

Unit for Psychooncology and Health Psychology - Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital

# Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Adjusted treatment manual based on "Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression" by Segal, Teasdale and Williams

Ingeborg Farver-Vestergaard

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## Note

This adapted manual should not be considered a “stand-alone”, and can only be read a supplement to the original treatment manual developed by Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2013).

## References

Bartley, T. (2012). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for cancer*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your mind to face stress, pain and illness*. New York: Dell.

Remen, R. N. (1996). *Kitchen table wisdom: Stories that heal*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Segal, Z., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. (2013). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression*. New York: Guildford Press.

Sessions agendas

## Session 1 – "Awareness and automatic pilot"

### THEME

On automatic pilot, it is easy to drift into "doing" mode and negative thought patterns concerning the negative in life (e.g. the COPD diagnosis, breathlessness, guilt etc.) that can tip us into vicious cycles of anxiety, breathlessness, inactivity, bad mood etc. Habitual doing mode also robs us of our potential for living life more fully. We can transform our experience by *intentionally* paying attention to it in particular ways ("being" mode). We begin to practice stepping out of automatic pilot by paying attention intentionally (mindfully) to eating, to the sensations of the body and to aspects of everyday practice.

### AGENDA

1. **Welcome: INTRODUCE THE ELEMENTS OF THE COURSE: EXERCISES, INQUIRY, TEACHING, HOMEWORK (draw parallels to physical exercise, fx it's difficult to explain how to do it, you have to learn it by doing it)**

Underscore the intention/compassion: e.g. we often take care of our close ones, also on days where we don't really feel like doing what it takes – we need to practice doing so in relation to ourselves as well. I will do as much as I can as teacher, but you have to do the most yourselves. Therefore it is very important that you come to the training, and that you do your homework. In the beginning "you don't have to like it, you just have to do it" (Jon Kabat-Zinn).

**The teacher(s) introduces him-/herself**

2. **Ground rules:**
  - Turn off your cell phone
  - No breaks, so feel free to go to the toilet etc. whenever
  - Confidentiality
3. **Discuss in pairs:** a) What do you think "mindfulness" is? b) What do you hope to gain from this course? → **in class:** people share their thoughts and the teacher link to the theme of the session if relevant.
4. **"The raisin exercise"** + inquiry
5. **"The body scan"** + inquiry (Remember to say before the guiding that it is okay to cough during the exercise. People can choose whether want to sit up or lay down on a mat)
6. **Distribute CDs and programs** and explain how to use the CD and program for home practice
7. **Home practice assignment-** "The body scan" every day + mindfulness of a routine activity
8. **Discuss in pairs:** a) timing of home practice, b) what obstacles may arise, c) how to deal with them (can be left out if there is not enough time)

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Raisins to distribute during the raisin exercise
- CDs and programs
- Meditation bells
- Attendance list
- Write the title of the session on the blackboard, but not until the theme comes up in inquiry or class discussion.

## Deviations from the original MBCT program

- The participants do not introduce themselves: The participants know each other already, because the MBCT program is an add-on to their rehabilitation program.
- Be very specific: The participants need the information and guidings to be very specific. So keep that in mind when teaching and guiding. For example, use only the word "awake" as the opposition of "falling asleep", not the more abstract use of the word as synonymous to "alert" or "attentive".

## Session 2 – “Living in our heads”

### THEME

In doing mode we “know about” our experience only indirectly, conceptually, through thought. This means we can easily get lost in negative thought patterns (rumination) and worry. Mindfulness of the body provides an opportunity to explore a new way of knowing directly, intuitively – “experientially”. Experiential knowing is a way to be aware of unpleasant experiences without getting lost in negative thought patterns. Already, most participants will be experiencing some difficulties in their practice. These difficulties offer precious opportunities to practice letting go of thinking and to connect with direct awareness of the body. Three themes should be introduced 1) from doing- to being-mode (Body scan home practice and Awareness of heartbeat and blood flow exercise), 2) become aware of barriers (via inquiry/feedback), 3) become aware of negative thought patterns (via inquire/feedback and “Walking down the street”-exercise)

### AGENDA

1. **Sitting meditation part 1 “Awareness of the heartbeat and the blood flow”** + inquiry (Remember to say before the guiding that it is okay to cough during the exercise)
2. **Home practice review** (body scan, mindful routine activity)
3. **“Thoughts and feelings exercise” (“Walking down the street”)** – see page 7 + cognitive diamond (p. 8)
4. **Introduce the “Pleasant experiences calendar” (See Handouts section)**: let one or two of the participants give a few examples and go through them on the blackboard, to make sure everybody has understood how to do it at home during the following week.
5. **Home practice assignment** (underscore the importance of home practice)
  - Sitting meditation part 1 “Awareness of the heartbeat and the blood flow”: every day
  - Complete the “Pleasant experiences calendar” (See handouts section)
  - Mindfulness of a routine activity

### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Bring copies of the Pleasant Experiences Calendar

### THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS EXERCISE ("WALKING DOWN THE STREET")

1. This exercise is a little different from the mindfulness exercises you already know from the CD. But I will invite you to take a comfortable, upright position. Close your eyes and imagine the following scenario:

"You are walking down the street,... and on the other side of the street you see some-  
Body you know... You smile and wave... The person doesn't react and walks by"

2. Bring awareness to your experience right now:  
What are you **thinking** of?  
  
What **feelings** arise?  
  
Are there any **body sensations**?  
  
What do you feel like **doing**?
3. Now open your eyes.
4. And I will ask you to describe your reactions in this exercise: What thoughts came up (or maybe pictures in your head)? What feelings? What happened in your body? Were there anything you felt like doing?
5. Write the reactions of the participants on the blackboard as they speak. Use the cognitive diamond as the framework on the board.

Let the participants sum up the meaning with the exercise themselves by asking for example:

"What do we make of this?" "What do you think the point of doing this exercise is?"

- Make sure you validate all that is being said.
- If possible, draw parallels to the theme, and make sure the participants understand it (be very clear and concrete, the less complicated the better)

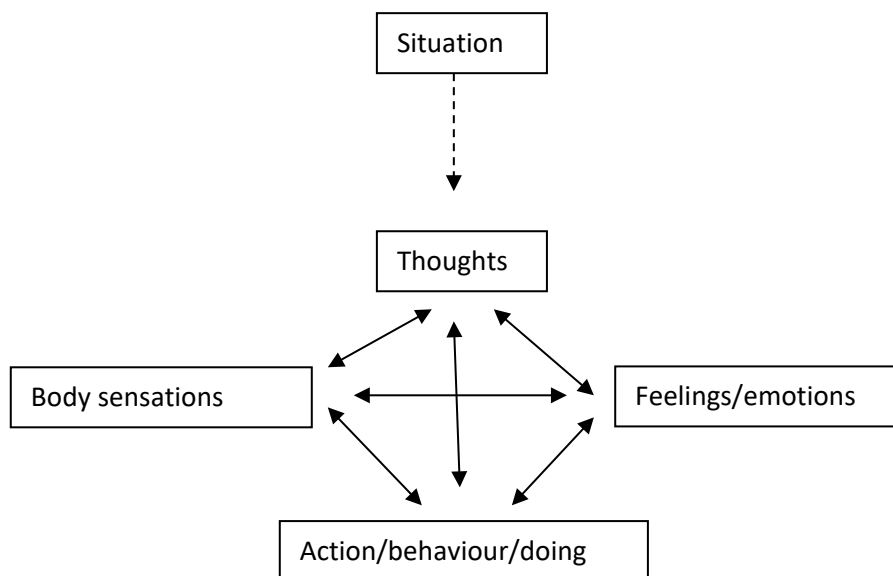
#### The key message of the exercise:

The same (objective) situation can result in many different thoughts, interpretations and therefore also many different feelings/emotions, body sensations and actions/behaviour. Thoughts, feelings/emotions, body sensations and behaviour is closely connected and are influencing each other all the time.

Thoughts about a situation are often automatic,  
and we are often not aware of them.

Nevertheless they influence what we feel and  
what we do.

### THE COGNITIVE DIAMOND:



### **Deviations from the original MBCT program**

- Awareness of the blood flow instead of the breath. The breath and breathing is often the trigger of frustration and anxiety in this group. Therefore it is inappropriate and deviant from the purpose of the MBCT-program to use the breath as "an anchor" to "gather the scattered mind". The blood flow is (like the breath) another physical mechanism that is with us all the time.  
That having been said, it is important that the breath is not ignored or problematised. We focus on the breath during this program as we would focus on any other uncomfortable thought or body sensation (bring awareness to it -> accept -> let it go -> gather focus around the blood flow/grounding/body)
- The Body scan is not guided in this session, due to the fact that too many elements introduced in one session is too much for these participants to handle. But make sure the experience from the Body scan home work is shared properly in class (linking to this session's theme)
- The Body scan is not part of the home work for this week. The complexity of having many different elements as part of the home work is too difficult for these participants to handle.
- The cognitive diamond can be used as a model to sum up the participants' experiences from the "Walking down the street" exercise. It is a relatively simple model, which is ideal for this group.
- The example in the Pleasant Experience Calendar is changed so it corresponds to everyday life of these participants.

## Session 3 – “Gathering the scattered mind”

### THEME

The mind is often scattered and lost in thought because it is working away in the background to complete unfinished tasks and strive for future goals. Instead, we need to find a way to intentionally “come back” to the here and now. The blood flow and the body offer an ever-present focus on which we can reconnect with mindful presence, gather and settle the mind, and ease ourselves from doing into being. Classic problem solving (by thinking) often does not help when it comes to feelings/emotions – and breathlessness.

### AGENDA

1. **Sitting meditation part 1 and 2 “Awareness of heartbeat, blood flow and body” (p. X)** (awareness of blood flow and body → how to respond to intense physical sensations) + inquiry
2. **Home practice review**  
(Sitting meditation part 1 “Awareness of heartbeat and blood flow”, mindfulness of routine activity)  
  
**Review the Pleasant Experiences Calendar → the participants share and the teacher sum up on the blackboard**
3. **Read “Surprised by meaning” in *Kitchen table wisdom* (Remen (1996))** (as an example of focusing on the here and now, noticing positive experiences) + interpretation (let the participants give their interpretation → link to the theme)
4. **The 3-minute “breathing space”** + inquiry (if there is enough time: how can we plan our day to do the breathing space three times per day) Focus on how the breathing space can be used to get as much out of positive experiences as possible.
5. **“Mindful stretching”** (REMEMBER: it is important to be aware of and respect the limit of your body – draw parallels to the physical training in the rehabilitation program) + inquiry
6. **Unpleasant experiences calendar** (See handouts section): let one or two of the participants give a few examples and go through them on the blackboard, to make sure everybody has understood how to do it.
7. **Home practice assignment**
  - “Mindful stretching” every day
  - Unpleasant experiences calendar
  - “3 minute breathing space” 3 times per day on pre-scheduled times.

### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Bring copies of the Unpleasant Experiences Calendar
- Bring the book “Kitchen table wisdom” by Rachel N. Remen (1996)

### Deviations from the original MBCT program

- Awareness of the heartbeat and blood flow instead of the breath. The breath and breathing is often the trigger of frustration and anxiety in this group. Therefore it is inappropriate and deviant from the purpose of the MBCT-program to use the breath as "an anchor" to "gather the scattered mind". The blood flow is (like the breath) another physical mechanism that is with us all the time. That having been said, it is important that the breath is not ignored or problematised. We focus on the breath during this program as we would focus on any other uncomfortable thought or body sensation (bring awareness to it -> accept -> let it go -> gather focus around the blood flow/grounding/body)
- Reading stories: These participants need as many examples/illustrations of the program as possible. Reading stories that deliver the message of the program is helpful. Stories from the book "Kitchen Table Wisdom" by Rachel N. Remen are read to the participants at selected sessions throughout the program.
- Mindful stretching: the exercise has been altered to fit the bodily condition of these participants (see manuscript)
- The 3-minute breathing space: the overall format of this exercise is the same as in the original program, but the content has been changed in step 2: The focus is on the feet's connection to the ground instead of the breath.

## Session 4 – “Recognizing aversion”

### THEME

The skill of “coming back” needs to be complemented by seeing more clearly what “takes us away” into doing, rumination, mind wandering and worry. We begin the experiential investigation of “*aversion*”, the mind’s habitual reaction to unpleasant feelings and sensations, driven by the need not to have these experiences, which is at the root of emotional suffering in relation to a chronic illness. Mindfulness offers a way of staying present by giving another way to view things: It helps us take a wider perspective and relate differently to experience.

Be aware that we have a tendency to want the pleasant and avoid the unpleasant; mindfulness is an alternative to both of these tendencies.

### AGENDA

1. **Sitting meditation part 1, 2 and 3 “Awareness of blood flow, body, sounds and thoughts”** + inquiry
2. **Home practice review** (Mindful stretching; 3-min breathing space x3)  
**Review the Unpleasant Experiences Calendar → the participants share and the teacher sum up on the blackboard** (draw parallels to the automatic thoughts that can arise (“**Automatic thoughts exercise**”, p. X) -> “when you are in a bad mood, how often do these thoughts arise?” + “when you are in a good mood, how often do these thoughts arise?”
3. **“3-min breathing space” (p. 11)** (introduce it this time as a pause when something uncomfortable happens) + inquiry. The exercise illustrates that it is a good way to follow up on uncomfortable experiences (because it follows the discussion of the Unpleasant Experiences Calendar)
4. **Home practice assignment**
  - Sitting meditation part 1, 2 and 3 every day.
  - 3-min breathing space (everytime something uncomfortable happens).

### AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS EXERCISE

**Examples of “Automatic thoughts”** (follow-up on Unpleasant Experiences Calendar if relevant)

1. “Why can’t I ever succeed?”
2. “I’m so disappointed in myself”
3. “Nothing feels good anymore”
4. “I can’t get started”
5. “I feel so helpless”

Can you recognize any of these thoughts from your own life? Which ones?

- When you are in a bad mood, how often do these thoughts arise? How much do you believe them/how convincing are they?
- When you are in a good mood, how often do these thoughts arise? How much do you believe them/how convincing are they?

**Summing up on Automatic thoughts exercise:** When we are challenged physically and mentally, it is normal to have these thoughts at times. And on days where we feel low, thoughts like these often feel like "the truth" about us. But these thoughts are actually symptoms of bad mood or anxiousness, just like a high temperature is a symptom of flu. Becoming aware, through mindfulness, that they are just "the voice of a bad mood/anxiety speaking" allows us to step back from them and begin to choose whether to take them seriously or not. THE MEANING IS NOT TO IGNORE THE THOUGHTS, BUT TO BE AWARE OF THEM IN ANOTHER WAY THAT THE ONE WE ARE USED TO. Perhaps, in fact, we can learn to simply notice them, acknowledge their presence, and let them go. You can do a 3-min breathing space when becoming aware of negative thoughts. (Guide a breathing space in class to illustrate your point)

#### **Deviations from the original MBCT program**

- "Walking meditation" is moved to session 5. Walking often results in breathing difficulties among the participants (draw parallels to physical exercises in the rehabilitation program). Therefore it is relevant to introduce the walking meditation in session 5, where we begin to focus on being with the difficult.
- The "Automatic thoughts" exercise (which is very depression-specific) is only introduced indirectly as part of the follow-up on Unpleasant Experiences Calendar.
- Do not read the poem "Wild geese". It is too abstract for these participants.

## Session 5 – “Allowing/Letting be”

### THEME

*Relating differently to unpleasant feelings and sensations – allowing things to be as they already are.* We can disempower aversion by intentionally bringing to all experience a sense of “allowing” it to be, just as it is, without judging it or trying to make it different. Such an attitude of acceptance embodies a basic attitude of kindness to experience. From this clear seeing we can choose what, if anything, needs to change. It is important that it is clear that from this session on, we begin to focus on being with the difficult (rather than “just” practicing being mindful).

### AGENDA

1. **“Being with the difficult”** (20-30 min) → inquiry
2. **Home practice review** (sitting meditation part 1, 2 and 3; 3-min breathing space when unpleasant).
3. **Read “The story about the king and his three sons”** (the MBCT-manual, page 269 + interpretation (let the participants give their interpretation → link to the theme)
4. **“Walking meditation”** (see the format of the exercise below “Deviations from the original MBCT program)
5. **“3-min breathing space”** when experiencing something uncomfortable + inquiry
6. **Home practice assignment**
  - “Being with the difficult” meditation every day
  - 3-min breathing space when experiencing something difficult

### Deviations from the original MBCT program

- The walking meditation has been moved from session 4 to this session. The instructions are as follows: while walking (first slowly, then faster and faster) bring awareness to **1) sensations in the feet and legs**, then **2) expanding awareness to encompass the whole body**, and then **3) expanding your awareness again to the space around you and your body walking here**. Include this instruction from time to time during the walking meditation: “If your awareness wander, perhaps to you breath, which might have become shorter, then simply notice that this is what is happening, explore the sensations, and then let it go and move your attention back to X” (in the same way as when paying attention to the difficult in the sitting meditation).
- Read the story of the king and his three sons instead of Rumi’s poem, which is too abstract for these participants.

## Session 6 – “Thoughts are not facts”

### THEME

*Relating differently to thoughts.* We free ourselves from the ruminative doing mode when we clearly see negative moods as passing states of mind, and negative thinking as the distorted products of those mind states. It is enormously liberating to realize that our thoughts are merely thoughts, even the ones that say they are not, and to recognize the contexts out of which they are born. Introduce the negative thoughts funnel (from the original MBCT-manual).

### AGENDA

1. **“Sitting meditation part 1, 2 and 3”**. Awareness of blood flow, body, sounds, thoughts and how we relate emotionally to the thoughts that arise + inquiry.
2. **Home practice review** (“Being with the difficult” meditation, 3-min breathing space).
3. **On the blackboard, “John was on his way to school” (the original MBCT-manual, page 299)**: John was on his way to school; He was worried about the math lesson; He was not sure he could control the class again today; It was not part of a janitor’s duty. Write each sentence one after another on the blackboard -> interpretation (let the participants give their interpretation → link to the theme)
4. **“Mood, thoughts and alternative viewpoints” exercise** (Our mood/feelings can influence how we think about/interpret a situation, p. 15)
5. **“3-min breathing space”** as the first step when thoughts take over + inquiry. MENTION: daily practice is important to shift from doing- to being-mode (e.g. by taking a 3-min breathing space)
6. **Mention preparation for end of course** – we will start talking about how to use what we have learned when the course is over. Link to next activity.
7. **Discuss “unpleasantness” signals** → discuss in pairs → share in group (use the negative thought funnel or the cognitive diamond to sum up. (REMEMBER: introduce **“My personal warning system”**, (See handouts section)
8. **Home practice assignment**  
Make mindfulness part of your life, a way of life, rather than a short therapeutical intervention. It is a long-term method to improve quality of life and prevent bad mood and anxiety. It is the “everyday-ness” of the training that is important.
  - a. Choose whatever meditation you want every day
  - b. 3-min breathing space when something uncomfortable arise
  - c. Notice warnings of bad mood/anxiety/“unpleasantness” -> fill in “My personal warning system”

**"Mood, thoughts and alternative viewpoints" exercise:**

1. "You are feeling down because you've just had a quarrel with a friend at a dinner-party. Shortly afterward, you bump into another friend at the party, and he or she rushes off quickly, saying he or she could not stop. What would you think?"

DISCUSS (USE BLACKBOARD TO NOTE REACTIONS)

2. "You are feeling happy because you have just been praised for good work you've done at the dinner party. Shortly afterward, you bump into another friend at the party, and he or she rushes off quickly, saying he or she could not stop. What would you think?"

DISCUSS (USE BLACKBOARD TO NOTE REACTIONS)

interpretation (let the participants give their interpretation → link to the theme)

**Deviations from the original MBCT-program**

- The content of the "Mood, thoughts and alternative viewpoints" exercise has been adapted to these participants

## Session 7 – “How can I best take care of myself?”

### THEME

*Using skillful action to take care of ourselves in the face of lowering mood/anxiety etc.* We can lift bad mood and anxiousness by intentional skillful action. We can respond more promptly and effectively to lowering mood by learning to recognize our personal pattern of warning signs. After taking a breathing space, we kindly take care of ourselves by acts that give pleasure or a sense of mastery, or provide a clear focus for mindfulness.

### AGENDA

1. **“Sitting meditation” part 1, 2 and 3.** Awareness of blood flow, body; noticing how we relate to our experiences through the reactions we have to whatever thoughts, feelings or body sensations arise within the practice, noting their effects and reactions to them, on the body + inquiry.
2. **Home practice review**  
(Choose whatever track on the CD you want every day + **“My personal warning system”** (See handouts section) -> sum up on the blackboard
3. **“Activities and mood exercise”** (See handouts section) (guide it as a meditation practice + the participants fill in the list, see handout for this session) -> the negative thought funnel/exhaustion funnel (p. 359 in the original MBCT manual). REMEMBER: keep the exercise as simple as possible
4. **“The action plan”, plan how to best schedule activities for when mood threatens to overwhelm:** introduce the action plan (See handouts section) -> the participants work in pairs -> sum up on blackboard
5. **Remember to tell the participants:** 3-min breathing space as the “first step” before choosing whether to take mindful action. Write on blackboard: 1. becoming aware of what is present? 2. 3-min breathing space 3. choose mindful action (which can also be doing nothing)
6. **“3-min breathing space” – inquiry**
7. **Read: “I never promised you a rose garden” from *Kitchen Table Wisdom (Remen (1996))*** -> interpretation (let the participants give their interpretation -> link to the theme)
8. **Home practice assignment**
  - a. Select, from all the different forms of practice, a pattern you intend to use on a regular basis
  - b. 3-min breathing space when something uncomfortable arise
  - c. Fill in the Action Plan (See handouts section)

### PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- Bring the book “Kitchen Table Wisdom”
- Bring handouts for the activities exercise

**Deviations from the original MBCT-program:**

- d. The activities exercise has been changed to a more simple version. "Nourishing" (N) activities are called "+" activities and "depleating" (D) activities are called "-" (minus) activities. The "mastery" activities are left out.
- e. The exhaustion funnel is relatively complex as it is described in the original manual. Therefore, the negative thought spiral can be mentioned, but do not go through all of it explicitly.

## Session 8 – “Maintaining and extending new learning”

### THEME

*Planning a new way of living.* Maintaining and extending a more mindful and caring way of being requires clear intention and planning. It is helpful to link intentions for regular mindfulness practice to a personally significant value or positive reason for taking care of oneself. “What have you gotten out of this program?/The most important thing you have learned in this program?”

### AGENDA

1. **“The body scan”** + inquiry
2. **Home practice review:** (including warning system and action plan (See handouts section))
3. **Review of the whole course:** what has been learned?
4. **Distribute sheets with the stories that have been read during the program (as mementos of the course):** The participants each mention the most important thing they have gotten out of this course (one word). -> Sum up on blackboard
5. **End of class:** participants wishing each other well

### PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- Bring sheets with stories that have been read in class throughout the course

## Handouts

### Pleasant experiences calendar

Be aware of pleasant event *at the time it is happening*. Use the following questions to focus your awareness on the details of the experience as it is happening. Write it down later.

What was the experience	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods and feelings accompanied this event?	What thoughts went through your mind?	What thoughts are present when writing this down?
<i>Example: Heading home after grocery shopping – stopping, hearing a bird sing.</i>	<i>Lightness across the face, aware of shoulders dropping, uplift of corners of mouth.</i>	<i>Relief, pleasure</i>	<i>"That's good," "How lovely" "It's so nice to be outside"</i>	<i>"It was such a small thing, but I'm glad I noticed it"</i>
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				

### Unpleasant experiences calendar

Be aware of an unpleasant experience *at the time it is happening*. Use these questions to focus your awareness on the details of it as it is happening. Write it down later.

What was the experience?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods and feelings accompanied this event?	What thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
<i>Example: Waiting for the cable company to come out and fix our line. Realize that I am missing an important meeting at work.</i>	<i>Temples throbbing, tightness in my neck and shoulders, pacing back and forth.</i>	<i>Angry, helpless</i>	<i>"Is this what they mean by service?" "They don't have to be responsible, they have a monopoly"</i>	<i>"I hope I don't have to go through that again soon"</i>
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				

## List of everyday activities

[illegible]

**A plan for my future mindfulness practice**, which I will try out over the next week.

Long meditations (e.g. Body Scan or Awareness of Blood Flow and Body”):

Short meditations (e.g. 3-minute breathing space):

”Informal” mindfulness (e.g. mindful eating):

## **Exercise to explore links between activities and mood**

### **Exercise 1A:**

Guiding:

Grounding, "Close your eyes and bring your attention to what you do over the course of a normal day...

- What is a typical day like for you...? What happens...?
- For example, what happens in the morning...? Perhaps activities such as getting out of bed, dressing, making coffee, having breakfast etc...
- And what happens in the afternoon...? Perhaps activities such as spending time in the garden, meeting friends or family, cleaning the house etc....
- And then what happens in the evening..? Perhaps activities such as cooking dinner, doing the dishes, watching TV, reading a book, going to bed, etc...

Now open you eyes...."

Instruct the participants to write down a list of the activities they do on a normal day (see the list on next page). "

## List of everyday activities

Activities	+ or - ?

After having completed the list of activities...:

- 1) ...mark the activities that lift your mood and gives energy with a "+".
- 2) ...mark the activities that lowers your mood and/or takes away energy with a "-".

Please note that a certain activity can be both "+" and "-"

### **Exercise 1B:**

Ask the participants the following questions and discuss and sum up on the blackboard.

1. What activities have you written down? (-> write them on the board)
2. Are they "+" or "-" (-> mark the activities with an "+" and/or "-")
3. How is the balance between the "+" and "-" activities?
4. How can you learn to be more aware of the "+" activities?
5. How can you change things to have more "+" activities?
6. How can you learn to be more aware of the "-" activities?
7. How can you change things to make the "-" fill up less of your day/thoughts/life?
8. How can you best handle the "-" when they happen or you start thinking about them?

The key thing is to be aware that you only have a certain amount of energy for one day. It is very important that you are aware of your body and mind's limits. -> that can be done through mindfulness/awareness and compassion/being kind to yourself.

## **Exercise 2:**

Consider how you can use what you have learned in this program in the future. Be realistic.

Make a plan that you can try out over the next week before we meet for the last time:

Long meditations (e.g. the Body Scan or Awareness of Blood Flow and Body):

Short meditations (e.g. 3 min breathing space):

"Informal" mindfulness practice (e.g. mindful eating, mindful routine activity):

Discuss on blackboard.

## My personal warning system

This worksheet offers an opportunity to increase your awareness of what happens for you when vicious cycles of anxiety, breathlessness, inactivity, bad mood etc. begin to appear. The aim is, carefully and with curiosity, to investigate the thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and patterns of behavior that tell you that your mood is starting to drop.

What triggers vicious cycles of anxiety, breathlessness, inactivity, bad mood etc. for you?

- Triggers can be external (things that happen to you) or internal (e.g. thoughts, feelings, memories, concerns, body sensations).
- Look out for small triggers as well as large ones – sometimes something that appears quite trivial can spark a vicious spiral.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Are there any old habits of thinking or behavior that might unwittingly keep you stuck in these vicious cycles (e.g. ruminating, trying to suppress or turn away from painful thoughts and feelings and body sensations, struggling with it instead of accepting and exploring it)?

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## My personal action plan

Last week, you wrote down what are your personal warning signals of vicious cycles of anxiety, breathlessness, inactivity, bad mood etc. On this sheet, we consider how you might skillfully respond when you find yourself in this position.

Ask yourself: In the past, what have you noticed that helped when you were becoming scared, inactive, depressed etc.? How could you respond to the turmoil of thoughts and feelings without adding to it? How can you best care for yourself when something bad happens (e.g. things that would soothe you, activities that might nourish you, people you might contact, small things you could do to respond wisely to distress)?

Now write down suggestions to yourself for an action plan that you can use as a framework for coping, once you or your friends/family have noticed early warning signs (remember to address the frame of mind that you might be in at the time; e.g. "I know you probably will not be keen on the idea but I think that, nonetheless, it is very important that you..."). For example, you might put on a body scan or sitting meditation recording; remind yourself of what you learned during the class that was helpful then; take frequent 3-min breathing spaces etc. It may be helpful to remind yourself that what you need at time of difficulty is no different from what you have already practiced many times throughout this course.

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## Meditation guides

## The Raisin Exercise

[Same guiding as in the original MBCT-program, p. 112-113]

## The Body Scan

Durations: approximately 25-30 minutes

### 1. [Bells]

2. Inviting you to lie down on your bed or a mat on the floor or sit up in a chair where your back can be supported, making yourself comfortable, in a place where you will be warm and undisturbed. Allowing your eyes to close gently. Feeling your feet's contact with the ground, the sensation of contact with something solid, firm, persistent, no matter what else is going on in your body or mind right now.

3. Taking a few moments now to get in touch with the fact that your heart is beating – sensing it directly, perhaps in the chest region, or just imagining the heartbeat. When you are ready, bring your awareness to the physical sensations in your body, especially to the sensations of touch or pressure, where your body makes contact with the floor or bed. Getting a sense of the heart providing blood to the whole of the body – providing softness and warmth, making the body sink a little deeper into the bed or chair.

4. Remind yourself of the intention of this practice. Its aim is not to feel any different, relaxed or calm; this may happen or it may not. Instead, the intention of the practice is, as best you can, to bring awareness to any sensations you detect, as you focus your attention on each part of the body in turn.

5. Now bring your awareness to the physical sensations in the chest area. Noticing what the breath feels like in this moment, without having to change or fix anything. And see if you can also notice the sensations of your heart beating in the chest area – rapidly or slowly, heavily or shallow? Take a few minutes to feel the sensations of your heartbeat.

6. Having connected with the sensations in the chest region, bring the focus or “spotlight” of your awareness down the left leg, into the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Focus on each of the toes of the left foot in turn, bringing a gentle curiosity to investigate the quality of the sensations you find, perhaps noticing the sense of contact between the toes, a sense of tingling, warmth, or no particular sensation.

7. When you are ready, feel or imagine the blood flowing from the heart and down into the abdomen, into the left leg, the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Providing energy, softness and warmth to this area of your body. As best you can, continue this for a few moments, feeling or imagining the blood running all the way from the heart down to your toes – softening, warming. Perhaps feeling the blood flow as a pulse, a tingling, or whatever you are sensing right now. It may be difficult to get the hang of this – just practicing this as best you can, approaching it playfully.

8. Now, when you are ready, let go of awareness of the toes, and bring your awareness to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot – bringing a gentle, investigative awareness to the sole of the foot, the instep, the heel (e.g. noticing the sensations where the heel makes contact with the bed or ground). Experiment with feeling the blood flowing in this area while exploring the sensations of the lower foot.

9. Now allow the awareness to expand into the rest of the foot – to the ankle, the top of the foot, and right into the bones and joints. Then, feeling or imagining how the blood can transport your awareness from the left foot to the lower left leg – the calf, shin, knee, and so on, in turn.

10. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity, to the physical sensations in each part of the rest of the body in turn – to the upper left leg, the right toes, right foot, right leg, pelvic area, back, abdomen, chest, fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, head, and face. In each area, as best you can, bring the same

detailed level of awareness and gentle curiosity to the body sensations present. In each area, getting a sense of the blood flowing into the area, providing energy, softness, warmth.

11. When you become aware of tension, or of other intense sensations in a particular part of the body – perhaps uncomfortable sensations related to the breath – you can imagine how the blood flows into these areas, providing exactly what the area needs to restore: energy, softness, warmth.

12. The mind will inevitably wander away from the body from time to time. That is entirely normal. It is what minds do. When you notice it, gently acknowledge it, noticing where the mind has gone off to, and then gently return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.

13. After you have “scanned” the whole body in this way, spend a few minutes being aware of a sense of the body as a whole, and of the blood flowing freely in the body.

14. If you find yourself falling asleep, you might find it helpful to prop your head up with a pillow, open your eyes, or do the practice sitting up rather than lying down.

15. [Bells]

## Sitting meditation part 1: Awareness of the heartbeat and the bloodflow

Duration: approximately 10-15 minutes

1. [Bells]

2. Finding a comfortable upright position, sitting on a firm, straight-back chair or a stool. If you use a chair, it is very helpful to sit away from the back of the chair, so that your spine is self-supporting.

3. Allow your back to adapt an erect, dignified and comfortable posture. Place your feet flat on the floor, with your legs uncrossed. Gently closing your eyes.

4. Bringing awareness to the sensations in the body as you are sitting here right now. Perhaps the sensations of contact between your body and the chair, and between your feet and the floor. Feeling your feet's contact with the ground, the sensation of contact with something solid, firm, persistent, no matter what else is going on in your body or mind right now. Spend a minute or two exploring these sensations, just as in the body scan.

5. Now becoming aware of the fact that your heart is beating. Maybe sensing the beating of the heart directly...in the chest region perhaps. Or if you can't feel your heart beating right now, simply knowing that your heart is beating, and being aware of that.

6. The heartbeat is our lifelong companion, and it provides blood, energy, warmth to our bodies all the time – whether we are aware of it or not. The blood flows from the heart and upwards, through shoulders, neck and head. Outwards through arms and hands. Downwards through the abdomen, legs and feet.

7. Now bringing awareness to the sensations of blood flowing through your body.

8. What does the blood flow feel like? Perhaps like a wave through certain areas in your body? Perhaps a throbbing sensation? A fluttering or tingling? Warmth? There is no right way or wrong way to feel. Just curiously exploring what it feels like for you right now.

9. Perhaps you cannot feel the blood flowing in your body right now, and if that is the case, then that's completely fine. Then simply noting "I cannot feel the blood flowing in the body right now".

10. Becoming aware of the changing sensations as the blood flow through your body from moment to moment.

11. Our heart provides fresh and clean blood for our whole body - flowing through the shoulders, neck and head...the arms and hands...the abdomen, legs and feet.

12. And as best you can, letting whatever is present be there. Not having to change or fix anything. Simply sensing or imagining how the heart provides energy, softness and warmth to all areas of the body, moment after moment.

13. Sooner or later you will notice that your mind has been wandering. Thinking, planning. That is not a problem at all, that is what minds do. It is not a mistake or a failure.

14. When you notice that your awareness is no longer on the sensations of blood flowing in your body, gently congratulate yourself – you have come back and are once more aware of your experience! You may

want to acknowledge briefly where the mind has been. The, gently escorting awareness back to a focus on the sensations of blood flowing through your body.

15. Perhaps exploring where in the body you feel the bloodflow most vividly. Maybe that is a throbbing in the head? A tingling in the hands? A wave in the feet or the legs? Or somewhere else.

16. Filling this part of your body with awareness. Exploring the sensations in this area. What does it feel like in this area? Throbbing, jitteriness, warmth? Do the sensations change from moment to moment, or do they stay the same?

17. As best you can, bringing kindness and patience to yourself when you discover that your mind has wandered away. Seeing the mind wandering as an opportunity to get to know your mind better, not a mistake or a failure.

18. Every time your mind wanders, the instruction is simply to notice, acknowledge where your mind went to, and escorting it back to the area of the body where you feel the blood flow most vividly.

19. Remember that the purpose of this exercise is not to get rid of thoughts, but to bring full awareness to whatever is present right now, and to bring back awareness again and again whenever the mind has wandered...Reminding ourselves that no matter what is going on in our lives, our heartbeat is our constant companion, proving energy, softness and warmth.

20. So every time the mind wanders, noticing and escorting the attention back to the area of the body where you feel the bloodflow most vividly.

21. And now, expanding awareness to take in the whole body and the sensations of blood flowing through the whole body. Upwards through shoulders, neck and head. Outwards through arms and hands. Downwards through the abdomen, legs and feet. The blood providing new energy, softness and warmth for the whole body.

22. [Bells]

## Sitting meditation part 2 – Awareness of the body

Duration: approximately 10 minutes

1. [Start this meditation with Sitting meditation part 1]
2. While still aware, in the background, of the blood flowing in the body, change your primary focus, so that you become aware of a sense of the body as a whole and of the changing patterns of sensation throughout the body. You may find that you get a sense of the movements of the blood throughout the body; the blood filling up the whole body, reaching all parts and edges.
3. The mind will wander repeatedly away from the body sensations – this is natural, to be expected, and in no way a mistake or failure. Whenever you notice that your awareness has drifted away from sensations in the body, you might want to congratulate yourself; you have “woken up”. Gently note where your mind was (“thinking”), and kindly focus your attention back to a sense of your body as a whole.
4. As best you can, keep things simple, gently attending to the actuality of sensations throughout your body from one moment to the next.
5. As you sit, some sensations may be particularly intense, such as pains in the back, knees, or shoulders, or a troubled breath or cough. You may find that awareness is repeatedly drawn to these sensations, and away from your intended focus on the body as a whole. You may want to use these times to experiment with choosing intentionally either to shift posture, or to remain still and bring the focus of awareness into the region of intensity. If you choose to remain still, then, as best you can, explore with gentle and wise attention the detailed pattern of sensations here: What, precisely, do the sensations feel like? Where exactly are they? Do they vary over time or from one part of the region of intensity to another? Not so much thinking about them, as just feeling them. You may want to imagine or feel how the heart is beating fresh blood into this area, providing energy, softness, warmth, just as in the body scan.
6. Whenever you find yourself “carried away” from awareness in the moment by the intensity of physical sensations, or in any other way, remind yourself that you can always reconnect with the here and now by refocusing awareness on the sense of the body as a whole. Once you have gathered yourself in this way, allow the awareness to expand once more, so it includes a sense of sensations throughout the body.
7. And now for the last few moments of this sitting, bringing your attention back to focus on your heart providing fresh blood to the whole of the body. Reminding ourselves that no matter what is going on in our lives, our heartbeat is our constant companion, proving energy, softness and warmth.
8. [Bells]

## Sitting meditation part 3 – Awareness of sounds and thoughts

Durations: approximately 10 minutes

1. [Bells]

2. [Start this meditation with Sitting meditation part 1 and 2]

3.-9. [Same guiding as in the original MBCT-program, p. 221-222]

10. If at any time you feel that your mind has become unfocused and scattered, or if it keeps getting repeatedly drawn into the drama of your thinking and imaginings, you may like to notice where this is affecting your body. Often, when we don't like what is happening, we feel a sense of contraction or tightness in the face, shoulders, chest or throat, and a sense of wanting to "push away" our thoughts and feelings. See if you notice any of this going on for you when some intense feelings arise. Then, once you have noticed this, see if it is possible to come back to the sensations of your body as whole and the heart providing fresh, softening, warming blood to the whole of the body. The body is right here, right now, and the body, the feet, have contact with the solid, firm ground – you are *here* right now, no matter what else is going on in your body or mind. Using this focus on the body to anchor and stabilise your awareness.

11. [Bells]

## The 3-min breathing space

[Bells]

### 1. AWARENESS - Observation

"As the first step in the breathing step, becoming aware of what is your experience right now.

What thoughts are here? What feelings...? And the bodily sensations...the breath...? Simply noticing what is here right now, without any judgment."

### 2. FOCUSING/GATHERING

"Then, as the second step of the breathing space, gathering attentions around the legs and feet on solid ground.

With your feet on the ground, you are connected to something solid, firm, persistent. You are present right here and right now. No matter what else is happening in your body and mind."

### 3. EXPANDING

"And then, as the third step, expanding awareness to take in the whole body sitting or standing here. Sensing how the heart is beating and the blood flowing in the body, providing energy, warmth. Softness and openness. Whatever is present right now... being open to it... it is already here... sensing the blood flowing into it, filling it with energy, softness and warmth.

Perhaps taking this sense of openness and acceptance with you for the remainder of your day"

[Bells]

## Mindful stretching

Durations: approximately 25-30 minutes

### 1. [Bells]

2. Finding a comfortable upright position, sitting on a firm, straight-back chair or a stool. If you use a chair, it is very helpful to sit away from the back of the chair, so that your spine is self-supporting.

3. Allow your back to adapt an erect, dignified and comfortable posture. Place your feet flat on the floor, with your legs uncrossed. Gently closing your eyes.

4. Bringing awareness to the sensations in the body as you are sitting here right now. Perhaps the sensations of contact between your body and the chair, and between your feet and the floor. Spending a minute or two exploring these sensations, just as in the body scan.

5. Throughout this exercises, we will be doing a few stretches. The purpose is to become aware of your body in movement, and to explore your own bodily limits and "edges" if you like. Becoming aware of your bodily limits without having to cross them. Cultivating a sense of compassion for yourself, taking good care of yourself.

6. So when you are ready, stretching both hands and arms slowly in front of you with the fingers pointing towards the ceiling and the palms facing forward. Holding this stretch while bringing full awareness to the sensations in the arms and hands. Now, give your hands a quick shake and slowly lower the arms and place them in the lap. Spending a few moments experiencing the after effects of this stretch. Sensing how the heart provides blood to the areas that has been activated – a tingling or warmth in the arms and hands perhaps.

7. Now, slowly dropping your head to the side, so that the ear is facing down towards the shoulder. Slowly starting a rolling movement of the head, so that the chin face towards the chest, and further until the opposite ear is pointing towards the opposite shoulder. And then slowly rolling your head forwards again and back where it came from. Continuing like this for a few moments. Slowly. And with full awareness of the sensations in the body, the neck, the head and the shoulders, as you are doing this movement. And now, stretching your neck so the head is in an upright position again, and spending a few moments experiencing the aftereffects of this movement.

8. Then, when you are ready, rolling both shoulders, as if you were to draw circles in the air with them. Slowly, carefully, bringing awareness to the sensations in the body from moment to moment. Then dropping the shoulders. And bringing full awareness to the after effects of this movement.

9. When you are ready, pulling up both shoulders towards the ears, as high as they can get. Fully aware of the sensations. Holding this stretch for a few seconds, bringing awareness to the tense sensations in the shoulders and neck, and then dropping the shoulder quickly and heavily. Being aware of the movement and sensations from moment to moment. Now pulling up both shoulders again, feeling the stretch, and letting go heavily. And then again, repeating the movement: pulling, holding, letting go. Spending now a few moments sensing the after effects of these movements.

10. And now letting your left arm hang alongside the body and the chair and bend your left hand, so that the back of the hand faces upwards, and the palm faces the floor. Sensing the stretch in your arm and hand. Fully aware. From moment to moment. And then letting go, placing the left hand in the lap and shifting to the other arm. The right arm. Alongside the body, bending the right hand and feeling the stretch in the right arm and hand. Letting go of the right hand, placing it in the lap. Spending a few moments being aware of the after affects of this stretch.

11. When you are ready, twisting the upper body (the torso and both arms) to the left, so that your legs and bottom stay where they are, while the upper body is facing left. Pulling and twisting your upper body as far as you can to the left while being fully aware of the sensations and the bodily limits. Explore the sensations of your bodily limits. Perhaps the effect on this movement on your breath – without having to change anything. Now letting go and slowly shifting to the other side. Twisting and pulling the upper body to the right, as far as it can go. All the time being fully aware of your body and its limits and edges. Letting go and facing forwards again, feeling the after effects of this stretch.

12. Then, with full attention, stretch your left leg out in front of you, the heel touching the floor, feeling a stretch on the back of the leg. Again, bringing awareness to the perhaps pretty intense sensations, taking care of yourself, exploring your bodily limits. If you feel like increasing the stretch a bit, leaning forward a bit, feeling the intensification of the stretch from moment to moment. Taking care of your self. Now letting go of the stretch and switching legs, so your right leg is stretched out in front of your, the heel touching the floor. The foot bending upwards, feeling a stretch on the back of your right leg. Perhaps increasing the stretch a bit by bending forwards. Fully aware of the changing sensations from moment to moment. And then letting go of the right leg. Now with both feet firmly on the ground. Sitting here for a few moments, bringing awareness to the after effects of these stretches.

13. Now slowly lifting the left leg and foot a tiny bit from the floor, so that your left foot is hanging a few centimetres from the floor. Aware of the intense sensations in your left leg as you are lifting the leg and foot. Perhaps feeling how your body want to just let go and lower the leg – what does that feel like? And then, when you are ready, lowering the leg and placing the foot firmly back on the floor. Switching now to the right leg, lifting leg and foot from the floor. All the time being aware of the intense sensations. Perhaps how they are intensified from moment to moment. And then when you are ready, letting go and placing your right foot on the floor again. Spending a few moments exploring the after effects of this lift.

14. And now, expanding awareness to the body as a whole, sitting here. What does it feel like in the body after having done all these stretches and movements? Heaviness or lightness, warmth? There is no right way to feel, simply noticing what is here in this very moment. How is the breath after having done these exercises? Rapid or calm breathing – deep or shallow breathing? There is no need to change how the breath is at this moment. Simply noticing. And sensing how the heart is constantly providing fresh blood to the whole of the body. Providing energy, warmth and softening the areas of your body that have just been activated by the stretches and movement.

15. Just sitting here for a few more moments, fully aware of the body as a whole.

16. [Bells]

Inspired by Trish Bartley (2012)

## Being with the difficult and working with it through the body

Duration: approximately 15-20 minutes

1. [Bells]

2. [Start this meditation with Sitting meditation part 1]

3. Sit for a few moments, focusing on the sensations of the blood flow, then widening the awareness to take in the body as a whole.

4. While you are sitting, if you notice that your attention keeps being pulled away to unpleasant thoughts or emotions, you can explore something different from what we have been practicing up until now.

5. Until now, when you have been sitting and notice that your mind has wandered, the instruction has been simply to notice where the mind had gone, then gently and firmly escort the attention back to the breath or body, or back to whatever you intended to be focusing on.

6. Now you can explore a different way to respond. Instead of bringing attention back from a thought or feeling, now allow the thought or feeling to *remain* in the mind. Then, shifting the attention into the body, see if you can become aware of any physical sensations in the body that come along with the thought or emotion.

7. Then when you have identified such sensations, deliberately move the focus of attention to the part of the body where these sensations are strongest. Perhaps that is in the chest or throat, or in the abdomen? Imagining that your heart provides fresh blood to this area – softening, warming, opening – just as you practiced in the body scan, not to change the sensations but to explore them, to see them clearly.

8. If there are no difficulties or concerns coming up for you now and you want to explore this new approach, then, if you choose, you might *deliberately bring to mind a difficulty* that is going on in your life at the moment – something you don't mind staying with for a short while. It does not have to be very important or critical, but something that you are aware of as somewhat unpleasant: perhaps a situation where you feel somewhat angry, regretful, or guilty over something that has happened. If nothing comes to mind, perhaps you might choose something from the past, either recent or distant, that once caused unpleasantness.

9. Now, once you have focused on some troubling thought or situation – some worry or intense feeling – allow yourself to take some time to tune in to any physical sensation in the body that the difficulty evokes.

10. See if you are able to note, approach, and investigate inwardly what feelings are arising in your body, becoming mindful of those physical sensations, deliberately directing your focus of attention to the region of the body where the sensations are strongest in a gesture of an embrace, a welcoming.

11. This gesture might include imagining how fresh, warm blood fills up that part of the body, exploring the sensations, watching their intensity shift up and down from one moment to the next.

12. Once your attention has settled on the body sensations and they are vividly present in the field of awareness, unpleasant as they may be, you might try deepening the attitude of acceptance and openness to whatever sensations you are experiencing by saying to yourself from time to time: "It is here now. It is OK to be open to it. Whatever it is, it's already here. Let me open to it." Soften and open to the sensations you become aware of, intentionally letting go of tensing and bracing. Say to yourself: "Softening, Opening".

13. Then see if it is possible to stay with the awareness, exploring these body sensations and your relationship to them, letting them be, allowing them to be just as they are.
14. Remember that, by saying “It’s already here” or “It’s OK”, you are not judging the original situation or saying that everything’s fine, but simply helping your awareness, right now, to remain open to the sensations in the body.
15. You do not have to *like* these feelings – it is natural not to want to have them around. You may find it helpful to say to yourself, inwardly, “It’s OK not to want these feelings; they’re already here; let me be open to them”.
16. If you choose, you can also experiment with holding in awareness both the sensations in the body and the feeling of the heart beating fresh blood into that area, moment by moment. Together with the sensations of your feet on the floor – you are in contact with something solid, firm, persistent, no matter what else is going on in your body and mind.
17. And when you notice that the body sensations are no longer pulling your attention to the same degree, simply return 100% to sitting with awareness of the blood flowing in the whole body as the primary object of attention.
18. If, in the next few minutes, no powerful body sensations arise, feel free to try this exercise with any body sensations you notice, even if they have no particular emotional charge.
19. [Bells]