

Mindfulness Training at [our school]

[A Parent]

February 2014

Mindfulness Training at [our school]

The participation of the [class] in a course by Jamie Howell training them in 'Mindfulness' has raised some issues. This document summarises my observations at this stage.

By means of background: [I am a parent of a child in the school.] This document is based on my notes and recollections from a session taught at the school [in February] 2013, which I sat in on as an observer.

Last Tuesday my [child] told us that they had done something called 'Mindfulness' in class on Monday 17th. [Their] descriptions and lack of clarity in expressing [themselves] and telling us more about it were out of character and raised alarms, along with [their] own very uncomfortable feelings regarding the session – [they] used words like 'I can't remember', 'I forget', 'weird', 'confusing'.

[The Principal] mentioned the course [at assembly], apologising that parents had not been informed but that [they] was working on a note about it. [Their] descriptions further piqued my interest and I did some research when I got home.

My discoveries prompted me to send an email to [the principal] highlighting that I believed the course to be an exercise in "religious observation" and making a number of suggestions regarding the way forward, based on the document 'Religion in NZ Schools' published by the Human Rights Commission. (Attachment 1.) [The principal] replied that [they] would delay the course and look into it further. (Attachment 2.)

Hauora and Religion in NZ Schools

My email to [the Principal] reflected my desire that the spiritual and religious aspects of the course be made clear, and that the school approach the course in a way that respected the rights and beliefs of all families in the school.

I fully appreciate that some families will be delighted to have their children receive this training at [our school] and that many will have no strong feelings either way, and will wonder what all the fuss is about.

[] I am delighted to see how [New Zealand] recognises the spiritual aspect of each person.

The Hauora, is a Maori philosophy of health and well-being unique to New Zealand. The Hauora has been compared to the four walls of a whare, each wall representing a different dimension. All four dimensions are necessary for strength and stability. There are four dimensions of Hauora:

Taha Tinana (Physical Wellbeing - health);
Taha Hinengaro (Mental & Emotional wellbeing - self-confidence);
Taha Whanau (Social Wellbeing - self-esteem); and
Taha Wairua (Spiritual Wellbeing - personal beliefs).

There is physical, emotional/mental, social, and spiritual caring.

The difficulty for Schools comes in addressing the spiritual wellbeing of our children in a way that respects the differing faiths, values, beliefs and religious practices of each person in our communities. The development of a child's spiritual beliefs and worldview, and participation in religious observance, is the responsibility of the child, their parents and whanau, and should not be imposed within the public school environment. This is where the guidance of the Human Rights Commission's document "Religion in New Zealand Schools" is very useful. It provides a way for each school to adapt to its community and adopt the religious and spiritual programmes and practices it sees fit.

My concern is that this Mindfulness programme is being presented as totally secular and non-religious, despite the fact that its roots are spiritual from deep within the Buddhist religious worldview, and it is being taught and promoted by a team of adherents to these religious practices and beliefs.

[], I am not comfortable with these practices and beliefs being taught to my children. I am not comfortable that other children, parents and whanau with a similar worldview or beliefs were not given the chance to decide for themselves.

I am not asking that the programme be cancelled; just that proper protocol is taken, particularly since my clear communication of my concerns regarding its spiritual and religious nature. I invite you to google Mindfulness for yourself and come to your own conclusions. Those that wish to participate should be given the opportunity to do so. Those that wish to be excused should be given the opportunity to do so.

Discussions at [our school]

On Monday morning [The Principal] called to say that Jamie was not going to be taking the course, but another instructor was already in the air flying in to take the course and that Jamie would be assisting him. [The Principal] was therefore in a difficult position and felt that the course had to go ahead. It was part of a national trial for the Department. He had spoken with the National Director of the programme from the Mental Health Department, had been assured it was not religious, and had received a letter to forward to parents. The course would be going ahead. We were invited along to observe, and [my child] could opt-out of the class.

We talked a bit about the course and my concern that it was religious, sharing a few personal stories and perceptions. [The Principal] mentioned that the course had felt a bit like Sunday School at times, and that when the children used 'praying hands' to symbolise 'spiritual', Jamie had reacted and instructed them to use a different posture.

I received an email from [the principal] on Monday morning. This email (Attachment 3) was addressed to all families of [the class], included a letter from Grant Rix of the Mental Health Foundation (Attachment 4), and requested parents to provide authorisation for the videotaping of their children within the session.

On Monday afternoon, just before the session was to begin at 1:30pm, [my spouse and I] were given some time to talk with Jamie before the class. [Class Teacher], joined us about half way through this discussion. Jamie stressed his educational background and credentials, and the University-led educational study being applied to Mindfulness. We discussed the huge need for children to receive support towards mental health and emotional resilience. He provided some background regarding the Mental Health Foundation (a non-for-profit charitable foundation); its long-standing work with the Ministry of Education, particularly in the area of Health Curriculum; and Jamie's role in delivering the Health Curriculum to primary and secondary students.

After a trial at [another school], Jamie had had 10 minutes to present on Mindfulness to [a group of Principals]. XXXX schools then took up his offer to present the course in their school: XXXX Schools, in addition to the initial pilot at XXXX School. This is part of a national trial involving many schools across NZ, particularly in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Gore. AUT will be reviewing feedback.

I mentioned our [child's] discomfort, and asked whether they would be giving other children who didn't wish to take part the opportunity to opt-out. [Class Teacher] was quite clear in saying No, that this is what we're doing and that the other children would have to participate. (Our [child] and one other child, whose [parent] had called the school and asked that [they] be excused, did not attend the class.)

Jamie mentioned that his friend, Dan, had flown in to videotape the session, but that given the concerns surrounding the course they had decided not to record today's session.

Observing the Session

We then had an opportunity to observe the class. Perhaps in response to our presence and its reference in my email, Jamie removed the 'Singing Bowl' bell and its wooden stick from near his chair, ready for use in the session, replacing it with a desk bell. Jamie, [The Principal], [Class Teacher] and the children sat in chairs arranged in a circle around the room. Jamie instructed the children to sit still, breathe, let everything settle. He showed them a bottle of fruit juice, and was pleased when one of the children recognised that the imagery of the pulp settling.

Jamie chimed the bell. Feet on the floor, mindful breaths, awareness of sounds outside the room. He chimed the bell again, and then a third time.

He invited them to stand and play a game: They were to sit down one at a time, but if two sat down at the same time, they would all stand up and start all over again. The children quickly got the hang of communicating without words. The next stage for standing up one by one, until all children were back on their feet. The next game involved them standing up and switching seats in response to questions. The children relaxed and enjoyed the games.

Jamie gave the children an opportunity for voice; expressing their observations of how they had been finding Mindfulness. The children asked some questions, resulting from what they had learned the previous week:

Did they need to sit in a circle when they were practising Mindfulness?

No. It was just about being present, however, being in a circle meant they could better support each other.

Did they need to close their eyes?

No, however it could help stop distractions.

What was the purpose of ringing the bell?

Jamie appreciated their curiosity – it was a good thing. The sound is a trigger. It meant it was time to practice mindfulness.

Why did he hit the bell with that stick?

Just a pretty sound. Other sounds could be used – wouldn't a bird's song be nice?

Jamie led the children in an exercise where they were to think of one thing that made them happy. Jamie mused that another name for what they were doing could be “Carefulness” rather than ‘Mindfulness’.

They were to write one thing on a piece of paper, and it was then acknowledged that some might need a second piece. Jamie asked them to explain the difference between ‘Treat’ happiness (e.g. Chocolate) and ‘Peace inside’ happiness (e.g. Hugging your dog).

The children were led through an exploration of whether the things on their paper were one, other, or both of these things. The children enjoyed learning about what made each other happy, so they could help each other get happy.

Jamie said that thinking about what made them happy could help them be even more happy, and that they could choose to be happier by recognising and doing these things more. He suggested that it was more powerful when they noticed things that affected the level of happiness we feel; e.g. seeing a sunset vs noticing a sunset.

Jamie led the children in an exercise of “guided relaxation”. They were encouraged to give themselves to it. Since boys were more easily distracted, they were separated. They were all asked to lie on the floor, on their backs, straight, with long legs. Positions were corrected.

Jamie was going to take them on a relaxation journey. Give to gravity, they were instructed. He reminded them to “settle” like the pulp in the juice bottle. Listen to sounds outside. Feel the breeze coming in the windows.

Bring your attention into your feet – feel the inside of your toes ... bottom of foot, arch, sole ... put your attention in the top of your foot ... appreciate your toes ... express gratefulness to your toes ... to your feet ... I welcome my feet ... I welcome my legs ... attention to bellies ... welcome belly ... appreciation of belly and what it does for you ... food into energy, into learning ... back, spine ... in your mind’s-eye imagine what it looks like ... I welcome my spine ... arms, shoulders ... relax ... what feelings are in these ... any sense of gratefulness to our arms, our hands ... breathing in and out ... throat, neck, teeth, jaw ... relax jaw from the inside out ... thinking, sow a seed ... can I relax my jaw here? ... breathing in ... I welcome my tongue, lips, teeth, jaw ... breathing out ... bringing awareness into the face ... relax muscles around the eyes ... breathing in ... I welcome my eyes ... breathing out ... I relax my eyes ... muscles in and on top of head ... I welcome ... I relax ... have a sense of your whole body ... one big organism ...

Ring a bell ... wiggle fingers and toes

Second bell ... come up to sitting, slowly, no talking

Third bell ... shuffle into a circle. The good thing about a circle is that everyone can see everybody.

Jamie asked each child to say how they were feeling. I missed a few due to speed, noise and mumbling, however these are the responses I recorded: recharged, happy? (intoned as a question), recharged, awoken, calm, weird, confused, weird, calm, heavy, forgetful, tired & heavy, forgetful, heavy, calm & refreshed, thoughtful.

Jamie had one more place to go. The children pulled their chairs back into a circle and sat down. Jamie introduced his friend, Dan, who joined the circle for this exercise, as a friend who liked studying Mindfulness and making movies. The children were instructed to hold out a hand, close eyes, no speaking, they would be given a gift. Jamie placed a mandarin in each outstretched hand. Notice the feeling that is present right now. Explore with the feeling of touch. Smell it. After some time, peel it ... smell it again ... pay attention to what you're doing while you're doing it ... resume visual investigation ... smell ... How would you paint that smell? ... we are reaching the pinnacle of our exploration ... open and separate a segment ... put it on your tongue but don't bite it, chew or swallow ... explore it with your tongue ... now pay great attention and bite into it ... notice what you notice ... break off another ... notice flavours, tastes, textures ... enjoy the rest of your mandarin anyway you wish to ... discuss with your neighbour what you notice.

Jamie wrapped up the session by summarising that life is more interesting when we're mindful ... being present makes the activity more enjoyable.

He reviewed with them what they had learned in the first session about the 4 walls of hauora:

Physical (they made a strong stance with their arms);

Relationships (they cross their arms and hugged their shoulders);

Mind and emotions (they cupped their hands under their chins); and

Spiritual (they lifted outstretched hands in a position of openness).

He challenged them to be 'present for little moments' over the coming week.

Follow up discussion

After the session Jamie and [The Principal] took some time with [my spouse and I] to allow us to ask any questions we had.

I asked Jamie how he felt the session had gone, in comparison to other similar sessions he had run? He acknowledged being a little flustered at the beginning – he liked to embody what he was teaching, but our pre-meeting hadn't left him much time to make final arrangements. Our observing (rather than participating) in the session was a little strange for him. He acknowledged that some of the children had said that felt 'weird' or 'heavy' in the session, and that many had struggled to stay focussed and still.

[The Principal] was very happy with the session, and again reiterated that, in [their] view, it wasn't religious, and was very useful for teaching some of the children to be more calm.

We were asked whether we thought our [child] would have enjoyed the session. We thought that no, [they] would too have found it weird and uncomfortable.

I asked Jamie what was different about a 'guided relaxation' session when he was in his own personal spiritual environment? He replied that he had never led such a session, and again mentioned academic studies on Mindfulness, particularly in regard to adult, long-term mental health patients. He talked repeatedly of being 'present', and explained that the floor was a mirror during relaxation sessions. He didn't actually answer my question.

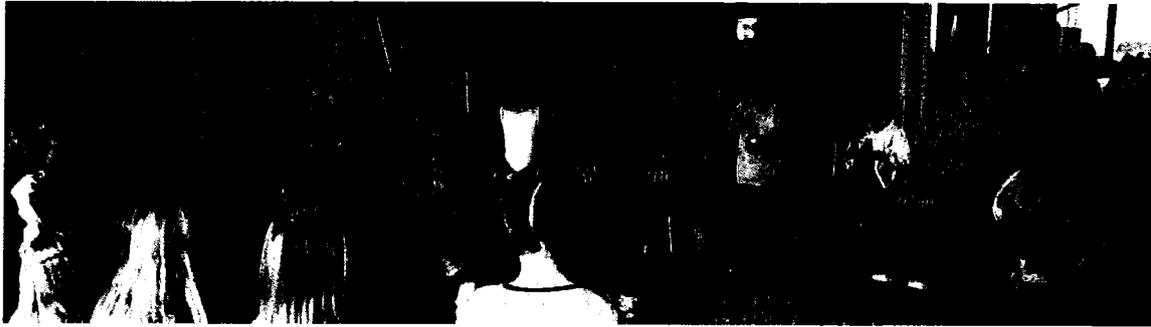
Points of Interest

1. Mindfulness is a core tenet of Buddhism. (See Attachment 5.) The foundations, source and execution of this programme cannot be divided from this religious root. While it may have measurable success for psychology and mental health, it is fundamentally based on Buddhist religious practices and beliefs. Truly secular Mindfulness can be taught, but in the hands of a practitioner of Buddhism, it returns to its Buddhist roots.
2. Jamie Howell and Grant Rix (Project Manager for Mindfulness at Mental Health Foundation) and his wife Natasha are practitioners of Buddhism, Dharma, Meditation, and Buddhist Mindfulness, as well as exponents of Mindfulness programmes for children in New Zealand's public schools. (See Attachment 6 for info from their own websites.)
3. The course taught by Jamie cannot be separated from Buddhist foundations and the religious leadership of the Wangapeka Dharma Study and Meditation Retreat Centre, which he references on his own website. (See Attachment 7.)
4. Jamie's words, actions and explanations during the course present his worldview and practice as Buddhist. While subtle to those unfamiliar with such terms and concepts, his use and context for words and phrases such as trigger, calm, presence, centred, breath, grounded, kindness, guided relaxation, being present, awareness, three mindful breaths, bring your awareness to, give yourself to, I welcome my toes, thanks to (rather than for)

toes, pinnacle of exploration, and food being transformed by the belly into learning – all indicate immersion in the worldview, practice and evangelisation of Buddhist beliefs.

5. The course includes “religious observation” with Buddhist rituals. Buddhists will ring a bell 3 times to begin a time of meditation. The ringing of a bell is core to the practice of Buddhism. Jamie referred to it as being a ‘trigger’. For what? There is great attention to the symbol and sound of the bell. Jamie rang the bell 3 times at the beginning of the session, and 3 times at the end of the ‘relaxation’ time. I saw very little difference between ‘guided relaxation’ and the religious meditation required of Buddhist Mindfulness teachers.
6. A search on Mindfulness in the Mental Health Foundation’s website brings up a list of contacts for teachers of Mindfulness. Many have overtly Buddhist, Zen, Dharma or other religious terms in their names or descriptions. A note at the bottom of the page (Attachment 8) highlights that Mindfulness is an ongoing practice (religious observation) that is subject to the leadership of senior teachers (religious leaders). Despite protestations to the contrary, this leads me to believe that the teaching of Mindfulness is inseparable in this instance from an immersive Buddhist environment, continuing Buddhist religious observation (meditation, etc.), under the guidance of a Buddhist religious leader. This ‘way of being’ is fundamentally spiritual in nature and therefore out of alignment with the world view and belief of many of differing faith or religion.
7. Secrecy and avoidance. Arranging these sessions, in coordination with [other schools], must have begun some time ago. Even being close to the start of the school year, there has been plenty of time for parents to be informed regarding the sessions. They are not core, barely curricular, and not within the stated focus for this term (writing, school values). Neither the Board nor parents have been properly informed.
8. Confusion. While I am sure there was no deliberate intention to do so, I have been misled at times during discussions. While this course is promoted as part of an important ‘National Trial’, it is promoted and sponsored by the Mental Health Foundation alone, not the Ministry of Education, its Health Curriculum, or the Ministry of Health. There may be other ways of presenting Mindfulness, but this course is a reflection of its sponsor and its presenter. Also, Dan was not flying in to present the course. He was asked not to videotape the session and played little part in the session. However, the confusion in the way his role was presented to me served to convince me that [The Principal] had no easy or honourable way to delay or cancel the course.

9. This is a photo of the class at Tasman School, copied from Jamie's website. Note the meditative postures of Jamie (centre) and the teacher, the careful ritual and symbolism of the ringing of the bell.



The children (and their parents) are unaware that they are being initiated into Buddhist religious observance, practice, thinking and belief.

Next Steps

As previously stated, I believe that correct procedure should be followed regarding 'Religion in NZ Schools'. If there is believed to be value in this course continuing, then the following is required:

1. Approval from the Board of Trustees for this course to be held in the school.
2. Continue the class during a time that the school or class is 'closed' for teaching.
3. Provide parents with details of the course and the choice to have their children opt in/out.

Future

I strongly believe that children need to be assisted to remain in good mental and emotional health through their school years and prepared for a happy, fulfilled and productive life. I am deeply saddened by so many stories that I hear of NZ children and their pain, grief, self-harm, depression and even suicide.

There are solutions, there are programmes, there are many ways of helping our children gain emotional resilience. I want to help my children and the children of [our school] find these ways. However, an experimental programme of unproven success and a covert religious agenda are not the answer.

[A Parent]

XX-Feb-14

XX@XX

Attachment 1

Mindfulness

From: [A Parent]

Sent: Saturday, 22 February 2014 9:49:38 a.m.

To: [Principal]

Cc: [Chair of BOT], [Spouse]

Hi [The Principal],

I did some checking into Mindfulness after Assembly yesterday. [My child] had mentioned it earlier in the week, and [their] descriptions and responses to our questions had piqued my interest.

Wikipedia provided some useful background for understanding the concepts. I also found Jamie Howell's website on Mindfulness (openingminds.co.nz), read it through and watched the video clip of him working in Tasman School.

My concern is that this is something that is "religious observance". Mindfulness is, in source, belief and engagement, core to Buddhist teaching and practice. Much of the language and practice I observe on the video supports this. The presence of a Singing Bowl – an item of religious and sacred meaning in Buddhist practice – and its use during the meditation exercises confirms this as being more than an exercise in positive psychology, or even religious education or instruction, to being religious observation.

Having read the Human Rights Commission's 2009 document titled "Religion in New Zealand Schools" (attached), I note the following:

Whether a school includes religion in the day-to-day life of the school or not is up to the school's Board of Trustees. If a school does provide religious instruction or observe religious customs it must be done in a way that allows students to opt out freely if they want to.

- Section 77 states that teaching must be secular during the hours a school is open for instruction.
- Section 78 allows a school (or part of a school) to close for up to one hour a week up to a total of 20 hours a year for religious instruction or religious observance, to be conducted in a manner approved by the school's Board of Trustees.
- Section 79 allows children to opt out if their parents do not wish them to participate in religious ceremonies or teaching.

In light of this, I do not believe you should continue with the course on Monday. I would like to suggest that you delay the course until the following occurs:

1. Approval from the Board of Trustees for this course to be held in the school.
2. Continue the class during a time that the school or class is 'closed' for teaching.
3. Provide parents with details of the course and the choice to have their children opt in/out.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you need to talk this over further.

Kind regards,
[A Parent]

Attachment 2

Re: Mindfulness
From: **[The Principal]**
Sent: Saturday, 22 February 2014 10:47:02 a.m.
To: [A Parent]
Hi [Parent]

Thanks for looking into this further. It had not occurred to me that this might be something that might be 'religious observance'. I took it simply as a strategy that might provide some of our kids with a way of staying calm. I will pass your concerns on to Jamie, and I will ask him to delay Monday's session so that we can better inform people about the programme.

Thanks

[The Principal]

Attachment 3

Message from []

From: **[The Principal]**
Sent: Monday, 24 February 2014 9:36:43 a.m.
To: [A Parent]
1 attachment (165.2 KB)

Kia Ora [Class] Families

I've attached a message that outlines the 'Mindfulness' programme we are trialling in class. The trial runs for 8 weeks, and is managed by Jamie Howell. The Mental Health Foundation is managing the programme nationally and feedback so far indicates it to be a worthwhile initiative.

As part of the trial, Jamie will be filming the class today. The permission forms for the filming of student images and work are due to go home today, but in the meantime if you do not wish your child to be filmed, please let me know. We will not publish any student images until we have received permission.

If you have any questions about the programme, please let me know.

Thank you

[The Principal]



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T (09) 300 7010 F (09) 300 7020
www.mentalhealth.org.nz

[Mindfulness at XXXX School] Mindfulness in Schools Project - [Redacted]

Dear Parents,

This term we are partnering with the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand (MHF) to deliver an eight week Mindfulness in Schools programme. Mindfulness is the practice of bringing our full attention to what is occurring in each moment with kindness and curiosity, and then learning to choose our behaviours more skillfully.

When implemented in schools, mindfulness has been shown to increase calmness, self-esteem, self acceptance and self regulation in children and young people. It also contributes to improving a range of academic skills including abilities for transferring previously learnt knowledge to new situations, thinking more creatively and independently, and improving knowledge retention.

The intended outcomes of this programme are to improve emotion regulation, increase children's abilities to form positive relationships with others, and to help make your child's classroom a happy and satisfying place in which to learn.

In 2013, the MHF ran this same programme as a pilot within 5 New Zealand Primary Schools. The preliminary research findings show similar results to those listed above with increased calmness, improved self regulation, enhanced self awareness, and increased focus observed. In addition, the programme appeared to help students to develop positive relationships and enhance their conflict resolution skills. For the classroom teachers a reduction in stress was observed.

The children will engage in a range of practices designed to teach them *how* to pay attention (instead of simply being asked to pay attention) as well as practices for cultivating gratitude and kindness toward themselves and others.

We are very excited to be participating in this initiative. If you have any queries, please

[don't hesitate to contact me or [The Principal].]

Yours sincerely

GRANT RIX PROJECT MANAGER
MINDFULNESS PROMOTION

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

Mobile: [Redacted]

Website Facebook | Twitter | YouTube

Attachment 5

Basic background and definitions from Wikipedia:

Mindfulness (Pali: *sati*,^[1] Sanskrit: *smṛti*; also translated as **awareness**) is a spiritual or psychological faculty (*indriya*) that, according to the teaching of the Buddha, is of great importance in the path of enlightenment. It is one of the seven factors of enlightenment. "Correct" or "right" mindfulness (Pali: *sammā-sati*, Sanskrit *samyak-smṛti*) is the seventh element of the noble eightfold path.

Enlightenment (*bodhi*) is a state of being in which greed, hatred and delusion (Pali: *moha*) have been overcome, abandoned and are absent from the mind. Mindfulness, which, among other things, is an attentive awareness of the reality of things (especially of the present moment) is an antidote to delusion and is considered as such a 'power' (Pali: *bala*). This faculty becomes a power in particular when it is coupled with clear comprehension of whatever is taking place.

The Buddha advocated that one should establish mindfulness (*satipatthāna*) in one's day-to-day life maintaining as much as possible a calm awareness of one's body, feelings, mind, and dhammas. The practice of mindfulness supports analysis resulting in the arising of wisdom (Pali: *paññā*, Sanskrit: *prajñā*).^[2] A key innovative teaching of the Buddha was that meditative stabilisation must be combined with liberating discernment.^[3]

The Satipatthāna Sutta (Sanskrit: *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra*) is an early text dealing with mindfulness.

Mindfulness practice, inherited from the Buddhist tradition, is being employed in psychology to alleviate a variety of mental and physical conditions, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and in the prevention of relapse in depression and drug addiction.^[4]

Mindfulness (psychology) as a psychological concept is the focusing of attention and awareness, based on the concept of mindfulness in Buddhist meditation.^[1] It has been popularised in the West by Jon Kabat-Zinn.^[2] Despite its roots in Buddhism, mindfulness is often taught independently of religion.^{[3][4]}

Clinical psychology and psychiatry since the 1970s have developed a number of therapeutic applications based on mindfulness for helping people suffering from a variety of psychological conditions,^[5] and research has found therapy based on mindfulness to be effective, particularly for reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.^[6]

Jon Kabat-Zinn (born **Kabat** on June 5, 1944) is Professor of Medicine Emeritus and founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn was a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn and a founding member of Cambridge Zen Center. His practice of yoga and studies with Buddhist teachers led him to integrate their teachings with those of Western science. He teaches mindfulness meditation which he claims can help people cope with stress, anxiety, pain and illness. The stress reduction program created by Kabat-Zinn is offered at medical centers, hospitals, and health maintenance organizations.^[1]

Attachment 6

Jamie Howell

I would encourage you to visit Jamie Howell's website: www.openingminds.co.nz as there is more information on his understanding and approach to Mindfulness, and more.

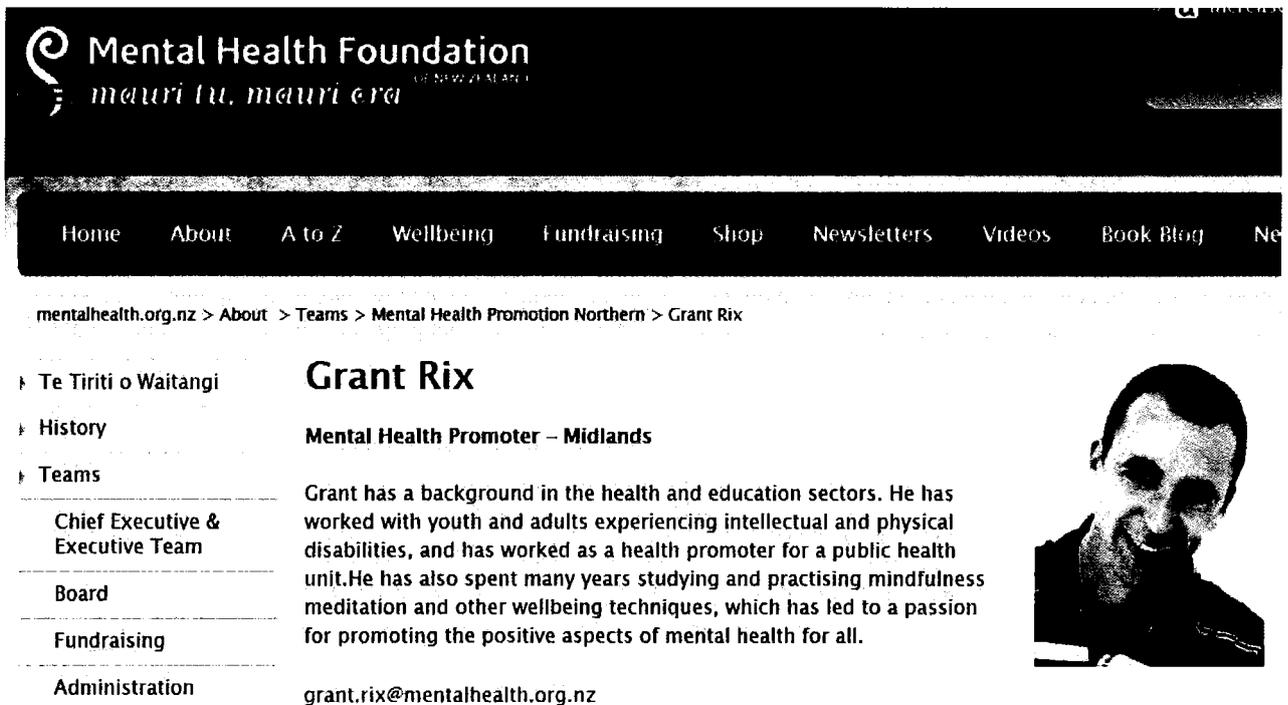
He gives his Bio as follows:

Jamie has a Master's Degree in Education from Canterbury University. He is a trained teacher who has been teaching and developing innovative health programmes in primary, secondary and Steiner school settings.

Alongside his work in schools he works with boys and their fathers as a facilitator of a community led rites of passage. His recent Master's thesis investigated the impacts of this programme on the mothers, fathers and young men who attend.

He is a graduate of a three-year course in mindful investigation called "The School of Living Dharma." Jamie has been developing and teaching mindfulness for over thirteen years.

Grant Rix



The screenshot shows the website for the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. The header features the logo and the text "Mental Health Foundation OF NEW ZEALAND mauri tu, mauri era". A navigation menu includes links for Home, About, A to Z, Wellbeing, Fundraising, Shop, Newsletters, Videos, Book Blog, and News. The breadcrumb trail reads: mentalhealth.org.nz > About > Teams > Mental Health Promotion Northern > Grant Rix. On the left, a sidebar menu lists: Te Tiriti o Waitangi, History, Teams, Chief Executive & Executive Team, Board, Fundraising, and Administration. The main content area is titled "Grant Rix" and "Mental Health Promoter – Midlands". The text describes Grant's background in health and education, his work with youth and adults with disabilities, and his passion for promoting mental health. A photograph of Grant Rix is shown on the right. The email address grant.rix@mentalhealth.org.nz is provided at the bottom.

mentalhealth.org.nz > About > Teams > Mental Health Promotion Northern > Grant Rix

Te Tiriti o Waitangi
History
Teams
Chief Executive & Executive Team
Board
Fundraising
Administration

Grant Rix

Mental Health Promoter – Midlands

Grant has a background in the health and education sectors. He has worked with youth and adults experiencing intellectual and physical disabilities, and has worked as a health promoter for a public health unit. He has also spent many years studying and practising mindfulness meditation and other wellbeing techniques, which has led to a passion for promoting the positive aspects of mental health for all.



grant.rix@mentalhealth.org.nz

On their website [<http://www.mindfulliving.co.nz/About-Us/>] Grant Rix and his wife Natasha show us how they are both involved with evangelising Mindfulness into NZ schools:



Our vision for Mindful Living is to provide individuals, workplaces and organisations with practical mindfulness skills and strategies for increased wellbeing in our daily lives.

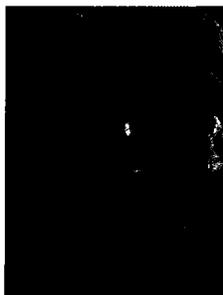
We have been studying and practicing mindfulness and meditation since 1999. We have been teaching in Tauranga since 2008, giving classes that are relaxed and inclusive, encouraging enquiry and personal growth.

We are graduates of a unique three-year study and meditation programme, run through the Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre under the guidance of our principal teacher Tarchin Hearn (a master of mindfulness with over 40 years experience). During this period of intensive training we lived as part of a mindful community from 2005 to 2007 exploring mindfulness through Body, Speech and Mind.

In addition to completing numerous periods of intensive deep retreat work, we continue to study with experienced mindfulness teachers and attend practice retreats. We are committed to living and parenting mindfully, and helping others awaken to the fullness and richness of life unfolding now.

Grant is the Mindfulness Promotion Manager for the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. Natasha is a provider of the Mindfulness in Schools programme, though her primary livelihood is by dana through Mindful Living.

Their teacher:



Tarchin Hearn was born in England and raised in Canada. He has more than 30 years of experience in Theravadin and Mahayana schools of Buddhism and was ordained as a monk for 12 years in the Tibetan tradition. In his early years he studied with such illuminating teachers as the Ven. Namgyal Rinpoché, Kalu Rinpoché, H.H. the XVIth Karmapa, and Ven. Sayadaw U Thila Wunta, as well as receiving teachings and transmissions from H.H. The Dalai Lama, H.H. Sakya Trizin, Chobgye Rinpoché, Ling Rinpoché, Trichang Rinpoché, Kanjur Rinpoché, Karma Thinley Rinpoché, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoché and Thich Nhat Hanh.

Attachment 7

From the website for the Wangapeka Buddhist retreat centre: www.wangapeka.org.



Jamie and Dan are in the first group picture, Jamie in the second. The other two pictures clearly show that the centre's focus is religious.

Description for a MINDFULNESS MATTERS (2 week) retreat at Wangapeka:

Cultivating a meaningful peace. Our bodies hold the key to deep healing (transformation). We will explore using particular, precise, gentle movement sequences largely carried out while lying on the floor; then noticing in detail all body /mind states while resting in the experience. In particular the states that make us feel whole (wholesome). The recognising and resting in the wholesome allows for deeper understanding (insight) to arise. Feelings of settledness, groundedness, centeredness, vibrancy, spaciousness, openness, clarity, joy, gracefulness and an overall feeling of wellbeing can be experienced, allowing us to taste of union (self and other not separate). We will work with the SIX PARAMI (activities essential for awakening). The Parami or 6 perfections are Generosity (the gift of interest), Morality (the developing of wholesome relationship with all of life), Patience (the ability to be quietly present during difficulties), Energy (enthusiastic perseverance), Concentration (centeredness), Wisdom (the merging of all duality; the understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena) This simple, direct, mindful way allows us to open to a richer more inclusive appreciation of all of life within and around us. A vast expansive knowing/becoming way beyond our self limiting beliefs. Leander Kane is an innovative and inspiring Teacher of Buddha Dharma. She weaves her deepening wisdom from over 20 years of meditative contemplations with her considerable skills with body through the Feldenkrais Method in a unique and wonderful way.

Attachment 8

This text is from a link on the Mental Health Foundation's Website for 'Where to find mindfulness teachers in New Zealand'.

Guidelines for those wanting to teach mindfulness

As mindfulness programmes and mindfulness-based interventions grow in popularity, it is important that people facilitating courses are well qualified to do so.

A person leading a mindfulness course should have a well-established daily mindfulness practice, attend regular retreats with a qualified senior teacher (and/or participate in solo retreat work if that has been deemed most appropriate for their development, as instructed by their teacher), and have been practising for a sufficient period of time (generally a number of years) before leading courses for others.

Mindfulness teachers should also be conscious and authentically responsive to their audience, recognising the values and world views held by people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Above all else, it is important to recognise that mindfulness cannot be fully understood by reading books or learning from others. It is a way of being that is manifested in each moment of life. With this in mind, a mindfulness trainer should teach from their own personal experience, with integrity, honesty and authenticity.