

Session 8. Keeping the Practice Going

Session 8 is the last of the weekly sessions, with 4 weeks until the Booster Session (Session 9). This is a time when you may reflect on the progress you have made and also consider ways in which you still wish to grow. This time of reflection can bring some feeling of accomplishment, as you may have made many changes and tried out many new ways of thinking, feeling, and being in the world over the past weeks.

With these gains can also come a sense of loss, because leaving behind old patterns is a change and may bring new challenges. There may be some sense of sadness that the road ahead means actively working to maintain the gains you've made, rather than leaving the sessions "cured," with no need to take additional active steps in the service of your ongoing growth and trauma recovery. It is helpful to explore these experiences of reluctance to change, or even sadness at the loss of a previous way of living.

The 4 weeks between the end of Session 8 and the Booster Session (Session 9) are a time to try out the practices on your own, without the support of the weekly group. It is a time to explore which practices are a good match and can be sustained over time. It is a time to note the areas of progress and reflect on how far you have come and what work you may still wish to do.

As we draw this weekly program to a close, you may spend some time planning for continuing your practice over the next 4 weeks. If you feel the practice has been helpful, it is important to plan for how to keep your practice going.

Many people find it easier to practice with a group. Classes may be available both in-person and online. If you are interested in attending an in-person group, you can explore classes in your area. You should look for classes that are near your home or work, because it can be difficult to attend a class that is far away on a regular basis. Go to the class a few times on a trial basis. Do you like the instructor? Is it in a safe and pleasant location? Is the cost of the class affordable? You may need to go to a few different classes before you find one that is a good match for you.

If you choose not to attend a class, plan for ways to keep your practice going on your own. Having established a daily routine that includes a regular time and place to practice is most helpful in this regard. If you think that practicing is an important part of your daily routine, then you will be a great success.

FAQs for Session 8

Is it better to meditate in a group or by myself?

Most people who maintain a regular daily practice of meditation will be meditating on their own almost every day. In order to keep the practice alive, many people find it helpful to have the guidance of an experienced teacher and the support of the company of other meditators.

(continued)

From *Mindfulness and Meditation in Trauma Treatment: The Inner Resources for Stress Program* by Lynn C. Waelde. Copyright © 2022 The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this material is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use or use with clients (see copyright page for details).

Session 8 (continued)

Can I still use audio tracks for the various practices?

You can turn back to the audio tracks any time you want to refresh your memory about the practices.

Meditating seems harder than it did when I first started. Am I doing something wrong?

No! It is a great sign of progress to notice that it is sometimes difficult to sit in meditation or to let go of things as they come up. Often the practice seems to get much more difficult just before we make a great breakthrough. So, don't give up. When it seems difficult, you can say "Oh well" to yourself—accept your experience with equanimity—and just keep meditating.

Session 8 Practice

Tasks for the Next 4 Weeks

You can continue to explore and problem-solve ways to maintain daily practice until the Booster Session (Session 9).

Practice in Daily Life

You can use all the techniques we've learned: watching the breath, Letting Go, repeating "Hum Sah," and the Tension Release exercise. Use the Tension Release exercise anytime you need it throughout the day and during Sitting Practice.

Remember to watch your breathing throughout the day. Make a special effort to let go of any tension that comes up. You can do this by taking a deep breath and, as you exhale, simply let go of any tension or holding. You can repeat "Hum Sah" throughout the day with each breath. Be sure to use the techniques you have learned when you really need them, as when things aren't going well.

Sitting Practice

As this program comes to a close, take a moment to be grateful for the opportunity to learn about meditation and for the commitment you have made to yourself. Let the feelings of gratitude, love, and happiness really build inside of you, then inhale and let go of them, and see what comes next.

You can follow the plan you set for yourself for daily sitting practice, with the recommended amount still being 30 minutes a day for at least 6 days a week.

Daily Practice Log

Write down the number of minutes you have spent each day on each practice during the next 4 weeks.

● Session 8 Journal ●

Look back at your journal for Session 1. Has your practice helped you reach the goals you listed?

Reflect on what it would be like to have only one goal for meditating: a goal of growing spiritually. Would that change your practice in any way?

Where would you like to go in the future with your practice?

Debriefing the Practice: As this program comes to a close, take a moment to reflect on what the experience was like for you. What were the best and worst parts of the last 8 weeks?

From *Mindfulness and Meditation in Trauma Treatment: The Inner Resources for Stress Program* by Lynn C. Waelde. Copyright © 2022 The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this material is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use or use with clients (see copyright page for details).