

BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

This Diploma explores Buddhist approaches to mental health and the alleviation of mental suffering through an in-depth examination of Buddhist psychology, theories of mental illness, psychotherapy, counselling, and pastoral care. Central to this study is an understanding, theoretical and practical, of mindfulness meditation in the context of Buddhist spiritual practices and its role in Buddhist counselling. This Diploma will be of interest to those who wish to integrate the wisdom of Buddhist spirituality into their professional and personal practices.

Compulsory: *Foundational Tenets and Practices of Buddhism and 5 of the remaining 8 courses listed here:*

FOUNDATIONAL TENETS AND PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM

This survey course provides an overview of the basic tenets, major figures, important developments, and the meditative principles of Buddhism. It will serve as an important foundation for the understanding of the various forms of applied Buddhism discussed in other courses of the Diploma program. Students will learn to appreciate the traditional Buddhist critique of our human condition and its aspiration to attain a transcendental spiritual goal. On that basis, students will also come to an understanding of the meanings behind the Buddhist practices and cultures.

BUDDHISM AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

A comparative course studying the convergence between Buddhism and the major systems of psychotherapy. Attention is on the key features of psychoanalytic, behavioural, cognitive, existential-humanistic, emotion-focused, mindfulness-based interventions, and the emerging field of positive psychology. The key elements of Buddhist psychology and the analysis of the human condition will be underscored. Students will critically study the key representative texts for each form of psychotherapy and the major Buddhist teachings on psychology with the goal of evaluating how this may enhance our understanding of emotional suffering and its alleviation.

BUDDHIST ETHICS

This course explores whether an Asian religion such as Buddhism can shed light on complex and controversial western problems. The course applies Buddhist ethics to a range of issues of contemporary concern, including abortion, euthanasia, suicide, war, environmentalism, and discusses the Buddhist response to these ethical dilemmas. This course also analyses the nature and practical dynamics of Buddhist ethics in the particularities of different Buddhist traditions, in comparison to a Christian perspective.

BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIVE CARE

Buddhist contemplative care has become an influential force on contemporary Buddhist practices worldwide. It has brought profound insights into practical services, from hospitals and hospices, to prisons, and into education and work places. This pioneering field has redefined the meaning and relevancy of Buddhist practice in our world and enriched the scope of chaplaincy and ministry beyond the Judeo-Christian context. The understanding of the Buddhist approach to death and dying, and the art of end-of-life care will be studied. This course will also provide practical knowledge to professional medical caregivers allowing them to understand the anxiety and fear of their patients with a Buddhist worldview, so as to provide meaningful palliative care.

BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

An exploration into the expansion of secular mindfulness meditation in western counselling and psychotherapy noting the significant differences between secular mindfulness and the meditative practices described in the Buddhist teachings. These will be considered within the context of the Buddha's model of psychological transformation and transcendence. The definition and components of mindfulness meditation, links with other spiritual practices, and benefits of meditation as delineated within Buddhism will be discussed as outlined in two key teachings: the *Satipatthana* (Foundations of Mindfulness) and the *Anapanasati* (Mindfulness

of Breathing) sutras. In addition, a theoretical understanding of the manner in which meditation produces its benefits will be described emphasizing affinities with cognitive science and theories of attentional regulation.

BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES ON MENTAL ILLNESS

A comprehensive view of the Buddhist concepts of mental illness and suffering and their treatment in the Four Noble Truths and the analysis of ego/self. The Buddhist analysis of emotional suffering centres on a conditioned tendency to misunderstand the nature of the self, leading to its reification and narcissistic idealization. Enduring mental and psychological functioning requires a fundamental transformation of the narcissistic self into one conducive to emotional well-being. This model of psychopathology has significant affinities with a number of western models particularly in cognitive-behavioural psychology and psychodynamic psychology which have similar analyses of the self.

MINDFULNESS AND COUNSELLING IN THE COMMUNITY

Based on the two Buddhist texts, *Anapanasati Sutta* (Discourse on the Full Awareness of Breathing) and *Satipatthana Sutta* (Discourse on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness), this course teaches how direct experience learning mindfulness can be integrated into daily life. Students are also encouraged to cultivate non-judgmental moment-to-moment awareness and an unconditional presence to oneself and others. The course will offer periods of silence, daily practice and class discussion, featuring the core mindfulness practices: mindful breathing, mindful eating, body scan, sitting meditation, mindful walking, and mindful movement. Students will also learn how to apply mindfulness in counselling and to cultivate the balancing factors of equanimity (*upekkha*), joy (*mudita*), compassion (*karuna*), and love (*metta*). Students will develop the capacity for self-awareness and reflect on how dominant beliefs and ideas are transmitted during counselling.

ANALYSIS OF THE MIND IN ABHIDHAMMA BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY

The Pali term Abhidhamma means higher, subtle or ultimate teaching (of the Buddha) or truth. Abhidhamma is often described as the core features of Buddhist psychology, dealing mainly with mental phenomena and explaining how our mind works. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of the Buddha's teachings of the mind and all its functions and structures within the more general knowledge of the Buddhism found in the Suttas. This course will survey the understanding of the mind (both mundane and supramundane consciousness), the qualities of mental functioning (distinguishing ethical and skilful aspects of mind from those considered non-ethical or unskillful), the causal and conditioned relations between aspects of mind, the continuity of consciousness from moment to moment, and the nature of unconscious and latent psychodynamic factors. In addition the psychological analysis of meditation, both the concentrative and wisdom aspects, will be presented.

BUDDHIST MEDITATIVE TRADITIONS

Built upon the foundations established from the Fundamental Tenets and Practices of Buddhism course, this course provides a further understanding of how the Buddhist traditions employ various meditative techniques to help practitioners realize the transcendental experiences explicated in the Buddhist doctrines. Five major Buddhist meditative traditions will be explored: the fundamental meditative techniques found in the Theravada tradition, the two forms of Chan/Zen meditation in China and Japan, the Pure Land tradition in China, the unique system of meditation developed in the Tiantai school in China, and the visualization practices in the Tibetan tantric method. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of the Buddha's teachings in association with the principles behind the meditative practices, the modern adaptations of these practices, as well as the relationship with the Buddhist teachings on well-being and spiritual happiness. Students are encouraged to adapt these meditative techniques and integrate the insights on spiritual development of self and others into their psychotherapy practices.