

Mindfulness Training

One mindfulness intervention gaining popularity in the education sector is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by psychologist Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1979 (Santorelli et al., 2017). MBSR is an eight-week course, led by a certified MBSR trainer, that focuses on key aspects of mindfulness, such as attention regulation and meditation (Santorelli et al., 2017). The weekly training sessions consist of group discussion and practice of a variety of mindfulness activities such as mindful yoga, body and breathing awareness and mindful eating and walking (Frank et al., 2013). According to Santorelli and colleagues (2017), the MBSR course teaches participants to “practice, integrate, and apply mindfulness in their daily lives” in order to “relieve suffering and increase wellbeing for people facing a host of challenges.” (p. 4).

Another mindfulness intervention that was designed specifically for teachers is the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education program, or CARE (Jennings et al., 2019). CARE is traditionally a 30 hour program, with five six-hour sessions delivered over the course of the school year, however they have also added shorter workshops and retreats (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). Each session involves training in mindful listening, emotional regulation skills, and loving kindness meditation (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). CARE has also recently added a program specifically for school administrators. CARE and MBSR are not the only mindfulness training resources available for teachers and school leaders, but they have both been rigorously researched and shown to be effective at reducing emotional exhaustion, burnout, and stress among educators.

Mindfulness Training Resources

[MindfulSchools training for educators](#): Four week online course, 2-3 hours per week.

[MBSR- training and facilitator certification](#): Eight week online course (with live sessions), 2-3 hours per week.

[MBSR-certified teacher directory](#): Includes a list of certified teachers/facilitators in U.S. states, as well as Canada, U.K. and Australia.

[CARE programs](#): Traditionally offered in five or six sessions throughout the school year, but some shorter options and workshops are available.

Materials:	Training program and resources OR hire an MBSR- trained teacher (cost varies).
Duration:	Varies. Most programs are about 30-40 hours over the course of 6-8 weeks. Some programs are offered during the summer to better accommodate teaching schedules.
Implementation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine what mindfulness training program is the best fit for your school, as well as if the training will be mandatory or optional for staff. 2. Determine when the training will be held and seek additional funding as needed through the district, state or other grant programs. 3. Decide whether to attend a structured training program or to hire an MBSR-certified teacher. You may also wish to certify your school counselors in MBSR to lead school trainings. Resources to assist you in this process are found above. 4. Invite school staff to the training and follow up on staff wellbeing and mindfulness following the training.

Does it work?

Some studies of the use of MBSR for teacher well-being report reductions in teacher depression, anxiety, and stress. In one of the first studies testing the use of MBSR with school teachers, Gold et al. (2010) observed ten teachers in suburban elementary schools in the UK who participated in the eight-week course led by a trained MBSR teacher. The average scores on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) of the participants significantly decreased following the intervention. In a more recent study, Todd et al. (2019) compared MBSR with another mindfulness-based program for its effects on teacher well-being. Though both programs improved participant stress levels, only the participants of the MBSR program showed improvement in levels of depression and anxiety (Todd et al., 2019).

Jennings et al. (2019) assessed the long-term effects of the CARE program over a two-year period, in a randomized controlled trial of 224 elementary school teachers in New York City. They found that teachers reported lower levels of negative emotions and improved emotional regulation long after the completion of the intervention. Schussler et al. (2015) noted that the CARE program helped teachers to become more aware of their physical and emotional health and the importance of self-care. Teachers reported that the skills learned in the CARE program helped them remain calm in interactions with students and parents (Sharp & Jennings, 2016). One participating teacher shared, “the thing that has changed me the most has been just learning about the whole emotional process and how everything works because now when my kids get upset I don’t get upset” (Sharp & Jennings, 2016, p. 214). Schussler et al. (2015) report that higher levels of emotional regulation when dealing with students also improved teacher burnout.

References:

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ADDRESSING
WELLBEING
IN SCHOOLS

*An Educator's Practical Guide to Improving
Wellbeing*

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DAVID BOREN



Fawson, S., Bates, M., & Boren, D. M. (n.d.). *Addressing Wellbeing In Schools*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing