

Your development as a mindfulness teacher includes paying attention to your relational skills and to your embodiment of mindfulness.

Relational skills rely on the interpersonal connection between teacher and student.

Blessing

May you awaken to the mystery of being here and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.

May you have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.

May you receive great encouragement when new frontiers beckon.

May you respond to the call of your gift and find the courage to follow its path.

May the flame of anger free you from falsity.

May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame and may anxiety never linger about you.

May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.

May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.

May you be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.

May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.

~John O'Donohue

How does this poem express the embodiment of mindfulness and its connection to your relational skills?

Relational Skills

The developers of the Bangor, Exeter & Oxford Mindfulness-Based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria have identified the key relational skills to cultivate.

Take notes on each skill and consider how you may develop and embody them.

Authenticity and Potency

Connection and Acceptance

Compassion and Warmth

Curiosity and Respect

Mutuality

Active Listening Skills

The goal of active listening is to listen to the other and to convey to them that they are heard.

There are 5 critical skills to active listening.

1. Pay Attention.

Give your full attention to the speaker and pay attention to their emotional tone and body language.

2. Show that You Are Listening.

Nod, give eye contact, maintain an open posture.

3. Provide Feedback.

- Paraphrase the speaker's words. For example, "What I think I hear is..." or "Let me check that I am hearing you correctly..."
- Ask questions to clarify certain points.
- Periodically summarize the speaker's comments.

4. Defer judgement.

Allow the speaker to make their points. Do not interrupt with counter arguments. Welcome skepticism. Share your appreciation for their statement or question. Consider stating that their comment or question is very common and that their point of view is understandable.

5. Respond Appropriately.

Convey respect. Be candid, open and honest. Treat others as you would want to be treated.

Reflection Questions

What are the behaviors and gestures that make participants feel welcome?

Consider the list of relational qualities. Where do you think you need to begin in developing these qualities in your interactions?

How might you practice the use of the active listening skill of paraphrasing?