



**Professional Diploma  
in  
Teaching Mindfulness-Based Interventions:  
MBSR & MBCT**

**Brochure for Course Beginning October 2023**

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This is a comprehensive, rigorous, experiential professional teacher training which has been running since 2015. As part of the programme trainee teachers are apprenticed to an experienced teacher and assist on an 8-week MBSR/CT course. The training faculty has a wide breadth of experience in all aspects of mindfulness teaching and its foundations in Eastern and Western psychology and neuroscience and includes teachers from Ireland, the UK and Europe. This training is one of those recognised by the professional body, the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland ([www.mtai.ie](http://www.mtai.ie)).

The training draws on the trainings at the Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice (CMRP) at Bangor University and the Center for Mindfulness (CFM) at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) in which the Directors have participated. Members of the faculty have also trained with the Institute of Mindfulness Based Approaches (IMA) and Oxford University's Mindfulness Centre, so a wealth of approaches informs the training offered by The Mindfulness Centre.

The programme also draws on the many retreats and other trainings we have taken as well as on our collective substantial experience in teaching mindfulness-based courses over the past 17 years. We have been Senior Lecturers on the Masters in Mindfulness-Based Interventions within the School of Psychology at UCD since 2014. We set up this professional training through our own Centre in April 2015. This training will equip you with the deep foundations required to teach mindfulness-based interventions in a variety of contexts.

We have been instrumental in the development of the MTAI, the teacher-led professional body which sets standards for and supports teachers and teacher trainings in Ireland, informed by the International Integrity Network in Mindfulness-Based Interventions and The European Association of Mindfulness Teachers (EAMBA). Josephine was the first Chairperson of the MTAI, from February 2018 - October 2020 and we and other members of the team remain active on the Board and various committees of that organisation.

The Directors and mindfulness teacher training faculty of The Mindfulness Centre for Professional Training observe, as a minimum standard, the Good Practice Guidelines developed by the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland. These guidelines safeguard integrity in teaching MBIs. Graduate teachers from this training are entitled to full membership of the MTAI, as this is one of the trainings recognised. People who are accepted onto this training can join the MTAI as a student members.

We are committed

- to fostering the on-going development of an inclusive community of Mindfulness Teachers, providing initial training and on-going CPD, supervision, regular retreats and advanced teacher training
- to supporting the highest standards in mindfulness teaching in Ireland through our own reflective practice and through supporting the continuing development of the professional body for mindfulness teachers, the MTAI.
- to honouring the ethical framework to which mindfulness belongs, supporting the cultivation of inner and outer conditions which allow individuals to thrive and which lead to a more mindful, compassionate society

Yours sincerely,

*Helen Byrne & Josephine Lynch, Directors,*

*Erica Balfour, Course Co-ordinator*

The Mindfulness Centre for Professional Training

## **TEACHER TRAINING FACULTY:**

### **FOUNDER DIRECTORS:**

**Josephine Lynch, Dip. Ac., Dip. Herbal Med., M.A.** Mindfulness-Based Approaches, Bangor University, has also gained the Certificate of Competence to Teach Mindfulness-Based Courses from the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (Bangor University).

Most of her career was in Mind/Body medicine with such modalities as shiatsu, acupuncture and herbal medicine. Josephine was involved in Community Education through Sláinte Pobal, an organisation bringing health education to women in areas of disadvantage in Dublin in the '90s. She studied counselling in Maynooth University and has had a particular interest in ecology and environmental issues for many years.

Josephine has been teaching MBSR since 2005, making her one of the first people to teach this course in Ireland. She has been active in bringing the very best international leaders in the field of mindfulness to Ireland to lead CPD and retreats for mindfulness teachers and trainee teachers since 2008, and she has been the driving force behind the development and setting up of the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland, the professional body for teachers of Mindfulness Based Interventions in Ireland ([www.mtai.ie](http://www.mtai.ie)) in 2019. She was the first Chairperson of the MTAI, steering it through its formative first year and 9 months, as well as supporting it in finding a coherent response to COVID. This included offering free online meditations twice daily to the public.

**Helen Byrne, H. Dip. Ed., Dip. Psych., M.A.** in Mindfulness-Based Approaches from Bangor University, Member of the PSI. She qualified as a Systemic and Family Therapist with the Clanwilliam Institute in 1996, at the same time as completing a Post-Graduate Diploma in Psychology.

Helen qualified as a post primary teacher in 1981 and worked in the area of learning support and as a Visiting Teacher to the Traveller Community. She also worked in education in Australia and London. She stepped away from the school system to lead various community initiatives with the ICTU Centre for the Unemployed in Finglas from 2005 to 2009, and also worked on a second chance education programme with the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE) in 2010.

Alongside the Masters in Mindfulness-Based Approaches at Bangor University Helen also completed all trainings and supervision with the Center for Mindfulness at University of Massachusetts, including participation in an intensive residential MBSR teacher training with Jon Kabat-Zinn and Saki Santorelli in 2009 and in an Advanced Teacher Development Residential training with Melissa Blacker and Florence Meleo-Meyer in 2010. She is currently participating in her second 2 year programme in Buddhist Psychology with the Bodhi College.

Helen trained as a Yoga teacher in 2003 and began combining her meditation practice with yoga teaching, offering Mindfulness Yoga classes in various yoga studios in Dublin from 2004 to 2010. She has been teaching MBSR in various contexts since 2008.

**Josephine and Helen** are Senior Lecturers on the UCD School of Psychology's M.Sc.in MBIs. They were involved in developing the course and have been teaching on the programme since its inception in 2014.

They are trained mindfulness supervisors, having trained with Cindy Cooper at Bangor University and having completed a 2-year in-depth course in Buddhist Psychology with what is now called the Bodhi College in 2014, they continue their studies with senior teachers there. They continue to study and practice with Senior Teachers at The Bodhi College and others. They trained to teach Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) with Christopher Germer and Kristin Neff in 2015.

Josephine and Helen have also received in-vivo training over a number of years in the use of the Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Teacher Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC) from Dr. Rebecca Crane, here in Dublin. The MBI:TAC is regarded as the gold standard in the assessment of mindfulness teachers and was developed at Bangor, Oxford and Exeter Universities. This is the assessment tool we use at The Mindfulness Centre on this Diploma Course.

### **FACULTY:**

**All the members of the faculty who are involved in teaching mindfulness are experienced teachers and practitioners and members of the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland. They adhere to that organisation's Standards of Good Practice (<https://mtai.ie/membership/standards/>).**

**Dr. Tony Bates** was Head of Psychology for 30 years in St James's Hospital Dublin and established and directed the MSc Cognitive Psychotherapy in TCD until 2006. He founded Jigsaw (The National Centre for Youth Mental Health) in 2006 to serve young people and their mental health needs. He was CEO until his retirement in 2018. Tony has been active in shaping and writing government policy since 2006. He was made honorary Professor of Psychology in UCD in September 2018 as a tribute to his contribution to the field. He trained as a mindfulness teacher in University of North Wales, Bangor in 2001 and has been active since in disseminating Mindfulness in Ireland. He is the patron of the MTAI.

**Niamh Barrett B.A.** began her training in teaching Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in 2007 with a foundation year at the University of Bangor in North Wales, and completed her training with the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (Germany), graduating in 2010. Prior to this she worked in documentary film and TV production. She has been teaching the MBSR programme since 2010 and is also a mindfulness-teacher trainer and supervision.

Niamh is an ongoing student of socially-engaged Buddhism and the practice of council circle, primarily with the Center for Council and Zen Peacemakers (U.S.) She is an experienced facilitator of online mindfulness practice. In 2019 she founded *showing up*, a framework of online and in-person retreats and courses to facilitate mindful civic engagement with issues such as the housing and homelessness crisis in Ireland, gender-based violence and racial justice. Through the *showing up* project she also offers mindfulness training to charities, activist groups and NGOs [www.showingup.ie](http://www.showingup.ie)

**Dominic Cogan, M.A.;** Dominic received a B.A. in English and Philosophy from U.C.C. and a Master's in Education from the University of London. He also has a Certificate in Counselling Skills and Practice. He trained in teaching MBIs with the CFMRP at Bangor University and the IMA, Germany. He trained with the Mindfulness in Schools Project to teach the .b programme to teenagers and the .b Foundations programme to teachers and those working with young people. He works as a teacher trainer on the MiSP .b teacher training courses.

Dominic has been involved in education as a teacher and teacher trainer in Ireland and abroad for many years. Recently Dominic completed QQI Level 6 Diploma trainings in Inter-Spiritual Mindfulness Facilitation as well as Soul Empowerment and Life Coaching. He also completed professional training in Positive Neuroplasticity with the leader in the field, Dr Rick Hanson.

**Erica Balfour, BSc** (Environmental Science), Grad Dip Psychotherapy, Dip Counselling Skills, Dip in Mindfulness Based Interventions, Dip in Mindful Communication. Erica is currently studying for a Masters in Psychotherapy.

A committed practitioner and mindfulness teacher at The Mindfulness Centre, Erica stepped into an administration role with the Centre over the last number of years. She has recently taken over the coordination of the professional training programmes and joined the teaching team.

Erica's personal practice of mindfulness spans a period of 15 years and began as a way to cope with the anxiety of parenting a very young family & navigating the grief of losing her mother to breast cancer. She discovered that over time, through a daily mindfulness practice, she began to find ways to befriend her anxiety. She believes that mindfulness has taught her to encourage and support herself with compassion when life feels overwhelming. Most importantly she began to see more clearly the richness in others, in nature and in herself.

**Barry Lee** is a certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher and yoga instructor. He has practiced meditation for over ten years and trained with the Institute for Mindfulness Based Approaches. He has since completed further training in a range of other mindfulness-based interventions including Mindfulness Based Compassionate Living and Awakening Joy. He is a member of the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland and is a registered member of Yoga Alliance UK & Ireland (Certified Experienced Teacher). Barry worked for over ten years as a corporate lawyer and has significant experience delivering mindfulness training to organisations in the corporate sector. In 2017, he founded Mindfulness for Law ([www.mindfulnessforlaw.ie](http://www.mindfulnessforlaw.ie)) with the intention of bringing the benefits of mindfulness training to the legal profession. He has facilitated workshops and courses in many of the top Irish law firms. In 2016, he co-founded Nature in Mind ([natureinmind.ie](http://natureinmind.ie)), an educational organisation which aims to help people improve their health and well-being through mindfully connecting with the natural world.

**Fiona O'Donnell M.A. M.Sc. B.Soc. Sc.,:** Fiona O'Donnell completed a 3 year Master's degree in Mindfulness Based Approaches at Bangor University, Wales. She has just achieved a Masters in Psychotherapy from Brunel College in London. She trained this year in

delivering MBCT-L with Oxford University. She is a Teaching Fellow on University College Dublin's M.Sc. in Mindfulness-Based Interventions.

Fiona trained in leading Mindful Self Compassion (MSC) with The Centre for Mindful Self Compassion, California. She attended training in Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, Oxford University and is registered as an MBCT Therapist on the International Access MBCT register. She completed 'b' training with the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MISP), Positive Neuroplasticity Professional Training with Dr Rick Hanson, and Google's 'Search Inside Yourself' Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Training with SIYLI.

Fiona completed Level 1 training in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy with the Sensorimotor Institute, Colorado, USA. Fiona's previous work experience includes several years in Children's Services in Dublin's North West Inner City, prior to working for Atlantic Philanthropies, which developed strategies and funding for Children & Youth, Education and Mental Health throughout Ireland.

**Sarah Silverton, M.Ed.:** Sarah's professional training was as an Occupational Therapist, working in mental health and Social Services settings for over twenty years. She also trained as a Counsellor, receiving her MEd in 1999. Sarah was introduced to mindfulness in 1996 by Mark Williams. She subsequently trained to teach others with Mark Williams at Bangor and with senior teachers at the Center for Mindfulness, Massachusetts, USA – Jon Kabat-Zinn's centre.

As a member of the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice teaching/training team at Bangor University from the foundation of the centre in 2001 until 2017 she was involved in teaching and training in MBSR and MBCT through the Masters' and CPD programmes. She is a supervisor and Teacher Training Pathway mentor with the Mindfulness Network, UK.

She is co-author of Paws b curriculum (Mindfulness in Schools Project). She developed 'The Present' with Dusana Dorjee and Tabitha Sawyer, a programme to support teachers to share mindfulness practice with children aged 3-11. [www.thepresentcourses.org](http://www.thepresentcourses.org)

She has published 'The Mindfulness Breakthrough', Watkins, 2012 (reprinted as 'The Mindfulness Key', 2016) and is co-author of 'Mindfulness and The Transformation of Despair', 'MBCT with People at Risk of Suicide' in paperback (2017), Williams, Fennell, Barnhofer, Crane and Silverton, Guilford, 2015.

**Alvina Cassidy** is a Counsellor & Psychotherapist and an accredited member of the Irish Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists. She trained with the Institute of Mindfulness Based Approaches (IMA) and was a member of their teaching faculty. She has been introducing Embodied Listening to student teachers at The Mindfulness Centre since 2015 and more recently is now making the same offering on the UCD Master's programme. She regularly co-presents on meditation and compassion retreats and Deep Listening training at Dzogchen Beara Meditation Centre, West Cork. In 2009 she organised a conference on Death and Dying in Killarney at which Jon Kabat-Zinn was one of the key-note speakers.

Alvina was introduced to mindfulness and compassion meditation in 1993 in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and has attended numerous teaching retreats with Tibetan and western



teachers. She completed many meditation retreats in Ireland, Germany, France and the US, including a one year enclosed retreat.

**Dr Alistair Wilson:** is a consultant psychiatrist and fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatry in Scotland. He has worked as a Consultant Community Psychiatrist within the National Health Service for almost thirty years. During this time, he completed his training in Cognitive Therapy at Oxford University and graduated with a MSc in Mindfulness Based Approaches with the University of Bangor in 2011. He has also trained in Trauma-Focused CBT, Sensory-Motor Psychotherapy and Eye Movement De-Sensitisation Rationale in order to deliver care for those experiencing symptoms of trauma. Since retiring from the NHS in 2014 he has been employed by Combat Stress, a charity providing support to UK veterans experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Alistair has a long history of delivering MBCT within mental health services in and around Glasgow. He has delivered mindfulness sessions to medical staff and workshops on Mindful Approaches to Trauma in London, Dublin and UMass. He is currently engaged in a series of research projects evaluating the feasibility of Mindfulness Based Approaches in a variety of settings including Oncology, Addiction and Trauma, and has recently trained to deliver the MBCT for Life course through the Oxford Mindfulness Centre.

**Dr. Terry Hyland,** Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK) & Professor Emeritus of the Education & Psychology Academic Group, University of Bolton, UK. Terry is a highly published author on the themes of mindfulness, education and philosophy and his current interest is in the area of the commodification of mindfulness.

**Trish Haugh:** is a yoga teacher & psychotherapist with 35 years of working with movement and somatic attunement. Trish's work includes training in The Feldenkrais Method, Developmental Movement and linking our physiology and psychology from a Winnicottian Attachment perspective.

### **Visiting Teachers:**

**Christoph Köck** was born in Vienna, Austria, and spent 17 years of his life as a Buddhist monk in the Theravadin tradition. He lived mainly in monasteries connected with Ajahn Chah in Thailand and the West. Currently he lives in Vienna, working as a psychotherapist in a private practice. He teaches Buddhism and meditation internationally, and is trained to teach MBSR and MBCT. He is a faculty member of the Bodhi College (<https://bodhi-college.org>).

**Jaya Rudgard** began meditating in the 1980s and practised for eight years as a nun in the Thai Forest tradition in England with Ven. Ajahn Sumedho as her teacher. She is a graduate of the Insight Meditation Society/Spirit Rock Teacher Training and teaches Insight Meditation and mindfulness in the UK and internationally. Jaya is a qualified yoga teacher and a certified Holden Qigong instructor. She is a faculty member of the Bodhi College (<https://bodhi-college.org>).

*From time to time, teachers other than those listed above may be invited to contribute.*

### **EXTERNAL EXAMINER:**

**Dr John Peacock** has been an academic and a Buddhist practitioner for nearly 50 years. Trained in India in the Tibetan Gelugpa tradition, he subsequently spent time in Sri Lanka studying Theravada. He lectured in Buddhist Studies at the University of Bristol, he was Associate Director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre and he taught on the Master of Studies programme in MBCT (Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy) at Oxford University until recently.

John has been teaching meditation internationally for more than thirty years and is a Gaia House guiding teacher. He is a co-founder of The Bodhi College, which is dedicated to the study and practice of the early teachings of the Buddha. John has been coming to Ireland to lead retreats since 2015.

### **SUPPORTING TEAM:**

**Course Co-ordinator: Erica Balfour** is a committed practitioner and mindfulness teacher at The Mindfulness Centre. Erica stepped into an administration role with the Centre over the last number of years and has proved an invaluable support to us in all areas of our work. She has recently joined the teaching team and taken over the coordination of the professional training programmes. (see bio above.)

**Shirley Copeland** has been cooking with whole foods and growing wisdom in the kitchen for over 30 years. She's known to many who have been on retreats in Ireland and in Plum Village Monastery, France. In the 80's she trained in Switzerland as a wholefoods chef, and in London as a medicinal cook.

More recently Shirley also has qualified as a Health and Wellness coach and a Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Trainer (MB EAT). As well as cooking and offering mindfulness in the kitchen on most of our residential trainings and retreats, she teaches mindfulness in the kitchen on the UCD M.Sc in MBIs.

## PT9 PROGRAMME SCHEDULE: October 2023 to April 2025

*From time to time the Directors may change or add to these dates, in response to the needs of the group and other factors.*

### 2023

7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> October	2 day teaching block 1, The Mindfulness Centre, 33 Pembroke St Lwr, Dublin 2
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> November	Residential Teacher Training 1, Teach Bhríde, Tullow, Co Carlow
December	Small group tutor-led meetings online

### 2024

10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	2 day teaching block 2 online
March	Small group tutor-led meetings online
13 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup> April	2 day teaching block 3 online
May	Small group tutor-led meetings online
8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> June	2 day teaching block 4 online
11 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> August	Retreat with Christoph Kock and Jaya Rudgard, De La Salle Retreat Centre, Castletown, Co Laois.
14 <sup>th</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept	2 day teaching block 5 online
October	Small group tutor-led meetings online
21 <sup>st</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> November	Residential Teacher Training 2, venue tbd.
December	Small group tutor-led meetings online

### 2025

8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> February	2 day teaching block 6 online
March	Small group tutor-led meetings online
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> April	2 day teaching block 7 at The Mindfulness Centre, 33 Pembroke St Lwr, Dublin 2

- In person non-residential teaching days will usually begin at 9.30am and break for lunch from 1pm to 2pm and finish at 5pm. There will be 'bio' breaks in the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Online teaching days will generally begin at 9.30 and consist of 3 blocks of 1.5 hours each + 1 final half hour: 9.30-11am, 11.30am-1.00pm, 2.00-3.30pm, 4-4.30pm.

## **TUITION FEES:**

**FEES: €3,965**

### **This fee includes:**

- All tuition, manuals, handouts and background literature;
- Small group online practice and study groups;
- Individual feedback on written work submitted after each teaching block;
- Teaching on 2 x 3 day residential trainings;
- At least 2 individual meetings with the Directors over the course of the training at a separate time from the teaching blocks;
- 4 hours of supervision with an experienced teacher during the delivery of the first 8 week MBSR or MBCT course you teach;
- Assessment of the recorded teaching using the MBI:TAC which will be carried out by a teacher other than your supervisor, trained in the use of the MBI:TAC;
- Moderation by the Directors of the Centre of the completed assessment;
- Further moderation by the External Examiner where it is deemed necessary.

### **Not included in the fees:**

- €500 towards accommodation and food at the August retreat;
- €250 x 2 for accommodation and food on the 2 x 3 night Residential Trainings.
- €350 towards the apprenticeship – the cost of participation in / observing / assisting an experienced MBSR/MBCT teacher delivering an 8-week course and mentoring sessions with that teacher on what you have observed in the teaching of the course, plus feedback on any guiding or teaching you may have done.

## **CERTIFICATION:**

Diploma in Teaching Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction / Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy from The Mindfulness Centre for Professional Training in Ireland. This training more than fulfils the requirements for teacher training developed by the MTAI, and is in keeping with best international standards. You will be able to join the MTAI as a student once accepted onto this course and then as a teacher member once you have achieved your teaching Diploma.

***Note on teaching MBCT:*** *This Diploma is not a qualification in delivering MBCT to clinical populations unless you already have an appropriate professional clinical training in mental health. You will need to follow the good practice guidelines of your own professional body, in addition to those of the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland.*

## PROGRAMME ETHOS:

### **The Mindfulness Centre for Professional Training in Ireland offers an eighteen-month comprehensive training in becoming an MBSR/MBCT Teacher**

*This training programme is founded on the premise that learning to teach Mindfulness-Based Stress-Reduction and/or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy requires a long and sustained engagement. The kind of training we offer suits people who are willing to engage deeply in both a personal and a professional development process, not just over the 18 months of training, but on into the future. This involves a high degree of personal commitment. We offer the same commitment to our own practice, our on-going training, and to our teacher trainees.*

We recognise that the process in which we are engaged on mindfulness trainings may raise personal issues for all of us. When such issues arise for you, you are encouraged to work with them through the mindfulness practice itself, both during and outside of the training / retreat sessions. As emerging mindfulness teachers you will be learning to encourage your future course participants to find a different way to relate to and work with difficulties. Therefore, as part of the intention to integrate mindfulness into our personal and professional lives, it is important that we learn to do this for ourselves, using the challenges that may arise for us to practice, thus galvanising what it means to learn mindfulness ‘from the inside out’.

If you find that the issues arising for you are very strong, and if you are not already engaged in a therapeutic process outside of the training, we expect you to let us know. Also, if we see that you are struggling we will explore possible supports with you. We may ask you to pause in your training for personal development and growth. We may be able to assist in practical ways that may help to resolve your difficulty, or we may be able to recommend some outside professional help for you. If, in our opinion, the training is not suitable for you, you will be asked to leave.

It has always been our wish to train small groups of teachers in ways which provide for the development of mutual support, working towards the growth of a strong mindfulness community in Ireland. Thus it is vital that the attitudinal foundations outlined by Jon Kabat-Zinn as an integral part of MBSR are cultivated in our relationships with each other over the course of the training and into the future.

We expect that the members of the group will treat everyone involved in the training with respect, patience, kindness and understanding in order to create a learning environment that will allow each of us to flourish. In this context, if there are difficulties with how any student is conducting themselves or if there are concerns about the effect this may be having on the group, we will invite that person to meet with us. If the difficulties remain unresolved, or if we or the student feel that the difficulties cannot be resolved, the student will be asked to leave the course.

## **PROGRAMME GOALS:**

- To offer teacher training of the highest quality in line with best international practice and good practice guidelines.
- To cover all that is necessary and important – including the origins of mindfulness in contemplative traditions, contemporary therapeutic approaches, and the theory, practice and research which underpins the modern mindfulness movement – in the preparation of teachers intending to work in this dynamic and exciting area.
- To support participants in furthering their personal development and deepening their understanding and practice of mindfulness.
- To provide a growing community of support for participants in this pioneering field.

## **THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF MBIs**

### **What?**

The training is based on providing opportunities for the direct experiencing of mindfulness and its impact on all aspects of our lives. We will be spending time with all the core practices of MBSR and MBCT – the Body Scan, Mindful Movement, Sitting Meditation, Awareness of Breathing etc. – inquiring into these experiences for ourselves, and exploring the effect on us as practitioners of bringing awareness to this direct experiencing in the formal meditations and in all aspects of our lives.

### **Why?**

We will spend time exploring the rationale behind each of the practices and the MBSR and MBCT courses in their entirety. This will involve placing the learning in the wider context of theoretical understanding, informed by aspects of Western Psychology and Buddhist Psychology.

### **How?**

We will be developing the skills and knowledge required to guide the practices, lead mindful dialogue, communicate the ideas and embody the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness. We will be developing the capacity to steward a group and guide the individuals within it in learning to turn towards all experience wisely, compassionately and courageously, and supporting them in exploring their inner and outer worlds. To do this work we need to have had experience already in exploring our own inner and outer worlds and we must continue to engage in this ongoing work of cultivating self-knowledge.

## **SOME OF THE TOPICS COVERED IN THE TRAINING:**

There is an emphasis in this training on experiential learning – learning to teach through teaching - and on developing and deepening one's personal mindfulness practice. The training also covers all that is relevant to understanding mindfulness and MBIs, and includes input from experts on a wide range of areas current in the literature on mindfulness, including the following:

- The history of mindfulness – from its ancient foundations in Buddhist psychology to how Western psychologists now understand the experience of being human.
- In-depth study of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) curriculum and an introduction to the Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) curriculum
- Neuroanatomy and neuroplasticity - the discovery of the capacity of the brain/mind to change
- Ethical practice in teaching MBIs – diversity, culture and social engagement
- Mindfulness and Trauma
- The use of mindfulness in clinical practice – the research findings
- The theory of working with groups
- The dangers of the commodification of mindfulness – ‘McMindfulness.’

## PROGRAMME COMPONENTS:

- Daily personal mindfulness practice of 45 minutes or more.
- Trainees will be participate in / observe an 8-week MBSR/MBCT course delivered by an experienced mentor teacher. As this is an intensive training in teaching 8-week MBSR/MBCT courses, it is essential that all trainees have an intimate experiential knowledge of the course from the inside out. *Where the Directors feel it is necessary or useful they may recommend that trainees participate in / observe additional 8-week courses.*
- Trainees will receive mentoring outside of class time with the mentor teacher while participating in / observing an 8-week course. This mentoring is intended to assist the trainee in developing their understanding of the 8-week course in terms of their own experience, their observations of others' experience and the teaching and any other issues that arise while observing and participating. Where they have led a practice they will receive feedback from the course teacher. *(The cost of participation and mentoring will be borne partly by the trainee teacher, who will pay €250 directly to the mentor teacher. The Mindfulness Centre will pay the balance to the teachers whom you assist.)*
- Trainees will teach an 8-week course under supervision, which will be recorded in full and submitted for assessment. (The timing of this component will depend on previous experience and teacher readiness, and may happen some time after the completion of the course, but usually within two years, in consultation with the Directors.)
- Trainees will be assigned to smaller seminar groups to support each other in their learning and in their teacher training practice. Some of these groups will be facilitated by Course Tutors. These will happen online. Please note that seminar groups are both study and practice groups.
- This work is a personal as well as a professional development process. As such, from time to time difficulties may arise for some people which may require some therapeutic help. From time to time we may recommend this. The Directors are happy to assist trainee teachers in accessing psychotherapists who work in ways that are aligned with mindfulness.
- From time to time, if you are struggling with your personal practice, we may recommend that you receive some support from a meditation mentor. *Payment for this will be between you and the meditation mentor.* From time to time the Directors may meet with trainee teachers individually to discuss aspects of their development as teachers and to make recommendations as to how they might proceed towards readiness to teach. Occasionally trainees may be invited to postpone participation to a future course, if the Directors feel this is necessary.
- Body awareness practices e.g. Hatha Yoga, T'ai Chi, Qigong, 5-rhythms dance. If you do not have experience you will be asked to participate in a class in one of these disciplines in your local area for the duration of the training.



## **TRAINEE TEACHERS WILL:**

- Attend all teaching sessions;
- Participate in / observe an 8-week course with an experienced MBSR/MBCT mentor teacher, selected in consultation with the Course Directors. (Where the Directors feel it is necessary or useful they may recommend that trainees participate in / observe additional 8-week courses);
- Submit video of yourself teaching a full 8-week course. The timing of this is to be decided in consultation with the Directors;
- Prepare and submit audios of the body scan, movement and sitting meditations;
- Prepare and submit a participant handbook to accompany the 8-week course;
- The final written assignment of c. 2,000 words will be an essay reflecting on your experience of teaching the 8-week course and, through watching the video recordings, evaluating the teaching, using the MBI:TAC as a guide. This will accompany the recorded teaching. This assignment is a vital part of the assessment as it affords the teacher the opportunity to share their reflections on their own teaching with their assessor;
- Keep a reflective journal;
- Submit short (max.1,000 word), written assignments based on the reflective journal and on the readings and teachings offered in each teaching block. These assignments are not graded, but are designed to assist trainees in engaging fully with reading material and teaching inputs and to demonstrate understanding. From time to time trainees may be asked to re-submit;
- Continue your daily personal mindfulness practice;
- Continue your participation in body awareness practices. If you do not have experience in any of these or similar disciplines you will be expected to participate in a class for the duration of the training;

### ASSESSMENT WILL BE BASED ON:

- An assessment of the trainee teaching a full 8-week course, using the Mindfulness-Based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC). Trainees who are not yet ready to teach will be given recommendations as to how to proceed and supported in developing readiness to teach. **It is important to note that the trainee teacher must show readiness in all the domains of the MBI:TAC before receiving their Diploma.**
- an 2,000 word essay reflecting on your experience of teaching the 8-week course and, through watching the video recordings, evaluating your teaching, using the MBI:TAC as a guide;
- your own audios of practices;
- the handbook given to your course participants;
- Full participation in all trainings. Absences of over 2 days must be made up by attendance of the same module at a future training. Certification will not be granted until this is fulfilled;
- Written assignments for each block, where set.

Your fee includes supervision with an experienced teacher who will support you in delivering your first 8-week MBI.

The MBI:TAC assessment will then be carried out *by a different teacher* who has been trained in using this assessment tool.

The Directors then moderate the assessment.

If there are any remaining concerns about your teaching or assessment we will submit your recordings to the External Examiner.

## ENDORSEMENTS:

**Melissa Myozen Blacker, Roshi**, is one of the Guiding Teachers and Abbot of the Boundless Way Zen Center, Worcester, Massachusetts. From 1993 until 2012 Melissa was the Associate Director of the University of Massachusetts Centre for Mindfulness, and the Director of Professional Training Programmes at the Center. She is one of the main architects of the MBSR curriculum, along with Jon Kabat-Zinn:

*“Helen and Josephine bring all of their heart and wisdom to teaching and training others to teach mindfulness. I have been personally blessed to know them as students and as colleagues.”*

**Pam Erdmann**, M. Ed., Senior Teacher Trainer and Supervisor at the Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts and Visiting Teacher to Bangor University’s Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice since 2003:

*“I have worked for several years with both Helen Byrne and Josephine Lynch. While I haven’t experienced their trainings directly, I have had supervisees working with them as well as my personal experience as colleagues. They do top notch work, holding both the didactic aspects and, more importantly, encouraging folks to bring all of themselves to the work. Great to have them both as friends and colleagues.”*

**Sarah Silverton**, BA (hons), Dip COT, and Med., Senior Teacher in the CFMRP at Bangor University from 2008 until 2018:

*“Josephine and Helen have engaged in developing their skills in teaching MBIs for over a decade and with some of the main originators of modern day mindfulness, including Jon Kabat-Zin and John Teasdale, as well as with teachers who themselves trained with the originators. As all good trainers do, they continue to engage in learning and development for their personal and teaching practices. As a result, the integrity and skill of what they offer shines through their training. People training with them can feel confident that they will become part of an informed, ethical, professional team working around the world to share mindfulness.”*

## STUDENT TESTIMONIALS:

**Dr. Sarah-Jane Cullinane**, Assistant Professor in HRM and Organisational Behaviour  
Trinity Business School Trinity College Dublin

*“The diploma was an excellent investment for me both personally and professionally. The course was largely experiential and therefore provided a supportive environment to develop my own practice and engage in self-reflection. Throughout the course I had great opportunity to observe and practice teaching MBIs which I have since applied to my work teaching third-level students and working with organisations who wish to promote well-being.”*

**Blathnaid Bergin**, Director, The Business of Food:

*“I enrolled on the Diploma in Mindfulness Based Interventions in January 2016 and it was a life changing experience which is difficult to describe. Learning the skill of living in the moment, [understanding] the tricks of the mind, the meaning of compassion and empathy, learning to trust in the moment to moment joy of living – Josephine and Helen are extraordinarily skilled in bringing students on a personal journey in a steady, supportive, fun and, where it is necessary to growth, challenging way. The many gifted teachers who guided us on the journey are as inspiring as they are brilliant. I cannot recommend this course highly enough, it will challenge and delight in equal measure.”*

**Martin Towey** MSc, BA mod, Dip MBI, Neurological Physiotherapist, Dublin:

*“I obtained a Diploma in Teaching Mindfulness-based Interventions from the Mindfulness Centre In 2017. The training had a very strong focus on supported experiential learning in terms of personal practice and applying this to teaching others from a more authentic and embodied approach. Helen and Josephine fostered a warm and caring environment and there was a lightness and humour also to their teaching which helped us all to be our truest selves. Undertaking the course took considerable commitment and, exactly like the practice of mindfulness itself, was challenging at times, but the learning was extremely rich and life changing. I would do it again in a heartbeat!”*

**Niamh Digan** M.Ed, BSc Couns & Psych, BA, Dip in Ed Leadership, MIGC, MIACP,  
Mindful Wellbeing Education Consulting

*“The Professional Diploma has been an experience rich beyond measure. The teachers are leaders in the field and provide opportunities to enter fully into an experiential apprenticeship-style training which is challenging and worthwhile. This course is rich in andragogy, co-operative learning and inquiry-based teaching. I have benefited personally and professionally from this wonderful experience and it gives me great pleasure to recommend this course to others.”*

**Dr. Elma Hedderman**, M.B., B.A.O. B. Ch., B.A., M.Cl.Psych., Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist:

*“I loved this training. It was definitely different from other courses I'd taken in my life so far. There were some essays. There were no exams. But there was a huge amount of practice. We learned by doing. It became ingrained as we progressed. I was aware of my own embodiment of the material but I could also see my classmates connect with the material in a deep sense. We all grew and changed. Josephine and Helen guided and supported us through our journey. They were always available. Always quietly there. Always encouraging us to keep going. I've officially finished the course now but I don't feel that it's over. Again Helen and Josephine have managed to ingrain a sense of connection and continuity to both of them, to my classmates and to the work of mindfulness. I would highly recommend this experiential training to friends and colleagues.”*

**Maria** B.A., H.Dip.Ed., M.Sc. Counselling:

*“The personal open integrity and generosity as trainers from both Josephine and Helen facilitated a grounded depth in our own personal mindfulness practice that equipped each of us with a solid teaching competency. I looked forward eagerly to each learning opportunity provided in the teacher training course and appreciate the clear understanding and experience of teaching mindfulness received in a warm, safe setting with plenty of laughter involved also! Having completed the teacher training course with Helen and Josephine and presently enjoying teaching MBSR/MBCT I can highly recommend it to anyone intending to pursue professional mindfulness teaching training.*