

## **“Anxiety, Stress & Mindfulness” Workshop Series Winter/Spring 2020: Evaluation Highlights**

The 12-week workshop series “Anxiety, Stress & Mindfulness” met in Winter/Spring 2020 between February 27 and May 14. The 1.5 hr. weekly sessions were conducted on Zoom (video conferencing). When physical distancing measures were put in place in mid-March, using the Zoom platform enabled the group to continue to meet without interruption.

This series was a partnership between Andrew Safer, Mindfulness Instructor, Trainer & Workshop Facilitator, and Canadian Mental Health Association-Newfoundland and Labrador (CMHA-NL). Safer managed the project and conducted the training. CMHA-NL provided funding support, which enabled participants to attend free of charge if cost was an obstacle. In addition, an anonymous donor and donations collected at Monday night meditation provided support for five seats.

Twenty participants attended the first session, and, three months later, 11 attended the last session.

Note: All evaluation details are available separately. Participants responded to 17 questions in the first session (pre) and the last session (post). Pre and post evaluations were matched for nine participants. The responses to each question were aggregated; pre and post means and percentage changes were calculated for each question.

Average change for all participants: **+25%**. Questions with greatest change:  
*Scale: 1 Strongly Agree - 2 Agree - 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree - 4 Disagree - 5 Strongly Disagree - 0 Don't Know*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Pre (Eval. Scores)</b>	<b>Post (Eval. Scores)</b>	<b>% Change</b>
My storylines keep the everyday stress rolling and pull me out of the present moment.	16	36	+44.4%
When I start thinking about something that concerns me, I can't get it out of my mind.	15	34	+42.2%
I get stuck with the storylines that can make me feel anxious and I don't know how	21	37	+35.6%

to pause or interrupt this pattern.			
I don't have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.	22	37	+33.3%
This pattern of not being fully present in my immediate experience is normal for me.	19	34	+33.3%
I always have the feeling that there is something I should be doing to get rid of my troubling emotions.	16	31	+33.3%

Eleven participants completed the post evaluation. Following is one question with several responses.

**Specifically, how has this workshop series helped you deal with anxiety / stress?**

- “I stopped dwelling on every thought to the point where my 3 "bad week" to my 1 "good week" a month ratio, went to 3 good months to maybe 3 "not so good" days. I have begun to sit with my feeling and accept them as they are and not try to wish them away.”
- “Gosh! I am catching my thoughts that throw me into chaos and panic. I can reel it in by saying, "come back to the breath". I am less reactionary and also notice when I am reactionary in a situation where there is anxiety and stress. So good when you get that awareness.”
- “It has helped me acknowledge my anxiety and stress as what they are- simply a feeling. I am now able to sit with my emotions, acknowledge them for what they are and actually be kind to myself about it. I don't worry about wanting to make the feeling stop, I just focus on the present and give the emotion no more power than it should have. I ground myself to the present and it allows for the worries of the future and the uncontrollable to ease.”
- **Has it helped you deal with the pandemic?** “Having a safe place to be within a group setting with others during this pandemic has been a blessing. It could not have come at a better time.”

**How helpful has this workshop series been for you?** (0 = not helpful; 10 = extremely helpful)..... **9.5.**