

Shelter in the Storm: Teaching MBSR to women with sexual trauma histories and complex PTSD

April 7-11, 2010 Trish Magyari, MS and Char Wilkins, LCSW.

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This half-day practical experiential workshop is focused on addressing the teaching challenges posed by women with complex trauma histories (especially childhood sexual abuse) using lecture, demonstrations, role-play, small group discussion and question/answer periods. Childhood sexual abuse is a relatively common event in the lives of women, making it likely that general MBSR classes are populated with those with this trauma history.

This workshop is for MBSR teachers and therapists who wish to make their groups more sensitive to this population as well as for those offering classes specifically for traumatized populations. Common challenges of those with complex PTSD include dissociation, flashbacks, on-going distress and strong avoidance as coping mechanisms.

Our experience and research data have given us confidence that MBSR is an appropriate and helpful intervention for those healing from complex trauma, given a mindful awareness by the teacher to the curriculum and participants' stages of healing. In this session we will present what we consider to be essentials regarding teacher sensitivity, curriculum adaptations and languaging with emphasis on addressing teaching challenges.

We will begin with a 30-minute review of PTSD symptoms, MBSR as a healing adjunct, and the selection of MBSR participants, followed by a 15 min. Q&A. In the next hour we will present specific adaptations to the MBSR curriculum including skillful teaching of the body scan and examples of how to help participants stay within the window of mindfulness practice (without distress) both in class and at home. The last hour will be spent in dyads and small group work doing experiential exercises involving typical classroom scenarios with this population. A closing 15 min dialogue with participants will allow reflections and concerns to be raised and discussed.

Presenters: Trish Magyari, MS and Char Wilkins, MSW, LCSW

Register: www.umassmed.edu/cfm