

# **OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT - PHASE 3 (NORTH EAST AND CUMBRIA)**

## **FINAL REPORT ON THE PROJECT 'IMPROVING LIVES'**

(Gateshead Council learningSkills, ALD Hair and Beauty Academy, Foundation of Light, North East Counselling Services, Darlington Borough Council)

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# Improving Lives: exploring the effects of mindfulness training

## Project aims and objectives

The initial aims and objectives of the project were to:

- Improve attendance, retention and progression of 16-24-year-old learners on Study Programmes and Traineeships.
- Improve learners' ability to focus on a positive future.
- Improve tutor resilience.

However, as the project progressed, we realised that some amendments needed to be made to these aims and objectives. After consultation with the partners, we revised them to:

- Improve attendance, retention and progression of any learners who have challenging lives.
- Provide learners with a range of coping mechanisms that enables them to focus on a positive future.
- Improve tutors' resilience that enables them to deal with and recover from challenging situations with learners.

## Rationale

As a provider of a whole range of learning programmes, we had identified that in some curriculum areas, learners who had more challenging lives were least likely to succeed, have poorer attendance and were more likely to leave their learning programme early. This was particularly prominent in courses that were designed for young people who had few or no GCSE's. In our 2015/2016 Self-Assessment Report, we had identified that attendance at Employability courses within the Study Programmes were inadequate at 40% and even worse (14%) in English and maths sessions. Progression to employment was very poor at 20% and marginally better for progression into Apprenticeships at 37%.

As a local authority, Gateshead Council is committed to "creating more opportunities for young people to flourish by addressing some of the key barriers and challenges facing them and their families." A strategic plan, *Children Gateshead- The plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead, Gateshead Children's Trust, 2014-2017* sets out the commitment required to young people and how the inequalities in terms of health and life chances will be addressed in order to provide young people with the best possible start in life. The plan also recognises that education plays a key role in improving life chances, specifically the role of Traineeships and Apprenticeships, and that some young people need a great amount of support to make the transition from school to further education, training and employment.

One of the most significant elements within the plan is identifying the importance of social and emotional well-being in relation to health development. It goes on to say "emotional resilience underpins the wellbeing of young people and provides the bedrock for moving into adulthood. Social and emotional wellbeing creates the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment." In addition, it helps to prevent behavioural problems, substance misuse and mental health problems.

In Gateshead, 5.3% of young people aged 16-19 years old are *NEET* (*Connexions Performance Report January 2017*), higher than the Tyne and Wear average with 27% classed as 'caring for own child'. Participation in education, training or employment reduces by over 20% at ages 18-19.

learningSkills had been working with disengaged and challenging young people for over 10 years, initially in collaboration with the Youth Service and in the last 5 years through direct delivery of Study Programmes and Traineeships. We have a policy of never refusing a learner access to education which results in us working with some of the most challenging learners. There have been some significant successes along the way but there has also been a proportion of young people that we have been unable to fully support due to the complexity of their needs, inappropriate behaviour that resulted in removal from the programme or a lack of motivation and ability to plan for a positive future. This led to falling success rates, poor attendance and low retention on programmes.

Interventions and remodelling of the curriculum established that the teaching was of a high standard and tutors were well equipped to deliver appropriate programmes. However, despite significant effort, many of the problems young people were facing were too complex to solve and learners were leaving early, unable to cope with the added pressure of attending a learning programme.

During a CPD event with the teaching team, we identified that one of the tutors was a trained Mindfulness Practitioner. Mindfulness is a practice that individuals and groups can do on a day-to-day basis that can enable them to change the way they think and feel about their experiences, especially stressful experiences. As a mind-body approach, it can increase the ability to manage difficult situations and make wise choices. A growing body of evidence has found that when people intentionally practice being mindful, they feel less anxious, stressed and depressed. It can have a positive effect on several aspects of whole-person health, including the mind, brain, body and behaviour as well as a person's relationships with others.

In a study at Brown University, researchers found that those with higher scores for mindfulness were significantly more likely to have healthy glucose levels than those with a lower score. (*Everyday Mindfulness linked to healthy glucose levels, Brown University, February 23, 2016* [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160223132541.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160223132541.htm))

The University of Pennsylvania found that people who were more mindful are less likely to be ashamed when presented with health advice and are therefore more motivated to change. (*Mindfulness motivates people to make healthier choices, University of Pennsylvania, January 30 2017* [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170130111020.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170130111020.htm).)

In addition, the more mindful you are the more likely it is that you won't overeat and less likely to be obese. (*Associations of Dispositional Mindfulness with Obesity and Central Adiposity: the New England Family Study, Eric B. Loucks, Willoughby B. Britton, Chanelle J. Howe, Roe Gutman, Stephen E. Gilman, Judson Brewer, Charles B. Eaton, Stephen L. Buka. International Journal of Behavioural Medicine, April 2016, Volume 23, Issue 2, pp224-233*). Mindfulness also combats anxiety, improves resilience, focus and memory, be used for pain relief and improves sleep.

After some discussions and further research, the benefits of practicing mindfulness with young people became clear. In September 2016, the tutor began a short 12-week mindfulness programme with 5 learners. Despite the short timeframe, some positive results began to emerge. Learner's attendance and punctuality began to improve, self-esteem and levels of confidence appeared to increase and learners with more complex lives started to seek help with dealing with their problems. It was clear that a longer mindfulness programme, embedded into the curriculum was required.

Through appraisals, we had already identified 5 members of staff that were interested in mindfulness and could be involved in the project. In addition, learningSkills works with over 100 subcontractors and we recognised that the concerns we faced when working with young people were mirrored in some of these organisations. After an initial consultation, we identified four partners who would benefit most from the project. These were:

- ALD Hair and Beauty Academy, a small training provider delivering Study Programmes, Traineeships and Apprenticeships to young people, many of whom have complex personal lives and multiple barriers to learning
- Barnardo's, a national children's charity working with hard to reach young people and their families helping them with social and behavioural issues, learning difficulties, relationship breakdowns, offending history, low confidence and self-esteem and previous poor experience of school
- Foundation of Light, a charity that works with young people to empower them to gain employment. Through a combination of classroom and physical activity, they improve skills and develop positive psychology and emotional intelligence
- North East Counselling Services, a tailored counselling service with specialisms in working with young people with a wide range of issues including poor mental and emotional health, low quality accommodation, dysfunctional relationships, lack of coping strategies and low levels of confidence and self-esteem

We established that the level of participation in the project would need to be manageable and not impact too much on their day-to-day business whilst still providing a benefit to the young people they worked with. After the initial partnership meeting, it was decided that the project would:

- Involve one or two members of staff for a few hours per week
- Involve learners/ clients
- Complement existing work
- Be evidence rich but paperwork light
- Provide the opportunity for professional development and sharing of best practice

Part way through the project Barnardo's, due to work commitments, had to withdraw. However, after meeting at one of the workshop events and expressing such an interest in the project, Darlington Council were asked to join the project.

## Overview of Activities

Mindfulness would be the main focus of the project and the impact this would have on learners and staff. However, we were aware that training to become a Mindfulness Practitioner takes a considerable amount of time and is not suitable for everyone. Therefore, learningSkills and the partners needed to identify staff that were not only able to participate in the project but understand the concept of mindfulness and be willing and able to embrace it as a way of life. We also knew that the Mindfulness Programme we had commissioned through Living Mindfully would not be completed until after the project's end date. However, what we were confident of was that the techniques learned in the initial stages, and with support from the already qualified tutor, we would still see benefits to learners and positive outcomes would begin to emerge.

Each member of the project team was asked to devise a 'mini intervention'. This should:

- Involve learners- the number would be dependent on:
  - the type of intervention- more complicated interventions may only involve one learner, whereas more simple interventions may involve a group of learners
  - access to learners - some partners may have access to a whole range of learners, others may only have a few

- the needs of the learners - some may have very complex problems and others less so
- Use mindfulness in some way to improve some aspect within a learner's life that could subsequently help improve their retention, attendance or success
- Be evidence rich and use a variety of methods to record the intervention and impact
- Have 'buy-in' from the learners to ensure they are fully aware of the intervention they are participating in
- Involve consultation with another professional, either internally or externally that enables collaboration to make the intervention stronger

The project lead met with each of the project team to help establish and advise on the mini interventions. The planned interventions were:

- Using mindfulness to improve attendance in year 11 alternative education programme
- Using mindfulness techniques and breathing exercises with a learner who has severe anxiety to help them cope with the college environment
- Developing the concept of 'being kind' with a learner who has low self-esteem but channels this through aggressive behaviour
- Encouraging focus by developing kinaesthetic resources to encourage writing skills with a learner
- Building confidence through mindfulness with learners with learning difficulties
- Exploring mindfulness and Solution Focused Therapy as a way of seeing a positive future
- Using meditation in class to see learners' levels of stress reduce and able to focus on learning
- Using mindfulness with learners to help close the multiple 'windows' and concentrate on the here and now

In addition, the project team would attend the Mindfulness Programme which consisted of:

- An 8-week, 16 hour Living Mindfully Programme. This consists of:
  - Week 1: Automatic pilot
  - Week 2: Dealing with barriers
  - Week 3: Mindfulness of the breath and the body in movement
  - Week 4: Staying present
  - Week 5: Accepting and allowing- letting be
  - Week 6: Thoughts are not facts
  - Week 7: Taking care of yourself
  - Week 8: Using what we have learned
- A 6-month Mindfulness Practitioner Support Programme and Personal Practice that includes a series of monthly workshops, lectures and one to one sessions that develops self-practice
- A 3-day, 24 hour Living Mindfully in Education Programme examining the following:
  - Know your mind
  - Know your thoughts
  - Know your body
  - Know your emotions
  - Know friendliness
  - Know your life

The Mindfulness Programme, in its entirety, would not be completed by the end of the project official end date. However, we were confident that techniques learned early on in the programme would enable the mini-interventions to be conducted in a useful way.

As well as the mini interventions and the attendance on the mindfulness programme, all of the project team would be required to attend a series of meetings. These were scheduled as follows:

- April 2017- initial scoping exercise with partners to confirm project aims and objectives
- May 2017- project planning and identification of project team
- June 2017- clarifying and action planning
- August 2017- confirming mini interventions
- October 2017- sharing outcomes of mini interventions
- November 2017- planning for dissemination

## **Research methods and means of collecting evidence**

A variety of methods were used to capture evidence from the mini-interventions and the Mindfulness programme. The staff involved in the mini-interventions were asked to choose from a range of evidence, including but not limited to:

- Course and session planning documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, learner profiles, initial assessments
- Resources they may have used either with the learner or for planning purposes
- Multi-media such as photos, videos, Apps, online learning tools that were used or helped to demonstrate what happened in the mini-intervention
- Presentation slides, completed flipcharts, post-it notes
- Results from questionnaires, surveys, tests or assessments
- Report, action research activities, learner and staff written feedback, anecdotal evidence and research into teaching and learning theories

## **Improvements in Professional Learning**

The mindfulness course commenced in September and completed at the beginning of November 2017. Nine practitioners were identified from learningSkills and the partner organisations. Most of the practitioners had heard of mindfulness as a concept and two had briefly practiced it. They had identified themselves as participants for a variety of reasons such as:

- They had seen the benefits mindfulness had on others and wanted to replicate it
- Wanted to learn more so they could support their learners who were struggling with depression and anxiety
- Was a 'good fit' with their role in their organisation
- Wanted to explore it in the hope it would improve some aspect of their own lives, particularly stress and anxiety levels

All practitioners particularly enjoyed spending time on themselves, away from the pressures of work and home and used it as some self-therapy. Many found it challenging to focus their mind for a full 2 hours but recognised that it was important to go through this process to enable them to understand how a learner may feel undertaking mindfulness.

Most of the practitioners identified that they often operated on 'automatic pilot' and had multiple thoughts in their head throughout the day. One practitioner identified early on that they were prone to over-analysing situations and tried to solve problems that were out of their control. They discovered that they held their stress and tension in their shoulders and neck but learned to breath correctly to release this.

The practitioners reported that their own stress levels reduced and they had developed some useful techniques for switching off. Although in its early stages, they were able to report how they would use some of the techniques with their learners such as:



- Using breathing exercises to regain composure when stress levels increase
- Using the 'home base' and a body scan as a means of distraction when learners may become distressed or angry
- Being able to advise learners on how to deal with anxiety and stress
- Able to justify trying techniques because others have found them successful
- Using breathing exercises with learners to improve mood

## Changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

Case studies reflecting upon the impact of each of the interventions are included in the appendices. Although the full impact of the project is yet to be realised the following has been noted:

- Tutors use a variety of techniques to assess learners' 'readiness to learn' and make adjustments to their planning to reflect this.
- Strategies to relax and reinforce the tutor/ learner relationship have resulted in more mature learner behaviour and improved classroom management.
- The organisation and content of sessions has become more learner centred and responsive to learner needs e.g. Access to classrooms 2 hrs before to catch up/revise resulting in lower anxiety levels for learners.
- Marking policy adjusted to allow more time for quality feedback.

Substantial impact on the health and well-being of tutors has been noted since the techniques have been adopted. This in turn has impacted upon the well-being of learners as staff have been able to confidently share techniques that have worked for them e.g. using breathing exercises to regain composure when stress levels increase, change mood, using the 'home base' and a body scan as a means of distraction when distressed or angry.

## Improved Collaboration

Through the project we have worked with a range of sub-contractors and services which has resulted in a more joined up approach, more accurate referrals and the acquisition of some simple but effective counselling skills for discussing concerns with learners which we can now implement.

What each organisation brought:

- Introduced to a range of services which will enable us to refer learners more easily such as counselling
- Use of simple counselling techniques that can be used when discussing concerns with learners
- Sharing the impact of mindfulness with Darlington local authority
- Joined up approach to learner referral between Prime and Subcontractor

## Changes in Organisational Practices

As a result of the Mindfulness project, learningSkills have seen a number of changes to our organisational practices:

- A roll-on-roll-off programme for all new learners to be introduced to mindfulness on a one-to-one basis prior to joining the classes, has been rolled out. This prepares the learners for the meditation they complete within the sessions.
- Designing a mindfulness curriculum for learners.

- Designated team of mindfulness practitioners who can be utilised for early intervention with staff and learners
- Introducing mindfulness concept to all tutors at a CPD event with a view to many more tutors adopting mindfulness, training to be practitioners and using it to help learners
- Introducing more opportunities for staff to practice mindfulness and other similar programmes such as yoga and meditation through a fully funded programme of events

Learners have clearly benefitted from the techniques, with some asking for and being granted the chance to practise mindfulness independently within the centre.

## Improvement in Learners' Achievement, Retention and Progression

Although there have been extensive improvements to quality procedures, there is also strong evidence to suggest that mindfulness has contributed to improved performance at Gateshead learningSkills.

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (Predicted)
Study Programme and Traineeship Attendance	39.94%	72.4%	75.2%
Study Programme and Traineeship Attendance on English and Maths	14%	74.3%	75.6%
Success Rate	70%	72.5%	72.9%
Retention Rate	76.3%	79.7%	81.2%

Not all learners who participated in the project were on a Study Programme or Traineeship, but a significant proportion were. Therefore, this is the measure that will be used to judge some of the impact.

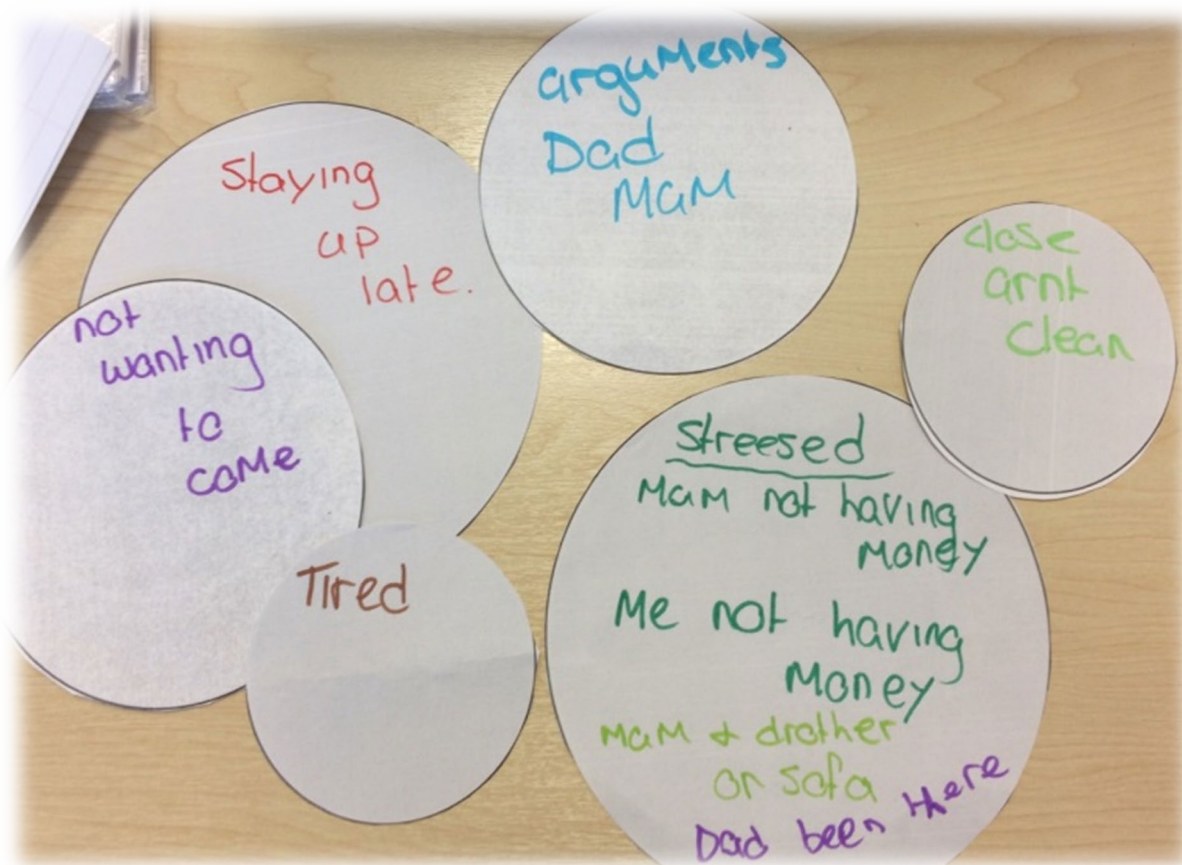
There have been some significant improvements in the attendance, success and retention of learners, as can be seen in the data table above. However, it should also be recognised that this cannot all be attributed to the mindfulness project. The team who delivers the programmes (who all took part in the project) had also been through a change in management since September 2015. Many of the changes, such as new policies and procedures, action plans to ensure success, strategies to report and improve attendance, could have also contributed to the improvements. However, there is strong evidence from the mini-interventions to suggest that mindfulness has also contributed to this.

## Outcomes of the mini-interventions

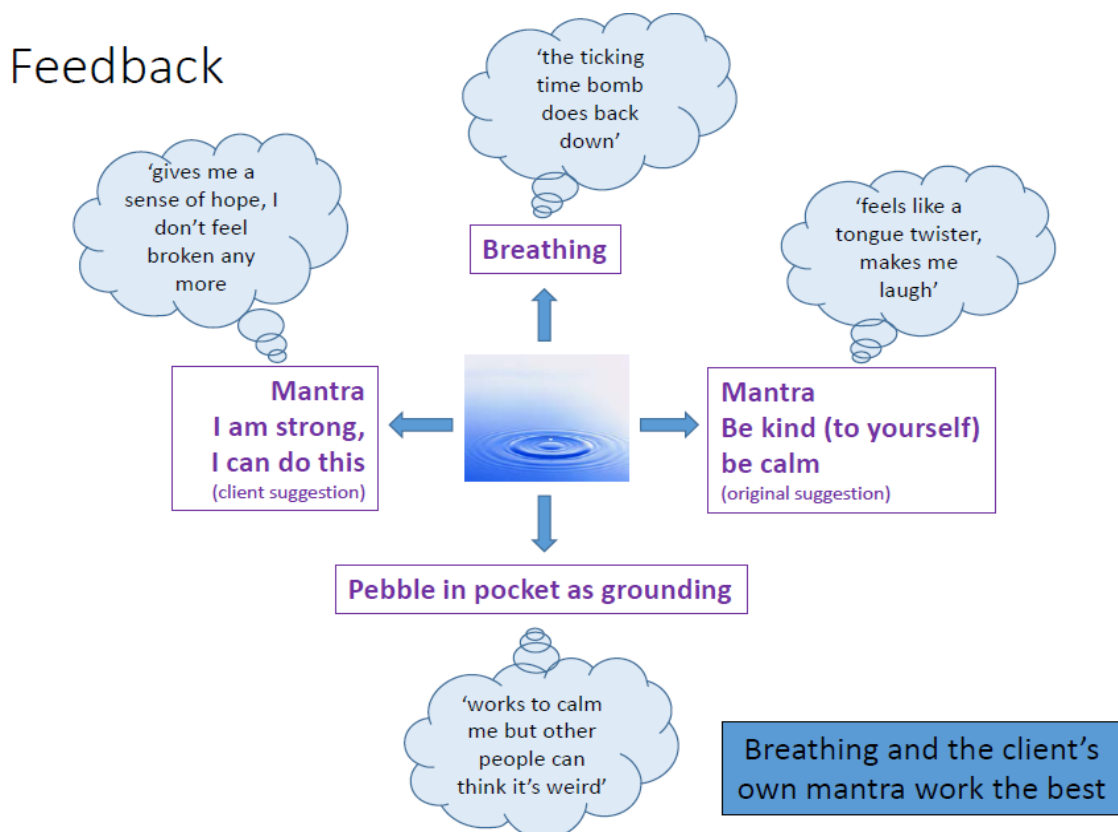
The mini-interventions were brief, mainly due to the delay in the start of the mindfulness programme. Some of the interventions changed, either before or during the activities. This was expected as some of the tutors had not yet met their learners (it was the week prior to the Autumn term) and others identified that what they had planned would no longer work due to time constraints, reluctance from the learner or learner readiness to make a change. One intervention (using scaffolded learning to engage a learner in writing tasks) did not directly include mindfulness at all but was a very useful project with a successful outcome.

It could be argued that through scaffolded learning activities, the learner became more focused, engaged, confident and aware of own abilities - all of which are principles of mindfulness. However, even in a small space of time, some progress was evident:

- Using mindfulness to improve attendance in year 11 alternative education programme (Appendix 1):
  - The participant, Lana, was experiencing some very challenging personal circumstances including being identified as high risk of child sexual exploitation, anxiety, substance misuse (used as a way of coping with complex emotions)
  - The mini-intervention explored breathing techniques and ways to close off intrusive thoughts and feelings
  - Lana reported she enjoyed the session and enabled her to momentarily take her mind off the other things happening in her life
  - Mini intervention was stalled when Lana experienced some health issues and a crisis relating to a close member of her family
  - The last meeting with Lana was, however very productive. Used the Circle of Concern and Circle of Influence activity to determine reasons why attendance was poor. This explored the relationships between people, circumstances and events. This identified poor attendance wasn't just due to being tired or not wanting to come but was related to deeper influences. Lana was able to 'reframe' her non-attendance as 'doing the best she can in challenging circumstances' rather than 'being bad' or 'not bothered'.
  - Although too early to tell whether the mindfulness course has had any impact on her personal resilience, Lana did enjoy the sessions. She has engaged very well in her subject specific work - much more than before the mini-intervention. The breathing techniques have helped her sleep, which has been a barrier to improving her attendance in the past.



- Using mindfulness techniques and breathing exercises with a learner who has severe anxiety to help them cope with the college environment (**Appendix 2**):
  - Young learner with mild to moderate learning difficulties and mental health needs
  - Listens to peers' life experiences and changes them in to her own personal experiences
  - Becomes upset when peers challenge this behaviour
  - Uses breathing to focus learner until her anxieties reduce and she can return to class
  - Working successfully and learner is starting to recognise the triggers for her anxiety
- Developing the concept of 'being kind' with a learner who has low self-esteem but channels this through aggressive behaviour (**Appendix 3**):
  - Used with a client whose emotional responses to situations and other people were immediate and instinctive and often angry, leading to aggression and difficult situations
  - Identified positive mantras that can help with grounding and self-celebration



- Building confidence through mindfulness with learners with learning difficulties (**Appendix 4**):
  - Learner is 21, shy and has mild learning difficulties
  - Has difficulty focusing on classroom and homework tasks as easily distracted
  - Practices breathing exercises of 60 seconds, several times a day to enable him to learn to focus his attention
  - Initially reluctant (as he felt shy about doing it) and easily distracted
  - Now successfully manages to do this several times a day and keeps a mood diary to reflect on his thoughts and possible triggers



- Delivery Mindfulness to learners on Study Programmes and Traineeships (**Appendix 5**):
  - All learners were experiencing challenging lives which resulted in poor attendance, behaviour and focus
  - Explored an 8-week course, integrated into their usual learning programme
  - 5 learners participated, all of which saw benefits within some aspect of their lives
  - Some learners stayed on beyond their end date to complete the mindfulness programme
  - All embraced the practice and some have seen significant improvements in their lives
- Using a meditation App in class to see learner's levels of stress reduce and able to focus on learning (**Appendix 6-8**):
  - Looking to see if learners focus could be enhanced and whether they could develop healthier relationships with others to combat reports of bullying
  - Used a 10-minute mindfulness practise with learners at the beginning of each teaching session
  - Learners responded exceptionally well and wanted to 'return the favour' by doing something nice for the tutor
  - As the programme developed, learners were less agitated, had more positive behaviour, reported feeling happier and were becoming kinder to one another (thoughtful responses and compliments amongst learners)
  - Timekeeping and attendance improved slightly and seeing less use of mobile phones
  - Learners appear more focused and follow instructions better
  - Some learners are using the App at home



- Improving erratic attendance, aggression and disruptive behaviour (Appendix 8):
  - Worked individually with two 14-year-old learners in alternative education
  - Developed/ negotiated ground rules for the mini-intervention with the learners and ensured these were abided by throughout
  - Identified the triggers for aggressive behaviour was not being listened to and unfairness
  - Discussed positive and negative emotions, the purpose of emotions and there is no such thing as a 'wrong emotion'
  - Followed on with discussion on actions resulting from emotions, learners felt things escalated too quickly for them to have control.
  - After discussing the effects of emotions on the body the learners were able to identify racing heart, faces becoming warm, shoulders tensing up.
  - Practiced ways to control actions such as breathing exercises, ways of sitting/ moving/ standing to feel more grounded, safe places/ safe people they can go to and places/ people they should avoid when at crisis point.
  - Initial feedback is positive. One learner has been able to (nearly) always remove themselves from negative situations. The other, where crises were happening on a daily basis, has been able to remain in lessons for one full week.
  
- Improving learners' engagement in writing skills through scaffolded learning (Appendix 9):
  - Examined learner avoidance strategies and delay tactics, levels of engagement, concentration, quality of written work and their emotional journey throughout the writing process
  - Learner on Programme of Study in Construction, working towards E2 English and is 17 years old.
  - Part of a roll-on, roll-off class and vast majority of learners come from a disadvantaged area of the community, have multiple challenges in their personal lives and have negative pre-conceptions of learning built from poor experiences of learning at school
  - Week one provided learner with linear list on how to complete a writing task which resulted in initial disengagement and avoidance to reluctant completion which lacked focus. Learners' emotional state was negative throughout and displayed signs of anxiety.
  - Week two provided learner with similar writing task with scaffolding to provide support and encouragement. Initially given a reading task on the topic (as the learner had better reading skills). Following this, there was a discussion on the content of the text, which the learner actively and confidently engaged in.
  - Learner given a short break and returned to the writing task which was well received. After some initial self-doubt, they worked independently, applied a lot of knowledge from the previous reading and discussion. He took care with the task with evidence of proof reading and correction of errors, and stretched and challenged himself to add features to his writing. Learners emotional state throughout was calm, focused and did not distract his peers or allow his peers to distract him.
  - Week three aimed at reducing the learner's initial self-doubt when completing a writing task.
  - Used a range of kinaesthetic resources such as flash cards, watched a video, discussed topic with peers, internet research, independent reading task.
  - The final activity involved writing a response to a colleague which the learner completed without hesitation, confidently sharing his opinions in the reply. He displayed no self-doubt and his emotional state was happy, positive and confident

## What Went Well/ Not Well and Lessons Learned

This project has found that, even in a short period of time, mindfulness can contribute to outstanding teaching, learning and assessment if used in the right way. We have seen the beginnings of some significant shifts in attitudes, behaviours and beliefs from learners who have undergone the mini-interventions.

Some learners have successfully adopted mindfulness as a way to deal with on-going stress and anxiety, enabling them to continue with their learning despite multiple challenges at home. Others have used it (specifically the breathing techniques) to help them overcome short-term anxiety in the learning environment for example, when facing an exam or difficult task or when confronted with challenging behaviour from another learner. Others have learned to be kind to themselves, recognising that they are their own worst critic and are actually coping very well under difficult circumstances.

The practitioners have also learned that they can become better teachers, counsellors and support workers through practicing mindfulness. They deal better with stressful situations and can manage their anxieties more effectively. Some practitioners reported feeling more able to cope with challenges in the classroom and were more aware of how to reduce learners' anxiety levels.

Another factor was the opportunity to take time out for themselves to complete the mindfulness course. All of the practitioners recognised they had busy lives, rarely taking a moment for reflection. The 2-hour mindfulness course enabled them to do this, and do it in the company of like-minded individuals. As well as practicing mindfulness together, they shared ideas, helped solve problems and advised on projects.

Throughout, many of the practitioners were surprised at the learners' readiness to accept mindfulness. After some initial hesitation with one or two participants, all of them actively embraced it, keen to see some positive impact on their lives. In a number of cases, participants asked to continue with mindfulness despite the intervention or their course finishing.

However, time was a major factor in the overall success of the project. At the outset, we understood that the whole of the mindfulness programme undertaken by the practitioners would not complete within the project timescale. However, there were capacity issues which resulted in a 3-month delay in the programme starting. This meant that the mini-interventions were also delayed, not wanting to commence them until the practitioners had at least an awareness of mindfulness. This resulted in the impact of the mini-interventions not being fully realised. However, despite this, there were still some very encouraging results.

In addition, due to a change in staffing, the project manager at learningSkills changed mid-way through the project. It was identified at this stage that the project had not moved quickly enough, was behind schedule and lacked some focus around the practical elements of the project.

Another factor that hindered the success was the capacity of the practitioners to compile the evidence from the mini-interventions. Their busy schedules resulted in the interventions being completed, but being 'evidence weak', relying on anecdotal evidence rather than data. However, this only happened in two of the ten interventions and we are satisfied that the results were seen despite being 'evidence weak'.

## Sustainability

The full impact of the project has not yet been realised. There have been some small but significant shifts in both tutors' approaches to teaching and learning but also the approach of learners. For example, we have started to see an increase in learner's willingness to participate actively in learning, rather than be passively taught. This is especially true with younger learners who are beginning to take ownership of their learning. Tutors have become more reflective, giving more thought to the planning of sessions that will be truly inclusive to all on an educational and emotional level. Many learners appear to be developing more empathy, resulting in a more pleasant learning environment with fewer instances of poor behaviour. Learners are being kind to themselves, recognising the difficult challenges they face on a daily basis. This in turn is resulting in them being kind to others.

However, the timescale for the project was too short. There have been some increases in attendance, retention and success but it is difficult to isolate whether it was as a direct result of the mindfulness project or whether other factors (such as a change in management within the Study Programmes and Traineeships) has influenced the increase. Whilst learners have benefited from the project it is impossible at this stage to know whether the benefits will be seen long term. The tutors who participated in the mindfulness training certainly enjoyed the programme and had a desire to fully embrace a 'mindfulness lifestyle'. As the training continues and the reality of completing a daily mindfulness practice is recognised, it will be interesting to see whether all tutors have the time and the resilience to continue to the end of the programme and eventually teach it to others.

learningSkills are interested in ensuring that the project continues. We will be monitoring the outcomes of the Mindfulness training, further mini-interventions and attendance, success and retention rates for courses where mindfulness is used to see what the full impact is.



## Appendix 1 – Case Study: Using mindfulness with a young person in a community learning setting

As part of our OTLA project, I wanted to use some of the techniques we had been learning around mindfulness to support Lana<sup>1</sup>, a young person I had been working with at our community learning setting. Lana is a year 11 student who has been out of mainstream education for over two years. Life for this young person has been very difficult indeed; she is identified as high risk of child sexual exploitation and she and her family are currently subject to a child in need plan. Lana also suffers from anxiety and her attendance can fluctuate as a result of this. Substance misuse is also a problem for Lana, and she has been known to engage in this as a strategy to help manage the complex emotions she experiences as a result of the ongoing difficulties in her life.

I intended to explore a different aspect of mindfulness with Lana each week to support her to explore alternative coping strategies and to help her manage some of the difficult emotions she experiences. I also hoped that mindfulness work might help Lana develop resilience (Rutter, 1999) and as a result of this, help her to improve her attendance at the centre. I felt that improved resilience and better attendance were important goals for me to work with Lana, as they will help her to develop the skills she needs to progress and maintain a placement when she leaves our setting in July.

The first couple of sessions with Lana went well. We explored different breathing techniques and ways in which she could shut off her mind to intrusive thoughts and feelings by focusing on her breathing. I asked Lana to try out the techniques at home and she told me that *'I tried the breathing and it made me fall asleep'*. Lana reported that she was enjoying the sessions and that they momentarily helped to take her mind away from other things that were going on in her life.

Following the initial breathing activities, I was unable to complete mindfulness work with Lana for a few weeks. A lot was going on in her life, and she missed a lot of time with us, including a period of illness caused by severe, untreated tooth decay. When I did see Lana, there were a series of ongoing crises' unfolding in her life which needed immediate practical attention. This is often the nature of work with young people who are receiving alternative education.

When we finally got opportunity to work together again in a classroom setting, the next activity we tried was a circle activity (an activity shared with me by the project lead from Gateshead Community Learning Team during one of our project meetings). The purpose of the circle activity is to focus on relationships between people, circumstances or events, and to explore the ways in which a central theme or event is influenced by things that are either within or outside of our control. Lana and I decided to use her difficulties with attendance as the central focal point. She began by stating that she didn't come because she *'didn't want to come'* and she was *'tired'*. As we used the circles however, it quickly became clear that there were far deeper reasons than 'tiredness' and 'not wanting to come' which were affecting Lana's attendance. Some of these things were in her control; some were not.

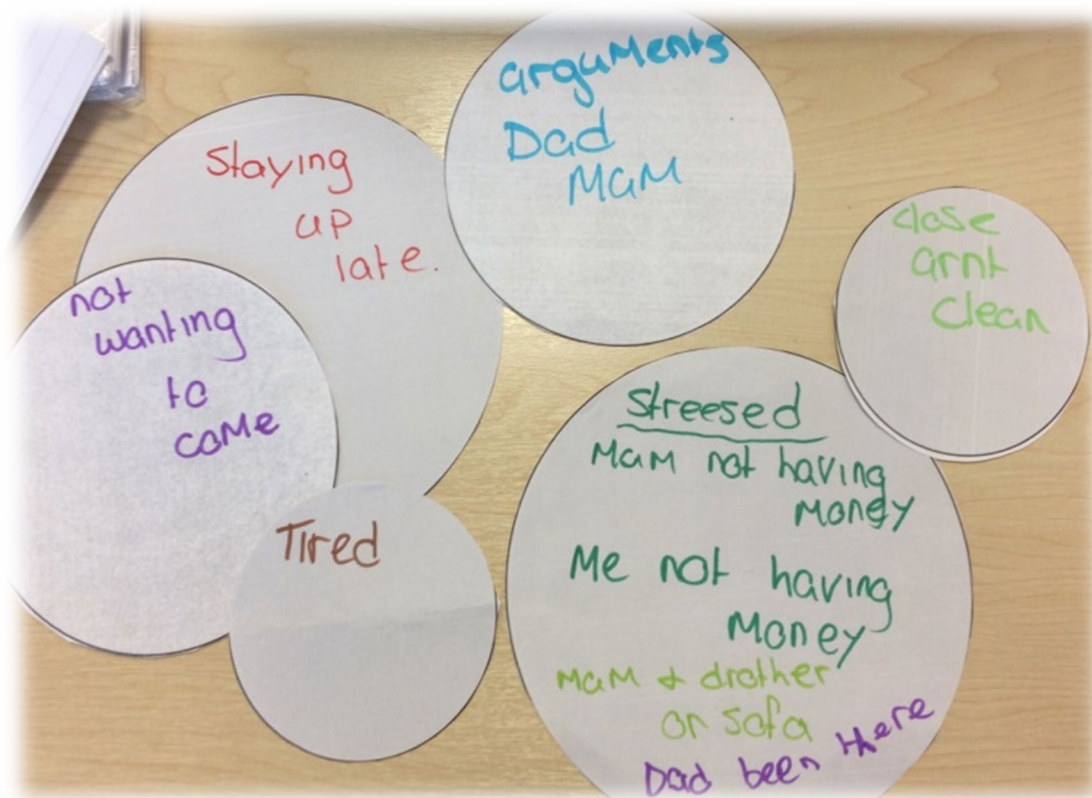
What the circles activity allowed Lana to do was to reframe the way in which she viewed her non-attendance, to understand that it is nothing to do with her being *'bad'* or *'naughty'* or *'not bothered'* and everything to do with her doing the best she can do under a very difficult set of personal

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<sup>1</sup> Name changed to protect young person's identity

circumstances. This is very important as a way to counteract stigma and labelling (Goffman, 1963) and to help Lana see that she is being listened to; that her experiences are being taken seriously and that her insight regarding how to develop resilience in relation to the adversities in her life is valued. As a tutor and manager of alternative education within our setting I was able to appreciate and reflect upon each individual issue that was affecting Lana's attendance, and work with her to look for solutions to the elements we felt we were able to have some control over. Exploring attendance using the circles encouraged me to unpick and explore with Lana, and helped me to develop a far clearer picture of her circumstances that I would have been able to had I just sat and asked her why she wasn't attending, as I would have done before the mindfulness project.

As the weeks continued, Lana's attendance continued to fluctuate. Last month her sister suffered a miscarriage nearly eight months into her pregnancy. We have seen little of Lana since. It is perhaps too early to tell whether the mindfulness work I completed with Lana has had any great impact upon her resilience; more work would need to be completed over a longer period of time. What I can report is that Lana told me that she enjoyed the sessions, and following the mindfulness work we did, she engaged very well indeed in her subject specific work with other tutors. In terms of Lana's attendance, there are too many other factors affecting this at present to know whether or not mindfulness work helps improve attendance in general. Lana did tell me that her breathing work had improved her sleep, which was a barrier Lana had identified in relation to her attendance in the past. We hope that Lana will come back to us following the tragedy of her sister's loss and we will continue to work mindfully together to support her transition into post sixteen learning.



*Using circles to explore attendance issues with Lana*

## References:

- Rutter, M. (1999), Resilience concepts and findings: implications for family therapy. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 21: 119–144. doi:10.1111/1467-6427.00108
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma, notes on the management of a spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster: London.

## Appendix 2 – Case study M

The young person I am working with, as part of the mini intervention of Living Mindfully is M who is a 21-year-old British Female who lives in Gateshead with her mother and father and two older sisters.

M attended mainstream primary school then specialist provision for students aged between 11-19. M has mild mental health issues and a mild to moderate learning difficulty.

M is willing to take part in the living mindfully project and is keen to share her worries with me. M often listens to her peers' life experiences and changes them into her personal experiences, which has caused trouble with M and her peers.

M can become upset easily and the intervention we practise is the 3-minute breathing activities in a quiet area until her anxieties are over.

Staff are aware that M and I are working together and Staff have often asked me to support M to reengage in her activities in class or on placement.



# Mindfulness

From practical course to application in  
counselling sessions

November 2017

## Context



- Aim of project was to take elements of mindfulness from the eight week course into day to day work interactions with other people
- In my case, this was to use elements of mindfulness practice in the counselling room
- Specifically to work with a client whose emotional responses to situations and other people were immediate and instinctive and often angry, potentially leading to aggression and difficult situations

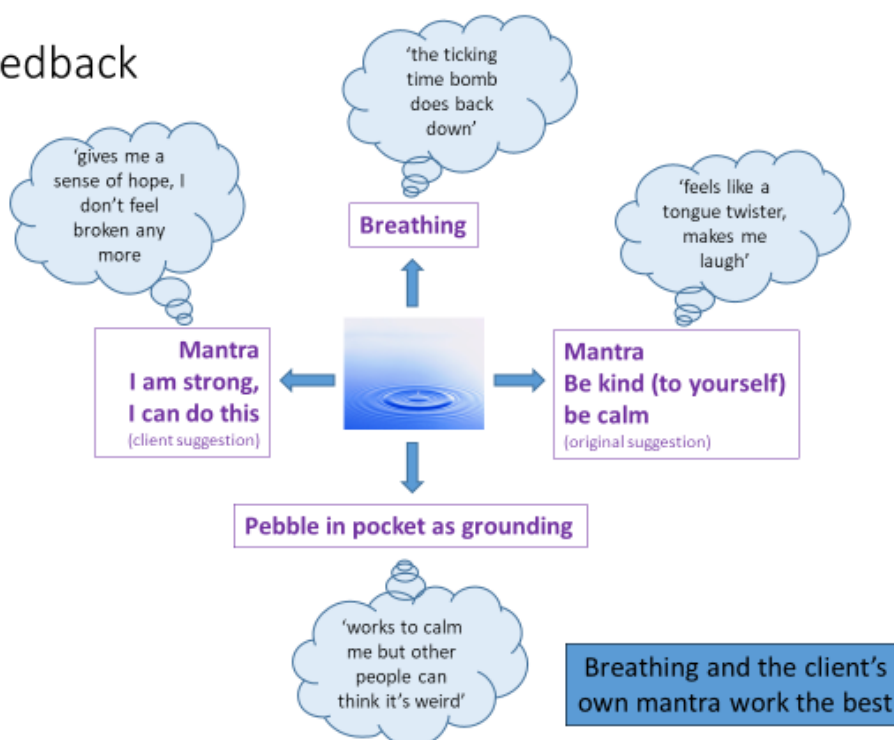
## Process



- **Stage 1: Consultation with a professional**
  - Consulted with my clinical supervisor, who had supervised my work with this client. I suggested using various different approaches to see what worked best with the client
  - Together we came up with three different approaches to test – slow breathing to allow space to choose how to react in a situation, use of a small smooth pebble for grounding in the moment and a short mantra as a focus to allow space to choose how to react in a specific situation
- **Stage 2: Tell the learner**
  - Within session, I talked to my counselling client – this fitted well with our overall goal of introducing ways for the client to access calmness, in challenging situations
  - We discussed the different elements and the client took them away to try out (having first altered the mantra to one that suited better)

**Stage 3: The learner tries out different options**

## Feedback



## Appendix 4 – Case study S

S is a shy young 21-year old with a history of depression.

He has difficulty focusing and concentrating on tasks in the classroom and homework tasks.

He agreed to explore a mindfulness-based exercise to help him concentrate.

We practiced breathing exercises and then he was encouraged to take 60 seconds each day to focus on only his breathing, staying in the here and now. He was told to do this several times a day. The long-term goal is to gradually extend the time to concentrate on his breathing.

He was reluctant at first and was distracted easily as he felt reserved, but with further encouragement he is now willing to give it a go.

This process has just been commenced. He has been encouraged to keep a mood diary to reflect thoughts and possible triggers.

The process will demonstrate whether concentrating on only breathing in the here and now for short and then lengthened periods of time will enable S to concentrate on class work for longer periods.

# The story so far...

Learner	Personal Profile	How they use Mindfulness	Results So Far...
<b>L</b>	Shy Self-critical Lacked confidence Traumatic childhood	Uses Mindfulness on a regular basis when she starts to struggle with things in her life  Uses 'Home Base' breathing technique to help calm nerves when she sat a maths exam  Has become more aware of her surroundings and is no longer lost in her thoughts	Embraced Mindfulness in everyday life  Gained confidence  Has more self-worth  Speaks out in class  Sees herself as a valued human-being
<b>A</b>	Friendly and outgoing  Long history of being bullied at school	Uses Mindfulness at home when things become chaotic  Meditates regularly  Used Mindfulness to cope with a recent family tragedy	Embraced Mindfulness on a massive scale  Able to do into very deep relaxation when meditating  Applies Mindfulness regularly in everyday life  Expresses his experiences  Supports others to embrace Mindfulness
<b>J</b>	On medication for depression Negative thinking	Enjoyed exploring thoughts and feelings	Recognised that most of his thoughts are negative and is working on strategies to change this such as compassionate comebacks and lean-on-emotions
<b>K</b>	Quiet Shy  Doesn't mix well but is quietly confident	Enjoyed every session  Uses Mindfulness and breathing techniques at home to manage emotions	Able now to recognise when home stressors are engaging and action (breathing) needed to calm
<b>L</b>	Autistic  Very quiet	Fully engaged with the sessions  Listens deeply when discussing 'the loop' between thoughts, feelings, emotions and	Developed his personality  Formed friendships



	Friendly	physical sensations	Expresses himself more confidently Recognises when he is in 'the loop'
<b>C</b>	Very shy Quiet Lacks confidence Doesn't mix well with others for fear of being judged	Discovering that thoughts are just mental events has been enlightening for him Recognising that he has a choice over what to do with his thoughts	Mindfulness has made him happier Starting to free himself from negative thinking Improving self-worth
<b>K</b>	Overactive mind Lives in the future	Found meditation difficult but lying down has helped as it settles her mind Enjoyed exploring and identifying where she felt emotions in the body and what colour and shape they represent Recognised she lives in the future and wanting things to be different	Starting to notice the benefits of being in the here and now Calms and soothes when she is feeling anxious/fraught when facing decisions
<b>S</b>	Friendly Reserved in terms of emotions Looked-after child	Distracted during meditation and often fidgets	Trying to recognise that he finds it difficult to remain still and working on breathing to deal with this
<b>J</b>	Autistic Gets very frustrated if he doesn't understand something and demonstrates this physically	Embraced the meditation Very engaged in activities	Starting to understand the benefits of mindfulness, and with continued practice will build on this
<b>M</b>	Outgoing Friendly Confident Soon to be dad	Initially embarrassed and uncomfortable in sessions	Starting to understand the possibilities of self-regulation Can see the benefits of stress relief for his unborn baby and the possibilities of using Mindfulness when he/she is born as a coping mechanism for new parents

## Learner Attendance

Three of the learners requested they stay on beyond their traineeship time as they all said they were getting so much out of the course.

K asked if he could stay on until the mindfulness programme finished as he was enjoying it and getting lots from it.

L expressed how she has noticed changes within her and wanted to continue on the programme, as did C. Generally, we have noted improvements in overall group attendance since incorporating the programme as learners have started developing a deeper bond and connection with each other through their gentle exploration of themselves.

This has encouraged them to want to attend as it is a place of trust, understanding and support from each other that has really grown beautifully.

## Success stories

One particular learner A, has massively benefited from the integration of mindfulness within the traineeship programme. He has become a complete advocate of mindfulness not only for himself, but for many he comes into contact with. He has been willing to share his own success with it and this has encouraged his peers to explore it for themselves without the fear of being judged. He has helped to create a safe and supported class environment which has allowed the gentle unfolding of experiences, often personal, other times collective.

This has been wonderful to be part of. It has been a real privilege to see the learners' realisation of the possibility of being able to work with their thoughts and feelings when they never knew this was possible. Having explored this within the sessions, they have then realised the benefits of this and the freedom this brings to their lives.



## Appendix 6 – Tutor report

### *Headspace/Calm*

#### *Train your mind for a happier, healthier life.*

#### *Guided meditation programme to help deal with anxiety, stress, sleep, anger, happiness, self-esteem, patience, kindness and generosity.*

Some of the qualities I was looking for during the programme were enhanced focus, so being able to stay on task longer periods of time and less table kicking. I was also hoping that students would have healthier relationships. This would mean less reports of bullying, less button pushing. I was also hoping to receive better reports from other tutors and staff members.

Initially I wasn't sure what the best way was to gather the thoughts and feelings from the students. I tried a survey on day 1 however it was a little too much for my students to manage so I changed it to a thought log where they log how they feel before the practise then straight after the practise then again after the session. Most of the time they completed the thought log fully without any problem.

The students seemed to really enjoy the first practise and my session that followed went really well. The students were a lot calmer and happier and one of them said because she had had a nice 10-minute practise she would like to do something nice for us the tutors like a hand massage or facial. This sort of behaviour continued over the weeks, the students were a lot less agitated and much more kind to one another. I saw more thoughtful responses and lots more compliments to one another. The time keeping and attendance also improved slightly and I do think I'm seeing fewer mobile phones. One of the girls in my class suggested to the group that they download the app for home use.

At the beginning of the programme the students said they preferred the voice on a different programme so I changed from the Headspace app to the Calm app. Some of the students felt a little self-conscious doing the meditation so we used the curtains around the beds in the beauty therapy room. There weren't always positive comments on the thought logs, there were a few days that they had recorded that their feelings had not improved but most of the time they had. Some of the words they used on the logs were happy, calm, relaxed, motivated, refreshed, positive and tired. Generally, the students in the group are more focused during their tasks and seem to follow instruction better.

The 2 students I have worked closely with during this programme are L and A.

L has improved attitude and attendance and is also a lot more kind, helpful and polite.

A seems to be a lot calmer with less shouting, screaming and bad language. A has also taken up reading which has calmed her down in class if she is to be a model for another student.

I will continue to do meditation in the salon with my students as I feel it makes a huge difference to my classes and the students request it daily.

## Appendix 7 – ALD Results (Headspace)

Learner	Right now I feel...		After my 10 minute meditation session I feel...	I think my day has gone...
<b>J</b>	Tired Stressed Happy Awkward	Fidgety Lazy Demotivated Worried	More relaxed Still worried/ stressed More motivated Less fidgety	I think my day has went quite well. I did a treatment and felt rather confident during it and I stayed on task. I also have enjoyed the day more and feel like the time has passed quickly.
<b>C</b>	Tired Demotivated Irritable Not confident		More relaxed More laidback Sleeper	Doing the practice root colour application on B, I felt on task and focused Felt confident in what I was doing The day went quick
<b>A</b>	Tired Weak Ill In pain Demotivated Fidgety		More tired Less weak Totally motivated Still ill Still in pain Less fidgety	I feel the headspace App helped me stay a lot more chilled throughout the day
<b>L</b>	Devastated Annoyed Tired Back pain		The same way- it didn't help one bit and actually give me a headache	I was focused on what I was doing but it did give me a headache
<b>A</b>	Angry Like everyone is judging me Down Anxious		Relaxed Calm Happy	Way better than I thought
<b>L</b>	Tired		Relaxed but more tired	Proper good!
<b>P</b>	Stressed Tired Unsettled		Relaxed Awake Motivated Stress has gone	Good and positive
<b>B</b>	Stressed Fidgety Tired		Calm Focused Happy Tired	Very well- better than expected

## Appendix 8 – Laura's report

My thoughts on how Mindfulness has gone

After my whole experience of mindfulness, I feel like I'm more calm and confident in myself and in day to day life. It did make me feel more tired after each session that I'd done because it is so relaxing to do. I felt that each session I did was quite nerve wracking, especially the first time doing it (as it was new to me). Before I went in each session, I felt low and depressed because of things happening in my life. But it has really helped me; it has helped me feel more proud in all of the things I do, like my hairdressing course. My tutor Jayne has seen a huge improvement in my attitude towards people like usually I would not listen to anyone and get quite angry and frustrated a lot but now I find that I don't get angry and frustrated as much. I just tell the person and I remove myself from the situation which I find this a lot easier to do now.

I would give mindfulness 10/10.

## Appendix 9 – Writing skills

Research project

Yildan Leigh Husnu

### *Aims*

The aim of this project is to improve learners' engagement with writing. Learners will be observed throughout sessions in particular looking at and assessing their attitudes and barriers towards writing (looking at avoidance strategies and delay tactics), their level of engagement throughout writing tasks (looking at their levels of concentration and the time they commit to a writing task), the quality of their written work and their emotional journey throughout the writing process.

The quality of their work will be assessed fairly and will coincide with the level they are working towards, the number of weeks/session they have been on programme (have attended English sessions) and the topics they have previously covered (for example if a learner has not covered a session on punctuation then it would be unfair to assess punctuation for that particular learner compared to a learner who has covered two or three sessions on punctuation). For the purpose of this research it is mainly the **engagement, participation and emotional well-being with the writing task** that will be monitored but other factors will also be observed (as outlined).

### *Make-up of learners and programme*

The learner who will be observed and used as a subject for this research attends a construction study programme and is working towards E2 English. The learner is under the age of 18. The programme is a roll on roll off so learners start and finish throughout the year at different times. Many of the learners are from disadvantaged areas of the community and have very turbulent personal/home-lives.

Learners who attend this programme usually have a very negative pre-conception of learning, a lot of this negativity stems from hostile and unsuccessful relationships with school and many learners have left school with little or no qualifications (especially in the core subjects). With encouragement learners often engage with the practical aspects of the programme (construction) but are hostile towards maths and English. This is usually a reflection of low confidence with these core subjects.

### *Research, part 1*

The initial writing task was observed: the learner was given a writing task to write about himself. There was little discussion before this task and no scaffolded activities. No examples of texts or writing frames were given but topics to consider were discussed to give learner scope on varied aspects of his life which he could potentially write about. A linear list was highlighted on the board: family, friends, pets, hobbies, work/work experience. Due to many having very disjointed home lives it was important to highlight that writing about them did not necessarily mean they had to write about families but aspects of their lives that they were comfortable sharing and aspects that were significant to them.

The learner who was being observed (who is particularly disengaged with writing tasks) became very hostile as the paper and pens were handed out: 'I don't want to do this, can I do it next week?'

he said. 'Can I do this after break?' he continued. **These responses are very typical of delay strategies and avoidance techniques.** This reflects his low confidence approaching a written task. His behaviour also changed, he began to swing on their chairs, look out of the window, and chat to peers and proceeded to go on his phone. With some verbal encouragement he did attempt and completed the task. The information given was limited and it was very matter of fact, there was not any emotion throughout this written task nor did he give any opinions.

**His emotional state throughout the task was negative; he was disengaged and showed signs of some anxiety.** He became very disengaged with the task before he engaged with it and completed it. Even when he did engage he was not fully focused (engaged) and **he completed it robotically.** **He completed it with the reward of a break.**

### *Research, part two*

The learner on week two of the research project was given a writing task with some scaffolding to give him support and encouragement. The **scaffolding was implemented to reduce stress and anxiety** whilst completing the written task and to build confidence with writing. The scaffolding was also implemented to secure the learner in his own learning and help to raise his awareness of his existing skills: **to give him the confidence to not only apply these skills but also to explore further and to ease him into his zone of proximal development** to explore new skills.

The learner was first given a reading task, this learner is confident with reading and his reading skills are stronger than his written skills. The topic was online safety. There were also structured and learner led discussions on online safety. Learners were asked to consider a minimum of 3 ways to stay safe online, this learner's responses included:

Not to add people you don't know (whilst discussion social networking)

To activate privacy settings

Not to talk to strangers online (through Q and As the learner was stretched and challenged to elaborate on this)

Not to give out personal information such as name, DOB, bank details, passwords, address or share photos which could include any of these details. A banking advert was referred to by this learner to support his point of view and prompted us to watch it with the class.

To only access safe sites to decrease the risk of viruses

To report suspicious site

To report bullying or inappropriate belabour online

Not to access sites which have an age restriction (if you're under said age)

**Learner was confident throughout the discussion and promoted a lot of valuable content.** Learner appeared at ease and very engaged he was on task throughout the discussion and was engaged; he shared his own opinions and respectfully listened to others'.

**Learner completed the reading task independently and with confidence.** The reading task was to read an online BBC article on social media and social networking. The reading task stretched his

application of reading strategies and knowledge of purpose and features. **Learner was happy to share his answers during group feedback; this is very significant** for this learner as he usually becomes anxious during group feedback.

Following the discussions and the reading task was the writing task: write an article aimed at young people with information on how to stay safe online. The learner had a break before this task. Learner returned from his break happy and ready to work, he knew he was returning to a writing task. Learner engaged with this task although he did initially mutter: **'I can't do this' and 'I can't write.'**

Learner worked independently throughout the written task. He applied a lot of the information from the discussion and information from the article. Care was taken to complete the written task as there is **evidence of proof reading** and correcting errors he'd identified. He offered opinions and advice and the article had a suitable tone for his target audience. Furthermore **he pushed himself to apply features to his writing** and to his article such as: headings, sub-headings and paragraphs.

Once on track with the task **the emotional state of the learner throughout this task was calm and very much in control** of the task. He was focused, unlike the first writing task he did not distract peers or display behaviour that would suggest he was trying to avoid the task. Above all, he did not allow peers to distract him.

### **Research part three**

As demonstrated throughout research part one and two the **learner responded much better to a writing task with scaffolding and support before the task**. There was still an initial 'I can't do this' and self-doubt. **The third task aimed to dissolve that initial self-doubt so that the learner did not have these negative conflicts**. A range of kinaesthetic resources were used during the scaffolding process.

The topic was bullying; the starter activity looked at banter vs bullying cards. Learner worked with a peer to discuss and decide whether the words on each of the cards would be defined as bullying or banter. Initially learner said that all of the words were 'just a bit of fun; a bit of banter.' The cards included words such as: geek, stuck up and tramp. After watching an anti-bullying video, where these same words were used repeatedly to target an individual, the learner and his partner consider the word cards in depth. This provoked a lot of discussion and the **learner took an active role in this often leading the discussion**: 'I guess it depends on who you say it to.' he concluded.

The discussion moved forward to consider bullying and harassment in the workplace. **Learner was happy to verbally share his opinions even when he was not always confident/lacked understanding with the topics**, for example: protected characteristics and Workers' Rights. Learner used the internet to research unfamiliar terminology and shared this with peers. **Learner was actively engaged throughout the discussions and the research**, which promoted and relied on the learner's reading skills to read for detail and understanding.

The learner was presented with two reading tasks: reading and researching information online and reading to identify slang words/phrases in a text message. Learner did not complete a reading comprehension to avoid becoming too reliant on this mode and method. **It was important to keep the type of scaffolding varied by using a range of resources and by using a range of learning styles**: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The scaffolding used throughout research three was multi-sensory.



The writing task was quite complexed as it was an unfamiliar scenario. Learner was asked to write his response to a text message. **The content of the text message linked to the content of the discussions and reading tasks:** bullying. For the purpose of the task the text message was sent from a fictional colleague and the colleague was trying to promote bullying against another staff member. Learner was asked to reply and was reminded to consider the information and opinions shared on bullying and harassment (in and out of the workplace). **The learner responded to this writing task very positively. He set to task right away and confidently shared his opinions throughout the message.**

This piece of writing was significantly shorter than the Online Safety article but that was to be expected given the nature of the two very different tasks and reflects his knowledge of target audience and format. His engagement with the second and third written research tasks were similar but **with the third task learner set to task straight away and did not display any self-doubt.** His emotional state was positive; he appeared confident and happy.

There is **evidence of proof reading throughout his reply to the text message, which demonstrates the time and care he spent on this task.** He has replied using some slang language, the task was to reply using informal language, so this is something that will be developed. Considering the purpose of this research and looking at his engagement with the written task **he displayed a greater awareness of his own abilities and the confidence to apply them.**

## **Conclusion**

**In conclusion the learner engaged more with written tasks when the tasks were scaffolded.** By scaffolding task this enabled the learner to focus on the content and the topic, to become confident with the topic and give him the opportunity to verbally share his own ideas and opinions in a relaxed environment. **The learner did not have a spike of anxiety when presented with the written tasks, when tasks were scaffolded using multi-sensory resources.**

**Learner appeared more confident when the scaffolded tasks were multi-sensory** (as in the third research example). It could be argued that the learners' confidence was naturally progressing by week three and his self-doubt was already beginning to decrease. But, **it is important to keep scaffolded tasks varied and these examples prove that by doing so learner remains engaged after the multi-sensory tasks have finished.**

Through observing the learning and through marking his written work (attached) there is a clear correlation between scaffolding and engagement. Although the learners' behaviour did hugely improve as the scaffolding was implemented next it would be lovely to hear him say some positive comments about writing. **Looking at the learners' comments in his ILP they do show that his enjoyment and emotional well-being in class improved** but does not specifically make a comment about writing. Week one he writes: 'Not good like, should do it by myself.' Week two he writes: 'Was okay' and week three he writes: 'Understood today.'

This research set out to improve engagement, confidence and emotional well-being with written tasks but it has surpassed this and **has proven to raise his overall self-esteem.**