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Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy: An Introduction COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

THIS COURSE IS APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELORS
(NBCC) FOR FIVE (5) HOURS OF ONLINE CONTINUING EDUCATION



The Mindful Ecotherapy Center has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 7022. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. The Mindful Ecotherapy Center is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs offered.

Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy: An Introduction

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy combines the skills of mindfulness with the healing power of nature.

MBE is used as a framework for helping individuals and families to find deeper connections in their own lives, and to give more meaning and enjoyment to the activities of daily living. By re-integrating ourselves with nature, we can tap into nature's healing power and to heal the earth as we heal ourselves.

The Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Workbook and the Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Workshop series were developed by Charlton Hall as a 12-week program to help individuals re-connect with the healing power of nature. The series meets once per week for 90 minutes, usually in an outdoor setting. The first six sessions cover the skills of mindfulness, and the next six sessions cover integrating mindful skills into ecotherapy. The six mindful skills are about "what" to do, and the six ecotherapy skills are about "how" to do it.

Each of the twelve sessions covers a distinct skill that builds on previous skills and provides activities and interventions that can be used in both group and individual therapy sessions.

ABOUT CERTIFICATION IN MINDFULNESS-BASED ECOTHERAPY

This *Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy: An Introduction* course is an introductory course to the skills and techniques of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE). It is an overview of the skills of the program for mental health professionals. If you are interested in learning how to implement your own Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy program, you may be interested in becoming a Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Certified Facilitator. Details are available at www.mindfulecotherapy.org

Outline/Overview of the Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) Program

Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy consists of 12 skill sets. The Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy program is a 12-week program, with one session per week. At each session, one of the 12 skills of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy is discussed and practiced. The skills of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) include:

Session 1: Mindful Awareness

Mindful Awareness is a way of tuning in to what is happening right now, at this moment. It is a shift from doing mode into being mode. Mindful Awareness involves the skills of Observing, Describing, Fully Participating, Being Non-Judgmental, Focusing on One Thing at a Time, and the Power of Intention. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches you these skills.

Session 2: Radical Acceptance

Mindful Awareness teaches us the art of acceptance. Emotional reactions to our circumstances are natural, but that doesn't mean that we have to respond to these emotions. The mindfulness skill of acceptance teaches us that we can experience these emotions without engaging in cycles of behavior that lead us to negative consequences. Acceptance teaches us that we are not our thoughts, and that we are not our emotions. At any time we can choose which thoughts and emotions we wish to respond to. If, at any time, we should engage in thoughts and behaviors that lead to negative consequences, this does not mean that we have become bad persons. This simply means that we are human beings, and as humans we are entitled to make mistakes. Each mistake is an opportunity for growth and learning. Forgiveness is a skill and an art. The place to start with learning the art of forgiveness is in learning first to forgive ourselves when we make mistakes. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches you the art of Radical Acceptance.

Session 3: Wise Mind and Wise Body

When you are being logical, rational, and devoid of emotion, you are said to be in Rational Mind. When you are allowing your thoughts to be driven by your emotions, you are said to be in Emotional Mind. The idea of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy is to achieve Wise Mind. The Mindfulness concept of Wise Mind is the joining of Rational Mind and Emotional Mind in perfect balance and harmony. It is a moving beyond opposites to a mindful state of acceptance. Likewise, when we come to realize that there is no line between mind and body, and that they are one and the same, we are able to move beyond the duality that implies that mind and body are separate entities. From there we see that the body can change the mind, and the mind can change the body. Wise Mind is the first step to living in True Self. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) gives you some of the tools you will need to help you develop your own Wise Mind and your own Wise Body.

Session 4: Letting Go

The art of Mindful Acceptance can best be described as the Art of Letting Go. Once you have done everything in your power to solve a problem, you have done all you can, so at that point worry and stress is counterproductive. Note that letting go of the stress and anxiety doesn't necessarily mean letting go of the problem itself. For example, suppose you have a car payment coming up, and you don't have the money to pay it. This would naturally cause you anxiety. If,

after brainstorming for solutions, you find that you still don't have the money to pay the car payment, then at that point you've done all you can do. So at that point, you let go of the anxiety associated with the problem. That doesn't mean that you let go of car payments altogether. You'll make the payment when you can. In this instance, "letting go" just means that you won't worry about not being able to make the payment. The energy you might have used worrying about the situation could be put to better use in trying to come up with solutions. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches us how to let go through the power of radical acceptance.

Session 5: Living in the Now

Living in the Now means leaving Doing Mode and entering Being Mode. In Being Mode we learn that there is no past, there is no future. There is only this present moment. Living in the Now means allowing yourself to be in this moment...here and now. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches you the skills of Living in the Now.

Session 6: Centering

Centering yourself is allowing yourself to get in touch with and being open to your True Self. It is allowing yourself to realize that you are perfect just as you are, even with your imperfections, because those feelings and desires are also a part of who you really are. If you accept your imperfections and integrate them into your way of thinking and feeling about yourself, you will obtain peace of mind, and you will be centered. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches you how to Center.

Session 7: Connecting

Suppose you could take all the spiritual paths practiced worldwide, put them into a cauldron, and boil them down to their essence. What would remain? I believe that the common thread to all spiritual practices is a feeling of connection. In this sense, spirituality means connection to others, or connection to the divine, or simply connection to nature and to ourselves. In short: spirituality is connectedness. If you think back on the spiritual experiences you've had in your lifetime, do recall feeling connected on some level? Many describe spiritual experiences as a sense of oneness. Oneness implies connection to something outside ourselves. In this sense, even an agnostic or an atheist could achieve spirituality through connection. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) can be one of the paths you use to re-connect to spirit.

Session 8: Nature as Metaphor

Each of us lives in our own personal fairy tale called "my life." We all have good things that happen to us, and we all have bad things that happen to us. We create our own personal myths by choosing which things to focus on in our own lives. The good news about the myth of our lives is that we are the authors. If we don't like the way the story is going, we have the power to do a rewrite at any time. We can't always choose the circumstances of our lives, but we can always choose the story we create about those circumstances. If you go out into the woods and start observing things, you will notice something begin to happen. You will begin to create stories about the events you observe there in the forest. These stories that spring to mind in the woods can tell you a great deal about what is going on in your own unconscious mind, if you

know how to pay attention to them. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches you how to pay attention to those stories.

Session 9: Nature as Teacher

Our ancestors knew hundreds of medicinal uses of local plants and herbs. They knew the seasons, when to plant, when to harvest, how to forecast the weather by the behavior of plants and animals, and a host of other things based on their observations of nature. The lessons our ancestors learned haven't gone away. They're still there, waiting in the forest like an open book. All we need to do is to learn how to read it. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) teaches us the language of nature so that we may read its "book."

Session 10: Nature as Nurture

A large and growing body of research has demonstrated that nature has incredible healing and nurturing powers. People who go into the woods become calmer, more relaxed, less stressful, and healthier. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) can be used to tap into the nurturing power of nature.

Session 11: Nature as Healer

Research continues to demonstrate the healing power of nature. People in hospital rooms that have windows overlooking a garden recover faster than those who do not. People who swim with dolphins recover from depression more quickly than people who take antidepressants. Children with ADHD who play outdoors regularly display fewer symptoms than those who do not. These are just a few examples of the many beneficial effects of the healing power of nature. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) helps you to connect to this healing power

Session 12: Living in True Self

Do you remember a time when you knew exactly who you were, what you wanted to be, and where your life was going? When you do something that isn't healthy for you, or make a mistake, which part of you is it that recognizes the mistake? What part of you is it that holds the highest dreams and aspirations for your life? Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) recognizes that part of you as your True Self. The goal of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy (MBE) is to realize your True Self, and to live in it. Doing so allows you the opportunity to re-connect in positive ways with nature, with others, and with yourself.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, the student will be able to:

- Discuss the mindful concept of Mindful Awareness
- Discuss and describe the mindful concept of Radical Acceptance
- Discuss and describe the mindful concepts of Wise Mind and Wise Body
- Discuss and describe the mindful concept of Letting Go
- Discuss and describe the mindful concept of Living in the Now
- Discuss and describe the mindful concept of centering
- Discuss and describe the mindful concept of connecting
- Discuss and describe the ecotherapy concept of Nature as Metaphor
- Discuss and describe the ecotherapy concept of Nature as Teacher
- Discuss and describe the ecotherapy concept of Nature as Nurture
- Discuss and describe the ecotherapy concept of Nature as Healer
- Discuss and describe the concept of Living in True Self
- Be able to successfully describe and explain all 12 skills of the Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Program

Course Format

This is a self-directed online introductory course in Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy. This course is NOT a part of the requirements to become a certified Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Facilitator. That is a separate program. This course is an overview of the program for those interested in more information on the Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy program.

DISCLAIMER

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All course materials are evidence-based, with clearly defined learning objectives, references and citations, and post-course evaluations. Upon request a copy of this information and a course description containing objectives, course description, references and citations will be given to you for your local licensing board. All online courses and webinars contain course objectives, references and citations as a part of the course materials; however, it is your responsibility to check with your local licensing board for suitability for continuing education credit if your licensing board does not recognize National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) approval. No warranty is expressed or implied as to approval regarding jurisdictions outside of the United States or its territories or for organizations that do not accept NBCC approval for continuing education courses.

Instructor Qualifications and Contact Information

This course was created by Charlton Hall, MMFT, CHt. Charlton Hall is the Executive Director of the Mindful Ecotherapy Center.

Charlton Hall, MMFT, CHt is a former Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor (now retired from that role) and retired Registered Play Therapy Supervisor. Chuck's area of research and interest is using Mindfulness and Ecotherapy to facilitate acceptance and change strategies within a family systemic framework, and he has presented research at several conferences and seminars on this and other topics.

Charlton (Chuck) Hall is a retired Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, a former (now retired) Registered Play Therapy Supervisor, a Certified Hypnotherapist, and a PhD candidate in Transpersonal Psychology (ABD). Chuck's area of research and interest is using Mindfulness and Ecotherapy to facilitate acceptance and change strategies within a family systemic framework, and he has presented research at several conferences and seminars on this and other topics. He facilitates workshops on mindfulness and ecotherapy throughout the world. Chuck's approach to therapy involves helping individuals and families to facilitate change through mindfulness and ecotherapy techniques in a non-judgmental, patient-centered, positive environment.

CREDENTIALS

- Bachelor of Science in Experimental Psychology
- Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Two-Year Post-Graduate Fellowship in Mindfulness, Ecotherapy and the Family System
- Retired Marriage and Family Therapist
- Retired Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor
- Former Registered Play Therapy Supervisor (now retired)
- Certified Hypnotist with the National Board of Professional and Ethical Standards
- Certified Hypnotherapist with the National Board of Professional and Ethical Standards
- Certified Non-violent Crisis Intervention Trainer/Instructor through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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