



Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches



Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living **International Online MBCL Teacher-Training Programme**

6 x Friday in Spring 2022

with the Founders of MBCL

Erik van den Brink, MD

Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist and Mindfulness Trainer

Frits Koster,

Meditation Teacher and Mindfulness Trainer

Organised by the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (IMA)

What is Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living (MBCL)?

MBCL is a mindfulness-based 8-week programme that supports the development and training of (self-) compassion to enhance physical, emotional and relational health and well-being. It is suitable as a follow-on course for other mindfulness-based programmes (MBSR, MBCT or equivalent). Developed by Erik van den Brink and Frits Koster, MBCL is grounded in science and in the decades-long experience of its two founders. Erik van den Brink brings to MBCL his experience as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, expert on mindfulness in mental health settings and long-time meditator. Frits Koster integrates his work as a Vipassana teacher, a trainer in MBSR & MBCT, his expertise in Buddhist psychology and his work as a mindfulness trainer for mental health professionals.

MBCL incorporates scientific insights, exercises and teachings gleaned from other compassion training methods as well as contemplative practices. It was originally developed in the ambulant mental health setting for clients who benefited from MBSR/MBCT and needed more support,



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particularly those with tendencies to be harsh with themselves, finding it difficult to receive kindness. MBCL is not aimed at specific diagnostic groups but - like MBSR - addresses unhealthy reactions and patterns contributing to suffering in general. Clients vulnerable to depression, anxiety, burnout, chronic pain or fatigue, and various emotional and relational difficulties can all benefit. It soon turned out that the MBCL programme is also very helpful to professional care givers, being vulnerable to symptoms of burnout. In recent years, MBCL has rapidly expanded beyond the mental health sector and is found to be helpful for anyone, professionals and non-professionals, having to live in a frantic world and wishing to deepen mindfulness with 'heartfulness'.

RESEARCH

There is an increasing amount of research showing the beneficial effects of compassion-based interventions for our physical, emotional and relational health. Supportive evidence for MBCL has been published in various scientific publications (Bartels-Velthuis et al. 2016; Krieger et al. 2016; Schuling et al. 2017; Ondrejková et al. 2020). Two recent controlled trials showed significant health benefits in a clinical population with recurrent depression who followed MBCL after MBCT (Schuling et al., 2020) and a non-clinical population who followed an online adaptation of MBCL (Krieger et al. 2019).

Why online?

The Covid-19 pandemic has enabled us to gain experience with working online. Despite some limitations, many have been surprised by the depth of teaching, practice and sharing online programmes can offer. The pandemic has increased our awareness of our vulnerabilities and the need to take care of ourselves, each other and the planet. It makes sense to expand the possibilities of online teacher trainings, which are kinder for the environment and for many participants who would otherwise have to travel great distances. It also provides richer opportunities to learn in groups of people across cultures.

Learning Objectives of the online MBCL TT Programme

- To experience the main exercises of MBCL in more depth beyond the foundation course level.
- To thoroughly review the content of the 8 sessions of an MBCL course.
- To have a basic understanding of the scientific foundation of compassion training and the theoretical background in western and Buddhist psychology.
- To review and develop the basic attitudes necessary for working with compassion-focused methods.
- To have an understanding for which clients compassion training can be helpful.
- To deepen the practice of mindfulness and clarify its relationship to compassion training.
- Deepening the understanding of the structure and content of MBCL.



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- Learning how to teach the curriculum and how to guide MBCL exercises.
- Introduction to leading inquiry following exercises.
- Developing skills of how to present the background theory on compassion training.
- Deepening one's personal experience of compassion exercises.

Content of the Online MBCL TT Programme

- The validation of pain and suffering.
- How our brain has evolved to help us survive and how compassion is a necessity (not a luxury), for our well-being and survival.
- Insight into the three basic emotion regulation and motivation systems
- How mental images and patterns can bring emotion-regulation systems out of balance and how compassionate imagery can restore the balance.
- The psychological expressions of fight, flight & freeze: self-hatred, self-isolation and over-identification and their antidotes: self-kindness, common humanity & mindfulness.
- "Tend & befriend" as a fourth reaction to stress in addition to fight, flight & freeze.
- Compassionately relating to resistance, desire and inner patterns; self-conscious emotions shame and self-blame; the inner critic and inner helper.
- Developing the compassion mode with its attributes of care for wellbeing and relief of suffering, sensitivity to needs, sympathy, empathy, tolerance of distress and non-judgmental awareness.
- The balanced cultivation of the four heart qualities: compassion, loving kindness, joy and equanimity.
- Compassion in action and practical ethics.
- The structure of MBCL's 8 sessions will be presented in detail from the teaching perspective.
- The content and structure of compassion-focused exercises will be reviewed and practiced.
- Participants will have more practice guiding MBCL exercises as well as leading compassionate inquiry sessions.
- Background knowledge and meta-perspectives for MBCL trainers, including:
 - Evolutionary perspectives
 - High and low routes toward compassion
 - The plasticity of the brain
 - The physiology of the breath
 - Individual and gender differences
 - Different attachment styles
 - MBCL and psychological problems, indications/contraindications
 - MBCL in private practice settings
 - Content and attitude in communication
 - The differences and common ground between psychotherapy and MBCL training.

Prerequisites for participation in the Online MBCL TT Programme



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The MBCL TT Programme is currently taking place in various countries in Europe and offered for professionals already familiar with mindfulness practice and mindfulness-based work. All applicants are required to have participated in only **one** of the following experiential offerings:

- an MBCL Foundation Course (minimum 3 days) - see also www.compassionateliving.info or www.mbcl.org for different options; Courses in German can be found on the IMA's German web site: <https://www.institut-fuer-achtsamkeit.de/leistungsspektrum/mbcl/termine>
- an eight-week MBCL training as a participant with a qualified MBCL teacher; Courses in various countries and languages can be found here <https://www.institute-for-mindfulness.org/offer/mbcl/find-an-MBCL-teacher-near-you>
- an MBCL retreat (see the websites of the teachers)
- an online eight-week MBCL training with one of the teachers, such as offered in Autumn 2020. [Click here](#) for more information.
- an online MBCL training with one of the teachers in another format, such as the one offered by the IMA in early 2021 by Erik van den Brink, six half-days weekly, beginning February 9, 2021.
- Participants must have adequate communication skills in English.-
- Participants must be familiar with using the online ZOOM video platform and willing to engage in mindful inquiry into their experiences through online sharing in larger and smaller groups. This includes interpersonal work in twos or threes in breakout rooms.
- Participants are responsible for ensuring a good internet connection and a suitable PC, laptop or other device with adequate video and sound systems. Use of a smart phone is not recommended.
- Participants are required to purchase the following book in advance:
 - **Required Reading:** *A Practical Guide to Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living - Living with Heart* by Erik van den Brink & Frits Koster, with Victoria Norton (Routledge, 2018), a self-help guide and workbook to be used by participants of a standard MBCL course.
 - **Optional Reading:** *Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living – A New Training Programme to Deepen Mindfulness with Heartfulness* by Erik van den Brink & Frits Koster (Routledge, 2015), a textbook for professionals which includes a middle part with practical guidance taking the reader through the course experientially.Both books come with downloadable audios and worksheets.
- Participants should be willing to spend a minimum of 14 hours of their own time to do preparatory work in-between sessions, individually and in small groups. They should also allow for reading time and individual practice time.



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MBCL Teaching Qualification

Two Paths ...

EITHER:

the participant must be qualified as a mindfulness teacher (MBSR or MBCT, or equivalent, e.g. Breathworks) from a recognized training institute. On successful completion of the MBCL TT Programme, and following a minimum of 3 hours of supervision during teaching MBCL to groups, one can obtain *A-registration* as an MBCL teacher and offer the formal MBCL-programme as an advanced course to participants who completed a basic mindfulness course (MBSR/MBCT/Breathworks).¹

Those who have almost completed their mindfulness teacher training can also apply for the MBCL TT programme. However, they will only obtain their MBCL A-registration following completion of their mindfulness teacher training and received certification.

OR: the participant may be qualified in a (mental) health or other helping profession without MBSR/MBCT teacher qualification. They should have followed basic training and gained experience in mindfulness-based interventions (e.g. ACT, DBT, MBCT) and/or wish to do the MBCL training to deepen their own practice and their therapeutic or counseling skills with mindfulness-based and compassion-focused interventions.

For this group the minimum requirements are that one has followed an eight-week MBSR/MBCT course and has at least one year of regular practice in mindfulness meditation. Those belonging to this group can obtain *B-registration* as a professional who has been trained in guiding exercises and working with material from the MBCL programme and applies this in their own work setting within the ethical guidelines of their profession, individually or in groups.

Please note: One can only register as a certified MBCL teacher and offer the full MBCL programme under its name when one is also a certified MBSR or MBCT teacher.

¹ This is in line with the Good Practice Guidelines for Mindfulness-Based teaching in the UK. As this is a postgraduate education one is expected to have the professional integrity and responsibility to judge when one is ready to offer MBCL independently. Those who do not feel confident to do so as yet after the TT, are advised to seek further schooling and supervision and/or obtain experience as a co-teacher.



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Teachers



Erik van den Brink is psychiatrist/psychotherapist and mindfulness teacher/trainer. He studied medicine in Amsterdam and trained and worked in psychiatry in the UK. From his return to the Netherlands in 1995 until 2015 he worked in the ambulant mental health services in the city of Groningen. Since its founding in 2007, he was involved with the Center for Integrative Psychiatry, an innovative mental health clinic, and he currently works at a psycho-oncological center. He is particularly interested in methods that empower people's self-healing capacity and was one of the pioneers introducing mindfulness-based and compassion-focused interventions in mental health services in the North of Holland.

He has a long-standing personal meditation practice and was trained by founding teachers in MBSR/MBCT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Compassion Focused Therapy, Mindful Self-Compassion and Interpersonal Mindfulness. With Frits Koster he developed the MBCL programme and co-authored several publications. He is a frequent guest teacher at mindfulness training institutes across Europe. Website: www.mbcl.org.



Frits Koster is a Vipassana meditation teacher and a certified teacher of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). He has also trained and worked as a psychiatric nurse. He has taught mindfulness in mental health settings, including clinics and hospitals, for many years. He has been practicing Theravada Buddhism for more than 35 years and lived as a Buddhist monk in Thailand for six years in the 1980s. He has been leading Vipassana retreats and courses since the 1980s. He is a member of the faculty of the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (IMA), the Institute for Mindfulness (IvM) in the Netherlands as well as various mindfulness training institutes across Europe.

He was trained by founding teachers in Compassion Focused Therapy, Mindful Self-Compassion and Interpersonal Mindfulness (Insight Dialogue). He is the author of several books, including *Liberating Insight*, *Buddhist Meditation as Stress Management* and *The Web of Buddhist Wisdom*. Thailand: Silkwormbooks. With Erik van den Brink he developed the MBCL programme and co-authored several publications. Website: www.compassionateliving.info.

Literature:

- Erik van den Brink & Frits Koster (2015): *Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living – A new training programme to deepen mindfulness with heartfulness*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Erik van den Brink & Frits Koster (2018). *A Practical Guide to Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living – Living with heart*. London/New York: Routledge.



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Dates and times:

- Friday, March 18, 2022	(Erik van den Brink)	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.
- Friday, April 1, 2022	(Frits Koster)	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.
- Friday, April 15, 2022	(Erik van den Brink)	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.
- Friday, April 29, 2022	(Frits Koster)	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.
- Friday, May 13, 2022	(Erik van den Brink)	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.
- Friday, June 3, 2022	(Frits Koster).	9.00 – 12.30 and 14.30-17.30 CET.

Time investment

There will be 36 hours of online teaching and a minimum of 14 hours for individual preparation of didactic themes and practice in small groups, and on two occasions an hour of mindful sharing in subgroups with one of the tutors focusing on one's individual process during the course. In addition, participants are expected to commit themselves to individual practice time and reading time depending on their individual learning needs. The teachers will also be available for individual email contact as required.

Acknowledgement of Participation in the MBCL TT Programme

All participants who have completed at least 33 formal, teacher-led training hours will receive a document that confirms their participation in the MBCL Online TT Programme.

Certification as an MBCL teacher

Those who

- 1) fulfill the requirements for certification as outlined in the section "MBCL Teaching Qualification,"
- 2) have taught a certification course within three years of completing the online TT programme,
- 3) completed a minimum of three supervision hours for the certification course with an approved MBCL supervisor, and
- 4) receive the supervisor's recommendation for certification,

will receive a certificate as an MBCL teacher and be listed on www.compassionateliving.info and on the website of the IMA.



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Additional information

- The maximum number of participants is 18 participants. The online programme can take place with a minimum of 10 participants.
- Zoom will be used as an internet application; it will offer interpersonal options, such as breakout rooms, chat and pin-up. This requires a suitable internet connection and a well-functioning device. Technical instruction in the use of ZOOM will not be offered. However, ZOOM provides excellent online tutorials

Course Fee: 1000,- Euro (Payable at the time of registration)

Terms of Registration

Places in the trainings will be assigned in the order in which registration is received. If the seminar is full, you will be notified and placed on a waiting list.

Terms of Cancellation

If you have to withdraw from the seminar, the following terms will apply:

Withdrawal up to 4 weeks before the seminar begins: We will refund any payments made minus a **Euro 40.-** fee for early withdrawal.

Withdrawal within 4 weeks of the seminar: The course fee is non-refundable. If we are able to fill your space from a waiting list, your course fee will be returned minus a Euro 40.- administrative charge.

ZOOM Link

The International Online MBCL teacher training programme will be taught using the online ZOOM video platform. 5 days before the seminar is to start, participants will receive a ZOOM Link via Email.

A registration form is available for downloading here:

www.institute-for-mindfulness.org/offer/mbcl/mbcl-online-teacher-training



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