

What Mindfulness-based Therapy Offers to the NHS

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I gained much more awareness of what goes on in terms of mind & body in day to day life. This lets me have the opportunity to take a step back and do what will be helpful rather than just 'reactive'.

- feedback from patient after a mindfulness course.

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Mindfulness-based therapy is



An 8-week
group-based
therapy



Effective for
a range
of conditions
including
depression



Can reduce
waiting
times



Can reduce
staff stress



Supported by
a national NHS
training Network

What is unique about mindfulness-based therapy (MBT)?

The clue is in the word "based": mindfulness meditations are the main agent of change. Mindfulness involves focussing on the reality of now rather than ruminating on the past or worrying about the future. This leads to a more compassionate view of one's self and situation, as well as greater patience and self-acceptance. The practices involve daily 30-minute home-based meditations, including movement and also carrying mindful awareness into everyday life. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and mindfulness-based stress reduction are both forms of MBT. Other therapies such as ACT and Compassion-based therapy have mindfulness as one component but do not include the half hour meditations, so are not classed as mindfulness-based.



How effective is it?

Systematic Reviews have shown that MBT is effective with:

Depression

particularly long-term and treatment resistant depression. Its effectiveness is similar to cognitive behavioural therapy and antidepressants and better than other therapies.

Anxiety

MBT is of similar effectiveness to other evidence-based therapies.

Addictions

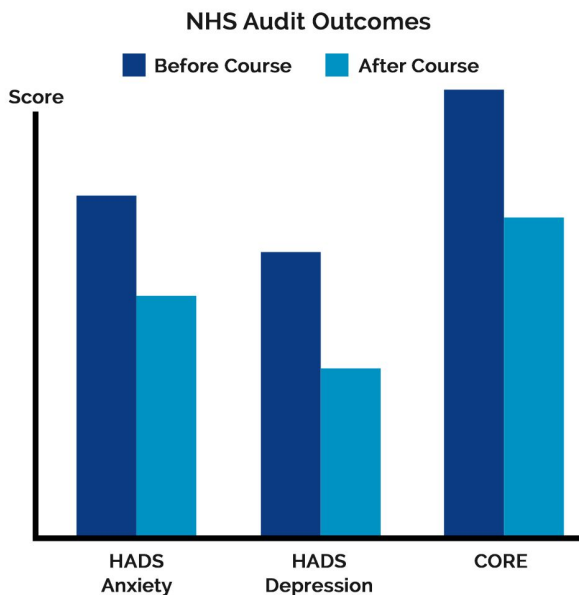
including smoking, where MBT outperforms other evidence-based therapies.

Chronic pain

MBT performs on par with other active therapies.

It is one of the evidence-based therapies recommended in the NES Matrix.

NHS audits from across Scotland have shown that MBTs reduce depression by 40%, anxiety by 34% and improve mental well-being by 32%, accompanied by an increase in mindfulness. These changes are statistically significant.



How is it implemented?

MBT is often used as a high intensity therapy with patients with major mental health problems e.g. in community mental health teams. This requires a high level of clinical skill from the therapists and good governance. In addition, MBT can be used across a spectrum of severity, including as a community-based well-being intervention. It is also increasingly being delivered online.

In the NHS, MBT has proved cost-effective: 3 patients can be offered MBT for the same time as 1 patient for individual therapy. It is therefore effective in reducing waiting times.



Training and Support

MBTs are implemented by a NHS network of health board mindfulness leads, supported by 2 NES-funded national co-ordinators. The HB leads are clinicians who normally deliver the training of new therapists.

References:

Goldberg, S.B. et al., Mindfulness-based interventions for psychiatric disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Clin Psychol Rev, 2018; 59: 52-60.

Bartlett, L. et al., A systematic review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training randomized controlled trials. J Occup Health Psychol, 2019 ; 24(1): 108-126.



Further information

NHS Mindfulness website: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/40297/scottish-nhs-mindfulness-network>

National MBT co-ordinators:

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To try a 3-minute mindfulness practice, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhwQvEGmF_I