

PAY ATTENTION!
A MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS MANAGEMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM
PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

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Dedication

This final project is dedicated to all those individuals who also believe in the power of mindfulness, and to all who acknowledge that through mindfulness, radical change is possible.

Abstract

Mindfulness therapeutic approaches are relatively new to the field of counselling psychology. By encouraging a present-centered, non-judgmental, observant attitude, mindfulness can instill power and peace within an individual. The concepts of mindfulness are highly generalizable, and lend themselves to a wide array of individual concerns and theoretical approaches. This project combines mindfulness concepts with cognitive behavioural therapy. The goal of this endeavour is to create a group program manual and literature review for practitioners to assist women with low self-esteem and high stress. Self-esteem and stress were chosen as the topic of concern due to high incidence rates, and because both serve as risk factors for many psychological disturbances. Group therapy is the chosen method of intervention, modelled after several successful and empirically validated mindfulness-based group interventions. Within the document, program rationale and relevant literature are presented concerning cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, self-esteem, stress management, and group processes. Lesson plans are presented for a hypothetical six-week group program. Interventions include informal mindfulness, mindful meditation, uncovering belief systems and experiential self-esteem exercises. This document provides a tool for practitioners and contributes to existing literature on mindfulness-based research.

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Introduction

The process of psychotherapy involves self-awareness as a tool for change. How practitioners encourage self-awareness often rests on the theoretical orientation of the practitioner. It is the view of this researcher that the principles of mindfulness lend themselves particularly well to client self-awareness. Cultivating mindfulness by simply paying attention to one's present experience "can directly improve the functioning of body and brain, subjective mental life with its feelings and thoughts, and interpersonal relationships" (Siegel, 2007, p. 3). The insight as to why an individual is suffering often eludes the sufferer; a mindfulness practice can provide a framework to guide the journey of awareness and insight.

The application of ancient mindfulness principles of Buddhist philosophy to psychotherapy is a relatively new (Kabat-Zinn, 2007). Since the 1980s, practitioners in the field of psychology, education and medicine have been researching and developing the integration of mindfulness to psychotherapy (Langer, 2000; Siegel, 2007; Sternberg, 2000). In the area of psychology, mindfulness has been applied to pain and stress management (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), increasing immune functioning (Davidson, Kabat-Zinn, Schumacher, Rosenkranz, Muller, Santorelli, et al., 2003), anxiety (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and depression (Ekman, Davidson, Ricard & Wallace, 2005). The following project was designed in order to build upon the existing literature, contributing to the relatively new field of mindfulness within counselling psychology.

The concept of mindfulness is central to the following project; however, it is supplemented by an older, heavily researched theoretical orientation: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT and mindfulness are applied in this project in the

following ways. Mindfulness is utilized as a tool for client self-awareness, and CBT offers guidelines for the change process. Together, the two principles offer a theoretical orientation to encourage self-understanding and provide an avenue for change to occur in clients. The two theories will be explained in much greater detail, and then applied to the design of a program for a specific population: women suffering from low self-esteem and high stress levels.

The following project, created for The University of Lethbridge as part of the fulfillment of requirements to complete a Masters of Counselling, is a group therapy program manual which also includes a literature review. It is influenced by many different psychological approaches, philosophies and biological theories, each with a unique take on cultivating a mindful approach to life, and/or applying the principles of CBT. The program, Pay Attention! A Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women, endeavours to increase the coping skills and self awareness of its participants. Pay Attention! acknowledges that self-esteem and the stress response in an individual often interact in complex ways. Many women with low self-esteem have poor strategies for coping with stress, creating a self-perpetuating negative cycle that reduces their ability to find helpful solutions. Pay Attention! aims to teach stress reduction techniques using mindfulness-based methods, and intends to elicit insight regarding personal belief systems regarding low self-esteem. Using both cognitive behavioural and mindfulness-based theories, the program brings about change through self-awareness and the cultivation of self-nurturing.

The following project proposes a six-week psycho-educational group for self-esteem and stress management in women. A comprehensive literature review will be

presented that will describe the necessity for such a group. The need for such a program will be illustrated by a comprehensive review of current research in mindfulness-based therapy, CBT, self-esteem and stress. This project will set out the projected goals, objectives and themes of the program, as well as group management logistics and lesson plans for six sessions.

Part I: Literature Review and Program Logistics

Program Rationale and Literature Review

Mindfulness-Based Research

Pay Attention! utilizes a mindfulness influenced approach in order to lower the experiential symptoms of stress and low self-esteem, thereby increasing awareness of negative automatic thinking and ultimately assisting the individual to cultivate an authentic and balanced life. Mindfulness simply means paying attention to one's immediate experience in this present moment (Walker, 2007). Mindfulness involves cultivating a precise attention to what is, without judgment or preconception. Kabat-Zinn (2007), the founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), draws a distinction between *doing* and *being*. Many individuals often “blast through life” reacting in a knee-jerk manner from a place of habit and mindlessness (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 14). In contrast, mindfulness is a moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness (Kabat-Zinn). Cultivating mindfulness can have profound implications for creativity, well-being, happiness, and physical and emotional health. When we fully experience what is happening in our bodies, in our minds and in our emotional lives, we begin to behave with intention – awake and present in the moment (Seigel, 2007). William James is quoted as saying “the faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again is the very root of judgment, character and will. An education which should improve this faculty would be the par excellence” (as cited in Kabat-Zinn, 2007, p. 17).

Group stress-reduction programs based in mindfulness have had much empirical support as of late, and research in the area is burgeoning. For example,

Chambers, Lo, Cheun and Allen (2008) found that individuals who completed mindfulness training in a group setting demonstrated significant improvements in self-reported mindfulness, depressive symptoms, rumination, and performance measures of working memory and sustained attention, relative to a comparison group who did not undergo any meditation training. Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer and Toney (2006) compared five different mindfulness scales in order to adequately study the construct and its effects. Following a meta-analysis, this robust study discovered that five facets of mindfulness seem to initiate the most beneficial effects:

- 1) Practising non-reactivity to inner experience
- 2) Observing/noticing/attending to sensations/perceptions/thoughts/feelings
- 3) Acting with awareness/(non) automatic pilot
- 4) Describing/labelling with words
- 5) Embracing non-judgment of experience

In particular, it was found that three constructs (act with awareness, nonjudgment, and nonreaction) were the best predictors overall of lack of symptoms of suffering (Baer et al., 2006). This study has both content and construct validity, and is heavily cited in the literature. The five constructs delineated by the authors are useful for further research.

In a related study, a mindfulness-based intervention conducted on 21 participants found an overall (albeit not statistically significant) decrease in self-reported measures of stress (Marcus, Fine, Moeller, Khan, Pitts, Swank et. al, 2003).

However, there was a significant difference found in the participants' physiological response to stress as indicated by a variation in salivary cortisol levels from pre- to post-intervention (Marcus et al.). The authors suggest that an explanation for the discrepancy between physiological and psychological response to stress may be found in the nature of the intervention itself: "Mindfulness practice brings individuals into greater awareness of their thoughts and feelings, and with this new awareness, subjects may make a more realistic appraisal of their stress responses" (Marcus et al., p. 66). Among the many studies of MBSR techniques in a group setting, it has been found that mindfulness may help increase neuronal plasticity, helps stop brain atrophy after traumatic events, increases sensorimotor integration and reduces telomere degradation in adults (Kabat-Zinn, 2007; Siegel, 2007). Abundant recent research in the field of mindfulness has demonstrated its efficacy through neurobiology (Adele & Feldman, 2004; Beitman, Viamontes, Soth & Nitler, 2006).

Mindfulness and Stress

Since the term "stress" was coined in the 1950s by Hans Selye, empirical research on its effects on the body has proliferated (Walker, 2007). The negative effects of stress on the immune system have been demonstrated in numerous studies, as have their effects on an increased susceptibility to cancer, heart disease, strokes, nervous disorders, gastrointestinal problems, skin disorders and virtually any health problem (Kwekkeboom & Seng, 2002; McEwen, 1998). Stress and imbalance are a self-perpetuating cycle, often resulting in burnout, depression, anxiety, illness, addiction and collapsing relationships.

A stress reaction, similar to the fight-or-flight response, is a state of physiological and psychological hyperarousal characterized by strong emotions which vary from anxiety, fright and terror, to frustration, anger, rage and violent outbursts (Walker, 2007). This reaction involves a complex rapid-firing of the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system; this releases stress hormones, the best known of which is epinephrine (adrenaline). Muscle tension and pain are one result, as well as an increased heart rate and heart strength, raised blood pressure, rapid upper-chest breathing, heightened sense perceptions, and intense vigilance and alertness (McEwen, 1998). Statistics Canada (2004) reports that about 26% of Canadians are under “quite a lot” of life stress, which suggests that a stress reduction program would be beneficial to many.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

CBT history and tenets. Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is an approach that aims to help individuals become aware of belief patterns which are maladaptive and causing emotional distress (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). Additionally, CBT attends to the dysfunctional behavior which reinforces the belief systems, ultimately aiming to both correct and ease psychic discomfort (Mulhauser, 2007). CBT has its roots in the rational emotive therapy work of Albert Ellis, and cognitive therapy work by Aaron Beck (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). CBT also contains concepts derived from Albert Bandura’s social learning theory and Arnold Lazarus’s multimodal therapy (Lazarus, 1981; Bandura, 1977). Thus, CBT is less like a single intervention and more like a family of treatments and practices. Therefore, practitioners of CBT may emphasize different aspects of treatment: cognitive, emotional, or behavioural.

Essentially, CBT is a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes how thoughts influence behaviour and feelings.

CBT Philosophical Assumptions

The nature of healthy functioning. Inherent in CBT is the philosophical assumption that all humans strive towards personal growth, and are active participants in the construction of their own experiences (Ellis, 2000). Contingent upon this idea is the concept that humans are ultimately responsible to author their own lives: visualize a future, make decisions, take action, and thereby create their own realities. The healthy individual has the ability to accurately reflect on their experiences, use adaptive schemas to react to new situations, and interpret events functionally, in an authentic manner (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). The authentic individual demonstrates focused, decisive behaviour and values growth towards greater autonomy.

According to Ellis (2000), the well-adapted individual demonstrates the potential to be self-preserving, meta-thinking, creative, sensuous, interested and self-actualized. Many of these ideas regarding psychic health are influenced by the ideas of existentialists and humanists. For instance, May (1981), Yalom (1980), and Maslow (1968) have all elaborated on these ideas of actualization, autonomy and responsibility.

The nature of problems. In contrast, the maladjusted individual is defined by CBT as one who feels helpless, believing he/she has no control over their inner world. It is assumed that an individual's psychological problems, such as depression or anxiety, result from "illogical thinking" about themselves, the external world, and the

future (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). Beck (1985) contends that this illogical thinking is maintained even in the face of evidence that contradicts it.

An individual's belief systems are based on past learning experiences, social interactions, and genetic influences. All of these are used as the basis by which new situations and experiences are interpreted (Cormier & Nurius, 2003). Through life experience, an individual develops both adaptive and maladaptive thoughts/assumptions/beliefs about themselves, others and the world. These thoughts are easily triggered in the process of everyday interactions and events. Maladaptive thoughts may contain a number of distortions; they are too confining, too extensive, too severe, or simply inaccurate. An individual's day-to-day dysfunctional/maladaptive thoughts derive from dysfunctional/maladaptive core beliefs, which are primarily developed in childhood (Shah & Waller, 2000).

Examples of maladaptive thinking. Burns (1980) cites some examples of common cognitive distortions:

1. All-or-none thinking: Seeing things in black and white categories. If one's performance falls short of perfect, the individual would see oneself as a total failure.
2. Over-generalization: Viewing a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. Mental filter: Picking out a single negative detail and dwelling on it exclusively.
4. Disqualifying the positive: Rejecting positive experiences by insisting they don't count for some reason or other. In this way, one can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by everyday experiences.

5. Jumping to conclusions: Making a negative interpretation, even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support these conclusions.
6. Catastrophizing or minimization: Exaggerating the importance of things, or inappropriately shrinking things until they appear tiny.
7. Emotional reasoning: Assuming that negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are.
8. “Should” statements: Trying to motivate oneself with “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts”: the emotional consequence is guilt.
9. Labelling and mislabelling: This is extreme form of over-generalization involves use of labels such as “I’m a loser.”
10. Personalization: Seeing oneself as the cause of some negative event.

According to CBT, when a person perceives an event or processes memories, information becomes distorted or biased in order to fit into existing schemas. Automatic thoughts thus become comprised of distorted and detrimental cognitive distortions which contribute to emotional distress (Beck, 1967). Thinking becomes dominated by maladaptive schema, such as caring too much for what others think of them, defining themselves in terms of others, or needing to be perfect all of the time (Ellis, 1996). Schemas such as these can lead to depression, anxiety, fear and feelings of loneliness. These maladaptive cognitions may block a person from achieving goals, create emotions that persist, distress, immobilize, and lead to behaviours that are harmful to the self and others. For example: anxiety is an inappropriate biased view towards danger about oneself or others. Social anxiety is a distorted view of social danger, such as humiliation. Panic is a learned bias towards internal

physiological danger leading to catastrophe, and depression is a biased orientation towards negative expectations and memory recall, which affects perceptions about oneself and the environment.

CBT in Practice

CBT aims to relieve individuals from psychic pain by identifying automatic thoughts that may be causing distress, challenging and correcting these maladaptive schemata, and doing so via cognitive and behavioural exploration (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). “Psychological problems can be mastered by sharpening discriminations, correcting misconceptions and learning more adaptive attitudes. “Since introspection, insight, reality testing, and learning are basically cognitive processes, this approach to the neuroses has been labeled cognitive therapy” (Beck, 1976, p. 20).

Within CBT, the internal sensations as evidenced by behaviour exhibited by the client is deemed to be functionally related to the environmental events surrounding it, therefore, behaviour and physical states are amenable to therapeutic intervention. CBT is designed to target specific symptoms and behaviours that are identified as a part of the diagnosis, or presenting problems for treatment. The practitioner challenges thought processes by encouraging active self-exploration. Change or improvement through CBT is effected through the engagement in new experiences which lead to less distorted and biased interpretations about oneself and the environment. Examining predictions or beliefs about the feared outcomes of events also brings about change. Once the belief system is understood, a behavioural action plan can be implemented. Progress is therefore made when new information is

obtained about events, which then leads to the examination of biases and cognitive distortions. This can lead to new relationships with events, and new thinking patterns.

Practitioners empower clients by teaching them the skills necessary to challenge automatic thoughts and dysfunctional beliefs. CBT has the benefits of being structured, effective and, in most cases, relatively brief. CBT practises consumer-focused care, in which practitioners and individuals work together to build the tools individuals need to make changes necessary to living better (Somers, 2007). Recent studies have demonstrated that neuronal pathways are in fact altered through CBT. The results of these studies show that metacognition and cognitive recontextualization selectively alters the way the brain processes and reacts to emotional stimuli (Beauregard, 2007). “The results of these investigations demonstrate that beliefs and expectations can markedly modulate neurophysiological and neurochemical activity in brain regions involved in perception, movement, pain and various aspects of emotion processing” (Beauregard, 2007, p. 218).

Interventions rooted in CBT are aimed at assisting individuals to identify the content of their cognitive systems, including the distortions and negative perceptions evident in these systems, and to restructure thoughts in a more functional, productive manner (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). Essentially, maladaptive assumptions are articulated through abstracting rules present in automatic thought. Once defined, the maladaptive assumption is then open to modification. The specific technique used depends on the maladaptive assumptions. Examples of such techniques include cognitive restructuring and reframing. One type of restructuring method, reattribution, involves

an examination of automatic thoughts and assumptions, then considers alternative causes of events. The reorganization of schemata is the therapeutic force of CBT.

CBT and mindfulness-based theories are similar, in that they both aim to encourage awareness, alter neural programming and emphasize the observation of automatic thinking. Together, both theories work in tandem to assist individuals in calming the nervous system, creating new cognitive schemas and bringing about new positive emotions. Both theories engage the prefrontal cortex, allowing positive, complex brain functioning, thus encouraging healthy functioning.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem defined. The concept of self-esteem is pervasive in psychology. Self-esteem was first described by William James in 1890 (Fancher, 1996). James recognized that individual's self-concepts are not simply mirrors of reality; in fact, self-concepts involve an integration and organization of information (Fancher, 1996). These self-concepts include generalizations about oneself that are formed in early childhood, and tend to guide how new information is used in relation to oneself. In fact, several studies have demonstrated that the most important influences on a person's level of self-esteem are their parents. This influence is partly genetic and partly produced by the degree of love, concern, acceptance and interest shown by parents throughout childhood and adolescence (Emler, 2001).

Self-esteem has become the third most frequently occurring theme in psychological literature. As of 2003 over 25,000 articles, chapters, and books referred to the topic (Rodewalt, 2003). Given this long and detailed history, it is difficult to pinpoint definitions of the term. Self-esteem can be examined from many different

theoretical approaches. For example, evolutionary psychologists believe that the self-concept is a composite of internal representations of individual characteristics that affect reproductive fitness (Kirkpatrick & Ellis, 2004). However, social psychology views self-esteem as akin to a barometer that tracks conditions rather than reactions to events (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004). This theory assumes that one's relations with others greatly affect self-esteem. When one is accepted, included and loved, self-esteem will be high. On the contrary, when one is rejected, excluded and despised, self-esteem will be low. Existential psychology views self-esteem as a manifestation of one's search for identity and meaning (Frankl, 1984). Psychoanalytic approaches view self-esteem in relation to the ego; in this view, self-esteem is at the mercy of the balance between id and super-ego. Conversely, cognitive-behaviourists look at self-esteem in great detail, defining the concept in terms of thoughts, emotions and actions.

Due to the cognitive-behaviouralist approach of Pay Attention! it seems appropriate to use the definition used by cognitive theorists.

Self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It is confidence in the efficacy of our mind, in our ability to think. By extension, it is confidence in our ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, and respond effectively to change. It is also the experience that success, achievement, fulfillment and happiness are right and natural for us. (Branden, 2007).

Low self-esteem. Within the cognitive behavioural approach, low self-esteem has been described as a negative image of the self, which tends to be global, persistent and enduring (Fennell, 1998). A person who has low self-esteem will filter incoming information in accordance with their view of self: they will overemphasize their weaknesses and deficits, and underestimate their strengths and assets. It is thought that negative early experiences with primary attachment figures can lead to the development of the “bottom line”, a global negative schema used to evaluate one’s sense of worth (Whelan, Haywood & Galloway, 2007). Environmental interactions activate this bottom line, which brings about the familiar negative automatic thoughts about the self. These thoughts trigger negative emotions, bodily symptoms and influence behaviour. The cycle then continues, and the bottom line is maintained.

Self-esteem and self-perception depend not only on past experiences with care-givers and the nature of one’s accomplishments, but also on the way one measures up to relevant peers (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997). As Leon Festinger (1954) puts forth in his social comparison theory, there is a drive within individuals to look to outside images in order to evaluate their own opinions and abilities. These images may be a reference to physical reality, or in comparison to other people. People look to the images portrayed by others to be obtainable and realistic, and subsequently, make comparisons among themselves, others and the idealized images (Festinger, 1954). Individuals then judge themselves based on their existent self-perception, and the comparison will thus become encoded as either enforcing the bottom line (contributing to low self-esteem), or in opposition to the bottom line.

Low self-esteem is a pertinent and timely subject for psychology. Thousands of studies have been conducted to determine what exactly low self-esteem is a risk factor for. Researchers have found that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to: show symptoms of depression, have suicidal thoughts and make suicide attempts, experience longer periods of unemployment and earn less, suffer from eating disorders (if they are female), be victimized, and have more difficulty forming and sustaining successful close relationships (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997; Whelan, Haywood & Galloway, 2007). Counselling interventions aimed at creating higher self-esteem therefore can benefit many aspects of an individual's life.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Self-Esteem

The concept of self-esteem is grounded in cognitive distortions; thus cognitive behavioural therapy has been a popular method for the treatment of low self-esteem. Cognitive behavioural therapy attempts to positively manipulate an individual's interpretation of various situations in order to bring about desired changes outside of a clinical setting. It is believed the cognitive connection between illogical thought patterns and unhealthy self-esteem can be examined and manipulated to create schemas and belief systems that are positive, and chosen by the individual. However, low self-esteem has been relatively neglected in cognitive therapy literature. This is perhaps because it is neither a specific psychiatric disorder nor a personality disorder. Rather, it emerges as an aspect of, consequence of, or vulnerability factor for many presenting problems (Fennell, 1998).

CBT for low self-esteem integrates concepts and methods from validated short-term therapy for people with acute anxiety (Beck, Emery & Greenberg, 1985)

and depression (Beck, 1967), and more experimental ideas and interventions from recent developments in the treatment of personality disorders (Davidson, Norrie, Tyer, Gumley, Tata et al., 2006). As with anxiety and depression, therapy normally starts with a focus on identifying, questioning and testing the cognitions that drive the vicious circle (i.e. negative predictions and self-critical thoughts) through a combination of cognitive and behavioural methods. In Pay Attention!, this beginning point of identification uses mindfulness-based approaches to encourage awareness. CBT provides a basis for examining how maladaptive assumptions are both unreasonable and unhelpful, and the mindfulness practice uncovers what the negative thoughts and feelings sound like and feel like to the individual. More realistic and helpful alternatives are then formulated, and put into practice in daily life. Finally, attention is focused on modifying the negative core beliefs about the self which the model suggests form the heart of low self-esteem. The overall goal is to encourage realistic self-acceptance (Fennell, 1998). It is proposed that high self-esteem is not the opposite of low-self-esteem, but rather self-acceptance is. Given the studies mentioned, the program Pay Attention!, although influenced by the work of Kabat-Zinn's MBSR program, also includes neurobiology education (Siegel, 2007), self-esteem experiential techniques (Satir, 1975), and meditation techniques (Shannahoff, 2006) in order to fully attend to all mindfulness and CBT constructs. As the six weeks progress, the clients will be educated on the principles and techniques of mindfulness (Siegel, 2007; Kabat-Zinn, 2005), breath work (Boccio, 2004), and neurobiology (Siegel, 2007). The participants will then uncover their maladaptive belief systems and learn how to restructure their cognitions (Brown, Elliot, Boardman, Andiappan,

Landau & Howay, 2007). The individual uses mindfulness-based strategies to observe their cognitions. Change is influenced through both CBT-based strategies (restructuring) and mindfulness-based strategies (relaxation). The program aims to assist an individual to attain:

- Feelings of tranquility and calm
- Self-validation
- An ability to remain present-focused
- An ability to remain non-distractible
- Distance from mental activity
- Nonjudgmental attitude towards mental events
- Sustained attention on the breath

Part II: Program Manual

The program manual for Pay Attention! is included below, with the lesson plans presented as Appendices. Facilitator, room and time considerations are suggested, as are screening and ethical recommendations. The author has included lesson plan objectives and rationale in order to orient the reader to the purpose of each lesson. The following manual is designed to assist interested practitioners in implementing Pay Attention!

Structure and Organization of the Group

Group Process

Pay Attention! is a six-week psycho-educational and process-oriented group therapy experience. The lesson plans are each created for a two-hour, weekly session. Members are also required to attend one pre-group meeting for 90 minutes. Additionally, there will be a one-hour follow-up meeting one month after the group commences. Ideally, a Pay Attention! group will have 10 to 20 members.

The group meeting room should have ample space for all members. The room will need to have a white board, some tables for writing and ample floor space for meditation, yoga and other forms of movement. The group is appropriate for a heterogeneous group of mixed ethnicity, age, sexuality and culture. However, the group is limited to females, to increase comfort levels of the participants and to nurture group cohesion. The group is designed to be widely applicable in order to service as many individuals as possible. The number of members is dependent on the size of the room available, and the comfort level of the facilitator(s). Intermediate English speaking ability will be necessary.

One to two facilitators are required. Experience with mindful meditation is essential, as is prior experience with the theoretical foundations of yoga. At minimum,

the facilitator(s) should be in a graduate-level psychology program. Ideally, the facilitator will be a Registered Clinical Counsellor. Session notes will be beneficial in order to plan adequately for next session, and to ensure accountability. Sample session notes are included in Appendix A.

The facilitator(s) is encouraged to evaluate the sessions on the first, third and sixth session; an evaluation form, influenced by Johnson, Miller and Duncan (2000), is provided in Appendix B. Additionally, a list of facilitator debriefing questions is provided to be utilized after each session (please see Appendix C). It is suggested that marketing concerns be taken care of at least one to two months ahead of the initial pre-screening date. A multi-pronged approach to marketing is recommended, such as posters, flyers, and direct marketing (a marketing poster is supplied in Appendix D). To further assist the prospective facilitator, recommended readings and references are included in Appendix E.

Group Membership and Screening

The success of this program is partly attributable to its ability to adapt to clients' needs. The very nature of Pay Attention! is highly applicable to a wide variety of women. However, it is geared toward women suffering moderate to high amounts of self-reported stress and/or low self-esteem. Alternately, it is not suitable for individuals with severe anxiety and/or depression or other types of DSM diagnoses. It is anticipated that the group will be highly heterogeneous, as the ages can vary widely (20 to 80), the cultures and ethnicity may vary and the life circumstances will be wide-ranging. Members will be screened by using the following three assessment measures:

The Beck Depression Inventory II: A 21-question scale to assess the intensity of depression in clinical and normal patients (Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996) The validity of this tool has been demonstrated in many studies, such as by Arenau, Meagher, Norris and Bramson (2001). This tool will be used to screen applicants for severity of depressive symptoms. Clients scoring from 29-63 will not be permitted to attend Pay Attention!, but will instead be encouraged to attend individual counselling first. The Beck Depression Inventory II can be purchased online at:

<http://harcourtassessment.com/haiweb/cultures/en-us/productdetail.htm?pid=015-8018-370>.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Rosenberg's scale includes 10 items that are usually scored using a four-point response ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items are face valid, and the scale is short, easy and fast to administer (Rosenberg, 1965). Extensive and acceptable reliability (internal consistency and test-retest) and validity (convergent and discriminant) information exists for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale can be downloaded from: <http://eib.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index3676EN.html>.

The Frieberg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI): Each group member will complete the FMI in order to establish a baseline of their mindfulness ability (Walach, Buchheld, Bутtenmuller, Kleinknecht & Schmidt, 2006). Studies have demonstrated that the FMI is a useful, valid and reliable questionnaire for measuring mindfulness (Walach et al.).

Cater to Multicultural Diversity

Pay Attention! will cater to a diverse population in the following ways:

- Spiritually open; discussion will remain neutral in terms of religion, however personal exploration will be respected and encouraged
- Open to a wide age group
- Open to all women regardless of sexuality, ethnicity, disability, education level, or socioeconomic status

In addition to these principles, each lesson plan contains specific notes on diversity. The leader should be cognizant of the various ways that diversity may affect the outcome of the session material, and vice versa. To encourage an emphasis on multicultural practices, Appendix F is provided.

Ethical Considerations

As recommended by Corey and Corey (2006), the following will be provided in writing to ensure that the group is conducted in an ethical and legal manner:

- Confidentiality and exceptions to confidentiality (please see Appendix G)
- Information on the nature, purpose and goals of the group (via handout on day one; please see Appendix H)
- The group leaders' theoretical orientation
- Written and verbal establishment of rules and boundaries concerning risks and benefits, preventing adverse outcomes, dual relationships and establishing boundaries (please see Appendix I)
- The role and responsibilities of group members and leaders (will be discussed during the ground rule discussion)
- The qualifications of the leader (included in the disclosure statement)

The Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2001) will be the ethically binding document utilized by the facilitator to guide the policies and legalities of Pay Attention! Although nearly all of the principles are applicable, in particular the principles concerning respect for the dignity of persons, informed consent, confidentiality and record keeping will be particularly relevant. In addition to the guiding principles in the Canadian Code of Ethics, the facilitator will endeavour to create an ethical group which respects diversity and the rights of each member, and will ensure that she safely uses interventions that are up to date, safe and will not cause harm (Canadian Psychological Association).

Lesson Plan Objectives

Each lesson plan is focused on particular goals and themes. The lesson plans are provided in Appendix J. The objectives of each session are outlined below to help guide the practitioner.

Pre-Group: Introduction and Setting the Stage

This meeting is ideal to set the tone for the following sessions. The members will meet each other and the facilitator, and become oriented to the process, building and room set-up. This session also provides the members with more information to help them decide if they are willing to commit themselves to what would be expected of them (Corey & Corey, 2006). The leader should identify member expectations, impart logistical information, and answer any questions. The following three objectives should be kept in mind, and used in conjunction with the pre-group lesson plan (Appendix J).

1. Explore Members' Expectations/Answer Questions
2. Clarify Goals and Objectives of Group
3. Educate Members about Group Process

Session One: Introducing Mindfulness

In the first session, the central processes include creating a working alliance, orientation, and exploration (Corey & Corey, 2006). In *Pay Attention!* the initial group focus is on introducing the framework (mindfulness), and doing so within a climate of trust and respect. To do so, the lesson (attached as Appendix J) centers on defining terms, setting up group norms, engaging in meditation for the first time, and some process work. Leaders should keep the following objectives in mind, and utilize the attached lesson plan and additional resources.

1. To create a working alliance with group members.
2. To educate the members about Mindfulness, its history, and how it works.
3. To invite the members to participate in Mindfulness Meditation.

Session Two: Introducing Self-Esteem

In this, the second session, relationships will begin to deepen, and the members will likely have a sense for how the group is structured. A deepening of group cohesion is fostered in this session through activities which promote personal exploration. As the members begin to engage in self-exploration, they may begin to feel vulnerable. Thus, a trusting safe atmosphere is paramount. It is within this session that self-esteem is incorporated into the group, and the topic is explored by each participant in a personal and meaningful manner. The following objectives should be used as a guideline while the

lesson plans attached (Appendix J) will provide the step by step instructions. Also included is a handout for self-esteem (Appendices K and L).

1. To nurture working alliance with group members.
2. To educate the members about self-esteem and cultivating authenticity
3. To invite the members to participate in experiential exercises about self-narrative and making mistakes.

Session Three: Mindfulness Through Movement

In session three the group may have entered either the transitional or working phase of development. In the transitional phase “...groups are generally characterized by anxiety, defensiveness, resistance, conflict and...challenges” (Corey & Corey, 2006, p. 178). The ability to process this stage and engage in meaningful interpersonal exploration will be an important factor in determining group success. The group’s ability to move forward is dependent on the ability and willingness of both members and leaders to work with whatever is expressed in the here and now (Yalom, 1995). However, the group may have entered the working stage of development which is characterized by the commitment of members to explore themselves and assume greater responsibility for change (Corey & Corey, 2006). With these two stages in mind, session three is geared to deepen the meditative experience, and to delve into their belief systems. The leader should attend to the stage of development and tailor the lesson plan accordingly. The following objectives correspond to the more detailed lesson plan included in Appendix J, and supplemented by Appendix M.

1. To invite the members to deepen the mindful meditative experience.
2. To invite the members to extend their practice into moving meditation through yoga (Boccio, 2004).
3. To teach the members about the powerful effect of bodily reactions on thinking and feeling.

Session Four: Mindfulness and Relationships

In session four, the group will ideally be operating in the working stage of development. The members will now have a good idea of the definitions and uses of mindfulness and self-esteem, and will have developed some coping skills. In this session, focus is turned to the members' relationships in order to expand the material and examine patterns of behaviour as it pertains to their social worlds. As the leader works through the lesson plan and visualization script provided (Appendices J and N), the following objectives should be kept in mind.

1. To teach people to be the observer in conflict.
2. To illustrate self-soothing.
3. To inspire members to become the observer of self-in-relationships.

Session Five: Living in Awareness

In session five, the members will have been cultivating a formal mindfulness practice for five weeks. In this week, the participants are invited to use this learning in their day-to-day existence. The goal of this week is to generalize and integrate their learning. Members should be encouraged to personalize their mindfulness practice, applying the principles to their unique life experiences. Experiential exercises and

relevant psycho-educational information is included in the lesson plans; however, the following objectives should be noted.

1. Deepen Mindfulness Meditation practice.
2. Invite the members to extend Mindfulness principles to their day to day life.
3. Demonstrate and educate members about the benefits of living in Mindfulness.

Session Six: Looking Ahead

In session six, the final session, the group may exhibit signs of being in the final stage of group development. This is a crucial stage for the group: a unique group identity has formed, and consolidation of learning should take place (Corey & Corey, 2006). The leader should also be sensitive to any issues pertaining to endings and good-byes. Additionally, members can use this session as an opportunity to discover how the behaviour changes will be integrated in their lives. In *Pay Attention!*, session six endeavours to set goals, gauge their change and say good bye. Specific methods of doing so are provided in Appendices J and O, and the following objectives will be helpful in preparing for the session.

1. Consolidation of learning (Corey & Corey, 2006).
2. Comparing earlier and later perceptions (Corey & Corey, 2006).
3. Set goals and identify stumbling blocks and coping strategies for future.

Post-Group/Wrap-up

A post-group meeting is an ideal time to go over any test results, consult with members about the change process and help them to reiterate some of the positive skills they learned in the group. When the members know that they have a wrap-up meeting to attend, it may inspire them to utilize some of their new skills. The facilitator is

encouraged to follow the lesson plan provided, but the following objectives will also help to shape the post-group meeting.

1. Follow up on test scores.
2. Assess outcomes (Rapin & Keel, 1998).
3. Invite members to discuss any difficulties they have encountered since termination.

Procedures

The lesson plans, program logistics and relevant literature review is intended to function as an aid for counsellors wishing to work with women suffering from low self-esteem and/or stress. The decision to create such a project was based primarily on researcher interest. More specifically, the decision was based on a desire to add to the burgeoning field of mindfulness, adding a manual to the growing research. As the researcher began a literature review in the areas of mindfulness and self-esteem, a scarcity of research was found. The researcher intends, through creating and then implementing the program offered in this project, that further information can be gathered related to how and in what ways mindfulness and CBT can serve individuals in need of psychological services.

Many steps were taken to ensure that the group program and literature review would be a valuable resource for both the counsellors and women participating in the group. A review of relevant literature on the topics involved was necessary to create the program manual, based on empirically validated practice, strategies and interventions. To do so, the project was divided into three sections: literature review, intervention planning, and organizing the material into the recommended lesson plans. These steps are described as follows:

Conducting a Literature Review

The search for relevant information for this project was categorized into six themes consisting of: 1) Mindfulness, 2) Self-Esteem, 3) Low Self-Esteem, 4) Stress, 5) Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and 6) Group Therapy. Research related to these themes was then identified through a systematic search through The University of Lethbridge's Library. The databases used include: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and The Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection. Additionally, the world wide web was utilized, using the Google search engine. The key words used to perform the search included: mindful, mindfulness, CBT, self-esteem, low self-esteem, stress, group therapy, and women. These words were used in different combinations with each other. Once the relevant research was retrieved, the researcher used the reference lists to further identify relevant primary sources. A final step was to use the researcher's personal library of relevant books. These books provided a rich source of data and the references from these books were examined to identify still more literature.

Intervention Planning

To gather information pertaining to the best course of intervention given the subject matter, the researcher attended several relevant workshops, speeches and therapeutic groups. These included a presentation by Daniel Siegel, a workshop for self-esteem, and an eight week group program on mindfulness. The manuals of each group were obtained, and the suitability and relevance of all workshops attended was determined.

Organization of Material

Once the relevant research material was examined, it was organized according to subject matter. The lesson plans were then organized in a way that was influenced by the researcher's experiences in a graduate-level class: CAAP 637 Group Processes. It was discovered through research that effective manuals are easy to read, structured, highly organized, and offer a step-by-step approach. The manual was then compared with other relevant manuals to determine feasibility and adequate organization. The title was created in order to grab potential members' attention, ensure marketability and represent the subject matter.

Synthesis and Implications

Pay Attention! is designed to help women increase coping skills and hopes to assist participants to live a life with inner peace. The concepts of mindfulness and CBT are widely applicable; indeed the manual itself represents this generalizability. The lesson plans can be used in varying settings such as schools, private agencies, correctional facilities and hospitals, to name a few. The literature and lesson plans serve to add to the field of mindfulness, strengthening the increasing interest of this topic. Furthermore, by applying mindfulness and CBT in tandem, specificity is attained and greater understanding is achieved of how the two differing theories can work together to instill change. It should be noted however that the lesson plans recommended are for a pilot program, and empirical validity is not yet available. Once the program can be delivered, greater understanding of its limitations will be delineated. However, it is the experience of this researcher that mindfulness concepts can offer solace, bringing about increased self-understanding, personal attunement and strength of character.

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Appendix A

Pay Attention!

Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women

File Notes

Date: _____

Session #: _____

Participant Name: _____

In Attendance? Yes No

Session Themes:

Client Participation:

Comments:

Appendix B

Pay Attention!**Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women****Session Rating Scale**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Session Number: _____

Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5

1 being not at all and 5 being all of the time

I was heard, understood and respected

1 2 3 4 5

The information was informative and valuable

1 2 3 4 5

The leader's approach is a good fit for me

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, today's session was informative and useful

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Pay Attention!**Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women****Facilitator Debriefing Questions**

Pre-Group

What problems or issues could we foresee, and prepare for? Do the members seem motivated? What needs to be done before the first session?

Lesson One: Introduction to Mindfulness

What were the concerns raised by the members? What can we do to make the experience more collaborative? How is the working alliance coming along? Do the members seem to be meshing well? When and for how long should we plan for next session?

Lesson Two: Introduction to Self-Esteem

What stage of development is the group in? What can we do to make the experience more collaborative? How is the working alliance coming along? Did we allot enough time for all of the activities? What themes are arising from the members?

Lesson Three: Mindfulness Through Movement

What was the response to the yogic portion? How is the working alliance coming along? Are the goals mutual, has trust been established? What do we need to do to prepare for next week? Are there any major concerns arising that will require consultation on? What feedback can you utilize from the evaluations?

Lesson Four: Mindfulness and Relationships

Were you able to structure the process portion appropriately? What stage of group development does the group seem to be operating in now?

Lesson Five: Living in Awareness

How did the group respond to these exercises? Does the meditative practice appear to be deepening? Are people doing their homework? What stage does the group appear to be in? How is the strength of the working alliance?

Lesson Six: Looking Ahead

What information would be helpful to share in post group? How are we dealing with our own feelings about leaving? Was it a successful ending? How did the members process the experience?

Post-Group/Wrap-up

What did we learn from this follow-up session that will help us the next time we facilitate a group? Was a follow-up group necessary?

Appendix D

Sample Marketing Material

Pay Attention! A Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Group



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is awareness without judgment. It is the open and curious observation of any given moment. It is a powerful tool that can be used by you to feel calm, in control and experience life in a more meaningful manner.

Mindfulness as a practice has been used for thousands of years, originally a Buddhist tradition. However, in the past 40 years it has become a part of the western medical world, used for treating chronic pain, grief, anxiety and depression.

Pay Attention! Is a mindfulness-based, FREE 8-week workshop designed to help you learn incredible coping skills for stress reduction and self-esteem enhancement. Through understanding the permanent changes that mindfulness can make on your brain, practising mindful meditation and learning about your personal belief systems, you will come to approach life with openness and ease.

“Observe the space between your thoughts, then, observe the observer.”

~ Hamilton Boudreaux~

Appendix E

Pay Attention!**Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women****Recommended Resources**

Additional resources that supplement the lesson plans include:

Baer, R.A., Smith, G.T., Hopkins J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*(1), 27-45.

Corey, G., & Corey, M. S. (2006). *Process and practice groups*. Toronto: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

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Appendix F

Pay Attention!**Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women****Notes on Diversity**

Pre-Group

As this is the first group, this is an ideal time to take note of the culture, ethnicity, gender, ages and physical abilities of the members. Clarification may need to be made about building access, ground rules, respect and members expectations.

Lesson One: Introducing Mindfulness

Mindfulness may mean many different things to different people. It is important to be aware of the Buddhist connotations and history. It may be important to either emphasize or de-emphasize the spiritual aspects of Mindfulness Meditation.

Lesson Two: Introducing Self-Esteem

The nature of the self-esteem activity may elicit many factors concerning gender, ethnicity, disabilities and/or sexuality. Encouraging the members to explore how these factors help to define their sense of self is an important aspect of increasing self-esteem.

Lesson Three: Mindfulness Through Movement

Facilitator needs to be aware of different physical abilities during yoga. Offering appropriate modifications will be crucial.

Lesson Four: Mindfulness and Relationships

The subject of relationships will mean different things to different people. It is important to keep in mind the complication that sexuality, gender, ethnicity and disability can place on relationships.

Lesson Five: Living in Awareness

This will be a good time for the members to explore their diversity. Many examples will be used from their personal lives. Be careful with the choice of food. Any resistance to using mindfulness in their day-to-day lives should be actively explored.

Lesson Six: Looking Ahead

It will be necessary to be aware of the diverse ways in which people deal with endings. Different check in and out activities could be used or elaborated upon.

Appendix G

Pay Attention!**Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women****Informed Consent Form**

(Drawn heavily from the work of Chen & Rybak, 2004 and The American Group
Psychotherapy Association)

Pay Attention! is a psychoeducational group intended to assist adults in relieving stress symptoms. By participating in the group you will be encouraged to inwardly reflect on your personal experience, and honor your intuition at all times. You will be taught relaxation exercises, meditation techniques and yoga exercises. Participation is completely voluntary and if at any time you wish to not participate in an exercise you are welcome to sit out. You will however get back what you put in, so full participation will enhance your experience. There are several rewards and minimal risks associated with this mindfulness-based group. The benefits include increased coping skills, sense of ease and control, and a decrease in physical and mental stress symptoms. The risks are nearly nonexistent, but may include physical pain from improper use of yoga positions and discomfort during extended periods of meditation.

It is mandatory that all group members maintain confidentiality. Please respect this right as it will ensure a safe and private group experience for each member. Discussing other group members will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal. In the event that a member reveals an intent to do harm to self or others, confidentiality can be lifted to protect those in danger.

By signing this document, I agree that I have read, understood, and will follow the above guidelines.

Member Signature

Date

Leader Signature

Date

Appendix H

Pay Attention!

Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women

Group Handout (American Group Psychotherapy Association, 2008)

Hello, and welcome to Pay Attention!, A group created to use mindfulness meditation, guided movement and education to assist you to live a more peaceful and present life. I am a graduate-level intern with Shanti Counselling Centre, completing my degree in Counselling Psychology. I have had a mindfulness practice for the past seven years, and trust completely in its potential benefits. As your facilitator, I will ensure that I provide you with professional and ethical services as guided by the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (Canadian Psychological Association, 2001).

By participating in this group you will be asked to abide by several rules to ensure a safe and secure environment for all. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated, and all members will be encouraged to do their best to contribute to a warm, safe, and open environment. I ask you to listen to your intuition and participate only as much as feels safe for you.

You have the right at any time to withdraw from services. You have the right to a responsible and caring facilitator. You have the right to a safe place to explore and express yourself. You have the right to confidentiality and privacy.

As a member of Pay Attention! you will have the opportunity to deeply explore and observe your thoughts, feelings and bodily experiences. The rewards will be many if you dedicate yourself as fully as possible. While the risks are few, please be aware that we will be utilizing yoga, stretching, guided movement and prolonged periods of sitting still. Therefore some discomfort and/or pain may result. Thank you for joining, and enjoy the experience.

Namaste

Kelly Tillman

Appendix I

Pay Attention!

Mindfulness-Based Stress Management and Self-Esteem Program for Women

Ground Rules

- Group member confidentiality: All members have the right to privacy and any conversations and names of group members shall remain confidential.
- The facilitator will be taking notes and keeping the records in a locked filing cabinet. The notes will contain the themes of the meeting, group interaction, noteworthy events and points to bring about next week.
- All group members shall be on time, and be present at all eight meetings.
- No group member shall be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the session.
- One person speaks at a time.
- All group members and leaders shall be respected at all times.
- In order to emphasize mindfulness, when the topic strays I will direct the conversation back to the present moment.

Appendix J

Lesson Plans

Session # Pre-Group: Introduction and Setting the Stage

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Handouts Pens

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes
5-10 Min.	Introduce facilitators	Introduce yourself, include background, interest in area, qualifications. Explain your responsibilities and expectations.	Give out card, any agency info. Share your expectations.
20 Min.	Explore expectations/ introduce members	Ask each member what they are expecting to get out of the group.	Go around the circle, make sure everyone is included.
10 Min.	Go over ground rules and group purpose	Distribute Group rules and purpose (Appendices E and F).	Ask what they would like to add to ground rules.
10 Min.	Describe group process	Include: How it can help with interpersonal skills, emphasize the context of here and now group interactions (Yalom, 1980).	Aim to instill faith in the group process. Be motivational.
25 Min.	Establish baseline on evaluation measures	Distribute The FMI and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory. (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996; Walach, Buchheld, Bittenmuller, Kleinknecht & Schmidt, 2006; Rosenberg, 1965).	Explain purpose of tests, answer any questions.
10 Min.	Conclusion	Give an opportunity for any further questions.	

Session # 1: Introducing Mindfulness

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Bring Flip Chart/Whiteboard/Writing Tools	Handouts
Bring Pillows/Blankets/Chime	Bring Pens

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
15 Min.	Check-In	Help members begin to connect. Ask them to identify one feeling word that describes them at this moment.	Make sure to connect members' responses to each other, and to the material.	
15 Min.	Process the pre-group meeting.	In pairs, discuss any fears that came up and establish five goals for the next six weeks.	Make sure they are getting to know each other, and disclosing.	Observe pairs, make note of level of comfort people are displaying.
30 Min.	Outline four aspects of mindfulness: history, biology, psychology and philosophy.	Use whiteboard/flipchart. Include the 9 consequences of Mindfulness as reported by Seigel (2007). i.e.: *Response flexibility *Resonance *Emotional Balance *Processing Trauma *Intuition	Ensure to include the members; what is their experience with Mindfulness? When else do they experience these effects?	Ensure learning by asking questions such as, What concepts of mindfulness do have presently?
15 Min.	Break			
15 Min.	Introduce mindfulness meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).	Explain how to meditate: *focus on breath *seated posture *returning thoughts to breath *letting go (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)	Attend to any concerns members may have with regards to pain or discomfort.	
15 Min.	Meditation	Seated on floor, engage in meditation	Watch the time. Sound a chime after 15 Min.	Observe them, their pace of breath, their

			Model deep breath.	stillness.
10 Min.	Debrief meditation experience	Each member reveals what it was like for them with the group. Emphasis needs to be placed here on how it is okay to feel bored. It is okay to feel like you are failing. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).	Pay attention to themes in answers. Give homework of 10-minute meditation per day.	
5 Min.	Check out	Each member gives one feeling word in closing.	Thank everyone for coming.	Distribute Session rating scale. (Appendix A).

Session # 2: Introducing Self-Esteem

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Bring Flip Chart/Whiteboard/Writing Tools	Handouts
Bring Pens	

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
10 Min.	Check-In	Welcome back. Check-in activity; share with group one enjoyable moment from the previous week.	Emphasis is on positive experiences and successes. Set the tone for the session.	
15 Min.	Process lesson one.	Members voice any comments or questions about last week.	Make note of concerns; common ones include difficulty in meditating.	
10 Min.	Revisit mindfulness definition.	Have members recreate definition; use white board.	Ensure to present centered, awareness, non-judgmental.	Ensure learning by asking questions such as, How did mindfulness encroach on your day to day life?
15 Min	Introduce self-esteem.	Supply working definition (Branden, 2007). Introduce authenticity.	Ask members, What contributes to positive self-esteem? Negative self-esteem? Why do we present ourselves differently than who we are?	Mindful individuals are truly authentic in that they are fully engaged with the environment and are busy noticing novel aspects of the situation, rather than devoting attentional resources toward winning the approval of

				others or toward bolstering fragile self-esteem.
15 Min.	Experiential Exercise: I am, I could be. (Appendix G)	Explain activity: Left hand side, "I am" (such as I am a student), the right hand side contains corresponding "I could be" (such as inquisitive). Debrief experience.	Demonstrates how to look at self in novel ways. Also demonstrates the mindfulness principle of not clinging to self-concepts (Seigel, 2007).	Ask questions such as, Were you able to come up with alternate self definitions?
10 Min.	Break			
15 Min.	Experiential exercise: positive past (Appendix H).	Distribute handout two. Instruct group that they are to divide their life into thirds. In each third they are to identify three successes. Debrief.	Lead discussion; what were the markers for the turning points? What made the success a success?	Is the group open to the positive nature of this exercise?
15 Min.	Open discussion.	Opportunity to process.		What stage of development is the group operating in? (Yalom, 1995).
10 Min.	Meditation	Lead group in meditation, will close every lesson.		
5 Min.	Check-out	Encourage members to share with group one. thing they are looking forward to in the coming week.		

Session # 3: Mindfulness Through Movement

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Bring pillows/chime Make sure room can be set up for yoga

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
10 Min.	Check in	Have each member use a colour to describe their state.	Reinforce pattern of group process and create appropriate Mindset.	
10 Min.	Review last week	Get in pairs and have them discuss what their week was like practicing meditation. Identify stumbling blocks.	Encourage group cohesion.	Observe pairs.
15 Min.	Collectively engage in 15 Minute sitting meditation	Extending the time, the experience will become richer and still more difficult.	Be aware of the time, sound a chime at the 15 minute mark.	Observe body language and breath.
10 Min.	Introduce moving meditation. Explain body awareness, walking meditation and finally, yoga postures (asanas) (Boccio, 2004).	Ask members what they know about yoga. What their experience has been with it. What their expectations are it. Address any physical concerns (i.e., bad back, joints etc).	Facilitator needs to be highly familiar with yoga. Use of tapes (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), or a guest teacher may be necessary.	
15 Min.	Break			
30 Min.	Guide group through yoga routine. Sitting, standing and laying	Move through movements slowly, awareness is focused on the breath. Ensure that you provide the	Be conscious of the non-verbal signs of pain and/or discomfort. Give lots of space for silence and awareness.	

	postures. Hatha-based Asanas (Boccio, 2004).	modifications for individual with difficulties stretching.		
10 Min.	Debrief yoga experience	Invite members to compare and contrast moving meditation with sitting meditation.	Connect members' experiences. (Facilitator provides input regarding the observer self).	
15 Min.	Power of the mind exercise.	Guided visualization script (Appendix I). Debrief experience.	Exemplify the power that thoughts have on the nervous system. During debrief, attend to the different bodily reactions with wings and without. Connect this to other aspects of members' lives.	
5 Min.	Check-out	Colour to describe self.	Using new ways to describe the body.	

Session # 4: Mindfulness and Relationships

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Bring Flip Chart/Whiteboard/Writing Tools Handouts
Bring Pillows/Chime Bring Pens

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
10 Min.	Check-In	Help members begin to connect. Ask them to identify one thing they were mindful of on their journey to the group.	Reinforce topic of mindfulness.	
10 Min.	Process last week's session and meditational practice.	As a group, lead discussion of any concerns or comments about group thus far.	What are some of the difficulties experienced with their mindfulness practice? Are there any deeply rooted issues coming forth?	Do they seem to have a good working knowledge of mindfulness concepts?
10 Min.	Introduce today's topic: relationships.	They will be encouraged to consider various relationships during the session, this can be romantic, professional, familial or friendship.		
15 Min.	Identify relationship world.	Toxic relationship exercise.	Distribute a blank piece of paper. Instruct them to write down all of the people that compose their world on a weekly basis. The people they interact with most often.	Walk around as they write out their list, is everybody engaged in the activity?

			Then instruct them to put either a plus sign or negative sign beside the name of the person. The plus sign represents people that offer positivity, enhance their life. The negative sign represents those that bring negativity, subtracting from their life.	
15 Min.	Break			
20 Min.	Guided Meditation	Seated on floor, engage in meditation, use script (Appendix J).	This exercise has many purposes: a) to experience a range of emotions b) to allow the members to create a grounding memory to be used as a tool in times of conflict. It is important to go slowly, to give them ample time to process.	
30 Min.	Debrief meditation experience	Each member reveals what it was like for them.	This process part of the session is important. The counsellor will be focused on the members' ability to apply	Ask questions such as, What differences did you notice in your body during the two different memories?

			the mindfulness concepts to being in conflict.	
10 Min.	Check out	Each member provides one thing that they got out of today's session.		Distribute session rating scale (Appendix A).

Session # 5: Living in Awareness

Advance Preparation Needed for Session:

Bring paper and pens Handouts Bring pillows/chime Bring food/napkins

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
10 Min.	Check-In	What is one thing you are mindful of in the shower?	Demonstrates living in awareness. Sets theme for the day.	
5 Min.	Outline the session	Set framework, so they know when to expect meditation, education, exercises etc.	Optional to set forth tasks, and ask for input as to what order they would like them to happen in.	
30 Min.	Review neurological effects of living Mindfully (Seigel, 2007).	Including: *COAL principle. *Attachment and Mindfulness *Frontal Lobe function * Facets of living mindfully (Baer. et al., 2006).	Include members by asking how and when they live mindfully. When do they live absentmindedly?	
15 Min.	Mental notation exercise.	Play two very different songs. Have each member write down feeling words that the music inspires.	Demonstrate importance of describing and labelling with words to the Mindful experience (Seigel, 2007). Provide time for members to reflect on this experience (meta-awareness).	Do the members need help with their feeling-word vocabulary?
15 Min.	Break			
20 Min.	Eating mindfully	Eat an item together	Ensure the	Do the

	exercise.	Mindfully (ex. A strawberry). Examine it. Feel it. Smell it. Chew it thoughtfully. Elongate and exaggerate the action.	members have ample time to process this experience.	members get uncomfortable, and change the subject? Does it appear to be difficult to stay in the moment?
15 Min.	Sitting meditation	Continuation of previous weeks.	Be aware of the changes in the room. Is there less fidgeting?	
10 Min.	Check-out.	Use one feeling word to check out.	This will re-iterate today's work.	

Session # 6: Looking Ahead

Advance Preparation Needed for Session

Flip Chart/Whiteboard/Felts	Handouts
Bring Pillows/Chime	

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes	Evaluation
10 Min.	Check In	Use one feeling word to describe self.	Gauge how group is feeling with respect to terminating.	
5 Min.	Set up session.	Briefly outline the next two hours		
15 Min.	Process last week.	Have members discuss the previous week's session and days following.	How is learning coming along? What needs to be elaborated on before termination?	
25 Min.	Process the entire group.	Touch on questions such as: How has this group been important to you? What will you take with you? What are specific examples of how mindfulness has benefited you?	Make sure each member speaks. What are themes? This summary should be cohesive and conclusive.	
10 Min.	Break			
15 Min.	Make Action Plans	Fill out the Action Plan Worksheet (Appendix K) and then discuss in pairs.		
15 Min.	Final round of testing to compare scores	Distribute the FMI, The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Session Rating Scale (Appendix A) (Walach, Buchheld,	The results will be shared individually through email, and general results in the post-group	

		Buttenmuller, Kleinknecht & Schmidt, 2006; Rosenberg, 1965).	session.	
20 Min.	Final Meditation	Pay attention to time, movement, fidgeting etc (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).	How is it different than the first session?	
10 Min.	Check-out	Engage in ritual for final check-out. In a circle, have members each tape a piece of white construction paper to each others back. Each person writes on each other's paper one positive word that describes that person.	Afterwards, each woman is left with this gift, many different affirmations of their character.	As the facilitator, join in. It is also important for you to process the termination.

Session # Post-Group: Wrap-up

Time	Goal/Theme	Activity	Facilitator Notes
10 Min.	Welcome Back and Check in.	Informal check in. Facilitator acknowledges and thanks everyone for coming.	
30 Min.	Explain reason for follow-up session; invite discussion.	Explain to group the purposes of follow up (Corey & Corey, 2006): Members can share difficulties they may have had since leaving, discuss specific steps they have taken to keep themselves open to change, and remember some of the positive learning moments from the group itself.	Go around the circle, make sure everyone is included. What changes are they making, if any? Are they taking more risks?
15 Min.	Discuss the general pre and post-tests results.	Give this feedback generally, without sharing individual results.	Ask what they would like to add to ground rules.
5 Min.	Remaining concerns and/or comments and final good-bye.	What else can you and the group share with each other that will help to ensure accountability. Optional to issue a formal certificate of completion to ritualize the group ending.	Aim to instill faith in the group process, model positive good-bye experiences and provide an opportunity for member accountability.

Appendix K

Who Am I?

I am...

I could be...

Appendix L

Positive Past Experience Exercise

Directions: Divide your life into three equal parts, title each section and list three successes for each period in the spaces provided below.

First Third: _____
Title

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Second Third: _____
Title

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Third Third: _____
Title

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Appendix M

Guided Visualization Script: Remember Your Wings

“Sit comfortably in your chair, both feet on the floor, back erect, hands in your lap. Bring your attention to your breath. Simply observe it. Gently close your eyes. Imagine that you are on a balcony. This balcony is on the 50th floor of a skyscraper. It is so high up that the people and cars below look like miniature ants. The balcony has no fence. You are simply standing on a piece of concrete 50 stories above the ground. The ledge is very small, just barely wider than your feet. Step to the edge of the ledge and look down, directly down. What do you feel? What is your body doing? Your muscles? Your breath? Your hands? The space between your eyebrows? Now continue to look around the ledge, feel the concrete beneath your feet, the wind on your cheek. As you look around you, you notice that a pair of beautiful white wings has grown from your shoulders. These wings are strong and powerful, and you know in your heart that they can take you anywhere. Now, with your new wings step forward to the edge of the ledge. Feel the strength and safety of the wings. Know that with your wings, you can fly, you are free. Step off the ledge. Begin to fly. Using the power of your wings, you can fly to anytime, anywhere to anyone. Choose a person, and a place, and a time that you would like to fly to. Soar to this place. Notice the wind as it rushes by you. How do you feel? What does your body feel like? Arrive at your destination with your person of choice. Sit with them, be in this special moment. Notice the smells, sights and sounds of the place that you chose to go to. Say your final words with this person, but know that whenever you choose you can come back here, with your wings. Slowly bring your attention back to the room. Feel your feet on the floor, your hands in your lap. Gently open your eyes.”

Appendix N

Guided Visualization Script: Conflict with Grounding

Step 1: Grounding Exercise

Guide the participants to a time when they felt relaxed, confident and capable. “Sit comfortably in your chair, both feet on the floor, back erect, hands in your lap. Bring your attention to your breath. Simply observe it. Gently close your eyes. Imagine yourself in a memory where you feel confident, capable, relaxed and at ease. When you can locate a memory like this, place your left hand in the air for a few seconds. Once you are in this memory, really ground yourself into it. What do you see around you? What do you hear? What does it smell like? Reach out and touch something in the memory. When you are really grounded in the memory, almost as if you are there, raise your right hand for a few seconds.”

Step 2: Conflict Memory

Guide the participants through a conflict that they have had within a significant relationship. In order to allow for safety, ensure that the observer is emphasized. “Now I would like you to leave that happy memory and bring about a recent conflict that you have had with someone. To make sure that the memory in no way feels unsafe, put it on a screen, you have control, if it gets too loud or too scary, you can turn the volume down. Bring to your mind your significant other/person in question. Witness their body, what they are wearing, the expression on their face. What do you feel? Where do you feel it? Now think of an argument, or a disagreement that you have had with this person, one that you would like to see solved. How does the argument begin? What do you say? What do they say? How do you feel? Where do you feel it in your body? Is your initial emotion

anger? Take a moment to sit in this place. What is the anger about? Are you really feeling something else? Unheard? Hurt? Do you feel afraid that the other person is going to walk away? What thoughts are coming to your mind? How do these feelings impact what you do, what you say? Your tone of voice? Are you shutting down? Play out the argument until it finishes one way or another. How does it end? Does somebody leave?"

Step 3: Re-grounding

Speak about how just being in the memory affects the members' present state. "What does your body feel like in your chair? What are your muscles doing? What is your pulse doing? Observe your breath." Bring them back to the happy, competent memory. Ground them back in the happy memory with the sights, smells and sounds they previously recalled. "Bring yourself back to the happy memory. Allow it to fill your mind. Remind yourself of the smells, sights, sounds and feelings. Again, notice how this memory affects your present state." Bring the focus back to self in the here and now, back to the breath, back to the room. "Gently bring yourself back to the room. Allow yourself to hear the room, feel your feet on the floor, your hands in your lap. Gently open your eyes."

Appendix O

Pay Attention! Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program**ACTION PLAN**

Five situations where I will be mindful in my life are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Three stumbling blocks I anticipate having are:

1.

2.

3.

My goals for the next five years are: