

**Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training
Outcomes Summary
May / June 2021**

August 10, 2021

Canadian Mental Health Association-Newfoundland and Labrador and Safer Mindfulness Inc. conducted an eight-week pilot program, “Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training”, in St. John’s in May/June 2021.

In one-on-one chats conducted both during the sessions and in between, participants made it clear that they were finding the workshops helpful. As was evident from their final evaluations, the mindfulness orientation, skills, and techniques were coming into play in their everyday lives. Based on their positive, hopeful comments, combined with the data below, we believe that what they learned in the program is helping them to address challenges and difficulties more skillfully, resulting in a reduction in suicidal thoughts. This will be further clarified through additional program implementation.

Twenty-four people signed up, including individuals who were referred by three psychiatrists, a registered psychologist, and a peer-support group for people with PTSD. Thirteen participants attended the first of the weekly 1.5-hour in-person sessions, which proceeded with an average of 12 per session. Physical distancing was observed as per COVID-19 protocol.

VOCM Cares Foundation and Pennecon Limited provided funding support.

Eight participants responded to 18 evaluation questions during the first and last sessions, indicating change over the eight weeks. Several questions focused on thoughts showed positive percentage changes:

- When I start thinking of something that concerns me, I can’t get it out of my mind.....58.3% improvement
- I think over and over about things that have already happened.63.6% improvement

- I have thoughts about suicide often..... 28.6% improvement
- I feel like I have no control over my thoughts, moods, and feelings.41.2% improvement
- The voice in my head can make me feel anxious and I don't know how to pause or interrupt this pattern....133.3% improvement
- When I have negative thoughts, they overwhelm me and I don't have any tools to deal with it..... 88.9% improvement

They were asked to rate the intensity of their suicidal thoughts (1=low; 10=high). The combined rating in the last session was 41.7% lower than in the first.

Considering that loneliness has been linked to depression and suicidal thoughts, it is noteworthy that the statement “I feel like I am alone in the world” showed a 64.7% improvement between the beginning and end of the mindfulness training.

Participant comments:

“(Mindfulness) practice will help me deal with feelings in a healthier way.”

“The power of the deep feeling of depression, the hole, the void, has proven to be fleeting; can be weakened by clear mind.”

“He taught me that suicide is not the best option and that I have basic goodness. I can work through these thoughts and not allow them to have control over me.”

“Immediately helpful with suicidal thoughts, then very helpful in rumination leading to suicidal thoughts.”

Q: Do you think other people with suicidal thoughts / ideation could benefit from learning about mindfulness—both meditation and the other practices?..... 7 responses. All Yes (1 added “for some”)

For the full Outcomes Summary, go to:

<https://safermindfulness.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Suicide-Prevention-Outcomes-Summary-AUG-10-21.pdf>