

THE EFFECTS OF A GROUP MINDFULNESS INTERVENTION IN REDUCING EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE

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Mindfulness interventions have been shown effective in reducing experiential avoidance, the tendency for anxious individuals to avoid their thoughts, emotions or physical sensations. This study compares the effectiveness of a group mindfulness intervention with interpersonal support groups and a no-treatment condition in reducing experiential avoidance among a clinical college population. Research participants included 80 college students from a northeastern state university who contacted the University Counseling Center with self-reports of anxiety and stress. Clients were assigned to one of the three comparison groups (Mindfulness, Interpersonal, No-Treatment) and completed written measures pre and post-intervention. Based on previous literature, we hypothesized that students would show a greater reduction on measures of experiential avoidance and increase in measures of mindfulness skills in the mindfulness intervention group compared to the interpersonal support group and no-treatment condition. The use of control groups and the university setting takes us beyond existing research to further our knowledge of group mindfulness training as an effective and efficient intervention for university students.