



Year 1: 2022-23



Plugged Into Mindfulness Evaluation Report - Healthcare

January - March 2023

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Peaceful Soul, LLC by:*
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Delivered June 2023



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PLUGGED INTO MINDFULNESS PROGRAM¹

Joni Staaf Sturgill, founder of Healthy Body, Peaceful Soul, LLC, designed the [Plugged Into Mindfulness program](#) as a group training for adults. Intended to be implemented various group settings, the program proposed to support participants in learning mindfulness and breathwork techniques to promote health, particularly reducing stress and anxiety, preventing substance abuse, promoting emotion regulation, and improving adults' capacity to serve others in their employment role and share mindfulness practices with those they serve.

The program implementation described in this evaluation report includes programming funded through the Butler County Department of Drug and Alcohol.

In its grant application, Healthy Body, Peaceful Soul, LLC outlined the following benefits of mindfulness training:

- “Healthy coping skills
- Emotion regulation (learning a different way to relate to thoughts and feelings)
- Reduction in feelings of stress and anxiety
- Increase in compassion toward self and others
- Improved attention skills (focus as opposed to auto-pilot)”

Further, the grant application indicates such practices have measurable positive effects on the brain, related to decision making, impulse control, learning, memory, and addiction. It proposes that simple mindfulness practices can be integrated in daily life for long-lasting positive outcomes.

The program's grant application outlined the following performance objective:

“Medical professionals who learn mindfulness not only reduce their own stress level and minimize burnout, but offer more effective, compassionate care. Specifically, those who practice mindfulness reap the benefits of improved attention, greater social-emotional skills, and a reduction in anxiety, stress, and depression. Additionally, patients can benefit from learning skills to help them manage stress and provide them with healthy coping techniques in the moment.”

The program includes instruction, support, and resources for using mindfulness techniques and practices. Weekly auto-delivered emails reinforce sessions with mindfulness quotes, breathing exercises, or another reinforcement.

Learning outcomes were to include:

- Mindfulness & breathwork training
- Techniques for managing active and stressful thoughts and managing challenging emotions
- Research on mindfulness and substance abuse prevention

¹ Program information from Plugged Into Mindfulness grant applications.

- Basic neuroscience of attention, stress, emotion, and mental health
- Practices that cultivate positivity, gratitude and compassion
- The role of mindfulness in communication and interaction
- How and when to offer different strategies and techniques to students
- How to facilitate mindfulness exercises in the classroom and one on one.
- Support for creating your own daily sitting practice
- Specific mindfulness assignments

The standard 10-hour program was designed to be implemented over 10, one-hour sessions with a trained instructor. Participants were afforded a mindfulness book recommendation that supported the training; an 80-page training manual, reading materials, and exercises in print and electronic form; mindfulness program videos; and for educators, a training kit that included age/grade-appropriate curricula, exercises, resources, evaluation tools, and library recommendations.

ABOUT HEALTHY BODY, PEACEFUL SOUL, LLC

The following passage was included in the program’s grant applications to describe founder and leader Joni Staaf Sturgill’s background and capacity to successfully deliver this program.

“For 18 years, Joni [Staaf Sturgill], owner of [Healthy Body Peaceful Soul, LLC](#) and developer of Plugged Into Mindfulness, has been teaching stress management, using mindfulness, meditation, relaxation and yoga. She is a licensed professional counselor, nationally certified counselor, an advanced yoga/mindfulness educator (ERYT-500) has a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, BA in Communications and also studied at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. Through her business, Joni shares insights on mental, emotional and physical wellness to corporate populations, cancer patients, therapists, educators, students of her training programs, and other various groups and individuals. Joni implemented her comprehensive Plugged Into Mindfulness Program at multiple school districts across Western Pennsylvania, as well as in counseling offices, health and human service centers, and medical facilities.”

PLUGGED INTO MINDFULNESS EVALUATION DESIGN

Program evaluation is a process by which an intervention is examined to determine what happened. Such an examination may review the intervention’s implementation, outcomes, or both. Evaluations may be formative (studying the program’s evolution while the program is happening) or summative (looking at the whole of the program after it concludes). Evaluations may also use a combination of methods to comprehensively examine the program from different approaches and perspectives.

Program evaluation differs from research, though there may be similarities or overlap.² Research typically employs, to some extent, experimental design and is primarily concerned with testing a theory

² Rogers, P. (2014), “Week 19: Ways of framing the difference between research and evaluation.” Better Evaluation. Retrieved from https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/blog/framing_the_difference_between_research_and_evaluation

or contributing to general knowledge, while evaluation is focused on a particular program in its applied circumstances. Program evaluation is typically called for as an accountability process in grant-funded programs to determine the extent to which a program happened, what result was achieved, and what could be done better or differently next time. Evaluation is about determining the *value* of an effort.

In its funded grant application, the program implementer budgeted for an external evaluation of the program. An external evaluation has some advantages over managing evaluation and accountability internally, such as perspective and distance from the program that add objectivity, additional capacity for data management and analysis; potential staff time savings as accountability needs are addressed by external resources, reduction in burden on program staff who should be more focused on implementation, and consultant support for program leaders, among other benefits.

While Plugged Into Mindfulness has been implemented and evaluated in the past, this iteration of the program was the first year that North of the Present conducted the evaluation. Healthy Body, Peaceful Soul, LLC engaged the services of North of the Present, LLC to serve as the external contracted program evaluator. This evaluation report is a product of that engagement. Leslie McConnell, Founder and President led the evaluation. Ms. McConnell has evaluated grant-funded educational programs for more than 20 years, specializing in supplemental education programs that support adult and youth learners. These programs have focused on children and youth of all ages, teacher professional learning, parent programming, and community impact. Ms. McConnell earned her Master of Science in Educational Foundations with a focus on program evaluation from Duquesne University and a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Writing from La Roche University. She is a recent Fellow of the Education Policy and Leadership Center³ and has completed a variety of post-graduate program evaluation courses through The Evaluators Institute⁴.

The evaluation design for Plugged Into Mindfulness is based on the grant applications supporting the program's operation as well as program implementer interests. This evaluation model was intended to examine the program's implementation and results of this program cycle. Future reports will include comparisons from this year against the future years. Because of differences in methodology, results from this report are not comparable to those found in reports produced by other evaluators.

While the evaluation takes a summative approach to each program year, each program year's evaluation can serve as a formative guide for future iterations or other initiatives.

Four primary evaluation questions guided this inquiry:

1. *To what extent was the program **implemented as designed**?*
2. *To what extent did the program realize positive changes in practice related to the program's identified goals and purposes? To what extent did participants change what they **do**?*
3. *To what extent did the program influence positive **outcomes** for participants (adults and youth), particularly outcomes identified in performance objectives? Are there differences in results for some subgroups?*
4. *How might we **improve** upon this program for future iterations and expansions?*

³ <https://www.eplc.org/>

⁴ <https://tei.cgu.edu/>

These questions and the program’s grant objectives guided the evaluation design. The Evaluation Plan developed identified that the primary intents of the program are to reduce stress and minimize burnout of participants; support adult participants in more effectively serving their constituents; and improve participants’ social/emotional skills; and improve participant focus.

Table 1 outlines the inquiry alignment between the performance elements and data collection and analysis.

Table 1. Evaluation Design – Performance Alignment.

Performance Element What is to be achieved?	Data Collection, Analysis, and Timeline What evidence will we collect?
The Plugged Into Mindfulness program will be implemented as designed.	Program schedule/calendar of sessions, participant attendance records, program curriculum, program content samples/examples, implementer feedback/reflections, participant demographics (for results context)
Participants will demonstrate new learning.	Participant survey feedback on strategies, tools, and practices used; level of participant integration/employment of new approaches
Participants will exhibit positive results during or after participation, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced stress/anxiety • Increased efficacy • Improved ability to manage emotions/support positive emotional response; emotional regulation • Feelings of empowerment • Increased capacity to support/serve others • Improved outlook on life • Increased compassion for others • Improved focus • Reduction in substance use/abuse • Positive personal performance • Increased self-awareness • Improved self-care • Other benefits 	Participant survey feedback related to and reflection on their implementation of new learning, analysis and comparison of pre/post instruments, post-only reflective instruments
Program leaders will make informed decisions about the program’s future, including revisions, replications, iterations, expansions, etc.	Program leadership/implementer reflections, curriculum and instruction adjustments, program shifts, new options, future plans

Data collection instruments, sources, and protocols were to include:

- Pre/post instrument using the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire⁵ (abbreviated) as its core and supplemented with additional program-specific questions;
- Brief implementer session reflection survey;
- Program attendance records [implementer managed];
- Program content and implementation details [implementer provided]; and

⁵ <https://novopsych.com.au/assessments/formulation/five-facet-mindfulness-questionnaire-ffmq-15/>

- Other data sources identified throughout the program.

The evaluation was to be both formative (occurring during and informing the evolution of the program) as well as summative (occurring after implementation concludes and reflecting on the whole implementation term). Data analysis was to include quantitative and qualitative data, summary and descriptive statistics (counts and variance), pre/post comparisons, year-over-year comparisons/growth/decline [starting in Year 2], reflections, and other methods identified as appropriate during the evaluation term based on the volume and quality of data available.

This report addresses programming that occurred from November 2022 through June 2023. This period is considered Year 1 of a two-year program cycle.

While this program has been evaluated in the past, this evaluation report cannot be directly compared or contrasted as it is unknown the extent to which the methods used by the previous evaluator align with those of the current evaluator.

HIGHLIGHTS

While the evaluator encourages readers to consume the entire Year 1 evaluation report, a brief overview of the highlights can support readers in identifying program accomplishments and provide a snapshot of program results.

- Plugged Into Mindfulness served 15 healthcare participants through the January-June 2023 program cycle, with nine adults participating on an ongoing basis. All participants (82%) were new to the program.
- All participants attended at least 80% of the sessions afforded to them.
- The program delivered 10 hours of instruction to participants.
- Respondents to the POST-program survey indicated that the following were “very true” for them:
 - their self-awareness increased (100%);
 - they learned new stress and anxiety techniques that work for them (100%);
 - they know different strategies to use in different situations (86%);
 - they are employing mindfulness techniques or resources while working with others (86%);
 - they feel better prepared to positively and compassionately handle challenges (71%);
 - they feel better prepared to deal with challenging emotions (57%);
 - they have increased their ability to focus using mindfulness (57%);
 - and they are using mindfulness in place of external or unhealthy solutions like alcohol, tobacco, or substance use; overeating, nonproductive internet time; shopping/retail therapy, or others (43%).
- 80% of respondents showed a net improvement from pre-program to post-program, with respondents improving on an average of 7.8 statements, and up to 11 of the 15 statements. All improved on at least five of the 15 PRE/POST measures.
- 86% of post-program respondents indicated that they are now practicing mindfulness daily, almost daily, or frequently/more than once a week.
- 100% of post-program respondents indicated that they expected mindfulness would be an “integral” or “very useful” resource, personally and/or professionally.
- All post-program respondents indicated interest in future mindfulness training or resources, in particular virtual sessions or refreshers and asynchronous activities or videos.

FINDINGS

Evaluation findings shared in this report include information and results of data analysis from program and participant sources on the Year 1 program, which spanned January through March 2023.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the report answers the evaluation question: *To what extent was the program implemented as designed?*

Plugged Into Mindfulness engaged adult individuals employed by the [Butler Health System](#).

This cohort followed the traditional program progression of 10 one-hour sessions. Their program occurred in person between January and March 2023.

This cycle of Plugged Into Mindfulness was funded by grant funds through the Butler County Department of Health and Human Services.

PARTICIPANTS

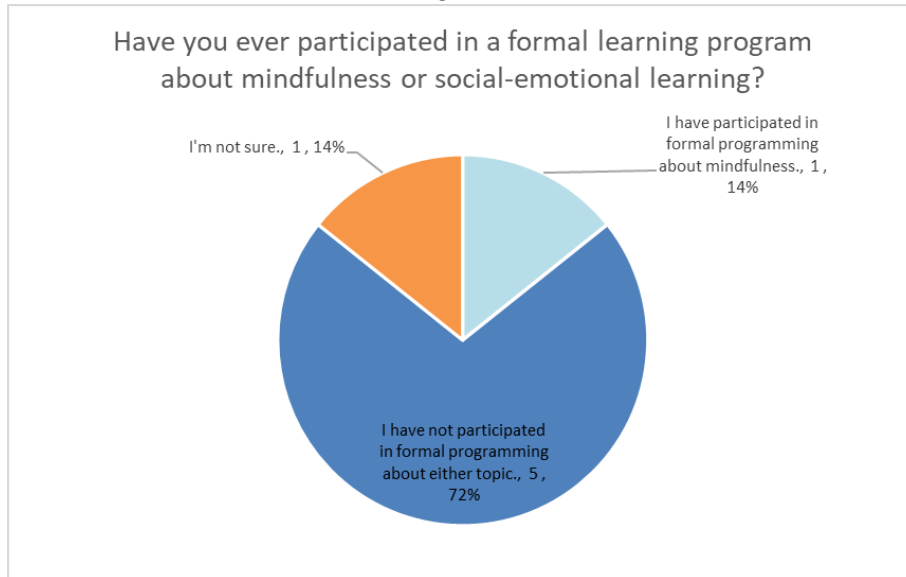
Plugged Into Mindfulness served a total of 9 individuals, on an ongoing basis, who are included in this evaluation.

An additional six individuals began the program but dropped out early in the cycle. In keeping with previous program practice, individuals with very low and early participation were excluded from the analysis in order to examine the implementation and influence of the program for those individuals with sustained participation. However, it should be noted that this exclusion of low participation may indicate a difference inherent to the participants themselves that may be a consideration in reviewing results.

Data was collected through the pre-program survey about participants' program engagement circumstances and experience in their professional field. Data were available for seven of the nine participants (78% of participants).

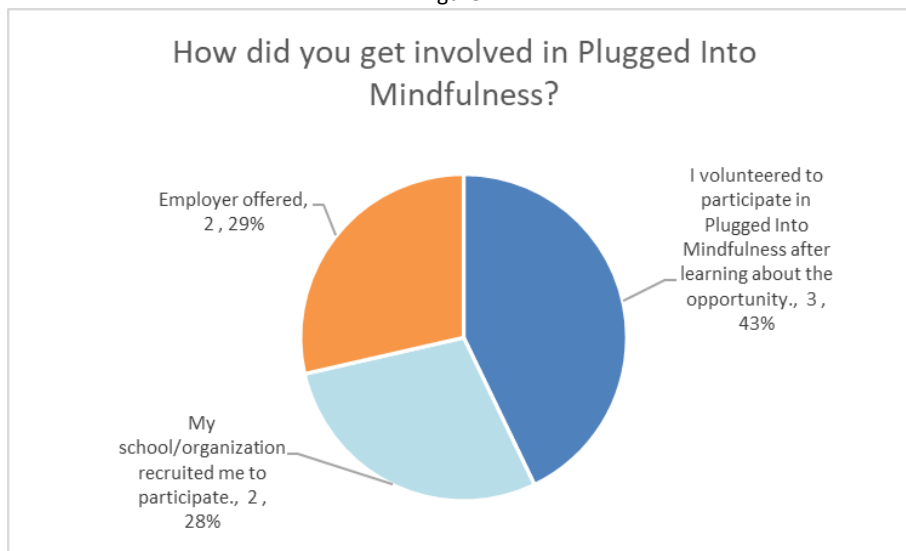
Five of the seven respondents indicated that they had never participated in a formal program about mindfulness or social-emotional learning. One indicated participating in a mindfulness program and one was not sure.

Figure 1.



Nearly half of the participants (43%) volunteered their participation. Two others were recruited. Another two joined because their employer offered the program, which might also be considered volunteering; these two were write-in 'other' responses.

Figure 2.



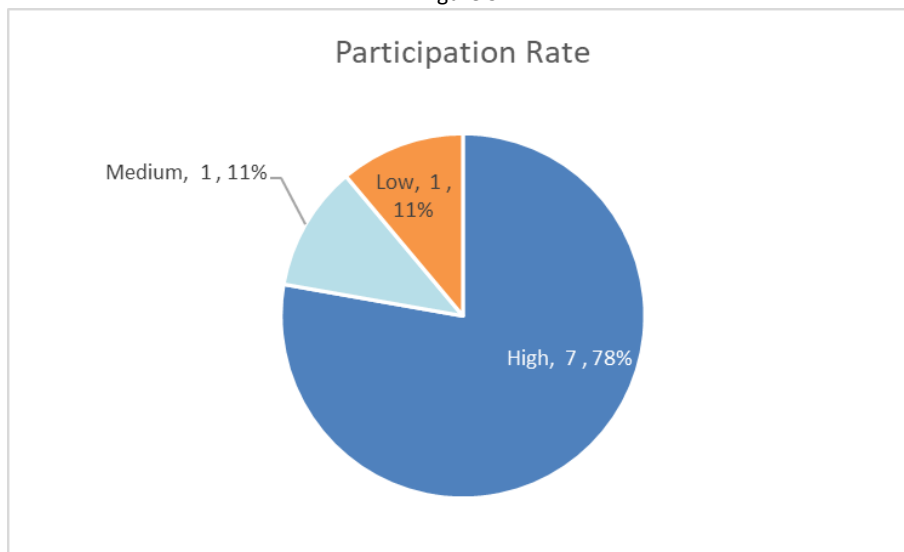
Participants were both veteran and new to their professions, although these participants were mostly mid-career or later with all but one participant having 11 or more years in their field. To protect the anonymity of this small group, a quantity by timespan breakdown is not provided. Participants included clinical staff, counselors, a physician, administrative support, and other roles.

PARTICIPATION

Participant attendance was examined based on the number of sessions attended compared to the number of sessions offered. Participation rates of 50% or less were considered “low” participation; rates greater than 50% through 79% were considered “medium” participation; and participation of 80% through 100% was considered “high” participation. It is worth noting that in this year, all “low” participation individuals had participation rates of 40% or less.

Most participants attended at rates of 80% or more (78% of participants); one had “medium” participation and one had “low” participation.

Figure 3.



IMPLEMENTER SESSION REFLECTIONS

To capture information from the implementer perspective, the evaluator created a very brief session reflection survey. The implementer completed a reflection for each of the 10 sessions conducted.

The first element examined was participant engagement on a scale from completely disengaged (0) to highly engaged (5). Eight of the 10 sessions were rated the highest level (5) and two were rated a 4. All comments indicated that the sessions went “great.”

The survey asked the implementer what, if any, changes or adjustments were made to session. Only one comment was shared; this comment indicated that participants were more conversational, which allowed for some expanded content.

Finally, space was available for the implementer to share anything else relevant or interesting about the session. For one session, the implementer shared that participant stories and questions provided opportunities for expanded discussion and content and reinforcement of previous concepts.

100%

of post-program respondents indicated increased self-awareness and knowledge of different strategies

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Plugged Into Mindfulness used an established instrument, the [Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire \(FFMQ-15\)](#), to examine program results. Together, the program leadership and the evaluator coupled this established instrument with additional questions designed specifically for Plugged Into Mindfulness to examine elements unique to the program, investigate specific interest areas, and to add context to results. The instrument, in the form of a survey, was administered to participants at the beginning of and ends of the program in a pre/post fashion.

This section of the report addresses the evaluation questions:

1. *To what extent did the program realize positive changes in practice related to the program’s identified goals and purposes? To what extent did participants change what they **do**?*
2. *To what extent did the program influence positive **outcomes** for participants (adults and youth), particularly outcomes identified in performance objectives? Are there differences in results for some subgroups?*

This report will share the results of all PRE responses, all POST responses, and then a comparison of PRE and POST for those individuals completing both instruments. Care should be taken in comparing all PRE and all POST, as these groups are inherently different. Not all participants completed both the PRE and POST instrument.

The results of the PRE assessment are useful mostly from a needs assessment perspective, giving insight to how future groups might enter the program.

POST results give insight to how the group (including only those who responded) ended the program.

The PRE/POST comparison will share information about how individuals may have changed over the course of the program.

Table 2. PRE/POST Completion.

Entity	Completing the PRE		Completed the POST		Completed Both PRE & POST	
	#	% of all	#	% of all	#	% of all
Butler Health System	7	78%	7	78%	5	56%

All PRE Results

Seven healthcare participants completed the PRE survey.

The beginning of the instrument asked participants to use a scale to indicate how true a series of 15 mindfulness-related statements were for them. The scale included agreement levels of “very often or always true,” “often true,” “sometimes true,” “rarely true,” and “never or very rarely true.” The results for the PRE responses are shown in the three graphs that follow.

Overall, the three statements with the highest percentage of “often true” or “very often or always true” included the following statements, in order of volume.

- “I’m good at finding words to describe my feelings;” 86% of respondents indicated this was often, very often, or always true for them.
- “I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face;” 57% indicated this was often, very often, or always true for them.
- “When I have distressing thoughts or images, I “step back” and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it;” 43% indicated this was often, very often, or always true for them.

The three statements with the highest percentage of “rarely” or “never or very rarely” included the following statements, in order of volume.

- “I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn’t feel them;” 71% of respondents indicated this was rarely, very rarely, or never true for them.
- “I don’t pay attention to what I’m doing because I’m daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted;” 57% of respondents indicated this was rarely, very rarely, or never true for them.
- “I tell myself I shouldn’t be feeling the way I’m feeling;” 57% indicated this was rarely, very rarely, or never true for them.

These results indicate that a portion of respondents have some self-awareness related to how they feel and translating those feelings into words, as well as being aware of how appropriate their feelings may be for them.

Results for each of the statements are shown in the following three figures. It is important to keep in mind that with this being a small group, each response carries considerable weight in the results. A difference of just one individual response can dramatically change how the result appears. In this case, each respondent’s answer is worth more than 14%. Readers should consult response counts as well as proportions when interpreting results. Given the small group, it is difficult to discern any particular trends in the pre-program instrument results.

Figure 4.

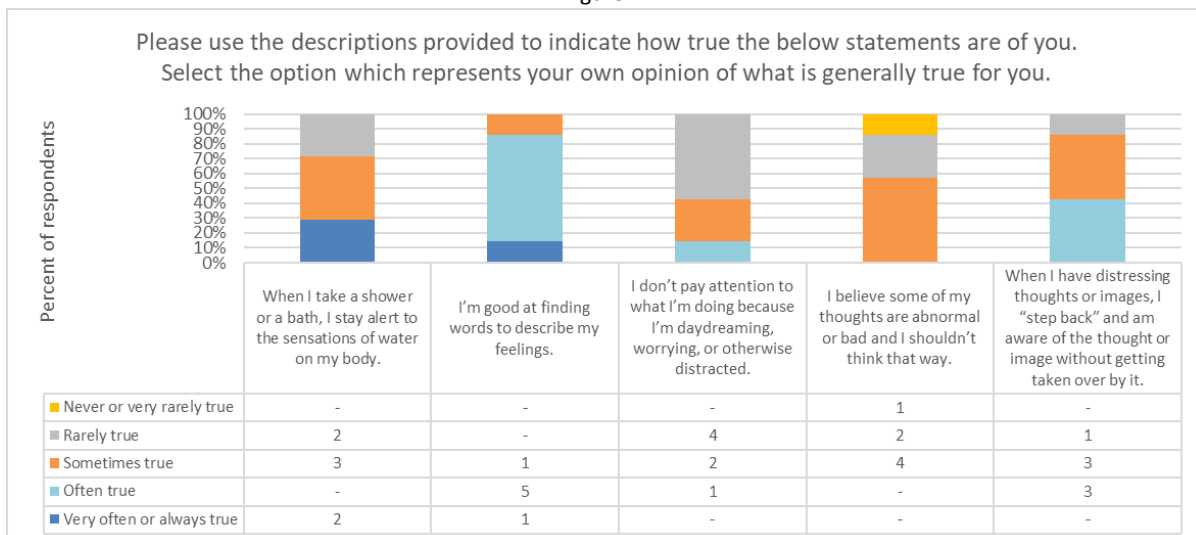


Figure 5.

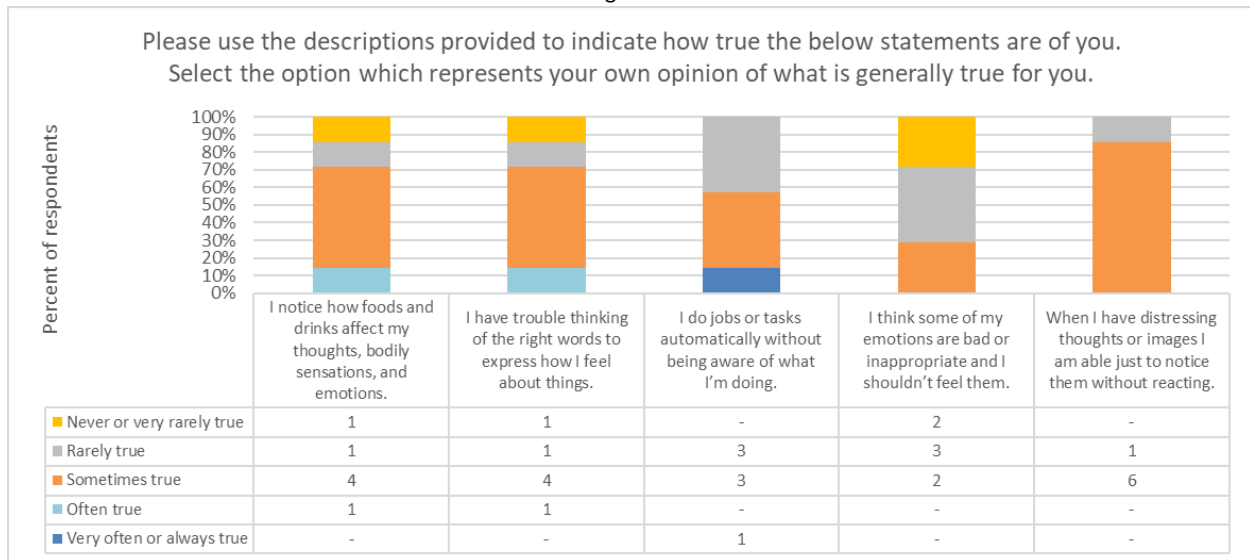
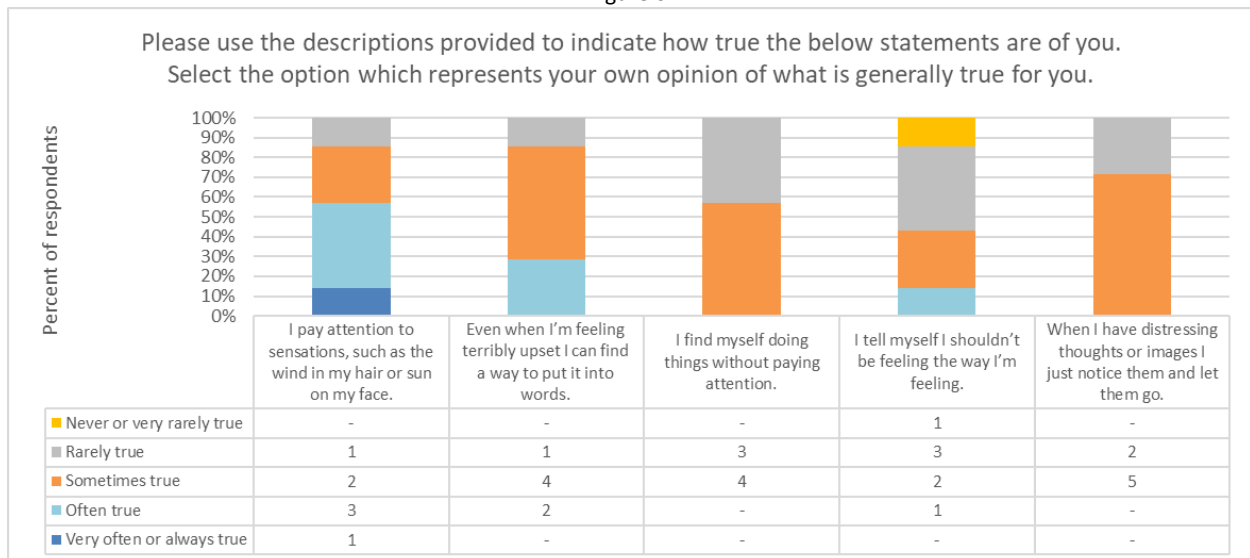


Figure 6.



All POST Results

Seven individuals, or 78% of the nine healthcare professionals included in this report, completed the POST instrument. This group includes individuals who completed the PRE instrument, as well as individuals who only completed the POST instrument.

Like the PRE survey, the beginning of the POST instrument asked participants to use a scale to indicate how true a series of 15 mindfulness-related statements were for them. The scale included agreement levels of “very often or always true,” “often true,” “sometimes true,” “rarely true,” and “never or very rarely true.” The results for the POST responses are shown in the three figures that follow. Like the PRE responses, it is difficult to identify any particular trends in the POST data because of the small counts.

Figure 7.

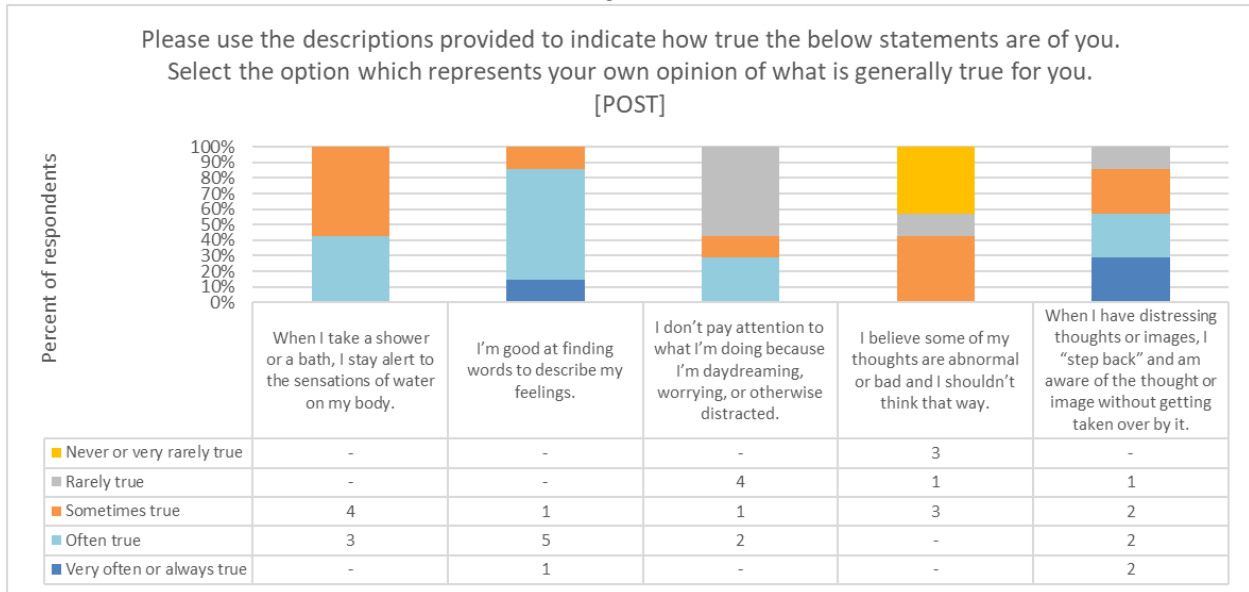


Figure 8.

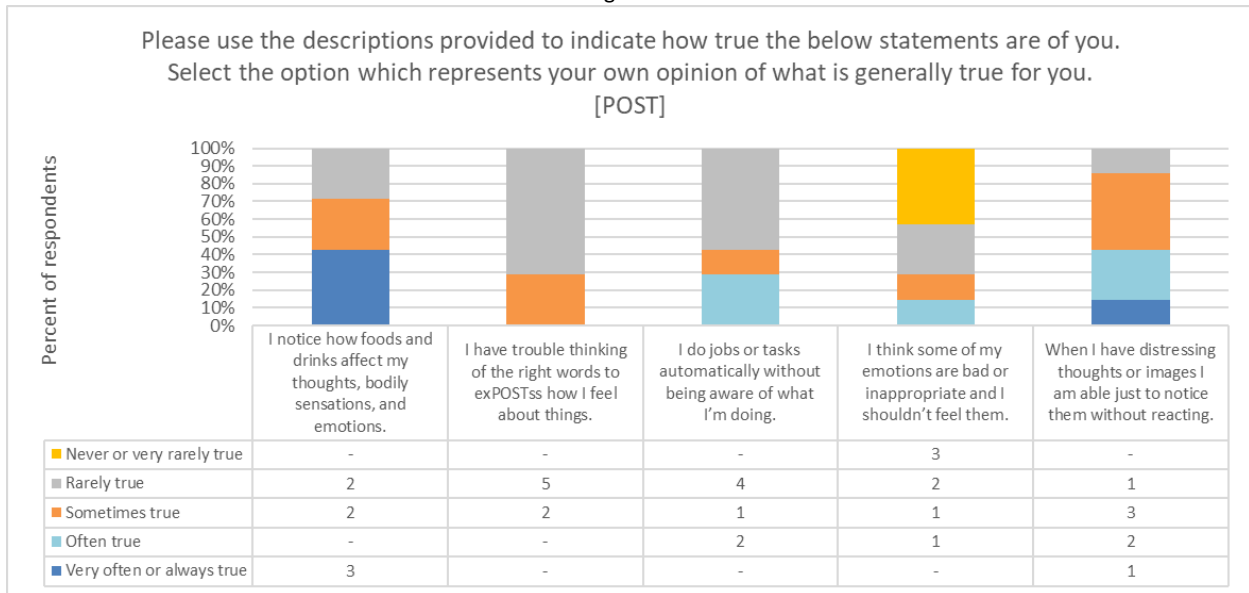
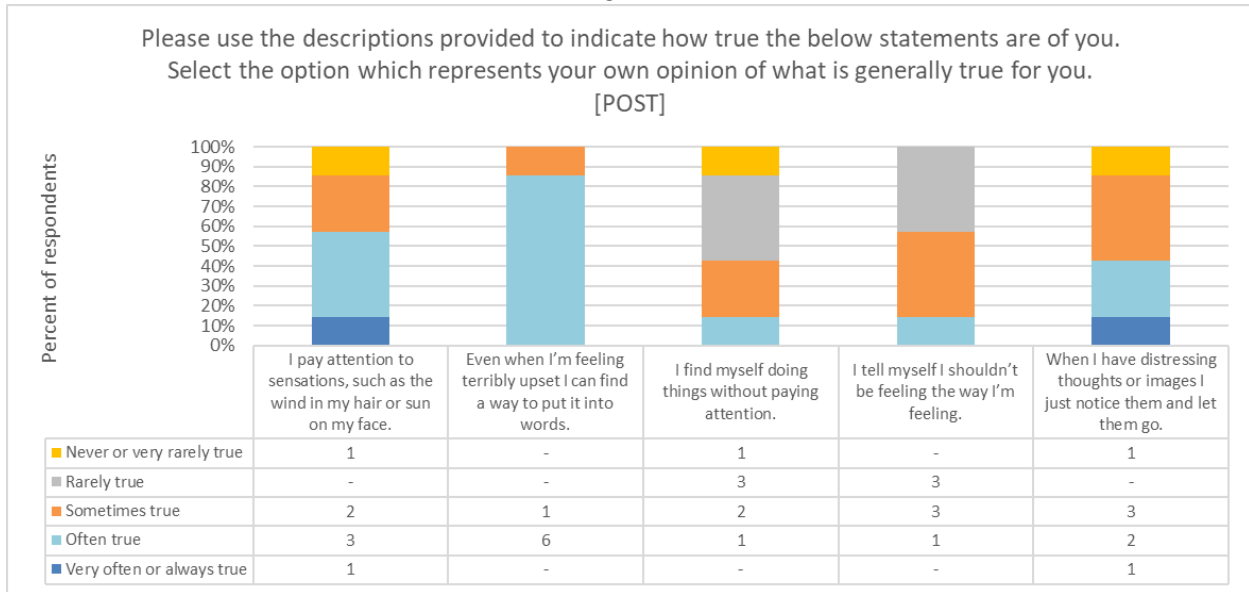


Figure 9.



A series of follow-up statements asked respondents to consider the extent to which the program contributed to positive changes and new learning and practices. These results indicated that participants gained new skills and learning over the course of the program.

Figure 10.

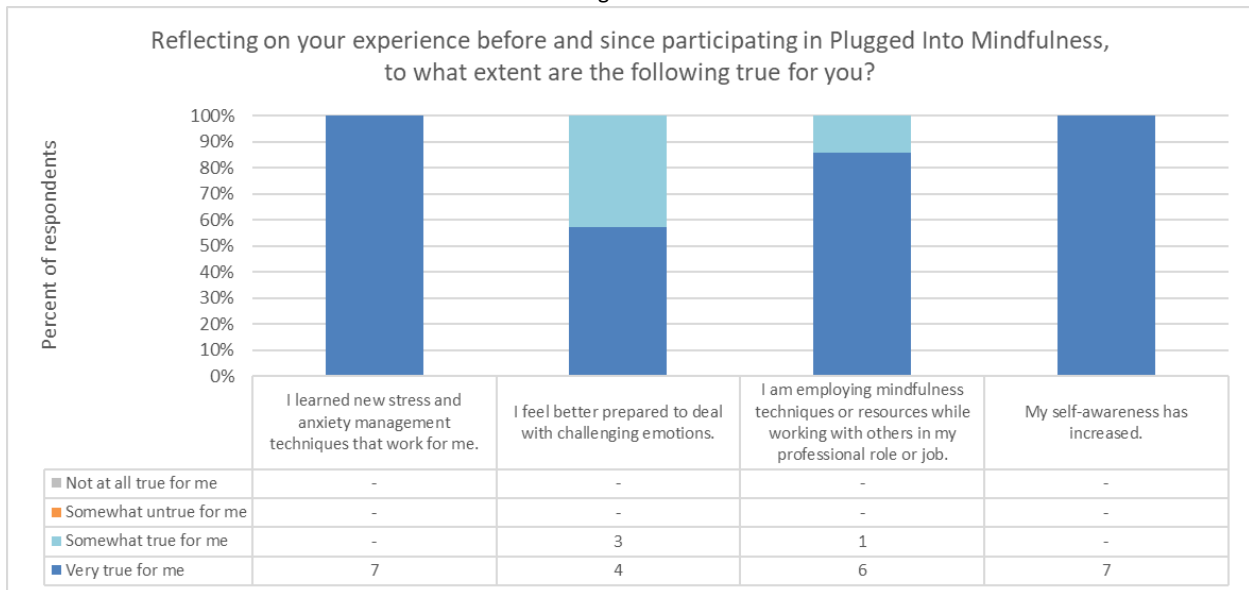
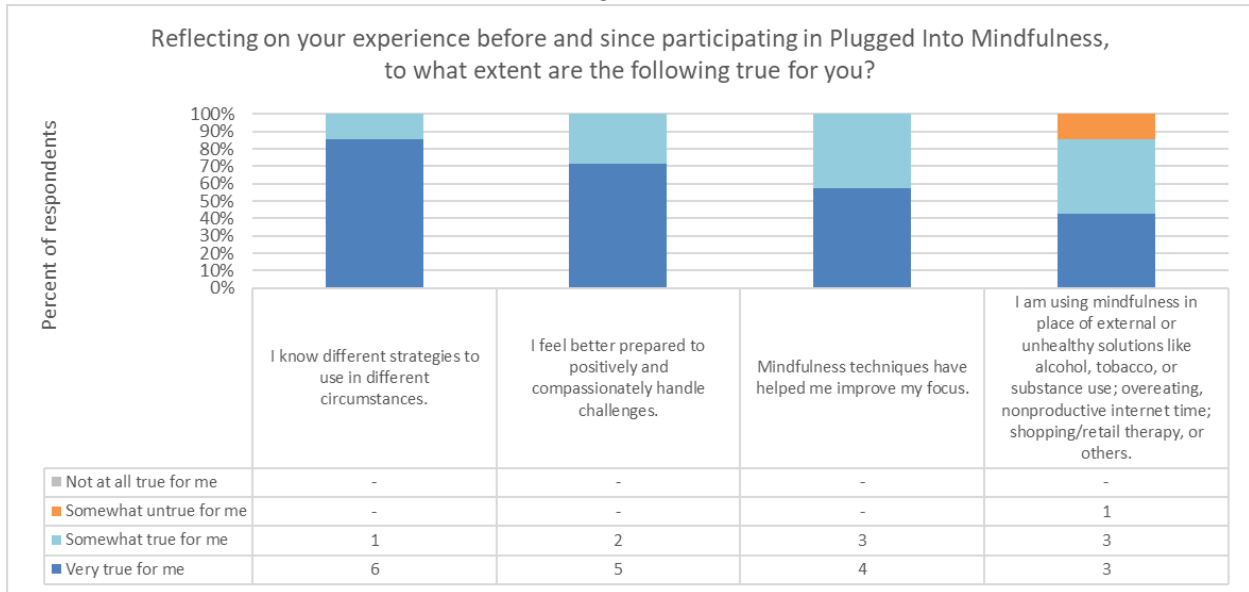
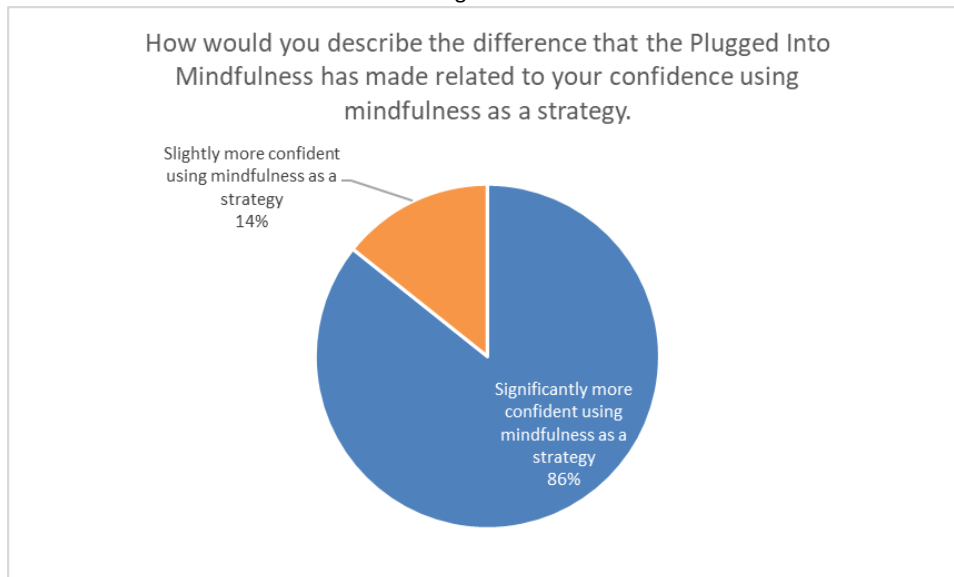


Figure 11.



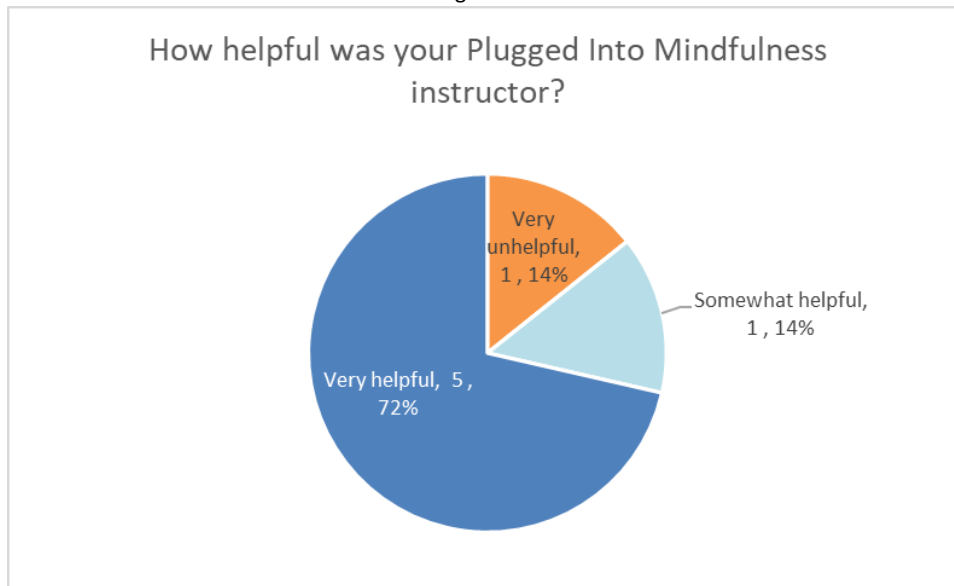
The POST survey also asked participants to share the extent to which they felt more or less confident using mindfulness as a strategy. All indicated that they felt more comfortable or confident to some extent using mindfulness as a strategy, with most (86%) indicating “significantly more confident.”

Figure 12.



Many participants found the instructor to be “very helpful” (72%) with one indicating “somewhat helpful” and one indicating “very unhelpful.”

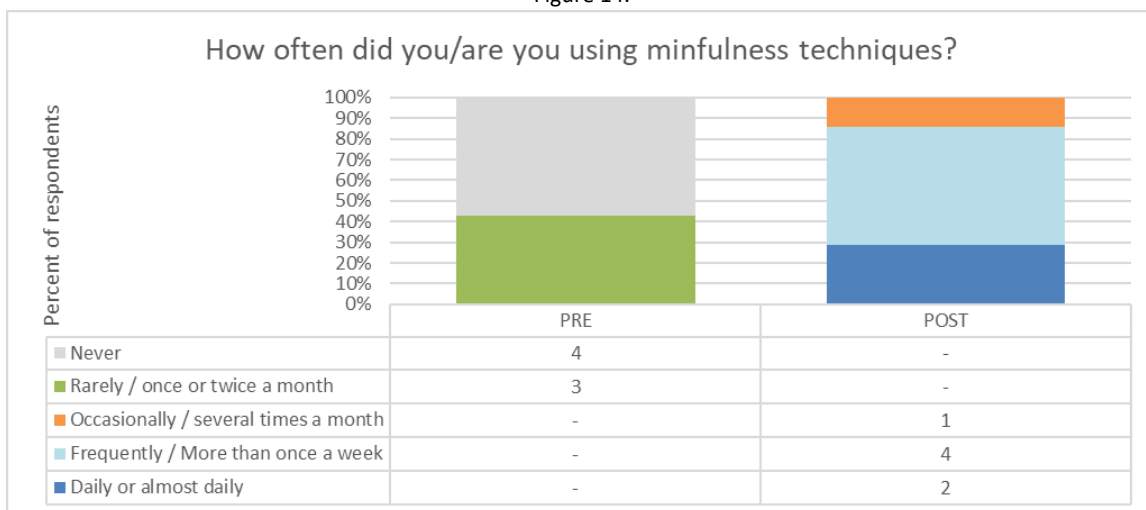
Figure 13.



To get a sense of changes in practice, the POST survey asked participants to reflect back on their practice before Plugged Into Mindfulness and share the frequency with which they employed mindfulness techniques. All respondents indicated that they “never” used such practices (4 of 7) or “rarely/once or twice a month” practiced such activities (3 of 7) before participating in the program.

Following the program, all respondents indicated an increased frequency of using mindfulness strategies, which suggests a positive program effect. The following figure shows the shift in responses. However, it is important to keep in mind that the PRE and POST groups here are not entirely the same individuals. Despite this, these results are a positive indication for the program.

Figure 14.



When asked whether mindfulness might be a go-to resource in the future, all shared that they thought mindfulness would be an “integral” or “very useful” resource.

Figure 15.



PRE/POST Comparison

Five individuals completed both a PRE and POST instrument (56% of all included participants). The evaluator collected these PRE/POST data and matched each PRE response to its corresponding POST response, where matches could be made.

For some statements, positive improvement meant a response that was more true at POST than on the PRE. For other statements, the converse was true. As such, each statement was examined and considered individually. For clarity, the response that is considered “improved” is called out in each figure. Further, all statements where ‘more true’ equals ‘improved’ are described first, and then the statements where the reverse is true are described, even though this is not the order that they appear in the instrument. Of the 15 statements, eight statements were identified as “more true = improved” and seven statements were identified as “less true = improved.”

It is again important to note that the small number of individuals may result in potentially misleading graphical representations. The number of individuals included in the group should always be considered when interpreting results. The numbers of individuals responding in each category for each grouping is provided in the figure for easy reference.

86%
of post-program
respondents indicated
they are now using
mindfulness daily, almost
daily, or frequently/more
than once a week.

Overall Change

The evaluator examined overall change from PRE to POST for all individuals who completed both instruments. In order to look at whether an individual improved overall, experienced no change, or exhibited a decline overall, the evaluator converted change designations to scores. If a respondent improved their response on an individual statement – they selected a more desirable response at the POST administration than they had previously – then they were assigned a score of 1. If the converse of this was true, they selected a less desirable response at the POST administration than they had previously – then they were assigned a score of -1. If they selected the same response for an item at both PRE and POST, they were assigned a score of 0.

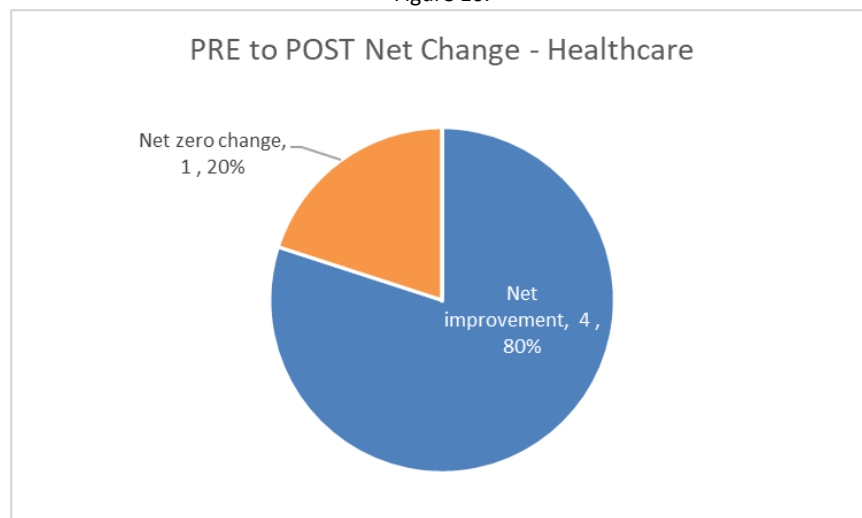
These scores were then totaled to determine a net total change for all statements together. Individuals were then classified in three potential change categories:

- Individuals with a net zero total either selected the exact same responses on the PRE and POST, or, they improved on the same number of items as they declined.
- Individuals with a net improvement improved on all responses – meaning they selected all more desirable responses, or they improved on more measures than they declined or selected the same response from the PRE to the POST.
- Individuals with a net decline declined on all responses – meaning they selected all less desirable responses, or they declined on more measures than they improved or selected the same response from the PRE to the POST.

It should be noted that no one selected all the same responses on both administrations and no one declined on all statements.

Four of the five respondents, or 80%, exhibited a positive change, or a net improvement, from PRE to POST, indicating that they selected more desirable responses at the POST administration than they had on the PRE administration. One showed a net zero change. None showed a net decline.

Figure 16.

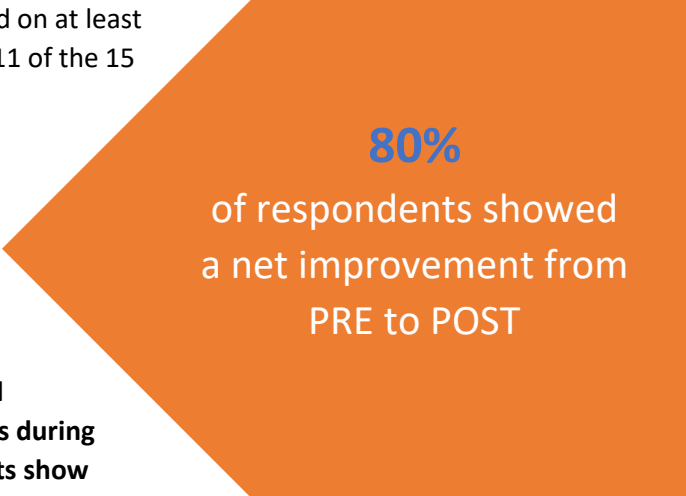


Each of the five respondents with PRE and POST data, improved on at least one measure. In fact, respondents improved on between five and 11 of the 15 statements (average 7.8 statements improved).

Respondents selected the same response on four to six statements.

Two of the five did not decline on any statements; those who indicated a decline did so for two to five statements (average 3.3 decline statements).

These results indicate that the program contributed to overall positive change to some degree for all healthcare respondents during the course of the program. Not only did nearly all respondents show improvement on at least one statement, the average number of statements improved (7.8) outnumbers the average number of statements with a decline (3.3) per respondent.



Individual Measure Change

The evaluator also examined change on each statement separately.

Most statements trended toward improvement, though the extent to which this occurred varied for each statement. This indicates that **in many domains, the program likely had a positive influence on participant outcomes.** However, the small group sizes make it difficult to generalize these results. Additional data and a larger population size would add strength to the results. The following table shows the results for each statement.

Table 3. Individual Measure Results.

Statement	Improved %	No Change %	Declined %
I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.	100%	0%	0%
Even when I'm feeling terribly upset I can find a way to put it into words.	80%	20%	0%
When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.	80%	0%	20%
I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.	80%	0%	20%
When I have distressing thoughts or images I just notice them and let them go.	60%	40%	0%
When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.	60%	40%	0%
I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.	60%	20%	20%
I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.	40%	60%	0%
I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.	40%	60%	0%
I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.	40%	20%	40%

Statement	Improved %	No Change %	Declined %
When I take a shower or a bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.	40%	20%	40%
I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.	40%	60%	0%
I find myself doing things without paying attention.	40%	40%	20%
I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.	20%	80%	0%
I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.	0%	60%	40%

FEEDBACK

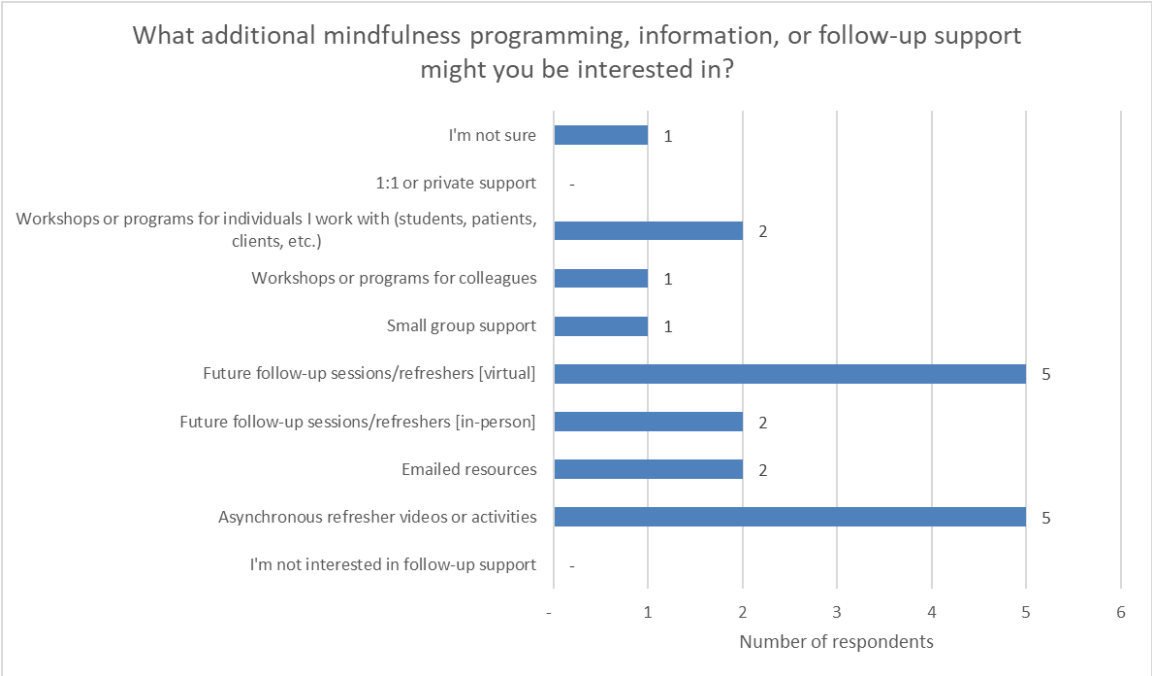
Adult Participant Survey

The post-program survey asked participants to share feedback about their experience that might be used or considered in future program adjustments, extensions, or services.

Asked about the most helpful or useful techniques, activities, practices, or resources they learned from the program, all respondents to the POST survey shared a response. Breathing techniques and exercises, specifically 4:8 breathing, was among the top responses. Other most-helpful elements shared included the book, the sessions, meditation and gratitude exercises, awareness, and “not holding onto negative thoughts.”

This group was most interested in asynchronous refresher videos or activities and virtual follow-up sessions/refreshers (5 respondents each), among others.

Figure 17.



Recommending the program to others was considered as a measure of program relevance and utility. Participants were asked to rate how likely they were to recommend Plugged Into Mindfulness to others. The scale started at zero for “not at all likely” and ended at six, “very likely,” with the midpoint, three, being “somewhat likely.” Respondents could select any option on the 0-6 scale. No one selected zero or one. All respondents selected one of the two highest ratings; six of the seven respondents selected “very likely,” the highest option on the scale and one respondent selected the rating 5 out of 6.

When asked for suggestions, additions, or revisions might be considered, three shared a substantive comment, which included alternative ways to watch missed sessions (participant indicated difficulty streaming sessions on a mobile device), meeting more than once per week, working around scheduling conflicts.

At the end of the POST survey, the evaluator provided an optional space for respondents to share anything else that they thought the program or the evaluator should know about their experience. Most of respondents left the space blank or shared appreciation for the program. Three shared substantive comments, including two expressing appreciation for the virtual participation option and one who offered: “It gave me aides to help at work which is very stressful.”

***“Amazing workshop,
loved the focus on skills
practice and how to
integrate into daily
living.”***

~ Healthcare participant
Post-program survey

REFLECTIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

The January through June 2023 program term for healthcare providers was the first year of the two-year grant cycle funded through Butler County Drug and Alcohol.

The evaluator shares the following reflections and suggestions based on data collection and analysis, interpretations and anecdotes, and other information considered throughout the program term. The evaluator offers these recommendations understanding that it may not be possible to address all of them. Changes may not be possible at all, or they may be delayed. However, including all generated recommendations provides an opportunity for conversation, exploration, documentation, and as part of a cycle of continuous improvement.

In general, findings and feedback from this report should be used to make informed decisions about if, how, and where program development efforts might be concentrated.

This section of the report addresses the evaluation question: *How might we **improve** upon this program for future iterations and expansions?*

- The program was delivered to the entities and groups proposed in its grant application. The program intended to serve up to 35 health professionals. The program ultimately engaged 15 adults (43%), of which nine participated in ongoing instruction.

Recommendation: If the program wishes to increase participation, it might consider exploring the reasons that some individuals dropped out early in the program and then designing program elements or promoting existing program elements to address those reasons, where appropriate. Successful programs and ventures are those that identify and successfully fill a need for their audience. It may be helpful to identify the “problems” that the program helps participants solve, which may differ from group to group. Messaging, recruitment, and marketing efforts may need to be adjusted depending on the audience to connect with participants who could benefit most. This includes the individuals as well as the participant entities. Further, discussions with the participating entities about increasing engagement might also yield additional insights or engagement.

- Based on whole-group POST survey results, most participants shared that they are using mindfulness more frequently than they had previously or they were continuing to use such strategies regularly. Furthermore, participants indicated an interest in continuing to learn about mindfulness. This indicates that the program was successful in increasing awareness and promoting the behaviors and interest it intended in its grant applications. Further, this also indicates that participants experienced positive changes in practice as a result of the program, if they are seeing enough results to warrant continued interest.

Recommendation: Continue offering the program while also considering additions, revisions, and tweaks from respondent surveys, as these give insight to the needs, interests, and experience of the end user. Being able to address participant needs directly – and demonstrate same – will add to program sustainability. POST survey results indicated the greatest interest in emailed resources, future virtual follow-up sessions, asynchronous refresher videos or activities, and in-person follow-up sessions.

- Matched PRE/POST results indicate positive results for most participants overall. Small group counts make it difficult to draw conclusions, despite the overall positive trends.

Recommendation: The evaluator and program leaders should collaborate to identify methods of increasing the response rate to both the PRE and POST instruments. Increasing the population size included in the data will also add strength to the results. The second year of this program cycle will likely add insights. Additional reinforcement or follow-up might support an increased response rate. Further, once the population size is increased, additional insight might be gleaned from breaking out the highest value “same” responses as an additional result group, “did not need to improve” or “highest value at both administrations.”

- The first year of a program cycle and a new evaluation are naturally a learning process for all. The evaluation and the program could be strengthened overall by greater responses rates, additional feedback from stakeholders, and potentially other elements.

Recommendation: The evaluator and program leadership might find it helpful to establish a more definitive calendar of sessions and data collection time points to better understand, manage, and reinforce data collection and survey completion. Continuing to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and refine the processes by which data are collected should yield increasingly more useful information.

- Participant gains and feedback may be useful from promotional and program development perspectives.

Recommendation: De-identified feedback might be used as a tool to encourage and support future participants. Program leadership and the evaluator might collaborate to identify those elements particularly motivating for potential and future participants. Additional services or program opportunities might include follow-up workshop series (virtual and/or in person), emailed resources, individual or small group coaching (virtual and/or in person), entity consulting on supporting an organization culture that encourages mindfulness, and mindfulness in leadership trainings.

The evaluation of the Plugged Into Mindfulness program is intended to address grant accountability expectations while also supporting the program’s leadership to identify, prioritize, and address program and participant needs in order improve future program iterations. Results are based on the data collected and analyzed for this evaluation as provided by the program, its implementers, and participants as of the date of this report’s production. The results of this evaluation may also be useful for other groups seeking to solve similar problems and serve the needs of similar individuals; policy makers; government agencies; and others.

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