

# moments of mass mindfulness

Bringing mindfulness to the community while supporting Mental Health Awareness Week and promoting the benefits of mindfulness practice



## Background

- 2016 - Mindful Parenting & Community Project hold first moment of mass mindfulness (MoMM) on College Green, Bristol in support of Mental Health Awareness
- Network of mindfulness teachers grows and includes Bristol Mindfulness and Warriors of Welfare, Weston-super-Mare.
- 2017 - events held in Castle Park, Bristol and the sea front at Weston-super-Mare
- Moments of Mass Mindfulness (MoMM) planned for Saturday 11 May 2019

We are a small group of mindfulness teachers and, like teachers everywhere, we're passionate about raising awareness of the benefits of mindfulness practice.

We are aware of the increasing issues of mental health and have organised a small number of mindfulness-based events over the last two years to support Mental Health Awareness Week and to raise awareness of mindfulness training on offer in our area.

These are small beginnings but the events have been well received and there is clearly a need for more of the same. We will be running events again in 2019 and we realise that there are many mindfulness teachers around the country who might like to do something similar. We put this guide together to save re-inventing the wheel and it's not meant to restrict you in any way, just to help to get you started and make the event your own.

Our experience over the past two years has introduced us to many people including Sue Cooper who has set up Self Care World, an organisation that is focused on building community and enhance personal wellbeing. Sue would love to hear from anyone who organises a MoMM in order promote the growing interest in mindfulness in the community. Contact Sue at [momm@selfcareworld.org](mailto:momm@selfcareworld.org).

Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to discuss any aspect of organising a MoMM in your area. **<<what contact address should we use here??>>**



# Guidance: organising a MoMM

This document is meant to be used as guidance and should hopefully clear up any confusion over issues such as risk assessment, choosing a venue, communication, marketing strategies etc.

Having a good plan, an organised team with clear ownership are key factors to success.

A list of helpful considerations:

- Venue
- Risk assessment for Health & Safety
- Insurance
- Organising a MoMM
- Qualified mindfulness meditation
- Funding
- Marketing & communications

**“** Please do not underestimate the time it takes to plan and organise **”**

## Venue

The choice of venue is a crucial decision. The venue may be an obvious part of the theme of the event.

Following are a list of considerations to have in mind whilst thinking about a potential venue.

Public spaces - often a great choice, but location will be key:

- Who looks after the public space?
- Is it near active footfall?
- Easy access
- Parking

Example spaces for a MoMM event:

- Parks
- Town/ central squares
- Beaches
- Lakes
- Green spaces (fields, forestry etc)
- University campuses

Most of these options are likely to require some type of authorisation. You will need to get permission from your local council if you want to hold an event in the street or a public space.

Most local authorities will have an events, parks or communities team. Contact them as soon as possible as it may take time for them to consider it properly.

The amount of time needed to consider an application will vary.

**Check local websites for information about other public events and where they are held.**



*Dr Julia Wallond introducing the Bristol MoMM in Castle Park 2018*

## Risk assessment for health and safety

A risk assessment is key to preventing any issues. Take care to do what you can to avoid accidents and injuries at your event.

A risk assessment lists the different hazards that people might encounter whilst taking part in activities run by your group, or using equipment or a venue that is looked after by your group. If you already have insurance, check your policy to see exactly what you are covered for, as you may need additional event insurance policy. Conducting a risk assessment in most cases it is just a matter of common sense. With the best will in the world, you cannot predict everything that might happen. Even with a written risk assessment, you must continue to make common sense judgments about danger and hazards as your activity goes on.

Some basic guidance from the UK Cabinet Office is as follows:

- How will people get to the event, if possible make sure your publicity gives details of public transport and parking
- Do you need to put up signs on the surrounding roads to make the event easier to find?
- Is the venue accessible for wheelchair users and people with other disabilities, make sure your

publicity is clear about the level of access visitors can expect

If you are holding an open air event, the weather can be unpredictable. Please consider the following:

- What impact heavy rain, strong winds or very hot weather could have
- Is there shelter for visitors from both heavy rain and/or strong sunlight
- Are there steps you can take to stop cars getting stuck, particularly as they enter or leave the car park
- Is there a risk of flooding

Risk assessment templates and forms are widely available on the internet and most likely from your local authority.

Guidance and assistance can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (<http://www.hse.gov.uk>).

## Insurances

There is no legal requirement to have public liability insurance. When making a decision as to whether to proceed down this route, please consider the following:

The venue might have its own public liability insurance that also covers our activities. If this is the case you do not need to get your own insurance.

If the venue does not have its own insurance it may insist that Momm will require one. Some funders insist on you having insurance as a condition of awarding a grant (if this is applicable, see section on Funding). Public liability insurance will cover organisers by providing financial protection if blamed for injury to a person or for loss or damage to property and sued.

Like with any insurance, different levels of cover exist (from £1 million upwards). This seems a lot but costs are relatively low, sometimes as little as £50 or £60.

Information is easy to source on the internet.

Please also check the British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA) website.

“ This was a very enjoyable and peaceful event. It was great to meditate outside in a group. It felt very connected. ”



## Organising a MoMM

Working with a team of people will make life easier. The beauty of MoMM is it's essentially a small event and doesn't need many people to make it happen. A core team of four including a Team Lead worked well for us but if you have more people and bigger ideas there's nothing to stop you. Sketch out a simple but clear plan and distribute roles and responsibilities accordingly and have lots of meetings to keep track of progress.

### Plan for the day

MoMM links neatly to Mental Health Awareness Week which helped our plan for the day emerge naturally and intuitively. Mindful living is needed in the community more than ever so we had a brainstorming session with tea and cakes to start things off. We soon came up with lots of exciting ideas and visions but then we trimmed back to what we felt was manageable. There is a lot of scope with MoMM but your event should be fun, enjoyable and most importantly achievable. Make it your own as long as you bring people together for some mindfulness meditation you're on the right tracks.

This is how it worked for us in 2018:

- 12:00 - Introduction
- 12:05 - Meditation (awareness of body & breath)
- 12:30 - Discussion
- 12:55 - Closing meditation
- 01:00 - Finish



### Someone to introduce MoMM

If possible recruit a local celebrity, dignitary or businesswoman to officially open your event. They only have to say a few words about mindfulness and mental health, we scheduled five minutes.

Begin the search for your guest speaker as soon as you have secured your date and venue. For our 2019 event we invited our local Mayor who was unable to attend but kindly suggested we invite a Councillor who has interests in mental health and wellbeing. We contacted Cllr Celia Phipps and she gladly accepted our invitation six months prior to the event so we had plenty of time to include her details in publicity and media materials.

### Qualified mindfulness lead

The mindfulness lead must be qualified and experienced or a teacher from an accredited body.

Even a relatively short mindfulness practice can stir up emotions for participants and could leave them feeling vulnerable and confused. It is important that mindfulness teachers are experienced in dealing with situations like this and reassuring people where necessary.

Some attendees will be familiar with practice but some won't so we focused on simple mindfulness of breath and body practice with a short introduction and lots of guidance throughout the practice. Being an outdoor space means there's lots of distractions - work with them!

## Practice

MoMM is an offering to your community to experience mindfulness and to hear about how it can support and maintain good mental health. It is important to have a simple message for the event that your team understands and can repeat at any given opportunity, even the guest speaker. For example, our message in 2018 was along these lines;

*'Mindfulness is scientifically proven to help mental health. It's simple to do, come along and try some. We are here to talk to you about mindfulness and let you know where you can get further advice and guidance'.*

Mindfulness is a buzz words these days but not everyone will be familiar with the words we use. Practice, guidance, even meditation might not mean much to some so it's a good idea to explain everything clearly from the start, especially the mindfulness lead. The intention is to make mindfulness accessible to your audience in a relatively short space of time.

For this reason we included some time after the practice for people to group together and discuss their experience and to ask us questions. We explained this before the practice started and reminded them about it at the end. Once they started talking we made ourselves available and got involved in discussions where appropriate. We also let everyone know that we would be around for a while after the event if they wanted to talk to us.

## Holding the space

Our MoMMs have been held outside and this brings extra considerations such as seating, umbrellas, and creating a sense of safety while people meditate. Remember some of your audience will be new to mindfulness and might feel vulnerable closing their eyes in a public space.

We held a long length of ribbon around the meditators before the practice started and reassured them that this was to help create a safe space for us all. It worked really well and helped us all to feel held.

## Feedback

Time quickly flies by so it's important to keep an eye on the time. Before the closing meditation we handed out feedback cards and pencils and invited everyone to write down there thoughts and place them in a box before they left. This is where all the quotes in the booklet came from plus we got a few contact details of people who are interested in future events so it's worth making time for this.

## Leave no trace

It's important to make sure that all litter and any other mess is tidied up before you leave the site of your MoMM so be sure to include time for a clean sweep.

## funding

Before you start trying to raise money for a MoMM gathering, establish a budget with a funding framework to help assess how much money is needed and where it should be allocated (insurance, marketing, license fees). In our first and second year we pretty much funded the event ourselves which shows that the costs don't have to be high.

Consider checking the following:

- Personal contacts or friendly business in the area who might support the event
- My Community - <https://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options>
- Gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-funding-community-project>
- National Lottery Fund - <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding>

Ask your local Community Foundation for funding opportunities <https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>

Also, if you intend to raise money for Mental Health Awareness Week consider setting up a mechanism for online donations.

This is easy to setup through systems such as Paypal (<https://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/not-for-profit>).

“ Great idea and it would be  
fantastic to see more and  
bigger events like this.  
Thank you. ”

## Marketing & Communications

Promoting a MoMM event doesn't have to be complicated or costly. There is a plethora of online channels that can be utilised for maximum coverage and in most cases are free to use.

### Social media

- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com>
- Facebook - <http://facebook.com>
- Twitter - <https://twitter.com>

Snapchat can also be a very valuable channel in addition to other popular social media sites. As Snapchat appeals to a high number of millennials, there is a potential to connect with a younger demographic.

There are also a number of event specific portals, which can be used to offer free tickets. All come with great analytics and in most cases free email marketing capabilities.

- EventBrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>
- EventCube - <https://www.eventcube.io>
- TicketTailor - <https://www.tickettailor.com>
- Brown Paper - <https://www.brownpapertickets.com>

Free website builders such as Wix (<http://wix.com>) or Weebly (<https://www.weebly.com/uk>) can also be used to create a bespoke webpage for promotional and informational purposes.

Email marketing is free from Mailchimp and is relatively easy to use (<https://mailchimp.com>)

 A valued experience  
in self discovery.  
Thank you. 

## Marketing & Communications

Word of mouth, local press, local radio, online portals willing to run advertising and promotional activity would also be channels to explore. Given that budget is likely to be tight, pulling in your respective networks, favours and drawing on the altruistic nature and mission of a MoMM event may help gain coverage.

Save the date posters, any type of media relations and ongoing outreach to encourage registration should be used.

Aside from marketing the gathering itself, this will also be an opportunity to raise awareness of your own mindfulness activities.

Send out simple press releases to local media outlets and offer interviews with one of your team. A radio interview broadcast on the morning of your event can draw in lots of people.

Take photos during the event and have a pre-prepared press release ready to go out to your media list as soon as the event is over. It's good to stage a photo at the end with as many people involved as you can get.



“Wonderful! Thank you. A reminder to commit to a daily practice. Powerful and insightful. A beautiful pause in the day. A space to experience the self in the present moment. Very well led. Gentle pace. I look forward to the next one”

## Disclaimer

Whilst every reasonable care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the advice and guidance provided, we cannot accept any responsibility for any action taken, or not taken, on the basis of this advice.

We shall not be liable to any person for any loss or damage which may arise from using any such advice.



“ Meditating in a group is a great reminder of what we are actually looking for and that we are not alone with our thoughts ”



“ Fantastic group meditation. Powerful to be meditating in a group. Be present, right here in the park is awesome. Sharing ideas and thoughts with someone else is amazing. Thank you. ”

