

Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training Program and Follow-Up Outcomes Summary

October 6, 2025

A mindfulness training program aimed at reducing the impact of suicidal thoughts while cultivating well-being is showing some promising results.

Andrew Safer and his team conducted the eight-week in-person program, “Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training”, in St. John’s from April 29th to June 17th, 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 watch recordings of the presentations at home.

Khyentse Foundation of San Francisco sponsored this workshop series.

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

The 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 do Mindfulness 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 completed a consent form, and recorded a unique personal code in lieu of their names, for anonymity. These number-and-letter combinations were matched pre/post for 10 participants. The evaluations that could not be matched were not included in the totals, but are available in the Appendix (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 here 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 10 Participants¹

	Evaluation Statement	Pre	Post	Change
1.	I feel like I have no control over my thoughts, moods, and feelings.	18	34	89%
2.	I often don't feel grounded in my body.	18	32	78%
3.	The voice in my head can make me feel anxious and I don't know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.	17	29	70%
4.	When I have negative thoughts, they overwhelm me and I don't have any tools to deal with it.	23	34	70%
5.	I feel like I am alone in the world.	22	37	68%
6.	I am worried about the future	17	28	65%
7.	I have difficulty accepting things as they are.	19	31	63%
8.	I don't have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.	22	35	59%
9.	This pattern of not being fully present in my immediate experience is normal for me.	19	29	53%
10.	Staying in the present hurts so much that I prefer to run away from what is unpleasant.	22	33	50%
11.	I have thoughts about suicide often.	23	34	48%
12.	I always have the feeling that there is something I should be doing to get rid of my troubling emotions.	20	28	40%

¹ A previous Outcomes Summary was issued after completion of the program on July 4th, showing 9 participants. After the follow-up session on September 16th, one program participant's pre-evaluation was located, enabling an additional pre/post match. Hence, 10 participants are represented here. The follow-up evaluation summary is also included in this document.

13.	I think over and over about things that have already happened.	16	22	37%
14.	I don't believe I can make a difference in my life.	29	39	34%
15.	I am not kind towards myself.	19	25	32%
16.	When I start thinking about something that concerns me, I can't get it out of my mind.	17	22	29%
17.	These suicidal thoughts are persuasive. I can see myself acting on them at some point.	33	38	15%
18.	I go around most of the time without paying attention to my surroundings.	29	31	7%

Note: The evaluation form can be viewed here:

<https://bit.ly/SuicidePreventionEvaluation>

The totals for pre- and post evaluation statements were:

PRE (April 30 th)	POST (June 17 th)
341	496
Difference: 155 = 45% overall improvement	

Follow-Up

Three months after the completion of the program in June, participants were invited to a single follow-up in-person session in September. Seven participants attended. After a check-in, Mindfulness practice, and sharing, the post-evaluation was administered, completed, and collected.

- 1) There was a slight **(4%) overall average score decrease** from the Post scores. In other words, the gains at eight weeks regressed by 4%, three months later.
- 2) The Follow-Up scores were still significantly higher than the Pre scores for these seven participants, showing a **32% increase**.

Two participants' scores increased from the Post-Evaluation (#3 and #4 below), indicating that they maintained all of the gains from the 8-week program.

Participant	PRE	POST	FOLLOW-UP
1.	39	57	52
2.	35	75	71
3.	35	62	63
4.	54	50	63
5.	40	64	55
6.	41	43	37
7.	28	63	57

Total	272	414	398
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For these 7 participants, there was a **52% improvement** in overall evaluation scores between the beginning and end of the program, and a **46% improvement** between the program's outset and follow-up.

Individual responses to the 18 Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up evaluation questions can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/SupplementalOctober2025>

Suicidal Thoughts

Participants were asked to rate the *intensity* of their suicidal thoughts. The average rating in the last session was **53%** lower than in the first, for 8 participants. [Note: This compares to a 42% decrease in the pilot group of 8 participants in 2021.]

The *duration* of suicidal thoughts was significantly reduced in the Follow-Up except for one participant (#6). Asked how long these thoughts last, the majority of respondents indicated dramatic reductions in the time interval, from days to minutes/not at all, etc., with the exception of #6.

Participants with pre/post matches are represented here.

Participant	Pre	Post	Follow Up
On a scale where 1 = lowest intensity and 10 = highest, the intensity of my suicidal thoughts is 1. _____	8	1	5
2. _____	6	1	1
3. _____	7	2	2
4. _____	0	3	1
5. _____	4	2	3
6. _____	N/A	<7>	7
7. _____	N/A	<3>	1
8. _____	8	6	N/A
9. _____	8	4	N/A
10. _____	10	5	N/A
The difference between Pre and Post, omitting #6, #7, is	51	24	
When I have suicidal thoughts, they generally last (complete one): minutes/hours/days. 1. _____	2 Days	Hours	Hours
2. _____	Days	Not at all	Seconds to Minutes
3. _____	Hours	Hours	Minutes

4.	Hours	2 Hours	1 Minute
5.	15 Minutes	Minutes	5 Minutes
6.	N/A	1-2 Hours	Hours
7.	N/A	N/A	N/A
8.	Days	1 Day	N/A
9.	Minutes	N/A	N/A
10.	Days	Minutes	N/A

Suicide-Related Statements from Quantitative Evaluation

"I have thoughts about suicide often."

Participant	PRE	POST	FOLLOW-UP
1.	2	4	2
2.	2	4	5
3.	3	4	4
4.	2	3	4
5.	3	4	4
6.	2	2	2
7.	5	5	5
8.	1	3	N/A
9.	2	2	N/A
10.	1	3	N/A

Totals

Pre-Post for 10 participants; Follow-Ups for 7

Pre to Post: **48% improvement**

Pre to Follow-Up: **37% improvement**

Post to Follow-Up: **No difference**

"These suicidal thoughts are persuasive; I can see myself acting on them at some point."

Participant	PRE	POST	FOLLOW-UP
1.	4	5	3
2.	3	5	5
3.	3	4	5
4.	4	4	4
5.	3	4	4
6.	4	3	2
7.	5	5	5
8.	3	3	N/A
9.	3	3	N/A
10.	1	3	N/A

Totals

33 / 26 (7)

39 / 30 (7)

28 (7)

Pre-Post, for 10 participants; Follow-Ups for 7.

Pre to Post: **18% improvement**
Pre to Follow-Up: **8% improvement**
Post to Follow-Up: **7% decrease**

Note: Re: “Suicidal thoughts are persuasive...” Because there was overall disagreement with this statement in the pre-evaluation, there was not much room for improvement.

Helpfulness

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

Follow-Up

Participant total responses to the follow-up quantitative evaluation (18 statements) declined by 4% compared to their responses at the end of the program three months earlier--a relatively small regression.

POST	FOLLOW-UP
414	398

Difference: 16 = **4% decrease in total evaluation score**

Participant Comments

Completion of Program

- “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.”

Follow-Up

“I am more self-aware of my immediate experience. Mindfulness helps keep me grounded when my mind starts to wander.”

How has it helped you deal with suicidal thoughts / ideation?

“Breaking up negative thought patterns; Change direction of negative thoughts

“Managing / perspective for intrusive thoughts.”

“Meditation allows me the tool to stop the momentum of the suicidal thoughts.”

Highlights of this Outcomes Summary (1 page) can be viewed here:

<https://bit.ly/SPHighlightsOctober2025>

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