

April 2021

Re: Formation of the International Mindfulness Integrity Network (IMI Network)

Dear Mindfulness Colleagues around the world,

This letter updates you on the development of the International Mindfulness Integrity Network (IMI Network), including the creation of a website (www.iminetwork.org). There are now opportunities for teacher training centers for MBSR, MBCT and other empirically supported MBPs (hereafter referred to generically as MBPs¹), who are aligned with the standards to support next steps.

Since 2014, there have been many preparatory steps towards the formation of this network. This letter updates you on progress and next steps.

History of the Integrity network

During 2015, a series of workshops took place around the world inviting exploration and sharing on whether there was interest and energy to collaborate to form a network. There was clear consensus from these meetings that an International Integrity Network could serve a valuable function in supporting the integrity and cohesiveness of the field.

A vision crystalized to create an international group that supports teachers and trainers in maintaining the integrity of evidence-based, researched mindfulness-based programs grounded in awareness, compassion and wisdom, upheld by an interconnected, diverse and global network dedicated to promoting health, well-being and ease, for the benefit of all beings.

From the initial meetings (see appendix 2), 9 colleagues were nominated to form a transitional working party who were tasked with proposing:

- a vision and mission for the international network,
- structures that could support the organization's function, enabling representation, transparency and appropriate inclusivity for the network going forward,
- evolving governance of this network, and
- Training standards and Ethical guidelines

We are pleased to report that this group conducted some careful and thoughtful work that we hope will now form a foundation for taking next steps. You can see the results of their work on the network's [website](#). The ethics and standards for practice are [here](#), and an article describing the work is [here](#).

Importantly, *how* they engaged together to create these documents is just as significant. It is the first time that this emergent field has attempted to create connection and consensus

¹ MBP programs are: Informed by a clear rationale; Teacher-led; Have been developed to be scalable; Have a set curriculum, typically at least eight sessions with 30 – 45 mins daily home practice, incremental development and experiential learning; and have a clear commitment to be evidence-based.

from the ground up, across cultures and geography on good practice and integrity in mindfulness-based teaching and training. There are sensitivities and nuances that need thoughtful dialogue within the context of a safe space. The group have created a vessel within which this delicate work can take place, and we believe that through this they have sown seeds which can be fruitfully nurtured going forward. We are not exactly sure what the next steps will be. A characteristic of this process is that no single individual or body is in charge – it is an emergent process created through non-hierarchical dialogue. In this regard, we are honing closely to principles grounded in mindfulness and practice, rather than linking to business models or competitive market strategies.

Whilst we recognise that there is a need to develop governance in the context of delivery of mindfulness in retreat settings, and other non-standard formats, we also believe that governance for the delivery of the range of evidenced-based mindfulness-based programmes that have emerged out of MBSR is best grown within this collaborative context. Why? Because careful work on integrity and standards has already taken place over many years across the world, and the people and organizations involved in these developments are part of this network.

As a global network, we aim to expand geographical diversity. We aspire to work in connection with teachers' associations and training schools going forward, with each initiative giving energy to the areas that we are already directly engaged in and therefore know most about.

Next steps

So how do we go from here? These are the elements that we know about the next phase:

- the process is important and needs to continue;
- the organic emergent nature of the development is vital - whilst there is some urgency to get things in place, we need to also allow it to unfold at a pace that allows attention to process;
- the individuals engaged in this work are offering service as an additional element to their everyday commitments within their own contexts, so we need to be patient and hold them with gratitude and compassion;
- A strong value and aim includes expanding representation of geographical areas and populations that are currently underrepresented in our field generally;
- IMI needs to plan how it can best support and relate to training organisations internationally.

Your involvement

If you wish to support and be part of the work of the IMI Network, there are different ways to do this:

1. Placing the IMI network's document on Standards and Ethics on your website

One option is for teachers' organizations and training institutes worldwide to adopt the document on *Training Standards and Ethical Guidelines* and use it as a foundation for

their trainings. The document could serve as a source of information on your website. Websites could also share a link to the IMI website

2. Applying for a place in the IMI working party

If you wish to play a more active role in the network, you are welcome to contact us. See next page for details.

Much gratitude to you all for your patience as this process unfolds.

May this engagement together support the development of this work, and so in turn facilitate the growth of compassion and wisdom across the world.

Warm regards,

from the IMI working group (see appendices1 & 2)

Working Party Membership of the IMI Network

Background

The IMI Network formed from the impetus of multiple conversations with mindfulness-based teacher and trainers internationally. It is an informal body which seeks to support the integrity of MBP teaching and training internationally.

Working party members are key to enabling the organisation to develop and contribute to this emerging field. We are currently seeking additional members to help us through the next stages of our development. There are a number of challenges ahead including raising the profile and disseminating the work of IMI Network; establishing IMI more formally as a body with clear governance structures; and expanding representation.

We aim to have a membership board with overarching expertise in:

- MBP teaching and training
- Running a not-for-profit organisation
- Community development and engagement
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), especially as it relates to the mindfulness field
- Development and implementation of policies and standards
- Marketing and communications

We do not expect any individual to span this wide range of expertise, and we aim to build and maintain a membership team that as a whole provides us with the leadership across this broad spectrum.

Role specification:

The working party members are the guardians of the organisation, ensuring it stays within its remit. This will include:

- contributing to the activities of the working party;
- developing, reviewing and approving strategy plans;
- acting as ambassadors for the organization, and representing the organization in different forums;
- acting as critical friends pointing out areas for improvement.

Location, remuneration and time commitments

Working party members are not remunerated. All meetings take place online.

There are about 6 scheduled working party meetings a year, of about two hours duration. There will be time required to read, contribute to papers and develop ideas in advance of meetings. Over and above the working party meetings, a member may volunteer for other activities, such as:

- leading a sub working party
- participating in a project
- representing IMI Network on various governance arrangements with partner organisations.

The working party will continue with about 10 members at any one time and will meet regularly to progress the Network's vision and mission. Members will serve a maximum term of four years. As members step out, other colleagues around the world will be nominated to join. We, therefore, invite colleagues to step in and play an active role when places in the working party become vacant. We especially welcome representation of geographical areas that are currently underrepresented in the field. See below for criteria.

For a discussion about the role and the International Integrity Network, contact the current working party chair: info@iminetwork.org

To apply: email a brief CV, a letter stating what draws you to the role, your vision for IMI going forward, a brief description of how your (training) organisation aligns with the *Training Standards and Ethical Guidelines*, and the ways in which you are positioned to represent your region (i.e. not just your own organisation). All materials submitted will be held in confidence within the current working party membership.

Send your application to: info@iminetwork.org. Closing date August 31st 2021.

If we would like to proceed with appointing you, we will ask you to supply two references from experienced mindfulness-based teacher trainers/supervisors laying out your suitability for this role.

Please see the Person Specification on the next page...

Person specification

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Professional Training	Degree-level qualification or equivalent experience.	
Experience / Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior - i.e. have a lot of experience as a teacher trainer within an established MBP or other closely related empirically underpinned 8-week Mindfulness-Based (teacher training) organisation - Able to represent both their own training organisation and the region within which they work (i.e. they are well respected, well networked and well trusted within their wider community) - Representative of different geographical areas in the world and of different sorts of training organisation. At any one time the working party needs to have a spread of geography, and a spread of individuals who work within different contexts (i.e. universities and independent training institutes). Every effort will be made to include diverse representatives of groups and populations in the mindfulness context. Sensitivity to various regional and global realities is required. <p>We also encourage colleagues from underrepresented <i>regions</i> in the world to join the working party. We acknowledge that it is possible that these colleagues will be unable to fully work within established good practice guidance. For this group we are seeking to include those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are pioneering mindfulness-based teaching developments in a context 	Experience of being part of a 'virtual' geographically spread organisation

	<p>that currently has little or no activity;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have undertaken teacher training themselves in MBSR or related programme, and who are linked by supervision with an experienced colleague <p>In addition, extensive knowledge and experience in <u>one or more</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community development • fundraising • working with diversity (including training) • management/governance in charitable organisations • marketing • teaching experience in a school, college or university • mindfulness delivery in a health, criminal justice, education or workplace setting • senior management • finance • information technology 	
Skills and attributes	<p>Strong interpersonal skills</p> <p>A team player, able to work towards a shared vision</p>	<p>Experience in a similar role</p> <p>Knowledge and experience of the not for profit sector</p>
Personal qualities and abilities	<p>Commitment to the integrity, quality and development of mindfulness-based approaches, acknowledging both the importance and limits of current research.</p>	<p>Open to innovation and creative approach to challenges</p>

Appendix 1: facilitators of the initial exploratory meetings held during 2015

Jud Brewer – Mindfulness Center at Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, RI, US

Tim Burnett, Mindfulness Northwest, US

Rebecca Crane – Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor, UK

Willem Kuyken – Oxford Mindfulness Centre, UK

Karin Ek Dahl, Karolinska Institute Sweden

Christina Feldman, independent teacher/trainer, UK

Lot Heijke, independent teacher/trainer, the Netherlands

Steven Hickman – Center for Mindful Self Compassion

Maura Kenny - Mindfulness Training Institute Australasia

Linda Lehrhaupt, Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches, Germany

Florence Meleo-Meyer, Mindfulness Center at Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, RI, US

Catherine Phillips, University of Alberta, The Mindfulness Institute, Canada

Saki Santorelli – Independent teacher/trainer, US

Susan Woods, independent teacher/trainer, US

Appendix 2:

Members of the transitional working party

Maura Kenny, Mindfulness Training Institute, Australasia (co-lead)

Günter Hudasch, Achtsamkeitszentrum.Berlin, Germany (co-lead)

Taravajra, Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, UK

Linda Kantor, Institute for Mindfulness South Africa

Lynn Koerbel, Mindfulness Center at Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, RI, US

Lot Heijke, Independent teacher / trainer, the Netherlands

Allan Goldstein, UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness, San Diego, CA, US

Catherine Phillips, The Mindfulness Institute, University of Alberta, Canada

Trish Luck, University of Rochester Medical School, US

Midwives (the advisory group):

Florence Meleo-Meyer, Mindfulness Center at Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, RI, US

Dawn MacDonald, Mindfulness and Well-Being Consultancy Inc., Winnipeg, Canada

Camilla Sköld, Center for Mindfulness Sweden and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

Linda Lehrhaupt, Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches, Germany

Tim Burnett, Mindfulness Northwest, Bellingham, WA, US

Rebecca Crane, Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor, UK