

Mindfulness and sustainability at the crossroads: towards mindfulness curricula for human and planetary wellbeing and transformation

Supplementary Material

1 Supplementary course information

1.1 Mindfulness-based sustainable transformation (ST)

Target Audience: Mindfulness Teachers and Practitioners, Change-Makers, Sustainability Experts, Consultants, Facilitators, Coaches

Participants: up to 40

Sessions: each 2 hours

Main Goal: To bridge the gap between inner awareness and outer action to better understand and support sustainable transformation across scales.

Related Teacher Training: Those having gone through this program are invited to deepen their understanding by participation in the related Inner Green Deal (IGD) Teacher Training, a mindfulness-based sustainable transformation program.

Delivery: 2021 (5 pilots), 2022 (2 programs), 2023 (2 programs), 2024 (1 program); 2025 (2 programs).

Overview of modules:

Modules	Problem addressed	Goals of session	Session and home practice examples	Transformative qualities/ capacities (Dimensions of the IDGs)
Module 1: Welcome Welcome and Introduction	The root cause of the current predicament – crisis of relationship	Individual level - Clarifying the intention - Onboarding on App and learning Platform - Conducting pre-survey* - Creating space in one's own life Collective Level - Getting to know and connecting with participants and trainers - Plenary sessions sharing of wisdom & insights Systems level - Understanding the crisis of relationship, Understanding the barriers of the mind and why mindfulness plays a crucial role for a sustainable transformation - Bringing spaciousness to the Ecosystem	- Mindfulness-based practice “Breathing Space”: focus on the process of inhalation and exhalation, fostering a sense of interconnectedness with the greenery that provides oxygen - Nature-based practice: each module has a specific focus on how to connect with nature, e.g., spending time in nature, developing a new relational view through nature, seeing the beauty of nature, understanding the systemic principals in nature - Reflection practice about habit change; a handprint habit. The handprint approach is the opposite of the footprint approach. It is about doing more of what is working in the realm of sustainability behaviours, strengthen them and bring them to your context and ecosystem. - Journaling	- Awareness (Being) - Purpose - Action, implementing a habit of creating space (in our mind, body, time schedule, etc.) needed for transformation

Module 2: The awake Mind	- Climate crisis and its consequences - Denial strategies - Lack of awareness due to perception errors and biases impacts the ability to relate to the climate crisis, nature, and us	Individual Level - Seeing reality as it is (the state of our planet, noticing biases) - Understanding how awareness is linked to sustainability - Seeing with new eyes through gratitude for what we have - Learning about self-regulation and habit change Collective level - Imagining a future for all - Sharing insights and collectively see what's emerging Systems level - Bringing gratitude to what the system provides Learning to see the whole system - Planting the "first seeds" within one's ecosystem	- Mindfulness-based practices: body scan and gratitude meditation (linking inner and outer dimensions) - Dyads and/or small-group reflections: barriers to habit change "Immunity to change": how to create space for helpful habit's - Guided nature walk (1): connecting with one's senses - Journaling	- Awareness (Being) - Insight (Thinking, critical thinking) - Connection (Relating), deep listening in breakouts and whole group
Module 3: Intelligence of emotions	- Unawareness of emotions and their impact on our action or inaction - Climate anxiety can negatively affect adequate and sustained engagement in pro-environmental actions across scales	Individual level - Learning how to cultivate empathy, awareness, and resilience as a way to explore and regulate the full range of emotions relating to the climate crisis, - Experiencing the intelligence of such emotions. - Experiencing the connection to oneself, others, and nature as a whole - Learning to take care of oneself and to understand the options how to embrace and lessen eco anxiety - Becoming aware of inner judgemental voices, stopping oneself from pro-environmental actions, lack of courage and confidence Collective level - Becoming aware of the collective narratives and their emotional impact - Understanding collectively shared emotional states Systems level - Understanding that individual emotions can reflect the emotional state of the system - Seeing how we are inseparable from the system	- Mindfulness-based practice: self-compassion/ taking care of oneself - Guided nature walk (2): nature as a teacher, what principals does nature have that can be applied to our life? - Dyads and/or small-group reflections: emotions related to the state of the planet and our shared humanity - Habit change: how to bring self-compassion into one's own life as well as workplace (mindfulness and compassion as a way of living and acting in the world - Journaling	- Awareness (Being) - Connection (Relating) - Action, integrating habits of care
Module 4: My calling and contribution	Feeling overwhelmed/ lacking confidence to address the climate crisis adequately (informed by a limited view of ourselves in relation to the collective and systems)	Individual level - Learning how to cultivate perspective-taking (stepping into the shoes of others) and (environmental) compassion - Clarifying one's own calling and contribution of how to contribute to the healing of this planet Collective Level - Compassion as a healing way to relate caringly to oneself and others - Noticing the place from which we act individually as well as collectively in relation to the polycrisis Systems level - Experiencing how the relationship to internal and external events impacts wellbeing of oneself and the world at large	- Mindfulness- and compassion-based practices: environmental compassion for oneself, other beings and nature - Visioning exercise using the Wheel of Realization (Calling): Indigenous practice connected to the Medicine Wheel, which illustrates the natural flow of life, nature, and energy. Guided nature walk (3): state of the planet, connect to what needs to heal in nature - Dyads exploration: the nature of self /shared humanity, going through the Wheel of realization - Habit change: what to let go off to let the Calling/ the role you want to play unfold - Journaling	- Purpose (Being) - Connection (Relating) - Insight (Thinking)
Module 5: Self-Efficacy & Systems Thinking	- Gap in understanding the broader perspective on actions to address climate change - Lack of understanding of ecosystems and their implications for	Individual level - Further exploring one's own purpose and potential role in effectively addressing climate change Collective Level - Collectively sharing experiences from linear to circular ways of seeing, sensing and acting Systems Level	- Mindfulness -based open awareness practice (linking inner and outer) - Guided nature walk (4): further elaboration of one's role and calling in addressing the climate crisis - Drawing one's own Ecosystem Map (linking inner and outer)	Bringing Awareness and Purpose (Being), Insight (Thinking), Connection (Relating) and Acting together

	impactful climate action	- Understanding the paradigm shift from linear reductive approaches to circular living system logics. - Complexity and systems thinking, sensing and feeling Exploring the difference between system thinking and sensing the system	- Linking Calling, Ecosystem Map and Action together (Handprint habit/project) - Habit change exercise: Inviting the Ecosystem to integrate certain habits - Journaling	
Module 6: Collaborate to solve complex problems	- Lack of understanding of integrative approaches that link inner and outer transformation - Lack of understanding that complex problems need collective intelligence to be addressed in a meaningful way	Individual level - Becoming aware of the inner-to-outer shift achieved so far - Understanding the abilities and inner work required for radical collaboration, while still fostering a supportive safe environment Collective level - Initiating activities within one's own ecosystem by drawing on the talents and competencies of the participant group. Systems level - Understanding the impacts on the climate crisis once all participants apply changes within their ecosystems.	- Mindfulness- and compassion-based practices: Deep listening (Listening from a place of non-judgement) and mindful speaking (speaking from the heart and using narratives that support positive change). Becoming aware of the Interbeing - Collaborative thinking and sharing talents and competencies of the participants supporting each other's projects within the ecosystem - Becoming aware that each ecosystem has an inner and outer layer (actions and interactions on system level) - Guided nature walk (5): Visualizing one's project coming to life. - Journaling	Linking previous clusters increasingly with Action and Collaboration, supporting each other for meaningful actions within ecosystems
Module 7: Moving to action	- Lack of networks and communities to sustain transformative actions - Lack of understanding of how our cultural narratives shape the world - Lack of storytelling abilities can lead to polarization - Lack of understanding of social tipping points leads to missed opportunities for timely intervention	Individual Level - Create stories that can help shift the mindset of an ecosystem - Develop stories that are experienced as invitations rather than as obligations or activism Collective level - Helping each other shaping the story to be brought to their ecosystem Systems Level - Understanding how storytelling shapes our systems, history, and future	- Mindfulness-based practice: Warrior Exercise (360 Degree presence) - Sending a letter to our grandchildren sharing our Handprint, behaviours and actions within our ecosystem, explaining the needed inner-outer transformation as well as the world we envision for them - Journaling	Action, Linking previous clusters increasingly with individual and collective Agency
Module 8 Summary - Linking individual, collective, and system transformation	- Polycrisis and metacrisis - Climate change as an interconnected sustainability crisis	Individual level - Integrating inner and outer transformation toward sustainability - Reflecting on the learning journey – which inner dimensions and habits have I learned to embody during these modules? - Completing the post-course survey Collective level - Observing how the group's energy, ways of being, thinking, and acting have shifted Systems level - Recognizing how interdependence and impermanence can shift systems toward resilience, compassion, and long-term sustainability	- Council practice (an indigenous practice of sitting in a circle and sharing from the heart): participants share the envisioned future of their own activities within the ecosystem, express their fears and joys, and reflect on the inner qualities that help connect the inner and outer - Journaling	All clusters

1.2 Mindfulness-based sustainable transformation (ST) – Teacher Training

Target Audience: Mindfulness Teachers and Practitioners, Change-Makers, Sustainability Experts, Consultants, Facilitators, Coaches

Participants: Up to 40

Main Goal: To learn how to facilitate integrated inner-outer transformation. Deepen the understanding of how to bridge the gap between inner awareness and outer action to better support sustainable transformation across scales. To bring the Inner Green Deal's Journey to other communities – creating a worldwide web of trainers delivering inner-led change.

Delivery: 2024-2025 first cohort. Second will start autumn 2025.

The teacher training consists of:

- 2 introductory sessions (kick-off), each 4 hours
- 8 module sessions, each 3 hours
- 4 closing sessions, each 4 hours
- 3 optional mindfulness sessions (to deepen the practices, the link between mindfulness and sustainability, and learning to guide related practices)
- 2 optional nature walk sessions (learning how to guide nature walks, sharing exercises that deepen the understanding of how nature can teach us about systems change and connecting to nature on a deeper level)

Throughout the eight core modules, the focus remains on participants' personal learning, deepening their understanding of each module and inner-led change more broadly, while engaging in an individual handprint project to gain increased practical experience. Additionally, each module enhances the participants' teaching skills and nurtures the capacities and qualities necessary for bringing the program into their own communities. The so-called (Un-)Learning Groups play a crucial role in this process. They provide a space where participants teach each other the modules, receive feedback, and reflect on their teaching abilities. In the final modules, the teacher community comes together to learn from, and celebrate, their handprint projects. Each presenter receives feedback on how ripple effects within their respective ecosystems could be strengthened.

Overview of modules:

Additional modules	Problem addressed	Goals of session	Session and home practice examples	Transformative qualities/ capacities (Dimensions of the IDGs)
Introductory Kick-off Session 1: Welcome Welcome and Introduction	• The root cause of the current predicament – crisis of relationship	• Getting to know, and connecting with participants and trainers • Clarifying the purpose of the program • Onboarding on App and Course Learning Platform • Conducting pre-survey • Understanding the crisis of relationship, understanding the barriers of the mind and why mindfulness plays a crucial role for sustainable transformation • Shared understanding about the skills, values and qualities of an Inner Green Deal Trainer	• Mindfulness-based breathing practices • Journaling • Embodied intention practice	• Awareness (Being) • Purpose (Being) • Connection (Relating)
Introductory Kick-off Session 2: Welcome and Introduction	• Lack of understanding of how to live with uncertainty from a sustainability perspective • Lack of understanding of the inner–outer Handprint Approach and the accompanying mindset for sustainable transformation	• Seeing reality as it is • Understanding why and how mindfulness and sustainability are interconnected • Building (Un-)Learning groups • Understanding the structure of the teacher trainings • Understanding the requirements	• Deepening mindfulness-based practices • Embodiment practice: Our human hand (inner and outer) • Guided nature walk (1): Connecting with one's senses • Journaling	• Awareness (Being) • Insight (Thinking; critical thinking) • Connection (Relating): deep listening in breakouts and whole group
Module Sessions (Modules 1-8; see previous table) Handprint projects	• Lack of knowledge on how to link inner-led change with meaningful outer actions, projects, or activities • Lack of understanding of comprehensive inner–outer transformation education (cf. the Educational Tree by Prof. Christine Wamsler), including the qualities needed to facilitate sustainable change	• Learning to give precise feedback and suggest ideas for how the impact within the ecosystem could generate further ripple effects • Summarizing the qualities needed—and experienced during the teacher training—to facilitate change, create a safe space, and cultivate a non-judgmental mindset	• See previous and next table for details	• All clusters

Closing sessions	Recognizing the importance of community support and collective intelligence in overcoming immunity and resistance to change and fostering impactful action	- Last Q&A - Outlook – how we continue as a community	Mindfulness- and compassion-based practices	All clusters
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Further details on the practices, exercises and the pedagogical approaches used to support the eight module sessions:

Module	Exercises	Pedagogical Methods
Module 1	- Mindfulness-based practice “Breathing Space”: focus on the process of inhalation and exhalation, fostering a sense of interconnectedness, e.g., with the greenery that provides oxygen - Deepening the understanding of the current crisis and it’s root causes - Inquiry: Experience in the field of mindfulness and sustainable transformation - Journaling: writing intuitively, letting insights from the session and experiences during the previous weeks emerge - Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour walk (using the app) in nature with diverse focal points, such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing the principles of natural systems. Deep exchange/ reflection to create space for transformation: What fills the gap constantly? How can each of the participants create more space in one’s own mind, schedule, life to become less stressed, more aware and be able to see the whole	Mix of direct instruction, embodied and contemplative pedagogy, lecture-based teaching and related group discussions, inquiry-based learning, and place based learning
Module 2	- What is the state of the planet – Climate Science lecture - Mindfulness-based practices: body scan and gratitude meditation (linking inner and outer dimensions); allowing gratitude to emerge by recognizing the preciousness of the body and its functions, and then zooming out to appreciate the world and what the environment offers - Dyads and/or Small-Group Reflections: exploring barriers to habit change; “immunity to change”; creating space for helpful habits; letting go of deeply ingrained beliefs - Self-Reflection and Small-Group Reflections: examining personal experiences and insights / biases and Their Impact: a short lecture on what biases are and how they influence our actions - Visionary Exercise: guided by the teacher; imagining the best possible future in 2040 - Shared Insights: exchanging reflections within the group - Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems - Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or weekly experiences	Mix of lecture-based teaching and related group discussions, direct instruction, embodied and contemplative pedagogy, inquiry-based learning, place-based learning, cooperative and problem-based learning
Module 3	- What Are Emotions from the Perspective of Neuroscience? – lecture - Dyads and/or Small-Group Reflections: exploring emotions related to the state of the planet and our shared humanity - Habit Change (Mindfulness and Compassion as a Way of Living and Acting): applying self-care in one’s personal life and workplace - Emotional Regulation (eco-anxiety, eco-grief, and stress): five-step practice – (1) Notice; (2) Notice where in your body; (3) Embrace the emotional state; (4) Let go of the story accompanying the emotion; (5) Rest - Self-Compassion Practice - Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or weekly experiences - Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems	Mix of lecture-based teaching, inquiry-based learning, peer teaching, contemplative pedagogy and place-based learning
Module 4	- Lecture: The Neuroscience of Compassion and Empathy – exploring differences between the two - Compassion Practice Linked to the Environment: cultivating compassion by, for example, connecting with wild animals suffering from climate change and imagining their habitat - Lecture: Indigenous Wisdom – The Wheel of Realization – linked to the Medicine Wheel; exploring the process of life and impermanence - Dyads: reflecting on the process from status quo → calling → letting go → taking responsibility → inspiration (the journey participants go through) - Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or from weekly experiences - Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems	Mix of lectures, contemplative pedagogy, inquiry-based, indigenous, and place-based learning
Module 5	- Collective Systems Practice/ Inquiry: co-creating an understanding of systems thinking, feeling, and sensing - Mindfulness-Based Open Awareness Practice (linking inner and outer): being fully present with what is happening inside ourselves and outside in the environment, without judgment - Ecosystem Mapping (linking inner and outer): drawing one’s own ecosystem map to visualize both the external (stakeholders, phenomena, nature, etc.) and the internal (capacities, qualities, resources) dimensions - Integrating Calling, Ecosystem Map, and Action: small-group work (in groups of four) to link inner calling with the ecosystem map and concrete handprint habits/projects - Habit Change Exercise: inviting the ecosystem to support the integration of specific habit changes - Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or weekly experiences	Mix of cooperative learning, contemplative pedagogy, holistic education, self-inquiry and place-based learning

	• Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems	
Module 6	• Lecture: social tipping points • Mindfulness- and Compassion-Based Practices: deep listening (listening without judgment) and mindful speaking (sharing from the heart, using narratives that support positive change); becoming aware of interbeing (1:1 exercise) • Collaborative Practice: identifying and sharing talents and competencies within the group to support each other's projects in the ecosystem • Group Discussion: reflecting on the inner and outer layers of ecosystems (actions and interactions at the system level) and exploring these in depth • Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or weekly experiences • Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems	• Mix of lectures, experiential, cooperative, and inquiry-based learning, contemplative pedagogy, and place-based learning
Module 7	• Mindfulness-Based Practice: standing, eyes open, Warrior Exercise — cultivating 360° presence by becoming aware of the space around oneself and the phenomena within it • Council Practice: sacred circle for speaking and listening from the heart. Prompt: How have the stories of your culture shaped your life and way of being, thinking, and relating? • Lecture: storytelling • Visioning Exercise: writing a letter to one's grandchildren, sharing personal Handprint behaviors/actions within the ecosystem, while explaining the needed inner-outer transformation and envisioning the world we hope to create for them • Journaling: intuitive writing (4–10 minutes), allowing insights to emerge from the session or from weekly experiences • Nature Walk (between modules): a one-hour app-guided walk in nature, with diverse focal points such as connecting with nature, sensing its presence, observing the impacts of climate change, attuning to its healing rhythms, and recognizing principles of natural systems	• Mix of contemplative pedagogy, experiential learning, lectures, contemplative and self-inquiry, and place-based learning
Module 8	• Meditative Journey: guided reflection through the entire learning journey, led by the teacher • Plenary Sharing: reflecting together on experiences and changes that have occurred during the journey • Council Practice: indigenous-inspired practice of sitting in a circle and sharing from the heart — focusing on the envisioned future of one's activities within the ecosystem, expressing both fears and joys, and recognizing which inner qualities help link the inner and outer dimensions • Journaling: intuitive writing, allowing insights to emerge from the session or weekly experiences	• Mix of contemplative pedagogy, cooperative and experiential learning

Instructor backgrounds:

Facilitator 1 has been a mindfulness practitioner and teacher since qualifying as a MBSR teacher in 2017. Originally trained as a coach in 2006, they have supported leaders across corporations, NGOs, public service, and small business. Between 2014 and 2019, they served as Country Manager for a leading mindfulness organization in the corporate world. Since 2020, they have worked as a Regenerative Leadership Coach and Facilitator, integrating mindfulness, neuroscience, nature, and somatic practices. A Founding Honorary Life Fellow of the Association for Coaching Ireland, they have designed and delivered *Courageous Coaching* since 2021 and facilitated Mindfulness-Based Sustainable Transformation courses with Inner Green Deal since 2022.

Facilitator 2 is a certified Mindfulness-Based Systemic Coach (since 2015) and an accredited Coach Trainer with more than 20 years of international experience. Since 2021 they have also been an EU-accredited trainer, working with leaders, teams, and large groups in complex environments such as the European Commission and Parliament, the United Nations, and leading NGOs and corporations. Their integrative approach combines mindfulness, embodied presence, systems thinking, neuroscience, and co-creative methodologies. They co-developed and train teachers in the Inner Green Deal's Mindfulness-Based Sustainable Transformation program and co-founded Facilitators for Future. Alongside professional work, they initiate Inner Development Goals nature walks and community events to strengthen awareness and connection. Working for the Inner Green Deal since 2021.

Facilitator 3 has studied and practiced contemplative methods since the age of 19 and brings decades of experience in applying mindfulness to cultural and organizational transformation. With a background in sports science and psychology, they also hold qualifications in Gestalt therapy, movement therapy, systemic family therapy, systemic coaching, and organizational development. They are co-founder and co-director of the Inner Green Deal and CEO of Awaris, which delivers evidence-based mindfulness programs for global companies. As an experienced mindfulness teacher, retreat leader, and coach, their work integrates somatic, cognitive, and contemplative perspectives. They focus on sustainability, compassion, and trauma-informed practice.

Facilitator 4 has been a mindfulness practitioner for more than 30 years and trained as a mindfulness teacher at Bangor University. Accredited by BAMBA and an Associate Member of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, they have led training across sectors including banking, manufacturing, higher education, pharmaceuticals, civil service, and the arts. Since 2015, they have offered mindfulness training to MPs, Peers, and staff in the UK Houses of Parliament. They are the author of *Introducing Mindfulness* (2012) and *Mindful London* (2014) and co-chaired the Mindfulness in the Workplace inquiry for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Mindfulness. With academic expertise in the traditions of yoga and meditation and a professional background in broadcasting, they lead groups with warmth, humor, and authenticity.

Background of participants in 2024-2025:

The participants include sustainability experts, Facilitators with a mindfulness background, MBSR Teachers, MBCT Teachers, Coaches and Trainers, Freelancers in the field of nature and sustainability, freelancers with expertise in business, working in NGO's, and/or working in corporations

Age: range between 29 and 60; **Gender:** The course participants were 74% female and 26% male.

Countries: 12 countries – North America (10%), South America (16%), Europe (71%), Africa (3%)

Program development and design:

The program is scientifically grounded in the emerging research field of inner–outer transformation for sustainability (also referred to as inner–outer transformation or existential sustainability). To ensure its validity and continuous improvement, Professor Wamsler has acted as an independent researcher by providing academic input. The qualitative research data she has collected, as well as the related analyses, remain exclusively accessible to her and are not shared with the program coordinators or instructors, ensuring the research's integrity and objectivity.

1.3 MBSR & EcoAwareness (EA)

Target Audience: Mindfulness Teachers and Practitioners, and particularly MBSR/MBCT teachers

Aims: The MBSR & Eco-Awareness workshop series invites participants to connect deeply with Earth and all her living beings, and to wonder about how best to offer space in their teaching for compassion, caring and action all around the beauty and the plight of our shared planet Earth

Delivery: The EA program consisted of a pilot program with 16 MBSR teachers from the United States, organized in 3 cohort groups

During this 6-session workshop, participants:

- Study and reflect on their relationship with the Earth
- Practice formally and informally in support of awareness, compassion and engagement for the wellbeing of all living beings on Earth
- Review the MBSR/MBCT curriculum to identify learning methods and means for calling out the natural place of Earth in our lives and awareness
- Prepare and guide brief Earth-informed mindfulness practices

MBSR & EcoAwareness Workshop Overview:

Session One: Start Where You Are

- Gather: Meeting One Another, Making Community
- Explore: How am I with the Polycrisis/Climate Emergency?
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in Orientation & Class 1

Session Two: Resourcing for the Journey

- Explore: What helps me maintain wellbeing and openness?
- Consider: Connecting with nature
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in Classes 2 & 3

Session Three: Honoring Our Pain for the World

- Explore: Facing challenge, difficulty, anxiety, grief for our Earth
- Consider: Causes and conditions of climate emergency
- Consider: Mindfulness-Based Coping strategies
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in Classes 4 & 5

Session Four: Deepening into Practice

- Explore: Listening to the Earth
- Share: Earth-based Practices
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in the Retreat Class

Session Five: Sustainability in the Midst of it All

- Explore: Tuning in to the collective intelligence
- Consider: Building capacity and resilience for the long run
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in Classes 6 & 7

Session Six: Integration and Going Forth

- Reflect: in review and looking forward
- Review and Plan: Possibilities for Earth Awareness in Class 8 and beyond
- Ending, and continuing, in Community

Typical Session Outline

- Welcome and landing
- Earth Practice
- Reflections and Sharing
- Curriculum Review, Teaching Questions, Action Learning Possibilities
- Closing

Details on the practices, exercises and the pedagogical approaches used to support the six sessions:

Sessions	Exercises and pedagogical methods
Session 1 (2.5 hours)	• Welcome, session overview and community introductions: for community formation • Guided Earth Awareness Practice: grounding in the present in this place on Earth • Land Acknowledgement /Positionality Statement by trainers: referenced as possibility in MBSR courses • Group Review and Dialogue: establish community agreements for behavior, based in part on East Bay Meditation Center's Agreements for Multicultural Interactions • Reflective Awareness and Sharing: How am I right now in relation to the world and the polycrisis? • Trainer presentation/ lecture: Fidelity and flexibility in the MBSR curriculum; what's appropriate for these times? Give early examples of accessible forms of Earth Awareness • Group dialogue: Beginning to consider where/when Earth Awareness might be possible in the orientation session and in Class 1 of the MBSR curriculum. • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, reading, reflection and practice assignments • Closing Practice: Awareness of breath as mutual interchange with all living beings
Session 2 (2.0 hours)	• Welcome and session overview: for community formation • Discussion: review and additional insights around possibilities for Earth Awareness in MBSR orientation and Class 1 • Guided Mindfulness Practice: resourcing oneself through joy, delight and gratitude in nature • Reflective Awareness, Individual Sharing and Group Discussion: How do I resource myself for resilience? Does nature play a role? • Small-Group and Large-Group Dialogue: Beginning to consider where/how Earth Awareness can be included in MBSR Classes 2 and 3 • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, reading, reflection and practice assignments • Closing Practice: Guided movement with Earth Awareness references
Session 3 (2.0 hours)	• Welcome and session overview: for community formation • Discussion: review and additional insights around possibilities for Earth Awareness in MBSR Classes 1 and 2 • Guided Mindfulness Practice: Sitting with difficulty, expanding to one's own experience of the Earth's polycrisis. Recognizing Earth as a resource as well as in need of our care. • Trainer presentation / lecture: Considering the polycrisis: causes, conditions and the potential for remedy and healing

	• Reflective Awareness Practice, individual sharing and group discussion: Stress reactions and stress responses around the polycrisis • Small-Group and Large-Group Dialogue: Beginning to consider where/how Earth Awareness can be included in MBSR Classes 4 and 5 • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, reading, reflection and practice assignments • Closing Practice: Holding ourselves and this Earth in awareness and compassion
Session 4 (2.0 hours)	• Welcome and session overview: for community formation • Practice Guiding: Participant teachers guide MBSR practices in Earth-informed way • Reflective Awareness and Writing/ Journaling: successes and wonderings around guiding • Group Discussion: Giving and receiving appreciative feedback around guiding • Small-Group and Large-Group Dialogue: Beginning to consider where/how Earth Awareness can be included in the MBSR retreat class • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, reading, reflection and practice assignments • Closing Practice: Gratitude for Earth and these good colleagues
Session 5 (2.0 hours)	• Welcome and session overview: for community formation • Discussion: review and additional insights around possibilities for Earth Awareness in MBSR Classes 4 & 5 • Guided Mindfulness Practice: Open awareness, grounded and inclusive of Earth and her elements and living beings • Reflective Awareness and individual sharing: stability and sustainability in Earth awareness practice • Small-Group and Large-Group Dialogue: Beginning to consider where/how Earth Awareness can be included in MBSR Classes 6 & 7 • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, reading, reflection and practice assignments • Closing Practice: Guided movement with Earth Awareness references
Session 6 (2.0 hours)	• Welcome and session overview: for community formation • Guided Grounding Practice: Earth as home • Reflective Awareness and individual sharing: Learnings, wonderings, take-aways for my own practice from these six weeks • Discussion: review and additional insights around possibilities for Earth Awareness in MBSR Classes 6 & 7 • Small-Group and Large-Group Dialogue: Beginning to consider where/how Earth Awareness can be included in MBSR Class 8 • Group sharing: closing reflections • Closing the session: check-in around our group process, follow-up possibilities for continuing to develop Earth Awareness

Instructor backgrounds:

Facilitator 1 trained and is certified to teach MBSR through the Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical School, where they served as an MBSR Teacher and Senior MBSR Teacher Trainer from 2015-2019. They trained with and gained certification with senior trainers at Bangor and Oxford Universities in assessing MBSR teacher competency using the MBI-TAC tool, which they use in mentoring mindfulness teachers. They are the co-founder of a successful international online mindfulness teaching and training organization, where they now teach and mentor aspiring MBSR teachers. They hold a Master's degree in Mindfulness Studies from Lesley University, and bring over two decades of experience in teaching meditation and mindfulness in corporate, small business, non-profit, church and community settings. They are a member of the 2022-2023 EcoAdvisory Teachers Group through the BESS Family Foundation. They founded the MBSR & EcoAwareness Project in 2024 to bring Earth awareness into life and teaching for MBSR teachers.

Facilitator 2 is the founding director of a successful mindfulness center in Atlanta, Georgia, US, active since 2009. They are a certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher, a licensed professional counselor, and a registered yoga teacher. Their professional interest and passion is to support healing, integration and equilibrium within the individual, society and the natural world by increasing awareness of and care for our inner and outer landscapes. They hold the Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from Montclair University and the Master's Degree in Pastoral Studies from Spring Hill College. They hold the Certificate in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction from the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society™ at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (Jon Kabat-Zinn, Saki Santorelli), the Certificate in Mindfulness Mentor Training from Banyan (Tara Brach, Jack Kornfield), the Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness Training from David Treleaven, the EMDR Training, Level I and II from the EMDR Institute (Francine Shapiro) and the Certificate in Spiritual Direction from Spring Hill College. They have facilitated the MBSR & EcoAwareness Workshop since 2024.

Facilitator 3 is a Certified MBSR teacher (MBSR Professional Training with Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1999 and Teacher Development Intensive at UMASS 2000). Since 2014 they have been an MBSR mentor in the UCSD MBSR Teacher Training Program. They hold a Master's degree in Clinical Counseling (Johns Hopkins University, 2009) and a private practice focusing on anxiety, depression, chronic pain and trauma healing. They have been the lead teacher on numerous MBSR clinical trials and a pioneer

in the field of trauma-informed mindfulness. They also have a Master's degree in Genetic Counseling (Sarah Lawrence College, 1981), focusing on grief counseling and adaptation to disability, and they are a registered yoga teacher. They are a Certified Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) teacher since 2015 and since 2018 they are a mentor in the 2-year Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Certification Program (MMTCP). They became an Insight Meditation Teacher under Tara Brach in 2005 and founded the Insight Meditation Community of Baltimore. They lead weeklong silent retreats in natural settings as well as daylong and weekend Eco-Mindfulness Retreats. They studied with Joanna Macy since the 1980's and Dr. Macy's "From Despair to Empowerment" and "Active Hope" courses. A longtime environmental volunteer, they have organized Earth Day gatherings, "Beyond Recycling" series, and a monthly Eco-Awareness coffeehouse. Currently they are concerned with reducing plastic in our oceans and they are a local volunteer for Keep Nassau Beautiful and the Friends of Talbot Islands State Parks, Florida, US. They have facilitated the MBSR & EcoAwareness Workshop since 2024.

Background of participants in 2024-2025:

The participants included mindfulness teachers, most of whom were certified in MBSR (76%), and they had taught an average of 30.9 related courses.

Age: range between 35 and 75. **Gender:** The course participants were 69% female and 31% male.

Countries: North America (100%)

1.4 Inspirational, adapted practices

From EcoAwareness session, illustrating how the earth, our connection to the earth can be weaved into a grounding exercise:

For example, in Class 2 of the MBSR Curriculum, the teacher guides the Body Scan practice, a repeat of the first long formal practice introduced in Class 1 and practiced six times by recording before arriving for Class 2. This time the teacher might, in their own vernacular, more overtly reference the Earth elements of the body as they are experienced through bare knowing: 1) the earth materials, minerals that are contained in sturdy, weighty bones; 2) water from Earth's rivers and rain, right here in the sense of moisture in the mouth and throat, in the coursing of blood circulation; 3) heat as transformative power from the sun, from fire and here in the body, from warmth and coolness, in digestion and temperature regulation of the extremities; 4) air from Earth's atmosphere, in the mutual exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the animal and plant worlds; and space, the container of skin and life within that is this human body, the collective volume of life existing in the thin envelope of the Earth's livable film of dirt, rock and atmosphere. This direct connection of body with the most important supporter of life: the Earth.

2 Interview guides

At the start of the programmes, participants were asked to share their reasons for enrolling, including any perceived developments, gaps and needs.

2.1 Pre-course interviews (ST)

CURRENT WORK & EXPERIENCES WITH MINDFULNESS/COMPASSION-TRAINING

1. Could you please say some words about your current work? (Profession, field of work, organization you work for)
2. Experience with mindfulness and compassion-related training? Own education and teaching others? (E.g. MBSR, MBCT, other inner development courses)
3. Other link(s) between current work and mindfulness/ compassion? E.g., integrated in organizational work/ approaches/ aims, etc.?

CURRENT WORK AND EXPERIENCES WITH SUSTAINABILITY

4. How does your work relate to sustainability? (participated in related courses)?
5. Focus of sustainability work? What aspects are in focus? E.g. Individual, collective, organizational, system level? E.g., sustainability integrated in organizational work/ projects/ approaches/ aims, etc.?

EXPECTATIONS

6. Why did you decide to take the Teachers Training? What was your motivation?
7. What do you want / expect to learn? What are your expectations in terms of personal learning goals?

NEEDS

8. What has been missing in your previous education(s) on mindfulness/ compassion/ sustainability?
 - a. Do these not sufficiently link to sustainability? E.g., difficult emotions, world stress. Why?
 - b. Are you in touch with your own climate grief/ feelings around the ongoing polycrisis? As a private person, as a teacher? Why yes/no?
(Optional: How should sustainability issues be addressed in mindfulness/compassion-based courses? What is missing?)

FUTURE PLANS

9. What are your future plans? What approach do you plan to use to introduce MBST to your working context/ target group?

(Optional: Is there anything that you would like to add, sth that I did not ask, or sth that you would like to clarify?)

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE ON THE ISSUE (optional question, only if there is time left – related issues will be covered indirectly in previous questions)

10. How do you believe contemplative practices, such as mindfulness and compassion, contribute to sustainability? / Link between inner and outer transformation? / Does it become too instrumentalized if we link sustainability and mindfulness?

2.2 Pre-course interviews (EA)

Similarly, in the EA program, the participants were asked during the first workshop why they have signed up for the course, giving them the opportunity to express any perceived developments, gaps and needs that they would like to address through the training. In addition, they were asked to answer the following questions:

1. How many years have taught MBSR?
2. How many 8-week MBSR cycles have you taught?
3. Will you be teaching an MBSR 8-week course during the workshop? If yes please provide course dates, say whether in-person or online, and where you're teaching.
4. Please say a bit about your interest in the MBSR and Eco-Awareness project.
5. What are 2-3 goals you have for participating in the Eco-Awareness workshop?
6. What population(s) do you teach; what contexts do you teach in? If you have a hosting institution or intentions/ways of targeting any particular populations, you're welcome to mention this, too.

2.3 Post-course interviews (ST)

At the end of the programs, participants were asked about any (potential) changes in their teaching practices and curricula, as well as what aspects of the courses were helpful or unhelpful.

Interview introduction: During the interviews that I conducted before the teachers training course, we talked about your hopes and needs that motivated you to sign up for the course. In this context, many mentioned that other courses they know of, or took previously, tend to focus on mindfulness or inner development on the one hand, and sustainability on the other hand. In contrast, the mindfulness-based sustainable transformation teachers training explicitly aims to integrate inner and outer aspects of transformation for sustainability. Today, I would like to follow up with you on this issue by asking the following questions:

1. Has the course filled this gap/need or not? Why? (Related changes in teaching practices)
2. What aspects were particularly important for you in this context (e.g., course content, structure, offered practices, handprint project, science-link, etc.)? In other words: What has worked/not worked for you in bridging mindfulness and sustainability education?
3. Are there certain aspects that could be further improved to adapt mindfulness-based education to the context of sustainability? If yes, what and how?

2.4 Post-course interviews (EA)

Similarly, in the context of the EcoAwareness course, the participants were asked if the workshops have led to changes regarding their personal practices and in terms of the MBSR curriculum, the way they teach it (e.g., the overall course or any of the aspects or segments or activities or class meetings). It was also asked if the workshops changed anything for the participants around their teaching, their sense of being a teacher. Finally, the participants were asked to say anything about the program that was (not) helpful. They were asked to answer the following questions:

1. About You: How are you? How is it for you around the Earth, our climate and the polycrisis?
2. About Your Practice: Did anything change for you personally over the course of the workshop?
3. About the MBSR Curriculum: Did anything change for you in terms of the MBSR curriculum, either overall or for any of the aspects or segments or class meetings, etc?
4. About Your Teaching: Did anything change for you around your teaching, your sense of being a teacher, your plans for teaching MBSR, related offerings or any other teaching you do?
5. About the Program: Please say anything about what was helpful, what was ok/fine/mixed and what could have been improved, removed, or added to make the experience more meaningful for you.

3 Sustainability and ethics: The role of ethics in mindfulness training

Illustrative examples of the intrinsic role of ethics in traditional mindfulness training.

First of five mindfulness training of Plum Village monastery, founded by Thich Nath Hanh:

Reverence For Life

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life. Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.

Fifth of five mindfulness training of Plum Village monastery, founded by Thich Nath Hanh:

Nourishment and Healing

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will practice looking deeply into how I consume the Four Kinds of Nutriment, namely edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness. I am determined not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs, or any other products which contain toxins, such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books, and conversations. I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear, or craving pull me out of the present moment. I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption. I will contemplate interbeing and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy, and well-being in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society and the Earth.

Five mindfulness contemplations at Plum Village monastery (repeated before every meal):

This food is a gift of the earth, the sky, numerous living beings, and much hard and loving work. May we eat with mindfulness and gratitude so as to be worthy to receive this food.

May we recognize and transform unwholesome mental formations, especially our greed and learn to eat with moderation.

May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that reduces the suffering of living beings, stops contributing to climate change, and heals and preserves our precious planet.

We accept this food so that we may nurture our brotherhood and sisterhood, build our Sangha, and nourish our ideal of serving all living beings.

Source: www.plumvillage.org

4 Taxonomy – Practical Considerations

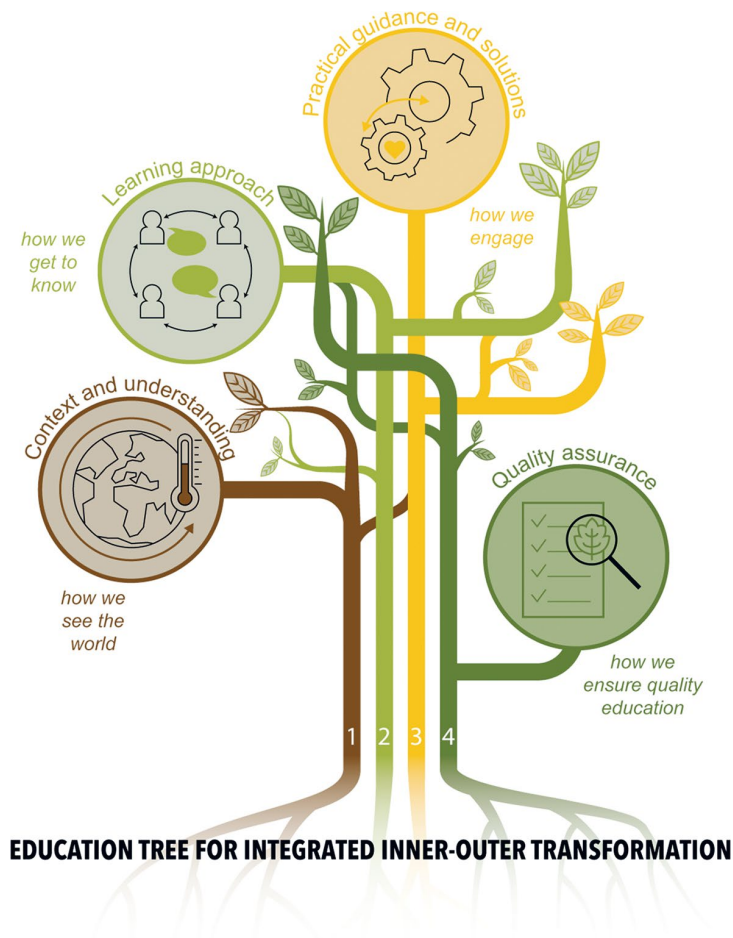
The taxonomy of mindfulness-sustainability integration illustrates different ways mindfulness practice can support sustainability — from small shifts in awareness to broad social transformation. It is not a ladder or ranking; you can start wherever fits your community, context, or goals.

How to use the taxonomy?

- Use it to **design, reflect on, or scale programs** in relation to your target group.
- Treat it as a **menu of approaches** — start where you are and expand as your capacity grows.
- Remember: sustainability integration doesn't need to be big to be meaningful — even a small shift in framing a mindfulness practice can plant a seed for larger change.

5 Key elements of integrative inner-outer transformation

The education tree for integrated inner-outer transformation (illustrated below) visualizes the four key elements, or essential pieces, for holistic learning and understanding to accelerate sustainability and transformation. They involve: (1) how we see the world; (2) how we get to know; (3) how we engage; and (4) how we ensure quality and equity considerations across all aspects. Together, they support well-being, flourishing, and regeneration across scales—by covering all of the key contributions of inner-outer transformation.



Source: Adapted from Wamsler C, Osberg G, Janss, J. et al. (2024) Revolutionising sustainability leadership and education: addressing the human dimension to support flourishing, culture and system transformation. *Climatic Change* 177, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-023-03636-8>