

## INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS FOR TINNITUS

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Course Description Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgment. Four decades of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this millennia-old discipline in relieving stress, treating heart disease, lowering blood pressure, reducing chronic pain, improving sleep, and alleviating depression and anxiety. More recently, research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness training in reducing tinnitus distress. Mindfulness training teaches us to respond in a non-judgmental manner, neither pushing away nor being overwhelmed by our experiences—including the experience of our tinnitus. This non-reactive attitude towards tinnitus is the key to habituation. Importantly, this is not something we can simply tell ourselves to do; it is something we must train ourselves to do. This 5-week class provides the groundwork for rewiring the nervous system to respond to our tinnitus in a different way (neuroplasticity).

### WEEK 1: Tinnitus Distress and Mindfulness

In this class students will learn:

- \*\*The real cause of tinnitus distress
- \*\*What mindfulness is and how it is relevant to Tinnitus
- \*\*The practice of formal meditation
- \*\*The four skills developed in meditation and how they help our Tinnitus
- \*\*The practice of informal mindfulness

### Week 2: Tinnitus Distress and Thought

In this class, students will learn:

- \*\*The connection between thoughts and tinnitus distress
- \*\*How to work with thoughts about tinnitus
- \*\*Three ways of working with tinnitus noise
- \*\*The practice of noting
- \*\*To expand their range of informal mindfulness practices and how these practices are relevant to tinnitus

### Week 3: Tinnitus Distress and the Body

In this class, students will learn:

- \*\*To identify the components of the stress response
- \*\*The components of the stress response as they relate to Tinnitus
- \*\*Techniques to counter both stress in general and tinnitus distress in particular
- \*\*Various breathing techniques to calm the body
- \*\*Walking meditation and other moving meditation practices
- \*\*To deepen their ability to work with thoughts

#### Week 4: Tinnitus Distress and the Emotions

In this class, students will learn:

- \*\*The role of emotions in dealing with tinnitus distress
- \*\*How to work with distressing emotions
- \*\*The process of reshaping our emotional response to tinnitus
- \*\*How Positive Psychology can help with tinnitus distress
- \*\*What techniques from mindfulness and chronic pain can help with tinnitus

#### Week 5: Tinnitus and Stress

In this class, students will learn:

- \*\*To understand the four levels of stress
- \*\*To utilize the STOP practice for working with stress
- \*\*How to be proactive with respect to stress
- \*\*What Polyvagal Theory is and how to use it as a means to stress control
- \*\*To establish a mindfulness plan