

Aphasia NZ Online Mindfulness for Wellbeing course details

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, using a gentle, nurturing perspective. Mindfulness involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we are sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future. It is a state of nonreactive awareness and helps us have more control over how we respond to what happens in life. Mindfulness is a non-religious practise, it does however have a historical basis in Buddhism. There is no religious teaching within the course.

Why should I attend this course?

Caregiving is associated with a host of problems, including poor physical health, compromised immune function, emotional issues, social isolation, and mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety. Carers are known to be at increased risk of 'burnout'. Mindfulness can help carers develop increased self-awareness so that they can identify where they are emotionally and physically at any given moment in time. Mindfulness also importantly teaches compassionate acceptance and kindness to self. This can encourage you to take better care of your own health and mental well being, so that you have the ongoing capacity to be a loving, positive, energetic, patient & caring partner.

Mindfulness groups are also particularly powerful at helping foster a sense of connectedness which helps reduce feelings of isolation. This group will enable you to share your own experiences with other people who have partners or family members with Aphasia. It gives you an opportunity to express your emotions in a safe environment where people can truly understand the ups and downs of caring for someone with Aphasia. There is usually much wisdom and inspiration that come out of Mindfulness group discussions.

What will course participants learn?

- The many health benefits of mindfulness
- How to incorporate mindfulness skills into daily life
- The basic skills of how to meditate
- How breath and body awareness can transform stress
- How to work with difficult thoughts and experiences

- How to overcome your inbuilt ‘negativity bias’-learning to focus on the good things and how they affect us
- How to develop kindness to self and others
- How to use mindful movement to help manage stress
- Basic nutrition for wellbeing and stress management

Practicalities

No prior knowledge of mindfulness or meditation is required. This is an introductory level course suitable for everyone, apart from people who have a diagnosed Mental health disorder or severe clinical depression. If you are unsure whether this course would be suitable for you then please contact Melissa for a chat, on 0211105588, creativehealthnz@gmail.com.

The course will be delivered online using Google Meet video conferencing. This is a very easy method of connecting with a group of people online. You will be able to see and hear each other, and there is a text box which you can use to type any comments or questions you may have during the class. We will have no more than 10 people on each online course so that we can get to know each other and have the opportunity for some good discussions.

Powerpoint slides will be used during the classes to assist in the teaching of mindfulness principles. The course will include a balance of direct teaching, questions and discussion, and guided meditation.

Each week you will be given a ‘mindfulness in action’ activity to do. These are simple things you can do while going about your daily business, but they help you to incorporate Mindfulness into your daily life.

You will require an email address, and a phone or computer which can run **Google Meet** on their website, or on the Google Meet app. Your computer or phone will require decent audio input/output. A headset/earphones with speaker function may be required.

You need to have a quiet space for the online sessions, we will practise using the mute and unmute function on the Google Meet website so that we can take turns talking without interruption or background noise! To be most comfortable during meditations during the online course sessions, you would benefit from access to a comfortable chair or recliner. You can also choose to lie down on a bed, yoga mat or soft carpet.

It would be helpful to have access to cushions for under the head, and for those with lower back problems, cushions can be placed behind the knees to increase comfort when lying.

Resources (free of charge) You will be provided with:-

1. 'The Little Mindfulness Workbook' by Gary Hennessey. This is a concise, practical and easy to read book which will help you review some of the key teachings we will cover in the course.
2. Mp3 audios of all the meditations which accompany the Little Mindfulness Workbook. These can be emailed to you so that you can download them onto your smartphone, computer/tablet/iPad or Mp3 player. If you don't have access to any of these, then the audios can also be provided in CD format.
3. Journal templates so that you can track how you're getting on with your practise of mindfulness. These include the specific practices introduced in each chapter of the book/each course session.
4. A simple 'How to use Google Meet' guide will be provided for you, and in the first session, we will practise using the Google Meet platform so you get confident with this.
5. Access to a private Mindfulness for Wellbeing Facebook group page, so that you can keep in touch with each other during the period of the course if you wish. You can also email Melissa questions during the week, which she will then try and answer at the next course session creativehealthnz@gmail.com

Personal commitment required

Please try and attend each course session if at all possible, as not only will it help your own learning, but your input to group discussions will also always be valuable to others. If you are unable to attend a session, then please let Melissa know in advance, and she can try and email you the powerpoint teaching slides and a summary of any group discussions.

It is up to you how long you choose to do your daily meditation practise for, research however shows that you will get the most from Mindfulness meditation by meditating for at least 20 minutes a day. 10 minutes twice a day is usually a good routine to aim for.

Please be aware that all information shared in group discussions needs to stay confidential. This is really important so that participants can share in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

Be mindful of the need for us to start and finish on time, we will have a lot to fit into our hourly sessions! Please also be respectful of the need to give everyone the opportunity to share in group discussions if they would like to.

Teacher information

Melissa trained as a Breathworks Mindfulness teacher in New Zealand and in the U.K.

Breathworks is a globally recognised leader in teaching mindfulness and compassion to individuals and organisations worldwide. Find out more at:-

<https://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/>

Melissa has 20 years of experience working as a Speech Language Therapist specialising in Aphasia rehabilitation. She worked for Waikato DHB for the last 8 years but has now gone into private practise. Melissa also works part time for Waikato District Council as a Custom Delivery Officer at Raglan Library.

Melissa became interested in mindfulness through her own health issues with severe chronic back pain. She has also had personal experience of working with stress related illnesses and grief. Melissa lives in Raglan with her 6 year old daughter Neave, and her husband, Sebastien.

What do I need to do next?

Complete and return a **registration form** and the **Informed consent for Mindful Movement form**. Please email Aphasia NZ for these forms.

Please let Aphasia NZ know when you register:-

1. If you require mp3 audios or CDs
2. If you want printed Journal templates, or if you prefer to download the templates and use them on your computer.
3. What your availability is for attending the course. At present Melissa's preference will be Tuesday- Friday, between 9.30am and 2.30pm. An evening time slot may be an option (but not on Wednesdays). A Survey Monkey brief questionnaire may be sent to you about this matter, it is very easy to complete this online.

I look forward to meeting you, Melissa Delaux, Creative Health Works.