

Mindfulness Inside

A 12-week Workshop Series presented by Just Detention International (JDI)

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” – Prof. Jon Kabat-Zinn

JDI is a health and human rights organization whose work includes ensuring that incarcerated survivors of trauma get the help that they need. The *Mindfulness Inside* program was designed to offer participants practical skills for coping with the stress and trauma of detention. Over the course of twelve weeks, the program combines meditation practices and group discussion to process the challenges of incarceration and build collective wisdom.

Mindfulness is a practice that involves paying close attention to your body and mind — and especially your breath. It is an effective tool for reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as improving overall well-being. Through regular practice, participants can develop skills to regulate emotions, navigate difficult situations, and make more intentional choices.

The program creates opportunities to increase awareness of thoughts, feelings, and how they impact behavior. This process can foster greater self-awareness and self-control, which in turn can support more positive outcomes both during incarceration and after release.

Recognizing that group participation can feel vulnerable, the program emphasizes creating a safe, respectful environment where participants can share at their own pace. Building trust and community is a key part of the experience.

This 12-week series is RAC-approved, with two hours of credit awarded for each session attended (for a total of 24 hours). Sessions are scheduled weekly, typically on Mondays (excluding holidays), and each workshop is structured to build on the previous one. The following section provides a brief overview of the curriculum for each week.

Week 1: Introduction to Mindfulness

We'll kick things off by introducing the concept of mindfulness, exploring its benefits, and practicing our first guided meditations together.

Week 2: Learning from Our Experience

This week, we'll explore how to observe our thoughts and feelings without getting swept up in them. We'll practice meditations focused on mindful observation and introduce a sound meditation.

Week 3: Mindful Journaling

We'll learn how journaling can be used as a mindfulness practice – helping us track our progress, process emotions, and deepen our self-awareness.

Week 4: Paying Attention to the Body

We'll shift our attention to the body's sensations and wisdom. Practices will include a body-scan meditation and an introduction to Mindful Movement, inspired by Zen and Qi Gong traditions.

Week 5: Calming the Body and Mind

This week focuses on using the breath as a calming anchor. We'll learn simple breathing techniques and practice meditations centered around breath awareness.

Week 6: Respond vs. React

We'll practice creating space between stimulus and response – learning to pause, breathe, and respond more skillfully to triggers and stress.

Week 7: Working with Emotions

We'll explore how to face difficult emotions with mindfulness – experiencing them fully without getting overwhelmed by the stories we attach to them. We'll also revisit our Mindful Movement practice and try a visualization exercise to help us *QTIP* (Quit Taking It Personally).

Week 8: Joyfulness

This week is all about joy! We'll practice a joy-focused visualization and reflect on the importance of finding small moments of joy, peace, or even just “okay-ness.”

Week 9: Your Authentic Self

We'll journal about our values and spend time meditating on what matters most to us – strengthening our connection to our true selves.

Week 10: Giving and Receiving Love

This week centers on compassion and empathy. We'll explore loving-kindness meditations that open our hearts to others and ourselves.

Week 11: Mindfulness in Everyday Life

As we near the end of our series, we'll discuss how to weave mindfulness into our daily routines – and reflect on any changes we've noticed in how we handle everyday stress.

Week 12: Broadening Our Perspective

For our final session, we'll explore how mindfulness can help us connect more deeply with others – including loved ones, challenging people, and strangers. We'll look at how this practice can ripple outward into our relationships and communities.