

# Perceptions of Learning after an Online 8-Week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programme

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## Introduction

*What is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)?*

- ❖ MBSR is an 8-week mindfulness training programme that was created by Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).
- ❖ This research sets out to investigate the perceived wellbeing and psycho-educational learnings of participants who engaged in a general population 8-week online MBSR programme (Griffith et al. 2019; Williams et al. 2014; Malpass et al. 2012).
- ❖ Due to Covid-19 restrictions, these programmes were delivered online. All participants did online MBSR's, which is a relatively new delivery mode of MBSR (Segal et al. 2012).

## Methods

- ❖ Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with the five participants from different MBSR programmes:
- ❖ Participants included: 4 women and 1 man, aged between 36 – 60, with a median age of 45 and a mean age of 44.
- ❖ Each interview was conducted online and lasted about 45 minutes
- ❖ The questions were designed to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of MBSR and give voice to their experiences.
- ❖ Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data

## Results

### Group Connection

#### Finding Common Humanity

*"knowing that you're not the only one that feels like this" (Maggie)*

*"could relate in some way to each other. You know that it made you feel not alone" (Laura)*

#### Making Social Connection

*"chatting with the others in the breakout room, you realized actually, you weren't alone" (Kate)*

*"I didn't expect the connection to be so good online...So that surprised me a lot" (Jacinta)*

#### Loss of Group Support

*"We were all a bit devastated that the last week was coming ...because it was a great little support group ... it was lovely" (Jacinta)*

*"At the end of it I was really quite sad, oh I'm not going to have this again" (David)*

### Key Finding

Psycho-educational learnings were not recalled as vividly as group connection

however, integration of these learnings in daily life was evident.

## Discussion

- ❖ The results of this research demonstrate that participants reported experiencing strong group connection whilst attending the online MBSR.
- ❖ The group connection emerged as a more dominant finding than expected.
- ❖ While further investigation into the role of the group is recommended there is evidence that the group process is important to the benefits of the MBSR programme.
- ❖ The online programme showed no evidence in reducing its effectiveness and participants reported experiencing strong emotional bonds with others in the group.
- ❖ It is worth noting that the need for social connection may have been increased due to Covid-19 however, the emotional connection and common humanity seems to be a core component of the MBSR programme experienced by participants.
- ❖ This research will add to the developing field of online MBSRs and the new role of the 'virtual group'

## References

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