



MINDFULNESS
EXERCISES

FOUNDATIONS OF TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS

15-Hour Certification Course
for Mindfulness Teachers

COURSE WORKBOOK



This workbook belongs to:

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this introductory course on teaching mindfulness with trauma sensitivity. Thank you for choosing to explore this important topic. Being here reflects a heartfelt interest in ensuring that your teachings are supportive for your students while minimizing the risk of re-traumatization. We are grateful for your care and concern.

This course will provide you with valuable information to help you share mindfulness in ways that acknowledge the reality of trauma. While mindfulness can be incredibly supportive and healing for many, bringing one's attention to pain and suffering (whether mental or physical) can be incredibly difficult - and in some cases, re-traumatizing. Trauma-sensitive mindfulness can help us to address other people's suffering with care, compassion, and wisdom.

By the end of this course, you will have a stronger understanding of what trauma-sensitive mindfulness is (and isn't) and how to practice it skillfully. You'll feel more confident as a mindfulness teacher, knowing that you have tools at hand (and in heart) to help navigate what might arise in your students during your teachings.

DISCLAIMER:

This course will not train you to be a trauma worker, trauma therapist, or anything similar. It will not train you to heal trauma, whether your own or another's. It is simply intended to increase your understanding of trauma, how to be sensitive to it, and how to address it with care if or when it arises in sessions with your clients.

Upon completion of all course lessons, you will:

- Understand what trauma-sensitive mindfulness is and isn't
- Understand the importance of trauma sensitivity
- Know how to modify your teachings to be sensitive of trauma
- Know how hypoarousal and hyperarousal can present in a student
- Know how to help your students 'resource' and 'apply the brakes'
- Be aware of meditation-related adverse effects
- Be familiar with self-compassion practices and how to weave trauma-sensitivity into self-compassion meditations
- Feel more confident addressing trauma if it arises in your students, including knowing when to refer a student on if what they need is beyond your scope of practice

You are also provided with three trauma-sensitive mindfulness scripts, which can support you in leading meditation with care and consideration.

Move through this course with care, knowing that this topic can bring up uncomfortable memories or sensations. We teachers (or teachers-in-training) often have our own trauma to work through, so please be patient and compassionate with yourself. Take this course at your own pace, pausing if you need to. In studying trauma-sensitive mindfulness, you will develop the resources to support not just your students but yourself, too.



You can get started by watching Sean Fargo's [introduction to the course](#) in the course area. After you finish watching the video, journal below on the following:

Why have you chosen to take this course?

How would you like to proceed through this course?

What qualities will you embody as you engage with this course and your teachings?



Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.

Pema Chödrön

COURSE STRUCTURE & REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This course workbook contains six lessons. Move through each lesson at your own pace, watching, listening to, and reading any of the required materials and answering the questions in this workbook along the way.

To receive the Certificate of Completion, you will need to complete this workbook in full with thoughtfulness, care, and nuance. We will be reading your work to assess if you understand the fundamentals of trauma-sensitive mindfulness and if you have learned what you need to learn in order to lead others through mindfulness practices with sensitivity and care.

Having received your submission for your certificate, if we believe that there are things you need to review, we will work with you to help bolster your understanding of trauma-sensitive mindfulness and how to share it with others. If we do not issue your certificate after your first submission, you can submit again based on our feedback.

The lessons you will work through are as follows:

- LESSON 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS
- LESSON 2: WINDOW OF TOLERANCE AND RESOURCING
- LESSON 3: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION
- LESSON 4: SELF-COMPASSION & TRAUMA
- LESSON 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TEACHING
- LESSON 6: PREPARING TO GUIDE TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

Completion of this course is estimated to take approximately 15-20 hours, including watching/listening, writing/reflecting, and teaching. The exact length of time it takes will vary from person to person.

LESSON 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS

Welcome to the first lesson of this course. Before you dive into the video associated with this lesson, let's take a moment to become clear on what trauma-sensitive mindfulness is and isn't.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) [defines](#) trauma-informed work as:

"A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization."

Based on this definition, trauma-sensitive mindfulness is mindfulness practice that aligns with all of the above. Trauma-sensitive mindfulness...

- realizes the impact of trauma
- understands potential paths for recovery
- recognizes signs and symptoms of trauma
- responds to students appropriately to resist re-traumatization

Trauma-sensitive mindfulness is not trauma-focused mindfulness. In practicing trauma-sensitive mindfulness we are not intentionally calling up trauma, 'treating' trauma, or otherwise coaching or advising someone through their trauma.

Becoming practiced in trauma-sensitive mindfulness does not give us the tools or license to work with trauma in the way that a mental healthcare professional would (although some people who are trained in trauma-sensitive mindfulness may also have training in trauma work).

QUESTION #1:

Based on the above, how would you define trauma-sensitive mindfulness in your own words? Also, what *isn't* trauma-sensitive mindfulness?

Continue to the [Lesson 1 video](#) in the course area. This video comes from a workshop led by David Treleaven in our [Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program](#). As you watch the video, answer the questions that follow.

QUESTION #2:

What is the double-edged sword of attention-based practices in relationship to trauma?

QUESTION #3:

What is the spectrum of trauma? Explain the difference between stress, traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress, and PTSD.

QUESTION #4:

What are the 4 Rs of trauma-sensitive mindfulness? Name and briefly explain each one.

QUESTION #5:

Try the practice that David leads at 53:18. How did you experience this practice today?

QUESTION #6:

Share your reflections on respecting a client/student's strategies for safety.

QUESTION #7:

What are a few ways that a student can 'apply the brakes' (modulate the intensity of their practice) if they are feeling overwhelmed? Why is it important to let your students know that they can apply the brakes (giving them a few examples of how they would do that) if they need to?

QUESTION #8:

Why is it important to offer your clients/students different anchors to choose from?
What are two possible anchors you can invite your students to consider aside from the breath?

QUESTION #9:

Try the practice that David leads at 01:28:07. How did you experience this practice today?



A big thank you to David Treleaven for joining our Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program and sharing this invaluable information with us. Learn more about David's work and buy his book via the links below:

David's Website: <https://davidtreleaven.com/>

David's Book on Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: <https://www.amazon.com/Trauma-Sensitive-Mindfulness-Practices-Transformative-Healing/dp/0393709787>



LESSON 2: WINDOW OF TOLERANCE AND RESOURCING

Welcome to the second lesson of this course. In this lesson, we will review some of what was covered in lesson one before diving further into trauma-sensitive practices and how we can support our students (and help them support themselves) if or when trauma arises.

Before you begin the video component, it will be helpful to have a strong understanding of what is referred to as ‘the window of tolerance.’

The Window of Tolerance

The **window of tolerance** is a pivotal framework developed by Dan Siegel that emphasizes the balance between emotional arousal levels.

Within this window, your emotions are manageable, and you can effectively process information, engage in relationships, and respond to challenges.

Straying too far beyond this window can lead to **hyperarousal** – a state of excessive activation or energy – or to hypoarousal – a state of shutting down or disconnecting.

Surpassing the upper threshold of the window is **hyperarousal**, signs of which include (but are not limited to):

- Anxiety and panic
- Irritability and anger
- Increased heart rate
- Rapid breathing
- Racing, intrusive thoughts
- Nightmares or flashbacks

Extending beyond the lower threshold of the window is hypoarousal. Signs of hypoarousal include (but are not limited to):

- Apathy and numbness
- Feeling disconnected from body, from self
- Disorganized or slow speech
- Frozen physical posture
- Pale skin tone
- Fixed or distant gaze

Encouraging our students to stay within the window of tolerance (or offering tools to help them come back into it if they’ve left it) can support growth and learning and prevent retraumatization.

As a mindfulness teacher, cultivating an understanding of this framework not only helps you to balance your own arousal levels, but it also equips you to extend this awareness to your students.

By being attuned to your own emotional landscape and that of your students, you help to create a space where one's experience can be acknowledged without overwhelm or disconnection.

Read more about the window of tolerance here:

<https://mindfulness Exercises.com/understanding-the-window-of-tolerance/>

QUESTION #1:

In your own words, how would you describe the window of tolerance?

QUESTION #2:

Consider a time when your own emotional arousal level neared or stretched into hypoarousal or hyperarousal (so long as calling forth this memory doesn't put you out of your window of tolerance). This may have been during meditation practice or outside of it.

Was there anything that helped you return to a state of balance? Or, based on what you know now from your own practice (and everything you've learned about mindfulness and trauma-sensitivity thus far), what could have supported you then?

Continue to the [Lesson 2 video](#) in the course area. This is another workshop featuring the wisdom and insight of David Treleaven. Answer the following questions as you move through the video.

QUESTION #3:

Try the guided practice that David leads at 6:27. What anchor of attention did you work with? How did you experience this practice today?

QUESTION #4:

In both this and the prior workshop, David talks about the 'myth of Medusa'. What is the myth of Medusa and how does it relate to trauma-sensitivity and mindfulness practice?

QUESTION #5:

What are some non-verbal signs of dysregulation?

QUESTION #6:

What is a sign that mindfulness and meditation may not be the primary ingredient someone needs at this time, and that it may be time to refer a student to someone else (i.e. a trained trauma professional)?

QUESTION #7:

What are some best practices for teaching online sessions (i.e. via Zoom)?

QUESTION #8:

What is one of the core self-regulation strategies we can offer to others?

QUESTION #9:

Share your personal reflections on the difference between focusing on what's working (or resourcing) and spiritual bypassing.

QUESTION #10:

What are some common sources of intrapersonal resources?

QUESTION #11:

What are two main ways to resource?

QUESTION #12:

Try the practice that David leads at 53:28. What did you visualize as your resource? Did you notice any shifts or changes within yourself as you tuned into your resource?

QUESTION #13:

Sometimes people choose a resource that isn't quite neutral for them (i.e. a place that reminds them of a difficult or lost relationship). Reflect on ways that you might encourage people to choose a neutral resource. What words might you use?

QUESTION #14:

David explains that 'more' is not always 'better' when it comes to intensity in mindfulness practice. Explain why.

QUESTION #15:

Why does David suggest it can be a good idea to use the word 'dysregulation' as opposed to 'trauma' in your teachings?

QUESTION #16:

Explain the soda bottle metaphor.

LESSON 3: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

As a mindfulness teacher, you're likely well aware of the positive potential of mindfulness meditation. If you weren't, you likely wouldn't be doing this work. There are plenty of scientific and anecdotal reports that suggest mindfulness can benefit our lives in numerous ways. Though this list is not exhaustive, [some findings](#) indicate that:

- Mindfulness-based therapy is a promising intervention for anxiety and mood concerns
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) has been scientifically shown to decrease stress and related symptoms
- Mindfulness meditation reduces pain-related activation in certain regions of the brain
- Mindfulness training reduces loneliness and increases social contact
- Mindfulness is positively correlated with self-esteem and unconditional self-acceptance
- Mindfulness is positively correlated with prosocial behavior
- Mindfulness can help to promote emotional regulation

However, none of these benefits are guaranteed. In fact, some people experience quite the opposite of such positive experiences during meditation. The diverse landscapes of individual minds and bodies yield varied reactions to practice, which is why it is essential to lead others with nuance, flexibility, and care.

To lead others through mindfulness practices with trauma-sensitivity, it is essential to be aware of meditation-related adverse events. Though the term can elicit slightly varying definitions, we might consider a **meditation-related adverse effect** to be:

a negative experience that arises during or after engaging in meditation or mindfulness practice, which contrasts with the intended benefits of the practice

Adverse effects can encompass a range of physical, emotional, cognitive, and perceptual changes that are unexpected and potentially distressing to the practitioner. Since the term 'negative' can refer to a wide range of experiences, from mild to extreme, measuring meditation-related adverse effects can be difficult. However, as you'll learn in the video component to follow, there is much work being done to explore this grey area with care and nuance.

Before you watch the video, take a moment to put yourself in another's shoes by trying this reflection exercise. Note your reflections in the box below.



REFLECTION EXERCISE:

Imagine that you've never heard of mindfulness nor meditation before, but you've signed up for a 30-minute mindfulness meditation class. You are informed (through the event's sales page) that mindfulness meditation will lead you to experience deep relaxation, immense happiness, and profound peace, which is just what you're seeking.

You enter the meditation room and take a seat on the floor, cross-legged like everyone else, even though it's uncomfortable for you. The teacher sits quietly at the front of the room and begins the session, diving straight into the practice.

Imagine that instead of relaxation, happiness, and peace, you feel an overwhelming rush of unpleasant emotions about 10–15 minutes into the practice. Vivid and stressful memories start to surface and you can feel your heart rate increasing. You're not sure what to do with these feelings, but you're trying to remain still, keep your eyes closed, and look like a 'good meditator' to fit in with everyone else.

You do your best to 'hold yourself together' for the second half of the meditation, remaining as still as possible. You try to stay focused on your breath, hoping it will start to feel relaxing soon. The session ends and you quickly rise from your seated position and leave the space, avoiding eye contact with others. You're confused about what just happened and don't know what to do. You don't feel comfortable reaching out to the teacher so you try your best to forget the experience and move forward.



QUESTION #1:

What might you (or someone else in this situation) feel either during or after this type of meditation experience? What thoughts and emotions might come up?



QUESTION #2:

What could the teacher have done to help reduce the likelihood, intensity, and/or duration of this negative experience?

QUESTION #3:

Even if we ourselves have never experienced a meditation-related adverse effect, we can put ourselves in another's shoes to consider what it might be like. This can help to deepen our embodied understanding of why trauma-sensitive mindfulness is important.

Even if we ourselves have never experienced a meditation-related adverse effect, we can put ourselves in another's shoes to consider what it might be like. This can help to deepen our embodied understanding of why trauma-sensitive mindfulness is important.

Continue to the [Lesson 3 video](#) in the course area, which comes from a workshop led by Willoughby Britton. Answer the following questions as you move along.

QUESTION #1:

In Willoughby's words, "trauma-informed" is not really "trauma-informed" unless it...

QUESTION #2:

What is the key piece in all of this that Willoughby wants you to take home?

QUESTION #3:

Why is it hard to measure the frequency of meditation-related adverse effects? What is the one number Willoughby invites us to remember when thinking about the frequency of meditation-related adverse effects?

QUESTION #4:

How would you define a meditation-related adverse effect based on this presentation?

QUESTION #5:

What are some of the adverse effects that participants might report as a result of participating in mindfulness-based programs? List 4-6 hyperarousal effects and 4-6 dissociation effects.

QUESTION #6:

Which symptoms are most likely to predict lasting impairment?

QUESTION #7:

What does the inverted U-shaped curve tell us?

QUESTION #8:

What are the top risk factors for meditation-related adverse effects?

QUESTION #9:

What does informed consent include?

QUESTION #10:

How should you monitor for meditation-related adverse effects?

QUESTION #11:

What is diversity-informed mindfulness?

QUESTION #12:

What are the principles of trauma-informed practice? List and briefly describe each one.

QUESTION #13:

Explain the chrysalis metaphor.

QUESTION #14:

Explain the technique of titration and pendulation.

QUESTION #15:

What are 6 different choices of anchors?

QUESTION #16:

What are some ways to offer choice to participants of your program?

QUESTION #17:

If you ever have a client that develops problems during meditation and you're not sure what to do, where can you send them?



A big thank you to Willoughby Britton for sharing this rich insight and research with us through our Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program. Learn more about Willoughby's work via the links below:

<https://www.cheetahhouse.org/>

<https://www.cheetahhouse.org/about-us/#team>



LESSON 4: SELF-COMPASSION & TRAUMA

What is the place for self-compassion in the context of trauma? As Christopher Germer and Kristin Neff [write](#):

“Self-compassion is a challenge and an opportunity for trauma survivors.”

Self-compassion can (when explored skillfully) help us to offer ourselves care and kindness in the midst of our suffering. It doesn't make the reality of trauma go away, but it can change the way we meet ourselves in the aftermath of it.

Self-compassion isn't only beneficial if we've already experienced trauma. In other words, the relationship between trauma and self-compassion is bidirectional. As trauma survivors develop self-compassion, they can break free from the cycle of self-blame and self-criticism that trauma often perpetuates. And conversely, practicing self-compassion can help prevent the development of long-lasting emotional scars following distressing events.

By nurturing a relationship to the self that is kind, caring, and understanding, we create a solid foundation for mental well-being, even in the face of adversity. This is what we support our students with when we teach them how to practice self-compassion.

With that said, it's important to note that people who have experienced significant trauma may be resistant to the idea of self-compassion or may have more difficulties cultivating it than people who have experienced far less trauma. This may stem from the nature of the trauma and its psychological effects.

A few reasons why trauma survivors may be resistant to self-compassion include:

■ **Negative Self-Perception:**

Trauma can lead to deeply rooted feelings of shame, guilt, and self-blame. Individuals who have experienced trauma may believe they don't deserve self-compassion or struggle to see themselves as worthy of kindness.

■ **Fear of Vulnerability:**

Trauma survivors may have learned to cope by distancing themselves from their emotions as a way to protect themselves. Engaging in self-compassion requires opening up to these emotions, which can be frightening and triggering.

■ **Lack of Trust:**

Trauma often involves betrayal or violation of trust. This can make it difficult for survivors to trust themselves, others, or even new concepts, such as self-compassion. They might be skeptical about whether it will truly help or if it might lead to more emotional pain.

■ **Avoidance of Painful Feelings:**

Self-compassion involves facing one's pain with kindness and understanding. Some trauma survivors might use avoidance as a coping mechanism, avoiding anything that triggers their traumatic memories or feelings.

When sharing self-compassion with people who may (or who you know) have experienced trauma, it's crucial to be aware of these potential barriers and to create a safe and empathetic space for exploration. Building trust, providing information about self-compassion, and offering support that aligns with an individual's readiness and comfort level can facilitate the process of overcoming resistance and gradually embracing self-compassion as a tool for healing.

QUESTION #1:

In your own words, why might trauma survivors have a more difficult time with self-compassion? Can you think of any other reasons (in addition to what's listed above) that trauma might make it difficult to tend to oneself with care and compassion?

Continue on by watching the [Lesson 4 video](#) in the course area. This video comes from a workshop led by Christopher Germer on self-compassion. As you move through the video, answer the following questions.

QUESTION #1:

What is the difference between mindfulness and self-compassion at the relative level?

QUESTION #2:

How do mindfulness and self-compassion help to regulate emotion?

QUESTION #3:

What is the definition of self-compassion as given by Christopher Germer in this workshop?

QUESTION #4:

Try the self-compassion practice that Christopher Germer leads at 37:55. How did you experience this? What challenges do you think someone who has experienced trauma might face during this type of practice?

QUESTION #5:

Consider the practice you just did. As a teacher, what caveats, invitations, or modifications might you make to this practice to be sensitive to any trauma in your students?

QUESTION #6:

What are some of the myths of self-compassion?

QUESTION #7:

What are the three components of self-compassion?

QUESTION #8:

How can self-compassion be learned?

QUESTION #9:

Mindfulness training and compassion training can be quite activating. For many people, this activation is not what a person needs. When mindfulness and self-compassion are not what someone needs right now (or when someone is in the early stages of feeling trauma), what is the primary thing to think about and establish?

QUESTION #10:

When working with someone who has experienced trauma, what questions might you ask?

QUESTION #11:

Some self-compassion meditations will have you asking students to bring to mind a problem that they're having. Why might it be important to ask students to choose a problem they'd rate as a level of 2 or 3 on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being lowest intensity, 10 being highest intensity)?

QUESTION #12:

Try the self-compassion break that Christopher Germer leads at 1:44:59. How did you experience this today?

QUESTION #13:

Consider the self-compassion break meditation with trauma-sensitivity in mind. What prompts, invitations, or caveats would you be sure to include in order to be sensitive towards trauma? How might you provide support after the meditation to any students who need it? How might you make sure that your students feel fundamentally safe enough to move into this practice?

To deepen your understanding of the intersection between trauma and self-compassion, read the following article by Christopher Germer and Kristin Neff. As you read it, use the empty field below to document any quotes or findings that stand out or feel important to you:

“Cultivating Self-Compassion in Trauma Survivors”: https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Germer.Neff_.Trauma.pdf

Notes (required):



Much gratitude to Chris Germer for diving into self-compassion with us during a live session of our Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program. Learn more about Christopher Germer and his work via the link below:

<https://chrisgermer.com/>



LESSON 5: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TEACHING

At this point in the course, you should have a variety of tools in your teaching toolkit to help you teach mindfulness with care and sensitivity – and to navigate any adverse effects that may arise. With that said, there is always more to learn and explore and some of this work requires looking within.

Additional considerations to bring to your teachings include:

■ **Language Choice:**

Language is a powerful tool that can either facilitate connection or unintentionally trigger adverse reactions. It's essential to be aware of the words we choose and their potential impact on our students, especially those who have experienced trauma. Each person will respond differently to different words, so we cannot avoid triggering entirely. However, can we bring mindfulness to the words we use? Can we listen with curiosity if someone responds negatively to or presents feedback around any aspects of our language?

■ **Receiving Feedback:**

In addition to bringing mindful care and curiosity to any feedback we receive about our language, it's important to bring this mindful presence to any feedback we receive – to welcome authentic responses. We're not here to only listen to the 'good' feedback, to the people who tell us how great, peaceful, or calming a practice was. We're here to welcome any feedback – without judgment. As mindfulness teachers, can we lead by example by welcoming raw, authentic experience without judgment? Can we take it into consideration? Can we empathize?

■ **Working With Self-Judgment or Shame:**

Receiving difficult feedback can be, well, difficult. Just because we teach mindfulness does not mean we are immune to inner criticism, self-judgment, and shame. However, it is essential to remember that negative or difficult feedback does not define our worth or effectiveness as teachers. Instead, it offers an opportunity for growth and refinement. Just as we encourage our students to meet challenges with an open heart, we can extend the same grace to ourselves. By recognizing that our own ongoing learning journey involves both successes and areas for improvement, we embody the essence of mindfulness teaching – an evolving process of discovery, driven by curiosity and care.

■ Honoring Personal Experiences:

It might seem obvious and be something that should go without saying, but it is worth remembering: as mindfulness teachers, we are here to honor our students' experiences without judgment. We want to honor what is true for people rather than projecting our own thoughts and experiences onto them. We're here to accept that if a student reports a particular experience, that is their experience. We're not here to talk them out of it or make them see things a different way. We are here to honor them, to help them feel seen and heard.

■ Creating Loving Boundaries:

It will be natural for some people to want to share their story with you and/or the group. This can be a wonderful way for people to connect and learn from one another. If you're in a group setting where the story may not be appropriate or is taking too much space from other participants, you will want to create loving boundaries around this, which requires a delicate interaction. It may be helpful to say something along the lines of: "Thank you for wanting to share your experience with us. That sounds really difficult, and I care about you. Because we'd like to give everyone the opportunity to share, would it be alright with you if we spoke at the break and I could listen to your story and support you in a more personalized way?" You can tailor this to the needs of the situation.

■ Knowing Our Limits:

We don't want to go into territory that is too deep for our experience level. For instance, we don't want to intentionally call up terror, unhealed trauma, or near death experiences if we're not clinically trained to handle that. We want to support our students in bringing mindfulness to things within their window of tolerance and within the limitations of our experience and training. We also want to support people to discover the various layers of their experience in baby steps.

■ Zooming In and Out:

It's important to consider that sometimes the best thing for someone is not to zoom in on an uncomfortable emotion or sensation. Sometimes, the skillful response is to zoom out. You can support your students to titrate between the two - focusing on a sensation when doing so is within their window of tolerance... and then zooming out, broadening their field of awareness, or even shifting their focus to something that feels pleasant.

■ Recognizing That Despite Our Best Intentions, Re-Triggering May Happen:

Re-triggering, re-traumatization, or an adverse effect may happen – despite our best intentions to teach with skill and care. We cannot control the experience that other people have; we can only do our best to create a safe container and offer supportive and wise guidance. If this happens, questions we might ask ourselves include:

*How am I going to navigate what has arisen with compassion,
acceptance, and wisdom?*

What am I able to offer this person?

What might they need external support for?

How can I hold space for their feelings and experience without judgment?

QUESTION #1:

What reflections, insights, or questions are coming up for you as you sit with the above considerations?

Continue on to the [Lesson 5 video](#) in the course area. This video comes from a podcast episode with Sean Fargo, 'Trauma in our Mindfulness Practice and Teachings'. You can also listen to this teaching via the link below:

<https://mindfulness Exercises.com/podcast-episodes/trauma-in-our-mindfulness-practice-and-teachings-with-sean-fargo/>

QUESTION #2:

As a teacher, you will receive all sorts of feedback – both positive and negative. It's important to be able to model what it looks like to welcome all of it – without judgment. How can you strengthen your ability to welcome negative or difficult feedback?

QUESTION #3:

Depending on what arises during a meditation, you may need to follow-up with a student while on a break between sessions or after the session. In your own words, how would you let a participant (or the group, generally speaking) know that you are available to listen and support them between or after each session?

QUESTION #4:

Share your reflections on why it's important to work within the boundaries of your experience level when it comes to trauma.

QUESTION #4:

Again: Despite our best intentions, re-traumatization or an adverse effect may occur. What qualities will you cultivate and/or call forth if that happens? What meditations/exercises can you do more of in your personal practice to help you more skillfully and mindfully navigate whatever might arise during your teachings?

LESSON 6: PREPARING TO GUIDE TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

It is time to prepare to lead others through trauma-sensitive mindfulness meditations. As the final requirement of this course, you are to lead six trauma-sensitive meditations (details below) and to document your experience of doing so.

In the Appendix, you will find three trauma-sensitive mindfulness meditation scripts:

- I. Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing
- II. Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan
- III. Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation

For certification, you will need to lead the three meditations listed above on two occasions each (guiding six meditations in total). You do not need to lead these practices word-for-word. Use the scripts as a guide while infusing your own wisdom and care into the leading of these practices.

After each session that you lead, fill out the corresponding self-assessment forms in this lesson of the workbook to reflect on how each practice went and where there is room for growth.

In the video and written content below, you will find some helpful reminders and new ideas to consider as you prepare to lead trauma-sensitive sessions. At the end of this lesson, there is space for you to summarize some of the key trauma-sensitive practices you've taken away from this course and that you'd like to remember to bring into your teachings.

Continue on to watch the [Lesson 6 video](#) in your course area, a talk given by Gillian Florence Sanger who touches on the reminders and additional considerations that are outlined below.

THINGS TO REMEMBER AND CONSIDER:

■ Trauma-Sensitive Does Not Equal Trauma-Focused:

Leading trauma-sensitive mindfulness practice is not the same as focusing on trauma or intentionally working with trauma. Rather than explicitly trying to heal or treat trauma, you are leading these practices in such a way that honors the reality of trauma, understands how it might surface during meditation, and responds to any signs of trauma that does arise in a caring and appropriate manner.

■ **Trauma-Sensitivity Begins Before the Meditation:**

Trauma-sensitivity is not only about the words you use during a guided meditation. It's also about (among other things) the warmth and care of your presence, your ability to respond wisely if signs of trauma arise, and how you introduce or begin a session. In other words, your ability to teach with trauma-sensitivity begins long before you sit down with your students to meditate. The way that you advertise your sessions, respond to emails, and welcome students into the space should reflect the principles we've explored through this course.

■ **And... It Extends Beyond the Meditation:**

As a teacher, you aren't only holding space for your students during the session itself. If students have questions, concerns, or anything they want to share after a session has closed, they should have a means of contacting you - and if or when they do reach out, you should be prepared to support your students with trauma-sensitivity, and with appropriate boundaries in place. *Note: You may need to refer a client on if what they present to you is beyond your skills or training.*

■ **Following Trauma-Sensitive Scripts Does Not Necessarily Make Your Teaching Trauma-Sensitive:**

The scripts we've provided you with include trauma-sensitive language. However, in and of themselves, they do not make your teaching trauma-sensitive. Be mindful of how you introduce/set up a practice, how you embody grounded presence while guiding, how you respond to challenges that arise, and how you follow up with your students after a session.

■ **Scripts Can Support You, But You Shouldn't Be Fixated on Them:**

If using a script while teaching, become really familiar with it before guiding others. If you are not quite comfortable with the script, you might end up too focused on the script and less aware of what's going on for your students. Your leading of a practice should also remain flexible. Remain open to adapting the session based on what you're observing about your students.

■ **Remember the Importance of Personal Agency:**

Ensure that your students know they have personal agency - that they can adapt the practice, shift their focus, or tap into a resource if and as they need to. Remain supportive of your students, knowing that everyone is showing up with a different set of experiences - both present and past. There is no one 'right way' to experience or follow a meditation.

■ **Emphasize the Importance of Confidentiality:**

As you begin a session, let your student or group know that you value confidentiality. Invite the group to maintain confidentiality around anything that is shared during the course of the session. This can help to establish trust.

■ **Different Types of Meditations Pose Different Challenges:**

For each different meditation type that you lead, consider where trauma might pose a challenge. For instance, a mindful body scan can bring awareness to difficult memories or sensations within the body, connected to past trauma. A loving-kindness meditation could stir awareness of a relationship that carries an echo of trauma. A breathing meditation could be destabilizing for some people if the breath is not considered a 'safe place'. Ultimately, you cannot ensure that your practices will be 100% safe for everyone, but by bringing mindfulness to these potential challenges, you can choose your wording and offer caveats in a way that is as supportive as possible to the most people possible.

■ **Embody the Teachings of Mindfulness As Deeply As Possible:**

Leading from a grounded, calm, and present place can help your students to feel secure and supported. We are, after all, energetic beings who pick up on (and often align with) the energies of other people. Embody the qualities you'd like to help your students develop within themselves, such as self-compassion, non-judgment, and curiosity.

■ **Help Your Students to Explore The Layers of Their Experience in Baby Steps:**

Developing mindful awareness is not a race, and when we're talking about trauma, taking baby steps in our mindfulness practice is safest and most supportive. It can help us to explore our experience with curiosity while remaining within our window of tolerance.

■ **Discern Between Discomfort and Dysregulation:**

Even within the realm of trauma-sensitive mindfulness, our aim isn't to shield our students from discomfort entirely. In fact, there's resilience to be cultivated by embracing what's uncomfortable. We can support our students in harnessing inner courage to be with what arises, to explore it with curiosity, and to foster a compassionate relationship with their experiences. However, it's also important to recognize that there's a difference between being uncomfortable and being dysregulated. As a mindfulness teacher, we can help our students to cultivate courage and discernment - to be curious about when we can lean into an uncomfortable sensation and when we might need to shift our focus away from it, to rebalance.

LEGAL/INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

■ **Seek Legal Advice to Draft Trauma-Sensitive Legal Documents:**

When teaching mindfulness, it is essential to prioritize legal considerations. Crafting essential documents (including but not limited to) an intake form, disclaimer form, and privacy policy requires careful attention to the specific legal requirements in your jurisdiction. Every region has its own unique regulations governing data protection and informed consent. To ensure you are compliant, it is strongly advised to seek the services of a legal expert. Note that asking sensitive questions on an intake form, such as 'have you experienced past trauma' can be triggering for some. Engage in a thoughtful conversation with your legal counsel, discussing not only legalities but also how to make these documents trauma-sensitive.

Consult on aspects such as offering choice within the form, establishing trust, and transparently conveying how the information you collect will be used and stored. Also, have a conversation around how to make your documents accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. This collaborative effort between you and your legal counsel will support both your legal needs and the well-being of your students.

Note that there may be other legal needs to consider beyond those that pertain to forms and documents (i.e. regulations governing how you can advertise your services). Discuss any such additional legal needs with your legal expert.

For legal needs, you might consider the services provided by Heather Pearce Campbell of [The Legal Website Warrior](#)[®]. Heather has been a guest teacher of our [Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program](#) and supports entrepreneurs in the U.S. and around the world who'd like to better understand their legal needs in regards to running a small or micro business. She has numerous articles and resources on her website, including access to her FREE [Legal Basics Bootcamp](#) which provides some essential legal training for entrepreneurs.

■ **Secure Adequate Insurance Coverage:**

As a mindfulness teacher, it is also important to recognize the importance of insurance. Unforeseen events can happen in any practice, so having appropriate liability insurance can act as a safeguard. Consult with insurance professionals who understand the nuances of mindfulness instruction, and who can help you tailor your coverage to the unique needs of your practice.



REFLECTION:

Reflect back on everything you've learned from this course (and on any other trauma-sensitive resources you've explored elsewhere). Take a moment to write down: some of the key teachings you want to incorporate into your sessions with others, any topics you want to explore in further depth, or any overall reflections or 'ah-ha' moments you've had during the course.



SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing #1

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing #1

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing #2

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing #2

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan #1

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan #1

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan #2

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan #2

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:

Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation #1

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation #1

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation #2

A. Did you feel prepared for the session? Is there any way you could have been more prepared?

B. Did you feel comfortable leading the meditation? How was your pace and tone? Do you feel you embodied mindfulness while you taught?

C. Overall, what went well during the guided meditation?

D. Overall, what about the session could be improved upon?

E. What happened directly after the meditation (i.e. further teaching, discussion time)? How did that go?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMS:
Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation #2

F. Did any challenges arise for your participants? What was it that made you aware of these challenges? How did you handle them, if any?

G. Did you request feedback after the session? Did you let your participants know how they could reach you if needed? What came up in the follow-up/feedback?

H. Is there anything you would do differently next time to make your session more trauma-sensitive? Or, based on this session, what will you take away, study, or reflect upon to strengthen your next guided mindfulness session?

RESOURCES

For further learning and study, refer to the resources below. Keep this list in a place you'll remember it so that you can refer back to it at any time.

Highly Recommended Resources:

- Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing by David Treleaven - <https://www.amazon.com/Trauma-Sensitive-Mindfulness-Practices-Transformative-Healing/dp/0393709787>
- Cheetah House - <https://www.cheetahhouse.org/>
- Scientific Articles - <https://www.cheetahhouse.org/bibliography>
- David Treleaven - <https://davidtreleaven.com/>
- Cultivating Self-Compassion in Trauma Survivors - https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Germer.Neff_.Trauma.pdf
- The Wisdom of Trauma (Movie) - <https://thewisdomoftrauma.com/>
- Christopher Germer - <https://chrisgermer.com/>

Blogs and Articles:

- 10 Resources for How to Teach Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness - <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/10-resources-for-how-to-teach-trauma-sensitive-mindfulness/>
- Understanding the Window of Tolerance: <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/understanding-the-window-of-tolerance/>
- Can Mindfulness Be Harmful?: <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/can-mindfulness-be-harmful/>

Podcast Episodes:

- Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness with David Treleaven - <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/podcast-episodes/trauma-sensitive-mindfulness-with-david-treleaven/>
- Identifying Adverse Effects of Meditation with Willoughby Britton - <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/podcast-episodes/identifying-adverse-effects-of-meditation-with-dr-willoughby-britton/>
- Trauma in our Mindfulness Practice and Teachings with Sean Fargo - <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/podcast-episodes/trauma-in-our-mindfulness-practice-and-teachings-with-sean-fargo/>

APPENDIX: TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS SCRIPTS

Before leading with these scripts, please note again that in and of themselves, these scripts do not guarantee your teaching to be trauma-sensitive. For example, you may need to offer additional support prior to leading these meditations (i.e. helping your students to identify a grounding anchor to work with should they become dysregulated).

Additionally, maintain mindfulness of any signs that trauma is coming up for your students. Trauma-sensitivity includes being able to respond skillfully should such signs arise. These scripts should be tailored according to your authenticity, wisdom, and the needs of your students. Also, your follow-up after the session (i.e. group discussion) should include principles of trauma-sensitive mindfulness.

Ultimately, trauma-sensitivity is not just about what you do or say during a formal meditation – and it can't be scripted. It should be woven into every interaction you have with your students – before, during, and after a meditation.



I. Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness of Breathing Script



As you settle into this practice, I invite you to make yourself as comfortable as you can be. You may be seated, standing, or lying down. Choose whatever posture feels most accessible for you today.

You can close your eyes or let your gaze be soft, settling down towards the floor in front of you.

Take a moment before we begin to recognize that my guidance is invitational. You have complete agency over your own practice. If at any point you need to open your eyes or redirect your attention to something that feels stabilizing for you, such as your feet on the earth or the sounds around you, please do so.

If you're ready, begin now by feeling into the chair or floor beneath you. Notice what it feels like to be connected to this surface.

If you need to make any adjustments to your posture, feel free to do so. You might soften your shoulders, your jaw, or your hands if that feels helpful for you.

Now bring your attention to your breath.

More specifically, bring attention to any place where you can feel your breath that feels grounding and supportive for you.

You might notice the breath as it passes through the rounds of your nostrils... or as it moves through your lungs and chest... or maybe where it expands and relaxes your belly.

If none of those places feels like a grounding place to notice your breath, you can bring your attention to any other part of the body, such as your hands or your feet... and just imagine that the breath is moving into and out of that place.

Notice your breath just the way it is - not trying to change it... not trying to deepen it. Just feeling it flow in... and feeling it flow out.

Maybe the breath is cool... maybe it's warm.

Maybe there is an aroma present with the breath... or maybe the smell is neutral.

Just notice whatever you notice, breathing in and out.

Continue to breathe, in and out... letting the breath continually remind you that you are right here.

There is nowhere to go and nothing you need to do. You are invited to simply breathe.

As you breathe, you might notice thoughts or other feelings arise. This is completely natural.

Hold whatever arises with tenderness and care, and then become curious again about what it feels like to breathe.

If anything arises that feels too challenging to be with, remember that you can flutter your eyes open or redirect your attention to what grounds you.

Otherwise, continue to mind the gentle inward and outward rhythm of your breath.

As you continue to breathe, see if you can welcome a gentleness and a sense of care to your experience.

Consider what it feels like to breathe with care and tenderness. Breathing softly and gently.

As you continue to breathe, become aware of your body resting right where it is. Feel yourself held by the chair or floor as you breathe.

Check in with your posture... and then continue to breathe with care.

Encourage your mind to stay with your breath for just a few more cycles - or with whatever is grounding you in this moment.

Now, bring some gentle movement into your hands and your feet... and into any other parts of your body that could use a gentle stretch.

When you're ready, slowly lift your gaze or open your eyes. Take the time that you need.



II. Trauma-Sensitive Mindful Body Scan Script



Take a moment to find a comfortable position, either seated, standing, or lying down. Choose a posture that is accessible and comfortable for you while also helping you to remain present and aware.

Before we begin this meditation, please note that you may become aware of uncomfortable emotions or sensations as we move through the body. We're not intentionally calling up difficult feelings, but sometimes they arise.

If anything becomes too overwhelming, you can gently open your eyes, take a few deep breaths, or shift your attention to a part of the body that feels comfortable, grounding and safe for you.

Additionally, if I refer to a body part that does not apply to you, you can shift your attention to somewhere else in the body, or you can take a few mindful breaths.

So close your eyes or lower your gaze if you haven't already. And begin by feeling the support of the surface beneath you... and the support of the breath.

There's no need to breathe in any particular way. Just allow the breath to flow naturally.

The intention for this practice is to notice what is present in your physical experience, with care and curiosity. As I guide you through this mindful body scan, sense into each area with gentle awareness.

We are not looking for anything in particular, pleasant or unpleasant... we are not conjuring anything up... and we are not trying to fix or push away anything. We are just noticing what is here.

So invite your attention now into the toes, sensing into the toes without looking at them. Can you feel your toes from within, just as they are?

Notice what sensations you notice - perhaps warmth or coolness... spaciousness or tingling.

Or perhaps there is an absence of sensation. You can notice that, too.

Allow your awareness to expand as you hold the feet in your awareness, noticing whatever is present in the feet.

And then let your attention shift, moving up into the ankles...

Through the lower legs, front and back...

Noticing the knees...

And then noticing the upper legs, first the front... and then the back.

Notice the legs with caring awareness for a full breath...

Everything you notice is welcome. Do your best to sense without labeling... holding whatever arises with spacious curiosity.

And then guide your awareness into the bottom of the spine...

Into the lower back...

And into the lower abdomen.

Notice what sensations are present in these areas - with care and curiosity.

And remember that you are always in full control of where you place your attention. You can always back away if a sensation is too much.

Now let your attention rise up the spine, sensing into the upper back...

And into the chest.

Take a couple of gentle breaths here if that's comfortable: breathing gently in... and gently out at your own pace.

Remembering you can always shift attention to a body part that feels safer for you - or to some other anchor of attention if you need to, such as the breath, the sounds around you, or the feeling of the seat beneath you.

Allow your attention to shift to the fingertips now, noticing what it feels like to sense the fingertips from within.

And then sense the whole hands...

The wrists...

The lower arms, top side and bottom side...

The elbows...

And the upper arms, the outer sides and inner sides.

Sense into the whole arms for a full breath... in and out...

And then guide your awareness into the shoulders, noticing what is present there.

Hold your experience, whatever it might be, with a sense of care and curiosity.

Let your attention rise into the neck... and into the jaw.

Notice with curiosity...

And then let your attention expand to include the rest of the mouth...

The cheeks, ears, and nose...

The eyes and eyebrows...

The top of the head...

And the back of the head.

Noticing the entire head with care and curiosity.

Now let your attention encompass the entire body... and then take three slow, gentle breaths into the whole body.

Take another few breaths to thank yourself for tending to the body with this gentle awareness - for tuning in without agenda.

And then bring a bit of movement back into your body... maybe wiggling your toes and your fingers... your arms and neck.

And when you're ready, slowly open your eyes or raise your gaze.

Thank you for your practice.



III. Trauma-Sensitive Metta Meditation Script



For this loving-kindness (or metta) meditation, I invite you to find a comfortable seated or resting position. Choose a posture that helps you to feel supported and relaxed while also awake and aware.

And as you settle in, gently close your eyes or lower your gaze... and take a moment to ground into this moment - either by feeling the surface beneath you... or by taking a few mindful breaths.

Settling into this moment: either with each breath... or by noticing what it feels like to be held by your physical space.

And then check in with your body, making any needed adjustments... or softening any tightness, such in your hands, jaw, or shoulders.

Allow yourself to arrive and settle in here with care.

In this meditation, we will practice sending loving-kindness to a few different people - and also to ourselves.

The intention is not for the loving-kindness to be forced; but rather, to see what we can naturally call up from within. Please take this at your own pace and practice to whatever depth feels right for you today.

I invite you to begin by calling to mind someone or something that you love and care for.

It could be a friend or family member... it could be a pet... or it could be something in nature, like a tree or river.

Just call to mind one being that you feel a natural sense of care and compassion for.

You might visualize this being as if they were in front of you... or you might sense into their energy.

Take a couple of slow, mindful breaths with this being in your awareness... feeling the natural love and care you have for them...

And then repeat the following warm wishes, or choose others that resonate with you:

May you be safe.

May you be happy.

May you be cared for.

May you be at peace.

Send any final words of care and warmth to this being...

And then gently release them from your awareness.

Take a couple of grounding breaths here... or root through your connection to what's beneath you.

Take note of how it feels to have sent those wishes, welcoming everything that is arising with equal grace.

Shifting our focus now, call to mind an acquaintance... someone you know but perhaps not too well.

Your feelings towards this person may be neutral or positive... but the connection is not particularly strong.

Maybe it's someone who works at your local café... or a colleague you haven't gotten to know yet.

Choose just one person, whoever comes to mind that feels neutral or positive but not particularly close to you.

You might imagine them as if they were standing in front of you... or you might simply sense the energy of their presence.

With this person in your awareness, I invite you to repeat the following phrases of loving-kindness – or again, any words that feel resonant with you:

May you be safe.

May you be happy.

May you be cared for.

May you be at peace.

Gently release your sense of this person... and reconnect with your breath or the surface beneath you.

Softening your awareness... settling your mind and body.

Take note of how it feels to have sent those wishes, welcoming everything that is arising with care and tenderness. There is no right or wrong here.

Now, I invite you to call to mind someone in your life who you have some difficulties with – someone with whom the difficulties are minor to moderate, nothing too intense.

If you were to rate the difficulty of this relationship on a scale from 1 to 10, it should be a challenge of around 3 or 4.

Take your time to call this person to mind, holding them gently in your awareness.

If it feels too difficult to hold this person in mind, allow someone else to come to your awareness – someone with whom the difficulty isn't as intense.

The invitation is to send this person your care as you did the first two. So when you are ready, offer words of loving-kindness to this individual... perhaps repeating:

May you be safe.

May you be happy.

May you be cared for.

May you be at peace.

Notice what is coming up, allowing whatever is present to be there. It's okay to feel resistance... confusion... or anything else that you feel. Just notice it.

Now release this person from your awareness and ground back into your breath or the surface beneath you.

Invite your thinking mind to settle... just noticing what it feels like to be resting and breathing right where you are.

Now in your own way, call to mind the whole world.

You might imagine the Earth as if you were observing it from outer space... or you might just hold this notion of the whole world close to your heart.

Sensing into the whole world, again offering loving-kindness:

May you be safe.

May you be happy.

May you be cared for.

May you be at peace.

Now gently release the whole world...

And instead, hold yourself in your awareness.

Hold the entirety of yourself with care, considering that you are a part of the whole world that you just offered your love to.

And so, see if you can offer yourself the same loving-kindness that you offered to all others - in your own words, or by repeating:

May you be safe.

May you be happy.

May you be cared for.

May you be at peace.

Notice whatever is coming up for you - holding your experience with care and curiosity. There is no right or wrong way to experience this meditation.

Now find an anchor that grounds you the most.

Again, it could be your breath or the surface beneath you... or, it could be a hand placed gently on your heart.

And take a few moments to let your mind settle into this anchor. Just resting with it for a short while.

Thank you for sitting with me in this loving-kindness practice. Whenever you're ready, I invite you to slowly lift your gaze or open your eyes to come back.