Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for individuals who are 13 years old and older and who experience emotive or mental stress that arises from an illness, injury, or life circumstance.

SUMMARY
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a community-based, school-based, or work site group intervention, is designed to help participants manage and reduce stress and improve their ability to cope with challenging circumstances.

EVIDENCE
This program has been tested with a range of populations including non-clinical samples, such as college students, community residents, and health care employees and clinical samples, such as individuals with cancer, chronic pain, anxiety disorders, fibromyalgia, and HIV. Positive effects, such as reduction in physical or psychological symptoms and/or improvement in life satisfaction, have been found in all of these populations. A small randomized trial with Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) found that a significantly greater percentage of MBSR participants experienced clinically meaningful improvement in PTSD symptoms and mental health-related quality of life at the 4-month follow-up compared to a group receiving treatment as usual.

COMPONENTS
The MBSR program is based on the central concept of mindfulness, which involves focusing one's attention on the present experience rather than past or future moments with an attitude of openness, acceptance, and compassion. This program is often used with individuals who have experienced trauma or stress due to a range of life experiences, medial conditions, or psychological circumstances. The program consists of three main components.

- Explanation of mindfulness, relaxation, meditation, yoga, and the mind-body connection;
- Instruction in and practice of meditation, gentle stretching, and yoga during the meetings and also as a daily, home-based practice; participants receive materials for home practice including CDs and a workbook; and
- Group discussion focused on problem-solving for barriers to effective practice of the above techniques; practical, daily applications of mindfulness; and supportive interaction between participants.

PREVIOUS USE
More than 24,000 individuals have completed the MBSR intervention since it was initiated in 1979. As of November 2011, there were more than 700 MBSR programs in the United States and other nations, and program materials have been translated into multiple languages. MBSR has been used by members of all branches of the U.S. military.

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu
Clearinghouse@psu.edu
1-877-382-9185

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TRAINING

Training is mandatory. Participants attend an 8-week or 9-day MBSR fundamentals course and two retreats and must complete an 8-day practice teaching intensive course. The cost for the 8-week MBSR fundamental course and the 8-day practice teaching intensive course is $4,850 plus travel expenses and retreat costs. The cost for the 9-day MBSR fundamentals course and the 8-day practice teaching intensive course is $5,390 plus travel expenses and retreat costs. Additional trainings for optional teacher certification are available and range in cost. For more information, please visit www.umassmed.edu/cfm/training/MBSR-Teacher-Education/.

CONSIDERATIONS

Some considerations for implementing the MBSR program include recruiting facilitators who have a strong commitment as training can be time consuming, gaining buy-in from participants and facilitators, and allocating time and space for program sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing the MBSR program, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME

Participants attend 8-weekly 2 1/2 hour sessions and a 1-day retreat on a weekend, which totals 31 hours. In addition, participants are asked to devote 45 to 60 minutes a day to home practice.

COST

In order to implement this program, two books are required, and they cost $20 and $13 per copy. Optional implementation supervision and MBSR consultation are available and cost $125 per hour and $150 per hour, respectively.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move the MBSR program to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one study with positive effects sustained to one year from the end of the program or two years from the beginning of the program must be replicated by independent researchers.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact the Center for Mindfulness by mail 55 Lake Avenue North, Worcester, MA 01655, phone 1-508- 856-2656, email mindfulness@umassmed.edu, or visit www.umassmed.edu/cfm/.

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