Mindful Emotions
Understanding ourselves and others

Courses and Coaching

Mindfulness adds a new dimension to traditional emotional intelligence; our ‘capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships’ (Daniel Goleman in Emotional Intelligence). Mindfulness goes further than this. It shows us how to build inner relationships with our different ‘selves’ – and to value even the harshest inner voices and the most ‘negative’ emotions.

Mindfulness shows us how every emotion within us is trying to contribute something valuable. When we see this, we begin to trust ourselves more. We discover there is no such thing as a truly ‘negative’ emotion. What is vital is to discover how to relate to our emotions in ways that allow our inner world to support us positively in all we do.

‘It is with the heart that one sees rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.’

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in The Little Prince

Course Aims
• To apply the insights of mindfulness practice to our emotions
• To navigate our inner landscape with resilience and skill
• To gain trust and deep confidence in our own responses

Learning Outcomes
• Understand your own emotions
• Understand emotions of others
• Connect with others more fully, genuinely and warmly
• Become better trusted, respected and liked by others
• Develop clear, clean thinking
• Improve interactions with others
• Change your moods
• Understand how to best motivate yourself
• Find challenging emotions easier to handle
• Integrate body and emotions
• Find freer flowing physical and emotional energy
• Sustain painful physical symptoms with an emotionally buoyant attitude

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**Following our Inner Compass**

By pausing and listening to ourselves with a non-judgemental, exquisite attention, focusing allows our inner stories to unfold. It lends an ear to what calls for attention within us. We then have a way of discovering the directions which are implicit in any situation. This means we can respond with genuine emotional intelligence, whatever confronts us.

As the process of listening grows more clear and subtle, it enables us to follow an inner felt sense of what is right at any moment. Just like an inner compass, our felt sense guides us towards what is needed. We learn to trust it as a means of finding fresh, creative and emotionally intelligent responses to the world around.

**Mindful emotions for Ourselves**

If we pay attention to our underlying thoughts and feelings, it is likely we are often puzzled by our own reactions to what happens to us, or baffled by the reactions of our colleagues, friends or family. Again, we may struggle to motivate ourselves, finding ourselves endlessly battling with hurdles and obstacles. Or we know that remaining positive, blame-free and nonjudgmental is useful, but find this difficult to apply in practice. In other words – our minds have a mind of their own; and our hearts simply lose their minds!

Being able to deal with what affects us, and to respond in positive, happy and motivated ways, means navigating the emotional patterns which forge our characters. Luckily, our most human failings carry the seed of the more-than-human skills we innately own. We all have the power to move beyond limitations and known difficulties, and to bring new, liberating understanding and awareness to what happens within and around us.

"Truth is not static! What anything is, includes what it can be, or will be. You can’t explain what an egg is without mentioning what it can become."

**Mindful emotions for Others**

In professional life, it is no longer enough to be excellent in our field. Whether we are in a leadership position, or dealing with the public, people now expect a high degree of emotional awareness, understanding and empathy and resonance with their own feelings and values.

In more complex situations, active listening or empathic communication is not enough in itself. We also need to respond from a base of emotional intelligence which may go beyond our own life experience.

**Creative Responses**

Our actions often seem to spring directly from what’s happening around us, in our particular context. Yet truly creative and dependable actions take into account the effect of what’s happening inside us. Knowing how we are affected in our feelings, needs and values is important information from our inner worlds which can vitally change what we do, and how we do it.

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More about Mindful emotions

To develop emotional intelligence with mindfulness, we learn where the emotions come from and what they tell us. We are able to recognise and welcome emotions as friends, and helpful messengers that point to our deeper underlying motivations.

We learn that painful or difficult experiences belong to parts of us which have become split off, ostracised or sent into exile. These parts behave rather like human beings when they are ignored, pushed aside, undermined, criticised or challenged. h other words, they become hard to manage, vociferous, unpredictable, sulky, defensive, critical, painful and so on. They take on an energy of their own which may seem to sabotage our best intentions, or to overwhelm us with difficulties. Problems then appear bigger than our ability to cope with them.

Applying with mindfulness to emotional intelligence is to give our inner world the right conditions for everything within us to be heard and acknowledged. This frees our emotions so that they can transform into healthy energy, bringing with them their own unique wisdom about where we are and what we need now. If we can hear their messages, exiled parts have tremendous power to contribute.

‘What is split off, not felt, remains the same. When it is felt, it changes.’

‘Most people don’t know this. They think that by not permitting the feeling of their negative ways they make themselves good. On the contrary, that keeps these negatives static, the same from year to year. A few moments of feeling it in your body allows it to change.’

‘If there is in you something bad or sick or unsound, let it inwardly be, and breathe. That’s the only way it can evolve and change into the form it needs.”

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Central Models

Dr Elizabeth English specializes in the emotional and relational aspects of mindfulness. Drawing on nearly 35 years of her own mindfulness practice, she now teaches mindfulness at Cambridge University. She uniquely combines mindfulness with Focusing and Nonviolent Communication™ (NVC). Internationally certified in all three approaches, she offers a broad range of powerful methods for developing emotional awareness and empathy.

Focusing and Nonviolent Communication™ (NVC) are rooted in the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers (1902–1987). Focusing (www.focusing.org) was developed in the 1960s and 70s by Eugene T. Gendlin Ph.D., still a leading figure in philosophy, psychology and psychotherapy. NVC (www.cnvc.org) has developed worldwide since the 1970s through the work of Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. Its approach is perfectly-suited to negotiation with others and to resolving inner conflicts. Supporting and sustaining the insights of these two processes is the practice of mindfulness – now clinically proven to assist in reducing stress and improve well being (www.umassmed.edu/CFM).