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ANXIETY, STRESS & MINDFULNESS FALL 2022: EVALUATION SUMMARY

December, 2022

The “Anxiety, Stress & Mindfulness “workshop series was presented in 6 1 ½-hr. weekly sessions to 8 adults (6 females; 2 males) via Zoom in the September to November 2022 time frame. Participants connected from Ottawa and Lombardy, Ontario, Carbonear, and the St. John’s area. When 4 more sessions were added, 6 participants continued. *Note: The evaluation outcomes below are for the 6-session series only.*

The sessions focused on:

1. Getting to Know Anxiety
2. Mindfulness & Mindfulness in Everyday Life
3. Upending Self-Sabotage Through Kindness
4. Understanding Stress: The Power of Pausing
5. Interrupting Rumination
6. Digital Distraction: Mindfulness Meets the Internet (*End of 6-session series*)
7. Birthright of Goodness
8. Focus vs. the Big Picture
9. Turning Our Habits on End
10. Fear & Fearlessness (*End of 4 additional sessions*)

Participants received copies of Andrew Safer’s book, *Anxiety, Stress & Mindfulness: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Wellness*, and reading was assigned. Between sessions, participants also read articles on the current topic.

Several mindfulness practices were introduced. After a check-in, the group practiced together at the beginning of every session, and were coached in developing a regular home mindfulness practice.

Participants completed the pre-evaluation at the first session, and the post-evaluation at the last (6 weeks later). Instead of writing down names, they recorded unique personal codes, which facilitated pairing, pre to post.

One participant withdrew due to severe chronic pain. Of the 7 remaining, one was unable to attend the last session due to a work commitment. Two personal codes could not be matched pre to post. Therefore, the quantitative portions of the evaluations were paired for 4 participants.

QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION: Totals for all 17 questions: PRE: 145 POST: 205

DIFFERENCE: 60.....**41.4% average improvement in score for all 17 questions**

Example Questions	Total Scores for Pre	4 Participants Post	
<i>[Low score is a negative indication; high score, a positive one]</i>			
When I start thinking of something that concerns me, I can’t get it out of my mind.	6	11	83% improvement
I don’t have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.	8	13	62.5% improvement
I get stuck with the storylines that can make me feel anxious and I don’t know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.	9	15	66.7% improvement

QUALITATIVE EVALUATION: For the following post-evaluation questions, written responses were requested (in addition to the 4 participants above, 2 others are included here). See excerpts below.

1. What resonates with you for everyday life?	2. Which mindfulness practices are helpful?	3. How helpful has this been? (0 – 10)	4. Can others benefit from learning about mindfulness?	5. Any suggestions on how this course can be improved?		
<p>“I don’t need to push anxieties away—I can notice them and keep breathing and let them go, but don’t let them stay for tea” [don’t hang out with them]</p>	<p>“I just started to <u>pause</u> before touching my phone.”</p> <p>“I find my morning <u>meditation</u> has given me structure and a clear mind to start my day.”</p> <p>“I have started to use <u>head and shoulders</u></p>	<p>Average of 5 responses: 8.4</p> <p>“I feel I’ve gotten more out of these few weeks of practice than I have in years of trying to stumble through it on my own.”</p>	<p>“Absolutely. I really wish my daughter would take the course.”</p> <p>“I do think others could benefit from mindfulness, especially with all the uncertainty that is going on in our world.”</p>	<p>“I thought this workshop series was excellent. I would enjoy if you did a workshop on different mindfulness books/readings.”</p>		

	<p><u>2. (cont'd.)</u></p> <p>(practice) a few times in real-life situations where I was finding myself particularly overwhelmed or stressed. Instead of getting stuck in a loop of negative thinking, it has helped take me out of that pattern in that moment.”</p>	<p><u>3. (cont'd.)</u></p> <p>“It's given me hope that I will be OK, that I do not always have to ruminate.”</p> <p>“It has helped me have a different view of anxiety, I am more aware of how I am feeling, and instead of trying to get rid of these feelings, I try to understand why I might be feeling this.”</p>				
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ANXIETY, STRESS & MINDFULNESS

Personal code_____

(pre-post intervention)

Please write down in the box on the left the number that best fits how you feel with regard to the statement:

1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree 0=Don't Know

- When I start thinking about something that concerns me, I can't get it out of my mind.
- My mind never stays in one place and keeps jumping from one thought to the next.
- I think over and over about things that have already happened.
- I keep projecting my concerns for the future.
- This pattern of not being fully present in my immediate experience is normal for me.
- I don't believe that I can make a difference in my life.
- I don't have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.
- Staying in the present hurts so much that I prefer to run away from what is unpleasant.
- I don't usually know what to do to bear with my discomfort and sense of vulnerability.
- I have difficulty accepting things as they are.
- I have difficulty dealing with troubling emotions.

- I always have the feeling that there is something I should be doing to get rid of my troubling emotions.
- I often don't feel grounded in my body.
- I'm not usually aware of what things or events trigger my anxiety.
- I feel like I have no control over my thoughts, moods, and feelings.
- I get stuck with the storylines that can make me feel anxious and I don't know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.
- My storylines keep the everyday stress rolling and pull me out of the present moment.

(Post-intervention only):

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

2. Which mindfulness-in-everyday-life practices are you finding helpful, and in what way?

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

Specifically, how has it helped you deal with anxiety / stress?

4. Have you been able to do some meditation practice at home?_____
If yes, about how many times a week?_____ Usually for how long?_____
5. Do you think other people could benefit from learning about mindfulness—both meditation and the other practices?_____
6. Do you intend to come to Monday night meditation at least once, to check it out? _____
7. Do you have any suggestions on how this workshop series can be improved?_____

Thank you!

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