



**Mindful of**

**STRESS**

This is a six session course designed to help you make peace with your stress by understanding where it comes from, how you're relating to it, and how to disengage from it so that you can reengage with life in a more meaningful and authentic way. Each session will teach you a new mindfulness practice to help ease your stress and bring you back to the present moment.

### **Session 1: The Breath**

- what is mindfulness
- how the breath calms the mind and body
- breathing techniques for stress

### **Session 2: Stress and the body**

- how stress shows up in the body
- body scan techniques to recognize and soothe stress

### **Session 3: Stress and the mind**

- the role of the mind in stress reactions
- mindful exercises to become aware of the thought patterns that cause stress

### **Session 4: Stress and emotions**

- how emotion reactions cause stress and how stress alters emotional experience
- making peace with emotions
- emotions techniques

### **Session 5: Stress and behavior**

- how stress changes behavior and who we are being
- exercises on reengaging with our authentic self

### **Session 6: Stress and relationships**

- how stress affects relationships and decreases connection
- exercises on easing stress so we can stay open and connected

## Session 1: The Breath

**Teachings:** Participants will learn what mindfulness is and how it can help reduce the negative effects of stress. We will cover how the breath helps to calm the body and the mind bringing us out of stress states.

**Meditations:** Several different breathing exercises to bring our attention back to the present moment

**Homework:** Practice using the breathing techniques first when you are already calm and then during times of stress. Note the changes you feel after the exercise.

## Session 2: Stress and the Body

**Teachings:** Participants will learn the physiological effects of stress and how to identify them before they become too strong. We will cover how to use our connection with the body to lessen our engagement with stress triggers.

**Meditations:** A body scan will be used to help participants bring their attention back into the body noticing how stress shows up for them and how to lessen its negative effects.

**Homework:** Practice the body scan daily. Stay in tune with the body when you are in a stress state and notice what you are feeling.

## Session 3: Stress and the Mind

**Teachings:** Participants will learn the neurological effects of stress. We will cover how it alters our ability to focus, remember, and think critically. We will also look into how our thoughts and perceptions contribute to our heightened stress levels and how to let go of those that harm us.

**Meditations:** Observing our thoughts and understanding how they contribute to heightened stress levels. Replacing negative thoughts with more helpful ones.

**Homework:** Pause throughout the day to observe your thoughts make note of the thoughts you are having when your stress is rising.

## Session 4: Stress and Emotions

**Teachings:** Participants will learn how stress effects our emotional reactions and how our emotions can increase our stress levels. We will explore how a healthy relationship to our emotions can decrease our stress levels.

**Meditations:** Recognizing our emotions and how they show up in our mind and body. Understanding our reactions to emotions and how to relate to them in positive ways so that they don't cause more stress.

**Homework:** Name your emotions as you notice them throughout the day. Note how they affect you and your stress levels.

## Session 5: Stress and Behavior

**Teachings:** Participants will learn how stress effects our behavior by altering our perceptions, our motivation, and our urgency. We will examine how to use awareness to notice who we are being and come back to our authentic selves rather than being controlled by stress.

**Meditations:** Recognizing the roots of our behavior and remembering who we really want to be and how we want to show up in the world coming back to our authentic selves.

**Homework:** Notice when your behavior is not in line with you who really want to be. Identify the root of this behavior.

## Session 6: Stress and Relationships

**Teachings:** Participants will learn how stress prohibits us from being present for the people in our lives by altering our perception of importance and value. We will explore how to recognize when stress is getting in the way of meaningful connection and decrease it so we can reengage with the people in our lives.

**Meditations:** Recognizing our stressors and how they hold our attention altering how we show up for others. Switching our focus from our stressors back to our present moment experience.

**Homework:** Notice when you are more focused on your stressors than on the present. Bring your attention back to the present.