Being Perfectly Mindful: An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Mindfulness on Self-Compassion and Perfectionism in College Students.

Independent Research Study

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Abstract

Self-oriented perfectionism has been previously shown to be unrelated to mindfulness. Therefore this exploratory study investigated the effects of an 8 week mindfulness intervention on college students (N=39) that measured their levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, anxiety, stress and multidimensional perfectionism (self-oriented, other-oriented and socially-prescribed), compared to a control, using a repeated measures ANOVA. Replicating previous research, it was predicted that after mindfulness training, the mindfulness group (n=15) would lower their stress, anxiety and socially prescribed perfectionism, and increase their mindfulness and self-compassion, compared to control (n=24). It was questioned whether or not participants would lower their levels of self-oriented perfectionism. Additionally, self-compassion was questioned to be an important component to lowering perfectionism. Paired samples t-test results replicated previous research, and the mindfulness group lowered their stress (M = 14.93, SD = 8.78) and anxiety (M = 8.17, SD = 4.79), while increasing their mindfulness (M = 41.27, SD = 6.92) and self-compassion (M = 38.80, SD = 9.93) compared to pre-test, respectively (M = 20.00, SD = 8.08) t(14) = 3.46, p < .005; (M = 13.93, SD = 9.30), t(14) = 2.93, p < .05; (M = 33.33, SD = 5.29), t(14) = -3.58, p < .005; (M = 32.93, SD = 4.76), t(14) = -2.72, p < .05. Extending on previous research, the mindfulness group also decreased their levels of SOP, and OOP, compared to pre-test, respectively (M = 75.47, SD = 18.42; M = 63.76, SD = 19.76), t(14) = 2.25, p < .05; (M = 60.27, SD = 10.29; M = 50.20, SD = 4.92), t(14) = 3.86, p < .005. Self-compassion was also found to be a significant predictor of lowering all types of perfectionism, SOP, β = -.624, t(13) = -2.88, p < .05, (R² = .389); OOP β = -.548, t(13) = -2.36, p < .05, (R² = .300); SPP β = -.647, t(13) = -3.06, p < .05, (R² = .418).