

# The Impact of Brief Psychoeducation on the Perceptions of Mindfulness-Based Programs



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## Abstract

### Context:

We examined whether providing psychoeducation specific to Mindfulness-based programs (MBPs), compared to providing general information about psychological treatments, can improve perceptions of the acceptability and credibility of MBPs as a psychological intervention for improved mental health/

### Method:

Participants ( $n = 188$ ) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In condition one, participants ( $n = 96$ ) were presented with balanced and evidence-based psychoeducation specific to MBPs. In condition two, participants ( $n = 92$ ) were presented with general psychoeducation of psychological treatments. Participants also completed self-report measures of MBPs' acceptability and credibility before and after exposure to psychoeducational material.

### Results:

Participants presented with general psychoeducation endorsed higher scores of acceptability post-psychoeducation, but participants exposed to specific psychoeducation did not. Results also suggested that participants endorsed higher scores of MBP credibility post-psychoeducation, regardless of the specificity of psychoeducation provided.

### Implications:

Understanding factors that impact MBP treatment engagement are integral for intervention dissemination. The current results suggest that perceptions of the acceptability of MBPs are malleable to change following exposure to general psychoeducation, and that perceptions of the credibility of MBPs improve following psychoeducation, regardless of specificity.

## Introduction

- MBPs are designed to cultivate the capacity for mindfulness, defined as paying attention to present-moment experiences with purpose, openness, and non-judgement (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)
- Perceptions of the acceptability (i.e., how appropriate the treatment is for a given problem) and credibility (i.e., how logical and convincing a treatment seems and how much improvement is expected) are associated with the initiation and outcomes in treatment (Constantino et al., 2011)
- Jorm et al., (2003) provide evidence for the effectiveness of specific rather than general information on improving attitudes towards treatment.

## Methods

### Participants:

Participants were 188 adults recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk, an online crowdsourcing platform used extensively in clinical and non-clinical research (Chandler & Shapiro, 2016). Of the sample, 39.4% identified as female ( $n = 74$ ). The age of participants ranged from 19 to 69 years ( $M = 38.2$ ;  $SD = 11.20$ ).

### Materials:

- *Treatment Acceptability/Adherence scale* (TAAS) (Milosevic, Levy Alcolado, & Radomsky, 2015) measuring perceptions of MBP's acceptability
- *Credibility Expectancy Questionnaire* (CEQ) (Devilly & Borkovec, 2000) measuring perceptions of MBP's rationale and its expected efficacy.

### Procedure:

Participants completed self-report measures and were randomly assigned to receive either an expert-vetted, evidence-based description specific to MBPs (485 words) or a general psychotherapy with a one line description of MBPs (418 words) as a mental health intervention. Descriptions included general information, advantages, and disadvantages of each. Participants then recompleted self-report measures.

## Results

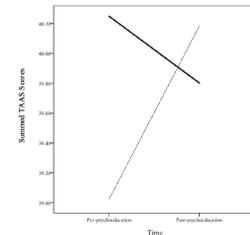


Figure 1. MBP Acceptability summed scores Pre-psychoeducation and Post-psychoeducation, stratified by Psychoeducation Condition (specific vs. general).

Note. MBP = Mindfulness-Based Programs; TAAS = Treatment Adherence and Acceptance Scale

- Two mixed model ANOVAs were conducted, one for acceptability and credibility, to assess whether perceptions of MBPs changed over time and across conditions.

- With the summed TAAS scores as the dependent variable, the interaction between psychoeducation condition and time was significant,  $F(1,186) = 5.12$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$  (Figure 1)

- Participants in the general psychoeducational condition endorsed higher TAAS scores at post-psychoeducation relative to pre-psychoeducation
- With summed CEQ Credibility scores as the dependent variable, there was a statistically significant main effect of time  $F(1, 186) = 11.23$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .057$  (Figure 2)

- Post-psychoeducation scores ( $M = 18.19$ ,  $SD = 5.75$ ) were significantly higher than pre-psychoeducation scores ( $M = 17.28$ ,  $SD = 5.67$ ) across the psychoeducation conditions

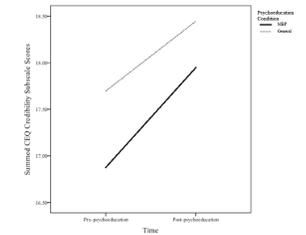


Figure 2. MBP Credibility summed scores Pre-psychoeducation and Post-psychoeducation, stratified by Psychoeducation Condition (specific vs. general).

Note. MBP = Mindfulness-Based Programs; CEQ = Credibility and Expectancy Questionnaire

## Discussion

- Examining public perceptions of MBPs is important for informing strategies to support access to, and use of, MBPs
- Results suggest preliminary support for providing general psychoeducation to improve perceptions of the acceptability and credibility of MBPs
- Providing specific education was not more effective for improving perceptions than general psychoeducation for credibility and in fact, was less effective than general psychoeducation for improving perceptions of acceptability

## References

Available on request

## Contact Information

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