

Mindfulness For Distressing Voices & Paranoia

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WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY
OFFER YOU THAT YOU
COULDN'T FIND USING
AN IPHONE 5?



- The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking out new landscapes but in having new eyes.

- **Attrib. Marcel Proust**



Mindfulness- Voice Hearing and Paranoia

- Until fairly recently meditation was ‘contra-indicated’ for people with unusual experiences such as hearing voices and paranoia. There appears to be little previously studied or written about this and the literature available was not evidence based.
- However, since 2005 Chadwick et al have been facilitating therapeutic groups for people suffering from ongoing distressing voices and paranoia with good research outcomes and there is now a growing evidence base.

Groups So Far

- C&I Foundation NHS Trust
- Mind In Camden
- Mind In Islington
- City & Hackney Mind
- Camden St. Mungos Broadway Residential Projects

Demographics-inner city London; mixed gender; age; sexuality & ethnicity

Personal Practice

- We are all practising mindfulness together- not delivering therapy from position of expertise although certainly offering facilitation; guidance and enquiry safely.
- Turning towards difficulties of one kind or another
- The universality of unsatisfactoriness -disease; old age; death.



Group Ethos

- Influenced by Hearing Voices movement-considering members to be experts of their own experience- 'knowing our own minds'
- Non clinical language.
- No emphasis on insight (psychiatry)- working with person's model of reality. However, metacognitive insights on nature of the mind are emphasised
- Members are aware of facilitator's obligations re confidentiality.
- Acceptance based-parallels with Romme & Escher's research findings on more positive outcomes for voice hearers.



RELAX
nothing is
under
control

Evidence Base

- Chadwick, Newman-Taylor & Abba (2005) reported outcomes for the first 10 people to complete a series of mindfulness groups, comprising of 6 group sessions. Participants showed significant improvement on a measure of general clinical functioning, and an improvement in mindfulness skills.
- Chadwick, Hughes, Russell, Russell & Dagnan, 2009 This pilot study was followed by a larger randomised feasibility trial which replicated the earlier finding of a general improvement in clinical functioning and increased mindfulness of thoughts and images for participants following a 5 week mindfulness group
- Langer, Cangas, Salcedo & Fuentes, 2012- Replicated in Spain
- Bardy-Linder et al, 2013- and in France
- Van der Valk, van de Waerdt, Meijer, Van den Hout & De Hann ,2013 Netherlands
- Jacobsen, Morris, Johns & Hodkinson, 2011- Inpatient units.
- Russell, (2011) Body in mind training: mindful movement for severe and enduring mental illness
- Five RCTs for ACT and psychosis. One for mindfulness.

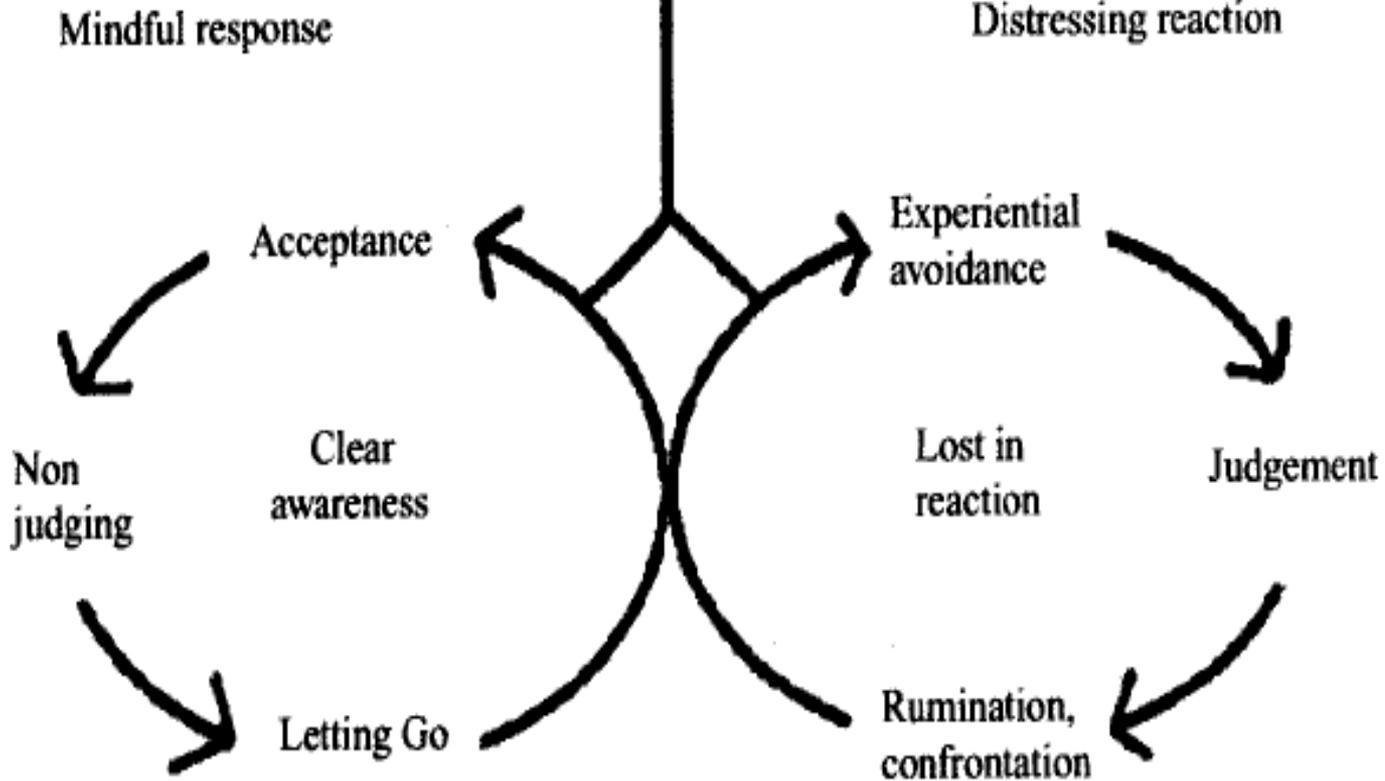
What is the Core Skill To Be learned-

- The core skill to be learned is how to step out of automatic responses to distressing thoughts, images and voices by recognising the negative judgements and ruminative thinking which accompany these experiences and adopting a perspective of mindful awareness.

Two arrows example.



Unpleasant psychotic sensation
(voice, paranoid thought, image)



Structure of 8 week course

- **Week 1 – Introduction-** Grounding techniques; short mindfulness exercises
- **Week 2 & 3-** Letting Go/Letting Be.
- **Week 4 & 5 –** Turning towards what is experienced as difficult
- **Week 6-** Nourishing ourselves with mindfulness- walking and eating.
- **Week 7-** Making friends with ourselves- compassion implicit throughout (Acceptance of experience and self)
- **Week 8-** Putting it all together

Breathing and Being Mindful Space

- **Breathing Space-**
- **Step 1-** Noticing what is happening in our minds- are we ruminating, struggling, experiencing floods of thoughts. And what about the body- is there tightness, tension and bracing our self.
- **Step 2-**Bringing awareness to the body sitting or standing and to the breath. Perhaps counting a few breaths as a way of connecting.
- **Step 3-** Opening out to what is here- thoughts, voices, images with acceptance; non judging of our experiences and our self; patience; a degree of gentleness and a not trying to make things different.
- And a possible next step if we choose-
- **Step 4** –Taking some skilful action- resting; being more active; listening to music; being with others on the telephone or in person.

Evaluation

- NHS group-

CORE – Clinical Outcomes in Routine
Evaluation – Outcome Measures.

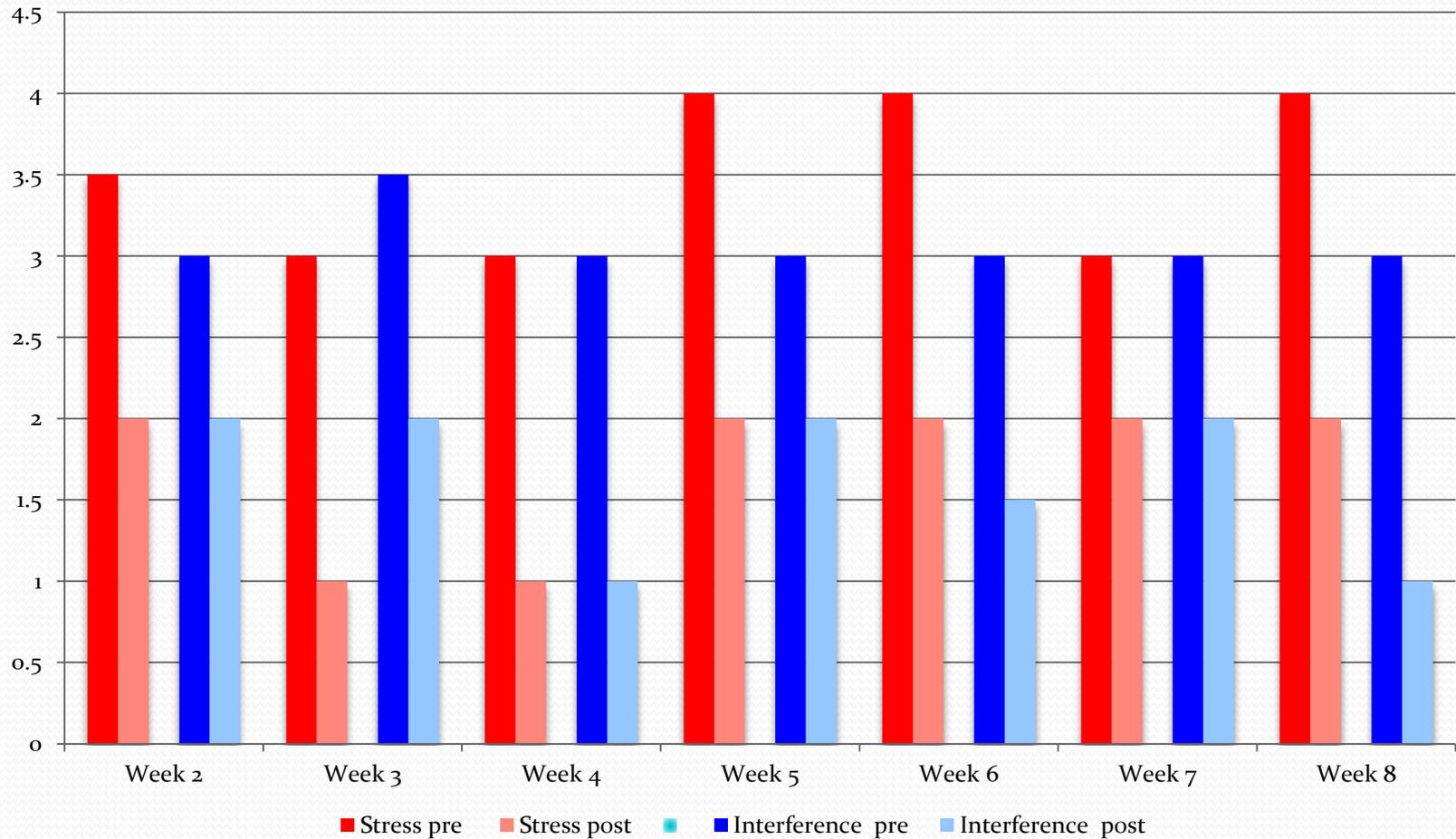
Southampton Mindfulness of Voices
Questionnaire.

Southampton Mindfulness of Thoughts and
Images Questionnaire

Quantitative feedback from NHS Group

- Due to a small sample size not enough power to detect a significant result, however the means and standard deviation (Baseline - $M=1.59$, $SD=0.68$. Follow up - $M=1.20$, $SD=0.67$) from the CORE questionnaire showed that it is going in the intended direction.
- This was also seen in the hearing voices Southampton questionnaire. (Baseline - $M=51.7$, $SD=3.21$. Follow up - $M=48.3$, $SD=3.21$)
- However the Southampton questionnaire regarding distressing thoughts and images did not show this trend. (Baseline - $M=40.6$, $SD=11.7$. Follow up - $M=41.6$, $SD=6.50$)

Stress Bubbles Outcomes



Measurement challenges

- Needs committed co facilitators
- Some participants not keen
- Requires recording at beginning and end
- Co facilitator to record qualitative data each week
- Occasional suspiciousness.

What Group Members Say- Mind groups

”Mindfulness is like watching a rollercoaster from a distance”

“Being aware of what is passing through” (experiences)

“Feels grounding” “Brings fearlessness” “I was experiencing what was here without blocking-the voices became less intense”

‘Awareness’ ; ‘calmness’ ; ‘Present moment’ ; ‘a still anchor’

‘As long as I know where I am,, I can do the 3 min breathing and being mindful space if feeling upset’; ‘Brings me to reality’ ; ‘Brings you to the here and now’; ‘Being comfortable with yourself’

“I had to force myself to stay with the voices at first...but on reflection very much worth it”



Developments

- Workshop with Jacqui Dillon chair of National Hearing Voices Network- 70 participants people who hear voices & their supporters- raising awareness of acceptance based approaches and compatibility with Romme & Escher's work on Hearing Voices-(Romme, Marius and Escher, Sandra: Making Sense of Voices - A guide for professionals who work with voice hearers: (2000) MIND Publications)
- Contribution to BPS document on good practice guidelines for MBIs
- 4 sessions for people who hear voices exploring integration of voices and mindfulness
- Paper/manual mapping out the approach
- Research. Sussex Partnership NHS Trust. Maudsley and IoP
- Working specifically with paranoia- naming; coping strategies; thoughts??
- SHaRP team- MBCTp.

The River Bank

The litter strewn across the running stream

A salutary question-

where am I?

To hold the in-breath

Out-take bringing back

the moment

*The clasp of hands as I become aware of the beauty of
the sky*

The river bank has worn green from the rays of the sun

Where am I?

As my witness

On the firm ground of the river bank

Coming back to the fold

I am here

Karim 2013

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- If you have questions please feel free to contact –
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