

The Mindfulness Program at the Middlesex School:

Evolution and Structure

February 2018

Preface

This document offers a detailed description of the evolution and current structure of the Mindfulness Program at the Middlesex School in Concord, Massachusetts. It is our hope that by sharing the details of how mindfulness came to Middlesex, we can be of support to others who are starting, or continuing to grow, a mindfulness program of their own.

Mindfulness is often defined as “paying attention to the present moment experience with curiosity and acceptance” and is a skill that allows students to gain a deeper understanding of their mind, including aspects such as attention, thoughts, emotions, and feelings. What began as an introductory talk on mindfulness before an all-school assembly at Middlesex in 2009, has grown through small steps into a fully formed mindfulness program that touches all aspects of community life on the Middlesex campus.

Of course, each community has its own philosophy and character, and what has worked at Middlesex may not be effective in your community culture. There are many ways to integrate mindfulness into a school or organizational community. Each community will need to go about this process in its own unique way—utilizing the interests and experience of its mindfulness educator, while at the same time being attentive to the community’s particular needs and values.

That said, we believe there are two key elements to the success of the Middlesex program. One is our guiding belief that, while it is important for all Middlesex students to be familiar with mindfulness, participation in any given meditation is *always* a choice. Our program introduces students to mindfulness through a required course for new students, and occasional presentations at faculty meetings to keep faculty informed, but as always it is an *invitation* to practice at Middlesex. We are never trying to mandate practice for anyone not interested in exploring mindfulness in a personal way. Students, faculty, and other community members take from the mindfulness program only what they find useful. In fact, they are always encouraged to have a “healthy skepticism” and to believe only what they find true in their experience.

The second key element to the development of our program was having a faculty member dedicated to the initiative and committed to practice. Our experience has shown that hiring or empowering a “Mindfulness Director”—an experienced practitioner who is a good fit for your community—will increase the probability of a successful program.

We wish you the best in developing your own mindfulness program and hope this document can be supportive.

Doug Worthen
Director of Mindfulness at Middlesex School
February 2018

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The Middlesex Mindfulness Program: An Overview

The intentions of the Middlesex Mindfulness Program are

1. To expose all members of the Middlesex community to mindfulness in a clear, accessible, and relevant way, and to support those who are interested in continuing mindfulness practice.
2. To support other interested schools and organizations in developing a mindfulness program by making information about our program and our research freely available.

The program includes

- A full-time director of mindfulness
- A required semester-long “Introduction to Mindfulness” course for all new students
- Advanced mindfulness courses for students
- Introductory and advanced mindfulness courses for faculty and staff
- Introductory and monthly drop-in mindfulness courses for parents
- Individual mindfulness meetings for students, faculty, and staff with the director
- A weekly all-school practice during Wednesday chapel
- A weekly drop-in practice led by different members of the community
- Mindfulness support for student athletes and the athletic department
- Mindfulness Club for interested students
- Mindfulness resources and support for interested alumni
- Annual summer mindfulness retreat for adult members of the school community
- Annual summer teen mindfulness retreat on campus (through Inward Bound Mindfulness Education)
- Support for other schools and organizations interested in starting a mindfulness program

Evolution of the Mindfulness Program at Middlesex

The Middlesex School community

Each community has its own unique makeup, and to understand the growth of the mindfulness program at Middlesex, it's important to view the program in the context of Middlesex itself.

Middlesex School is a coeducational, residential, independent secondary school located in Concord, Massachusetts. Founded in 1901, Middlesex School enrolls approximately 400 students in grades 9-12, 70% of whom are boarding students and reside on campus in dormitories. The remaining 30% commute to campus as day students. In most years, approximately 12% of the student body are international students, 30% are students of color, and 30% are financial aid recipients. The boarding population at Middlesex typically represents 25 states and 15 countries. Middlesex is academically rigorous, and it has a balanced curriculum that includes required arts and athletics.

Most Middlesex faculty members live on campus, either in dorms or on-campus houses. Faculty members teach, coach, advise, mentor, and support students around the clock when school is in session. Students are similarly busy, with a daily schedule that begins with class at 8:00 a.m. and includes a full day of academics as well as athletic practices, theater and chorus rehearsals, community service activities, club meetings, and homework.

Origins of the mindfulness program

The mindfulness program at Middlesex developed slowly and organically. It began in 2009, when the assistant head of school, Dan Scheibe, grew interested in bringing mindfulness to the attention of the community. Through the Middlesex alumni network, he found Doug Worthen '96 and Geoff Cohane '96 and invited them to speak about mindfulness at an all-school assembly. Doug and Geoff's own mindfulness practices had begun in college as student-athletes. At the time of Dan's invitation, Doug had been involved in facilitating mindfulness retreats for teenagers and was training to become a mindfulness teacher.

In response to interest on campus, Doug offered to facilitate a voluntary mindfulness group for students on Sunday afternoons during the spring 2010 semester.



Mindfulness was not well known or widely appreciated at the time—"The Mindful Revolution" had not yet graced the cover of *TIME* magazine, as it did four years later in February 2014—and most students at Middlesex had had no exposure to or experience with meditation. Twelve students became regular attendants of this first Middlesex mindfulness group.

These students were excited about mindfulness, and word began to spread on campus about the mindfulness group. During the fall of 2010, Doug held another voluntary mindfulness group, this time on Thursday mornings, with the intention of attracting more students on a weekday (students at Middlesex start classes later on Thursdays). Mornings turned out to be a prohibitive time for teenagers, however, and although fourteen students signed up for this second group, only a handful attended each week. The following semester, spring 2011, when the meeting time switched to Friday evenings, 40 students began to regularly attend the voluntary mindfulness group. Finding the right time for students proved to be one of the keys.

Honing the curriculum to find the most effective practices and finding the order in which to introduce them, were also important. During these first sessions, Doug drew from a variety of curricula, including *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn) and *Mindfulness for Schools* by Carol Cattley and Jini

Lavelle. Doug also received mentoring from Florence Meleo-Meyer, a senior teacher at the UMass Center for Mindfulness, who had recently written a mindfulness curriculum for teenagers, *Cool Minds*.

In 2011, Doug began drawing from the *Learning to Breathe* curriculum by Trish Broderick. That summer, looking for a curriculum that might work as a required course, he attended a .b mindfulness teacher training in the UK led by the founders of the Mindfulness in Schools Project, Chris Cullen and Richard Burnett. The .b training curriculum, which included a fitting lesson arc, a variety of exercises, and PowerPoint presentations that could be used effectively in a class, held promise as a starting point for an introductory course for teenagers.

The importance of the mindfulness educator to the program

As enthusiasm for mindfulness at Middlesex grew, momentum was building to grow a mindfulness program beyond the weekly mindfulness group. Doug was becoming more comfortable and skilled as a teacher, but he understood that to take the program further and be able to support faculty, staff, and parents into the future, the next step for him must be to deepen his own practice. The teaching resources and training courses had been valuable, but despite having been practicing for over a decade, including several months of retreat practice, he knew he needed even more practice to be able to answer questions and guide the Middlesex community more skillfully.

In the fall of 2011, Doug attended a three-month retreat for intensive practice at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts. This was a silent retreat, during which participants practiced meditation formally for approximately eight hours each day and met every few days with a teacher. While on retreat, two experienced practitioners led the volunteer student groups at Middlesex to keep the momentum going.

In the spring of 2012, with Doug back from retreat, Middlesex began to offer voluntary 10-week mindfulness courses that met once a week for 40 minutes during the school day. These courses were open to all students and were organized around the free blocks of interested students, with 4-8 students usually in a group. That semester, 65 students signed up to practice mindfulness during their free blocks, and 15 seniors took a for-credit senior elective course, “Mindfulness,” which Doug co-taught

“The mindfulness program taught me personal skills that I could apply to life in the classroom, and on the playing field, and also created a sense of community for me that has stuck with me years after leaving Middlesex. In many ways, the values I developed through the practice of mindfulness have become the foundation for my development as a student and a person.”

Student, Middlesex '14

“Since our mindfulness program began, we have become a more grateful and intentional community. I hear students and adults express gratitude openly and frequently in ways I never did before. We've also changed the language we use about the work we do. Now we often ask, ‘What is our intention?’ before going full-steam ahead.”

Erika Mills, Director of Financial Aid/Teacher

with English teacher and assistant head of school Dan Scheibe. This course met four days a week to write, practice, and discuss mindfulness-related books. (The course was well-received, but it did not repeat due to Dan leaving Middlesex to lead a different school, and other mindfulness courses taking priority. Plans for a new senior for-credit mindfulness course are underway for 2019.)

Doug was now teaching and supporting mindfulness most days on campus. Thanks to his steady presence and his familiarity with the school, he was able to find the places in the daily routine of Middlesex where mindfulness might fit—a key step in creating a program of mindfulness that works for a community. Students were beginning to speak about mindfulness during senior chapel talks, and the faculty were growing curious. Change does not happen quickly in school communities, but bit by bit, mindfulness was taking hold at Middlesex, and the school administration—particularly Head of School, Kathleen Carroll Giles—saw the value of making mindfulness a required part of the Middlesex curriculum. That spring, Doug became a part-time employee of Middlesex, with the title Director of Mindfulness.

Required mindfulness course for freshmen

In light of the success of the mindfulness groups, and with the growing support of students, faculty, and the trustees, Middlesex was ready to institute a required mindfulness course for new students during the 2012-13 academic year. Drawing from his experience teaching the voluntary groups, Doug devised a twelve-week course based on the .b curriculum that he tailored to meet the unique needs of Middlesex freshmen. Beginning in fall 2012, the course “Introduction to Mindfulness” became a required part of the curriculum for new students at Middlesex. The class meets once a week for 40 minutes and covers mindfulness ideas and mindfulness practice.

Instituting a required mindfulness course for all new students was a big step in the development of the mindfulness program at Middlesex. Not only has the course fostered a common language around mindfulness in the Middlesex community, but it has also helped to position mindfulness as an essential aspect of school culture. With this required course, the message to students, faculty, parents, and alumni is clear: Middlesex believes it is important for all students to be exposed to the history, benefits, and practice of mindfulness.

All schools look for ways to help students cope with anxiety, stress, and other emotions, and Head of School Kathleen Giles’ belief in mindfulness as key to supporting students at Middlesex has been (and continues to be) crucial to the establishment of the Introduction to Mindfulness course. The support of Karlyn McNall, Assistant Head of Faculty and Academic Affairs, whose work to fit



“While science proves the benefits of mindfulness practice for young people, in our school community, we see those benefits manifested in our students’ improved emotional balance, judgment, and relationships—to self, friends, work, performance, and the world. We all talk about investing in the health of our students and in life-long learning. There is no better skill to teach at a young age than mindfulness to improve our students’ experiences and enrich their lives.”

Kathleen Carroll Giles, Head of School

the required Introduction to Mindfulness course into the academic schedule, was also instrumental in making mindfulness a required part of the Middlesex experience.

While attendance in the introductory course is mandated for new students entering Middlesex, the practice of mindfulness in class and on campus is always optional. Over 420 students have completed the required introductory mindfulness course to date at Middlesex, and feedback from student has been consistently positive. When surveyed at the end of the course, 94-98% have reported it was a “positive experience” and “would recommend the course to a friend.” Students also report the course has helped them to sleep better, to cope with negative thinking and stress, to concentrate on schoolwork, to focus in sports, and to improve relationships with others.

As the mindfulness program has evolved, the required course has evolved with it. The director of mindfulness has continued to modify the curriculum to better fit the Middlesex community, and shifted the style of the mindfulness classes toward a more flexible, discussion-based experience that can better respond to the interests and chemistry of class participants. In addition, the course has expanded to include optional recommended readings, which allow students to explore concepts they may have not completely understood in class, or to pursue other topics of interest. The book *Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World* (Williams & Penman, 2011) has been a useful text. It follows a structure similar to the course and includes the science behind mindfulness as well as a number of guided meditations.

Mindfulness courses begin for faculty and staff

That same semester, fall 2012, Doug also began teaching a voluntary Introduction to Mindfulness course for faculty and staff. This course mirrored the required student course in content and structure, and was intentionally run during the same semester so that faculty could understand what students were learning. Twenty-five faculty and staff members participated in the introductory course held that fall, and many continued to practice the following semester.

Mindfulness had been introduced so gradually at Middlesex that by 2012 there was very little resistance to the program from faculty and staff. Faculty and staff members had grown interested in mindfulness after hearing students talk about it for several years, and yearly presentations at faculty meetings had kept the faculty up to date on the growing mindfulness program.

New mindfulness courses added to the program

After completing the required Introduction to Mindfulness course, many students and faculty were eager to continue improving upon their mindfulness practice. Beginning in spring 2013, Middlesex introduced several non-credit Level 2 mindfulness courses into the program, aimed at students and faculty/staff who want to deepen their practice. “Continuing Your Practice” and “Mindfulness in Athletics” can both be taken multiple times. The instructor determines the meeting times for these courses by surveying students, faculty, and staff, and then by grouping the interested participants by availability.



“The mindfulness program at Middlesex gave me so much. Four years out and in college, I still use the practices I learned at Middlesex to continue to work on myself. Mindfulness allows me to practice skills such as compassion, focus, and gratitude just as I would practice a sport or an instrument. As a result, I am a better student, a better friend, and a better leader.”

Student, Middlesex '14

In 2015, the program expanded to include a Level 3 mindfulness course—“Guiding Mindfulness Practice,” in which students and faculty/staff learn to facilitate the practice of mindfulness for others. The addition of this course was particularly exciting: not only does completion of the Level 3 course give students and faculty/staff the skills necessary to guide others in mindfulness practices in other communities, but it also represents a capstone experience for students who have pursued the practice of mindfulness for three or four years in the Middlesex program. These students graduate Middlesex able to bring mindfulness into their college communities and beyond. Faculty who have completed Level 3 are able to reinforce mindfulness in the community by guiding students in mindfulness practice in their classes and on their teams.

Expansion of the mindfulness program to include parents

During the 2013 fall semester, Middlesex began to offer an evening mindfulness class for local Middlesex parents, similar to the introductory courses offered to faculty/staff. The class meets six times for 90 minutes, and is designed to support interested parents in starting or continuing a mindfulness practice. On average, ten local parents have attended the class each year. The mindfulness director also leads a monthly mindfulness drop-in session for parents who have taken the class in previous years.

The decision to include parents in the mindfulness program has been important to growing the reach of the mindfulness program for a number of reasons. First, it

“The mindfulness program helps our students to better understand, accept, and interpret themselves and the world around them. In addition to the physical and mental skills practiced, they also gain a vocabulary that helps them self-analyze and self-reflect. These are invaluable virtues that benefit our students in their time here, and will continue to do so in the years to come.”

Dan Sheff, Dean of Students

has helped parents to better understand what their children are learning. Second, it expanded the language of mindfulness beyond the Middlesex campus and into students’ homes. Indeed, many parents have adopted their own mindfulness practice as a result of the course, and parents enjoy sharing this experience with their children.

Third, the experience of exploring mindfulness has sparked parent interest in growing the mindfulness program at Middlesex, and some parents who have taken the course contribute financial support to the program. While the mindfulness course is free to parents, there is an invitation to contribute to the program at the end of the course.

A fully formed mindfulness program

By the 2014-15 academic year, the Middlesex Mindfulness Program had fully taken form. Doug was hired in 2014 to become a full-time director of mindfulness, with responsibility not only for the mindfulness program, but also for all the other roles of a full-time Middlesex faculty member.

The program now included a required introductory mindfulness course for new students, advanced mindfulness courses for students who want to pursue further study, introductory and advanced mindfulness courses for faculty/staff, and an introductory mindfulness course for parents. Outside the classroom, a Mindfulness Club for students, mindfulness support for athletes, ongoing research on the required freshman course, and the opportunity for one-on-one guidance from the director of mindfulness, enhanced the program. Planning for the

first annual summer mindfulness retreat on campus for adults in the Middlesex community was also underway for summer 2015.

In addition, many students, faculty, and parents were committed to the daily practice of mindfulness, and a brief mindfulness practice had become part of Middlesex’s weekly all-school “chapel talk” assembly. The integration of mindfulness into this weekly assembly served as a communal experience of mindfulness and was a constant reminder about mindfulness to the Middlesex community. These elements of the program are ongoing in 2018.

Support for mindfulness in other schools and organizations

The mission of the program now is to continue to strengthen the mindfulness program at Middlesex and to support other schools and organizations interested in growing their own mindfulness programs.

In the summer of 2016, Middlesex partnered with the Independent School Health Organization to host the Northeast Independent Schools Mindfulness Conference on the Middlesex campus. The intention for this conference was to begin creating a strong support network among schools that were interested in beginning or advancing mindfulness programs. The conference has brought 80 educators to campus for the past two years.

The annual summer mindfulness retreat—a joint effort between Middlesex and the Inward Bound Mindfulness Education (iBme) organization—extended its reach beyond the Middlesex community in 2017 to invite independent school teachers from around New England to campus for an intensive practice of mindfulness. In 2018, given the interest from many others outside the Middlesex community, this retreat will be open to all adults.

Finally, in order to provide more resources to members of the Middlesex community, Middlesex partnered with 10% Happier in fall 2017 to make guided meditation accessible to community members through the 10% Happier app. In addition, the webpage for the Warburg Library at Middlesex includes an extensive list of resources on mindfulness for individuals, educators, and organizations that is freely available to the public, including links to notes from the 2016 and 2017 conferences.

Lessons Learned

We learned a few lessons along that way that may or may not be useful or true for you as you work to develop your own program. Here is some of what we have learned:

- Limit early morning classes for high school students. Teenagers often have a hard time getting up in the morning, and early morning mindfulness classes can be an invitation to go back to sleep.
- Interest goes in waves in a school community. Some weeks or years we have tons of interest in mindfulness from faculty, staff, and students, and other weeks or years we have less. Learn to be comfortable with those waves and just keep coming back to the deeper intention to practice and to share mindfulness with your community.
- It has been very helpful to solicit feedback via anonymous surveys at the end of every semester. We have often been surprised to learn what is and isn't landing for students, faculty, staff, and parents, and many times this feedback has proven to be useful to growing and improving our mindfulness program.
- Feel free to innovate to figure out what works best for your community. Some of our most effective mindfulness practices (for example, social group noting) we discovered by altering established mindfulness practices.
- The students, faculty, and staff who practice are the best advertisers. The most important thing a director can do is to set up times for people in the community to practice. Once that's done, the practitioners will help get the word out.



- No gurus allowed. Continuously talking about mindfulness, forcing mindfulness research on people, and pretending to be more mindful than others is both annoying and the perfect recipe for killing the momentum of a mindfulness program. It helps to remember that often the people who don't practice mindfulness are living balanced, happy lives, and simply don't need to practice.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn's teaching advice to me was, "Just keep messing up." Each moment in the development of a mindfulness program does not need to be perfect. Just keep coming back to the intention to support the mindfulness practice of those in the community who are interested.

Trajectory of the Middlesex Mindfulness Program: The Director's Initiatives

2009-2010: October 2009 school assembly on mindfulness. Began a Sunday afternoon voluntary mindfulness group for students during spring semester (12 students).

2010-2011: Held a Thursday morning voluntary mindfulness group during fall semester (14 students), and a Friday evening voluntary mindfulness group during spring semester (40 students).

2011-2012: Mindfulness sessions continued at Middlesex during fall semester while Doug Worthen was on a three-month retreat. Spring semester, began a voluntary mindfulness course (65 students) and co-taught an English/Mindfulness course (for-credit) for seniors (15 enrolled, 15 waitlist).

2012-2013: Began a Level 1: Introduction to Mindfulness required course for freshmen (90 students) and a Level 1: Introduction to Mindfulness course for faculty/staff (25 faculty/staff). Spring semester began a Level 2: Mindfulness for Faculty and Staff course and a Level 2a: Continuing Your Practice course for students.

2013-2014: Added a Level 2b: Mindfulness in Athletics course for students, and began to teach an Introduction to Mindfulness course for parents.

2014-2015: Initiated an all-school mindfulness practice during Wednesday chapels, and began to teach a required Introduction to Mindfulness course for new sophomores and juniors on Tuesday evenings. Started research on the impact of the required freshman course. Spring semester started a Level 3: Guiding Mindfulness Practice course for students. Began advising a student-run Mindfulness Club.

Summer 2015: Organized and hosted a four-day mindfulness retreat on campus for adults in the Middlesex community (faculty, staff, alumni, and parents).

2015-2016: Started a Level 3: Guiding Mindfulness Practice for Faculty and Staff course. Increased work with athletic teams.

Summer 2016: Established the Northeast Independent Schools Mindfulness Conference in partnership with ISHA.

2016-2017: Participated in Teacher Training with iBme. Began recording meditations with Level 3 students.

2017-2018: Started weekly drop-in mindfulness sessions during Friday Senate block; each session led by a different faculty, staff, or student each week.

“Mindfulness has been by far the most valuable class I’ve ever taken. The practice of mindfulness has made me more equipped to deal with life.”

Student, Middlesex '15

“Mindfulness has had a tremendous impact on my life. I’ve learned to focus on the task at hand, and in doing so I find more enjoyment in each task than I could have ever imagined.”

Student, Middlesex '16

“To me, mindfulness has been an intellectual gift and a spiritual gift.”

Student, Middlesex '18

What is Needed to Lead a Mindfulness Program?

As with any subject, the amount of practice and training needed to begin teaching mindfulness and leading a school-based mindfulness program (or an organization-based program) will differ based on the individual instructor, the instructor's fit to the community, and the community's stated needs. Of course, it is important for an instructor at any school to be transparent with others about his/her professional qualifications and experience, and a mindfulness instructor is no exception. The qualifications of a mindfulness instructor are best described by his/her history of personal practice and his/her experience in mindfulness teacher trainings.

Below is a list of the Middlesex instructor's practice history and training, which other schools and organizations might find helpful as a guide. Note that while most long mindfulness retreats are held at Buddhist centers, more and more secular mindfulness retreats and teacher trainings are emerging.

Daily Practice

- On and off formal daily practice (15-30 min) from 1999-2008
- Consistent formal daily practice (15-30 min) 2008-present

Teacher Trainings

- UMass Center for Mindfulness, eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Teacher Training Practicum (2009)
- Still Quiet Place, eight-week teacher training (2011)
- Mindfulness in Schools Project, four-day .b curriculum teacher training (2011)
- Mindful Education Institute, one-year teacher training (2012-2013)
- iBme Mindfulness Teacher Training—Mentor (2017-2018)

Retreats*

- Seven 1-day retreats
- Eleven 5-10 day retreats
- One 14-day retreat
- One 21-day retreat
- Three 1-month retreats
- One 3-month retreat

**The majority of these retreats were through Insight Meditation Society/Forest Refuge, Spirit Rock, Insight Meditation Center of Newburyport, Vipassana Centers of S.N. Goenka, Pointing Out the Great Way (Dan Brown), and Dharma Ocean.*

Staff for Teen Mindfulness Retreats

- Staffed fifteen week-long iBme Teen Mindfulness retreats.

This experience was very helpful to observe how iBme teachers were sharing mindfulness with teens—it sparked ideas and inspired confidence. Also, iBme emphasizes how to work with a diverse population and how to skillfully work with people who have a history of trauma. Few other trainings do this.

Key Mentors Along the Way

- Florence Meleo-Meyer
- Patricia Broderick
- Richard Burnett
- Chris Cullen
- Amy Saltzman
- Daniel Rechtshaffen
- Matthew Daniell
- Chris McKenna
- Will, Jon, and Myla Kabat-Zinn
- John Churchill
- Jessica Morey
- Adam Ortman

Mindfulness Courses for Students

(See course syllabi for all mindfulness courses at the end of this document.)

Introduction to Mindfulness: Level 1

This class is a twelve-week introduction to mindfulness that is required for all new students. Students are introduced to mindfulness concepts and practices, and they have the opportunity week-by-week to develop a mindfulness meditation practice. Students learn a variety of mindfulness practices, including attention stabilizing practices, body and thought awareness practices, and compassion practices. Students do not receive a grade for this class, but attendance is mandatory. The course is listed in the curriculum guide under the Social Science Division.

While attendance in class is mandatory, participation in the practice of meditation is not. The instructor invites students to participate in each class meditation, but students choose for themselves if they practice. Sitting in silence without practicing is definitely okay, as long as students do not interfere with anyone else's practice. The instructor directs students to let their own experience guide them, and the instructor encourages a healthy skepticism in class discussions.

The instructor opens each class by asking if any class member has anything to share about their home practice, including successes, difficulties, challenges, or insights. After this check-in period, the instructor introduces the focus topic of that day's class—body awareness, thoughts, emotions, befriending, or something else—and then invites students to participate in a 10-15-minute meditation practice related to the topic. When the meditation is completed, students are invited to share their experience.

The shared experience of this required course among new students to Middlesex has been essential to forming a common language in the Middlesex community around the topic of mindfulness and its related themes. Also, by requiring nothing of the students beyond attendance, the instructor enables the students to glean from the Introduction to Mindfulness course precisely what is useful to them, which is key to the success of the mindfulness program at Middlesex.

Mindfulness for Students: Level 2a—Continuing Your Practice, and Level 2b—Mindfulness in Athletics

Level 2 mindfulness courses for students are divided into two sections: Level 2a focuses on advancing personal practice, and Level 2b focuses on mindfulness in athletics. Interested students are encouraged to take the Level 2 mindfulness courses as many times as they like. Level 2 courses are voluntary and not for credit.

Level 2 courses are ideal for students who have recognized the benefits of mindfulness in their own lives and are committed to deepening their personal practice. The environment in a Level 2 course often feels intimate and safe. Students are committed to a deeper exploration of mindfulness, and their curiosity and commitment to practice makes way for deeper, more open discussions.

The Level 2a course provides structured guidance to help students deepen their own daily practice of mindfulness. The class is similar in structure to the Level 1 course, but it invites longer in-class meditations (about 20 minutes) and encourages deeper discussion of mindfulness topics and experiences. Students typically share openly with each other in this course, and often the students who take a Level 2 course will take it multiple times during their years at Middlesex.

The Level 2b course also invites longer meditations and encourages deeper discussion, but it is more focused on mindfulness in athletics. The intention is to guide students in understanding how they can bring a mindfulness practice onto the playing field and into everyday life. Practice in this course emphasizes movement, body awareness, and attention stabilization; class discussions center on the emotions and thoughts that arise while in athletics. A large percentage of students at Middlesex are athletes, making this course particularly relevant to the student body. In fact, a desire improve athletic performance is often what first inspires Middlesex students to explore mindfulness in more depth.

Guiding Mindfulness Practice: Level 3

The Level 3 course is an exciting addition to the Middlesex mindfulness curriculum. Students who have become committed practitioners of mindfulness during their time at Middlesex learn in Level 3 to guide mindfulness practice for others and to facilitate mindfulness groups. After completing the Level 3 course, students are more comfortable and skilled at sharing mindfulness with others, whether at school, at home, or in college. In many ways, this course has proven to be an essential step in building a mindfulness program that reinforces itself among the student body at Middlesex. It also supports the integration of mindfulness into the communities that students join after leaving Middlesex.

The Level 3 course is open to all students who have committed to a daily mindfulness practice for at least a year and have taken two Level 2 courses. Students who take this course have ample opportunities to both guide their own practices and to learn from the experience of listening to other students as they guide. This course is most successful when the number of students in the class is 2-3. This smaller class size offers more opportunity for students to practice guiding, and creates the kind of intimate environment ideal for giving and receiving honest feedback.

Each week, students rotate leading meditations in class. Students are invited to choose the type of meditation they would like to guide, and they are encouraged to provide a scenario (for example, an athletic event, or an event with family, friends, or peers) with the goal of guiding as if they were embedded in that scenario.



“Mindfulness has helped me understand that the way I was living life was not the only way to go about it. I’ve found it most useful in times of joy, where it can help me experience life fully, and in times of pain, both physical and mental, where it can help me see the transience of the sensations and find the strength to persevere. Additionally, in the time between extremes, mindfulness helps me remember to not take anything for granted, and that there is beauty in every moment of life. I am so grateful that Middlesex has introduced me to this practice.”

Student, Middlesex '17

“Practicing mindfulness at Middlesex has given me insight into the nature of my day-to-day emotions, feelings, and fears. This awareness has helped me to find contentment and confidence.”

Student, Middlesex '18

“Students gain skills in emotional regulation and resilience by learning mindfulness meditation techniques. Specifically, they learn to not always believe their thoughts, and to detach—ever so slightly—from the rocky emotional landscape they are living in. Furthermore, with regular practice, students gain empathy and compassion for others because of their ability to be with their own discomfort. Any school committed to character development should have a mindfulness curriculum as a cornerstone to all programming.”

Meg McLaughlin MS, FNP,
Director of Health Center

Mindfulness Courses for Faculty and Staff

Introducing faculty and staff to the concepts and practice of mindfulness has been essential to strengthening the Mindfulness Program at Middlesex. Faculty share the mindfulness experience with students, and many report that developing a personal practice has enhanced both their personal and professional lives. A number of adults at Middlesex have become dedicated practitioners since mindfulness was first introduced into the community, and teachers use mindful practices successfully with students in classrooms and on the athletic fields. This can include being more embodied, balanced, and present while teaching or coaching, or perhaps guiding a team in a brief meditation before practice or a game.

Level 1, 2, and 3 mindfulness classes for faculty/staff are structured similarly to the corresponding student courses, and also follow a semester trajectory. Approximately 75% of Middlesex's 90 faculty members and 35% of the 35 administrative staff members have completed the Level 1 Introduction to Mindfulness course. Roughly 50% of those faculty/staff who take the Level 1 go on to take a Level 2, (and about 50% of those who take the Level 2 sign-up consistently every semester). As of 2018, about 5% of Middlesex faculty/staff have become Level 3 practitioners.

Faculty/staff courses are similar in content to student courses, but the instructor sometimes offers the adult participants longer in-class practices, and also provides more extensive readings to supplement class discussion. This non-required reading material is available as a resource to participants, many of whom choose to delve further into mindfulness on their own, despite very full schedules.

The instructor also emphasizes check-in time during the adult classes to provide faculty members with a safe space to openly discuss things going on in their lives. In this way, the class also functions as a support network for faculty and staff, offering a forum to connect with colleagues and a place to discuss and release stress.

Introduction to Mindfulness for Faculty and Staff: Level 1

This twelve-week introduction to mindfulness course is similar in content to the course for students. Faculty members are encouraged to take this optional class during their free periods. The instructor encourages the class members to follow their curiosity throughout these sessions, and ample resources, including books, articles, and guided meditations are available to support faculty exploration and development of a mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness for Faculty and Staff: Level 2

The Level 2 sessions for faculty/staff focus on advancing practice. The course follows the arc of the Level 1 course, with longer meditation practice (about 20 minutes of formal practice in each 40-minute session) and more time to report on practice specifics. The intention of these sessions is to provide faculty/staff members with the structured guidance necessary for deepening their personal practice, as well as the support of group practice and discussions. Faculty/staff members are encouraged to take this course as many times as they like.

Guiding Mindfulness Practice for Faculty and Staff: Level 3

Identical in content and structure to the Level 3 course for students, this course for faculty/staff teaches committed practitioners of mindfulness how to guide practice for others and how to facilitate a mindfulness group. Faculty and staff members who take this course are more equipped to spread mindfulness practices to other parts of the Middlesex community without the assistance of the director of mindfulness. In many ways, this course has proven to be an essential step in building a mindfulness program that reinforces itself among the Middlesex community as a whole.

Mindfulness Course for Parents

Introduction to Mindfulness for Parents

The director of mindfulness offers an introductory mindfulness course for local parents that meets one evening a week for six weeks on campus in the fall. This parent course meets fewer times than the introductory courses for students and faculty, but for 90 minutes each session. Each parent class session covers two topics from the introductory course syllabus.

Like other mindfulness courses, each parent session begins with a check-in and includes meditation practice and discussion of the focus topics and participants' experience. The director of mindfulness provides optional reading material to parents, and access to other meditation resources.

This parent course has been important to the mindfulness program both for extending its reach beyond campus, and for attracting new and sustained funding to the program. Middlesex parents have been grateful for the opportunity to share in their children's experience of mindfulness at Middlesex, and many parents have become dedicated practitioners. There is no fee for the parent course; rather, at the end of the course, parents are invited to support the program.

Most Middlesex parents do not live locally and are unable to attend a parent course; however, at a day school, a parent course could become a very important part of a mindfulness program.

Monthly drop-in session for parents

Once parents complete this introductory course, they are invited to attend a monthly 90-minute drop-in session for parents. Each session is focused around a theme and includes 20-25 minutes of meditation practice.

“The course for parents gave me a range of tools to help me stay present, especially during stressful times. Because the parent course closely followed the student mindfulness course, my son and I now have a common language around mindfulness that allows me to better support him in building a solid and committed mindfulness practice.”

Parent, Middlesex '17

“I believe mindfulness practice is the most valuable tool there is to help our teens navigate this busy, demanding, fast-paced world of stress and high anxiety.”

Parent, Middlesex '18

Other Middlesex Mindfulness Activities and Events

Individual sessions

Members of the Middlesex community who cannot attend a course due to scheduling conflicts, or who simply prefer to meet with an instructor in a more private setting, can meet one-on-one with the director of mindfulness. These sessions are structured around the specific needs of the individual and include personal guidance from the director. Some students request a brief individual session to discuss a specific question, and some request a longer session to discuss athletics, their personal mindfulness practice, or their thoughts on committing to deeper practice, among other topics.

Mindfulness Club

Mindfulness Club is a student-run organization that meets weekly to meditate and talk about mindfulness during semesters when there is sufficient student interest. The director of mindfulness is the faculty advisor for this club, but the club itself is organized and run by students. Members of the club attend off-campus mindfulness events and travel off campus to hear speakers. The club offers students a structured environment for pursuing their interest in mindfulness, as well as a community for supporting each other in practice.

Weekly all-school community practice

A brief mindfulness practice is a central feature of the school's weekly all-school chapel assembly, when students and faculty meet in the school's non-denominational chapel for a 40-minute senior "chapel talk." Seniors at Middlesex have the opportunity to give a chapel talk, if they choose, in which they can share their thoughts and reflections with the community. Before each talk, the director of mindfulness (and recently some of the students and faculty who have completed the Level 3 courses) guides the community in a short 5-7-minute mindfulness practice. Following the practice, Middlesex's Director of Spiritual and Ethical Education says a few words, usually in response to current news or events around the world, and then the senior addresses the community.

As with all mindfulness practice at Middlesex, participants are invited, but not required, to engage in the

chapel assembly practice. This weekly practice serves as a reminder of mindfulness to the community and reinforces the routine of mindfulness practice. It builds community around the shared experience of mindfulness.

On-campus summer retreat for adults

Beginning in June 2015, Middlesex partnered with Inward Bound Mindfulness Education (iBme) to host its first on-campus, four-day mindfulness retreat for adults. This first retreat was aimed at the Middlesex community, and included faculty, staff, parents, alumni, trustees, and interested partners. Jessica Morey, Executive Director of Inward Bound Mindfulness Education, Will Kabat-Zinn '93, a leading mindfulness educator on the West Coast, and Doug Worthen, Director of Mindfulness at Middlesex, were the retreat mentors.

Two dozen adults attended the first retreat. Participants lived in dorms on campus and used the chapel as a meditation hall. Retreat participants were incredibly positive about their experience, calling the retreat "a gift," and using adjectives such as "transformative," "insightful," "powerful," and "amazing," to describe the experience.

Since 2015, the retreat has taken place annually, utilizing campus facilities. In 2017, Middlesex extended an invitation to attend to all independent school teachers in New England. Thirty-five people attended the 2017 summer retreat. Middlesex will be opening the retreat to all interested adults in 2018.



The future of the mindfulness program at Middlesex

We have made important first steps in developing a strong mindfulness program that reaches as many members of our community as possible, but our program is still in its beginning stages in many ways. Mindfulness is a lifelong practice and we are excited to see how the practice of those in the community continues to evolve.

In many ways, mindfulness at Middlesex has become part of the campus culture—in the classrooms, on the playing fields, in the theater, and in the music hall. As the program grows, we hope to strengthen our course offerings so that students can study mindfulness more rigorously. The not-for-credit Level 3 courses have been an important addition to the program, providing students with the skills to carry the mindfulness practices they learn at Middlesex into their next communities. The next step is to deepen the study of mindfulness for interested students by creating a for-credit advanced mindfulness course for seniors.

Finally, after using a multi-purpose space in the library for most mindfulness practices at Middlesex over the years, we soon will have a dedicated space for the mindfulness program in the soon-to-be-renovated arts facility at Middlesex. The design of this space will be similar to a yoga studio or a meditation hall. This new space will provide a centrally located haven for practice as well as a visual reminder of mindfulness for all our community members.

We also plan to continue to support other schools who are developing their own mindfulness programs. Each school has its own unique culture, and therefore each school will need to integrate mindfulness in its own way—according to its own values. That said, we will share as much as possible about our mindfulness program at Middlesex with the idea it might serve as a model from which other schools draw ideas. All schools can learn from each other as we explore how to bring mindfulness into our communities.

“Mindfulness has helped me be less reactive in my day-to-day interactions with others. I think I’m a better listener and more thoughtful in the way I respond to others. In that way, mindfulness has made me a better teacher, advisor, coach, colleague, parent, and friend.”

Erika Mills, Director of Financial Aid/Teacher

“Cultivating a consistent mindfulness practice has enhanced my self-awareness and helped me to regulate my emotions, while increasing my efficacy in all aspects of my interpersonal relations, including with students in the classroom, athletes on the soccer field, and adults in the Middlesex community. My default mode and my relationship to thoughts and emotions has shifted closer to what I aspire to be as a teacher, a coach, a friend, and a mentor.”

Ken Risley, Athletic Director/ Soccer Coach

“Mindfulness is in many ways the most important class of the week. It’s the one that makes all of the other classes better.”

Stephen Koelz, Teacher

Mindfulness Course Syllabi and Weekly Schedules

The following course syllabi detail the lesson topics and specific weekly focus of each Middlesex mindfulness class, including the discussion prompts and the types of meditations practiced during class. By sharing these details, we hope you will be able to use the basic framework of our courses as a template for designing courses that fit the interests of your instructor and the needs of your community. *(Note: Course outlines change slightly from year to year.)*

The mindfulness class routine

Each Level 1, 2, and 3 mindfulness class meets once a week for approximately 40 minutes. The trajectory of each session frequently unfolds as follows:

Class activity	Minutes	Instructor's Role	Intentions of activity
Check-in: Life and home practice	5-10	The mindfulness instructor invites class participants to share what is happening in their lives, as well as any experiences they've had with mindfulness practice during the past week.	This is a group-connecting exercise, and a way to find out what is happening for participants in their lives and practice. If this a Mindfulness 1 group, which typically has 12-15 students, we will often do a quick group check-in (i.e. thumbs up/thumbs down) so we have time to discuss the week's topic and practice.
Discussion of the focus topic	3-7	The mindfulness instructor introduces the focus of that day's class, (such as attention, body awareness, thought awareness, etc.), and invites the class to discuss it.	The intention is for members to understand the ideas surrounding mindfulness, and to make connections between those ideas and their daily lives. The mindfulness instructor (encouraged to be a participant as well) facilitates the discussion, answering questions and providing insights where fitting.
Formal practice	10-25	The mindfulness instructor invites the class to participate in a meditation related to the day's focus	The intention is to provide the class members with an opportunity to practice the meditation, and perhaps to experience some of what the class discussed earlier.
Sharing of the meditation experience	5	The mindfulness instructor invites the participants to share their experiences of the meditation	This community-building exercise encourages class members to reflect on their own meditation experiences and to identify with the experiences of others. Hearing the experiences of other participants often helps class members to begin to make sense of their own meditation experiences.
Closing	1	The mindfulness instructor recaps the day's class and foreshadows the topic for the next meeting.	The instructor's remarks encourage participants to practice the meditations between class meetings.

Level 1 Student: Introduction to Mindfulness

Level 1 Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Course Overview	Brief stabilizing attention practice (3 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One word you think of when you hear “mindfulness” • Mindfulness definitions • History and science of mindfulness • People and organizations currently practicing mindfulness • Why practice?
Week 2	Attention and Awareness	Getting to know attention and awareness practice (5 min) Stabilizing attention practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship between attention and awareness • Students share experience with practice after each meditation
Week 3	Body Awareness and Emotions	Body scan (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why bring attention to the body? • The science of emotions • Can we control our emotions? • Where do we experience emotions and how do we relate to them?
Week 4	Thought Awareness	Thought awareness practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The science of thoughts • Can we control our thoughts? • Are we our thoughts? • Where do we experience thoughts and how do we relate to them?
Week 5	Movement and Eating	Walking meditation (8min) Eating practice (7 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing mindfulness more into our days • Overview of mindfulness in movement • Overview of mindfulness in eating
Week 6	Relating to Difficult Emotions and Pain	Ice cube practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of learning to be with difficult emotions and pain
Week 7	Noting Practice (aka Name to Tame)	Silent and social noting practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of noting terminology • Science of noting practice
Week 8	Strong Determination	Strong determination practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of addiction • Practicing not acting on impulses • Reacting vs. responding

Level 1 Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 9	Empathy and Compassion	<p>“Just like me” empathy practice (10 min)</p> <p>Lovingkindness practice (10 min)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining empathy and compassion • The science of empathy and compassion
Week 10	Interconnectedness and Gratitude	Gratitude practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and science of interconnectedness and gratitude
Week 11	Relational Practices	Dyads relational mindfulness practice— listening (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How mindfulness supports us in relationships and conversations • Nonviolent communication overview
Week 12	Review	Choose your favorite practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sessions 1-11 • Mindfulness graduation letter (to be sealed and returned to student at graduation) • Feedback

Level 2a Student: Continuing Your Practice

Level 2a Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Writing Exercise	Stabilizing attention practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Why are you here? Why are you really here? (option to pass in what was written) • Overview of semester arc
Week 2	Stabilizing Attention	Counting practice (10 min) Social counting practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of counting practices
Week 3	Stabilizing Attention and Body Scan	Stabilizing attention practice (10 min) into sitting body scan (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion about stabilizing and body practices
Week 4	Body Scans and Emotions	Lying body scan (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of emotions
Week 5	Thoughts	Thought awareness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of thoughts
Week 6	Movement	Stretching and walking practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of movement practices
Week 7	Noting Practice	Silent noting into social noting practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review of noting and social noting
Week 8	Spontaneous Social Noting	Spontaneous social noting practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of spontaneous social noting practice
Week 9	Empathy and Compassion	“Just like me” empathy practice into lovingkindness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of empathy and compassion
Week 10	Interconnectedness and Gratitude	Interconnectedness and gratitude practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of interconnectedness and gratitude

Level 2a Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 11	Relational Practices	Relational mindfulness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check-in: Life and practice• Discussion of relational mindfulness
Week 12	Review	Choose your favorite practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check-in: Life and practice• Review of sessions 1-11• Feedback

Level 2b Student: Mindfulness in Athletics

Level 2b Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Writing Exercise	Stabilizing attention (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are you here? Why are you really here? (option to pass in what was written) • Overview of semester arc
Week 2	Attention	Stabilizing attention practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Importance of awareness and attention in athletes
Week 3	Body Awareness and Emotions	Varied postures body scan practice: lying down to sitting to standing (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Importance of body awareness and being an “embodied” athlete • Discussion of emotions
Week 4	Relating to Thoughts	Stabilizing attention and thought awareness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of thoughts: How our relationship to thoughts impacts performance
Week 5	Movement Practice & Mindfulness in Everyday Life	Mindfulness in movement: walking and stretching practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • We can be practicing all the time • The importance of weaving practice into everyday life
Week 6	Emotion- and Thought-based Actions vs. Value-based Actions	Stabilizing attention and sitting/lying body scan (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of emotion- and thought-based actions vs. value-based actions • Clarifying values exercise
Week 7	Continuing to Clarify: Emotion- and Thought-Based Actions vs. Value-Based Actions	Stabilizing attention and sitting/lying body scan (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Revisiting and refining values (how they relate to motivation) • Which actions are emotion- and thought-based? Which actions are value-based?
Week 8	Flow State and the Ego/Self	Stabilizing attention and standing/walking practice (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Writing: Describe our experiences with flow states • What is similar about our flow experiences? What do they tell us about the ego/self?
Week 9	Skillful Communicating with Coaches and Teammates	Stabilizing attention and sitting/lying body scan (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Overview of nonviolent communication and how it supports us in difficult conversations

Level 2b Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 10	Success and Failure/ Winning and Losing	Stabilizing attention and standing/walking practice (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • How do you define success and failure? How do you relate to winning and losing? • Negotiating failures/successes and winning/losing while living from values
Week 11	Interconnectedness in Athletics and Relating to Opponents	Stabilizing attention and sitting/lying body scan (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Writing exercise: How do you relate to opponents? What do you think is the most helpful way to handle those relationships and why? • Invitation to share parts of writing • How are we interconnected with opponents?
Week 12	Review and Closing	Stabilizing attention and choose your practice (15-20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review classes 1-11 • Feedback • Closing

Level 3 Student: Learning to Facilitate and Guide

Level 3 Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Writing Exercise	Stabilizing attention practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing exercise: Why are you here? Why do you want to facilitate mindfulness groups and guide practices? • Students invited to share experience writing • Overview of semester arc • Invitation to pass in what was written
Week 2	Facilitating Groups, Guiding Meditation, and Feedback Process	Stabilizing attention practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Keys to facilitating groups • Keys to guiding meditation • Keys to giving feedback • Discuss which student will facilitate/guide next week
Week 3	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 1 guides (5 min) Student 2 guides (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #1: Guide (5 min) • Student #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #2: Guide (5 min) • Student #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 4	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 3 guides (5 min) Student 1 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #3: Guide (5 min) • Student #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #1: Guide (10 min) • Student #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 5	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 2 guides (10 min) Student 3 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #2: Guide (10 min) • Student #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #3: Guide (10 min) • Student #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 6	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 1 guides (10 min) Student 2 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #1: Guide (10 min) • Student #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #2: Guide (10 min) • Student #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback

Level 3 Student	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 7	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 3 guides (10 min) Student 1 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #3: Guide (10 min) • Student #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #1: Guide (10 min) • Student #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 8	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 2 guides (10 min) Student 3 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #2: Guide (10 min) • Student #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Student #3: Guide (10 min) • Student #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 9	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 1 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #1: Guide (20 min) • Student #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 10	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 2 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #2: Guide (20 min) • Student #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 11	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Student 3 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Student #3: Guide (20 min) • Student #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 12	Review and Closing	Each student guides (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Course surveys/feedback • Closing

Level 1 Faculty: Introduction to Mindfulness

Level 1 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Course Overview	Brief stabilizing attention practice (3 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and instructor introduction • Participant introduction • Why did you sign up? • Definitions, history, and science of mindfulness (ppt) • Overview of course arc/share course materials
Week 2	Attention and Awareness	Getting to know attention and awareness practice (5 min) Stabilizing attention practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Home practice and reading • Relationship between attention and awareness • Participants share experience of practice
Week 3	Body Awareness and Emotions	Body scan (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why bring attention to the body? • Where do we experience emotions and how do we relate to them?
Week 4	Thought Awareness	Thought awareness practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain science of thoughts • Are we our thoughts? • Can we control our thoughts?
Week 5	Movement and Eating	Walking meditation (8 min) Eating practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing mindfulness more into our days • Overview of mindfulness in movement • Overview of eating practice
Week 6	Relating to Difficult Emotions and Pain	Ice cube practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of learning to be with difficult emotions and pain • Overview of difficult emotions and pain
Week 7	Noting Practice (aka Name to Tame)	Silent and social noting practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science of noting practice • Overview of noting terminology
Week 8	Strong Determination	Strong determination practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of addiction • Freedom from acting on impulses • Reacting vs. responding
Week 9	Empathy and Compassion	“Just like me” empathy practice (10 min) Lovingkindness practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of empathy and compassion • The science of empathy and compassion

Level 1 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 10	Interconnectedness and Gratitude	Gratitude practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and science of interconnectedness and gratitude
Week 11	Relational Practices	Dyads relational mindfulness practice—deep listening (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How mindfulness supports us in conversations, connecting, and relationships • Nonviolent communication overview
Week 12	Review	Choose your favorite practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sessions 1-11 • Feedback

Level 2 Faculty: Continuing Your Practice

Level 2 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Welcome and Overview	Stabilizing attention (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Why did you sign up? What do you hope to get out of this? • Overview of semester arc
Week 2	Stabilizing Attention	Stabilizing attention with optional counting practice (15 min) Social counting practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Participants share experience of practice • Discuss home practice commitment: Each participant will commit to home practice appropriate for them (i.e., 1 min stabilizing attention per day, 20 min body scan per day, etc.)
Week 3	Stabilizing Attention and Body Scan	Stabilizing attention practice into body scan (10 min each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Participants share experience of practice • Discuss home practice commitment
Week 4	Body Scans and Emotions	Lying body scan (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of emotions • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 5	Thoughts	Thought awareness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of thoughts • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 6	Movement	Stretching and walking practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of movement practice • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 7	Noting Practice	Silent noting into social noting practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review of noting and social noting • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 8	Spontaneous Social Noting	Spontaneous social noting practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of spontaneous social noting practice • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 9	Empathy and Compassion	“Just like me” empathy practice into lovingkindness practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of empathy and compassion • Share experience and discuss home practice

Level 2 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 10	Interconnectedness and Gratitude	Interconnectedness and gratitude practice (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of interconnectedness and gratitude • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 11	Relational Practices	Relational mindfulness practices (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Discussion of relational mindfulness • Share experience and discuss home practice
Week 12	Review	Choose your adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Participants share experience • Review of sessions 1-11 • Feedback & closing

Level 3 Faculty: Learning to Facilitate and Guide

Level 3 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Writing Exercise	Stabilizing attention practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing exercise: Why are you here? Why do you want to facilitate mindfulness groups and guide practices? • Participants invited to share experience of writing • Overview of semester arc • Invitation to pass in what was written
Week 2	Facilitating Groups, Guiding Meditation, and Feedback Process	Stabilizing attention practice (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Keys to facilitating groups • Keys to guiding meditation • Keys to giving feedback • Decide which participant will facilitate/guide next week
Week 3	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 1 guides (5 min) Participant 2 guides (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #1: Guide (5 min) • Participant #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #2: Guide (5 min) • Participant #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 4	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 3 guides (5 min) Participant 1 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #3: Guide (5 min) • Participant #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #1: Guide (10 min) • Participant #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 5	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 2 guides (10 min) Participant 3 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #2: Guide (10 min) • Participant #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #3: Guide (10 min) • Participant #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 6	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 1 guides (10 min) Participant 2 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #1: Guide (10 min) • Participant #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #2: Guide (10 min) • Participant #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback

Level 3 Faculty	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 7	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 3 guides (10 min) Participant 1 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #3: Guide (10 min) • Participant #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #1: Guide (10 min) • Participant #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 8	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 2 guides (10 min) Participant 3 guides (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #2: Guide (10 min) • Participant #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback • Participant #3: Guide (10 min) • Participant #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 9	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 1 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #1: Guide (20 min) • Participant #1: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 10	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 2 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #2: Guide (20 min) • Participant #2: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 11	Practice Facilitation and Guiding	Participant 3 guides (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Review keys to facilitating and guiding • Participant #3: Guide (20 min) • Participant #3: Shares experience and others offer feedback
Week 12	Review and Closing	Each participant guides (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Course surveys/feedback • Closing

Parent Class: Introduction to Mindfulness

Parent Class	Focus	Meditations	Discussion topics
Week 1	Course Overview and Stabilizing Attention	Playing with attention and awareness (7 min) Stabilizing attention with counting (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introductions • Why did you sign up? • Definitions, history, and science of mindfulness • Course overview and group guidelines • Lesson 1: Understanding attention and awareness
Week 2	Body Awareness, Emotions, and Thoughts	Lying down body scan practice (20 min) Thought awareness (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of attending to the body • Cultivating the “mindful” relationship to emotions and body sensations • Science of thoughts and emotions • Are we our emotions and thoughts? Can we control our emotions and thoughts?
Week 3	Mindfulness in Everyday Life	Standing and walking meditation (15 min) Eating practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaving mindfulness into our day • Overview of mindfulness in movement • Overview of eating practice
Week 4	Relating to Difficult Emotions and Pain; Silent and Social Noting Practice	Ice cube practice (10 min) Silent and social noting practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Overview of difficult emotions and pain • Science of noting practice • Overview of terminology
Week 5	Strong Determination Practice and Lovingkindness	Strong determination (aka “freedom from impulses”) practice (15 min) Lovingkindness practice (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • Overview of addiction and impulses • Reacting vs. responding • Overview of empathy, compassion, and lovingkindness
Week 6	Relational Mindfulness, Gratitude, and Review	Dyads relational mindfulness practice and deep listening (15 min) Gratitude practice (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in: Life and practice • How mindfulness supports us in conversations and connecting • Nonviolent communication overview • Science of gratitude • Review • Surveys/feedback