

A History of Mindfulness-Based Programs at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics/University of Iowa

1996 to 2016 with addendum 2017-2021

Mindfulness, the practice of paying attention intentionally to what is occurring in the present moment, acknowledging what is here with curiosity and open-heartedness, is based on a 2,500 year old meditation practice. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction is an 8-week program, taught in a secular manner, relevant to universal human experiences and offered multiple times throughout the year at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. The MBSR Program began at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in 1996 in the Department of Family Medicine Counseling and Health Promotion Services and moved to the Department of Psychiatry in 2003. It is modeled after the internationally known University of Massachusetts' Center for Mindfulness' MBSR program, created by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD in 1979. He is an MIT-trained molecular biologist who had practiced meditation and yoga for many years and studied with well-known meditation teachers. The idea for MBSR came to him while on an extended silent meditation retreat.

Kabat-Zinn wrote a book, *Full Catastrophe Living*, about the MBSR program and its impact on participants. In 1993, journalist Bill Moyers featured the MBSR program on his public television series entitled "[Healing and the Mind](#)". Kabat-Zinn's office was inundated with phone calls by people who were deeply moved by what they had seen, many of them health care professionals wanting to know how to access training so they could offer the program to their patients. People suffering from various kinds of pain and illness, also deeply moved, wanted to find programs in their areas. The Center for Mindfulness began offering training programs and by the mid-late 1990s, MBSR programs could be found in an increasing number of hospitals and private clinics.

Bev Klug, MA, LMFT, had practiced yoga and meditation personally for many years and was also professionally interested in integrated healthcare practices. After seeing MBSR featured on the Moyers series, she embarked on extensive training in 1995 with Kabat-Zinn and his colleagues at the Center for Mindfulness to eventually become a certified MBSR teacher. She started the MBSR program at UIHC in April, 1996. Over 2,500 people have participated in our MBSR program since its inception.

As enrollment in programs increased, the need for additional teachers with a long-standing personal mindfulness practice and mindfulness teaching skills also grew. Chris Klug, MA, began teaching MBSR the morning of 9/11/01 and also teaches graduate groups frequently. He has received training sponsored by the CFM and other mindfulness teachers. Christine Allen, LISW, volunteered with our program, received mentoring, did training sponsored by the CFM and others, began teaching MBSR in 2006, then our academic freshmen course from 2009-2013. Trudy Goldman, MD, after volunteering and training in our program and the CFM, taught teens, medical students, parents and MBSR from 2007-2014. In 2008, Kerri Eness-Potter, MA, began volunteering and training in our program, soon moving into training with the CFM. She was hired as Program Coordinator in 2011. She teaches our academic course in the College of Education, MBSR, graduate groups and has also taught groups for teens and educators. See below for more details about these programs.

Research has increased dramatically on the positive effects of MBSR with stress, chronic pain, chronic illness, psychological and emotional challenges such as anxiety and depression and/or wellness and preventative healthcare. Recent studies in neuroscience are indicating physical and functional changes in the brain with the practice of mindfulness, and it appears this will be a deepening area of research in the future.

In 2002, the UI Human Resources Department's UI Wellness Program conducted a pilot program evaluation to track outcomes for UI employees who participated in the MBSR program. In 2003 it became an established offering of UI Wellness for employees who qualify, as it contributes to significant benefits in the health of employees maintained over time as well as savings in healthcare

costs. The MBSR Program serves many UI employees and also draws participants from the surrounding community, throughout the state and, occasionally, from adjacent states.

The core foundations and teachings of MBSR are the basis for many other Mindfulness-Based Interventions for a range of ages, settings and reasons for suffering. MBIs are now in pre-schools through graduate programs, businesses, prisons, the military, and more. Some of ours are listed below:

In 2003, Bev Klug moved from Family Medicine to the Department of Psychiatry and in 2004, in addition to offering MBSR, began to also offer the 8-week **Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy** program for people with recurrent major depression. This program was developed by a group of cognitive-behavioral therapists and researchers (Segal, Z., Williams, M., Teasdale, J.) who worked with Jon Kabat-Zinn to develop it, with the hope of reducing the rate of depression relapse, and showed good success in randomized controlled studies. We continue to offer MBCT. More than 300 participants have completed the MBCT program at UIHC.

In 2006, Jon Kabat-Zinn visited Iowa City for two days, in part, to kick-off a collaborative effort between the Department of Psychiatry and the Carver College of Medicine to pilot a modified MBSR program for **Medical and Physician Assistant** students, eventually including **Dental** students. This collaboration continued until 2014 with Bev, Chris and Trudy as teachers. Healthcare students are now welcome to attend regular MBSR programs.

Currently, a **Mindfulness for Residents** program is being piloted in the Department of Psychiatry for the first three years of residency training.

A **Mindful Teens** program was developed by Kerri and offered periodically from 2007-2015.

In 2008, an advisory group consisting of selected graduates of the MBSR program was formed to explore the development of an **academic course for academic credit** on Mindfulness for **UI students**. The initial offering approved was an 8-week course for freshmen through University College's "College Success Initiative," with the belief that if students learned the practice of mindfulness, it could be helpful to them personally and academically as they transitioned to the university and throughout their lifetime. Christine Allen taught this course from 2009-2013 to a total of 225 students. It later moved to the College of Education where it was joined, in 2011, by a new full semester course, "Mindfulness Foundations: Just this Moment or the Rest of Your Life," open to all undergraduates. Students learn the practice of mindfulness experientially, read research and writings on mindfulness, and consider its relevance in their possible career choice, as well as in their personal lives. Kerri Eness-Potter has taught this course since 2011 and 270 students have completed it as of Spring Semester 2016. As of May 2016, 500 undergraduates are going out into the world with some mindfulness skills to support them.

Graduate Groups are follow-up groups offered (not for academic credit) for those who complete any of the above programs. They are intended to support people in continuing, deepening and/or beginning again with their mindfulness practice as well as to be in community with others who practice. Approximately 1,800 people have enrolled in graduate groups.

In the 20 years at UIHC, over 5,000 people have participated in our programs. People typically have come because they are suffering in some way and want to do something to help themselves in the face of it, or to try to prevent it. This is a courageous and challenging step since, in order to benefit, they are committing to daily practices through which they cultivate the ability to be with and relate more skillfully to the unpleasant and painful in their lives, while not missing pleasant experiences. Paradoxically, this is profoundly freeing, sometimes life-changing. Feedback and outcome measures indicate that, when people engage fully in the program and practices, they benefit tremendously.

The initial and continued existence of Mindfulness-Based Programs at UIHC has depended and continues to depend on many people. We would like to express gratitude to some of them, with apologies in advance to anyone we may have forgotten:

- David Rosenthal, PhD, and Dr. Evan Kligman, who hired Bev Klug in 1996 to offer MBSR in the Department of Family Medicine's Counseling & Health Promotion Services at a time when few people knew what it was. Thanks, too, to colleagues and support staff at that time in CHPS who encouraged people to come to MBSR and helped work out the logistics of doing so.
- Joni Troester, who worked in CHPS developing wellness programs and later moved to Human Resources, working with Laura Reed and Sue Buckley to develop UI Wellness' liveWELL program which has included MBSR since 2002, based on the pilot evaluations collected early on. Our collaboration with Megan Hammes and all of the health coaches, the staff at liveWELL and the EAP staff continues to be a wonderful team effort in supporting UI employee health and well-being.
- Dr. Bob Robinson, (former) Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, who welcomed Bev to join the department with the enthusiastic encouragement of colleagues Scott Temple, PhD, Linda Madson, MD, Lance Clemens, MA, Bruce Pfohl, MD, Jodi Tate, MD, and many others in the department who found the idea of having a mindfulness program exciting and continue to! Many thanks to department administrator, Steve Blanchard, for his kind support.
- Members of our Advisory Group of 2008-2010 who successfully paved the way for academic mindfulness courses at UI: Don Yarbrough, Steve McGuire, Mary Greer, Sarah Hansen, Gina Crosheck, Nancy Hauserman, Bonnie Murphy, and the late Lauren Reece Flaum were incredibly supportive and skilled at navigating the administrative processes. Thanks to Tom Rocklin for being open to the initial course proposal and making it happen in University College. A special thanks to Don for helping to bring both courses to the College of Education, ultimately, and for hours of patient guidance on the details. Many thanks to a talented and resourceful group of supporters.
- Bonnie Murphy for hours of volunteer help, including participating in numerous health fairs to educate people about our programs.
- Helen Damon-Moore who worked in the College of Medicine and was instrumental in helping to bring Jon Kabat-Zinn to Iowa City and in starting the Mindfulness program for medical and PA students. Marcy Rosenbaum, PhD, for her support and assistance in this endeavor and many others over the years.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn, Saki Santorelli, Ferris Urbanowski, Florence Myers, and Melissa Blacker at the Center for Mindfulness for their teaching, guidance, and integrity in keeping the heart in mindfulness teaching, training, and practice.
- The participants in our programs who trust us to guide and support them in learning to live mindfully, trusting themselves and their wisdom. We learn from you and all that you bring into the room each week. May it be for the benefit of all.

Addendum 2017-2021

These years included continued offerings of MBSR, MBCT, Follow-up groups, UI Student Mindfulness course for academic credit (ended in May, 2020) Mindfulness for Residents including an 8 -hour introduction of Mindfulness to Surgery Residents at UIHC (thanks to Dr. Jennifer Hrabe and Dr. Julia Shelton). The COVID-19 Pandemic of February 2020 -? (at the time of this writing) dictated that we cancelled Spring MBSR offerings and pivoted quickly to on-line offerings via Zoom for a Follow-up group and to the date of this entry (2.9.21) have been offering all our programs via Zoom. We have also collaborated closely with UI Wellness/liveWELL in offering 1-hour presentations/practice session to various departments throughout UI on integrating mindfulness attitudes and practices during this challenging time. Our website provided various links to Mindfulness resources, including guided recorded practices by our teachers and others.

Bev Klug, Director of the Mindfulness Programs at UIHC since its inception in 1996 is retiring on April 2, 2021, sparking changes in the programs still to be determined.

See enrollment data next page:

Number of Participants Served

Below is a summary of programs offered and number of people enrolled in Mindfulness Programs from September 1995-April,2021*:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)	3,104
Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)	465
Follow-up/"Graduate" Groups for Completers of MBSR & MBCT (many attended more than one F-U group)	2,105
University of Iowa Mindfulness for Undergraduates	586
Medical & PA Students, Medical Residents	127
Mindfulness for Teens	<u>46</u>
Total	6,433**

- *1st programs were actually offered in September 1995 when Bev Klug was hired on a contract basis.
- **Careful records were not kept initially (there was a lot going on!) so any inaccuracy in these numbers would err on the side of low rather than inflated