

Pre-Conference Workshop

10th ECPP Reykjavík, 29th of June 2022

Title: Making Mindfulness Relevant and Accessible in the 21st Century

Facilitator:

Sarah Silverton, The Present Courses CIC

Learning outcomes:

To play with ways we can increase engagement and connection with our own and our participants' experiences of mindfulness in life

To explore the intentions of mindfulness practice in today's super-busy life

To broaden our understanding of mindfulness practice and mindful awareness

To explore the difference between learning to meditate and learning to live more mindfully

To experience different ways to invite curiosity and awareness of present moment experiences, building metacognitive, warm awareness to our experience

To find new ways to connect mindfulness to our everyday lives, recognising its relevance and potential to build our well-being in our unique but human lives

Background:

Sarah has been teaching mindfulness in the UK for more than 20 years and seen course populations change over this time. She has seen a significant change in the people who come to classes in the last five years and experienced how participants are challenged in new ways in their lives. We seem to be increasingly busy, filling our schedules so completely (device use taking up much of the space in our day) these days.

Asking people to make a commitment to nine classes lasting at least two hours plus an hour of home practice daily can feel, for many, impossible and offer yet another way to feel they have failed. Most mindfulness teachers these days recognise and share the experience of the downward gazes of participants when they're asked, "so, how did your practice go this week?" If the course to support people is actually adding to the problem they came with then maybe it's time for the approach to change? How do we offer an accessible introduction to mindfulness that meets people's busy lives and supports people who may be vulnerable to engage in mindfulness practices and learn to live more mindfully?

The pandemic has, of course, strongly impacted our lives and, for many, our well-being. The need to care for ourselves well over this time has become even more evident.

Sarah has been exploring and piloting (in the UK and Iceland) over the last six years a new style of eight-week course that participant feedback suggests may be an exciting, relevant, trauma sensitive and different way to introduce mindfulness.



This workshop offers the chance to explore her ideas and discover together new understandings and practices that may refresh and inspire both our personal practice and teaching practice.

Content

In this workshop we will reconsider and reshape how we can offer learning about becoming more mindful to meet busy people, without diluting the “dose” of mindfulness. We will look at how this different, new approach engages and builds autonomy in participants so that awareness becomes something they can succeed in, value and actively connect with in everyday life.

How best can people build their resilience and self-care, their curiosity and wonder in themselves and the world around them? How can we invite people to see their internal and external experience clearly and with care to allow choices to arise that will support themselves and the people and places they connect with?

We will explore what that might look like by re-examining some long-held practices and intentions. We will look at how we can tailor an approach to engage each person who attends classes.

Through a range of practice, enquiry and discussion we will experience and build this understanding.

Bio



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 and teachers at the Center for Mindfulness, Massachusetts, USA.

As a member of the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice teaching/training team from when the centre was founded in 2001 until 2017 she was involved in teaching and training in MBSR and MBCT through the Masters' and CPD programmes. She developed courses within the CMRP team such as the MBSR Specialist training and Inquiry 2-day workshop.

Sarah was a teacher on MBCT research trials (treatment as usual groups in 1999 and Staying Well after Depression 2008- 2012).

Her teaching and training interests are inquiry and mindful movement. She is a supervisor privately and with the Mindfulness Network.

She became involved in school-based mindfulness in 2010 working with teachers and children from Ysgol Pen y Bryn, Colwyn Bay. Sarah is co-author of Paws b (Key Stage 2) curriculum (Mindfulness in Schools Project). She subsequently developed 'The Present' with Dusana Dorjee and Tabitha Sawyer, a programme to support Foundation Phase/Key Stage 1, KS2 and KS3 teachers to share mindfulness practice with children aged 3-11. Training began in March 2018 and has taken place in both the UK and abroad (Iceland, Moldova and China) The Present is now also translated into Welsh and Simple and Traditional Chinese. www.thepresentcourses.org

Sarah has also developed an adult version of The Present called Living in The Present for busy people and workplace settings such as schools and the NHS who want to explore mindfulness but find it difficult to make time to practice formally.

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. She has contributed to a number of academic papers about mindfulness.

Sarah practises living more mindfully in her own life and works with others to support them through their own mindfulness practice and teaching mindfulness to others. She lives in Penmaenmawr, North Wales and loves walking, Pilates yoga and wild water swimming.