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## MSC: Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher Training

15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 arriving 3-5pm to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021  
departing after lunch.

Led by Ali Lambie and Vanessa Hope

Delivered by the Center for Mindful-Self-Compassion  
<https://centerformsc.org/course/msc-teacher-training-15/>

Hosted by Sussex Mindfulness Centre, part of Sussex Partnership NHS  
Foundation Trust, at the beautiful Ammerdown retreat centre near Bath  
<http://www.ammerdown.org>

“For someone to develop genuine compassion towards others, first he or she must have a basis upon which to cultivate compassion, and that basis is the ability to connect to one’s own feelings and to care for one’s own welfare... Caring for others requires caring for oneself.”

—Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama



Vanessa Hope

Vanessa Hope has been practicing yoga and meditation since 1980 and currently studies with a Zen teacher. She previously practised as a Homeopath for 18 years and became a lecturer,

supervisor and assessor for both students and practitioners. She now works full-time as a Mindfulness & Mindful Self-compassion Teacher & Trainer.

Since 2001, Vanessa has taught Mindfulness courses for a wide range of groups including over 60s, low-income groups, social workers, council staff, carers, mental health groups and clinical professionals. She is a member of the core team for the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor and taught on their MSc in Mindfulness-Based Approaches for 5 years. She also facilitates Professional Training Programmes and acts as a supervisor and assessor for the Mindfulness Network.

There are two chapters by Vanessa in Sarah Silverton's book 'The Mindfulness Breakthrough' republished as 'The Mindfulness Key' and translated into 8 languages.

Vanessa has always felt kindness and compassion to be at the heart of mindfulness, so in 2014 she trained to teach the Mindful Self-Compassion Course with Chris Germer and Kristin Neff and is now enjoying this deeply rewarding work as a teacher, mentor and teacher trainer of MSC.



Ali Lambie

Ali Lambie has an MSc in Teaching Mindfulness-Based Approaches from the University of Bangor. Prior to training as a mindfulness teacher she was a counsellor for many years and manager of a counselling service within the NHS for the last eight of those. She is a Certified Teacher, Mentor and Teacher Trainer of MSC and this work is her passion.

These days she is fully self-employed teaching MSC and MBSR to general populations and in workplace settings where she lives in the south of England. She also runs several ongoing monthly groups, regular day and weekend retreats as well as 5-day MSC intensives and silent retreats further afield.

Ali enjoys supporting other teachers as a supervisor and MSC consultation host and often has newer teachers working alongside her too. She has a deep love of the countryside and part of her practice is mindful walking in the woods each day.

**M**SC Teacher Training is an intensive, 6-day, residential program facilitated by a team of senior MSC teachers. The training is built around the eight weekly sessions of MSC with each half day dedicated to a condensed, experiential review of one of the sessions, followed by small group activities designed to give attendees opportunities to practice teaching, guiding and facilitating discussion in that session with the close consultation of one of the Teacher Trainers. In addition, the training includes short talks, group exercises, discussion, and periods of silence. Participants will be provided with the essential materials to teach MSC programs.

## Objectives

At the completion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Deepen one's personal practice of responding to difficult emotions with mindfulness and compassion
- Summarize current basic theory and research on self-compassion
- Identify the core themes and practices presented in each of the eight group sessions of MSC, plus the retreat day
- Develop the skills necessary to facilitate MSC groups, including how to guide meditation, teach from each participant's direct experience, and facilitate group cohesion
- Identify obstacles to mindful self-compassion practice and strategies for overcoming them
- Embody a mindful and compassionate stance toward students of the MSC program as they confront challenges to their practice

## Target Audience

This 6-day intensive is intended for those who wish to teach the MSC program, those who would like to integrate mindfulness and self-compassion in their ongoing professional activities (i.e., psychotherapy, coaching, nursing, teaching, etc.), and individuals who have a professional interest in the field (i.e., researchers, administrators, etc.).



Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) is an empirically-supported 8-week program designed to cultivate the skill of self-compassion. Based on pioneering research by Kristin Neff and integrated with the clinical perspective of Christopher Germer, MSC teaches core principles and practices that enable participants to respond to difficult emotions with care and understanding.

The three key components of self-compassion are self-kindness, a sense of common humanity, and balanced, mindful awareness. Kindness opens our hearts to suffering, so we can give ourselves what we need. Common humanity opens us to others, so that we know we aren't alone. Mindfulness opens us to the present moment, so we can accept our experience with greater ease. Together they comprise a state of warmhearted, connected, presence during difficult moments in our lives.

Self-compassion can be learned by anyone, even those who didn't receive enough affection in childhood or who feel uncomfortable when they are good to themselves. It's a courageous attitude that stands up to harm, including the harm that we inflict on ourselves through self-criticism, self-denial, or self-absorption. Self-compassion provides emotional strength and resilience, allowing us to admit our shortcomings, forgive ourselves, motivate ourselves with kindness, care for others, and be fully human.

Rapidly expanding research clearly demonstrates that self-compassion is related to emotional wellbeing, lower anxiety and depression, maintenance of healthy habits such as diet and exercise, and more satisfying personal relationships.

## Trained Teacher Designation

The purpose of the 6-day Teacher Training is to establish a basic level of training and proficiency sufficient to begin offering the program to the general public. To receive MSC Trained Teacher status, graduates of the Teacher Training are also expected to receive consultation while teaching at least one 8-week MSC program, either by co-facilitating with a certified MSC teacher or through online group consultation offered through the Center for MSC. All Trained Teachers are eligible to be listed on the Center for MSC website in a Directory of Trained Teachers.

## Teacher Certification

Trained Teacher status is a key step toward Certification. Certification is a process of ensuring that an individual has achieved full competency through experience, training and supervision over a period of time and practice. The UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness offers certification in conjunction with the Center for Mindful Self-Compassion. Please see our MSC Certification Pathway if you have further questions about Certification.

## Teacher Training

The MSC program has been in development since 2009, and a MSC training manual and workbook have been recently published (see below in Reading).

## Course Pre-Requisites

### Personal Skills

- Established daily mindfulness practice of at least two years.
- Ongoing, daily, sitting meditation practice
- Ongoing practice of loving-kindness and self-compassion in daily life
- Attendance in at least one 5-day silent, teacher-led meditation retreat

### Professional Skills

- Previous participation in a five-day or eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) Training
- Experience teaching meditation in groups, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, or in clinical settings
- You do not have to be a clinician to take the MSC Teacher Training

Please Note . . .

- You must allow at least six months to elapse between completing your MSC course and beginning Teacher Training. This will allow you to reflect on whether you really want to begin the teaching journey. However, you may register for teacher training at any time after you complete the MSC course.
- We strongly recommend that the silent, teacher-led meditation retreat be completed more than two months prior to your attendance at the Teacher Training.
- You do not have to be a mental health clinician to take the MSC Teacher Training.
- Upon completion of the MSC Teacher Training, participants receive a Certificate of Attendance from the Center for MSC stating that he or she has attended the Teacher Training in its entirety and can start teaching MSC as a Teacher Trainee.

## Required reading

Please read the following prior to attending the training. All books are available on our Amazon Bookshelf.

- *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength , and Thrive* by *Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer*
- *Teaching the Mindful Self-Compassion Program: A Guide for Professionals* by *Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer*
- *On Becoming a MSC Teacher: A Mountaineer’s Guide to Building the Resource of Mindful Self-Compassion* by *Christine Braehler, Steven D. Hickman, and Christopher Germer*
- *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* by *Kristin Neff*
- *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions* by *Christopher Germer*

## Recommended Reading

- *Wisdom and Compassion in Psychotherapy* by *Christopher Germer and Ronald Siegel*
- *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy – Second Edition* by *Christopher Germer, Ronald Siegel and Paul Fulton*
- *The Compassionate Mind* by *Paul Gilbert*

- *The Mindfulness Solution* by *Ronald Siegel*
- *Self-Compassion: Step by Step*. CD set by *Kristin Neff*

## Teaching MSC

The MSC program is ideally led by two instructors. This model enables one instructor to monitor the emotional needs of individual participants while the other is teaching. Self-compassion can activate strong emotions, sometimes including relational pain dating back to childhood. We therefore recommend that one of the teachers, or an assistant to the MSC teacher, be a licensed mental health clinician. We realize that some groups may have members with relatively minor emotional needs, or be too small to require two teachers, so please use your own judgment about how to provide a safe and supportive learning environment.

## Participant Guidelines

Our ability to teach others depends largely on discovering the power of self-compassion in our own lives and embodying the practice. Since the core principles and practices of the MSC program are taught through experiential learning, participants are encouraged to focus on their felt experience during teacher training. Ample time will also be allocated for professional dialogue and the nuts and bolts of teaching.

The MSC program is a journey - an adventure in self-discovery and self-kindness. Loving-kindness and self-compassion training helps us soothe and comfort ourselves as it paradoxically reveals emotional distress we may have been unconsciously holding inside, often for many years. Therefore, some difficult emotions are likely to surface as we grow in our capacity to embrace them. This is intrinsic to the process of emotional transformation through self-compassion.

Self-compassion thrives in an environment of safety, support, privacy, individual responsibility, and a common commitment to presence and compassion. Self-compassion practice should also be easy and enjoyable. The teacher trainers are dedicated to creating such a learning atmosphere for all workshop participants and their future students.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I get to the venue ?**

This is the link to the venue: <http://www.ammerdown.org/> and directions are here: <http://ammerdown.org/how-to-find-us>. If you need additional accommodation or advice on transport, please contact the venue.

### **What time should I plan to arrive? When do we finish?**

We will begin checking people in from 3-5pm on the first day of the training. We ask that you plan on arriving between 3pm and 5pm so that we can begin with the full group in attendance at dinnertime. We plan to end the retreat by 2pm on the last day so please plan your travel accordingly, using the time guidelines above. Sometimes situations arise in which people have to leave the retreat earlier than noon on the last day but we strongly urge you to avoid this if at all possible.

### **Is there wireless service/cellular phone use?**

Free WiFi is available throughout the centre, accessed by a password which is displayed in the meeting rooms, information folders in bedroom or from the receptionist at the main reception desk. As the centre is in a rural area, sometimes the download bandwidth can be a bit slow, especially if lots of people are trying to download all at the same time. It is most advisable to leave your computer at home because of the retreat nature of the training; however we recognize that sometimes computer use is a necessity.

Mobile/cell phone signal is patchy and depends which network you are on. Most people are able to get a signal from the car park or just at the top of the main drive while some lucky people can get a signal in the centre! Again, however given the nature of the training there will be limited opportunities to use them, so informing those who may need to contact you of these limitations ahead of time will be helpful.

### **Is it possible to stay extra nights at the facility or arrive a day or two early?**

Depending on availability, the centre may be able to offer bed and breakfast. If they are full then there are a few local places they can recommend. Please contact [bookings@ammerdown.org](mailto:bookings@ammerdown.org) for further information.

### **What do I need to bring?**

If it is at all possible, please bring a meditation cushion (zafu) and a yoga mat. The centre has a few cushions but not enough to go around, and no mats, so if you use these items and can squeeze it into your luggage or bring it as a carry-on please consider doing so. It is always advisable to check the weather forecast prior to traveling, to help guide you in proper clothing choices.

### **Can I keep items securely ?**



Every bedroom has a lockable door and each guest will have a key for their own room. The main centre has the front door and back on a timer lock so when the reception desk is not manned it is locked. This means people who aren't staying will have to ring a bell to gain access. Guests have a fob on their room key which will open the door for them. We recommend leaving valuable items at home to reduce the possibility of anything being lost or stolen.

**What should I expect regarding the format of the training?**

This training is taught in a retreat format, which means there is a great deal of mindfulness practice embedded in the training, and we want to reiterate that now so you are not surprised when you get here. The venue very much facilitates this format; we will meet, eat and be housed in a relatively secluded area.

**What are the accommodation options?**

We are hoping to be able to accommodate everyone in solo occupancy rooms. All rooms are ensuite except for three single rooms and these rooms have wash basin and toilet, and access to shower rooms a few footsteps away. If you would like one of these three rooms or would like to share in a twin or double room, please specify in your application and there is a reduced fee for these options. Each bedroom has a desk and chair, a comfy chair, a hospitality tray and storage for clothes and personal items. Linen and towels are provided.

**What should I read prior to arriving?**

As above in the "Required Reading" section.

**What if I require some special accommodations or have dietary restrictions?**

While you are asked to note specific food restrictions on your registration application, if there are any additional food or medical concerns we should be aware of please let us know of these in advance so we may assist you.

Ammerdown regularly cater for vegetarians, vegans, people who are gluten free, coeliacs, have dairy intolerance, allergies to specific foods ie nuts, tomatoes etc.

There is only an additional charge if there are diets that are very complex or require special ingredients that would incur additional costs. The venue also cannot cater for anyone with a very severe allergy where a small trace may prove fatal as they cannot guarantee that there won't be traces of allergens on foods that have been brought in.

**What is the tentative schedule for the training?**

The tentative schedule is as follows:

**Day One**

Registration: 5.00-6.00 pm

Dinner: 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm  
First Session: 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

### **Day Two-Six**

Optional Morning Practice: 7:00 am – 8:00 am  
Morning Session: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm  
Lunch: 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
Afternoon Session: 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm  
Dinner: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm  
Evening Session: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

### **Day Seven**

Optional Morning Practice: 7:00 am – 8:00 am  
Final Session: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

## **Payments and applications:**

Enquiries can be made via [smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk).

### Total payments on or before 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (early bird rate):

Single occupancy room: £1,400pp

Shared (either twin or double) occupancy: £1,300pp

(please state which option you want and if there is anyone you want to share with)

### On or after 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Single occupancy room: £1,700pp

Shared (either twin or double) occupancy: £1,600pp

(please state which option you want and if there is anyone you want to share with)

Please be aware that the early-bird rate is available for all participants who register and pay their balance in full by the early-bird deadline (*by 5pm on 17th July 2020*). The balance for all early-bird rate participants who pay the deposit before 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 but pay the balance after that date will be calculated using the early bird rates.

All balances must be paid in full by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 or your registration will be cancelled, your deposit will not be refunded, and you will not be able to attend. Staged payments are acceptable. However a non-refundable and non-transferable minimum deposit of £500 is due upon registration.

## **Cancellation Policy**

A refund (minus your non-refundable and non-transferable deposit) will be made for cancellations submitted in writing before 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. No refunds will be allowed after that date.

In the unlikely event that the course is cancelled, Sussex Mindfulness Centre is responsible only for a full refund of the registration fee and not for transportation, hotel accommodations or any miscellaneous expenses.

## **Application Process**

- 1) Submit your registration form and pay the £500 non-refundable deposit. This is available from available from <https://sussexmindfulnesscentre.nhs.uk/train-to-teach-mindfulness/> Or <https://sussexmindfulnesscentre.nhs.uk/events/compassion-oriented-events/>.
- 2) Once these have been received, you will receive a confirmation email which will include a longer online MSC Teacher Training Application. This application includes a brief 200-word essay where you can share your reasons for taking the training and your reflections on the essay.
- 3) If your qualifications are not accepted, a full refund will be granted. If your application is approved, the relevant balance of your payment will need to be made. The amount depends on the date you apply (before or after the early bird rate) and the type of accommodation you choose (single or shared). When this payment is received, you will receive final confirmation of your place from Sussex Mindfulness Centre.

## **Bursary places**

We would like to make this training available to as many people as possible and there is a very limited number of bursaries. Applicants for the bursaries are asked to register for the training, pay the deposit (ie stage 1 above) and at the same time submit a required one-page essay to SMC at [smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:smc@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk) which should address the following questions:

- Why do you wish to attend this training, and what are the specific financial or other barriers to your attending?
- How do you imagine implementing or integrating MSC into your life?

Decisions about the award of a bursary place will be made near to the start of the training. The amount of reduction in fee available will depend on the number of other applications received. Bursaries are very unlikely to be for less than the deposit amount. The initial deposit will be refundable for scholarship applicants who do not receive an award.