Depression and Anxiety

- about 20% of adults become severely depressed at some point in their lives, almost as many suffer from anxiety, and many experience both at the same time
- depression and anxiety involve both biological changes in the way the brain works and psychological changes that affect the way we think and feel
- this group will present a non-medicinal, mindfulness meditation-based approach to reducing depression and anxiety that can be used safely with or without medication.

Prevention

- whatever caused your anxiety or depression in the first place, the experience has a number of after-effects including an increased likelihood that you will become depressed and possibly anxious again
- the purpose of this group is to improve your chance of getting out of and preventing further episodes
- in the group’s eight 2½-hour sessions, you will learn skills to help you handle your thoughts and feelings differently.

The Importance of Practising at Home

- we will be working to change habitual patterns of mind, and that will take effort
- in order to gain the maximum benefit of this group, it is essential that you practise the skills you will be learning
- homework will take about an hour a day, 6 days a week, and involves tasks such as listening to recorded meditations and performing brief exercises
- the commitment to spend time on home practice is an essential part of the class; if you do not feel able to make that commitment at this time, it would be best to register for a future class when you have more free time in your schedule and/or to seek other supports such as individual counselling
- we ask you to approach the classes and homework practice with a spirit of patience and persistence while accepting that the fruits of your efforts may not show straight away.

Facing Difficulties

- the group meetings and the homework assignments can teach you how to be more fully aware and present in each moment of life, making life more interesting, vivid, and fulfilling; this means facing what is present even when it is unpleasant or difficult
- you will find that turning to face and acknowledge difficulty is central to preventing further depression and anxiety
- in this group, you will find gentle ways to face difficulties, and will be supported by the facilitators and other group members.

(cont.)

Adapted from Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression by Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2013 – The Guilford Press).
How will the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy group be helpful to you?

Here are some things that participants in past groups have reported:

- I became aware of the workings of my mind
- I learned to recognize patterns
- I learned to stay steady, but also to stand back a little
- I could recognize that I have choices other than slipping back into old patterns
- I learned to take a kinder, more gentle attitude towards myself
- I learned to recognize warning signals and take helpful action
- I learned how to put less effort into “fixing” things
- I learned how to focus on the here and now.

The Initial Individual Meeting

- your initial individual meeting provides an opportunity for you to ask questions about the classes or issues related to the points raised in this handout
- you may find it useful, before you come for that interview, to make a note of the points you wish to raise.

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