

## **Meditation for Health**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This report describes the first three iterations of the mini-course entitled “Meditation for Health,” taught by a Health Educator at Emory University Student Health Services in the Fall semester of 2009 and Spring semester of 2010. The course was intended to introduce students to mindfulness meditation and lovingkindness meditation as tools for improving concentration, reducing stress, improving immunity to certain illnesses, and improving the meditators’ overall sense of wellbeing. The evaluation suggests that the curriculum met its objectives and that university students are interested in learning meditation as a means of improving academic performance through enhanced concentration and sense of wellbeing. The report is intended as a reflection on the curriculum rather than as research findings.

## *Description of the Course*

### EMPIRICAL BASIS

Respondents to the 2009 National College Health Assessment<sup>1</sup> report that the top issues affecting academic performance include stress, depression, anxiety, inadequate sleep, worry, and colds/flu, among other health problems. In numerous scientific studies, meditation practice has been shown to lessen these health problems.<sup>2</sup>

Based on factors that are particularly strong in the campus climate, it was hypothesized that students would be interested in learning to meditate. At Emory many students practice their faith actively and show an interest in spiritual wellbeing. For example, the Mind-Body Program, located in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine at the School of Medicine, works with the Collaborative for Contemplative Studies to conduct large-scale research projects examining mechanisms of action for meditation. The Tibetan Studies Program allows students to study in Dharamsala, India, where the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile is located. The Drepung Loseling Institute, a university affiliate, hosts Tibetan monastic scholars who provide teachings to the university and metropolitan communities. Finally, some students are familiar with meditation because they participated in a study of the immunological effects of compassion meditation as taught in the Tibetan tradition.<sup>3</sup>

The content and methods of the course were based in part on the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course<sup>4</sup> and on traditional methods of teaching meditation, especially as practiced in Theravada Buddhism, the tradition that is widely practiced in Southeast Asia. MBSR is a non-sectarian, eight-week curriculum that teaches mindfulness of breath, body, sensations, feelings, and thought patterns through the meditative practices of sitting, standing, lying down, walking, and eating. The instructor for this mini-course has participated in an MBSR course and a pilot of a course that builds on MBSR training by introducing practices for maintaining mindfulness while interacting with others. She has also meditated in Buddhist and Christian traditions and participated in numerous meditation retreats.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, it was anticipated that participants would be able to (1) discuss the scientific understanding of the health benefits of meditation; (2) demonstrate a variety of meditation postures; (3) practice three types of meditation: observing the breath, body awareness, and compassion; and (4) Identify on-campus resources for learning more about meditation and health.

### COLLABORATION

Stakeholders included students, sponsors (Residence Life), and the university community at large, especially friends of participants, since the participants might influence their friends' knowledge and practice of stress management. It was also hoped that participants might attend Meditation Stations (weekly meditation practice sessions open to all members of the university community); thus that program was a stakeholder as well.

#### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Mindfulness and lovingkindness meditation were selected for inclusion in the curriculum because these approaches are documented in the scientific literature as potentially beneficial; also, the instructor had experience with these practices but not with other nonsectarian forms of meditation. Mindful walking, body scan, breath monitoring, and mindful eating were selected because they are traditional meditative practices that illustrate the integration of mindfulness into everyday activities.

Each cohort met three times for seventy-five to ninety minutes each time on three consecutive weeks. Topics presented in each session for each cohort were slightly different and are given in the Appendix.

#### LOGISTICS

The course was marketed via intranet announcements, Physical Education courses (extra credit was offered for some courses), a listserv, word-of-mouth, participation in prior mini-courses, and clinical referrals. Sponsors reserved rooms and provided light snacks such as fruit and granola bars.

#### PARTICIPANTS

For all cohorts, participation was open to all university students. Over the three cohorts, an average of twenty students registered online for the course and took the pre-test, an average of sixteen students attended at least one session, and an average of ten students completed all three sessions and completed the post-test. Seventy-three percent of participants identified as female, with the remainder identifying as male.

#### MATERIALS

The course required minimal materials. Students were asked to bring a pillow and/or rolled up towel to use as a sitting cushion, and about one third did so. For Cohort 2, the instructor was able to borrow meditation cushions including zafus, zabutons, and crescent cushions from the Mind-Body

Program in the Department of Psychiatry. Copies of handouts were available in class and online. Students in Cohort 3 received a copy of *Meditation and Mindfulness in Plain English*.<sup>5</sup> Participants were given a Certificate of Completion and a t-shirt after the course.

#### BUDGET

For Cohorts 1 and 2, cost per participant attending at least one session was \$1.68. Cost per participant completing the post-test was \$2.57. For the third cohort, cost per participant attending at least one session was \$12.08. Cost per participant completing the post-test was \$16.40.

### ***Assessment of Learning Outcomes/Outcome Evaluation***

#### METHODOLOGY

The four learning objectives were measured by the instructor's observation of students during class.

#### RESPONSE RATE

Not applicable, as all participants were observed in class.

#### RESULTS

The instructor observed class members performing all four objectives satisfactorily.

### ***Process Evaluation***

#### METHODOLOGY

All students registered for the course by taking a pre-test via SurveyMonkey, an online survey host. Eleven students in Cohort 1 attended at least one class and were sent an email and follow-up email asking them to take the post-test. Nine responded, for a response rate of 82%. Cohort 2 included eighteen students attending at least one session and ten completing the post-test, for a response rate of 55%. In Cohort 3, nineteen students attended at least one class and were sent an email and follow-up email asking them to take the post-test. Fourteen responded, for a response rate of 74%. Respondents were given a unique identifier, and pre- and post-tests were matched.

The pre- and post-tests included questions about meditation experience and motivations for taking the course (pre-test) and satisfaction with the course (post-test). For Cohort 3, the post-test

asked about the number of times the participant practiced meditation between class meetings, what meditation techniques participants found most useful, participant opinion of the textbook, and satisfaction with the course.

#### RESULTS: EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

Among students taking the pre-test in Cohort 1, twelve had some prior experience with meditation or yoga, while two had none. In Cohort 2, fourteen students taking the pre-test had prior experience, while eleven had none.

Cohorts 2 and 3 were asked their hopes or expectations for the course. Their responses are given in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. Participants cited a wish to begin or deepen a meditation practice, to manage stress, and to apply the course to their study habits. Figures 1 and 2 quote respondents.

**Figure 1: Hopes and Expectations of Students Taking the Pre-Test for Cohort 2**

To gain some knowledge of something that has always intrigued me.
I hope to reduce stress, clear my mind, and devote some time to myself without worries about school or assignments.
To be less stressful
I hope to be better able to focus when I need to focus and relax when I need to relax.
I hope to learn more about meditation and how I can make it a part of my normal routine.
Experience and try to successfully meditate
I hope to learn how to focus on being in the present and let go of stress so that I can then recreate those feelings on my own.
Relaxation
I would want to be a person with great awareness of the environment that I am living. I would like to be someone ( <i>sic</i> ) who can cope with the difficulties around me.
I hope to learn a new way to relieve stress.
Become better at meditation.
To learn to focus my energy better so that I can accomplish things on a higher level.
To learn new meditation techniques, increase my ability to focus, and get into the habit of meditating more often.
To get more in touch with myself.
Just to learn something interesting about meditation
I hope to meditate
I hope to learn strategies for tapping into the mind-body connection in order to optimize my health. I want to learn better ways to manage stress. I know that stress affects our immune systems, so I want to be sure to keep this under control in order to keep from getting sick.
Get back in touch with the skills I picked up over the summer.
I hope to develop relaxation techniques and to learn to practice mindfulness.
I hope to be able to find ways to manage my stress and de-stress, as I am a highly stressed person and am nervous I'll get a heart attack at a young age! (well hopefully not)

To develop a regular meditation practice
I would like to bring meditation back into my life by learning how to integrate it into my life at school.
To be able to focus for longer periods of time without being distracted.

**Figure 2: Hopes and Expectations of Students Taking the Pre-Test for Cohort 3**

<i>From those who registered but did not attend</i>
I hope to learn techniques to make myself a healthier, calmer person.
To be able to relax more easily by meditating
To learn more about meditation and how to relax
To learn good meditation techniques.
Relaxation
To learn methods of stress relief via meditation
I just need to learn to relax and destress. I hope to learn to gain a sense of self in my daily routine. I feel like I'm overworked and do not focus enough energy on renewal of my own mind, body, and spirit.
<i>From those who attended at least one session</i>
Learning strategies of concentration and different ways of meditation.
-to understand the purpose and intent of meditation -to understand why it does what it does
-to be able to access different types of meditation depending on how I feel
I hope to learn meditation methods and techniques to apply to my daily life in dealing with stress and the daily grind. I would also like to use meditation in reconnecting with nature and the natural world.
To help me experience the benefits of meditation firsthand.
I hope to be able to develop techniques for spiritual and mental balance.
To find another way to feel more relaxed
To gain expert instruction on how to meditate. Reap the benefits of meditation such as attention, relaxation, clarity of mind.
Learn about meditation and how to use it to improve health
To help reduce current stress and help me focus day-to-day.
- How to balance life with school - How to handle stress/relax/meditate - How to learn to forgive and forget (inner peace)
Relaxation
I hope that I will be able to better manage my emotions and stress with mindfulness and use it whenever I feel uncomfortable with things in my life.
Learn meditation techniques that will help me relieve stress

On the post-test for Cohorts 1 and 2, participants were asked to rank the methods of meditation used in order of usefulness. Walking meditation was inadvertently omitted from the list. Students in Cohort 1 generally found the body scan or the breath meditation most useful. Students in Cohort 2 preferred the breath and lovingkindness meditations, with several appreciating the eating meditation. Students were asked about why they answered the way they did, and their answers connected with the goals of improving stress management and academic performance. Responses are listed

in Figure 3. Brackets indicate what the respondent was referring to.

Figure 3: Cohorts 1 and 2: “For the method you found most useful, in what way did it help?”
(Cohort 1) The Breath Meditation was more useful with calming and centering of the mind
(Cohort 1) It {breath meditation} helped me become more attentive in classes and it helped me remember things better. It felt like I had erased all the tension I had accumulated during the day.
(Cohort 1) Breath Meditation helps to align all my stresses and allows me to focus more.
(Cohort 2) Calming, relaxing {breath and lovingkindness}
(Cohort 2) Helped me focus {breath}
(Cohort 2) Mindfulness {breath}
(Cohort 2) It helped me understand a mindset I can adopt when I feel overwhelmed or tense. {breath and lovingkindness}

Participants in Cohort 3 responded very favorably to the lovingkindness meditation and to the breath meditation. In class, students reported that they used lovingkindness meditation when feeling stressed (such as before a test or in response to unpleasant events), when preparing to study, and for general meditation practice. Breath meditation was applied as an aid to study and concentration as well as for general meditation practice. One participant used outdoor walking meditation to feel more connected to nature. A few tried eating meditation in the dining halls.

Most participants in Cohort 3 practiced meditation for at least five minutes on at least two occasions between class meetings. Only one person each week (two different individuals) reported not practicing at all, and one participant did not answer the question. The number of practice sessions reported varied from zero to nine, with a mean of about three practice sessions between class meetings. Ten of fourteen (72%) unique respondents in Cohort 3 had a favorable opinion of the book, i.e. planned to keep the book and/or thought it was a good choice for the course.

Satisfaction was measured on a five-point scale with 1 being the most satisfied and 5 being the least satisfied. Participants were asked about overall satisfaction, the instructor’s knowledge of the subject, the instructor’s teaching style, group discussion, course length, handouts, location, and food. For Cohorts 1 and 3, participants rated various aspects of the course highly (score of 1 or 2). Cohort 2 was slightly less satisfied on most measures, tending to rate aspects of the course with scores of 2 and 3.

Attrition was 27% for Cohort 1 and 44% for Cohort 2. For Cohort 3 attrition was 47%. Among those completing the post-test for Cohort 3, six respondents missed at least one class. Reasons for missing class were chosen from a multiple-choice list. During the registration process, students were urged to set aside the time for class meetings, and it seems that reasons for missing class were generally beyond the students’ control. One participant who missed class due to being out of town reported that she attended a funeral, and the two who had academic obligations said that the lab or

study group was scheduled after the mini-course started. The instructor notes that attrition is typically high in meditation classes she has attended.

Students were invited to comment on the course. Cohort 1 had no strong opinions. Cohort 2 suffered from the noisy location and, possibly as a result, felt that class meetings were too long. Cohort 3 wanted more meditation and less instruction and discussion during class, but other respondents in Cohort 3 wanted more class interaction. Two respondents in Cohort 3 wanted more class meetings. Results are in Figures 4-6. Instructor comments are in brackets.

#### Figure 4: Comments from Cohort 1

I really enjoyed the course. It would be nice to hand out articles regarding the benefits of meditation, especially for students—this would be interesting, and when something is in writing, it resonates more. {Handouts were available online, but perhaps some students prefer hard copies}

Maybe some more styles for us to practice

I would like to have done the body scan during one of the classes. {We did this in class; this respondent may have been absent}

#### Figure 5: Comments from Cohort 2

The class time should be a little shorter. There were a lot of awkward pauses during the class discussion that could be avoided with less class time. The location was not great because of the amount of traffic that was coming in and out of Dobbs during our class time. Maybe somewhere a little more secluded like Candler library. {Silences during discussion are considered appropriate during meditation classes. The room was louder than anticipated}

Make it shorter

Need to switch meeting location.

Get recordings of chanting for meditation

The sessions could be shorter.

Should be an hour long.

location too noisy, class too long

A more quiet/private location would have been helpful. Also, I would have liked more time to practice meditating silently, as the facilitator did a lot of talking while we were meditating, and silent periods tended to be very short. {This comment may be from a more experienced meditator. Meditation teachers recommend that a facilitator give verbal cues when working with new meditators in order to help students stay grounded and oriented.}

#### Figure 6: Comments from Cohort 3

Have more sessions in order to discuss and practice the readings

Better participation from the students, but this is up to them and not the course.

Have time for meditation in different environments, to notice changes in practice. It was great, thanks so much!

An e-mail reminder to meditate daily when we have time :)

More meditation practice.

I think it is too short; an extra session could be useful. I really enjoyed it. Thanks!



Offering the course slightly earlier in the semester would be helpful (and probably improve attendance). It would also be nice if it were available at the main campus, or at least not during traffic hours. I would have liked to have the class be slightly shorter each session and meet another session or two.

More interaction and more students please!

Longer meditation sessions in comparison to group discussions.

#### RESULTS: EVALUATION BY INSTRUCTOR

For the first two iterations, the class covered the didactic material faster than anticipated. Individuals vary greatly in their tolerance of silence and sitting, so the frequency of verbal cues and the duration of sitting sessions remain challenging. Since new meditators sometimes identify with the discouragement, distress, or discomfort that arises during meditation, it seems best to give verbal cues at least once per minute and to begin with short sitting sessions and gradually lengthen them without abandoning verbal cues.

Cohort 1 met in a meeting room in a modern residence hall. There was some unfortunate noise from an ice machine and refrigerator, but the small group was able to adapt. Many of the students in Cohort 1 appreciated the body scan meditation. This is traditionally done while lying down. Almost all of the students fell asleep. The class discussed the significance of sleepiness during meditation (it may be psychological resistance or it may be fatigue). Since so many students are indeed sleep-deprived, it is not hard to understand the appeal of the body scan as a sleep aid. However, the exercise is intended as a body awareness practice rather than as a sleep aid. Given the contrast between the students' need for sleep and the aim of teaching awareness of the body, the instructor was uncertain about whether the body scan was appropriate for this course. Experimentation with the body scan with other groups of meditators suggests that it may function as a sleep aid when attention moves from the feet up, while scanning from the head down may be energizing. Does one need to relax, become alert, or simply attune to the body? As a meditator's experience and skill deepen, she becomes able to select a form of meditation that suits the circumstance.

The location for Cohort 2 was attractive and conveniently located in a formal parlor of an historic residence hall at the center of campus, but students' experience was hindered by the sound of passers-by in the residence hall. The parlor is situated next to the main entrance to the building, and in the afternoon, when the class met, other residents were actively entering and leaving the marble and concrete building. It really was too noisy for the purpose. More experienced practitioners are instructed to integrate their reaction to sound into their practice, but beginning meditators benefit from a low-stimulus setting.

By the third iteration, the curriculum seemed to be well adapted to students' needs and interests. The quiet, uncluttered, sunny room used by Cohort 3 was ideal for the purpose. The location is at some remove from the main part of campus, requiring a shuttle bus ride or a walk of over a

mile. Although a few students found it difficult to get to the location on time or felt it was too far, it may also be that the time spent walking or riding the shuttle provided a transition time and supported the tone of the mini-course. The class developed a good rapport and participated in discussions more than prior cohorts. There was some sound from the passageway outside the room. The instructor guided participants to notice sensory phenomena such as sound while retaining an attitude of nonreactivity, alertness, and equanimity. Participants were encouraged to make no attempt to control or block out phenomena while leading the attention back to the object of meditation, whether the body as a whole, breathing, walking, or other focal point.

Cohort 3 received more instruction on lovingkindness (*metta* in Pali, the language of Theravada scripture) meditation than did previous cohorts. The sense of goodwill cultivated during lovingkindness meditation may have contributed to the group rapport. The positive response to lovingkindness meditation is not surprising given the similar response to this technique observed during Meditation Stations and the advice of classically-trained meditation teachers in the Theravada Buddhist tradition. In her personal practice, the instructor places great emphasis on *metta* and has found it to be the single most powerful practice toward liberation from suffering.

#### LIMITATIONS

This curriculum is based on MBSR but differs from it in many ways, including fewer meetings and somewhat different exercises. The instructor is not trained as an MBSR teacher. Therefore this curriculum and its outcomes should not be compared directly with MBSR.

#### Recommendations

This course should continue to be offered. The most significant revision to the curriculum was to introduce lovingkindness practice early in the course. Recommendations are given in Figure 7.

<b>Figure 7: Recommendations and Outcomes</b>		
Recommendation		Outcome
Work with sponsors to arrange for a quieter space.	Yes	The room used for Cohort 3 was an ideal space; most students had no difficulty arriving on time from main campus, and the room was quiet, sunny, and spacious.
Create a packet of hard copies of some handouts.	Yes	See discussion above.
Select a textbook.	Yes	See discussion above.
Food is not important to this mini-course. If the sponsor does not allow food in a room that is ideal for use, or if there are budgetary limitations, omit the snack. Bring a small bag of pretzels for teaching mindful eating (if ok with sponsor in a food-free room).	N/A	Snacks (beverages, granola bars, fruit) were provided

Meet for 75 instead of 90 minutes, or have the class last 60 minutes with a 30-minute meditation session to follow.	Yes	Class was announced as 90 minutes but we adjourned early.
Begin with teaching lovingkindness meditation in order to build the sense of inner safety that makes it possible to tolerate potential physical or psychological discomforts that arise.	Yes	Very helpful; students overwhelmingly reported that they liked this technique, practiced it during the week, and intended to continue practicing.

## COMMENTS

Students approached the course with a variety of expectations, notions of meditation, and experiences with it. In the first cohort, two students had received instruction in a method of concentration meditation that they hoped would give rise to extraordinary states of consciousness. I explained that the meditation presented in this class was oriented to noticing and accepting present sensory and cognitive phenomena, rather than visualization. In the second cohort, several of the students had spent a semester in Dharamsala, India, studying Tibetan Buddhism. These students seemed accustomed to sitting quietly and listening to the teacher. I wish I could have elicited more comments from them during class so that we could benefit from their experience. Since the setting, teaching, and overall environment for this class were different from what they experienced in India, for some of these students the mini-course compared unfavorably. I hope that they will continue to explore the impact of external conditions on their practice.

In the third cohort, a student asked why one is instructed to offer lovingkindness to an adversary, as we practiced *metta* in the traditional five-fold pattern of offering lovingkindness to ourselves, a dear one, a neutral person, an adversary, and all beings. The student wondered if it were better to pay no attention to those who had hurt her. I encouraged her to experiment with both approaches and discover which was more helpful for her. In general, students react with relief to *metta*, as they quickly experience the benefits to their minds, which are saturated with cultural values of overstimulation, drive, competition, and judgment. Cultivating goodwill is liberating.

The newness of this material and its teaching demands were invigorating. I found teaching this mini-course to be challenging because I had never taught meditation before. I have taught and counseled for twenty years about sexual health and am much more confident in that pedagogy. I am not trained as a Dhamma (Pali word, *Dharma* in Sanskrit) teacher, though I am experienced as a meditator and Dhamma student. Dhamma study was beyond the nonsectarian, beginning scope of this course. Since the course was offered by the Office of Health Promotion at the university's Student Health and Counseling Services, explicitly Buddhist teachings would not have been appropriate. Teaching the course confirmed that it is not necessary to be a master of all aspects of

praxis in order to offer what one can. There is an ethical responsibility to remain within the scope of one's role and experience. In most branches of Buddhism, a teacher is expected to have studied, practiced, and integrated material before being authorized to teach it by her teacher. Disembodied, "objective" teaching and inquiry is known to be ethically perilous in Buddhism. In teaching this course, I clarified my role as a spokesperson for the health benefits of meditation, on the one hand, and the scope of my own Buddhist praxis on the other. One need not be the most eminent scholar to teach the alphabet. Stay transparent about the parameters of your praxis, and teach what you can.

## *Appendix*

Course description used in marketing

Session outlines

Handout: Metta (Lovingkindness) Recitation

## Meditation for Health



### *Description*

Learn basic mindfulness techniques that are practiced by people of any faith or of none. Experience the health benefits of meditation: reduced stress, stronger immune function, improved sense of wellbeing. We will explore meditation postures, breathing techniques, and mental practices that researchers at Emory and elsewhere associate with a variety of health improvements. Participants will develop mindfulness skills that they can take into everyday life for continued benefit.

### *Learning Objectives*

At the conclusion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the scientific understanding of the health benefits of meditation;
2. Demonstrate a variety of meditation postures;
3. Practice three types of meditation: observing the breath, body awareness, and compassion;
4. Identify on-campus resources for learning more about meditation and health.

### *Activities*

The class will have the opportunity to:

- Discuss the ways that meditation reduces stress and improves immune function;
- Learn about different styles of meditation;
- Practice three kinds of meditation in class;
- Practice meditation daily between class meetings, using supportive materials in written and podcast formats;

- Observe the effects of meditation practice in one's daily life.

### ***Incentives***

Participants will receive:

- Expert instruction in a comfortable learning environment surrounded by engaged peers;
- Free t-shirt to participants who attend all three sessions;
- Certificate of completion for full attendance which participants may add to their e-portfolio.

### ***Empirical Foundation***

- Respondents to the 2009 National College Health Assessment\* report that the top issues affecting academic performance include stress, sleep difficulties, depression, anxiety, worry, and colds/flu, among other health problems. In numerous scientific studies,\* the health problems listed here have been shown to be lessened by meditation practice.
- The content and methods of the course is based in part on the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction\* course and on traditional methods of teaching meditation.
- The course will be evaluated by pre-post administration of a survey that includes the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale\*.

\*citations on file; contact Shirley Banks

### ***Contact***

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***Meditation Mini Course- Session Outline for Cohort 1***

**First meeting**

Stress & health presentation 15min

Meditation & immunity presentation 15 min

Compassion studies presentation 10 min

Types of meditation presentation 10 min

Religious

Visualization

Mindfulness

Why meditate on the breath?

How to meditate-posture & breath presentation 10 min

Guided practice 5 min

Group reflection on practice 20 min

Homework assignment 5 min

Practice with breath 5-10 min daily. Select a set time. Note questions, comments, reflections

**Second meeting**

Check-in 20 min

Metta presentation 20 min

Guided practice 10 min

Group reflection on practice 15 min

Body scan presentation and practice 20 min

Homework 5 min

Practice with breath, Metta, and body scan as desired, daily

**Third meeting**

Check-in 20 min

Guided practice 10 min

Aversion, tuning out, and craving presentation 20 min

Guided practice 10 min

General discussion 30 min

## ***Meditation for Health Session Outline for Cohort 2***

### **First meeting**

Stress & health presentation 15min

Meditation & immunity presentation 15 min

Compassion studies presentation 10 min

Types of meditation presentation 10 min

Religious

Visualization

Mindfulness

Why meditate on the breath?

How to meditate-posture & breath presentation 10 min

Guided practice 5 min

Group reflection on practice 20 min

Homework assignment 5 min

Practice with breath 5-10 min daily. Select a set time. Note questions, comments, reflections

### **Second meeting**

Check-in 10 min

Metta presentation 20 min

Metta practice 25 min

Group reflection on practice 10 min

Mindful eating presentation and practice 10 min

Group reflection on practice 10 min

Homework assignment 5 min

Practice with breath, Metta, and body awareness, daily

### **Third meeting**

Check-in 20 min

Guided mindfulness and Metta practice 25 min

Walking meditation presentation and demonstration 10 min

Walking meditation practice 15 min

Discussion & closure 20 min



***Meditation for Health Session Outline for Cohort 3***

**First meeting**

Introductory remarks 15 min

Types of meditation presentation 10 min

Religious

Visualization

Mindfulness

Why meditate on the breath?

How to meditate-posture & breath presentation 10 min

Metta presentation 20 min

Metta practice 10 min

Group reflection on practice 10 min

Homework assignment 5 min

Practice with breath 5-10 min daily. Select a set time. Note questions, comments, reflections

**Second meeting**

Check-in 10 min

Science of meditation presentation 20 min

Walking meditation presentation and demonstration 10 min

Walking meditation practice 15 min

Group reflection on practice 10 min

Mindful eating presentation and practice 10 min

Group reflection on practice 10 min

Homework assignment 5 min

Practice with breath, Metta, and body awareness, daily

**Third meeting**

Check-in 20 min

Body Scan meditation presentation 10 min

Body Scan practice 10 min

Group reflection on practice 5 min

Guided mindfulness and Metta practice 25 min

Discussion & closure 20 min

***Metta (Lovingkindness) Recitation***

*Short Version*

May I be safe,  
May I be healthy,  
May I be happy,  
May I be peaceful.

May my loved one be safe,  
May my loved one be healthy,  
May my loved one be happy,  
May my loved one be peaceful.

May strangers be safe,  
May strangers be healthy,  
May strangers be happy,  
May strangers be peaceful.

May my adversary be safe,  
May my adversary be healthy,  
May my adversary be happy,  
May my adversary be peaceful.

May all beings be safe,  
May all beings be healthy,  
May all beings be happy,  
May all beings be peaceful.

*Long Version*

May I be free from all sources of danger and harm.  
May I have happiness in body,  
Happiness in mind,  
And ease of wellbeing.

May my loved ones be free from all sources of danger and harm.  
May my loved ones have happiness in body,  
Happiness in mind,

And ease of wellbeing.

May strangers be free from all sources of danger and harm.

May strangers have happiness in body,

Happiness in mind,

And ease of wellbeing.

May my adversary be free from all sources of danger and harm.

May my adversary have happiness in body,

Happiness in mind,

And ease of wellbeing.

May all beings be free from all sources of danger and harm.

May all beings have happiness in body,

Happiness in mind,

And ease of wellbeing.

[http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hp/hp\\_meditation.php](http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hp/hp_meditation.php)

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### Endnotes

**1** (American College Health Association, 2009)

**2** Richard J. Davidson et al., "Alterations in Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65, no. 4 (July 1, 2003): 564-570; E. Monk-Turner, "The benefits of meditation: experimental findings," *The Social Science Journal* 40, no. 3 (2003): 465-470; K. Rubia, "The neurobiology of Meditation and its clinical effectiveness in psychiatric disorders," *Biological Psychology* 82, no. 1 (2009): 1-11; L. Shapiro Shauna et al., "Cultivating mindfulness: effects on well-being," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 64, no. 7 (2008): 840-862; R Walsh and SL Shapiro, "The meeting of meditative disciplines and Western psychology: a mutually enriching dialogue. [Review] [99 refs]," *American Psychologist* 61, no. 3 (April 2006): 227-39.

**3** T. Pace et al., "Effect of compassion meditation on neuroendocrine, innate immune, and behavioral responses to psychosocial stress," *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 34, no. 1 (1, 2009): 87-98.

**4** S. R. Bishop, "What do we really know about mindfulness-based stress reduction?," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 64, no. 1 (February 2002): 71-83; Paul Grossman et al., "Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 57, no. 1 (2004): 35-43.

**5** Bob Sharples, *Meditation and Relaxation in Plain English* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006).