

Delivering Mindfulness-Based Interventions for People Living with HIV

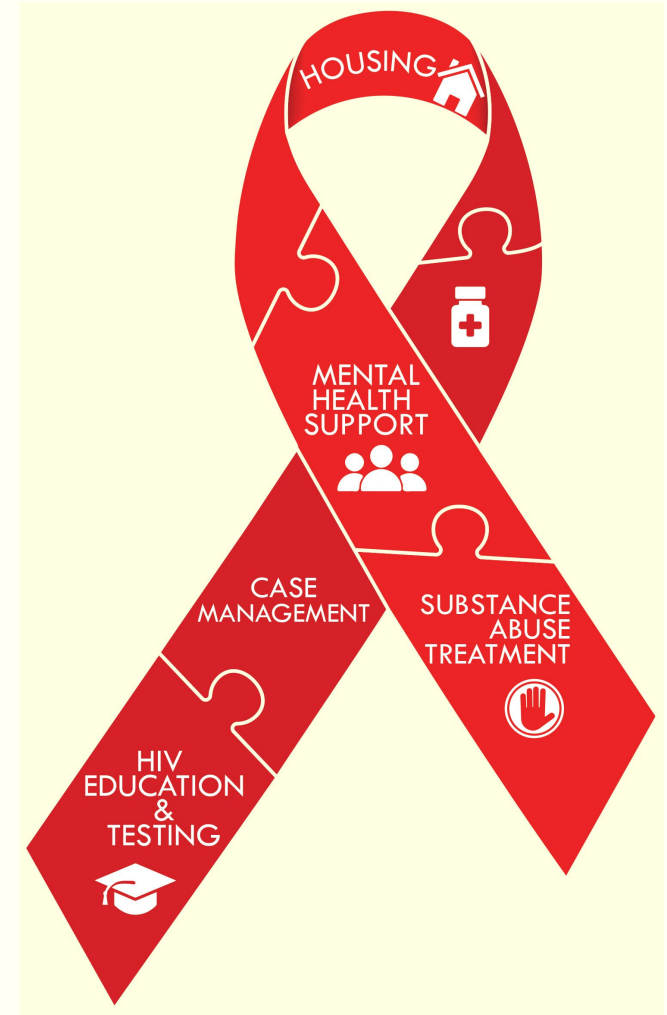
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HIV, Mental Health and Trauma

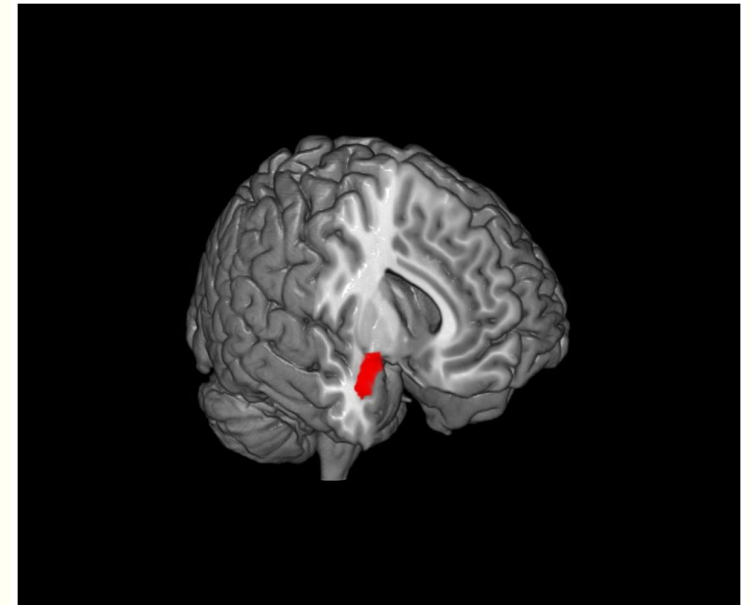
- Significantly higher rates of psychological ill-health
 - Canada: 39% mental health condition [1]
 - UK: 47% new referrals in 1 year had depression [2]
 - India: 59% signs of major depression [3]
 - China: 61% depressive symptoms [4]
- PTSD rates range from 10-74% [5]
- Adverse childhood events and intimate partner violence: consistently linked to psychiatric symptoms in later life [6]



What is mindfulness?

“Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally, to things as they are” [7]

- “Being” vs “doing”
- Standardised 8-week interventions:
 - Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
 - Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
 - Further context dependent adaptations
- Neurophysiological effects, e.g. changes to regions of the brain [8, 9]



Decreased grey matter volume in right amygdala explains lesser stress reactivity [10]

Positively Mindful: methods

- Aim: to assess the feasibility and acceptability of MBSR for PLWH
- Design: mixed method randomised feasibility trial (n=22)
 - 2:1 allocation to MBSR (n=16) or WLC (n=6)
- Data collection and analysis:
 - Data on recruitment rates, adherence, attrition etc.
 - Questionnaires (e.g. PROMs, feasibility questionnaires)
 - Semi-structured interviews (feasibility & intervention experience)
 - Descriptive & inferential statistical analysis, Thematic Analysis ^[11]

Intervention experience & acceptability

Five themes:

- Seeing Anew
“I thought I was facing the end of my life really... but now I’m kind of like, I run. I’m running again.” (Bob)
- Using Course Techniques and Materials
“I noticed what was around, the things that have been there for I don’t know how long, but I never used to notice them” (Flo)
- Interacting with the Group
“So you take it all in easier and because there’s other people doing the same practices you’re more inclined” (Frank)
- Course facilitation
“The fact someone was there to lead you through the whole experience is a motivation on its own.” (Flo)

Theme 5: Mental Health Interactions (1)

Phil, 43yo, met eligibility criteria, PHQ-9 = 19, disclosed previous childhood trauma during interview

“Since I was 20, I have been on this odyssey of trying to find out what my patterns were, and maybe the body scan enables you to inhabit this zone of the final frontier, maybe the last layer of the onion. And it’s just too dark, too black for me.”

“Well one of the things I have always hated about myself is my body. I hate my body. I have been at war with my body for...since I was 14 I started going on diets, I have always hated my body. I don’t like my appearance, I have never done, I think there is so much on some gay men to be perfect in so many ways, and who can live up to that. Aye, so my body and me are not firm buddies. It’s like a war of attrition. Not as bad maybe as it was, but I don’t want to focus on my body, I hate my body.”

Theme 5: Mental Health Interactions (2)

Saul, 25yo, met eligibility criteria, history of anxiety

“It was when we came to start to do meditation that I started to get breathing difficulties and shortness of breath. Then, the second time I went on the week after, it was the same and more severe. We were doing more of a meditation exercise and it sort of sent me off into having shortness of breath that lasted longer than just the session. It went on for a week, few weeks after and I had a nervous reaction to it.”

“I think it was really important for me to go through that and to get through that. I guess I feel very different from how I was then. I feel like I’ve been continually getting better as time has gone on.”

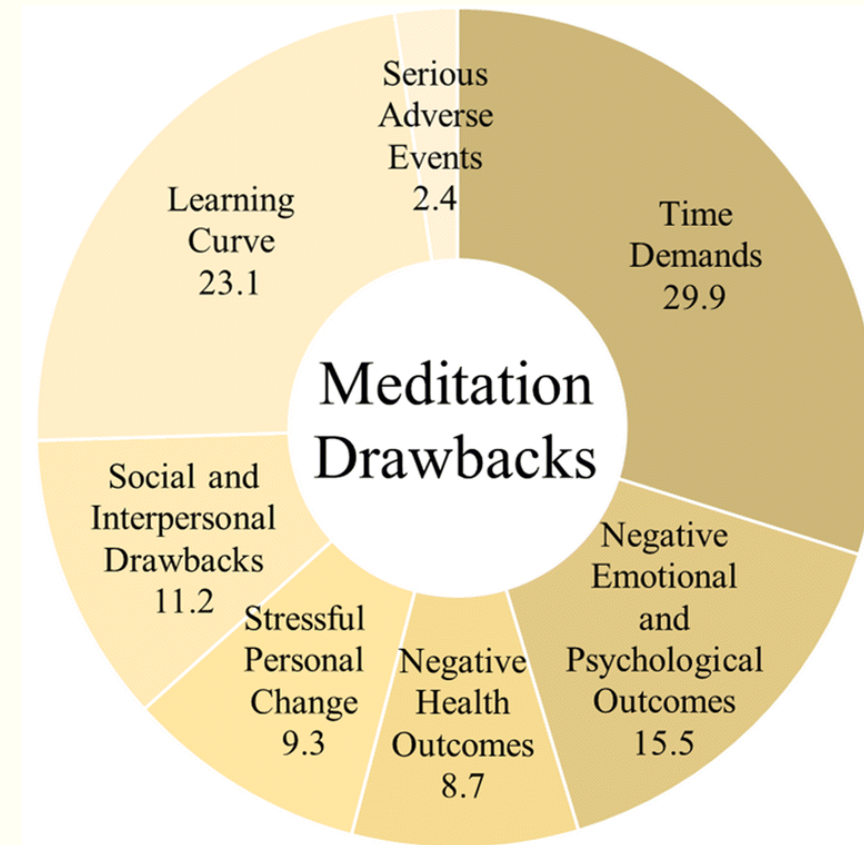
Is mindfulness helpful for everyone?

- Mindfulness is not a panacea
- Every intervention, whether medication, psychological, surgical, has risks



Challenges with mindfulness (1)

- Time and energy [12,13]
- Difficulties with practice [12,13]
- Implementation



From Anderson, Suresh & Farb (2019) [13]

Challenges with mindfulness (2)

- Different groups - different results
- Low socioeconomic status = higher drop out rates [14]
- Little known about why people withdraw
- Adverse events:
 - Dissociation, depersonalisation, re-traumatisation [15,16]
 - “Unwanted” experiences are common [15]
 - Likely underreporting of adverse events [17]

Person-centred approaches to mindfulness^[18]

- Choice
- Flexibility
- Existing beliefs and contexts
- Open to discussing difficulties
- Trauma-sensitive: take concerns seriously ^[19]

In sum...

- Mindfulness appears to be feasible and acceptable to PLWH
- There remains a risk of adverse events
- All potentially effective interventions (e.g. pharmaceuticals, therapy) come with the risk of adverse events

Thank you for listening

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References

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