

Ethos

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is an offering. The “offering” is safe space to explore ourselves and to be ourselves. The MBSR teacher has responsibility for offering physical and relational space that provides safety for a room full of people who will meet together for 9 weeks, seeking greater awareness, ease and acceptance in their lives.

MBSR is radical. By setting aside time to explore our humanity in the company of others, we step outside of cultural pressure to value ourselves as producers, performers, consumers and conformists. MBSR creates space for non-judgmental observation of who we are at our most basic: we learn to find in ourselves the causes of unnecessary suffering, and to bear witness to the pain that is unavoidable. We also learn to accept and love our creatureliness; to experience ourselves in any given moment as breathers; eaters; lovers; strugglers; doubters, and beings who have the capacity to be awestruck at the experience of being alive.

MBSR is based on an ancient technology, the technology of meditation. Meditation uses no equipment, costs nothing, and is always accessible. To our contemporary minds, it is so easy, it’s hard!

MBSR has inspired scientific study, which resonates with traditional Buddhist values of observation and non-judgment. Science and ancient wisdom meet in the core understanding that safety is necessary for us to connect with ourselves and others, and that connection is our most brilliant way of surviving whether as a species or just surviving a day. Safety arises with attunement and compassion, expressed in gestures of careful listening, full occupation of the body, and gentle persistence with kind intent. MBSR teaches us to continuously check in with ourselves moment by moment with the intellect of a scientist and the and whole-heartedness of an artist.