

OVERVIEW OF THE NW MINDFULNESS AND WORK-PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

WHAT IS THE NW MINDFULNESS AND WORK-PREPAREDNESS PROJECT?

This programme, brokered and commissioned by both DH NW and NHS NW, written by both and funded under PSA16 (supporting vulnerable and socially excluded adults) has applied mindfulness approaches within a mixed group drawn mainly from the Recovery community (former drug and alcohol users) as well as from the BME asylum seeker and carer communities. The pilot programme was delivered by Breathworks C.I.C in Manchester, in partnership with support workers, with the goal of helping 30 people who are in recovery to become work prepared.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness has been the subject of growing attention and interest in recent years, thanks to a rapidly expanding evidence base demonstrating that it can be helpful for many mental and physical health problems, as well as for improving well-being more generally.

Mindfulness is an integrative, mind-body based approach that helps people change the way they think and feel about their experiences, especially stressful experiences.

It involves paying attention to our thoughts and feelings so we become more aware of them, less enmeshed in them, and better able to manage them. (Mental Health Foundation, 2010)

WHY WAS THE PROJECT SET UP?

With the current emphasis on Health and Worklessness, the programme was designed to support the health and well-being of individuals currently outside the labour market, and to assist a sustainable and appropriate move towards training and employment, with all the social and mental health benefits this has been shown to provide.

This also supports the government's renewed drug policy emphasis (Drugs Strategy 2010 – supporting people to live drug free life) in which the priority is to move from treatment to supporting full recovery.





OVERVIEW



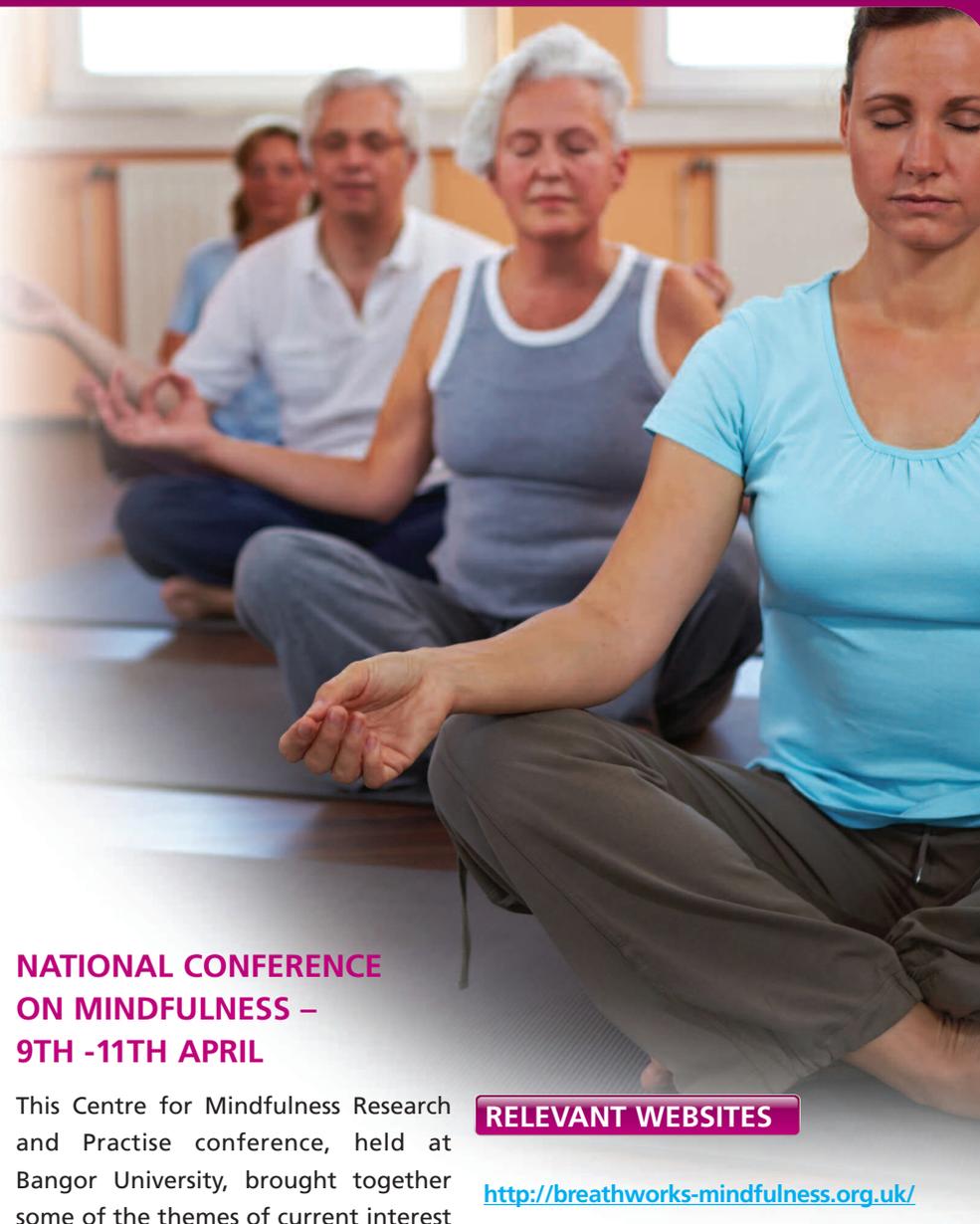
North West

HOW DID THE PILOT PHASE WORK?

Participants were selected by community support workers as ready and able to engage with and benefit from the Breathworks Mindfulness for Stress programme. This course ran over 4 fortnightly day-long sessions, with local community support groups in between to keep momentum going, address challenges and gather development suggestions. It was then followed by a "Next Steps to Employment" session with supported employment and benefit experts helping inform and guide a focus on effective personal action planning.

MINDFULNESS AND WORK-PREPAREDNESS CELEBRATION DAY – 5 APRIL

A celebration day sharing initial outcomes from the Mindfulness and Work-Preparedness project was held on 5 April 2011 at the Whitworth Art gallery where participants stood up and shared their inspirational personal stories before being presented with certificates by the Regional Director of Public Health, Ruth Hussey. This event highlighted the role of participants in co-creating the mindfulness pilot programme and demonstrated the potential of Mindfulness as an intervention to support people into employment in the future.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MINDFULNESS – 9TH -11TH APRIL

This Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practise conference, held at Bangor University, brought together some of the themes of current interest in the field of mindfulness-based approaches – Mindfulness Now. Alongside the keynote speeches and workshops there was a stream of practices led by CMRP teachers as well as poster presentations and interest groups. Participants from the NW Mindfulness and Work-Preparedness programme were also in attendance sharing their personal stories with an even wider audience.

RELEVANT WEBSITES

<http://breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/>

<http://bemindfulonline.com/>

REFERENCE

Mental Health Foundation (2010), Mindfulness Executive Summary 2010, London: Mental Health Foundation.

FURTHER LINKS

[Executive Summary Mindfulness Report](#)

[Mindfulness and Work - preparedness Poster](#)

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