

You are cordially invited  
to the **Mindfulness Symposium @ KU Leuven**

Saturday December 15<sup>th</sup>  
Justus Lipsius Zaal  
Blijde Inkomstraat 21, 3000 Leuven



A keynote will be presented by **Rebecca Crane**. Rebecca Crane is director of the Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice at Bangor University (UK), and has been a leading role in its development since it was founded in 2001. She has a background as occupational therapist and integrative counselor. Her research focuses on the delivery of evidence-based mindfulness-based interventions in different settings, with a particular focus on the integrity of the teaching and therapist competency. She teaches and trains internationally in both MBSR and MBCT.

**Program:**

***10:00-10:15: Welcome by Filip Raes (LMC) and Edel Maex (vzw MOMENT)***

***10:15-11:15: "Making the Path by Walking it: The Journey of Implementing Mindfulness"  
by Rebecca Crane***

***11:15-11:30: Meditation guided by Edel Maex***

***11:30-12:00: "Open source programs @ Leuven Mindfulness Centre"  
by Inge De Leeuw, Ineke Van Mulders***

***12:00-13:00: Lunch***

***13:00-16:00: "Presentations of ongoing research in Belgium"  
by Barbara Willekens (UZA), Sabine Deprez (KUL), Eva Dumon (UGent), Inge De Leeuw & Marbella Perez Peña (KUL), Benjamin Roux (UCL), Maarten Vansteenkiste (UGent)  
Please scroll down to see the abstracts.***

***16:00-16:15: Closure by Katleen Van der Gucht and drinks***

Costs of attending are 30 euro. Free for members of vzw Moment. Last year the symposium was fully booked, so please make sure you register in time via <http://www.mindfulmoment.be/> or by sending an email [moment@mindfulmoment.be](mailto:moment@mindfulmoment.be)

Organiser: Katleen Van der Gucht, together with Filip Raes and Peter Kuppens

## The Mindfulness Symposium 2018

### Abstracts

#### Keynote by Rebecca Crane<sup>1</sup>

#### **Making the Path by Walking it: Implementing mindfulness in the mainstream**

<sup>1</sup> Director of the Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice at Bangor University (UK)

Mindfulness training is becoming increasingly accessible to everyday people in the mainstream. We can begin to imagine the possibility that on a societal level embedding mindfulness practice into everyday life could become recognised and promoted as a pragmatic way to support wellbeing - in similar ways to how physical exercise is perceived. This emerging interest and engagement with contemplative practices in mainstream culture and institutions holds great promise. The promise that wisdom and compassion become more readily accessible to us – both individually and collectively.

There are though particular sensitivities related to bringing contemplative practices into the mainstream. How do we meet the implementation challenge of enabling the accessibility whilst supporting the integrity of the approach? How do we ensure that teachers are well prepared to guide others in mindfulness? What ethical issues need consideration when bringing practices that emerged in religious contexts into the secular mainstream? How does this emerging field skilfully navigate the tensions inherent in mainstreaming an approach that involves a paradigm shift to mainstream frameworks for understanding human experience? How do we do the work of 'mainstreaming' language and approach whilst also retaining the essential and unique elements of the foundations on which mindfulness-based programmes rest? How do we invite systemic transformation rather than 'quick fixes'?

The talk will review empirical and practice based work in these areas in relation to developments that support integrity and ethical understanding, the work of training teachers, of assessing teacher competence, and of implementing mindfulness-based programmes, and will consider challenges and questions for the field in the future.

**Ongoing Research in Belgium**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Mission (im)possible: can mindfulness influence hidden symptoms and brain structure in multiple sclerosis patients?</b>
<b>Author names and affiliations</b>	<p><b>Barbara Willekens<sup>1</sup></b>, Gaetano Perrotta<sup>2</sup>, Sara Vanhoorenbeeck, medical student<sup>3§</sup>, Arash Sarwar, medical student<sup>3§</sup>, Carl-Edward Van Mieghem, medical student<sup>3§</sup>, Wim Van Hecke, PhD<sup>4</sup>, Bjorn Prins, psychologist<sup>5</sup>, Paul Parizel, MD, PhD<sup>6</sup>, Nathalie Cools, PhD<sup>7</sup> and Patrick Cras, MD, PhD<sup>1</sup></p> <p><sup>1</sup>Neurology, Antwerp University Hospital, Edegem, Belgium,  <sup>2</sup>Neurology, Hopital Erasme, Brussels, Belgium,  <sup>3</sup>University of Antwerp, Wilrijk, Belgium,  <sup>4</sup>Icometrix, Leuven, Belgium,  <sup>5</sup>Department of Experimental Clinical and Health Psychology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium,  <sup>6</sup>Radiology, Antwerp University Hospital, Edegem, Belgium,  <sup>7</sup>Laboratory of Experimental Hematology, Vaccine &amp; Infectious Disease Institute (VAXINFECTIO), Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Antwerp, Wilrijk, Belgium;</p> <p>§ equal contribution</p> <p>Corresponding author: Barbara Willekens, <a href="mailto:barbara.willekens@uza.be">barbara.willekens@uza.be</a></p>
<b>Stage of research</b>	Partial results
<b>Background</b>	<p>Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an incurable disease of the central nervous system (CNS) affecting young adults. The pathological hallmarks consist of neuroinflammation, demyelination and (secondary) neurodegeneration. Hidden symptoms such as fatigue, depression and cognitive dysfunction, pose a significant burden on the patients' quality of life (QoL). Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been shown to positively affect fatigue and depression in MS. This therapy may work via the tripartite interaction between the brain, the immune system and neuroendocrine system. In this respect, it may also lead to improvement of cognitive dysfunction and might induce structural changes in brain in regions important for memory, attention and emotional regulation.</p>

<b>Methods</b>	The MIND-MS study is an exploratory open-label study that evaluates the effects of a MBI on cognition, structural Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) measurements, Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and cytokine levels. The intervention consisted of a 8 week MBI that closely followed the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program according to J.Kabat-Zinn. Patients were evaluated at baseline, post-intervention and at 6 months follow-up. Outcome measures included change in cognitive function (Symbol Digit Modalities Test or SDMT) and change in perceived cognitive deficits. To assess brain structure, MRI gray matter volume and selected regions based on voxel-based morphometry were analyzed. Other secondary outcome measures are PROM on quality of life, fatigue, anxiety and depression, coping and stress.
<b>(Expected) findings / Results and discussion</b>	The interim analysis of pre-and post-intervention measurements in this exploratory study did not suggest a significant improvement in cognitive function as measured by SDMT. However, a significant improvement in emotion-oriented coping and increase in mindfulness could be demonstrated in the short time-frame of pre- to post-intervention.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Impact of a mindfulness-based intervention on chemotherapy-induced cognitive dysfunction and brain alterations: A pilot study</b>
<b>Author names and affiliations</b>	<p>Katleen Van der Gucht<sup>1</sup>, Soumaya Ahmadoun<sup>1,2</sup>, Ellen de Cloe<sup>1</sup>, Ann Smeets<sup>3</sup>, Filip Raes<sup>1</sup>, Peter Kuppens<sup>1</sup>, Stefan Sunaert<sup>3</sup>, Sabine Deprez<sup>2</sup></p> <p><sup>1</sup>Leuven Mindfulness Centre, KU Leuven, Belgium</p> <p><sup>2</sup>Department of radiology, University Hospitals Leuven &amp; Department of Imaging and Pathology, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Multidisciplinary Breast Center, University Hospitals Leuven, KU Leuven, Belgium</p>
<b>Stage of research</b>	Results
<b>Background</b>	This pilot study focuses on breast cancer patients who finished chemotherapy treatment and experience cognitive complaints. Research and expert opinions suggest that attention, memory and executive functioning are most often compromised and that cognitive deficits can persist up to 20 years post-treatment. This study aims to assess the impact of a mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) on the cognitive complaints and cognitive functioning after cancer treatment.

<b>Methods</b>	Participants were 34 breast cancer patients who completed treatment and had cognitive complaints assessed with the cognitive failure questionnaire. They were randomized to a mindfulness condition or waitlist control condition (TAU). Assessments took place at three points in time, one week before the intervention, one week after the intervention and at three months follow-up. Primary outcomes are objective measures on cognitive functioning using cognitive tests and brain imaging (MRI) and subjective measures using (self-report) questionnaires. Symptoms of emotional distress, fatigue and mindfulness skills are secondary outcomes.
<b>(Expected) findings / Results and discussion</b>	<p>Multilevel modeling showed 1) no significant changes in cognitive functioning collected via cognitive tests, and 2) a significant reduction in the subjective measure of cognitive failure, emotional distress and fatigue. Further analyses showed that improvement in mindfulness skills was correlated with a reduction of subjective cognitive failure.</p> <p>While MBI significantly reduced cognitive complaints, MBI in the current format did not improve outcomes on objective measures of cognitive functioning in this small sample size. Positive effects, however, were observed for subjective cognitive complaints and related distress, which suggests that participants after the MBI related in a different way to their cognitive complaints.</p>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Mindfulness and Sleep: Towards a Better Understanding of their Reciprocal Relation</b>
<b>Author names and affiliations</b>	<b>Prof. Dr. Maarten Vansteenkiste<sup>1</sup></b> & Dr. Rachel Campbell <sup>1</sup>  <sup>1</sup> Ghent University
<b>Stage of research</b>	Finalized
<b>Background</b>	In this talk, it will be argued that mindfulness is not only a blessing for individuals' psycho-social well-being but also for their sleep pattern. At the same time, our daily sleep influences our capacity daily for mindfulness.
<b>Methods</b>	Correlational and experimental research will be presented.

<p><b>(Expected) findings / Results and discussion</b></p>	<p>The relation between mindfulness and sleep is likely bidirectional, with different mechanisms intervening in both directions. That is, both fatigue and the satisfaction, relative to the frustration, of one’s psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness were found to play a critical explanatory role herein. Suggestions for future research and clinical practice are formulated.</p>
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<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>A mindfulness-based intervention for refugees and staff working in the shelters: two pilot studies assessing feasibility and impact.</b></p>
<p><b>Author names and affiliations</b></p>	<p><b>Inge De Leeuw<sup>1</sup>, Marbella Pérez Peña<sup>1</sup>, Jana Glas<sup>1</sup>, Lucia De Haene<sup>1</sup>, Peter Kuppens<sup>1</sup>, Filip Raes<sup>1</sup>, Katleen Van der Gucht<sup>1</sup></b>   <sup>1</sup>Leuven Mindfulness Centre, KU Leuven, Belgium</p>
<p><b>Stage of research</b></p>	<p>Presentation of the results of the first pilot study at the shelters of vzwMinor Ndako and the design of the second pilot study at the shelter Poelkapelle (FEDASIL)</p>
<p><b>Background</b></p>	<p>Unaccompanied refugee minors (UMs) and young adult refugees are a vulnerable group that experiences high levels of worry and rumination due to adverse life experiences and an uncertain future. The staff of the refugee shelters in which these refugees are staying, is also confronted with considerable amounts of stress due to heavy caseloads, long hours, and limited control over an organizational structure in transition. The aim of the first pilot study was to assess the feasibility of a MBI for UMs residing at the shelters of vzw Minor Ndako. Since the results of this first study were promising, a second pilot study is underway to assess the feasibility of a MBI for UM’s, refugee young adults, and the staff of the Poelkapelle refugee shelter (FEDASIL).</p>
<p><b>Methods</b></p>	<p>A mixed methods evaluation was used in both studies, including quantitative questionnaires measuring emotional distress, positive and negative affect, post-traumatic stress (study 1) and perceived and daily stress levels in the staff (study 2) as well as qualitative interviews to explore how participants experienced the MBI.</p>
<p><b>(Expected) findings / Results and discussion</b></p>	<p>In study 1 we found that UM’s exhibited reduced negative affect, increased positive affect, and reduced symptoms of depression after the intervention. However, these preliminary results must be interpreted with caution due to the small self-selected sample and a lack of a control group. In Study 2, we expect to replicate these findings in a mixed group of UM’s, refugee young adults, and staff.</p>

	Additionally, we expect the MBI to reduce stress levels and increase coping efficacy in the staff of the refugee shelter.
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for suicidal individuals: effectiveness and implications</b>
<b>Author names and affiliations</b>	<b>Eva Dumon<sup>1</sup></b> , Eva De Jaegere <sup>1</sup> , Renate van Landschoot <sup>1</sup> , Kees van Heeringen <sup>1</sup> , Gwendolyn Portzky <sup>1</sup>  <sup>1</sup> Flemish Centre of Expertise in Suicide Prevention (VLESP), Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
<b>Stage of research</b>	Results
<b>Background</b>	Evidence on the effectiveness of psychotherapy focusing primarily on the reduction of suicidal ideation is limited. There is a need for well-described treatments targeting individuals at risk for suicidal behaviours. As Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) focuses on key factors within the suicidal process, it is a potentially promising therapy to mitigate suicide risk. The aim of the present study is to investigate the effects of MBCT on reducing suicidal ideation and symptoms associated with suicidal behaviour.
<b>Methods</b>	A randomised controlled multicenter trial was conducted, enabling a comparison of MBCT with a treatment as usual control group. Furthermore, changes in pre- to post-treatment and follow-up were analysed.  Suicidal in- and outpatients in Flanders (Belgium) were recruited between September 2016 and August 2017. The training consisted of 8 weekly group sessions of MBCT, which was adapted to suicidal individuals.  Participants completed online assessments at baseline, post-treatment, and 12-weeks after the end of the training (follow-up). Suicidal ideation was assessed, together with depression, hopelessness, worrying, defeat, entrapment and mindfulness.
<b>(Expected) findings / Results and discussion</b>	When comparing the intervention group with the control group, a significant reduction was found at follow-up in suicidal ideation, depressive symptoms, and defeat.  When focusing on the intervention group only, a significant reduction

	<p>in suicidal ideation was found when comparing baseline with post-treatment, as well as a decrease in depressive symptoms, hopelessness, worrying, defeat and entrapment, while mindfulness significantly increased. These effects all persisted at follow-up.</p> <p>Our findings suggest that MBCT is a promising suicide-specific intervention as it may have the potential to reduce suicidal ideation and suicide-related components. Further research is needed to strengthen the results of this study.</p>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Do adolescents with behavior disorders benefit from mindfulness-based interventions?</b>
<b>Author names and affiliations</b>	<p><b>Benjamin Roux<sup>1,2</sup></b> &amp; Pierre Philippot<sup>1,2</sup></p> <p><sup>1</sup>Psychological Sciences Research Institute, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium</p> <p><sup>2</sup>Laboratory for Experimental Psychopathology, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium</p>
<b>Stage of research</b>	Results of a PhD study
<b>Background</b>	<p>Preliminary results concerning the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in children and adolescents are promising. However, the benefits of this approach in clinical populations are still unclear. To answer to this limitation, a randomized controlled trial was conducted among Belgian adolescents suffering from behavior disorders. The psychological processes and the efficacy of a MBI in this specific population are discussed.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Participants included 107 adolescents, aged 11 to 19 years, presenting behavior disorders, and living in a Residential Service for Youth in Belgium. Three groups have been constituted. A Treatment As Usual group (TAU), a health education group and a MBI group. A behavioral task assessing attentional capacity and questionnaires on depression, impulsivity, and externalizing/internalizing symptomatology were proposed before, during, and after the program for all groups. It was hypothesized that these variables would improve in the MBI group in contrast to the other groups. Moreover, the profile of adolescents who benefit the most of the MBI are investigated.</p>

<p><b>(Expected findings / Results and discussion)</b></p>	<p>Depressive symptomatology decreased in all groups while only the MBI group seemed positively impacted in terms of attentional capacities and sad mood. The MBI group did not differ from the health education and TAU groups on externalizing symptomatology. Results suggest that depressed adolescent girls benefited the most from the MBI.</p>
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