

# **Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training Outcomes Summary July 2025**

July 4, 2025

Andrew Safer and his team conducted the eight-week in-person program, “Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training”, in St. John’s from April 29<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Fifteen people registered, including individuals who were referred by three counsellors, a psychiatrist, a priest, the Memorial University Student Wellness and Counselling Centre, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors and Psychologists Association.

Fourteen people joined the program. Only one withdrew and one decided partway through to study the presentations at home.

Having presented Mindfulness workshop series on mental health and addictions since 2013, Andrew Safer points out this is the first time the number of participants (11) at the last session equalled the number at the first session. [Note: Three registrants joined at the second session.]

Khyentse Foundation of Seattle, Washington sponsored this workshop series.

The staff included Andrew Safer (Presenter & Mindfulness Trainer), Tina Davies (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), Janet MacDonald (Canadian Certified Counsellor), Kathy Porter (Meditation Instructor/Speaker), and two former participants from the 2021 pilot group who spoke to the participants.

The outline of weekly topics included:

1. How Does Mindfulness Help?
2. Grounding and Mindfulness Practice
3. Being Present and Mindfulness in Everyday Life
4. Birthright of Goodness: Discovering Inner Resources
5. Self-Judgment vs. Kindness: Making Friends with Yourself
6. Stress & Anxiety: The Power of Pausing
7. ‘Rumination & Disengaging from Thoughts
8. A New Way to Relate to Feelings and Emotions

Each session included a check-in, Mindfulness instruction, guidance and practice, presentation on the day’s topic, and Q&A/discussion. Between sessions, participants were emailed links to relevant articles/videos, and encouraged to practice daily.

In order to measure change between the beginning and end of the program, participant responses to 18 questions on the pre- and post- evaluations were compared. Each participant recorded a unique personal code in lieu of their names, for anonymity. These number-and-letter combinations were matched pre/post for nine participants. The evaluations that could not be matched were not included in the totals, but are available in the Appendix (<https://bit.ly/SPAppendix>).

Following are the 18 evaluation statements, with the greatest improvement shown in descending order, pre to post, over the eight weeks. Participant responses were:

- 1 Strongly Agree; 2 Agree; 3 Neither Agree, Nor Disagree;  
4 Disagree; 5 Strongly Disagree

*Note that lower scores indicate more agreement with statements that correlate to poorer mental health; a positive change in scores from pre- to post-course assessment indicates that, at the group level, participants agreed less/disagreed more with the statements, suggesting overall gains in the way they related to their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and a present-moment orientation.*

Totals for  
9 Participants

|     | <b>Evaluation Statement</b>  | <b>Pre</b> | <b>Post</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|-----|--|------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1.  | I feel like I have no control over my thoughts, moods, and feelings.                                     | 16         | 30          | 87%           |
| 2.  | I often don't feel grounded in my body.  | 16         | 28          | 75%           |
| 3.  | The voice in my head can make me feel anxious and I don't know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.   | 15         | 26          | 73%           |
| 4.  | I have difficulty accepting things as they are.  | 17         | 28          | 65%           |
| 5.  | I feel like I am alone in the world.   | 20         | 33          | 65%           |
| 6.  | I don't have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.               | 19         | 31          | 63%           |
| 7.  | This pattern of not being fully present in my immediate experience is normal for me.                     | 17         | 26          | 53%           |
| 8.  | These suicidal thoughts are persuasive: I can see myself acting on them at some point.                   | 16         | 25          | 56%           |
| 9.  | I have thoughts about suicide often.   | 20         | 30          | 50%           |
| 10. | I am worried about the future.   | 16         | 24          | 50%           |
| 11. | When I have negative thoughts, they overwhelm me and I don't have any tools to deal with it.             | 21         | 30          | 43%           |
| 12. | I always have the feeling that there is something I should be doing to get rid of my troubling emotions. | 17         | 24          | 41%           |
| 13. | Staying in the present hurts so much that I prefer to run away from what is unpleasant.                  | 20         | 28          | 40%           |
| 14. | I don't believe I can make a difference in my life.  | 25         | 35          | 40%           |

|     |  |    |    |     |
|-----|--|----|----|-----|
| 15. | I think over and over about things that have already happened.                         | 15 | 20 | 33% |
| 16. | When I start thinking about something that concerns me, I can't get it out of my mind. | 15 | 20 | 33% |
| 17. | I am not kind towards myself.  | 17 | 22 | 29% |
| 18. | I go around most of the time without paying attention to my surroundings.              | 26 | 27 | 4%  |

### Suicidal Thoughts

Participants were asked to rate the intensity of their suicidal thoughts. The average rating in the last session was **51%** lower than in the first. [Note: This compares to a 41.7% decrease in the pilot group of 8 participants in 2021.]

| Evaluation Questions   | Pre            | Post        |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| On a scale where 1 (is lowest intensity) and 10 (is highest), the intensity of my suicidal thoughts is _____ | 8              | 4           |
|  | 10             | 5           |
|  | 8              | 1           |
|  | 6              | 2           |
|  | 8              | 6           |
|  | 7              | 2           |
|  | 0 <sup>1</sup> | 3           |
| <i>Total for all who responded both pre and post</i>   | <b>47</b>      | <b>23</b>   |
|  | N/A            | 7           |
|  | N/A            | 1           |
| When I have suicidal thoughts, they generally last (complete one): minutes/hours/days.                       | Minutes        | [No answer] |
|  | [No answer]    | 2 Hr.       |
|  | Days           | Minutes     |
|  | 2 Days         | Hours       |
|  | Days           | Minutes     |
|  | Days           | 1 Day       |
|  | Hours          | Hours       |
|  | N/A            | 1-2 Hr.     |
|  | N/A            | N/A         |

### Helpfulness

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<sup>1</sup> In a private conversation early in the program, one participant indicated they were not having suicidal thoughts but were afraid this might start happening.

Asked to rate how helpful they found the program (this total includes those whose evaluations were not matched pre to post), the average rating was **8.4** (scale: 1 to 10) for 12 participants.

Participant comments:

- “Thank you. Your program was very instructive. I felt safe, so much so that even my emotional dysregulation was disarmed. I am very interested in learning or participating in ADHD sessions at some point. Breaking that cycle of self sabotage, feeling lazy, guilty, stupid, a fake has been and continues to be a challenge.

The hopelessness that I often feel about changing myself is probably the biggest trigger to my suicidal thoughts. It is often a self- perpetuating cycle that leaves me exhausted and paralyzed. Fortunately, I have built a good toolbox, and have had lots of professional help to navigate those moments of deep dark despair. “

- “I have found the day-to-day mindfulness of grounding yourself by being aware of what you are doing and being in the moment very helpful. I have started the practice of sitting in my car before driving and taking a few minutes to breathe and feel the steering wheel and how it feels to sit up straight in my seat. It is very helpful to redirect the mind away from the thoughts.”
- [On receiving her Certificate of Completion] “No certificate has mattered to me more than this.”

Please note: The four participants whose personal codes (unique identifiers) did not match on both pre and post evaluations are not represented in this report, with the exception of the question on Helpfulness which did not require pre/post responses.

Six out of seven participants indicated significant relief regarding the intensity of their suicidal thoughts. However, among the four post evaluations that were not matched, two indicated levels of intensity at 8 and 9. The team will be meeting to determine how to best serve the needs of all participants. See the Appendix (<https://bit.ly/SPAppendix>) for unmatched pre/post data. Matched pre/post data is available on request.

A three-month follow-up session is scheduled for September 16, 2025.

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