

Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training for Veterans with Psychological Distress: Intervention Description and Trial Results

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

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Overview

- **Rationale for brief mindfulness training in integrated care settings**
- **What is Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training?**
- **Research Evidence**
 - Two small randomized controlled trials
 - Treatment adaptation efforts
 - Description of newly funded full scale clinical trial





Poll #1

What is your primary care professional role?

- Mental Health Provider
- Whole Health Provider
- Peer Specialist
- Researcher
- Administrator
- Other



Poll #2

What is your prior clinical experience with mindfulness interventions?

- I'm brand new to mindfulness
- I have some background knowledge on mindfulness but do not deliver mindfulness interventions.
- I sometimes include mindfulness content into the services I deliver.
- I am experienced mindfulness facilitator
- N/A, I don't deliver clinical services.



Why integrated care?

- Most individuals with mental health concerns never receive specialty mental health services.
- Goals:
 1. Provide services where individuals present to care.
 2. Allow medical and mental health care to be collaborative.
 3. Provide services to the entire medical seeking population, not just a select few.
 - Population-based Care
 - Stepped Care
 - Open Access

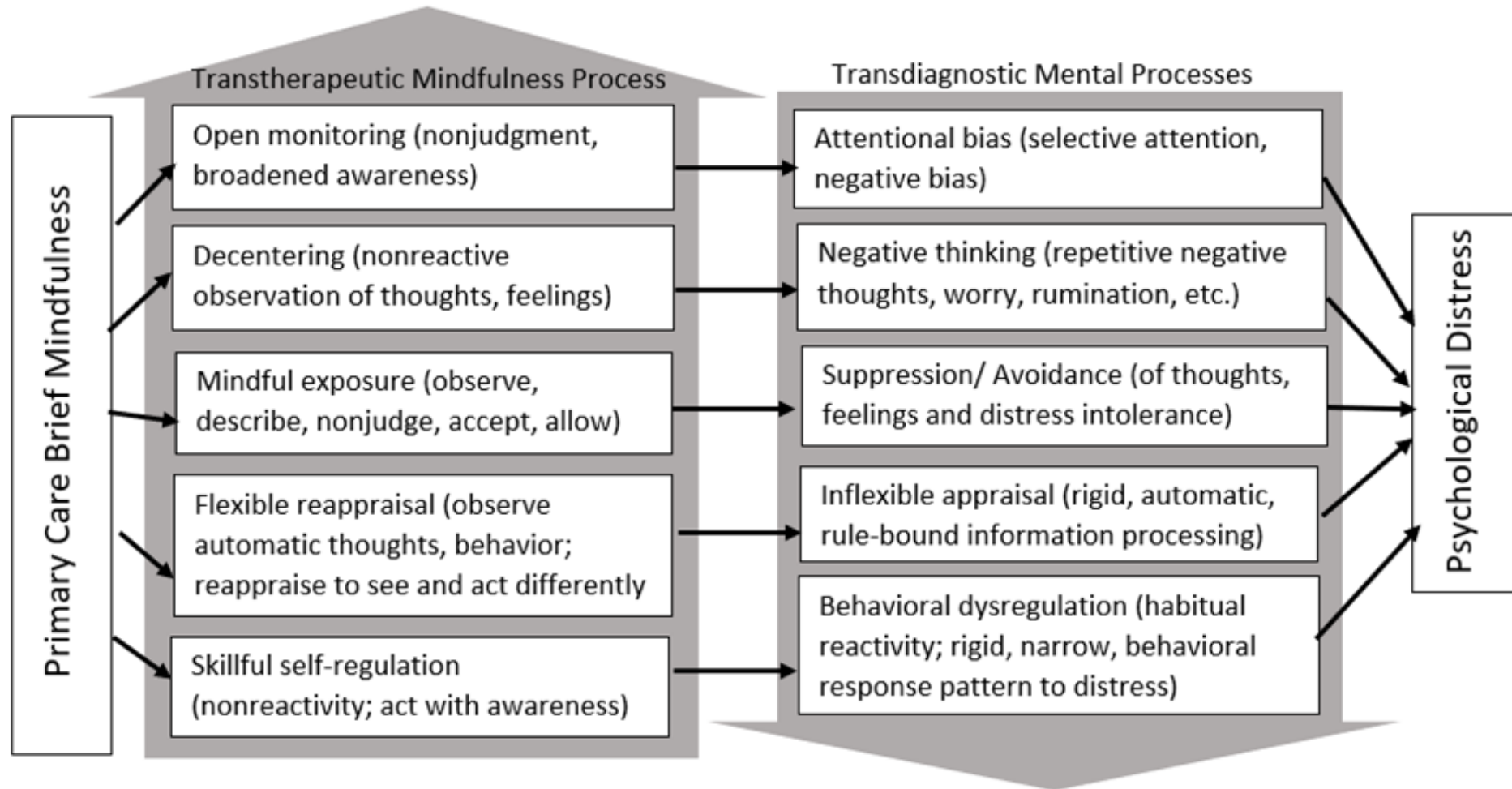
Rationale for Brief Mindfulness

- **Individuals are who are uninterested in traditional mental health treatments may attend a training class with other Veterans.**
 - Classes vs. treatment
 - Students vs. patients
 - Low stigma location
 - Students do not need to identify as having a mental health disorder
- **Focus on building skills**
 - practicing mindfulness rather than talking about problems or concerns



Transtherapeutic Mindfulness Framework

adapted from Greeson et al. (2018) *Evidence Based Complementary Alternative Medicine*



Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training

Modified Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction: Four 1.5-hour classes

Class 1	Welcome and Class Overview	Class 3	Check-in & Discussion of Home Practice
	Grounding Meditation		Opening 15 Minute Sitting Meditation
	Awareness of Breath Discussion and Exercises		STOP (Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed)
	What is Mindfulness? The Waterfall Metaphor		Loving Kindness Meditation
	Mindful Eating: Chocolate Eating Exercise		Intro to Mindful Walking (for home practice)
	Body Scan		Wrap-Up and Homework
	Wrap-Up and Homework		
Class 2	Check-in & Discussion of Home Practice	Class 4	Check-in & Discussion of Home Practice
	Opening Grounding Meditation		Discussion: Making this Practice Your Own
	Overview of Stress Response		Sitting Meditation
	RAIN (working with bodily sensations)		Yoga
	Yoga Stretches		Body Scan
	Body Scan		Closing Ceremony & Meditation
	Wrap-Up and Homework		

Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training

Funding:

1. **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Primary Care Veterans with PTSD Symptoms. VA Central Office Clinical Demonstration Funds, PIs: Possemato & Pigeon.**
2. **Primary Care Based Mindfulness Training for Veterans with PTSD. R34AT009678-01 NIH, National Center for Complementary & Integrative Health, PI: Possemato**
3. **Type I Hybrid Effectiveness-Implementation Trial of Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training for Veterans, VA HSR&D IIR, PI: Possemato**



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A Randomized Clinical Trial of Primary Care Brief Mindfulness Training for Veterans with PTSD

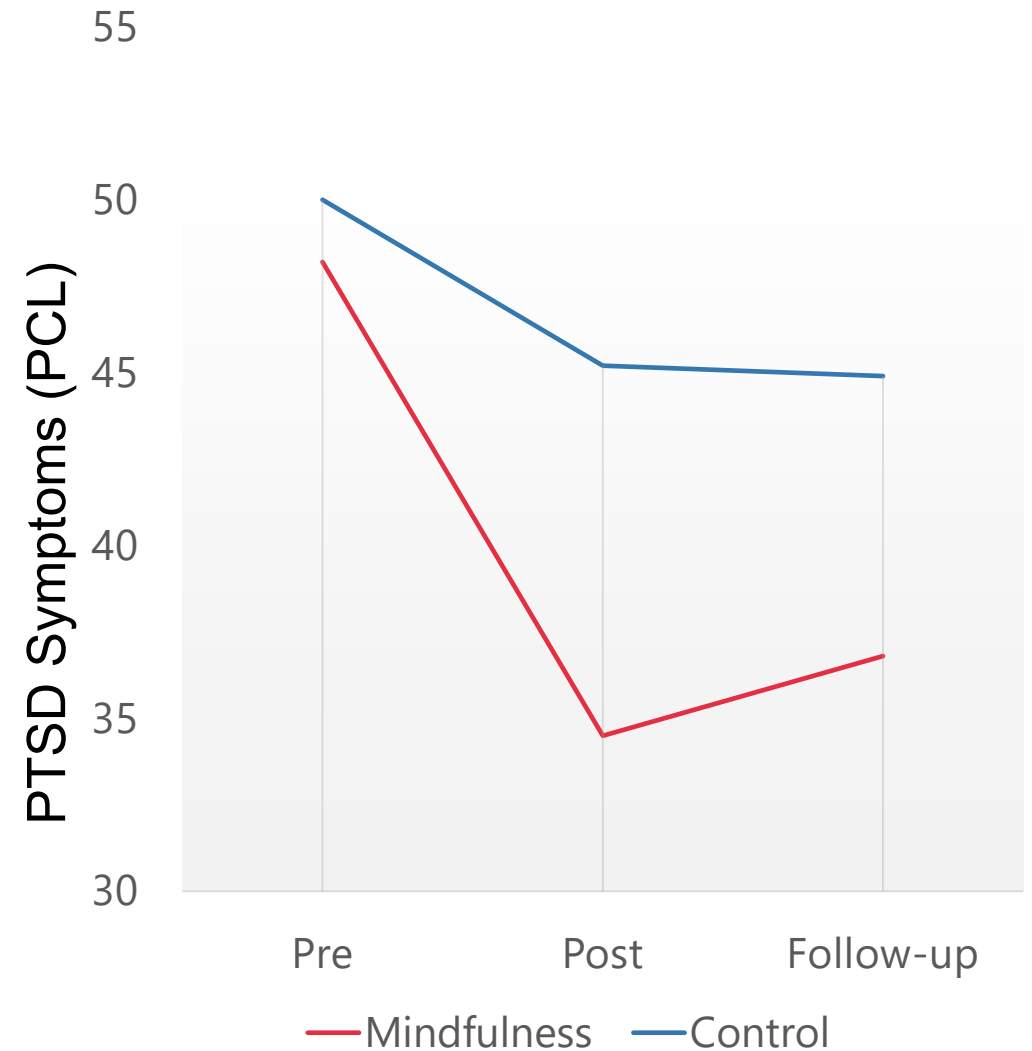
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Affiliations + expand

PMID: 26613203 DOI: 10.1002/jclp.22241

Methods

- N=62
- PCBMT vs. PC treatment as usual
- Recruited PC patients with PTSD that were not engaged in other MH treatment.



What did participants think?

"I went to the mall for the first time in a long time. I walked around for an hour and a half. Being mindful helped me to focus on my friends and the conversation, rather than thinking about being weirded out in public."

"The whole experience of the groups helped me to focus on connectedness- I had been feeling so detached before. It's good to have a plan for when I feel this way."

"The loving-kindness meditation made me notice how much more I was able to accept the nuances and decisions some family members were making."

"I felt less angry at work and was even able to laugh at some thoughts that arose which might have normally set me off."

"I was on my last rope. Now I have tools to use to make one bad day be just one bad day and not a string of days. It is a daily battle but it doesn't have to affect my life like it used to."



Barriers in First Trial

- Classes were facilitated by a non-VA MBSR expert.
 - Need a feasible VA training program
- 1/3 of Veterans never came to the first class.
 - They thought they would be asked to talk about their PTSD symptoms.
- Potential Solutions
 - Watch a video on mindfulness meditation
 - Peer specialists serve as a friendly introduction to classes
 - 1:1 meeting before first class
 - Personal Health Inventory
 - How can mindfulness support health goals?



Adaptation Process

Reasons for Adaptation	FRAME Goals for Modification	Approach/ Evaluation Strategy	Resulting FRAME Modifications	Resulting Outcomes Assessed in Trial
Content not specific to veterans with PTSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Veterans fit • Address Veteran recovery • Increase satisfaction and effectiveness 	Phase 1: Deliver PCBMT to VHA mental health providers and peers and then gather their feedback for content modifications.	Content: PCBMT content and facilitator manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran satisfaction • Changes in PTSD
No feasible pathway to train VHA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve feasibility of training VHA facilitators 	Phase 2: Train providers and peers to deliver modified PCBMT.	Training: structure and content of facilitator training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator fidelity
Low veteran attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase veteran engagement 	Phase 3: Deliver modified PCBMT to veterans.	Context: peers added as facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class attendance



Intervention Modifications

- Simplified yoga
- Meditations \geq 20 min.
- Classes limited to n=8
- Add suggestions on how to practice mindfulness in social situations
- Students asked to practice/ share mindfulness with people in their life
- Frame additional treatment as continuing mindfulness
- Peer pre and post class meetings:
 - Pre: use Personal Health Inventory to identify values and goals
 - Post: help students reflect on goals and connect them to additional services as needed

3 Training Phases

1

- Participate in 4 classes at students

2

- 3-day intensive training

3

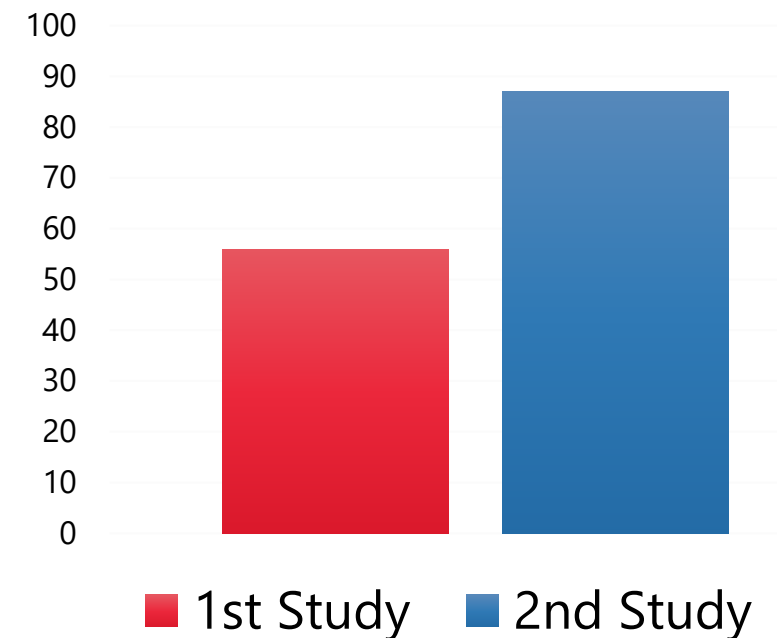
- Four 2-hour sessions
- Lead components and receive feedback

Facilitator Fidelity and Class Attendance

Fidelity

- Self-rated: 94% of all essential elements were enacted
- Independent Observer:
 - 100% agreement with facilitators self-rating
 - 44% of class time was spent practicing mindfulness

Attended First Class



Randomized Clinical Trial of Brief Primary Care-Based Mindfulness Training Versus a Psychoeducational Group for Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

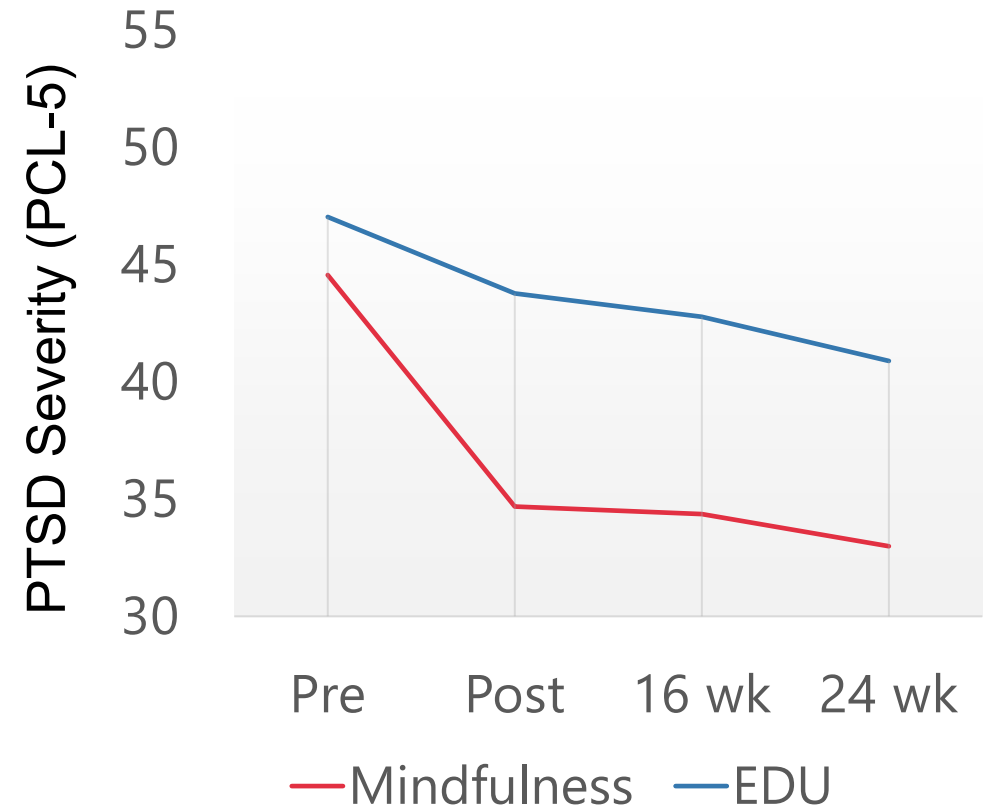
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Affiliations + expand

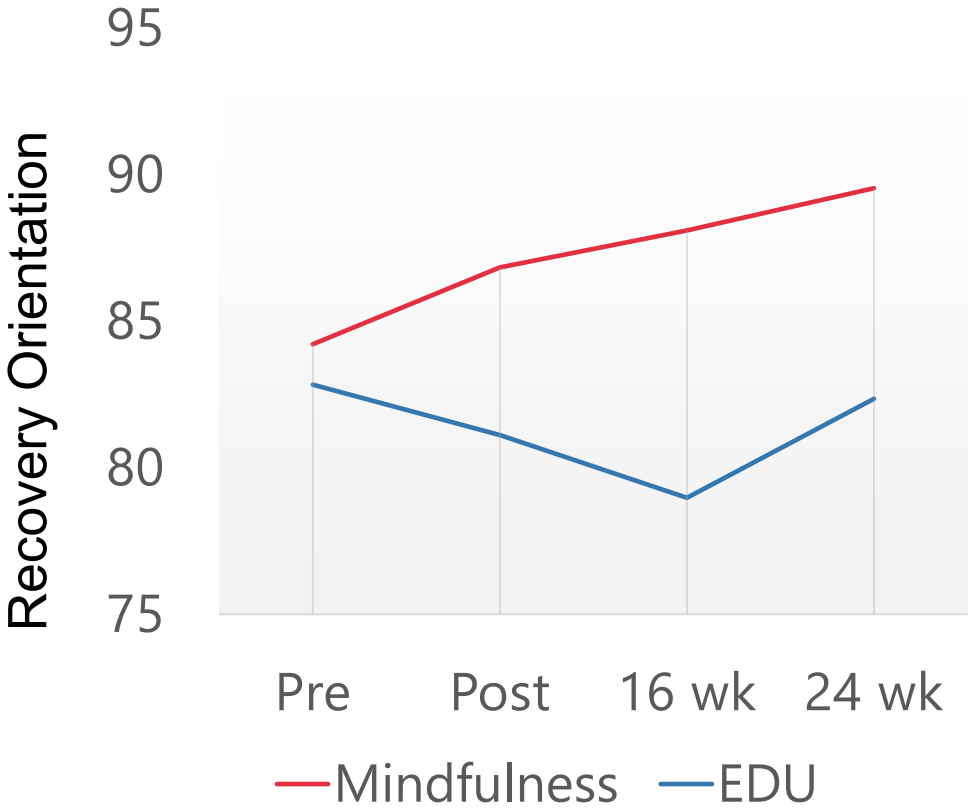
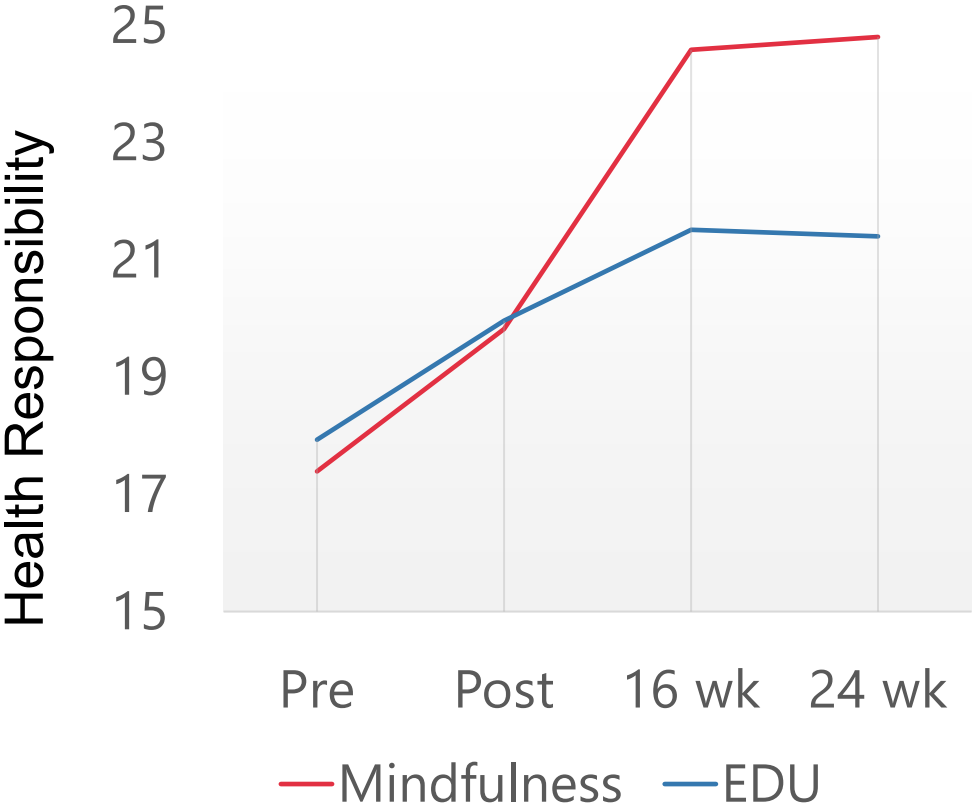
PMID: 36576365 DOI: 10.4088/JCP.22m14510

Phase 2: Test refined training in RCT

- N= 58
- Mindfulness vs. PTSD educational group
- Recruited PC patients with PTSD that were not engaged in other MH treatment.



PCBMT Impact Beyond Symptom Relief



Newly Funded Trial

- Full Scale Trial N=265
- PCBMT vs. Moving Forward Group
- Primary Outcome: Psychological Distress
- Sites: San Diego, St. Louis, Phoenix
- Aims:
 1. Compare conditions on clinical outcomes
 2. Test mediators and moderators
 3. Assess implementation barriers and facilitators to inform future implementation

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Conclusions

- Evidence thus far indicates:
 - PCBMT is feasible to deliver in integrated care settings.
 - Veterans report high satisfaction.
 - PCBMT is superior to active comparison conditions in reducing PTSD, depression and increasing positive health behaviors.
- If the current trial demonstrates PCBMT effectiveness, we hope to disseminate the intervention widely in VA.
 - We will not share the manual until the trial is over.
 - There is no training available outside of our three study sites.



Questions or Comments?

Thank you for your interest
in this research.

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