

Andrew Safer
Safer Mindfulness
 Mindfulness Instructor & Trainer – Workshop Facilitator - Writer
andrew@safermindfulness.com
www.safermindfulness.com
 (709) 722-2716

Mindfulness in the Workplace Training with Waypoints Youth

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Ten youths with barriers to employment between the ages of 18 and 25 participated in a five-week Mindfulness in the Workplace program (1-hr. sessions) at Waypoints in St. John's, NL from January 11 to February 8, 2019.

An 11-statement questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the first session and again at the end of the last session (pre and post). The participants signed consent forms agreeing that their statements could be used anonymously. Eight youths completed the program.

The most significant changes pre to post occurred in the following statements:

(Note: 1=Strongly Agree; 5= Strongly Disagree)

Evaluation statement	Aggregate score change, pre to post	Percentage change
When I do something that doesn't meet my expectations, I give myself a hard time.	14 - 21	50%
When I have difficult thoughts or feelings, I tend to avoid facing them for as long as I can.	18 – 23.5	30.5%
After I “send” an important email or text, I often regret what I wrote.	19 - 24	26%
When I'm concerned about something, it doesn't occur to me that my thoughts might not be true.	20 - 24	20%
When my thoughts overtake me and I feel worried, I don't know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.	20 - 24	20%

Further responses follow:

Q: How helpful has this workshop series been for you? (0=not helpful; 10=extremely helpful)

10, 9, 7-8, 9, 9, 7, 9, 9. Average: 8.7

Specifically, how does your study and practice of mindfulness help during the workday?

- “Worrying about getting through challenging work, I can focus on a few of my breaths and come back to the present task instead of worrying what work I might have to do.”
- “It’s helped me to be more patient and think before I speak.”
- “Helps after work to de-stress, forget about work or my stressors. Difficult to do at work. I just need to practice more.”
- “I feel mindfulness practices allow me to think before I act and even do similar tasks with an improved outcome.”
- “It helps me be more aware of my thoughts and be able to control them during situations that arise in the workplace that can cause me stress or anxiety. I have been getting better at not letting the anxiety rule my mind / life.”
- “I need to do it more often but when I do it helps calm me down and put me in a better, more relaxed mood.”

What are some of the main points about mindfulness that resonate for you and your everyday life?

- “I have learned how to pause and take control of my own thoughts when I feel they are taking over, which is something I struggled with before.”
- “I enjoy the breathing exercise because it allows me to be mindful and weigh my decisions in stressful situations and remain calm.”
- “Our brain, thoughts, emotions, and feelings are not the enemy.”
- “A big thing for me other than meditation is that my thoughts aren’t true and I feel like knowing that has helped my anxiety.”
- “When there’s a potential problem I worry about, I can come back to a feeling of grounding, and that thoughts are not necessarily true.”
- “I am going through a hard time and it has helped me with my addictions and my home life.”

Do you think your colleagues could benefit from learning about Workplace Mindfulness?

- Yes.....8
- No.....0