators, we are mandated reporters. If you disclose that you are at risk of harming yourself, others, or report abuse involving minors or vulnerable adults, we are required by law to take appropriate steps to ensure safety.

Session Themes

- Session 1 – Exploring Mindfulness
- Session 2 – Perception
- Session 3 – Being at Home in the Body
- Session 4 – What is Stress?
- Session 5 – Reaction or Mindful Response
- Session 6 – Mindful Communication
- Session 7 – Taking Care of Ourselves
- Session 8 – Reflecting Back, Looking Forward

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Program Logistics

- You will receive an email reminder the day prior to each mindfulness session.
- A text reminder will be sent the morning of each session.
- After each session, you will receive two follow-up emails:
    - One with a list of home practices for the week.
    - One with your earned gift card(s) through the rewards program, sent within 24 hours of each session.

Class Guidelines

- **Attendance.** If you must miss a class or will be late, please call, text, or email me.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality**. We encourage you to share during the discussion sections of the sessions. In order to make this a safe space for all participants, we ask that everyone agree to protect each other's privacy. Please maintain confidentiality by not repeating outside of class what occurred or was said in class.
- **Cell Phones & Watches.** Turning off your cell phone is strongly encouraged, if possible. Please use your phone outside the room, if absolutely necessary. We also encourage you to silence your smart watches to minimize interruptions.
- **Trust**. Stay present. Trust yourself to remember what is important. We will share the materials presented during the sessions with you so no need to take notes.
- **Self-care**. Always honor your own comfort and ease and listen to your body. If something doesn't feel right for your mind/body, ease off.
- **Breaks**. Feel free to access water, bathrooms, movement, etc. when and as needed.
- **Support.** If you ever need additional one-on-one support or would like to talk about something that comes up during or after class that may not require urgent attention, please don't hesitate to reach out to the **facilitators**.
- **Communication**. Open and respectful communication is essential for creating a supportive and mindful learning environment. We encourage active listening, speaking from personal experience, and respecting others' opinions to foster a safe space for sharing.

If you have any questions or need support relevant to this course, please feel free to bring them up during our individual check-ins at the end of each session or email us at mindfulness@fiu.edu.

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Brief History of MBSR

Mindfulness is a long-standing practice rooted in Buddhist traditions, though it's not tied to any religion. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn in the University of Massachusetts Stress Management Clinic in 1979. MBSR is an evidence-based 8-week program originally designed to help people manage stress, pain, and illness. Research has shown that mindfulness can also improve focus, emotional regulation, and well-being. This version of MBSR has been adapted based on FIU student feedback to better fit your experiences—and we're excited to share it with you!

Home Practice Expectations

The skills you build here are strengthened through practice. We ask that you:

- Make time each day for mindfulness exercises.
- Approach your practice with an open mind.
- Be patient and persistent—benefits often emerge gradually.

A useful attitude to adopt is "*I'll give this a try with an open mind, and at the end of the course I'll decide whether I've learned anything useful and what I can take away with me*."

During each session, you will have an opportunity to reflect and share your experiences of the home practices. You are encouraged to share what helped, what didn't, and what questions you have.

Facing Difficulties Through Mindfulness

Mindfulness is not about escaping discomfort, but about gently turning toward our experiences—even when difficult. This course supports you in learning how to:

- Recognize stress and reactivity patterns
- Use awareness to pause and respond skillfully
- Develop resilience through consistent practice

Patience and Growth

Like planting a seed, mindfulness requires ongoing nurturing. You may not see immediate results, but over time, you may notice shifts in your energy, emotions, and perspective.

Remember: "***You don't have to like the practice, you just have to do it***."