

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview

Could you give me a brief history of your experience of pain, from when it started to when you arrived on the Mindfulness for Health programme?

I will be focusing on compassion-based approaches, but I would like to ask how you have found the MfH programme from the beginning?

Prompt: experience of teaching, experience of other learned meditations, experience being in a group

You may remember, in session 6 of programme, the theme of the session was on compassion and you went through the three-modes model. Do you remember parts of this session?

Prompt if participant expresses unclear memory of session, describe topics of teaching as detailed in Mindfulness for Health programme to support recall as necessary.

Prompt: one of key practices of session was the open-heart meditation, which would have been the 1st time you were introduced to this practice. The sort of guidance involved encouraging kindness towards yourself and extending this kindness to others close to you and then to other people. (additional information provided if necessary, using script from open-heart meditation)

During the session, you participated in this open-heart meditation. Please describe what happened when you participated in the open-heart meditation, in your own words?

As best as you can remember, how did you experience that practice from the beginning

How did you feel during the meditation?

Prompt: physical, emotional, psychological, experience of pain

How did you react to these feelings?

Prompt: body & emotion

(if not already covered)

Did you encounter (other) difficult experiences during the meditation. If so, can you share more about these?

How did you react to these difficult experiences?

Prompt: physical, emotional, psychological, experience of pain

(if not already covered)

Sometimes people report trouble engaging with this practice. I wonder if you experienced any difficulties staying engaged with the practice, if so What were these?

Is there anything else about your experience of this practice that we haven't already covered that you would be comfortable sharing. *Can you share more about these experiences?*

How did you feel at the end of the meditation?

How did you make sense of those experiences, how did you understand those experiences?

After the meditation, you had a chance to meet with the group for an enquiry process. Here, some people will have shared their experiences, and these may have been explored. Can you tell me how was this experience for you?

How did this influence your thinking about the practice?

After the session, you were guided to do follow the recording of practice at home

What was your experience in relation to this practice at home?

(similar prompts to above in relation to experience of practise, engagement, difficulties encountered)

Can you tell me more about what influenced how you decided to practise or not practise this meditation at home? Can you remember any points where you were weighing up whether to do this practice or another practice? Can you talk me through, as best as you remember, your experience of those?

Based on your experience, what are your thoughts about these practices? Is there anything else in relation to this practice that might be helpful to share?

How does it compare with other practices learned on course?

Appendix B: open-heart meditation as presented in MfH

The Open Heart meditation

Track
6

This meditation will help you to cultivate a stable, open, kindly awareness towards all of your experience.

Preparation

As usual, begin by establishing a meditation posture. Align your body as best you can whether you're sitting, lying or standing; and set yourself up to be as comfortable as possible.

Give the weight of your body up to gravity. Allow the whole body to settle down on to the chair, the bed or the floor.

The meditation

Gently rest your awareness inside the body; feel the sensations and the movement of the breath. Can you feel the breath moving inside the body as well as at the edges of the body? Can you allow the front, sides and back of the body to be massaged by the gentle rhythm of the natural breath?

As your awareness begins to settle into the meditation, check that you are not blocking or resisting any unpleasant or painful aspects of your experience. Scan through your body for any feelings of tightness or resistance. See if you can gently and tenderly include these, as well as any pain or discomfort, in your

field of awareness with a sense of kindness. Respond to your pain or discomfort as you'd naturally respond to a loved one who was hurting. Rest here for a few moments and cradle the discomfort in a soft and tender breath. And if you have a strong sense of resistance or aversion to pain or discomfort, or your experience feels hard or defensive, then accept that this is how it is for this moment and cradle *this* in a soft and tender, accepting breath. Allow the weight of the body to settle back down towards the earth with each out-breath, settling over and over again.

Very gently shift the gaze of your awareness to settle upon the pleasant aspects of the moment. Rest your attention, very lightly, on anything pleasant, no matter how subtle: something like the sun falling on your skin perhaps, soft face, warm hands, a pleasant sound or maybe you simply notice an absence of the unpleasant. For example, an absence of hunger. Be careful that you don't only value the big, intense experiences. Remember to pay attention to, and appreciate, the subtle, or even ordinary, pleasant experiences that are always there waiting to be noticed if you include them in the light of awareness in the right way. So gently scan through all of your experiences in the body, in your senses, and rest upon, dwell upon the pleasant and enjoyable.

And now, if you imagine that you've just focused on the unpleasant and pleasant aspects of the moment with a precise and close-up lens of awareness, now very gently broaden and widen your perspective to cultivate a wide-angle lens of awareness. Rest back in your experience, rest back in your body, and allow any unpleasant aspects of your experience to arise and pass away, moment by moment, without resistance or clinging; and allow any pleasant and enjoyable aspects of your experience to

rise and fall, moment by moment, without clinging on to them. In the same way as the breath comes into being and passes away, moment by moment, in a continuous flow of movement and changing sensations, allow the unpleasant and pleasant to come into being and pass away in a continuous flow of movement and changing sensations.

If you find images helpful you can imagine that pleasant and unpleasant experiences are like waves on the ocean – continuously rising and falling. If you react to each wave of pleasure or pain with knee-jerk aversion or grasping, your awareness is like a small dinghy or rowing boat bobbing about at the mercy of each wave, each passing sensation. But if you cultivate a broad, stable, non-reactive awareness that includes all of your experience with a sense of wholeness and balance, your awareness becomes like a beautiful streamlined yacht carving its way through the waves and the sea. A yacht has a sense of ballast and depth and also a tall mast providing height and perspective. Can you get a sense of your awareness being like this beautiful yacht as you rest, breathing in and out, including all of your experience within a fluid, open perspective, moment by moment?

Bring a kindly, tender quality to the natural breath. On the in-breath, breathe in kindness, acceptance towards all of your experience; and on the out-breath, breathe out kindness and tenderness towards all of your experience.

Rest here for a few moments within this broad, open, stable, kindly awareness towards all of your experience. Instead of your awareness being dominated by the surface waves of the passing sensations of pain and pleasure, see if your awareness can have the perspective of the whole ocean – broad, deep and fluid and

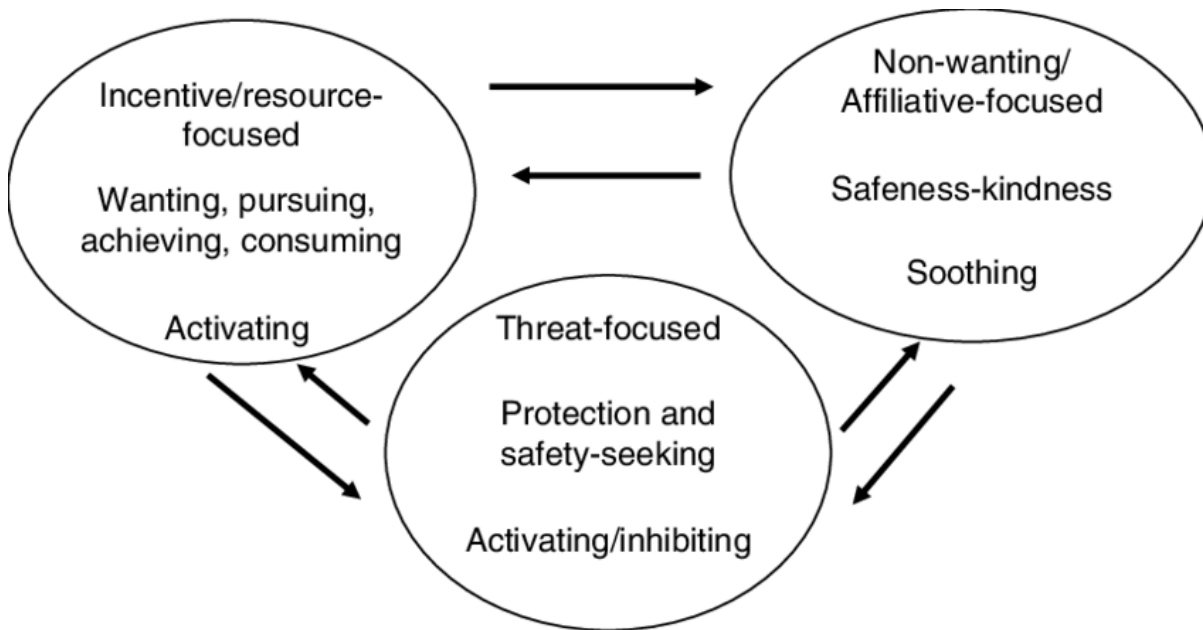
saturated with kindness towards yourself. Just as the water of the ocean is saturated with salt, can you let your breath be saturated with kindness towards yourself?

Conclusion

Very gradually begin to bring the meditation to a close. Form an intention to take this broad and stable, more fluid perspective with you as you move back into your daily life. Allow your body to be grounded, stable and receptive to the kindly breath as you continue to relate to all experience as a flow of passing sensations, thoughts and emotions. Relate to them as they rise and fall, neither automatically pushing away pain, nor clinging on to pleasure.

When you're ready, gradually move your body, taking the kindly breath with you as you move on to the rest of your day.

Appendix C: three regulation systems model as presented in MfH



Appendix D: Table of exemplary quotations from themes

Master Themes	Master Themes	Master Themes
Turning away from self-with-pain	Efforts to control pain or avoid pain	<p><i>“I’m not kind with myself, I just... just get on with it. If that makes sense? Yeah, I’m just (sigh). I’m just here. I just get up, get dressed, go on, go to work, do what I’ve got to do, get off, take my painkillers. I’m not kind to myself. Don’t ask me why, I don’t know.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, I think that’s what we all do in life and there’s like this... it’s a control issue. We feel as if we’ve always got to control everything that’s going, you know, our lives, so there’s no pain. To stay away from the pain.”</i></p> <p><i>“I found the meditation really heard and I got very agitated and... cross with the lady on the record. She’s saying about, you know, love yourself or, you know, be compassionate to yourself. Be kind to yourself or in a kindly manner or something. And I’d sort of in my mind, I’d be answering her back... in a very agitated way, and I’m not going to be compassionate to myself ‘cause I don’t like myself. So I sort of ended up we’re having a... bit of a battle.”</i></p> <p><i>“And I just kept thinking ‘I’m rubbish at this. I can’t do this’. I’ve never been able to do this kind of thing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yeah, yeah, at first I didn’t think it was going to make any difference. It fills my mind. I think it doesn’t stop the pain, it doesn’t stop. I was convinced it wasn’t going to work. But I convinced myself to go with an open mind.”</i></p> <p><i>“We really struggled, like, what am I doing here? Don’t quite get it. What... what are we trying to achieve here?”</i></p>
	Previous traumas	<p><i>“It takes me right back to my childhood and we went through these things (sigh) I had in my life, five life threatening situations that I’ve been in, so I’ve had this excessive trauma and also in my early years... we suffered really toxic, uhm, emotional abuse from, uhm, my father’s mother. Actually very very toxic abuse that has sort...of scarred everyone for life.”</i></p> <p><i>“In very many ways I think... I’m not sure whether it’s to do with the police force and crazy hours and no sleep and all that... or whether it’s just the fact that I’ve got arthritis and all that skipped in, or whether it’s just the back [operations]. Very unlucky, I don’t know”</i></p>
Self-with-pain	Critical-self and pain	<p><i>“And also feeling blamed for the way things were going.... Because the pain is slowing the brain. I cannot engage in conversations with people. I’m just physically there, but I cannot engage if they bring a subject to the table.”</i></p>

<p>experienced as shameful</p>		<p><i>“So I couldn’t work after that...and lost my job and C and I ended up in social housing”</i></p> <p><i>“You know, it’s a long time to be sat at home, by yourself and not able to drive, do stuff and you do feel really isolated and sort of left to your own devices.”</i></p>
	<p>Cultural and personal relationship with compassion</p>	<p><i>“You focus on the few incidents or the few people and you build it up into something bigger and the first thing when someone that does something, the first thing you think is that it’s a criticism and it just going back to...that just comes from my grandmother (sigh). That’s where it comes from, the constant little jibes, etcetera. But I was worried about being tainted by my grandmother of having those genes in me and having that genetic material in me that there might be something wrong.”</i></p> <p><i>“It was really, really bad and I didn’t know how to describe it and I was searching and searching and trying and trying... for more than three years I was trying to find an answer for it. Trying to speak with people who could help me and find a name for it.”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m not kind with myself, I just... just get on with it. If that makes sense? Yeah, I’m just (sigh). I’m just here. I just get up, get dressed, go on, go to work, do what I’ve got to do, get off, take my painkillers. I’m not kind to myself. Don’t ask me why, I don’t know.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, I think that’s what we all do in life and there’s like this... it’s a control issue. We feel as if we’ve always got to control everything that’s going, you know, our lives, so there’s no pain. To stay away from the pain.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had lots of scans, lots of sort of questionnaires, all kinds of things, and each clinic at the end of the investigations they did, they just go “yeah, well, you’re absolutely fine” or “you don’t quite tick marks” or, you know, “you’ve not got anything severe” and (sigh) it was very difficult for me.”</i></p> <p><i>“And having spent all these years thinking that there was something wrong with me, like why does nobody else see all these symptoms? Why does nobody else take this seriously? Am I just being a fraud? Am I mentally ill?”</i></p>
	<p>Pleasing others to reduce feelings of shame</p>	<p><i>“But when you try, for me to think of compassion for myself, I find that really hard. I did find it and I think the whole group of us found it really hard. But then we were kind of saying, is it because we’re doers for people? We’re always helping other people, so then actually taking time out and think about yourself is quite hard (sigh). And to give yourself some kind of credit or recognise who you are in this system. It was quite difficult and the phrases they use, they were... I</i></p>

		<p><i>found it very strange. I could never say them out loud, I just found it really weird.”</i></p> <p><i>“Ok, no come on. I really had no compassion for myself at all. No. I have it for other people, but for me, why should I be kind to myself?”</i></p> <p><i>“You’re taught when you grow up that the compassion was for everybody else apart from myself.”</i></p>
Facilitating change	Being ready for change	<p><i>“And I then very slowly just decided that I just had to get better.”</i></p> <p><i>“I hit a brick wall and I literally went ‘I need help’ and then suddenly...I said I will take it and grasp it... ‘cause I...need to look after me, you know.”</i></p>
	Mindful awareness facilitating compassion practice	<p><i>“I [can] work on my pain now by taking several minutes and it allows me to have my little mini pit stop and then I think the world can carry on for that moment. Nothing is gonna happen. I’m here.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had a sore place on my foot and I had been kind to myself because when I was having a shower, ordinarily I would have just like, you know, whatever, but I was actually careful with my foot. Consciously careful, which really surprised me, ‘cause I’ve never really done that before, you know? Just hold it.”</i></p> <p><i>“[Be]cause you do feel, I think, frustration. I get angry at myself. I get... ‘cause it’s just like I’ve done something to bring this back, so I’ve never done it. We’ve never listened to our bodies.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had realised, part way through the practice, I’d said ‘you know what?’ it came out of the one meditation, which was very unexpected... when I realised how bloody angry, I’m sorry, but how angry I was inside. Really, really angry and all those years of turning the other cheek.”</i></p> <p><i>“I just thought ‘actually, you have never given yourself time’, so as much as you’re upset that other people aren’t being compassionate to you, you’re not being compassionate to yourself, which is blindingly obvious, probably. But it just hit home, you know, like the old saying ‘charity starts at home’.”</i></p> <p><i>“She [the facilitator] was good at listening, good at picking up on things that I wouldn’t necessarily have picked up on myself, you know, she would hear something and then we would discuss it.”</i></p> <p><i>“And so when I was put into this [programme], it was almost like a huge relief (sigh), now someone is going to take me seriously, somebody is actually taking care of me, sees me as who I am, if that makes sense?”</i></p>

	<p>Shared experience of challenge as a group</p>	<p><i>“The self-compassion was obviously...I think every single person in the group said the same thing was difficult, that that was very... difficult and when we were looking at compassion for somebody that you like, that was really easy. It was reinforcing seeing other people on the course all like me. Very compassionate people, very articulate people, intelligent people, caring people who couldn't be nice to themselves. So we all had that experience and it was lovely hearing about other people talking about it.”</i></p> <p><i>“There was no like, ‘we can't say anything ‘cause I think I'm stupid or I don't get this'. Everybody just literally was comfortable with people around them and realised that, you know? And the sharing part for me was the best because it was, you know, it just makes you feel how different every person thinks. They might feel something different, but they're putting it all in the melting pot and you could take something away.”</i></p>
<p>Turning towards pain</p>	<p>Experiential learning and process of overcoming personal defences</p>	<p><i>“When we were doing it [open heart meditation], he [facilitator] was saying you could hug the pain. Now I've never thought of that ‘cause I'd stabbed the pain, kicked the pain all over the place but never thought of hugging it. It's a totally different way of looking at it and honestly never in my life have I sat there and thought ‘it's Ok to look at that pain' I'd like to kill the pain. I just smashed it all over the place. This had taught me to love it and that makes me feel different.”</i></p> <p><i>“And so when I returned to compassion to myself, you know from that I... I think having gone through that little journey of compassion for the entire world, you know...if you go through that little journey actually coming back to compassion for myself was a bit easier.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think what was really good was the way we were told that there's no right or wrong for doing this, ‘cause I...think a lot of things you do, in life, you're not confident if you're doing it at home by yourself because you don't know if you're doing it right, and it's really reassuring if there is no right or wrong answer, don't worry, and listen to what's happening”</i></p> <p><i>“I know that there are a lot of papers and a lot of information and a lot of books and... but it's not the same because, I find it difficult to translate what's on paper to translate it in my situation. You stay there and you listen and things make sense and try to translate that in real life when it's pain. But it's not just the pain-pain.”</i></p>
	<p>Confronting difficult experiences in compassion-</p>	<p><i>“Everyone of us, you know we ended up in tears at some stage, but it wasn't because we were unhappy, it was because there was some triggering of something in somebody.”</i></p>

	<p>based meditation</p>	<p><i>“Yeah, I think it’s to do with being let down. And relationships. And uhm... that’s it, it is men and relationships, and I think you just put barriers up because you’ve got to protect yourself and your daughter and just plough through. So this meditation, it’s going to be a... first step...so you’re going to chisel away”.</i></p> <p><i>“It made me really think about it because you’re so busy doing, you don’t often think about yourself. And then what I’ve taken from the course is actually recognising what I do, which I probably didn’t, I would never actually think about.”</i></p> <p><i>“Because you’re not focused on your pain... you’re looking at it differently. It’s you’re just looking at the whole thing.”</i></p> <p><i>“[Work] we understand that you’re not well at the moment, and if you need help, you know if you need support then let us know and we can put it in place. You know, I spent a lifetime hiding issues form work.”</i></p>
<p>Accepting self</p>	<p>Sense of empowered self and committing to value-based activities</p>	<p><i>“This need to be more aware.... I was on a call with a London partner and it started snowing outside and I was like ‘Oh my God’. So the kids were home and I said ‘I’m really sorry but can I have two minutes... and the other guy was from Jamaica and, he’s never seen snow in his life, so he ran out to have a look and he came back and went, ‘thank you, I’ve seen snow for the first time’. And it was like one of those moments.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had a really difficult problem with somebody who’d done something that was really out of line and I decided... I dealt with it in quite an assertive way. I’d felt the anger in me but normally I wouldn’t do anything about it when I’m feeling angry, ‘cause I don’t trust myself. But actually I felt the anger, I recognised where it was. Where I felt it. Why it was anger. And just dealt with it very short and sweet and assertive and is what I’m doing and that, uhm, which was very different to how I would normally have done it. Normally I would have brooded on it for a long time and I’ve been all that here and you know, and upset and whatever, and that night I slept like a baby. I really did. I slept like a baby, which was great and I felt good and that helped me with the compassion, because I began to think, you know, you are actually worth something, you are actually, you know, quite capable and you can be assertive.”</i></p> <p><i>“Because I began to think, you know, you are actually worth something, you are actually, you know, quite capable and you can be assertive...and I just thought, you do deserve better and you’ve got lovely friends and take care of yourself first and I did and it’s... yeah, it’s a start.”</i></p>

“So I walk every day, twice a day and it’s become part of my busy routine. But it’s really important to me and just to stay healthy, get some fresh air. And I think it’s good for the kids to see. Often they come with me...often I’m thinking of a million things and I could have missed these things. Was the sea rough? These things I could have missed.”

“Well, maybe there’s like a little fissure now in the rock and a tiny trickle of water opening up in this heart on concrete that I have for myself.”

“I think... I needed that journey of those eight weeks to sort of get me going and get me focused on changing things and changing my attitude.”

“I think that, well, I’ve got to work at it. I have to. This is a work in practice. Because otherwise, how could I change, unless I want to change? And the only way I can change is by working at it...and it’s going to take a long time. I think I see anywhere I’m going to be able to conquer. It is just to go with it, is what it is, isn’t it? To be kindly to myself. To let my barriers down.”

“I’ve learned things, I’ve changed things. But I still need guidance and I still need support and... it was a good way of socialising with... Mindfulness, the people there and everyone is moving on with their lives.”

“I think it’s very easy to, you know,, depending on how your life is, I think it would be quite easy to take the eight weeks and go right down the eight weeks, now Ciao, you know, I’m going to walk away from it. But actually for me it’s just to say it gave me the coping mechanisms for all the stuff that’s going on.”