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Suicide Prevention Through Mindfulness Training Program Outcomes Summary

August 18, 2026

“Suicide Prevention through Mindfulness Training” is a program aimed at reducing the power of suicidal thoughts and the compulsion to follow them, while at the same time cultivating well-being. It is showing strong results.

One measure of the program’s effectiveness indicates that the *intensity* of suicidal thoughts decreased by an average of 49 per cent for 20 people, over the eight-week timeframe of the course.

Between 2021 and 2026, three groups were conducted in St. John’s, NL, each with eight weekly 1 ½-hr. sessions. The pilot group in 2021 was conducted by Andrew Safer, Safer Mindfulness, and Canadian Mental Health Association—Newfoundland and Labrador. Two groups met in-person and one met on Zoom only. This report aggregates outcomes for 20 participants across the three groups who completed both the pre- and post- evaluations.

Thirty-four participants began the training. Two who completed pre- and post-evaluations are not included here due to unavailability of data.

Andrew Safer, Safer Mindfulness Meditation Instructor and Trainer, led the sessions. Tina Davies, President, Richard’s Legacy Foundation for Suicide Loss and President, ASIST NL (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), Darren Fancey, Wellness Coordinator, and Kathy Porter, Meditation Instructor and Speaker, provided program support. Funding support was provided by VOCM Cares Foundation, Pennecon Limited, and Khyentse Foundation.

The weekly topics were:

1. How Does Mindfulness Help?
2. Grounding and Mindfulness Practices
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 and Anxiety: The Power of Pausing
7. ‘Rumination and Disengaging from Thoughts
8. A New Way to Relate to Feelings and Emotions

Each session included a check-in, mindfulness meditation instruction, guidance and practice, presentation on the day's topic, and Q&A/discussion. Between sessions, participants were emailed links to relevant articles and videos, and were encouraged to practise at home daily. They were also given chapters to read from Andrew Safer's book, *Anxiety, Stress & Mindfulness*, which they received at the beginning of the program.

Following are the 18 evaluation statements. The improvements over the eight weeks are shown in descending order. Participants were asked to respond to each statement as follows:

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

Note: Each of the evaluation statements below suggests poor mental health. Participants were asked to respond to them using a scale of 1 to 5. The highest score indicates strong disagreement, which suggests good mental health; the lowest score suggests the opposite. Therefore, higher aggregate scores in the "Post" column below indicate overall gains in the way participants related to their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and a present-moment orientation.

Total Evaluation Scores for 20 Participants

	Evaluation Statement	Pre-program: Disagreement w/Statement	Post-program: Disagreement w/Statement	Improvement
1.	The voice in my head can make me feel anxious and I don't know how to pause and interrupt this pattern.	38	68	79%
2.	When I have negative thoughts, they overwhelm me and I don't have any tools to deal with it.	49	80	63%
3.	I always have the feeling that there is something I	35	57	63%

	should be doing to get rid of my troubling emotions.			
4.	I feel like I have no control over my thoughts, moods, and feelings.	44	71	61%
5.	I feel like I am alone in the world.	47	73	55%
6.	I have thoughts about suicide often.	48	73	52%
7.	I think over and over about things that have already happened.	34	51	50%
8.	I am worried about the future.	37	54	46%
9.	When I start thinking about something that concerns me, I can't get it out of my mind.	35	51	46%
10.	I have difficulty accepting things as they are.	46	66	43%
11.	I don't have confidence in my ability to deal with the stressful things that happen to me.	50	71	42%
12.	I often don't feel grounded in my body.	46	63	37%
13.	I don't believe I can make a difference in my life.	59	79	34%
14.	I am not kind towards myself.	48	63	31%
15.	This pattern of not being fully present in my immediate experience is normal for me.	45	59	31%
16.	These suicidal thoughts are persuasive; I can see myself acting on them at some point.	66	85	29%
17.	Staying in the present hurts so much that I prefer to run away from what is unpleasant.	55	68	24%
18.	I go around most of the time without paying	63	73	16%

	attention to my surroundings.			
	Totals	845	1,205	43% improvement

- On a scale where 1 is the lowest intensity and 10 is the highest, the **intensity of my suicidal thoughts** is ____.

Pre	Post	Pre	Post
0	3	7	3
0	N/A	7	6
1	1	8	4
2	1	8	6
2	1	8	4
3	1	8	1
3	1	8	4
4	2	10	5
4	1		
5	4		
6	1		
7	2		
		Total Pre: 101	Total Post: 51
		49% improvement	

Note: The evaluation form can be viewed here:

<https://bit.ly/SuicidePreventionEvaluation>

(Over)

Suicidal thoughts generally last (select one...)

_minutes; _hours; _days.

Pre	Post	Pre	Post
10 minutes	10 minutes	2 days	hours
15 minutes	minutes	days	hours
minutes	N/A	days	minutes
minutes	N/A	2 days	few minutes
minutes	1 minute now	2-5 days	several hours
minutes	minutes	4 days	2 hours, or rarely a full day
1 minute	0 minutes	0	N/A
hours	2 hours		
hours	minutes		
hours	hours		
2 hours	N/A		
days	1 day		
days	Not at all		

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

Rating	10	9	8	7	6	5	N/A
No. of Participants	8	3	3	3	1	1	1
	Total: 163 divided by 20 = 8.15 average						

What Participants Learned

- “I can work through these thoughts and not allow them to have control over me.”
- “The power of the deep feeling of depression, the hole, the void, has proven to be fleeting and can be weakened by a clear mind.”
- “Immediately helpful with suicidal thoughts, then very helpful in rumination leading to suicidal thoughts.”
- “Before these sessions, I was very anxious—I took time off work. Now I have the tools to believe in myself and know it’s up to me to change things. I have confidence to change things that aren’t working.”