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**Protecting the Integrity of Mindfulness Education and Training:  
Ensuring Access to High Quality Teachers**

*“There is no one regulatory body overseeing the professional context for mindfulness-based teaching. Many mindfulness-based teachers work within the context of their root profession (i.e. a health professional or a school teacher is bound by their professional regulatory body), and this gives some protection for both teacher and course participant. However, it is also important for a mindfulness course participant to have the confidence that their teacher has done the necessary preparation for the specific nature of this work. It is relatively easy for people who do not have the recommended credentials to set up as a teacher; and it becomes confusing for those wanting to access a well-qualified teacher to know how to judge the quality of their potential teacher.” - [Oxford Mindfulness Centre](#)*

Until a regulatory body emerges in the US overseeing mindfulness-based teaching, the Midwest Alliance for Mindfulness (MAM) follows the UK Network’s Good Practice Guidelines for Teaching and Teacher Training ([mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk](http://mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk)). They are reprinted here:

**UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations  
Good-practice Guidelines for Teaching mindfulness-based courses**

**A teacher of mindfulness-based approaches should have the following:**

**A. Mindfulness Based Teacher Training:**

1. Familiarity through personal participation with the mindfulness-based course curriculum that they will be learning to teach, with particular in-depth personal experience of all the core meditation practices of this mindfulness-based programme.
2. Completion of an in-depth, rigorous mindfulness-based teacher-training programme or supervised pathway over a minimum duration of 12 months.

**B. Training or background required in addition to mindfulness-based teacher training:**

1. A professional qualification in mental or physical health care, education or social care, or equivalent life experience, recognized by the organization or context within which the teaching will take place.
2. Knowledge and experience of the populations that the mindfulness-based course will be delivered to, including experience of teaching, therapeutic or other care provision with groups and/or individuals, unless such knowledge and experience is provided to an adequate level by the mindfulness-based teacher training itself. An exception to this can be when teaching with the help of a colleague who knows well the population to whom the course will be delivered and has a relevant

qualification. They would also need to have an understanding of mindfulness-based approaches.

3. If delivering MBCT, knowledge of relevant underlying psychological processes, associated research and evidence-based practice, unless these are provided to an adequate level by the mindfulness teacher training programme.
4. If delivering MBCT or other mindfulness-based course with a clinical population, an appropriate professional clinical training

### **C. Ongoing Good Practice Requirements -**

1. Commitment to a personal mindfulness practice through
    - a. daily formal and informal practice
    - b. participation in annual residential teacher-led mindfulness meditation retreats
  2. Engagement in processes which continue to develop mindfulness-based teaching practice:
    - a. ongoing contacts with other mindfulness practitioners and teachers, built and maintained as a means to share experiences and learn collaboratively and
    - b. regular supervision with an experienced mindfulness-based teacher including:
      - i. Opportunity to reflect on/inquire into personal process in relation to personal mindfulness practice and mindfulness-based teaching practice
      - ii. Receiving periodic feedback on teaching through video recordings, supervisor (mentor) sitting in on teaching sessions or co-teaching with reciprocal feedback.
  3. A commitment to ongoing development as a teacher through further training, keeping up to date with the evidence base, recording and reflecting on teaching sessions, participation in web forums etc.
  4. Adherence to the ethical framework appropriate to the teacher's professional background and working context.
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### **UK Network for Mindfulness-based Teacher Training Organizations Good Practice Guidelines for Trainers of Mindfulness-based Teachers**

- A. Mindfulness-based teaching, training and experience:
- To have had full teaching responsibility for at least nine mindfulness-based courses over a minimum of three years.
  - To be a proficient teacher of mindfulness-based courses as assessed by experienced colleagues and ideally through the use of the [Mindfulness-based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria \(MBI:TAC\)](#).
  - To continue to teach mindfulness-based courses to people with varying levels of experience as a teacher, as well as supervising teachers.

- To have regular (strongly recommended monthly) supervision with an experienced mindfulness supervisor (mentor) to reflect upon their teaching practice and its interface with their personal mindfulness practice.
- To engage in peer relationships with other trainers and supervisors (mentors).
- To attend annual retreats that facilitate practice at depth, some of which are at least 7-10 days in duration. [MAM requires 5 days or more]
- To stay up-to-date with the current and developing evidence base for mindfulness-based interventions, with a particular emphasis on the programme or programmes in which they offer supervision.
- To be up-to-date with current methods of assessing mindfulness-based teaching competency and maintaining good practice.
- To be steeped in the practice and understanding of mindfulness which is informed by both relevant current scientific and/or clinical understanding as well as its historical antecedents from relevant spiritual and philosophical traditions, the most common example of which is the Buddhist tradition.
- To be a compassionate and strong team player who is willing to operate in the context of a supervision team and in connection with others who are supervising teachers in the UK context.

**Mindfulness-based teacher supervisors (mentors) need well developed skills, understanding and attitudes in the following areas:**

- An experientially gained understanding of the complexity of mindfulness as an approach and its transformational potential.
- An in-depth understanding of the aims and intentions of the full range of curriculum components within the mindfulness-based course they are training others to teach.
- An understanding of the underlying theoretical principles of the mindfulness-based courses they are training others to teach.
- An understanding and capacity to supervise others in the principles underpinning the adaptation of mindfulness-based courses to different contexts and populations.
- Skill in working with groups, especially the creation of a safe and challenging learning environment.
- The ability and skill to support trainees in identifying their strengths and learning needs, and to provide feedback that facilitates new learning.
- An understanding of the complex interface between MBAs taught in a therapeutic context and mindfulness taught in traditional or specific cultural contexts, and a commitment to being transparent regarding which context(s) mindfulness teaching/training is being offered.
- The ability and knowledge to work within the ethical framework of his/her profession or training and to have particularly developed sensitivities in relation to:
  - Only supervising within the limits and boundaries of competence
  - Only asking supervisees to engage in an appropriate kind and amount of informal and formal practice (i.e. no more than the supervisor (mentor) themselves would practice).

**B. Supervision (or Mentoring in US) and Training experience**

Our supervisors (Mentors) need to:

- Have completed mindfulness-specific supervision (mentoring) training (minimum of 3 days training).
- Work within a Mindfulness-based Supervision (mentoring) Model.
- Engage in on-going continuing professional development in mindfulness supervision (mentoring) with an experienced mindfulness supervisor (mentor), including engaging in “Supravisation,” which is the supervision of supervision (mentoring of mentoring).
- Have on-going study and guidance with a teacher or teachers to support a deepening of the supervisor’s (mentor’s) personal mindfulness practice. This might include interviews or meetings with a teacher on teacher-led retreats; on-going dialogue with a teacher experienced in meditation; and/or guidance and study with an experienced mindfulness supervisor (mentor) who has these skills and experience.
- Have a sustained and on-going personal mindfulness practice that includes the body scan, mindful movement and sitting practice.
- Be trained in and familiar with the use of the Mindfulness-Based Interventions:Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC).

### **C. Clinical/Contextual background**

Ideally the supervisor (mentor) will be clinically trained and/or have life experience in the field or context to be supervised (mentored).

Please note that if the supervisor (mentor) is not trained or qualified in the clinical field being supervised (mentored), the supervisor (mentor) will limit his/her supervision (mentoring) to non-clinical areas of mindfulness content and process.

Clinical responsibility is always to be held by a separate clinical supervisor and this must be clearly detailed in the supervision contract.

### **D. Specific Competencies for Mindfulness-based supervision (mentorship)**

Our supervisors (mentors) will have the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of ethical and professional practice.
- Competence in working with difference.
- Ability to set up a Supervision (mentoring) Contract, identifying and taking into account the supervisory (mentoring) needs of:
  - The nature of the work, context and specialist skills required (e.g. working with cancer, chronic pain, etc., supervision (mentoring) of Masters students)
  - The organisational context (NHS, Voluntary Sector, Private Practice, Education, Workplace, etc.)
  - The Supervisee’s (mentee’s) mindfulness practice and mindfulness teaching developmental needs
- Ability to set up Session Contracts.
- Ability to develop and maintain a working alliance.
- Ability to identify supervisee’s (mentee’s) level of competence and learning needs.
- Ability to enable the supervisee (mentee) to reflect and present supervision (mentoring) material.

- Ability to give accurate and constructive feedback and to challenge bad practice where necessary.
- Ability to write reports on the supervisee's (mentee's) development, if agreed in the contract and if necessary.
- Ability to reflect on own work as a supervisor (mentor); identify own training and supervisory (mentoring) needs; and identify own limits in terms of specific specialities, contexts and own mindfulness practice development.
- Ability to conduct supervision (mentoring) in different formats: group, individual, peer, telephone, Skype and face-to-face.
- Ability to help the supervisee (mentee) to practise specific mindfulness skills, including incorporating mindfulness practice into the supervision (mentoring) sessions when appropriate.
- Ability to supervise (mentor) the development of the supervisee's (mentee's) personal mindfulness practice.
- Ability to draw on own mindfulness practice and employ a mindfulness Inquiry process to facilitate the supervisee's (mentee's) learning.
- Ability to incorporate direct observation and observation through DVDs into the supervision (mentoring).
- Familiarity with and ability to use MBI:TAC as a training tool and as an evaluation tool.