

## **InnerZoneCare Centre of Mindfulness / Sentrum vir Mindfulness**

### **6 Weke Volbewus-wees Kursus - Prakties**

**This 6-week course is based on the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) program (Zindel Segal, Mark Williams & John Teasdale), the Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program (Jon Kabat-Zinn), Emotion Focused Therapy (Susan Johnson) as well as Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) (Marsha Lineham). It will be presented quarterly.**

#### **Week 1: Mindfulness vs Autopilot**

How often do we find ourselves going through our days "mechanically", or in "automatic pilot", without really being aware of what is going on. Our minds are often "hijacked" by thoughts, memories, plans or feelings. It then becomes easy to drift into the ruminative thought patterns that can tip us back to a state of stress, panic or depression. We can transform by stepping out of automatic pilot by paying attention intentionally to aspects within ourselves, and in everyday experience.

#### **Week 2: Stress and Embodiment**

Stress means to be in one place, and wanting to be in another place. We usually try to react on difficult or painful experiences by trying to get rid of them. It is amazing how we can be simultaneously completely preoccupied with the appearance of our body and at the same time completely out of touch with it as well. Often, due to difficult experiences, we learn to live in our heads rather than our bodies. We learn that it is "safer" to think about emotion than to experience emotion in the body. Habitually withdrawing attention from the body means that "processing" emotional experiences remains uncompleted. Mindful exercises like the "body scan" teach us to get caught up in judgemental thinking about it, and to learn to "embody" experiences fully.

#### **Week 3: Haunting Thoughts and Feelings**

Although Cognitive Therapy since the 1970's made us aware that unrealistic thoughts could cause depression, we realised that we can't always change our thoughts. This leaves us vulnerable to relapse and recurrence. Through mindfulness we can learn to identify and change our relationship with our thoughts, and in this way learn to prevent the downward spiral into the depths of depression. We also need a new relationship with our feelings, in order to make better decisions on how to act on them. To have secure attachment with loved ones, we also need to be able to recognise our true feelings, name them and share them. By means of mindfulness we can learn to befriend our thoughts and feelings.

We often use quick fixes, distractions or denial to shut out painful feelings. Other times we worry or ruminate about it, through judgement about the experience. Mindfulness includes becoming aware of aversion, and learning to handle it in a more effective way.

#### **Week 4: Breathing Space**

Mostly, we are not in touch with our breathing. Our breathing seems to change with our moods. It can be used as a tool, like an anchor, to bring stability to the body and mind when we deliberately choose to become aware of it. By learning through mindfulness to become more aware of our breathing, we can use our breathing to handle stress better, focus better, and to handle pain and difficult feelings better.

#### **Week 5: Create an Island of Being in a Sea of Doing**

...in the words of Jon Kabat-Zinn. We need to learn to recognise the doing-mode (ideas: thinking about the world in which we dwell) and being-mode (connecting with life directly) in our lives, to find the balance between the two. When sensing life experiencing it, knowing it intimately, we get a taste of the richness and ever shifting wonder of the experience of life.

## **Week 6: Compassion and non-judgement**

Mindfulness always goes along with kindness... towards ourselves, as well as others. We can only truly face our own difficult thoughts, feelings and bodily experiences without being judgemental towards ourselves. We need to re-discover the difference between self-compassion, self-pity and self-confidence. Through mindfulness we can focus on the responsibility of self-care, in order to take care of loved ones, and the community in general.

"Every time we are truly mindful, we nourish the precious intention to care for ourselves and for other people." (Teasdale, Williams and Segal).