

Navigating Anxiety and Stress Through Mindfulness

Workshop Series: Participant Comments

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Following are participant responses provided at the end of this eight-week program, presented here with permission.

1. What are some of the main points about “mindfulness” that resonate for you?

- “Presence resonates with me. The quality of my activities is very closely tied to how present my attention is with the activity.”
- “Being more connected to the world and simple pleasures.”
- “Mindfulness helps me experience fear and anxiety without getting paralyzed.”
- “Not getting caught up in the “me”-ness. I can be with all sensations that are horrible, and deal with it—noticing that my storyline/feeling/thoughts are not me.”
- “Avoiding and resisting discomfort tends to make it worse, and the present moment is much richer than we generally believe.”
- “That it is OK to sit with the feeling of pain or sadness.”
- “I have changed my view of anxiety. I now can more easily recognize negative thoughts as just thoughts and stop them from escalating.”

2. How helpful has this workshop series been for you? Specifically, how has it helped you deal with anxiety and stress?

- “Makes me more aware of other feelings; makes me more open, less depressed. Keeps me from ruminating on different things happening in my life.”
- “Helpful in getting me to open up to people again.”
- “It has helped me to know that my suffering is caused when I get further away from reality.”
- “It’s made me more aware of what my triggers are, and how I can use what I’ve learned to help me deal with whatever shows up in life.”
- “Shifting perspective. For example, it’s OK to let the feeling be. (I’m) really believing now that there are times when you accept things as they are.”
- “It has reinforced the need to be with whatever is happening, pleasant or unpleasant, without resisting or clinging. Generally, I find this allows strong negative emotions to arise and dissolve on their own, rather than intensify.”

Mindfulness in Recovery Workshop Series: Participant Comments

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Following are selected participant evaluation responses seven months after completion of the eight-week program, presented here with permission.

1. How has the Mindfulness in Recovery program benefited you in terms of sobriety and recovery from addictions?

- I am learning to stay in the present by staying with the craving. I am meditating on most days in the morning. I am learning to avoid judging my thoughts and starving the craving by not allowing story lines to take over.
- It has helped me learn to stay in the present, pause before I act, control my ruminating and negative preoccupation, and it has helped me to find a quiet peaceful place within.
- The group taught me how to live.
- Everything is doable. New tools. See reality. Working on acceptance. Love me and others more. I am OK, no matter what.
- It allowed me to isolate the urge to use, see it for what it is, dispute it, and move on. This is very powerful because it is a direct way of dealing with urges that reaffirms my reasons for quitting every time. The affirmation comes in the disputing. It is a direct way as opposed to distracting oneself or avoiding “triggers” or praying for a higher power to remove a ‘mental obsession’.

2. How has the workshop series benefited you generally in your life?

- Allowed me to understand the inner workings of my mind and to stay in the moment more. It is taking a lot of practice, but the workshop series is helping me to be more aware as opposed to drifting and allowing my thoughts to control me. I feel less anxious as a result of meditation.
- I can see now where consumerism/materialism really drove my addiction. As I become more aware, I can see an improvement: do I need it or want it? Really like the idea of simplifying my life and appreciating what I do have.
- The workshop series has set me on a new way of living. Addiction is a disease of the soul; the series has taught me how to live with uncertainty and change.
- It gave me the proper attitude—one of openness, courage, and non-judgmentalism—to relax and become aware of thoughts and feelings.

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