

Mindfulness-Based Intervention Teacher Survey

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Background

Our research team in the Saron Lab at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain is conducting a study to better understand how mindfulness-based and other contemplative interventions might change people's responses to emotionally charged scenes and interpersonal situations. Overall, this study will help us understand how people develop the skills and capacity to be with suffering that allow them to thrive in their relationships and lives.

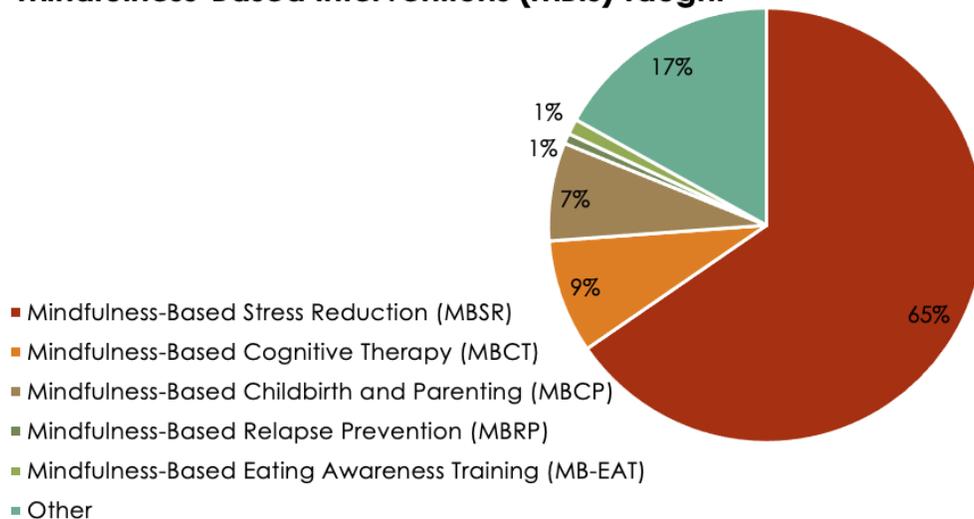
We originally planned to conduct this research with people attending in-person classes, but the conditions of the global pandemic caused us to move our study entirely online. As such, we conducted a survey to gather perspectives from Mindfulness-Based Intervention (MBI) teachers on the efficacy of online versus in-person training. A total of 201 complete responses were analyzed.

Findings

Respondent Demographics

Survey respondents ($M_{age} = 55.9$, $SD_{age} = 10.2$, range = 32-78) had been teaching MBIs for an average of 7.4 years ($SD = 5.6$), with some teachers just learning to teach and others having up to 36 years of experience. All respondents taught between one and three different types of MBIs. The proportion of teachers of each type of MBI is represented below, along with the countries that participants have taught in-person courses in. Respondents that taught multiple MBIs are included in the totals for each MBI they indicated they have taught.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) Taught



Country	Count	Country	Count
United States of America	74	Greece	2
United Kingdom	20	Sweden	2
France	19	Afghanistan	1
Switzerland	11	Turkey	1
Spain	9	South Africa	1
Germany	7	Bulgaria	1
Canada	7	Japan	1
Ireland	6	Georgia	1
Belgium	5	Kuwait	1
Hungary	5	Latvia	1
Italy	5	Netherlands	1
Israel	4	Portugal	1
Austria	3	Qatar	1
China	3	Serbia	1
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	3	Singapore	1
Australia	2	South Africa	1
Luxembourg	2	South Korea	1
Czech Republic	2	Turkey	1
Denmark	2	United Arab Emirates	1

Perceived Efficacy of Online vs In-person Training

Averaging across all MBIs, teachers reported that the efficacy of online training formats was similar to that of in-person formats ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 0.7$, range = 1 [online much less effective] to 5 [online much more effective], where 3 indicates equally effective). This was also true for training-specific ratings of MBSR, MBCT, and MBCP. There were not enough responses regarding MBRP and MB-EAT to draw conclusions about perceptions of those online training programs individually.

We also asked teachers to rate the degree to which they believed the online format diluted the potency of training, and the degree to which it strengthened it (ranging from 1 [not at all] to 5 [completely], where 3 indicates somewhat). Averaged across all MBIs, teachers indicated that the online format both diluted ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.9$) and strengthened the potency of training a little ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.9$). Some aspects of training that teachers felt were lost in the transition to online formats included the ability for students to have informal conversations before and after class, a sense of community in the group, and easily observable body language cues. On the other hand, teachers reported that some features of online formats strengthened the training, such as greater accessibility of MBIs to a more diverse pool of students, reduced travel time, and the ability to be in the safety and comfort of one's own home when learning. Overall, results of this survey indicate that online versions of MBIs are comparable to their in-person counterparts.