



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



See with Fresh Eyes

Programme evaluation report

See with Fresh Eyes: Mindful Photography for Improved Mental Health

A mixed methods evaluation of the See with Fresh Eyes programme delivered by Look Again in partnership with Create Gloucestershire.

This programme was awarded a grant by the BUPA Foundation, which included commissioning this evaluation undertaken by the University of Gloucestershire.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Mindful Photography programme developed by Look Again was awarded a grant by the BUPA Foundation to support individuals in their mid-life with regard to their mental health and wellbeing. Mindful Photography is a tool that uses our sight and the lens of a camera or smartphone as an anchor to help us become more consciously aware of and connected to the present moment. It is experiencing the process of creating photographs in a non-judgmental way, with gratitude and compassion towards ourselves, others and the world around us. It enables us to slow down, look, look again and see our lives differently.” (Ruth Davey, 2020). The mindful photography course involved (in the first instance) eight half-day sessions to improve mental health and wellbeing through mindful photography techniques. Pursuant to the pandemic, the project was adapted to suit online delivery, where participants took part in four weekly two-hour sessions. The present evaluation was commissioned to assess this intervention for its efficacy in improving participants’ mental health and wellbeing.

Objectives

The evaluation set out to answer two questions:

1. Are there changes in participants’ levels of anxiety, depression, wellbeing, and resilience after involvement in the intervention?
2. What are participants’ experiences and perceptions of the intervention?

Method

The evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the objectives. Participant self-report data were used to address objective 1, comparing before and after scores on self-report questionnaires. Two focus groups were conducted at the end of a course to address objective 2.

Results

Quantitative analyses provide support for the programme being associated with decreases in anxiety and depression, and increases in wellbeing. Resilience appears to not be changed over the course of the programme, but this may be relevant to the context in which the programme took place, which was during the pandemic. Qualitative evidence provides a great deal of support for the programme with regard to its ability to increase social connection and decrease anxiety. Of key benefit were the design and methodology of the programme, its success in online delivery, encouraging and

enhancing connection to nature, and improved social connection. Participants spoke of its impact in providing them with new perspectives and more opportunities to reflect and reframe their own appreciation of themselves and their lives. Participants viewed the facilitator as being key for their ability to engage successfully and beneficially with the programme. Participants also provided thoughtful and useful recommendations for improvements or developments of the programme.

Conclusions

The intervention, from the methods employed to assess them, shows support for it being an effective intervention in promoting mental health and wellbeing for those in mid-life.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are provided to increase data robustness to facilitate future evaluation.

Recommendations regarding practice are also provided to both continue and enhance good practice.



PHOTO CREDIT: ANGELA PEARCE

Lay Executive Summary

What is the report about?

The Mindful Photography programme developed by Look Again was funded by the BUPA Foundation to support individuals in their mid-life with regard to their mental health and wellbeing. Mindful Photography is defined as a tool that uses our sight and the lens of a camera or smartphone as an anchor to help us become more consciously aware of and connected to the present moment. It is experiencing the process of creating photographs in a non-judgmental way, with gratitude and compassion towards ourselves, others and the world around us. It enables us to slow down, look, look again and see our lives differently.” (Ruth Davey, 2020). The mindful photography course involved (in the first instance) eight half-day sessions to improve mental health and wellbeing through mindful photography techniques. Due to the pandemic, the project was adapted to suit online delivery, where participants took part in four weekly two-hour sessions. The present evaluation was commissioned to assess this intervention for its efficacy in improving participants’ mental health and wellbeing.

What did it aim to do?

The evaluation set out to answer two questions:

1. Do participants’ levels of anxiety, depression, wellbeing, and resilience (see comment before re resilience) improve after involvement in the intervention?
2. What are participants’ experiences and perceptions of the intervention?

How did it do it?

The evaluation used survey data and the responses from participants during focus groups to answer the questions. Participant self-report questionnaire answers were used to answer the first question by comparing before and after scores. Two focus groups were carried out at the end of a course to answer the second question.

What did it find?

Survey response assessments show support for the programme being associated with decreases in anxiety and depression, and increases in wellbeing. Resilience appears to not be changed over the course of the programme, but this may be relevant to the context in which the programme took place, which was during the pandemic. Focus group analysis provides a great deal of support for the programme with regard to its ability to increase social connection and decrease anxiety. Of key

benefit were the design and methodology of the programme, its success in online delivery, encouraging and enhancing connection to nature, and improved social connection. Participants spoke of its impact in providing them with new perspectives and more opportunities to reflect and reframe their own appreciation of themselves and their lives. Participants viewed the facilitator as being key for their ability to engage successfully and beneficially with the programme. Participants also provided thoughtful and useful recommendations for improvements or developments of the programme.

Conclusions

The intervention is effective in promoting mental health and wellbeing.

What happens now?

Several recommendations are provided to increase the strength of future evaluations.

Recommendations regarding practice are also provided to both continue and enhance good practice.



PHOTO CREDIT: WENDY MILNER

Infographic

See with Fresh Eyes
Evaluation Findings

MINDFUL PHOTOGRAPHY

Angelo Pearce

Effective in promoting mental health and well-being


- Increased well-being
- Decreased depression
- Decreased anxiety

What worked well:

Programme design


- Online format
- Methodology
- Structure

Social connectedness



Zoe Bates

Connecting with nature




Andy

"When you're going through difficulties nature can give you hope [you see] resilience in nature...I think you subconsciously when you're in nature pick up that resilience and that sense of hope...it's very therapeutic in that way"

The facilitator

- Created a safe space
- Personal experience



Emma

Relieved anxiety

- A focus away from daily life
- Changed perspectives

"You do the assignment and you suddenly realise that for 10 minutes you haven't thought about the things that you've been worrying about an hour ago"

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

LOOK AGAIN

Introduction

The programme encouraged people with mental health challenges to slow down, reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and learn to see their lives from a new perspective, whilst building confidence and self-esteem, learning new skills and building connections with new people. The programme was run in conjunction with key host organisations from across Gloucestershire: The Nelson Trust, Longfield Hospice, Headway Gloucestershire, and Maggie's Cheltenham. The methodology for the programme was developed by Look Again¹ to support mental health and wellbeing through photography practice that incorporates mindfulness, and encourages connection with nature. Mindful Photography is defined as “a tool that uses our sight and the lens of a camera or smartphone as an anchor to help us become more consciously aware of and connected to the present moment. It is experiencing the process of creating photographs in a non-judgmental way, with gratitude and compassion towards ourselves, others, and the world around us. It enables us to slow down, look, look again and see our lives differently” (Ruth Davey, 2020, www.look-again.org). A previous evaluation of a Look Again programme showed strong support for the methodology, and evidenced its key aims of helping its participants to look again at their lives and their worlds to improve wellbeing (1).



The courses focus on the Five Ways to Wellbeing and centre around photography, mindfulness and being in nature. The participants include patients/service users, their families or carers who are experiencing mental health challenges. The intention was that a member of staff from each host will be trained to offer on-going support. The aim was to include 40 adults in their mid-years (suggested age range 30s-50s) – ten people to be referred by each host partner. The target participant pool was to include a combination of clients/service users, family members, carers and staff, who may have been struggling with mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety or depression due to dealing with life changing circumstances, physical pain, facing the end of one's life, caring for clients or a loved one who is dying, or experiencing grief. The programme culminated in an online exhibition and

¹ Please see: <https://www.look-again.org/mindful-photography-methodology> for more information

celebration event where participants were invited to share their work and their experiences of the programme².

Coronavirus pandemic impact

The project began in the Autumn of 2019, and ran until the Autumn of 2020. The project was originally intended to be run as in-person eight-week courses of mindful photography, and this was possible with two of the host groups (The Nelson Trust, Headway Gloucestershire). After the pandemic broke in the UK in March 2020, and stay-at-home orders were rolled out, a change in delivery was required in order to continue the viability of the project. In response to this, the other two host referral groups (Maggie's Cheltenham, Longfields Hospice) participation needed to be moved to an online format, and were shortened to four-week courses. Utilising internet-based video conferencing software, the programme was adapted to suit online delivery, and the structure necessarily changed to accommodate this change of delivery. This has impacted the overall evaluation of the project to a degree as there are very different experiences across the groups of participants. However, this has also provided an interesting opportunity for the evaluation to assess how more remote delivery of such a programme may be possible. This aspect is important as it may be that more potential beneficiaries can be reached via online delivery, particularly those who may have mobility issues or may otherwise find it difficult to engage in a group-based activity outside of their residence.

Evaluation framework

Aim of the evaluation

The evaluation set out to establish whether there were notable changes in key measures (i.e. resilience, wellbeing, depression, and anxiety) observable upon completion of the programme. The evaluation also sought to establish what participants understood to be key benefits of taking part, what they may have seen as barriers or facilitators to taking part, and what their overall experiences and impressions were of the project. Fundamentally, the evaluation sought to understand how the project may have provided benefit to those who took part, what aspects of the programme went well, and what could be done to improve the programme for future projects.

² Please see: <https://www.seewithfresheyes.co.uk/> for more information

Ethical considerations

Ethical and governance approval was received from the University of Gloucestershire School of Natural & Social Sciences Research Ethics Panel July 2020.

Method

Process of referral and data collection

Create Gloucestershire is working with the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that the arts are 'prescribed' as commonly as medicine, providing a preventative and therapeutic solution for those with physical and mental health challenges. Ten people from each host organisation were put forward to take part in the programme. As the project was funded by a specific fund to enhance the mental health of those in midlife, potential participants were put forward with this criterion in mind.

Quantitative data

Data were collected from participants via paper-based surveys for the first two host groups to carry out the programme, and via an online survey for those taking part in the two latter online-mediated groups. Participants were asked to complete the survey (in either format) on the first session, and after the final session to assess change. The demographic part of the survey asked participants to provide information about their gender identity, age group, employment status, ethnicity, and marital status. Participants were also asked whether or not they considered themselves to have a longstanding illness or disability, whether they feel socially isolated, or if they had caring responsibilities. The key outcomes for the evaluation were wellbeing (by using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale [WEMWBS]: 2), resilience (using the Brief Resilience Scale [BRS]: 3), anxiety (using the Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale [GAD-7]: 4), and depression (using the eight-item version of the Patient Health Questionnaire [PHQ-8]: 5). Data were provided by a total of 35 participants, however in many cases data were not available for both pre and post assessments (ranging from 10 to 13 matched pairs of data), minimising the capacity for robust inferential analysis.

Qualitative data

Two focus groups with participants from a cancer support group (CS) and an end of life care group (EoL) who engaged in the programme remotely were undertaken, via video conferencing, at

completion of their respective courses (July and October 2020). An interview schedule was devised to guide the discussion to explore participants' experiences of taking part in the programmes provided by the project. The CS focus group lasted 1 hour and 12 minutes; the duration of the EoL focus group was 54 minutes. The sessions were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Quantitative

Anonymised participant data were collated and linked according to an anonymous code provided by the facilitator (in the case of the in-person programme participants), or were linked by a participant-generated alphanumeric code (in the case of the online programme participants). One set of data were unable to be matched from the online cohort due to the codes not being able to be matched across each survey. To describe the sample, category frequencies for demographic variables were produced. To evaluate each of the core outcomes, scales were calculated appropriately and change scores (post-pre scores) were generated. The original design set out to implement matched pairs t-tests for comparisons between pre and post measures, however none of the outcome measures attained sufficient numbers to substantiate such a test. Instead, an overall summary of means and standard deviations for the pre and post scores is provided for an overview of trends in the data.

Qualitative

Both of the focus group transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis technique (6). These included the following phases:

1. Familiarisation with the data - transcripts were read and re-read, with brief notes recorded to create preliminary ideas for the next phase of the analysis.
2. Codes of interest were generated by extracting and collating pertinent excerpts of the data.
3. Emerging codes were organized into broad themes that reflected the content and meaning of the data, and reflected the evaluation aims and objectives.
4. Themes were reviewed and refined in relation to the generated codes and the entire data set.
5. Themes were labelled and defined, attempting to capture the essence of the data it contained.

Analysis was initially conducted on each of the two FG transcripts individually. A comparison across the transcripts was subsequently carried out.

Findings

Quantitative findings

Who took part

A total of 35 participants provided data for the evaluation. Of these, 22 identified as female, 12 as male, and one participant identified as neither male nor female. The majority that provided data were from the in-person modality of the project (N=23, 65.7%). Participants were divided across three age brackets, with 21 within the targeted 25-50 age group (60%), and 14 over 55 (40%). The majority of participants were from white backgrounds (N=27, 77.1%), with other participants self-identifying as mixed race (N=2, 5.7%), black or black British-Caribbean (N=1, 3.1%), or British Arab (N=1, 3.1%). Most participants recorded themselves as being currently unemployed (N=10, 29.4%), and were not married or in a civil partnership (N=19, 54.3%). A full overview of the background of the participants is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Category		Number	%
Gender identity	Male	12	34.3
	Female	22	62.9
	Other	1	2.9
Age group	25-50	21	60
	55+	14	40
Employment status	Full time employed	3	8.8
	Part time employed	5	14.7
	Unemployed	10	29.4
	Retired	7	20.6
	Other	9	26.5
Marital status	Married or in a civil partnership	14	40
	Not married or in a civil partnership	19	54.3
	Rather not say	2	5.7
Ethnicity	Black or Black British-Caribbean	1	3.1
	British Arab	1	3.1
	Mixed White and Asian	1	3.1
	Mixed – any other mixed background	1	3.1
	White British	25	78.1
	White – any other White background	2	6.3

Participants' specific needs

To understand the specific needs or perspectives of those who wished to take part, participants were asked to record whether they considered themselves to have specific health and wellbeing vulnerabilities. Whilst not all participants provided information about their potential needs or vulnerabilities, of those that did the majority indicated that they had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity (N=24, 68.6%), considered themselves to be suffering with mental health difficulties (N=19, 55.9%), felt socially isolated (N=15, 50%), and did not have caring responsibilities (N=19, 61.3%).

Understanding key outcomes from the programme

Measures of wellbeing, anxiety, depression, and resilience were requested from participants at the start of their programme, and at the end. Looking at the aggregated findings (presented in Table 2) from those that provided their self-report responses we are able to see some clear patterns of change from pre to post.

TABLE 2. MEAN LEVELS OF KEY OUTCOMES BEFORE (PRE) AND AFTER (POST) THE PROGRAMME, WITH MEAN CHANGE BETWEEN COLLECTION POINTS.

Measure	Pre Mean value (\pm SD)	Post Mean value (\pm SD)	Change Mean value (\pm SD)
Wellbeing (WEMWBS)	42.9 (8.62)	50.9 (7.04)	+11.2 (7.90)
Anxiety (GAD7)	11.2 (7.90)	7.5 (5.53)	-3.7 (2.69)
Depression (PHQ8)	11.6 (5.77)	8.7 (6.39)	-2.3 (5.48)
Resilience (BRS)	2.9 (0.48)	2.9 (0.33)	-.01 (0.51)

To begin with, the group were reporting levels of wellbeing below population norms, and by the end of the programme these were almost comparable with population norms (7). For anxiety, the group were reporting what are considered to be “moderate” levels of anxiety, but this lowered to “mild” levels reported at the end of the programme (8). Similarly, for depression the group reported mean levels that would be categorised as “moderate”, but these reduced to “mild symptoms” (5) by the end of the programme. For resilience, participants reported levels lower than population norms (9). It seems that there was a slight decrease reported at the end of the programme compared to the beginning. The brief time period in which the data were analysed may mean that more substantial changes to resilience cannot yet be determined. It is also important to note that data collection occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have had an impact on the measures taken.

Robust analyses of these changes is not possible due to the modest sample sizes (reduced significantly by missing or un-linkable data), however it can be seen that participating in the programme does appear to be associated with improvements in wellbeing, anxiety, and depression, which is in line with findings more broadly in the arts for health sector (10). The changes are presented visually in Figure 1.

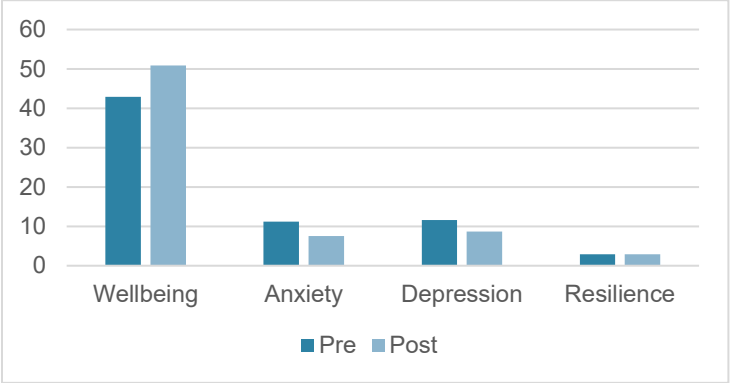


FIGURE 1. CHANGES IN OUTCOME MEASURES ACROSS THE PROGRAMME



PHOTO CREDIT: MICHELLE GRANT

Qualitative findings

Who took part

Five participants (all female) took part in the Cancer Support (CS) focus group and six females participated in the end of life care (EoL) focus group. It must be noted, that due to the small size groups, these outcomes are not largely transferable. The small number of participants also means that anonymity is difficult to maintain, so pseudonyms or reference numbers to quotations are not included. Where interactions are quoted, the first speaker is numbered 1, the second 2 and so on.

Four overarching themes were identified from the focus group analysis: (1) *Worked well* referred to elements of the intervention that participants perceived as facilitative for their wellbeing; (2) *Challenges* indicated perceived inhibitive factors; (3) *Impact* referred to perceived positive outcomes of attending the course; and (4) *Recommendations* depicted potential areas for advancement or improvement. Figure 2 (marked as Figure 1 below – please change to Fig 2) depicts a comparative summary of the findings from the two focus groups (CS and EoL). Some of the boxes on the right of Fig 2 aren't showing up? Please check. These are discussed in turn. Quotations are used in each theme, where possible, to enable the voices of participants to be represented in the findings.

Worked well

Three elements of the course were perceived as particularly facilitative by the participants for enhancing their health and wellbeing: (1) The online format; (2) The session design; and (3) The facilitator.

The online format

The mindful photography course was originally intended to be an 8 week in-person programme. However, the global pandemic resulted in a national lockdown and restrictions meaning that people were confined to their homes. This put the course, and thus a potential support system, in jeopardy. However, by adopting an online format, individuals were still able to take part in the programme.

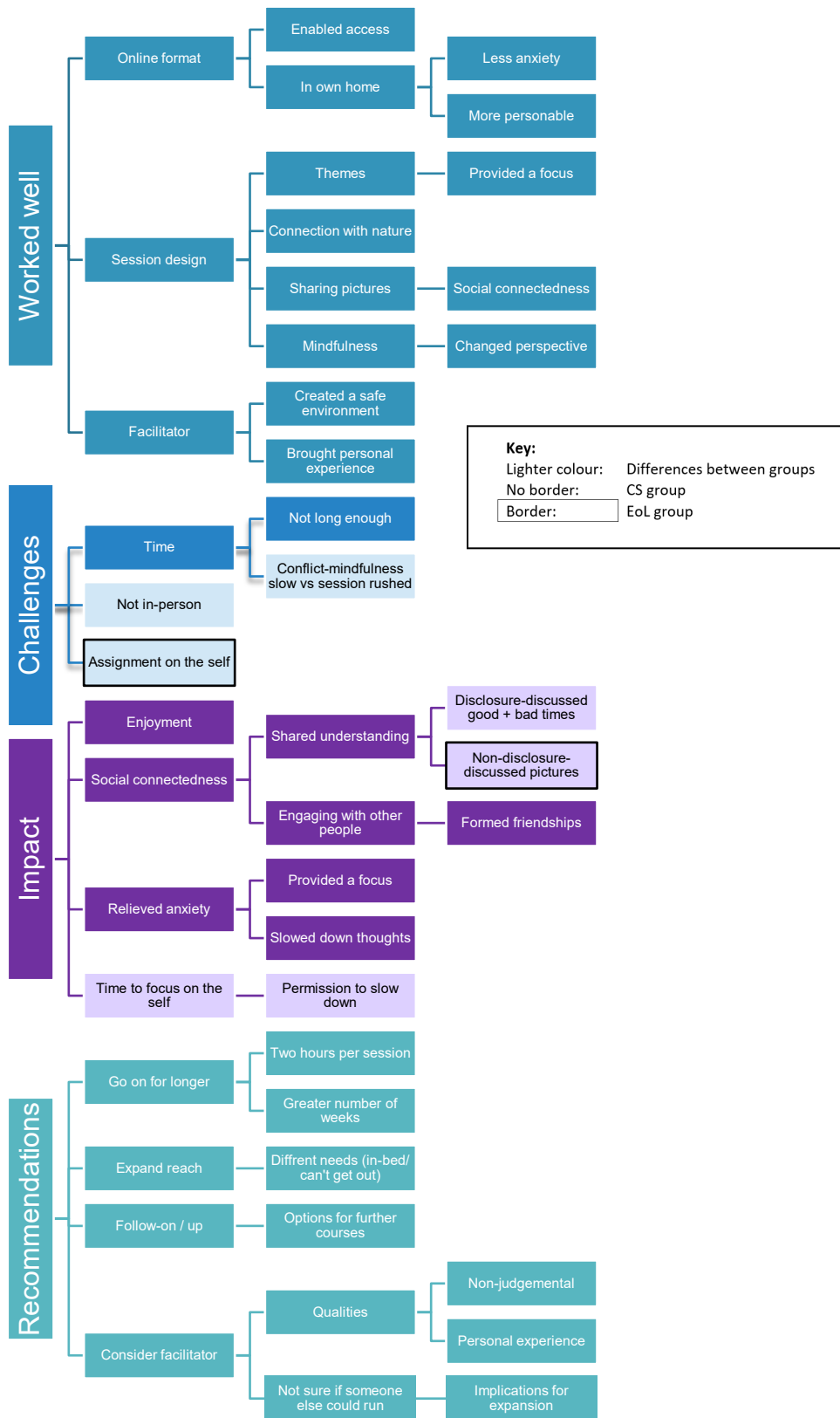


FIGURE 2. COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Although some individuals expressed initial apprehension stating that “we weren’t sure how [the course] was going to pan out with zoom” (EoL group) and “[I was concerned about] the technical issues of me trying to get onto the internet” (EoL group), the overwhelming feeling from the participants was of gratitude that they were still able to attend the course despite the restrictive measures. This is highlighted in the quote below:

It’s been very difficult to get out...so, I’m really grateful for it...I really appreciated [the programme] being on Zoom (EoL group)

The participants cited benefits from the online format both in response to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic as one individual states “I wouldn’t have been able to do [the course] if it wasn’t online because I’d be here (at home) all the time” (EoL group) and more generally in terms of attendance and accessibility; depicted in the excerpt below:

It just gives you another way of reaching people who might not necessarily be able to feel well enough to come out. For me it would have been a whole afternoon possibly almost the whole day by the time you’ve travelled and if you’re not feeling well travelling is the last thing you want to do really isn’t it (CS group)

In addition to the benefits of online delivery with regards to accessibility, the attendees relished the ability to carry out the programme in their own home, meaning that the contents could be made more personal and relevant to them:

Because we’re at home I think the photographs showing and sharing are far more personal than they might have been had we been at [the location] which is beautiful so we would have all taken lovely photographs but it would all have been of the lovely interior and of the wood it wouldn’t have been of the things that we’ve got here at home (CS group)

Being situated in their own home also made the participants feel more relaxed as one individual states below:

It’s just a small group so we can really personalise it for each other and I think getting snippets of people’s homes in the background is just nice because actually I’m way more relaxed at home...because it’s my space so you know I’m just kind of sat on the sofa with a blanket over my knees and feeling that yeah it’s like having friends around your home almost...there’s not that competition like there is sometimes in a room if you’re kind of trying to meet everyone (EoL).

The session design

Being presented with specified themes for each of the weekly session was perceived as a facilitative factor for the attendees in terms of their wellbeing. The participants noted that having themes provided them with a direction and something to focus on beyond their everyday lives:

1. *Each week we had different activities to focus on, a different theme. At first, we were talking about opposites, what opposites could we think of like good-bad, beautiful-ugly, wet-dry. That was good.*
2. *We did compassionate connections last week.*
1. *I think otherwise it would have been too broad. It was good having [a] focus for us so we didn't have to do that bit...telling us what to do was really helpful.*
3. *We've all probably got enough decisions to make without having to think about that as well. So, that was good (EoL group)*

The session design also facilitated the individuals' wellbeing by connecting them to nature. This is normally a core component of the programme, but was made less practical with online delivery. Although not a requirement, the participants stated that "[the course] got us out of the house" (EoL group) which was particularly potent given the pandemic restrictions. In the quotes below, attendees describe their cathartic experience of connecting with nature:

Every morning after I dropped my daughter at school, right now I have the privilege of not working, I'm able to walk the dogs and that was a time when I would then do some of the photographs, which was really great because...I like the walking, it's meditative, but it sort of brought me more grounded and focussed in my day and also it gave me a pleasure finding things out in nature (EoL group)

If you were indoors, [you could] sit say at your window and look outside and see the clouds, we done that last week...if you're in a house you could do it outside or you could see how many birds or something just looking out the window (CS group)

In the statement above, one individual suggests that the benefits of connecting with nature are inclusive not only of *being in* nature but also of *observing* nature. Collectively, the participants felt that connecting with nature enhanced their health and wellbeing because nature is instilled with hope; one individual summarises this below:

Somebody took a picture...of the weed, I think when you're going through difficulties, when you're going through ill health nature can give you a lot of hope um of the resilience of nature. Um and I think you subconsciously when you're in nature pick up that resilience and that sense of hope and I think it's very therapeutic in that way (EoL group)

While connecting with nature was perceived to be a contributing factor to the participants' wellbeing, one individual from the EoL group acknowledged that, for her, it was not an essential component of the course. In the quote below, the participant examples the potential reach of mindfulness beyond nature:

It's about finding the interest point in the everyday whether it's a ruffled up sock in the laundry basket that looks a bit like a face or whether it's you know the way that the sunlight's falling through the window onto the table (EoL group)

The inclusion of breakout groups, in which attendees could “show each other [the] work that [they]’d done for the exercise” (EoL group), was also perceived to be a valuable component of the programme. This seemed to enhance social connectedness between the group members:



PHOTO CREDIT: ANDY

In terms of it impacting relationships...I've made some new friends and you know that's lovely and because it's such a strange time for everybody and this is how we're...meeting in groups and stuff...it's been a unique experience...for me and it's quite reassuring how close you feel to people even though they're just a picture on your screen (EoL group)

It also facilitated learning and broadened the individual's outlook:

I know every time we did that (participated in a break out group) I've learnt something from what happened in those moments and it would just broaden my view on what I was going to do next...it made me think differently (EoL group)

I found that inspiring looking at what everyone else was doing that you hadn't thought of and...it broadens the way you look at things (EoL group)

Mindfulness was another aspect of the programme that was perceived to work well by the participants. Individuals from both focus groups commented that practicing mindfulness encouraged them to “look at things differently and [took them] away from everything else going on in [their] life at the time” (EoL group). Several attendees further commented that, by encouraging people to see things differently, the course could help people to view adverse situations in a more positive manner, as was the case for a number of them:

If somebody's in their house thinking this that and the other and they just see something in depth, they might think oh it's not that bad you know it's lovely or whatever (CS group)

It was in the first week [another course participant] took a photograph of a weed coming through the pavement and she said no matter what life happens you know no matter what you throw at it nature comes back sort of thing. Um and it was things like that that made me look differently at things and something that you would probably consider an eye sore actually you can find something beautiful in it no matter what it is (CS group)

Although there was some initial scepticism with regards to the mindfulness aspect of the course, all of the participants viewed it as valuable once they had begun to practice it:

I really enjoyed the mindfulness. It's not something that I've really ever done before, I've always thought that's not for me, um but actually I really enjoyed it and the mindfulness at the start really got you into the zone...at the end [the facilitator] brought you back down again into the mindfulness and it made you reflect on the session. So actually, that was really nice. When [the facilitator] first said that she was going to do mindfulness at the start I thought mmmm but actually I have really enjoyed it (CS group)

The facilitator

The facilitator was perceived to be a fundamental factor of the mindful photography course for all of the participants involved. She was attributed with a number of positive qualities which included being “very gentle” “lovely and relaxed” “patient and welcoming” “calming” “warm and generous” and “great fun” (CS and EoL group). As such, the groups deemed that the facilitator immediately created an environment in which they felt safe and supported; this is depicted in the quotes below:

The way that [the facilitator] delivered the course you felt very held and looked after and I think that was really really lovely (EoL group)

- 1. [The facilitator] was very patient and welcoming and um everything we did was appreciated which was really nice so it felt very sort of safe and warm environment that she created.*
 - 2. I would echo everything that's been said. I mean teaching you've got to set the tone at the beginning and have a sense of trust and expectation. She did that brilliantly. She was very gently...you didn't get the feeling that she's doing this again, do you know what I mean? That to her this felt a special time because it was a special time for us as well. So it was a good relationship and the people in the group as well it just felt safe and it's been very good.*
 - 3. Yeah. I can only echo what everybody else had said that you know she's got a lovely calming voice and a lovely calming demeanor and so it immediately put you at ease (CS group)*
-
- 1. [The facilitator] really did make it, her personality...shone through and her warmth and generosity as well and it was just really lovely and great fun.*
 - 2. We all second that (CS group)*

As suggested in the comments above, the facilitator demonstrated positive regard and a non-judgemental stance. Consequently, the attendees felt relaxed and thus more able to participant in, enjoy, and benefit from the course. Disclosing her personal experiences to the group (be it covertly or overtly) was also viewed favourably by all involved. Illustrated in the excerpts below the participants describe how, by exposing her own circumstances, the attendees not only felt inspired to learn about and use the techniques with which the facilitator identified, but also developed a sense of trust and rapport with her:

I think [the facilitator] has been through some harsh times herself and has had that experience and uses [mindful photography] to get her out of that ahh the down times. So, she's expressing something that we all want to be able to (EoL group)

What I liked about [the person] leading it is that she practices what she preaches...I felt like everything that she was, in all of her instructions and the way in which she dealt with the group, it was very mindful and it liberated us to do things (EoL group)

The group attendees felt more able to open up about their own experiences because they sensed that the facilitator could understand, or empathise, with their situation having been through challenging times herself. The participants really appreciated this:

Yeah I got the feeling that it was almost like being given a gift really because you could see it was really personal to [the facilitator] and she was coming at this from her own experience as well so it was like she really empathised with what we were all going through and she did make it a special time and it is a special time really (CS group)

Challenges

Three aspects of the course were perceived as challenging by the participants: (1) *Time*; (2) *Not in-person* (CS group only); and (3) *Assignment on the self* (EoL group only).

Time

The length of time that the participants had to engage with the course was perceived to be the biggest inhibitive factor. All of the attendees felt like the programme “*would have been better...over a longer period of time*” (CS group and EoL group). They made reference to both the length of the course...

I think [the course] would have been better over 6 weeks or 8 weeks. Typically, each week [the facilitator] gave us two tasks to go and photograph...it did feel very rushed the going to get your photograph and then going to the breakout group. Whereas if it was one a week over a longer period of time it would have been better (CS group)

Having further sessions you know another couple/few weeks because it took you a little while to get the idea of what the format was going to be and what to do and I just felt like I had got a handle on it and then it's kind of like we're already talking about the evaluation, in fact we were probably already talking about the evaluation right at the very beginning and it felt like it came around really quickly. So longer sessions would have been great (CS group)

...and the duration of each session:

It would have been nice for me for 2 hours, an extra half hour. [The facilitator] did go [on for] another quarter of an hour but I think we needed, I think everybody agrees with that, everything was a bit rushed (CS group)

It could have been 2 hours instead of an hour and a half because...I always felt a little bit like ahhh I wish we had more of that (EoL group)

My only criticism is that when we did the breakout rooms sometimes, we didn't get enough time within that time frame... it just could have been a wee bit longer (CS group)

Although the participants expressed a desire for the sessions to be extended, the proposed increase was not substantial. In fact, there was consensus amongst the attendees that 2 hours would be an optimal time frame for each of the weekly sessions. This, the participants proposed, would enable adequate content to be delivered but, at the same time, it would not overload them with information. One individual depicts this suggestion below:

I think that 2 hours would have been better...but probably no longer as well though. Actually, I think it's probably optimum because it's harder to fit in things that are any longer than that and also it's like information overload and...you need time afterwards to let things settle (EoL group)

Finally, one participant, from the CS group, inferred that the limited time frame that they were given to complete the tasks was, in effect, at odds to the practice of mindfulness itself. This is depicted in the quote below:

I think it was quite a tall order to run around and try and get the photos quite quickly and given the fact that we had a mindfulness session which said slow down, calm down, take it easy, and then now you've got two minutes [to] get out there and get those photos and run back here and I must admit by the time I had changed my shoes, nipped outside, I was sitting down thinking what can I photograph and it was a bit sort of oh my god look at the time and then I was invariably late for getting back for everybody's session because you suddenly get into it and so just a few more minutes on that would have been good (CS group)

Not in-person

In addition to the limited time frame, a number of participants highlighted that they missed the course being in-person. One participant stated that she used to “enjoy [having] cups of tea at [the location] around the table” (CS group) with the other participants; this is something that she was not able to do with the online course. Another individual articulated that they “missed the faces” of not being able to directly interact with other people (CS group). This was not universal to both groups however, the attendees of the EoL course felt that they adequately connected with the other attendees over Zoom, as is highlighted in the utterance below:

I've not really done anything over Zoom, well only through lockdown and stuff, it's been a unique experience for me and it's quite reassuring how close you feel to people even though they're just a picture on your screen (EoL group)

Assignment on “the self”

The final challenge was located in the conversation from the EoL group only. They expressed difficulties completing one of the weekly assignments in which they were directed to focus on *the self*. One individual stated that she found it “*painful...to tell the story of [her]self in photos.*” However, she “*didn't know why it was hard*” for her. The other group members corroborated with the assertion that focusing on the self was “*particularly challenging.*” The participants did, however, state that this task was “*more reflective*” than the other assignments and articulated that perhaps the process of seeing themselves with fresh eyes provoked emotions that they would typically avoid.

I looked at me and who I am and what I do now because things changed so quickly for me...I feel like I'm strong but if somebody...like I'm very brittle as well. So, you know something can knock me down really quick and being able to show that vulnerability it would make me a bit less brittle (EoL group)

In the excerpt above, one individual suggests that, although difficult, being assigned to focus on *the self* has the potential to decrease her feelings of vulnerability and, as depicted by another attendee below, photography offers a lens through which to view the self:

There's something about taking a photograph that is about looking from the outside and when you're having to look at the outside of yourself it feels like a really, it's like taking yourself outside of yourself and looking at yourself. It's a strange sensation (EoL group)

A statement from a participant from the CS group, that did not find focusing on the self particularly challenging, highlights how the course, in facilitating self-reflection, helped her to make sense of her life journey. This contributed to a revitalised sense of self-confidence that helped her to feel more in control of her life:

We had to do something about ourselves and what I realised because I've had cancer and the Covid and everything and getting over it, I'm 6 months after my treatment now so I'm just coming alive...we had [a task] all about us and I locked everything away and my confidence had gone so this has given me confidence to get all of my stuff out of the cupboard because I had my camera and guitar and everything was all put away, the guitar string broke and everything, it made you look at your life it closed me to see what's going on and that, well for that week it was, and I realised that I've got a lot of my stuff put away and I hadn't got it out so the outcome is I am going to go back to taking photographs even if they are not good, just to do it for fun if that makes sense (CS group)

Nevertheless, this individual was 6 months post cancer treatment and, as such, may have felt more optimistic about her future; perhaps why the task was less difficult for her. Thus, a person's

perception of their stage in their life journey may be a significant area for consideration when deliberating topics of focus for future courses such as this.



PHOTO CREDIT: ANDREW BLAGDON

Impact

Four primary impacts of attending the *See with Fresh Eyes* course were voiced by the participants these were: (1) *Enjoyment*; (2) *Social connectedness*; (3) *Relieved anxiety*; and (4) *Time to focus on the self* (CS group only).

Enjoyment

Regardless of the group, all of the participants stated that they enjoyed taking part in the mindful photography course. This is articulated in the attendees' accounts below:

I enjoyed doing the photograph course because I like art and I love talking to people (CS group)

I've always enjoyed taking photographs so I thought whatever [the course] was going to be I think I would have been interested in it and it was just lovely...I think it made me think more...rather than just snapping away taking photos of family and things like that and almost recording things it really gave me something different to do with the camera (CS group)

I think for myself it felt quite a luxury to be able to join the group and see how it went and actually I really enjoyed it too (CS group)

I love how this mindfulness applies to photography. I like that because I hadn't thought of that connection before. I think about it with meditation and other arts but being out with my camera it was like oh I can do that! I hadn't thought of it, it hadn't occurred to me before that you could put those two things together and have a very mindful experience and also have a creative artistic experience. That's been exciting for me. So, like discovering something for the very first time (EoL group)

One participant, a full-time caregiver who had no means of attending a course outside of her home due to her caring responsibilities, stated that she enjoyed participating so much that she would consider receiving extra support to attend an in-person programme in the future:

It's been very difficult to get out...So, I'm really grateful for [the course]. But down the line I think I would get some help because I enjoyed it so much...to do an actual physical meeting (EoL group).

Social Connectedness

Having the opportunity to engage with other people was frequently cited as a favourable outcome of attending the course. In the discussion below, two individuals express how the programme helped them to feel less isolated, gave them something to look forward to, and offered them a means of communication beyond the confines of their family:

- 1. The fact that [the course] came during lockdown was actually a god-send because it's been very isolating shielding [and] I think it's been really nice to have something in the week to look forward to where actually you engage with other people.*
- 2. I agree with that. I live on my own and I've been in lockdown with this sort of being sheltered sort of thing and it was nice to have everybody to talk to and...I've got my children and that which is obviously I have bits with them, but it's nice to have something outside the family (EoL group)*

Furthermore, one individual commented that the course stimulated a new interest and topic of conversation that she could discuss with people outside of the programme. Not only did this facilitate social connectedness between herself and those close to her, but it also allowed her to focus more generally on the positive things in her life:

I think it made me feel like I had something different to talk to other people about because having been in lockdown and shielding I think my children were getting a little bit bored of my repertoire of mundane. So they took an interest, so bless them, I would be forever showing them oh look at this photo that photograph and they were very polite but it's nice to do something different and normal and have a different level of topic of conversation with other

people and it's been very refreshing because you do get down at times...I mean I had to leave the meeting last week because my doctor suddenly rang me and you know everything is online at the moment and you get some negative things as well coming through and this has been refreshing and taken your mind away from things at times, it's been brilliant (EoL group)

Aside from engagement, the participants stated that they “made some new friends” (CS group) on the course and found the whole process validating. One attendee describes this below:

I found it really validating just having other people see what I see. When we would show [each other] the pictures, I really enjoyed looking at other people's pictures and having my pictures shown before we started the new session it just felt, I don't know...it made it feel real, it made me feel real. It felt significant and it was really nice. To me that was one of my favourite parts of it, sharing and seeing the photos (EoL group)

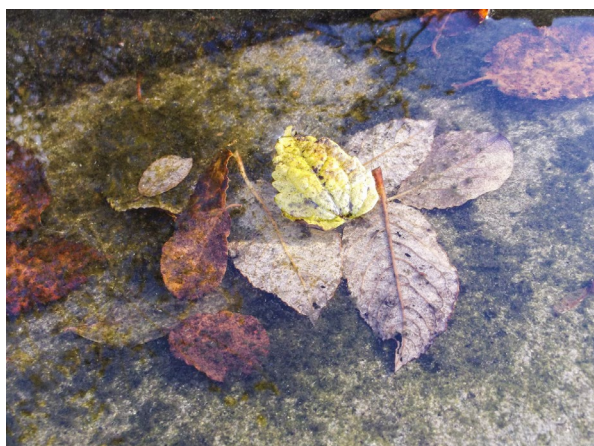


PHOTO CREDIT: DANNY

Both groups of participants articulated a connection with the other people on their course. However, differences in terms of social connectedness were apparent in their comments. The CS group participants were aware of each other's reason for attending the programme (i.e., they were all living with, and beyond, cancer). The perception of being “all in the same boat” (CS group) brought these attendees closer together. As such, discussions extended beyond mindful photography, this is highlighted in the quotes below:

[It] was really nice to be in a smaller group where you could chat with people and you know chat about other things [that] naturally come up in conversation other than the photographs that you're taking (CS group)

We tended to say what we had to say with our photographs and then chat about some of our difficult bits [and] our moans...which was really good...the interaction was lovely (CS group)

Not only did being in a group with people who had shared similar experiences initiate gratitude in some of the attendees, as is depicted below...

To see people worse off than yourself...I think that made you feel better, not better that's the wrong word, it makes you feel...um yeah I suppose better that you can share these things and grateful that's the word I want to say, is more grateful for your life (CS group)

...But it also sparked appreciation and sentimentality between members of the group:

It's been incredible...well quite moving really. I think because people have been very unselfish about talking [and] sharing information and I think that I've been privileged to be part of it really, to see what people have been interested in and what we've brought together. It's been really really lovely (CS group)

1. *Everybody you've all been lovely...it's been really lovely. Lovely, lovely, lovely! Can't say no more.*
2. *I think we're going to have some sort of virtual hug at that point (CS group)*

In contrast, the EoL group were not overtly aware of the reasons behind each other's medical needs or diagnoses. Although everyone appreciated that their host group centred around end of life care, each other's experiences remained equivocal (i.e., participants could be attending for respite (as a carer) or they could be undergoing end of life care themselves as well as other circumstantial reasons). Despite this lack of insight, the participants in the EoL group still acknowledged feeling "very close to people on the course." For these individuals, "having a common purpose" was enough to help them bond. One participant depicts this in the statement below:

Even though it's only 4 times, this is the 5th time we've met, and we've never really taken any time to tell one another about our lives or ourselves but sharing the work and listening to each other and seeing what the process has been for each of us has brought us close regardless (EoL group)

The sense of comfort and familiarity of seeing the same faces and sharing the same space was also perceived to aid the groups relationship:

1. *Talking about the bonding of the group, I just found it completely um...uncompetitive. So, there's no competition...we're all in the same space and we don't have to prove ourselves.*
2. *Yeah, yeah, very non-judgemental...and that helps, and these faces you see are become familiar and even though we don't know each other really, we don't know much about each other, so it's kind of private but also um comforting, familiar to see the faces again (EoL group)*

For the EoL group, not only did not "knowing much about each other" matter, but for some this lack of disclosure actually enhanced the bonding process, as one individual describes below:

I kind of got to know everyone. Um you know I hear little bits of stories through the pictures and in moments and um it's actually been really that subtle beauty of meeting somebody without having to have an introduction but just getting to see little pieces of somebody it's quite profound actually, and just kind of recognising that in the moment how special that was (EoL group)

Thus, although both groups of participants experienced social connectedness while attending the programme for the CS group this took the form of knowing about and understanding each other, sharing experiences and supporting one another. Whereas for the EoL group their sense of

togetherness stemmed from the process of engaging in the course with the same group of people and the familiarity and comfort that this instilled regardless of their history.

Relieved anxiety

The most frequently voiced impact of attending the course was that it helped to relieve the participants feelings of anxiety; it did this in a number of ways. Firstly, the participants stated that the programme provided them with a focus and a “welcome distraction” (EoL group) away from the worries of their daily lives:

I have to be on call so to speak 24 hours...[by attending the course] I was able to keep the anxiety down because I'm doing something and focusing on something and I'm not listening to that elephant or whatever you call it. I'm listening to the rider. Talking to it. What can I see you know and it helps, it really does (EoL group)

In the quote above the participant describes how having a focus not only quietened her disruptive thoughts but it also prompted her to take ownership, and feel more in control, of her own wellbeing. This was echoed by numerous participants, as highlighted below:

I was surprised at how I could shut the voices and the anxieties [that I] had when I did go and do the assignments (EoL group)

You do the assignment and you suddenly realise that for 10 minutes you haven't thought about the things that you've been worrying about an hour ago (EoL group)

Whatever you had been doing before the session...you sort of just close your eyes and... it really helped you sort of visualise what the session was going to be and how you could work with it...And whatever you had been doing in the past if you'd just been rushing to get some lunch or something it just makes you forget all of that and focus for the next hour and a half (CS group)

The participants further described how the course encouraged them to “slow down,” to “lose [themselves] in the moment” and to “just be in the here and now.” In this sense, it was comparative of a therapeutic experience without being therapy per se:

My idea of mindfulness is to be in the moment, present, with whatever's going on and to allow yourself the time to see what's around you...You asked us earlier how does [the facilitator] get us into that what happens to make you feel like that? And it's the same as what happens in the art therapy room really. I don't know whether you access a different part of your brain once you pick up a paintbrush and you start to you know...move away from the alley where the busy voices are and the stress levels are all that kind of thing and you just put them to one side or something...that's how it feels for me anyway. You know you can just lose yourself in what you're doing and it's a wonderful feeling (EoL group)

In encouraging the participants to slow down the course also helped individuals to “really look at” and appreciate their surroundings. Seeing things “from a new perspective” and the beauty in what was around them instilled the attendees with a new founded sense of hope and optimism. This is depicted in the excerpts below:

I've got some lavender plants outside the house and I was doing some weeding and they are covered in bees at the moment, and whereas before that would have been a bit of a hindrance, I think I'm going to get stung any moment, um it was just joyful just to stop and I took some photographs and I've got some really close up photographs of a bee coming into land which I've never looked at a bee before. It's really bizarre. I'd never actually looked at how a bee was made up and they're very bizarre creatures when you look close (CS group)

I think for me [participating in the programme helps you] to remember that if you're having a really tough day there is a way that you can just escape from it for a minute, even if it's just 5 minutes...that if you go in the garden or go somewhere else, start looking at the photos, you will have at least sometime where you just feel a bit better (EoL group)

Time to focus on the self

The final sub-theme with regards to *impact* was identified as *time to focus on the self*. This was only prevalent in the CS group of participants perhaps because, as discussed earlier, individuals in the EoL group struggled with the concept of centring on the self. Nevertheless, for the CS group being allotted a time to focus on themselves was significant because this, they felt, allowed them permission to step away from their daily responsibilities and to slow down:

I found that with walking the dog down the lane normally it's a sort of job of right I'm going to walk the dog so we're off, off round the lane, and we're off back again. It's a bit like driving on a motorway I guess; going from A to B to do the job. I think what [the course] has taught me [is] that if I see a butterfly land on a leaf somewhere I can actually stop and just look at it you know the dogs not going to mind and I'm not in a rush to get back for anything at the moment with lockdown. So, it's giving yourself permission to slow down and stop when you want to stop, you don't have to just keep going all the time and that was very beneficial (CS group)

It did make me slow down. It made me either get out from stuff at home you know if I was working from home or out of the office and do some bits here and actually see the beauty of some things, so the simple things like the pencil, the picture of the pencil you know and it did kind of slow me down (CS group)

In the utterance below, one individual extends this theme to suggest that, for her, the course was a means of escapism:

It was like a little oasis in the week where you've got time for yourself and you can put the shutters down around you to just concentrate and just think about that, it was just really lovely, really nice. And it's made me look at um trying to get in the habit of taking photographs like that

more often in a more mindful way rather than rushing through doing different things. It made me stop and think a little bit more (CS group)

Thus, with regards to the perceived impact of the course, these factors were all facilitative to the attendee's health and wellbeing.



PHOTO CREDIT: CLAIR HODGSON

Recommendations

For the final theme *recommendations*, the participants highlighted four potential areas for advancement, these are discussed below.

Go on for longer

The most prominent recommendation suggested by participants on each of the programmes was that the course could have gone on for longer. A number of the quotes that proposed an extended timeframe are displayed below:

My perspective [is that the course] could have gone on a little bit longer.

I would have liked [the course] to go on longer.

Over a longer period of time [the course] would have been better.

I think it would help if we had a little bit longer.

A little bit longer sessions would have been great (CS group)

I think [the course] could have been longer.

I definitely felt [that the course] could have gone on longer. It ended a little, I don't think abruptly is the right word, but I was left wanting more (EoL group)

To further this, the attendees corroborated that “2 hours would be about right” (CS group) and “over 6 weeks or 8 weeks” (CS group).

Expand reach

The participants recognised the potential of the course for people with a wide array of needs including those who may be particularly vulnerable and isolated. As such, it was recommended that the course be implemented with a wider range of people; particularly those who may struggle to access interventions due to ill health. This is expressed in the excerpts below:

[Another participant] he's in a wheelchair and he wouldn't have been able to go to [the location]. If I'd known...six months or a year ago and I [was having] cancer treatment...if you're restricted and ill...I would have loved this. Even though I was [too] ill to come [to the location] and sit...the first week we sat and just took a picture right in front of us [at home]. So, I think that if you're very poorly, or you're very restricted in a wheelchair and that it would be good for that (CS group)

Thinking from how we've ran it...I think even with Covid aside it's shown us another area that could be supporting people that can't get in for travel for whatever reason. I think it definitely has its plus side...it makes it much more accessible and that's I think what we've got to kind of focus [on] (CS group)

- 1. I think you could even do [the programme] from your bed if you were a patient who was really unwell.*
- 2. Yep.*
- 3. If your room had objects in it or maybe if you had someone to bring objects to you and or you had a well decorated room with lots of things you could sit and look even if you weren't always taking photos you could still look mindfully and sort of frame your composition in your mind rather than being out in the open (EoL group)*

Follow-up/Follow-on

Having significantly benefitted from the programme the participants stated that they would “definitely welcome a phase two or a second round of [the programme]” (EoL group) in which they suggested that “different topics” could be explored as well as “going deeper” into the existing subjects (EoL group). A further proposition from the groups was that they “could do a one year on” (CS group) to see how they had developed and / or utilised their skills over a period of time.

Ultimately, the attendees felt that the programme was something that they had “learnt a lot from” (CS group) and “would benefit again” (CS group). As such, they recommended that “it would be good to move it forward and utilise it again” especially given the “many opportunities...[and] possibilities” (EoL group) that the programme has to offer.

Consider facilitator

Given the plethora of commendable qualities identified in the facilitator for delivering the programme such as “being open”, “bringing her own experiences”, and being non-judgemental (discussed earlier in this essay), the attendees expressed apprehension as to whether “somebody else could [run] it” (EoL group) because “that energy is not something that everybody has” (EoL). The participants inferred that this could have significant implications when attempting to grow the programme and, as such, the facilitator needs to be carefully considered for the programme to thrive.



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE DUNKLEY



PHOTO CREDIT: LINDA ASKEW

Collated findings

The present evaluation sought to understand the potential benefits of participating in this programme of mindful photography, specifically produced to support those in mid-life in challenging circumstances. To this end, the intervention is supported as being effective from the perspective of information garnered via self-report measures, as well as opinions and experiences shared in focus groups. The collated findings from this evaluation support the project as having fulfilled its key aims in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of those in their mid-life. The quantitative analyses provide support for observable changes in key measures associated with mental health: anxiety, depression, and wellbeing. The changes observed here are consistent with other arts for health programmes available via means of social prescribing (10) with regard to these key outcomes. The findings here are relatively hampered due to the amount of data available to make statistical inferences, but these preliminary findings show promising trends. It should also be noted that these data were collected during the pandemic, and so changes observed over the course of the programme may well have been impacted.

The qualitative data provide rich information regarding participants' experiences of taking part. Here, participants appeared to deeply appreciate the methodology of the programme, as well as the authentic approach from the facilitator. Despite the many additional challenges of the pandemic, the participants spoke of their gratitude for the opportunity to take part in the project, and how this had been effectively adapted in reaction to the required restrictions at that time. Participants have provided some meaningful and insightful comments with regard to how the programme may continue to provide benefit to others beyond the project, and recommendations for future learning. Of importance here, it would seem that the shortening of the programme to adapt to the online delivery mode may have had an impact on overall participant experience. Participants cited that this could be overcome by increasing the length of the sessions, or increasing the overall number of sessions for the programme. This would bring the session total more in line with the in-person delivery mode, suggesting that the 8-week modality is optimal from a participant experience perspective. The overall aim of the programme to utilise the Five Ways to Wellbeing via these activities has been successful as reflected by the considerations of the participants in their discussions around their experiences. This creative programme methodology appears to not only be effective for those who take part, but is also enjoyable from a variety of perspectives, and appears to allow participants an incredible amount of freedom with their own journey with the methodology, whilst being adaptable and suitable for many tastes and preferences.



PHOTO CREDIT: PAULINE TURFREY

The social element of the course was well-received, and provided participants with a much-needed outlet and distraction from the worries and strains of the pandemic. This is particularly interesting, as the social element of many similar types of programmes (typically those within social prescribing paradigms) can often be a complicated aspect to navigate, causing some participants worry and concern (11). Here, the social element of the programme was received very well, regardless of whether the group was oriented around a specific health concern (as with the cancer support group), or whether the particular medical needs of the participants were disparate or undisclosed (as with the end of life support group). This may appear on first glance to be conflicting findings, but our group has noted this elsewhere where social prescribing groups based on particular illnesses (i.e. cancer) report benefits of being around others with similar needs and experiences (12, 13), whereas those in “medically anonymous” groupings (i.e. not grouped around medical diagnoses or needs) report benefits of being free from the label of their diagnoses (14). It is the opinion of the evaluation, given the available data, that this disparity is likely to be due to the ability of the programme to adapt to the needs of its participants, and also due to the ability of the facilitator to adapt her own approach according to the needs of those she works with, which is an important strength of the methodology of the programme.

Conclusion

The present evaluation provides support to the mindful photography programme provided by Look Again, in partnership with Create Gloucestershire, and made possible thanks to a grant awarded by the BUPA Foundation project. The programme once again appears to be effective in increasing metrics of participant wellbeing and mental health, and is well-received by those taking part. Moreover, the adaptation of the programme to an online delivery mode appears to have been well-received, and has provided support and benefit to those whose wellbeing has been additionally impacted by the global pandemic.



PHOTO CREDIT: NICOLA PEREGRINE

Recommendations

Whilst the present evaluation is able to lend support for the intervention, it is recommended that further evaluations take place in the future to provide more substantial support. The collated evidence indicates the following recommendations:

1. To try to reinforce the benefits of participants completing pre and post measures to allow for robust quantitative assessment. This can be a challenge, particularly when the role of the facilitator is primarily to assist and guide and not to push for the evaluation. Perhaps in the future it may be helpful to have an evaluation partner involved at the beginning and end of the course to discuss the merits of providing the data.
2. To collate data on why participants' motivations for taking part – whether that be in terms of being referred (and, if so, for what reasons), or whether they are self-referring into the programme, and for what reasons.
3. To consider the use of the online mode of delivery for future programmes, particularly for those who have mobility issues, or who may live in more remote areas with limited transport.
4. To expand the online modality to more sessions and/or longer available sessions. The participants cited the potential rush to create and share images as being at odds with the ethos of mindfulness.
5. To provide potential follow-up activities for those taking part, or perhaps an activity booklet to encourage a sustained practice of mindful photography. The facilitator has created materials already (albeit for a different programme) that encourage longer-term engagement with activities. This could be particularly beneficial for those who feel they may need support in the more creative aspects of the method.
6. To consider the framing of the activity relating to “the self”. Whilst some participants were able to reflect on this being an insightful and profoundly meaningful exercise, it seems that many felt that this may be unfitting for their context.
7. To continue to consider collating longitudinal data to assess whether or not there is a sustainability of benefit for those taking part.

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