



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) groups

MBCT (mindfulness-based cognitive therapy) is an 8-week structured group, led by a trained clinician, that combines mindfulness with elements of CBT. It was developed to keep depression from coming back. When mood dips, patterns like rumination and self-criticism can pull you back into an episode; MBCT teaches you to notice them early and step back before they spiral.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- Best in remission from recurrent depression, to lower the risk of future episodes.
- Also a fit for residual symptoms, or while tapering off antidepressants.
- Not an acute treatment for a severe current episode or crisis. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's used for

Strongest evidence: preventing relapse in recurrent depression (three or more episodes).

Increasingly used for current depression and anxiety.

Also for people tapering off antidepressants, and adapted for perinatal and bipolar depression.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Eight weekly sessions of 2 to 2.5 hours, plus a full-day mindfulness retreat.

2 Guided meditation, movement, and structured inquiry about your home practice.

3 A set curriculum, not open-ended discussion. Home practice is about 45 minutes daily.

MBCT has strong, well-replicated evidence for its main purpose: preventing depressive relapse.

- A 2021 network meta-analysis of 14 trials (2,077 people) found MBCT **reduced the risk of depressive relapse** and lengthened time to relapse.¹
- A 2024 individual-participant meta-analysis confirmed the effect, with a relapse hazard ratio of 0.69.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Practice between sessions. The daily sitting is where it works.

Befriend a busy mind. Noticing and returning is the skill.

Give it a few weeks. The shift is gradual.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is the leader a clinician trained in MBCT?
- 2 Is this the full 8-week curriculum?
- 3 Is there a booster or maintenance group afterward?
- 4 What does it cost? Is there a free or sliding scale option?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 McCartney, M., et al. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for prevention and time to depressive relapse: systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* (2021).
- 2 Biesheuvel-Leliefeld, K. E. M., et al. An individual participant data meta-analysis of psychological interventions for preventing depression relapse. *Nature Mental Health* (2024).

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