

## Course Outline

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| Course Name      | MND 102: The Neuroscience and Science of Mindfulness                                  |
| Length of Study  | 6 weeks, non-credit   |
| Facilitator Name | Stephanie Kersta and Carolyn Plater   |
| Course Dates     | <b>Start Date:</b> Mar. 16, 2020   <b>End Date:</b> Apr. 26, 2020   All times Eastern |

## Course Description

This course examines how mindfulness can quite literally alter and change our brain structure and chemistry. We will summarize and distill the thousands of leading neuroscientific research papers conducted in the field of mindfulness over the last 30 years. We will take an in-depth look at the brain and explore the physical benefits that mindfulness practice can have – such as improving memory, attention and focus, decreasing anxiety and depressive symptoms, preserving the aging brain – and so much more. We will also explore how key medical and scientific experts are applying this research in the fields of mental health, addictions, cardiology, pain management and more. Fireside chat with a neuroscientist, discussion on meditation technology, and experiential practice will be incorporated.

## Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the physical benefits a mindfulness practice can have on the body
2. Describe the structures of the brain and their role in our wellbeing.
3. Recognize current neuroscientific research and apply it in activities to promote brain health

## Meet the Facilitators

### Carolyn Plater, MSW, RSW

Carolyn Plater graduated with an Honours BA. in Psychology from York University. She received her Addiction Education Diploma from McMaster University and her Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto, which included a joint collaborative program in Addiction Studies. She possesses additional certifications in Smoking Cessation Interventions, Concurrent Disorders, and Opioid Dependence from The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She holds certificates in Solution Focused Counselling, Trauma counselling, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention.

As a complement to her strong clinical education Carolyn has incorporated additional evidence-based holistic certificates to further round out her training including a certificate from the University of Toronto in Applied Mindfulness Meditation and is a certified trauma-informed yoga instructor.

Carolyn holds teaching positions at McMaster University, Humber College, Ontario Learn, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She is also a consultant trainer for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Livingworks, certifying hundreds of people in Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and safeTALK suicide alertness training every year. Carolyn runs a private clinical practice with a specialty in anxiety, depression, and self-esteem for children and adolescents.

She is the co-founder of Hoame, North America's largest modern meditation studio which has garnered over 150 million media impressions. Carolyn is regularly sought out as an expert for media, conferences, and corporate speaking engagements.

## Stephanie Kersta, MSc, RP

Stephanie Kersta holds an Honors Bachelor of Science with a specialty in Psychology, and a Masters of Science in Psychology, with sub-specialties in Mental Health Counselling and Organizational Psychology.

Additionally, she holds a number of certifications, including a post-graduate certificate in Addictions and Mental Health Counselling, and certificates in Solution-Focused Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Psychometric Assessments. Stephanie is also certified in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) certifying her as a sleep specialist.

As a complement to her strong clinical education, Stephanie has incorporated additional evidence-based holistic certificates to further round out her training. She is certified in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, and Mindful Eating.

Stephanie holds teaching positions at McMaster University, Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario Learn, Durham College and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She is also a consultant trainer for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Livingworks, certifying hundreds of people in Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and safeTALK suicide alertness training every year. Stephanie runs a private clinical practice with a specialty in anxiety, depression, stress, and sleep for youth and young adults.

She is the co-founder of Hoame, North America's largest modern meditation studio which has garnered over 150 million media impressions. Stephanie is regularly sought out as an expert for media, conferences, and corporate speaking engagements.

## Outline

| Week | Topics                                   |
|------|--|
| 1    | Introduction to Neuroscience             |
| 2    | The Brain                                |
| 3    | The Physiological Stress Response        |
| 4    | Mental Health and Mindfulness            |
| 5    | Physical Health and Mindfulness          |
| 6    | Applications of Neuroscientific Research |