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Investigating Facilitation Strategies And Engagement In Correctional Mindfulness Programs: A Grounded Theory

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Investigating Facilitation Strategies and Engagement in Correctional Mindfulness

Programs: A Grounded Theory

A Dissertation

Presented to

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By

Alexander J. Hilert

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Investigating Facilitation Strategies and Engagement in Correctional Mindfulness

Programs: A Grounded Theory

By

Alexander J. Hilert

Approval March 2020 by

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Dedication

      This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, my loving partner Camila, and all the

mindfulness practitioners who've shared the teachings of mindfulness and compassion in prisons

through the years.

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Investigating Facilitation Strategies and Engagement in Correctional Mindfulness

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ABSTRACT

Mindfulness has received growing attention as an empowering approach for the treatment of addiction and mental health disorders in the criminal justice system. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, this study explored the teaching practices of volunteers who currently facilitate mindfulness programs in correctional settings. A total of fifteen volunteer meditation teachers and three former group members were interviewed. The researcher utilized interview data to construct a grounded theory which conceptualizes the barriers volunteers face, helpful facilitation strategies, and factors which promote and threaten the engagement of group members. The results of this grounded theory illustrate culturally responsive facilitation strategies and empowering ways volunteers share mindfulness teachings with individuals who are incarcerated. Limitations and suggestions for future research are presented, along with implications for the counseling profession.

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Investigating Facilitation Strategies and Engagement in Correctional Mindfulness Programs: A

Grounded Theory

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The criminal justice system has become one of the largest providers of mental health services in the U.S. (Roth, 2018). Amid high rates of mental health and substance use disorders, the lack of available treatment programs, and disparities affecting racial and ethnic minority communities, there is a great need for counseling and mental health advocacy in the criminal justice system (Carrola & Brown, 2018). Counselors could bring a unique perspective to these challenges through their emphasis of humanistic values such as empowerment, wellness, human agency, and social justice (Vereeen et al., 2014). However, the paradigm of correctional treatment has historically relied on risk-management, surveillance, and coercion (Grommon, 2013). Mindfulness has emerged as one approach to correctional treatment which aligns with the humanistic and strengths-based tenets of counseling (Himelstein, 2010; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). Mindfulness has already become heavily integrated in the counseling profession as both a training method and psychological intervention (Goldberg, 2018; McLaughlin, 2019; Brown et al., 2013), and could be used by counselors to promote the well-being of justice-involved clients.

Mindfulness is derived from Buddhism contemplative practices where it has been used for centuries to cultivate wisdom, insight, and compassion (Analayo, 2018). In contemporary literature, mindfulness is most often described as a process of observing present-moment experiences with an attitude of openness, acceptance, and curiosity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Researchers have found evidence that mindfulness training can promote capacities for self-awareness, emotional regulation, and pro-sociality (Dahl & Davidson, 2019; Hölzel et al., 2011). Mindfulness has also been used as an intervention to treat depression, anxiety, post-traumatic-stress disorders (PTSD), and substance abuse disorders which are all prevalent in the criminal

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justice system (Khoury et al., 2013; Li et al., 2017). Additionally, researchers have found that mindfulness-based interventions offered to individuals who are incarcerated can help promote psychological health and optimism while reducing rates of relapse and recidivism (Himelstein, 2010; Bowen, 2006; Samuelson, 2007; Malouf et al., 2017).

Although mindfulness has grown in popularity amongst counselors, there are major remaining questions in the literature regarding how to offer mindfulness in a way that is culturally responsive (Amaro, 2014; Davis, DeBlaere, Hook, & Owen, 2019; Stratton, 2015). According the *Multicultural Counseling Competencies* (MCCs; Sue, McDavis, & Arrendondo, 1992), *Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies* (MCSJCs; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015) and the *Spiritual Competencies* (Association for Spiritual and Ethical Values in Counseling [ASERVIC], 2009), counselors must be sensitive to the institutional barriers clients face and integrate interventions within the worldview, values, and beliefs of clients. Currently, there is little research regarding best practices for mindfulness facilitation strategies and cultural adaptions for people who are incarcerated. People who are incarcerated may face several potential sources of oppression due to poor living conditions, mistreatment from officers, and discrimination due to social status (Carrola & Brown, 2018). Additionally, people who are incarcerated are culturally diverse in regards to race, religion, and socioeconomic status, and have a unique cultural experience of being incarcerated (Crewe, Warr, Bennett, & Smith, 2014). For example, among men especially, the only way to survive in prison may be to conform to rigid masculine norms of suppressing emotions and avoiding expressions of vulnerability (Ricciardelli, Maier, & Hannah-Moffat, 2015).

While the integration of mindfulness in correctional counseling is a recent development, volunteers from Buddhist and secular mindfulness communities have taught mindfulness

meditation in prison systems since the 1960s (King, 2009; Maull, 2015). Experienced

mindfulness teachers may have expertise in best practices for integrating mindfulness in

correctional settings in a way that is culturally responsive and empowering to participants. This

study used a grounded theory methodology to explore the experiences of expert mindfulness

teachers who volunteer in correctional settings to construct a theory of best practices for teaching

mindfulness in the criminal justice system. The researcher also interviewed former group

members as a means of data triangulation. In this chapter, the author will provide background

regarding incarceration in the U.S., current treatment modalities a rationale for the study, and

conceptual framework.

Incarceration in the U.S.

The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world (National Research

Council, 2014). There are currently 2.2 million people incarcerated in prisons and jails, a 500%

increase since the 1970s (Sentencing Project, 2018). These changes are largely attributed to

changes in criminal justice policy from the "tough on crime" era which entailed increased

sentencing for violent crimes, mandatory minimum sentencing for drug crimes, three-strike laws,

and cutbacks in parole releases (National Research Council, 2014). The increasing prison

population has fueled the use of private prisons (Gotsch & Batsi, 2018) and led to issues of

overcrowding in state-run institutions (National Research Council, 2014). Researchers have

largely concluded that incarceration has disproportionally impacted people of color and low-

income communities and that it is largely ineffective in reducing rates of crime (National

Research Council, 2014).

Racial and Cultural Disparities

Politicians have used the criminal justice system as a tool in shaping racial inequity since the inception of the 13th amendment, which banned slavery except for people who are incarcerated (Davis, 2003). In the 1980s, legislators used *The War on Drugs* as a strategy to reverse the gains by African Americans made in the civil rights movement (Alexander, 2010). The combined force of the media's negative portrayal of African American communities, biased lawmaking (e.g. crack-cocaine and powder cocaine sentencing disparities) and biased policing practices (e.g. racial profiling) led to gross racial disparities in the criminal justice system (Thompson, 2008). Today, people of color represent 37% of the U.S. population, but 67% of the prison population (Sentencing Project, 2018). African Americans are six times as likely to be incarcerated as White men, and Latino men are more than twice as likely (Sentencing Project, 2018). Researchers have found clear evidence of bias in the criminal justice system (National Research Council, 2014). For example, African Americans are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana despite similar rates of use as Whites (ACLU, 2013). The cumulative impact of incarceration on Black and Latinx communities is great as incarceration negatively affects life chances, civic participation, and health outcomes (Blankenship et al., 2018; National Research Council, 2014).

Disparities in the criminal justice system extend beyond race. Individuals who belong to sexual minority groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals who are poor are also disproportionately incarcerated and experience worsened treatment by the criminal justice system (Carrola & Brown, 2018). Scholars have also brought attention to the fact that women are the fastest-growing population experiencing incarceration in the U.S (Ison, 2017). The majority of these women have not been convicted of a crime and are disproportionately stuck in jails compared to men (Ison). Women in the criminal justice system also have disproportionately

high rates of experiencing childhood trauma, interpersonal violence, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse disorders (Green et al., 2016; Fuentes, 2013).

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Rates of mental health disorders have risen dramatically in the criminal justice system since deinstitutionalization, the closing down of mental health hospitals (National Research Council, 2014). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an estimated 14.5% of individuals in prison, and 26.4% of individuals in jail report serious psychological distress (Bronson & Berzofsky, 2017). Further, 36.9% of individuals in prison and 44.3% of individuals in jail reported previously being diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Of these individuals, only a third reported receive any meant health treatment (Bronson & Berzofsky). Rates of substance use disorders among individuals in the criminal justice system are at epidemic proportions. Almost two-thirds (64.5%) of incarcerated individuals (1.5 million) meet the criteria for a substance use disorder (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2010). Only, 11% of these individuals are currently receiving substance abuse treatment. The need for mental health and substance use services is great, yet funding for these services has diminished as the rates of incarceration have gone up (National Research Council, 2014).

According to scholars, individuals with mental health disorders face harsher treatment at every level of the criminal justice system (Roth, 2018). Individuals with mental health disorders are more at risk of arrest, less likely to make bail, receive longer sentences, experience greater solitary confinement, experience higher rates of recidivism, and commit suicide at higher rates than the general population (Roth, 2018). Correctional staff are often untrained and unequipped to deal with inmates with mental health disorders and resort to punitive measures with sometimes violent consequences (Carrola & Brown, 2018). Journalists have documented human rights

abuses at several jails across the nation which have resulted in the deaths of several inmates (Winerip & Schwirtz, 2014).

Researchers have found that the experiences of incarceration can exacerbate and/or incite mental health problems among individuals who are incarcerated (National Research Council, 2014). In multiple studies, researchers have found that incarceration and involvement in the criminal justice system are associated with diminished mental health, most notably the onset of mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder (Schnittker et al., 2012; Sugie & Turney, 2017). Researchers believe factors such as shame, internalized stigma, and loss of hope may contribute to these increased mental health symptoms (Schnittker et al., 2012; Sugie & Turney, 2017). Scholars have also linked the environment of incarceration to increased mental health problems (Tobin Tyler & Brockmann, 2017). Inmates are often susceptible to poor housing conditions, isolation, family separation, violence, and dehumanizing correctional practices (National Research Council). Researchers have found that in-prison victimization and experiences of solitary confinement are associated with increases in PTSD symptoms, depression, hostility, and substance abuse post-release (Hagan et al., 2018; Zweig et al., 2015).

Reentry and Recidivism

The challenges of incarceration do not end when one leaves prison. Community reentry, the return of individuals from correctional settings to their communities, entails multiple stressors (Visher & Travis, 2011). Returning citizens (aka formerly incarcerated individuals) often struggle to meet their basic needs like finding housing and employment (Petersilia, 2003; Visher & Travis, 2003; Visher, Yahner, & La Vigne, 2010). The majority of returning citizens also return to communities that are already economically disadvantaged leaving little opportunities for building social capital or finding employment (Visher & Travis, 2011;

Olusanya & Cancino, 2012). Returning citizens face discrimination based on having a criminal record (Pager, 2003; Alexander, 2010). Michelle Alexander (2010) referred to this legalized discrimination afforded by criminal record status as *The New Jim Crow*. Once branded a "criminal," individuals may be denied access to public benefits, voting rights, the ability to obtain Pell grants, and professional licenses (Whittle, 2018). This situation is often more severe for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous/Native American individuals who faced added discrimination based on race (Alexander, 2010; Olusanya & Cancino, 2012; Pager, 2003).

The stresses and discrimination returning citizens face can contribute to increased health disparities (Blankenship et al., 2018; Tobin Tyler & Brockmann, 2017) and relapse into addiction (Binswanger, 2012). Despite needs for mental health and substance abuse treatment, returning citizens often struggle to acquire treatment due to costs and competing demands (Begun, Early, & Hodge, 2016). Returning citizens also must contend with a stringent parole system that employs extensive monitoring, parole requirements (e.g. employment and drug testing), and fines, which often lead to rearrests (Alexander, 2010). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, nearly 70% of individuals are rearrested within 3 years of release from prison (Alper, Durose, & Markman, 2018). The issue of recidivism has become a major focus in criminology literature with the goal of reduced recidivism a major focus of correctional treatment programs.

Correctional Treatment

While prions were once considered humane institutions premised on rehabilitation, they have essentially become storehouses for millions of people from disadvantaged communities and/or individuals with addiction and mental health problems (National Research Council, 2014). Despite Supreme Court decisions guaranteeing inmates access to healthcare, including

mental health treatment, there are major gaps in the provision of mental health and substance abuse services throughout prisons and jails in the U.S. (Carrola & Brown, 2018). In an attempt to fill these gaps, scholars have proposed and tested various models for correctional treatment.

Current Modalities

After Martinson (1974) famously declared "nothing works" in the criminal justice system to effectively reduce rates of recidivism, scholars have worked ardently towards developing evidence-based correctional treatment programs (Ziv, 2018). Existing programs can be generally broken down into rehabilitative treatment programs which seek to address factors leading to recidivism, mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, and the emerging strengths-based programs.

Rehabilitative Treatment. A major focus in correctional treatment is the reduction of recidivism. The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model developed out of years of meta-analytic research on recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The RNR is now the leading paradigm for offering correctional treatment (Ziv, 2018). The primary focus of RNR is that treatment should be provided to the most at-risk individuals and that treatment should target "criminogenic needs," meaning factors that may lead to recidivism (e.g. values supportive of criminal behavior, anti-social attitudes, substance abuse, etc.). The RNR is often operationalized through cognitive-behavioral therapy programs that target criminogenic needs by attempting to change maladaptive thoughts that are supportive of criminal behavior (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). CBT programs such as Moral Reconation Therapy and Thinking for a Change have been shown to lead to significant reductions in recidivism (Lipsey et al., 2007). Despite existing evidence supporting the RNR and CBT programs, critics often challenge the focus of these programs as overlooking the strengths

of clients (Schlager, 2018; Ward, Yates, & Willis, 2011). Additionally, some research has shown that CBT may be less effective for racially diverse clients (Van Voorhis et al., 2013).

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment. Many researchers have sought to address gaps by investigating prison-based mental health and substance abuse treatment. The most widely researched treatment in prisons and jails are therapeutic communities (TCs). Therapeutic communities entail mutual aid-groups (e.g. 12-step meetings), mentoring, individual and group therapy, and access to education, psychoeducation, and recreation opportunities (Klebe & O'Keefe, 2004). Researchers have found TCs are effective in reducing relapse and recidivism (Mitchell, Wilson & MacKenzie, 2007), especially when utilized within a cognitive-behavioral therapy framework (Duwe, 2017). However, TCs models often lack trauma and multicultural sensitivity and continue to expose inmates to harsh treatment (Kerrison, 2018).

As an alternative to incarceration, mental health and substance abuse courts have also been developed. These programs offer individuals access to treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Researchers have found that mental health courts (MHCs) are moderately effective at lowering recidivism (d=-.20) and connecting individuals to treatment services (Lowder, Rade, & Desmarais, 2018; Sarteschi, Vaughn, & Kim, 2011). Despite the effectiveness of MHCs, they have not been widely adopted. Additionally, there are problems with MHCs as many individuals may feel coerced into treatment which may limit the effectiveness of such programs (Stare and Fernando, 2019).

Strengths-Based Models. As a counter to deficit-oriented treatment programs, many scholars have begun to advocate for strengths-based models of correctional treatment that rely on principles of harm reduction and empowerment (Schlager, 2018). Ward and Maruna (2007) introduced the good lives model (GLM) as an approach centered on the assumption that

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treatment which aids individuals in finding fulfillment will also lead to reductions in recidivism. Preliminary findings on the GLM demonstrate clients and treatment providers find the model empowering (Harkins et al., 2012; Hunter et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2018), however more evidence is needed to support its use.

Similarly, motivational interviewing has also been applied in the context of community supervision and prison-based substance abuse treatment (Schlager, 2018). Motivational interviewing is a client-centered counseling approach that aims to help clients resolve ambivalence around change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Current evidence suggests motivational interviewing can increase adherence to treatment and improve motivation to change in correctional settings (McMurran, 2009; Stinson, 2018), although findings indicate this may not lead to reductions in recidivism (Walters et al., 2010).

Throughout the U.S., researchers have also started to study reentry programs, which provide transitional services to individuals as they return to their communities from incarceration (Petersilia, 2003). Reentry programs often consist of case management, transitional housing, employment counseling and/or referrals to treatment (Duwe, 2017). Researchers have found that reentry programs can ease the transition of formerly incarcerated individuals into their communities (Hunter et al., 2016), yet it is inconclusive whether they reduce recidivism (Berghuis, 2018). Lastly, researchers have investigated the potential of mindfulness-based interventions for promoting psychological well-being and behavior change in correctional facilities (Himelstein, 2010; Shonin, Gordon, Slade & Griffiths, 2013). Mindfulness-based interventions hold many benefits because of their low-cost and their potential to address factors associated with recidivism in a way that is more empowering than traditional treatments (Kerrison, 2017; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016).

The Rationale for Mindfulness in Corrections

In recent years, several scholars have highlighted the rationale for offering mindfulness-based interventions in correctional settings (Dafoe & Stermac, 2013; Himelstein, 2010; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). Generally, scholars have highlighted the potential of mindfulness training to offer incarcerated individuals a holistic path to wellness and recovery which may improve health outcomes while also reducing ratings of recidivism (Maull & Crisp, 2018; Shonin et al., 2013). Within the domain of health, mindfulness practice is associated with an increased capacity for self-awareness and regulation which may aid individuals in coping with stress and managing difficult emotions (Hölzel et al., 2011). This capacity for stress and emotion management can bolster health outcomes on a variety of domains includes improved sleep, management of pain, decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety, and healing from trauma (Creswell, 2017; Kabat-Zinn, 2014; van der Kolk, 2014). Mindfulness practices may also be especially beneficial for individuals recovering from addiction, as mindfulness has been shown to aid individuals in acknowledging and accepting substance use cravings without using (Enkema & Bowen, 2017; Bowen, De Boer, & Bergman, 2017).

Scholars have also highlighted the potential of mindfulness to reduce factors associated with recidivism (Dafoe & Stermac, 2013; Himelstein, 2010; Shonin et al., 2013). As shown by the risk-responsivity model, factors such as negative affect, hostility, impulsivity, and substance abuse are associated with increased likelihood of recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Mindfulness practices may directly target these areas by increasing capacities for self-regulation, healthy coping, and the development of pro-social emotions like compassion (Dafoe & Stermac, 2013; Shonin et al., 2013). From a more holistic perspective, mindfulness may also provide individuals who are incarcerated a means of self-transformation by which they can develop

insight into harmful schemas such as self-blame and avoidance and cultivate greater levels of self-compassion, acceptance, and meaning-in-life (Dahl & Davidson, 2019; Shonin et al., 2013). Mindfulness teachings derived from Buddhism such as recognizing one's inherent "basic goodness" may also play a special role in helping individuals move beyond negative labels one has accrued through society to find greater self-worth and self-esteem (King, 2009; Maull, 2005).

More recently, scholars have also highlighted how mindfulness may be a more empowering and culturally responsive intervention than traditional correctional approaches (Kerrison, 2017; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). These authors have contended mindfulness programs are non-stigmatizing in that they do not require extensive self-disclosure or the acceptance of deficit-based labels (Kerrison, 2017; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). Mindfulness programs can also be culturally-adapted to focus on the needs, perspectives, and world-views of diverse cultural groups through their integration with familial cultural and spiritual beliefs (Amaro et al., 2014; Spears, 2019). Mindfulness training also aligns with the strengths-based model in its premise that "as long as you are breathing, there is more right with you than there is wrong with you" (Kabat-Zinn, 2014, pg. xxviii). Paradoxically, mindfulness is not about reducing stress or fixing anything, but rather it is an invitation to compassionately explore one's own experience of heart and mind in each moment (Kabat-Zinn). These strengths-based and multicultural principles of mindfulness also align with the humanistic underpinnings of counseling (Vereen et al., 2014; McLaughlin, 2019).

Lastly, there is some reason to believe mindfulness programs may be more long-lasting in their effect than traditional correctional intervention approaches. Once one learns how to practice mindfulness meditation, they can do so individually at any time they like or they can join one of countless meditation communities where they can also gain social support (Lyons & Cantrell,

2016). This is important for individuals as they navigate community reentry as the skill of mindfulness meditation may aid individuals in managing stress and adapting to their new environment. There is already some preliminary evidence that mindfulness can reduce rates of recidivism and relapse post-release compared to treatment as usual (Bowen et al., 2006; Malouf et al., 2017; Suarez et al., 2014) Additionally, unlike traditional cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness training promotes *embodied learning* which goes beyond intellectual knowing by promoting bodily awareness and healing (Barrett, 2017; van der kolk, 2014; Rousseau et al., 2019). In sum, mindfulness offers a holistic means of transformation which can address the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual elements of growth and healing (Kabat-Zinn, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Mindfulness-based interventions are a promising approach to correctional treatment and there is a growing body of evidence to support their use (Bowen et al., 2006; Malouf et al., 2017; Suarez et al., 2014; Shonin et al., 2013). However, many correctional counselors lack sufficient training and competence to provide mindfulness training in correctional settings (Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). Counselors may also face many challenges in implementing mindfulness such as institutional barriers (e.g. lack of funding or support from correctional staff). Additionally, to teach mindfulness in a culturally responsive way, counselors must integrate mindfulness interventions within the communication patterns, worldview, and values of clients (ASERVIC, 2009; Sue et al., 1992). However, there may be inherent difficulties in teaching mindfulness given the oppressive context of correctional settings, the cultural diversity of participants, and dominant prison norms opposing vulnerability and emotional expression (Crewe et al., 2014; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). Given the lack of research regarding cultural adaptions to mindfulness

interventions in correctional settings, there is a great need for further exploring best practices in facilitating correctional mindfulness programs.

Conceptual Framework

This research attempted to discover how expert mindfulness teachers facilitate programming in correctional institutions. The study was conducted through the constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014). This approach consists of collecting and analyzing qualitative data with the intent of constructing a theory grounded in the data. This was an appropriate approach considering the lack of research on this topic (Creswell, 2014). Constructivist grounded theory is rooted in the assumptions and tenets of social constructionism (Chamarz, 2014). In the social constructivist paradigm, scholars assume that individuals make meaning through their social context and that there are multiple realities rather than an essential truth which can be discovered (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). When applied to research, scholars work off the belief that knowledge and learning are embedded in social life and that new knowledge can be co-constructed between researchers and participants (Charmaz; Hays & Singh).

Social constructionism is an ideal framework for this study because mindfulness teachers and former group members possess socially embedded knowledge from their experiences as teachers in correctional settings. While such individuals do not hold an essential truth on what makes mindfulness training effective, they may have helpful thoughts and ideas which can be applied in the development of a grounded theory. Additionally, in grounded theory, the researcher is also the part of the world they study and their past and present involvements will shape the analyses they produce (Charmaz). As someone who has previously volunteered as a mindfulness teacher in correctional settings, the researcher's beliefs also impacted the research

process. For these reasons, constructivist grounded theory assumes that its final product is not an exact picture of the world, but rather an interpretation of it (Charmaz).

Grounded theory is well-suited for counseling research given in its ability to assist with theory construction which can then be applied to clinical practice (Fassinger, 2005; Hays & Singh, 2012). Additionally, grounded theory can be applied in the study of social justice issues by investigating the experiences of marginalized individuals and incorporating feminist and critical perspectives (Charmaz, 2014; Fassinger, 2005). Previously, researchers have used grounded theory for such purposes as understanding non-improvement in therapy (Miléna De Smet et al., 2019), exploring how low-income clients experience social class in therapy, (Thompson, Cole, & Nitzarim, 2012), and analyzing the coping mechanisms of transgender individuals through the transition process (Budge et al., 2013). Given the wide applicability of grounded theory to counseling, this approach is well-suited to exploring the integration of mindfulness into correctional settings. In this study, the researcher will utilize Charmaz (2014) constructivist grounded theory as the framework and methodology.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the practices and techniques of experienced teachers who provide mindfulness training in correctional settings. Grounded theory was used as a methodological approach for this study to inquire into the different experiences and perspectives of experienced mindfulness teachers and in developing a theoretical understanding of best practices when implementing mindfulness training in correctional settings. The findings of this study could be used to inform how to train counselors in offering mindfulness practices within criminal justice settings in a way that is empowering and culturally responsive.

Research Questions

1. How do expert mindfulness teachers attempt to provide culturally responsive and empowering mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

2. What strategies do mindfulness teachers perceive as helpful when providing mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

3. How do mindfulness teachers overcome institutional barriers to implementing mindfulness programming in correctional settings?

Definition of Terms

This section defines the terms used in this study to provide the context and understanding this study utilized the terms.

Meditation and Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Mindfulness refers to a set of practices originating in the Buddhist tradition, whereby a receptive state of awareness is cultivated through "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Mindfulness-based interventions include any therapeutic approaches which emphasize the development of mindfulness through psychoeducation, experiential activities, meditation practice, and group dialogue.

Criminal Justice System and Justice-Involved Individuals

The criminal justice system refers to the system of law enforcement responsible for policing, prosecuting, sentencing, and incarcerating individuals who are suspected of criminal offenses. Justice-involved individuals include any person who has been arrested or charged with a crime and who is currently receiving supervision via jail, prison, parole, or probation.

Significance of the Study

The task of mindfulness instructors is to "translate the meditative challenges and context into vernacular idioms, vocabulary, methods, and forms which are relevant and compelling in the lives of the participants" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 149). This statement mirrors the MCCs and MCSJCs endorsed by the American Counseling Association (ACA) which state counselors must be sensitive to the worldview of clients and adapt interventions to their communication patterns, beliefs, and values. Volunteers have brought meditation and mindfulness teachings into prisons and jails since the 1960s as part of what's been called the *prison mindfulness movement* (Maull, 2015; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). Many of these teachers may have specific expertise on how to successfully provide mindfulness training to incarcerated individuals in a way that is empowering and culturally responsive.

Researchers have found many benefits associated with mindfulness training for justice-involved individuals which include reductions in recidivism (Malouf et al., 2017) and the promotion of psychological well-being (Himelstein, 2010). However, counselors may face several practical barriers to implementing mindfulness training and there are few existing guidelines regarding best practices when teaching mindfulness in correctional settings. Experienced mindfulness teachers may hold relevant knowledge and expertise regarding how to present mindfulness training to justice-involved clients. This study was the first to explore the approaches and techniques of volunteers who teach mindfulness in correctional settings. The researcher will use a grounded theory methodology to construct a theoretical framework for implementing mindfulness training in correctional settings. The results of this study may hold practical relevance to correctional counselors and researchers seeking to develop mindfulness programs adapted for incarcerated people.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Mindfulness has received considerable attention in the counseling and psychology literature over the past three decades. Researchers have investigated the role of mindfulness in promoting counselor dispositions such empathy, therapeutic presence, and self-efficacy (Boheker et al., 2016; Dunn, Callahan, & Swift, 2013; Greason & Cashwell, 2009), preventing burnout and compassion fatigue (Schure, Christopher, & Christopher, 2008), and promoting multicultural competence (Ivers et al., 2016; Hilert & Tirado, 2018). Mindfulness has also been incorporated into several evidence-based therapies, termed mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs; Brown, Marquis, & Guiffrida, 2013) which are considered part of the third-wave of cognitive-behavioral therapy. These mindfulness-based interventions have received considerable attention in the literature and are now offered in institutional settings throughout the U.S. including clinical settings, workplaces, schools, the military, and prisons (Creswell, 2017). This chapter will provide a comprehensive review of the state of mindfulness research with a focus on its applications in the field of counseling and corrections. The author will also highlight the prison mindfulness movement and its relevance to the development of culturally responsive MBIs.

Foundations of Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to a process of "openly attending, with awareness to one's present moment experience" (Creswell, 2017, pg. 493). This process, typically cultivated through meditation, contrasts with habitual states of mind which include running on automatic pilot, ruminative thinking, and/or suppressing unwanted experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). Researchers have found that the capacity of mindful awareness is associated with increased well-being

(Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007), as opposed to mind-wandering which associated with increased distress (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010).

Mindfulness has been operationalized in the literature in several ways. It's most common features include grounding attention and awareness in one's present moment experiences (e.g. becoming aware of one's body sensations, emotional reactions, and/or cognitive or perceptual experiences), and adopting an attitude of openness, acceptance, compassion, and curiosity towards one's inner experience (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2007; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). According to Brown and colleagues (2007), this receptive state of mind allows one to "be present to reality as it is rather than react to it habitually." Importantly, the acceptance developed in mindfulness does not connote a sense of passivity, but rather a sense of active engagement in life that includes being open to difficult experiences (Creswell, 2017).

A great deal of the scientific scholarship on mindfulness and the development of mindfulness-based interventions has been informed by 2,500 years of Buddhist theory and practice (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition has been taught as a central path towards the development of insight, wisdom, and compassion (Goldstein, 2013; Hanh, 1999). However, there is nothing exclusively Buddhist about mindfulness because it is considered an innate capacity that all humans are capable of developing (Kabat-Zinn). In this vein, scholars have developed and researched various mindfulness-based interventions which are secular in nature, yet maintain aspects of the spiritual tradition and practices from which they were derived (Kabat-Zinn). Mindfulness-based interventions are one of the fastest-growing areas of mental health research and have become integrated into mainstream counseling practice (Brown et al., 2013).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

The 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction program (MBSR) was developed by Jon-Kabat-Zinn in the 1980s at the University of Massachusetts's Medical School. MBSR consists of a weekly 2.5 hours class offered by a trained facilitator in a group format (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). The MBSR program also includes a day-long mindfulness retreat and daily audio-guided meditation practice. MBSR is considered to be didactic, student-centered, and experiential (Crane, Brewer, Feldman, & Kabat-Zinn, 2017). The MBSR program focuses primarily on teaching clients how to be mindful of present-moment experiences through formal and informal mindfulness practices (Kabat-Zinn). Formal mindfulness practices include various forms of meditation including the body scan meditations, mindfulness of breathing, and Hatha yoga. Informal practices include cultivating mindfulness throughout activities of daily living (e.g. mindfully washing the dishes, mindful eating, etc.).

Mindfulness-based stress reduction was first used to treat individuals with chronic pain but was quickly applied to other populations with health problems (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). The scientific research supporting MBSR led to the development of numerous other mindfulness-based interventions which share a similar structure as MBSR, but include added elements to address specific concerns. Most notably, these interventions include mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for treating depression (MBCT; Segal, Williams, and Teasdale, 2002) and mindfulness-based relapse prevention for treating substance use disorders (MBRP; Bowen, Chawla, & Marlatt, 2011).

While 8-week MBIs are the most commonly studied interventions in the literature, mindfulness can be also be offered in several other formats including intensive residential retreats, brief mindfulness training interventions, and internet or smartphone applications (Creswell, 2017). Mindfulness has also become integrated as a component of (e.g. dialectical

behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Hayes et al., 2006). In DBT and ACT, mindfulness is taught as one of several skills offered to clients to help alleviate distress and promote positive psychological functioning.

Mindfulness Research

Through the past thirty years of study, researchers have found evidence that mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions are effective at promoting greater physical and psychological health (Creswell, 2017). Many of these studies have utilized randomized controlled trials (RCTs) with comparison groups that either received treatment as usual (TAU) or were placed on a wait-list. There has also been an increase in studies that asses the efficacy of MBIs in comparison to active control interventions including gold standard treatments (e.g. CBT).

Physical Health. Mindfulness-based interventions have been explored in the physical health domain with the assumption that mindfulness can promote relaxation, improve stress management, and increase resilience which can buffer the impact of stress on physical health outcomes (Creswell, 2017; Kabat-Zinn, 2014). In the domain of pain-management, multiple studies have found that MBSR can reduce pain symptoms and reliance on pain medications (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). Garland and colleagues (2014) found that compared to an active control group, an 8-week MBI reduced pain severity at three month-follow up in a group of opioid-abusing clients with chronic pain. Davis and colleagues (2015) found that an 8-week MBI was superior to CBT and psychoeducation in reducing stress, pain-related catastrophizing, and fatigue in a sample of adults with arthritis (N=143).

Mindfulness-based interventions have also shown promise in promoting immune functioning and reducing inflammation (Creswell, 2017). Davidson et al. (2003) found that

stressed employees who received MBSR exhibited a significantly stronger antibody response

after being administered a flu vaccine compared to a control group. These differences were

accompanied by increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex of participants that suggests that

they were more effectively handling emotions such as stress and anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 2014).

Creswell and colleagues (2012) found that MBSR reduced loneliness in a sample of older adults,

which is associated with an increased risk of health problems. Additionally, participants who

received MBSR showed reduced expression of genes related to inflammation (C-reactive

proteins). These findings are important considering the role of inflammation on cancer,

cardiovascular diseases and Alzheimer's (Creswell et al., 2012). Mindfulness has also been

shown to improve quality of life for individuals with serious health conditions including

individuals with fibromyalgia (Schmidt et al., 2011) and breast cancer (Carlson et al., 2014).

Lastly, mindfulness may also promote health-related behaviors (e.g. sleeping and healthy eating),

however, more research is needed in this domain (Creswell, 2017).

Mental Health and Addiction. Mindfulness-based interventions such as MBCT, MBRP,

DBT, and ACT have been applied in the treatment of various mental health and substance use

disorders to promote self-regulation and cultivate awareness and acceptance of one's inner

experience (Roemer & Orsillo, 2009). Through meta-analysis research, scholars have found large

and clinically significant effects on the use of mindfulness for treating anxiety (Hedge's g = .89)

and depression (Hedge's g =.69), and small to medium effect sizes on substance use (Cohen's

d=.33; Khoury et al., 2013; Li et al., 2017).

Some of the most impressive findings have been on the use of mindfulness in preventing

depression and substance abuse relapse. Several RCTs have shown that MBCT reduces

depression relapse by approximately 50% compared to TAU and some studies suggest it may

even be equivalent to taking anti-depressants (Creswell, 2017). Kyuken and colleagues (2015) conducted a blinded, randomized controlled trial of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression compared to maintenance anti-depressants for 2188 adults. The researchers found that the MBCT was as effective as anti-depressants in preventing depressive relapse or recurrence and promoting quality of life (Kyuken et al.).

For substance abuse, Bowen and colleagues (2009) conducted a randomized trial of MBRP compared to treatment as usual with a group of 168 adults. Individuals in the mindfulness group experienced significantly lower rates of substance use four months post-treatment which was supported by increases in acceptance and acting with awareness and decreases in craving compared to the treatment as usual group (TAU; Bowen et al., 2009). In a recent study (Bowen et al., 2014) randomly assigned (N=286) clients to 12-step treatment, CBT, and MBRP. Compared to the 12-step group, MBRP and CBT both led to significant reductions in relapse, however, the researchers found evidence that MBRP had significant long-term advantages at the 12-month follow-up period compared to CBT (Bowen et al., 2014).

Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Outcomes. Mindfulness has also been studied with samples of healthy adults. In a meta-analysis, mindfulness training was shown to produce positive changes in attention, dispositional mindfulness, positive and negative emotions, self-concept, interpersonal relations, stress, and well-being with an average effect size of ($r=.29$; Sedlmeier et al., 2012). The attention training aspect of mindfulness has been shown to result in improvements in sustained attention, working memory performance, and problem-solving skills (Jha et al., 2015; Zeidan et al., 2010). Mindfulness training can also produce lasting changes in well-being. De Vibe (2018) found in a sample of 288 graduate students, that those who received MBSR exhibited significant increases in dispositional mindfulness and problem-focused coping

six years later, even when minimally practicing formal meditation during this time. Mindfulness meditation has also been found to be supportive of attitudes like empathy and compassion and pro-social behaviors (Luberto et al., 2018). Researchers have also shown that mindfulness training can also help reduce implicit age and racial bias (Kang et al., 2014; Lueke & Gibson, 2014), however, more research is needed to support these findings.

Mindfulness Mechanisms of Change Scholars have increasingly explored the mechanisms by which mindfulness leads to increased well-being. Hölzel and colleagues (2011) provided a theoretical model of mechanisms of change informed by neurological research which included: (a) attention regulation, (b) body awareness, (c) emotion regulation (including reappraisal and exposure, extinction, and reconsolidation), and (d) change in perspective on the self. The authors suggested that these mechanisms of mindfulness work synergistically to enhance the process of self-regulation leading to increased well-being. Tran and colleagues (2014) investigated this model with a sample of German (n=891) and Spanish (n=393) meditators using the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and measures associated with the proposed mechanisms. The researchers found that mindfulness was associated with all of the proposed mechanisms of change, but especially with measures of decentering, the ability to objectively observe and dis-identify with one's thoughts and feelings, and non-attachment, the ability to not fixate on thoughts and ideas (Tran et al.). Consistent with neuroscientific research, the researchers found that body awareness, detachment from identifying with a static self, and, the accepting and regulating aspects of emotion regulation were found to mediate the association between mindfulness meditation and depression and anxiety (Tran et al.).

Researchers have also investigated the mechanisms of change with clinical samples. Bieling and colleagues (2012) investigated mechanisms of change with clients receiving MBCT

compared to individuals receiving maintenance anti-depressant medications. Only clients receiving mindfulness training demonstrated increases in decentering which were also associated with reduced depressive symptomology (Beiling et al.). Researchers have found similar mechanisms of change in the treatment of addiction. In an RCT of MBRP compared to TAU, mindfulness practice moderated the link between craving and substance use, demonstrating how mindfulness can help clients decenter from cravings (Enkema & Bowen, 2017). Although less explored in the literature, scholars have also hypothesized mindfulness training can improve mental health through enhanced meaning-making (Garland, Farb, Goldin, & Fredickson, 2015), self-compassion (Germer & Neff, 2013); psychological flexibility (Hayes et al., 2006), spirituality (Shonin & Gordon, 2016), and reducing processes such as ruminative thinking and experiential avoidance (Roemer & Orsillo, 2009). However, more research is necessary to substantiate these claims.

Neuroscience Research. Researchers have increasingly used methods from the field of cognitive psychology and neuroscience to study mindfulness meditation. These studies have included using brain imaging technology to study long-term meditators (i.e. Buddhist monks), as well as beginners who have completed MBIs (Goleman & Davidson, 2017). Researchers have documented several changes to regions of the brain associated with mindfulness meditation including changes in the anterior cingulate cortex, insula, temporo-parietal junction, fronto-limbic network, and default mode network structures (Hölzel et al., 2011). Researchers believe these changes correspond with increases in attention, working memory, body awareness, emotion regulation, perspective-taking, resilience, and self-perception (Goleman & Davidson, 2017; Hölzel et al., 2011). For example, Hölzel and colleagues (2013) completed an RCT of mindfulness training with clients who have a generalized anxiety disorder. Following

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mindfulness training, clients who received MBSR showed decreases in amygdala activation and increases in ventrolateral prefrontal regions (VLPFC) indicating greater functional connectivity between the VLPFC and the amygdala. These changes were associated with greater top-down emotion regulation and decreased anxiety (Hölzel et al., 2013). Scholars have also linked meditation practice to increased left-prefrontal lobe activation, which is associated with positive emotion, reduced stress, and improved immune functioning (Davidson et al., 2003). Researchers studying advanced meditators have also found that meditation may lead to increased thickening of the cortex, which is the outer regions of the brain, specifically areas associated with attention, introspection, and sensory processing (Lazar et al., 2005). These changes may lead to increased executive functioning, and offset age-related neural deterioration (Wallace, 2009).

Teaching Mindfulness

The fundamental prerequisite to becoming a mindfulness teacher is having an extensive personal practice of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Teachers must navigate the challenges of developing and maintaining a meditation practice before aspiring to teach others to do the same (Kabat-Zinn). Practicing mindfulness is also essential towards developing core competencies of teaching mindfulness, defined by (McCown, 2016) as stewardship skills. These stewardship skills consist of building and maintaining relationships with students, embodying a mindful presence, and working to maintain an environment of safety and trust (McCown, 2016; Wolf & Serpa, 2015). By utilizing these skills mindfulness teachers can co-create an environment where participants feel safe to look inward, express vulnerability, and learn new ways of relating to experience (McCown; Griffith, Bartley, & Crane, 2019). Scholars have especially highlighted embodying mindfulness, defined as a form of modeling, to be essential to authentic mindfulness teaching (McCown; Kabat-Zinn; Wolf & Serpa). Scholars believe embodying mindfulness is

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essential to guiding others in mindfulness due to mirror neurons in the brain, which allow people to feel the movements, intentions, and emotions of those they are around (McCown; Wolf & Serpa).

A growing body of research has affirmed the importance of the role of teachers in MBIs. Van Aalderen et al. (2014) utilized triangulated qualitative study effective mindfulness teaching with a group of mindfulness training participants (n=10) and teachers (n=9), and a focus group of teachers (n=6). The researchers found four themes characterizing the teacher-participant relationships: teacher embodiment of mindfulness, empowerment of participants, teacher non-reactivity, and peer support. Ruijgrok-Lupton, Crane, and Dorjee (2018) investigated the impact of mindfulness teacher training on MBSR participant outcomes. Nine teachers were recruited with different varying levels of training. The researchers found that participants taught by teachers who had received additional teacher training had greater reductions in perceived stress and gains in well-being (Ruijgrok-Lupton et al.). Cormack, Jones, and Maltby (2018) utilized grounded theory to describe how mindfulness teachers steer the group "vessel" to foster a sense of safety and community and cultivate enriching learning opportunities. In their grounded theory, the authors highlighted how MBIs may promote healing through group-related factors such as normalizing painful experiences and enabling individuals to feel part of a group (Cormack et al., 2018).

Challenges to Mindfulness

Despite the increasing depth and sophistication of mindfulness research, scholars have warned against the uncritical adoption of mindfulness practices. Van Dam and colleagues (2017) suggested the "hype" of mindfulness practices in the media and advertising has led to the notion that mindfulness is a panacea despite the need for greater research (Van Dam et al., 2017, p. 1).

The authors called for greater rigor in empirical studies, clearer definitions of the term

mindfulness, and the documenting of adverse experiences that may arise in meditation practice

(Van Dam et al.). Scholars have also critiqued the process by which mindfulness meditation has

been de-contextualized from its Buddhist roots, and appropriated as a self-help tool (Hyland,

2017; Surmitis, Fox, & Gutierrez, 2018). These scholars argue that mindfulness has been diluted

as a result of this process, and call for the inclusion of ethical values in MBIs "which are at the

heart of Buddhist mindfulness" (Hyland, 2017, p. 1). Purser (2019) took a harsher stance by

criticizing the mindfulness movement for reinforcing neoliberal and capitalist values such as

individualism. Purser contends mindfulness promotes individual responsibility for stress

management rather than challenging the dominant societal structures which contribute to stress

and oppression. Many mindfulness teachers have acknowledged these issues and have started to

include explorations on topics such as race, equity, and social change in their efforts to offer

mindfulness (Berilla, 2016; Davis et al., 2019; Magee, 2016; Williams, Owens, Syedulla, 2016).

Mindfulness in Counseling

Counselors have increasingly incorporated mindfulness into clinical training and practice

(Fulton & Cashwell, 2015; Reilly, 2016). Counselor educators argue that mindfulness is

consistent with the profession's humanistic emphasis in that it normalizes human suffering, calls

for a valuing of human experience and promotes self-awareness as essential to healthy

functioning and wellness (McLaughlin, 2019; Roemer & Orsillo, 2009). Moreover, scholars

contend that mindfulness training can help counselors cultivate professional dispositions such as

therapeutic presence, empathy, multicultural competence, and self-care (Hilert & Tirado, 2018;

Reilly, 2016). While there have been limited outcome studies with clients on mindfulness in the

counseling literature, there have been several studies on using mindfulness in the training of

counseling students. In quantitative studies, researchers have found that offering mindfulness training to counselors-in-training can enhance their levels of cognitive empathy, perspective-taking, and tolerance of ambiguity (Leppma & Young, 2016; Schomaker & Ricard, 2015). In qualitative studies, counselors who received mindfulness training have reported increased self-awareness, mental clarity, and empathy towards clients (Schure et al., 2008). Counseling researchers have also found that the mindfulness training of counselors can also affect client outcomes. Johnson (2018) found that the dispositional mindfulness of counselors in training predicted their working alliance as reported by clients (Johnson, 2018).

Counselors frequently incorporate mindfulness training in the counseling of clients with a wide variety of mental health problems (Brown et al., 2013). Counselors who utilize mindfulness in therapy typically provide psychoeducation about the benefits of mindfulness and instruct clients in learning basic mindfulness techniques (i.e. mindful breathing). Counselors may also support clients in applying mindfulness skills to overcome emotional difficulties and reduce experiential avoidance (Baer, 2014; Roemer & Orsillo, 2009). This can take the form of teaching mindfulness strategies to work with negative thought patterns and emotionally triggering situations and in substance abuse specific programs, the ability to tolerate cravings without using drugs or alcohol also known as urge-surfing (Bowen et al., 2011). While counselors may lead formal MBIs, they can also incorporate mindfulness in individual and group therapy informed by other theoretical perspectives (e.g. cognitive, existential, narrative, etc.).

Mindfulness Competencies in Counseling

With the growing interest in mindfulness among counselors and other mental health clinicians, there have been increased questions regarding competency in integrating mindfulness in counseling. To address this issue, Stauffer and Pehrsson (2012) surveyed counselors about

competencies in implementing mindfulness in counseling. The researchers surveyed published

authors on mindfulness in counseling and psychology resulting in a sample of (N=52). These

participants had an average of 14 years of meditation experience, and the majority had received

formal training in offering at least one MBI. The researchers proposed 16 competencies derived

from a review of 162 studies on mindfulness to the survey participants, who ranked their

agreement with the competencies. The researchers found wide agreement on the 16 proposed

competencies which were grouped into four areas: (a) integrated and engaged practice; (b)

cultural competency and mindfulness use; (c) competency limits and continuing education, and

(d) clinical considerations.

In regards to integrated and engaged practice, Stauffer and Phersson (2012) noted the

importance of clinicians being personally engaged in mindfulness practice. The participants

recommended that counselors practice mindfulness meditation at least weekly, with 63% of

recommended daily practice. They also recommended clinicians practice for a mean period of at

least 1.56 years before teaching others. This recommendation mirrors that of others who've

highlighted the fundamental need for mindfulness teachers to have a regular meditation practice

(Wolf & Serpa, 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). In the second category of cultural competency and

mindfulness, reviewers agreed on the importance of clinicians respecting the client's religious

and spiritual beliefs and values when implementing mindfulness practices (Stauffer & Phersson,

2012). Multiple scholars have noted the importance of clinicians possessing cultural competency

when delivering mindfulness-based interventions including considering the potential of

mindfulness to conflict with their client's spiritual beliefs (Davis et al., 2019; Stratton, 2015).

This aligns with the *Spiritual Competencies* (ASERVIC, 2009), and the MCSJCs (Ratts et al.,

2015), which state counselors must integrate interventions within the worldview and beliefs of clients.

Stauffer and Phersson (2012) also found that experts agreed on the importance of clinicians receiving professional training and continuing education on mindfulness before using it in clinical practice. This mirrors the *Code of Ethics* (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014) which dictates that counselors must practice within the bounds of their training. Formal training to provide an MBI such as MBSR and MBCT entails engaging in formal programs and teaching internships, however, counselors may learn basic principles of integrating mindfulness into counseling by attending workshops and/or reading texts (Stauffer & Phersson). Lastly, reviewers agreed clinicians using mindfulness must be able to make skilled clinical decisions based on clients presenting problems to implement mindfulness practices that are effective and avoid any potential harm. Mindfulness practice is helpful for clients suffering from a variety of conditions including suicidal ideation, psychosis, and PTSD (Brown et al., 2013; Wolf & Serpa, 2015), yet clinicians must make adjustments when implementing mindfulness with specific populations such as shortening periods of meditation and/or instructing clients to keep their eyes open during meditation practice (Treleaven, 2018; Wolf & Serpa, 2015).

Cultural Responsiveness in Counseling

Within the field of counseling, multicultural awareness and sensitivity is considered an ethical mandate (ACA, 2014). Professional counselors must be affirmative towards diverse cultural worldviews, values, and identities and utilize counseling interventions which are culturally relevant and consistent with principles of social justice (Ratts et al., 2015; Sue et al., 1992). A number of terms have to been used to describe the framework of multicultural counseling, including: cultural competence, cultural humility, and cultural responsiveness (Sue,

2001; Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Cultural competence most often refers to a set of attitudes and beliefs including: self-awareness of one's cultural background, knowledge regarding the worldviews and values of diverse cultural groups, and culturally appropriate counseling skills for diverse populations (Sue, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2013). Cultural humility is a term developed in the medical professions which refers a "life-long commitment to self-evaluation and critique" in order to address power-imbalances in helping relationships (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 123). In counseling, the culturally humble practitioner takes an "other-oriented" stance and is modest about one's own knowledge base and expertise regarding culture and diversity (Hook et al., 2013, p. 354). Lastly, cultural responsiveness is a term developed in the field of education which refers the attempt to "match school culture with student culture to promote academic success" (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 313). It may entail using educational and counseling strategies which align with the culture, context, and learning styles of individuals to promote greater engagement (Gay, 2000).

While the movement for cultural competence and responsivity grew largely as a response against the longstanding history of racism and discrimination in the fields of medicine, psychology, and education (Sue & Sue, 2013), such approaches are also theorized to have better outcomes. According to the cultural compatibility hypothesis, counseling interventions will be more effective when they are congruent with the worldview, values, and social context of clients (Tharp, 1991, Fraser et al., 2009). Scholars believe that this because clients are more likely to engage and adhere to treatment that corresponds with their pre-existing values (Tharp, 1991, Fraser et al., 2009). In an effort to maximize cultural compatibility, researchers have investigated the use of culturally-adapted curriculums and counseling interventions for diverse populations (Bernal & Scharrón-del- Río, 2001). For example, researchers have developed several culturally-

adapted cognitive-behavioral therapy treatments for diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups (Lim et al., 2014; Shea et al., 2012). Such interventions may include discussion of cultural factors in therapy, taking steps to reduce stigma, using culturally relevant metaphors and symbols, adapting language and communication patterns, promoting spiritual and religious coping, and promotion of consciousness-raising and self-advocacy (Hwang et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2014; Shea et al., 2012).

Overall, researchers have found preliminary evidence supporting culturally-adapted interventions. For example, in a systemic review of culturally-adapted CBT for depression in developing countries, the authors found that adapted CBT led to substantial reductions compared to the control interventions (Vally & Maggot, 2015). Additionally, researchers have found culturally-adapted programs outperform standard approaches in meta-analyses of substance use interventions for Latino adolescents (Robles et al., 2016) and for adults with schizophrenia (Dengnan et al., 2018). In contrast, Lim and colleagues (2014) found no differences on outcomes between culturally-adapted and standard CBT for religious individuals in a systematic review. However, the authors noted that several studies showed greater adherence and engagement in the culturally-adapted programs.

Cultural-Adaptations to Mindfulness

Given the central role of multicultural competence in counseling (Ratts et al., 2015; Sue & Sue, 2013), it is imperative to consider the cultural dimensions of mindfulness research. The majority of research on MBIs has been with middle-class, White populations (Fuchs et al., 2013). This is consistent with findings that mindfulness-based interventions are more routinely accessible and utilized by privileged populations (Olano et al., 2015). However, there has been a growing interest in the utilization of MBIs with culturally diverse and/or systemically

marginalized populations (Davis et al., 2019; Fuchs et al., 2013; Iacono, 2019; Spears, 2019).

Scholars have argued MBIs could be particularly beneficial for individuals experience

oppression as the effects of mindfulness may buffer against the effect of discrimination-related

stress on health (Dutton et al., 2013; Spears, 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014).

Preliminary investigations demonstrate that mindfulness does buffer the relationship between

perceived discrimination on depressive symptoms in racial and ethnic minority adults in cross-

sectional studies (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014; Shallcross & Spruill, 2017).

There has been some debate as to whether MBIs are culturally responsive for minority

groups. Some authors have expressed that mindfulness interventions are inherently culturally

responsive due to their recognition of contextual factors, destigmatizing therapeutic approach,

and acknowledgment of the client's personally held values (Lee & Fuchs, 2009). Still, others

have called for the development of culturally-adapted MBI programs which are specifically

tailored to offer empowering experiences to racial, ethnic, and cultural minority groups (Amaro,

2014; Spears, 2019). Thus far, scholars have developed culturally-adapted mindfulness programs

for immigrants and refugees (Gucht et al., 2019), the Latinx community (Ortiz et al., 2019),

African Americans (Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014), evangelical Christians (Ford &

Garzon, 2017), individuals living in poverty (Hicks & Furlotte, 2010), and LGBTQ youth

(Iacono, 2019).

One step taken towards developing culturally-adapted mindfulness programs has been the

use of qualitative studies to evaluale the acceptability of mindfulness with low-income,

predominantly African American participants (Dutton et al., 2013; Spears et al., 2017; Woods-

Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). In these studies, participants reported a high acceptability of the

intervention and increased calmness, self-awareness, and stress-relief (Dutton et al., 2013; Spears

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et al., 2017). However, the researcher also suggested potential modifications based on participant responses which included using more commonly understood terminology (e.g. paying attention rather than mindfulness), and integrating mindfulness with familiar cultural and spiritual beliefs (Spears et al., 2017; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). For example, when working with clients who identify as Christian it may be helpful to connect mindfulness to Biblical passages or hymns (i.e. 'Be still and know that I am God;' Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). Researchers have also made other culturally responsive adaptations such as making trauma-sensitive considerations (e.g. leaving the lights on during meditation, and shortening meditation periods), and acknowledging the reality of sociopolitical issues (Amaro et al., 2014; Hicks & Furlotte, 2010; Iacono, 2019). The consideration of multicultural and social justice factors like race, class, gender, sexual identity, and religion is also considered an essential component of ethical counseling according to the MCSJCs (Ratts et al., 2015).

Researchers have found preliminary support for culturally-adapted mindfulness-based interventions. For example, Hicks and Furlotte (2010) created and tested a program for economically marginalized populations entitled *radical mindfulness,* which incorporated interventions addressing social and structural issues related to poverty such as teaching self-advocacy skills. Individuals who completed the program rated it highly and showed improvements in life satisfaction and self-compassion (Hicks & Furlotte). However, the researchers utilized a small sample (n=8) and had no comparison group. Amaro et al. (2014) provided a culturally adapted MBRP program for 318 low-income women of color, with trauma histories and substance abuse problems. While the authors observed low completion rates (36%), participation was significantly associated with decreases in perceived stress, and alcohol and

drug use severity. However, the authors did not have a control group and were reliant on self-report data.

Blum (2014) developed the Mindfulness Allies Project (MAP) designed to offer culturally relevant mindfulness training to people of low socioeconomic status and people of color. Blum offered a five-week training at a community center located in a low-income neighborhood, which included instruction on mindfulness, discussion on issues related to oppression, free childcare, and food. The average attendance was seven individuals, the majority of whom were people of color. Participants completed surveys upon completion wherein they rated the class as helpful and enjoyable, and they wished to continue the practice of meditation in the future. Similar to the aforementioned study, this study was limited due to its small sample size and lack of a control group. Additionally, the author did not use validated instruments or conduct pre-testing. Lastly, Ortiz, Smith, Shelley, and Erickson (2019) offered a culturally adapted mindfulness programs for Latinos to improve mental health. The researchers recruited thirty participants to complete their program which entailed eight sessions. Of those who completed, participants reported decreases in anxiety and depression, and increases in mental and physical health (Ortiz et al., 2019).

Mindfulness in the Criminal Justice System

Researchers have investigated mindfulness and meditation-based interventions in the criminal justice system for over three decades. While early research focused primarily on Transcendental meditation, a form of mantra meditation derived from Hinduism, there has been an upsurge in research on mindfulness through the study of MBIs and Vipassana meditation retreats. Mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to promote positive changes in mood and behavioral functioning, and in some cases lead to decreased rates of recidivism (Himelstein,

2010; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). In addition to the work of researchers, a mix of volunteers, activists, Buddhist teachers, and formerly incarcerated people have helped launch the prison mindfulness movement which has led to the creation of correctional mindfulness programs around the world (King, 2009; Maull, 2005, 2015).

Prison Mindfulness Movement

Mindfulness and other forms of meditation and yoga-based programs have been offered in correctional facilities since the 1960s. These efforts have been facilitated largely by faith-based volunteers, many who consider themselves part of the Engaged Buddhism movement, which seeks to bridge Buddhism with social activism (King, 2009). According to Lyons and Cantrell (2016) the purpose of these programs is "not to reduce drug use and recidivism after release, but to improve participant's lives in prison" (p. 1369). Although volunteers may come from Buddhist backgrounds, the programs they facilitate are often secularized and focused on the development of mindfulness, sometimes including other contemplative practices like mindful movement, yoga, contemplative prayer, and/or group dialogue (King, 2009). There are also some curriculum-based programs developed specifically for incarcerated populations like Kate Crisp and Fleet Maull's (2011) *Path of Freedom* program which incorporates mindfulness training with a focus on emotional intelligence, and the *Guiding Rage into Power* (GRIP) program at San Quentin which offers a yearlong program with a focus on mindfulness and conflict resolution.

In 1989, Fleet Maull founded the Prison Dharma Institute (aka Prison Mindfulness Institute) while still incarcerated. This organization has provided books and resources on mindfulness to inmates and training to mindfulness teachers throughout the world (Maull, 2005, 2015). It is now estimated that there are over 185 mindfulness/meditation programs in correctional institutions across the globe, including programs in Europe, Australia, India,

Canada, Israel, and China. While there is variation amongst these mindfulness meditation programs, they tend to include a similar structure of psychoeducation, guided meditation, and group dialogue. In some cases, teachers may provide more formal meditation instruction. For example, the Vipassana Prison Trust is an organization that provides ten-day meditation retreats throughout Washington State and Alabama.

Currently, there are opportunities for specialized training in mindfulness for incarcerated populations through the Prison Mindfulness Institute, which has trained over 600 facilitators to deliver its Path of Freedom program, and the Mind Body Awareness Project in San Francisco California, which has likewise trained many practitioners. The majority of facilitators are Buddhist volunteers or secular mindfulness practitioners with an interest in prison work,(King, 2009; Maull, 2015).

Related literature and research. There have been few studies of mindfulness teachers in correctional settings. However, scholars have highlighted the implications of the prison mindfulness movement in the literature. Lyons and Cantrell (2016) described how the prison mindfulness movement, informed by tenets of Engaged Buddhism, could be a vehicle for addressing mass incarceration. They described how Buddhist principles such as non-duality, the recognition of oneness between helper and helped, may inform instructors and inmate relationships in a mutually beneficial way (Lyons & Cantrell). They also described how the principle of a sangha, the community of meditation practitioners, can help former prisoners build social capital and help build support for addressing mass incarceration through activism (Lyons & Cantrell). Lyons and Cantrell also provided practical suggestions for meditation facilitation such as building on the client's current conceptions of mindfulness and spiritual practice,

empowering participants to start meditation groups of their own, and linking participants to meditation groups in the community when they are released.

Singh (2018) conducted a dissertation studied on prison-based yoga teachers. Singh completed a narrative analysis with seven participants. Six themes emerged from the analyses: (a) awakening to public service, (b) desire to serve prisoners, (c) emphasis on teaching methods, (d) restorative justice principles, (e) barriers to volunteering, and (f) future of prison yoga. Singh described how the yoga teachers demonstrated a passion for service which led to their volunteer work in prisons. Despite facing barriers such as time and money, the volunteers remained committed to teaching yoga because of its benefits to participants (Singh). Although the study provided insights into the field of yoga in correctional settings, it did not provide an in-depth exploration of best practices regarding teaching mindfulness to participants as there are distinct differences between the practices of yoga and mindfulness meditation. Further exploration of the experiences and perspectives of prison-based mindfulness teachers is warranted.

Prison Mindfulness Research

In addition to scholarship focused on the prison mindfulness movement, there have been several experimental studies on the use of mindfulness interventions in prisons and jails. Bowen et al. (2006) assessed the effects of Vipassana meditation (VM) ten-day retreats on a group of 305 adults incarcerated in a minimum-security facility in Seattle. The VM participants (n=63) underwent intensive mindfulness meditation training while the control group (n=242) received standard substance abuse treatment. Although the study had high rates of attrition, after 3-months post-release VM participants had significant reductions in alcohol use, alcohol-related problems, crack cocaine use, marijuana use, as well as greater reductions in psychological distress (Bowen).

Similarly, Perelman and colleagues (2012) studied the longitudinal impact of Vipassana meditation retreats in maximum-security facilities in the Alabama Department of Corrections. A total of 127 people participated, 60 of whom completed the VM retreats and 67 who served as a comparison group. At one year follow up, VM participants showed enhanced mindfulness and emotional intelligence and decreased mood disturbances. However, there were no significant changes in behavioral infractions. These studies (Bowen et al; Perelman et al.) support the use of mindfulness training in criminal justice settings, however, the modality of ten-day meditation retreats may be unrealistic in the majority of correctional settings.

Samuelson and colleagues (2007) evaluated the delivery of the 8-week MBSR program for a total of 1350 individuals residing in drug units in the Massachusetts Department of corrections. The authors found significant pre to post-course improvements in measures of hostility (7.5%), self-esteem (4.7%), and mood disturbances (31.2%). The authors found these effects were more substantial for women than men, and men in minimum security pre-release facilities rather than those in medium-security facilities. Their study was limited by its lack of randomization and control group, but has merit due to its large sample size.

Himelstein et al. (2011, 2012) studied the delivery of the Mind-Body Awareness intervention, an original curriculum based on MBSR for incarcerated adolescents. In in a single subject design, Himelstein et al. (2011) observed mindfulness led to significant decreases in perceived stress, and increases in healthy self-regulation in a sample of 32 participants. In qualitative analyses, Himelstein et al. (2012) found participants reported increases in subjective well-being, self-regulation, and self-awareness, as well as an accepting and positive attitude towards the group experience and overall treatment intervention.

Suarez and colleagues (2014) evaluated the impact of the Freedom Project in Washington State which consists of teaching client's nonviolent communication skills and mindfulness meditation. The authors observed individuals who participated in the Freedom Project had a recidivism rate of 21% which was significantly lower than the Washington State average of 37%. Additionally, in a matched-pair control group design of 26 participants, individuals who participated in the Freedom Project reported decreased anger and increased self-compassion and social skills (Suarez et al., 2014). While the researchers were not able to use a matched control group, this study did provide evidence suggesting mindfulness training can decrease recidivism.

In a randomized controlled trial, Malouf et al. (2017) studied a values and mindfulness-based reentry intervention on a sample of male jail inmates. Participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention (n=21) or TAU (n=19). Participants in the mindfulness groups showed significant medium effect size increases in willingness/acceptance (d=.72), and decreases in non-judgment of self (d=.73) and marginally significant increases in shame (d=.44). After 3-months post-release, only changes in willingness/acceptance persisted (d=1.05). After 3 years, individuals in the treatment group were arrested at nearly half the rate of the control group (d=-.73). Individuals in the mindfulness group also had less substance use, but the difference was not significant.

In a qualitative study, Barrett (2017) interviewed young men (age 18-24) who received mindfulness and yoga training through an alternative to incarceration program. The participants described how mindfulness training assisted them in managing stress, anger, and difficult emotions. Participants noted distinct benefits as a result of embodied nature of their learning that increased their ability to regulate impulses and potential conflicts (Barret). The researcher also

noted some challenges in implementing mindfulness training such as participants' initial resistance to the idea of practicing yoga and meditation.

Lastly, in a systemic review, Shonin and colleagues (2013) reviewed eight studies of MBIs in the criminal justice system. Shonin and colleagues (2013) reported evidence for MBIs in treating individuals with substance use disorders, decreasing negative affect, promoting anger management, self-esteem, and optimism. However, the authors noted major methodological flaws such as few studies employing random assignment, poor adherence to fidelity of implementation, and overreliance on self-report (Shonin et al., 2013). These findings were also supported by a meta-analysis of 12 studies by Auty, Cope, and Liebling (2017) who found that participants in jail or prison-based meditation and yoga programs experienced significant improvements in well-being (Cohen's d=.46) and behavioral functioning (Cohen's d =.30). These changes are noteworthy as improved psychological and behavioral health through mindfulness may lead to decreases in recidivism risk factors. According to both the RNR model and the GLM, when participants experience greater well-being and decreased criminogenic risk-factors like aggression, impulsivity, and substance use, they are less likely to experience recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Ward et al., 2011).

Common Barriers

There are many barriers to implementing mindfulness-based programs in correctional institutions. First, correctional counselors may lack the skills and training needed to offer mindfulness-based interventions (Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). The majority of correctional programs in prisons and jails are heavily structured and didactic so they can be taught by anyone. Alternatively, mindfulness programs which require facilitators with an extensive degree of mindfulness training (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Additionally, despite the research supporting the

effectiveness of MBIs in prisons (Himelstein, 2010; Malouf et al., 2017), mindfulness programs may be viewed as non-essential by correctional staff. Correctional staff may view meditation programs as an oddity and thus they may struggle to gain internal support and external funding (Maull, 2015).

Additionally, when teaching classes, volunteers may face disruptions due to the chaotic environments of prisons and jails (Singh, 2018). Daily disruptions from noise, correctional staff, and violence may negatively impact the safety and quiet atmosphere needed to conduct a mindfulness program (Cormack et al., 2018). Additionally, participants in mindfulness programs may struggle to practice independently due to the challenging environment of jails and prisons, which is considered an essential component of MBIs (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). For these reasons, Maull (2005) likened practicing mindfulness in prison to be like ancient Buddhist charnel ground practices, which consisted of meditating in areas with decomposing corpses. In the Buddhist context, such practices aimed to accelerate spiritual progress and insight into impermanence. Thus, while developing mindfulness may be a great challenge in prisons and jails, there is also the potential for great realization (Maull, 2005).

Counselors facilitating MBIs may also encounter challenges integrating mindfulness within the world-views and values of participants. The practice of meditation or discussions on topics related to emotions or acceptance may run counter to masculine norms in correctional settings (Crewe et al., 2014; Ricciardelli et al., 2015) Barret (2017) found in group of young men in an alternative to incarceration program, many participants were initially resistant to practicing meditation and yoga because they did not think it was masculine. For these reasons, mindfulness teachers must find the appropriate language and metaphors when describing mindfulness training to match their participant's attitudes and beliefs (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Such an approach would

mirror that of the MCCs which outlines the need to match the preferred language and communication style of clients, and integrate interventions within the worldview and belief systems of clients (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992).

Mindfulness participants of various cultural backgrounds may also feel their spiritual or religious beliefs conflict with mindfulness meditation due to its association with Eastern spirituality (Davis et al., 2019; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). Thus, counselors must be able to integrate mindfulness within the client's pre-existing spiritual and religious worldview of clients by following the MCCs (Sue et al., 1992) and the *Spiritual Competencies* (ASERVIC, 2009).

Lastly, there may be inherent challenges to teaching mindfulness in a way that is empowering to justice-involved individuals given the oppressive context of the criminal justice system (Lyons & Cantrell, 2016). In accordance, with the MCSJCs (Ratts et al., 2015), counselors must go beyond teaching individuals to adapt to oppressive settings. Scholars have suggested integrating a discussion of social justice issues in mindfulness interventions to make programs more culturally responsive (Berilla, 2016; Hicks & Furlotte, 2010; Magee, 2016). Currently, it is unclear to what degree volunteer mindfulness teachers adapt their facilitation approach to the needs and backgrounds of incarcerated participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the practices and techniques of experienced teachers who provide mindfulness training in correctional settings. A constructivist grounded theory methodological approach was used to inquire into the different experiences and perspectives of experienced mindfulness teachers, and to aid in developing a theoretical understanding of best practices when facilitating mindfulness programs in correctional settings. The findings of this study can be used to inform how to train counselors in offering mindfulness practices within criminal justice settings in a way that is empowering and culturally responsive.

Research Questions

1. How do expert mindfulness teachers attempt to provide culturally responsive and empowering mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

2. What strategies do mindfulness teachers perceive as helpful when providing mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

3. How do mindfulness teachers overcome institutional barriers to implementing mindfulness programming in correctional settings?

Methodology

Grounded theory has a rich tradition in social science research which originates in the writings of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The purpose of grounded theory is to generate a substantive theory that may "explain who, what, when, where, why, how, and with what consequences an event occurs" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22). Grounded theory has several hallmarks summarized by Charmaz (2014) as simultaneously data collection and analysis, use of theoretical sampling and comparative methods, and a focus on inductive analysis for the pursuit of theory construction.

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Grounded theory also differs from other qualitative approaches in that data analysis begins at the start of data collection and the researcher can engage in theorizing throughout the process in a non-linear fashion. Grounded theory is an approach that offers flexibility with its emergent and open approach (Charmaz). The researcher gathers rich data and uses inductive and abductive reasoning to construct analytic categories through an iterative approach. The final result is theoretical product rather than a purely descriptive account (Charmaz).

The researcher followed Charmaz (2014) procedures for constructive GT beginning with the gathering of rich data through intensive interviewing and writing analytical memos and ending with focused coding and data analysis to construct a theoretical framework. The grounded theory approach was used to empower participants to describe their experiences in their own words (Fassinger, 2005). The data collected was used in the construction of a theoretical framework of mindfulness in correctional settings.

Participants

Purposeful and theoretical sampling was utilized to recruit participants who could contribute to the grounded theory. Organizations and individuals associated with correctional mindfulness programs were contacted through the Prison Mindfulness Institute. Individuals were contacted via email and messaging platforms and invited to participate in an online interview. In total, eighteen individuals participated in the study who ranged in age from 28 to 70 years (M=51). Fifteen of the participants were individuals with experience teaching meditation in prisons or jails for between 3 to 12 years (M=5.2). Of these participants, the majority were female (n=10) and a minority identified as male (n=4). Most of these individuals identified as White (n=11), two individuals identified as Black, one identified as Latina, and one identified as South Asian. Additionally, one individual identified as Queer and one as a lesbian.

The majority of facilitators reported experience teaching in jails (n=9) and many had also taught in in prisons (n=8). The majority of individuals reported experience teaching men (n=12), several individuals had experience teaching women (n=5), and a minority of individuals reported teaching in specialized units for transgender populations (n=2).

Three of the individuals who participated in the study were individuals who previously participated in mindfulness programming while incarcerated in prisons. All three of these individuals identified as female, two identified as White and one identified as Black. One individual identified as bi-sexual.

Table 1

Participants

Role	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Setting	Age
Facilitator	Male	White	Men's Jail	70
Facilitator	Female	White	Women's &Trans Jail Unit	48
Group member	Female	White	Women's Prison	60
Facilitator	Female	White	Women's Prison & Jail	69
Facilitator	Female	Latinx	Men's Prison	28
Facilitator	Female	White	Men & Women Jail	46
Facilitator	Female	White	Men's Prison	49
Facilitator	Male	White	Men's Jail	62
Facilitator	Female	White	Men and Women Jail	62
Group member	Female	Black/AA	Women's Prison	29
Facilitator	Female	White	Men's Jail & Prison	48
Facilitator	Male	Black/AA	Men's Prison	Unknown
Facilitator	Female	White	Women's & Trans Jail Unit	57
Group member	Female	White	Women's Prison	32
Facilitator	Female	White	Young Men's Prison	63
Facilitator	Female	South Asian	Men and Women's Jail	57
Facilitator	Male	White	Men's Prison	61

| Facilitator | Female | Black/AA | Men's Prison | 28 |

Data Sources and Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews utilizing open-ended questions (Charmaz, 2014). The initial questions were focused on the participants' experience of providing mindfulness in correctional settings and their beliefs regarding helpful facilitation strategies. Throughout the research process, questions evolved to focus on saturating emerging categories as is recommended by Charmaz (2014). In this study, specific questions emerged related to categories of trauma-sensitivity, cultural awareness, importance of relationship-building, etc.

The majority of interviews were conducted via an online videoconferencing platform (Zoom). Approximately three interviews were conducted by phone, and one was conducted face-to-face. The researcher provided all participants with informed consent forms via email before the interview and also received verbal consent to record at the start of interviews. Demographic data was collected during the interview. Follow-up questions were asked during interviews to gain richer information from participants. All of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher within two weeks of their recording. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants and maintained throughout the data analysis process to protect confidentiality. Data collection ceased upon theoretical saturation which was reached when no new categories emerged from the interview data (Charmaz, 2014).

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized Charmaz (2014) constructive grounded theory approach to analyze the data. First, the researcher transcribed all interviews into word documents as soon as they were completed. Then the researcher started initial coding, which consisted of "naming segments of data with a label that summarizes, categorizes, and accounts for each piece of data"

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(Charmaz, 2014, p. 111). The researcher conducted line-by-line coding which was used to begin to define implicit meanings in the data, make comparisons between data, and guide decisions about following up on in subsequent data collection (Charmaz). In GT, coding also entails moving beyond the concrete statements of participants and making interpretations of the data which will then be the basis for developing the emerging theory (Charmaz). During this time, the researcher also recorded analytical memos in a word document. Analytic memos consisted of observations of the data including patterns and interpretations of participants' statements.

The second major phase of GT was focused on coding. In focused coding, the researcher assesses and compares initial codes against each other and the data to find the codes that have the greatest analytic power (Charmaz, 2014). Once selected, these focused codes were tested against extensive data to see if they had exploratory power. The coded data were then sorted into sub-categories labeled by focused codes with the greatest explanatory power. The researcher then started axial coding, which consisted of grouping several sub-categories into larger key-categories. The researcher utilized the constant comparative method by comparing and relating subcategories to categories, comparing categories to new data, and exploring variations and re-conceptualizing categories when necessary (Charmaz, 2014).

Throughout this process, the researcher also engaged in theoretical sampling which entailed using additional interviews to check and elaborate categories and fill in gaps in the emerging theory (Charmaz). The researcher also continued recording memos regarding how categories were related to each other and other analytical observations which were the basis of the emerging theory. The researcher also engaged in constructing various diagrams to being representing the relationships between major categories. The researcher also maintained a

reflective journal to record personal reactions to the interviews and data analysis as a form of bracketing.

The final process was constructing the grounded theory which consisted of conceptualizing and articulating relationships between central categories (Charmaz, 2014). This process entailed further diagram construction, reviewing emerging theoretical interpretations with an external auditor, and finalizing a grounded theory that was tested against the data. After finalizing a diagram that incorporated the key categories and their theoretical relationships, the researcher generated a narrative to describe the grounded theory. The final data was then presented with substantive quotes to demonstrate that the theory is grounded in the voices of participants.

Strategies for Validating Findings

In qualitative research, validity is determined by the criteria of "trustworthiness" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 192). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified measures of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity. Essentially this criterion reflected the need for researchers to produce research that genuinely reflects the nature of their findings, utilizes methodological rigor, seeks to minimize bias, and includes thorough descriptions of how data was collected and analyzed (Hays & Singh, 2012). To that effect, scholars recommend the use of several strategies to maximize trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012).

In the proposed study, the research utilized several strategies to maximize trustworthiness. First, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal that allowed for reflection on experiences with data collection including personal reactions to the process. This helped the researcher to consider how their views were impacting the study (Hays & Singh, 2012). The

researcher also complete memos as part of the research process. Creating memos is an essential part of grounded theory research which enables the researcher to record observations throughout data collection as well as thoughts that relate to the data analysis and theory construction (Charmaz, 2014). These journals and memos comprised an audit trail that was used to document how the researcher analyzed data and made decisions throughout the research process.

Second, the researcher engaged in member-checking, which is considered a key strategy in creating trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member-checking entails involving participants in the research process so that their views are accurately represented (Hays & Singh, 2012). The researcher engaged in member checking by requesting that participants review transcripts of their interviews and provide any additional information, edits, or retractions. These processes supported the empowerment of participants and strengthened the authenticity of the findings. Additionally, when writing the findings, the researcher used thick descriptions to emphasize the voices of participants.

Third, the researcher utilized strategies critical to grounded theory like simultaneous data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). This was done by immediately coding transcripts following interviews which enabled the generation of new insights and potential interview questions. This process is essential to the development of grounded theory and a way of furthering trustworthiness (Hays & Singh). Lastly, the researcher utilized a peer-reviewed and external auditor to help verify the analysis. The peer reviewer and external auditor were used to provide feedback on coding and the audit trail to ensure the authenticity of the grounded theory construction process (Hays & Singh). The external auditor specifically helped by providing feedback on the construction of the finalized grounded theory to ensure its accuracy in representing the fullness of the data.

Research Positionality Statement

Bracketing is an essential component of qualitative research which is used by researchers to minimize bias (Hays & Singh, 2012). When engaging in the bracketing process researchers need to recognize any of their values, beliefs, and preconceptions which may bias the data collection and analysis. To that effect, the researcher will discuss their personal history with the topic of research as a form of bracketing, as well as a way of demonstrating trustworthiness.

The researcher is a cis-gender, Jewish, 27-year old White male. As a college student, I began practicing mindfulness meditation and quickly developed in an interest in Buddhism. I started reading and re-reading texts like Bhante Gunaratana's (2011) *Mindfulness in Plain English* and Thich Nhat Hanh's (1998) *The Miracle of Mindfulness* As someone who had struggled with my mental health and substance use, I found the practice of mindfulness highly beneficial in developing greater presence and stability. I was first exposed to the idea of teaching mindfulness in prisons through the documentary *Dharma Brothers*, which showed the transformative potential of meditation in a southern U.S. prison. These early experiences influenced my belief that meditation could be healing and effective in promoting mental health in correctional settings.

After graduating from college, I began studying counseling with a focus on multiculturalism and social justice. I was exposed to great professors like Dr. Chung and Dr. Bemak at George Mason who inspired in me a passion for group-work and social justice advocacy. Around that time, I also started volunteering as a facilitator in a jail-based mindfulness program with men in the D.C. area. In that experience, I observed how participants had varying attitudes towards the class, but that I could get greater participation by connecting with

participants and having confidence in the teachings I was providing. I found the experience to be personally enriching and I felt that meditation was helpful to many of the participants.

As I entered my doctoral program, I further devoted myself to the study of multicultural and social justice issues in counseling. I also continued working as a clinician with individuals experiencing addiction and mental health issues, many of whom were formerly incarcerated. While I have continued to integrate mindfulness into my clinical work, I have questioned how to do it in a way that is most helpful and culturally responsive to participants.

Based on my personal and professional experiences with this topic, I come into this study with certain assumptions about correctional mindfulness programs. For one, I believe mindfulness programs are helpful for participants. Additionally, I come into this project with certain assumptions and biases I developed as a counselor, such as the belief that relationships are critical in all helping work. I also come into this project acknowledging my limitations, biases, and privilege as a White man who has not personally experienced incarceration. While I have gained greater awareness through my counseling relationships with formerly incarcerated people, I lack an understanding of that experience.

Ethical Considerations

The research was approved by the William and Mary Education Institutional Review Board (EDIRC) before the implementation of the study. The researcher provided informed consent regarding participation in the study, guaranteeing confidentiality, except under conditions of a participant indicating the desire to harm oneself or others, child abuse, elder abuse, or in the case of a subpoena. The researcher clarified that participation in the intervention is completely voluntary. The researcher provided participants transcriptions of their interviews for review as well to ensure its accuracy.

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The researcher primarily sought to interview mindfulness teachers due to their relevant expertise. No ethical issues were identified in interviewing this population. However, the researcher also sought to identify formerly incarcerated participants of mindfulness programs. The researcher identified this group as a potentially vulnerable population. To minimize risks, the researcher sought to only interview individuals who had been released from prison for at least three years. Efforts were made to protect their confidentiality by using pseudonyms throughout the researcher process, not including revealing personal info in the narrative, and providing participants the opportunity to extract any information.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

Grounded theory is rooted in the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions of qualitative research and social constructionism (Creswell, 2014; Hayes & Singh, 2012). Although early proponents of GT like Glaser have contended that GT adheres to post-positivism, the work of Charmaz (2012) has firmly rooted GT in social constructionism. Core among its tenets, constructionist GT holds that there are multiple realities and that knowledge is co-constructed between researchers and participants (Charmaz, 2014). In GT, the researcher utilizes inductive reasoning regarding the participants' experiences to construct a theory that can describe a social process (Charmaz). The researcher does not hold that this theory is universal, but rather acknowledges that it is constructed (Charmaz). Because of the constructive nature of GT, the researcher must acknowledge their biases as potentially influential (Charmaz; Haye & Singh). Thus, the researcher seeks to minimize their biases through a process called bracketing.

Similar to other forms of qualitative research, GT has inherent delimitations in regards to its generalizability. Unlike positivistic approaches, the researcher aims to understand particular

experiences without the use of statistical methods used to generalize findings to larger populations (Charmaz, 2014). The choice of using a GT was purposeful because it can be used to construct a theory of phenomena, however, it cannot determine the causal effects of mindfulness training.

The researcher identified several potential limiting factors like the reliance on retrospective recall and self-report which could lead to social desirability bias. Participants were asked about prior teaching experiences which they may recall inaccurately. Additionally, the research was limited by their self-report. Participants may be more willing to disclose positive experiences and minimize negative experiences.

Results

Overview of Grounded Theory

Data analysis yielded five categories: (a) contextual barriers, (b) facilitation strategies, (c) factors promoting engagement, (d) factors threatening engagement, and (e) individual experience and learning outcomes. These categories were all theoretically linked to the core process of engagement in mindfulness programming. As depicted in Figure 1. contextual barriers such as the oppressive and traumatic correctional environment and cultural/social differences between facilitators and group members created an obstacle to engagement which mindfulness teachers attempted to overcome through the use of culturally responsive facilitation strategies. For example, considering the marginalization incarcerated group members faced, facilitators attempted to embody an "empowering" leadership style by using an "interactive" teaching approach and supporting group members' ability to "determine their own experience" with meditation. This approach could overcome barriers to engagement, as group members described how they were looking for "something different" from the typical "authoritative environment" of prison life.

In addition to contextual barriers and facilitation strategies, several other factors could contribute to group member engagement. These factors were divided into factors that promote engagement and factors which threaten engagement. Both of these categories were further divided into facilitator factors (e.g. cultural awareness, empathy, flexibility, trauma sensitivity, etc.) and group member factors (e.g. openness to meditation, defensiveness, mental health concerns, group cohesion, etc.). Thus, while a traumatic event in the prison could lead to group members shutting down or feeling triggered which would threaten engagement, an empathic

facilitator would flexibly adapt to their needs and introduce a trauma-sensitive, "grounding"

mindfulness practice to maintain group member engagement.

The accumulation of contextual strategies, facilitation strategies, and factors that threaten

and promote engagement all influenced the level of engagement of group members which in turn

contributed to their individual experience and learning outcomes. Thus, someone who enters into

a mindfulness program but is not motivated or resistant to the idea of meditation may still

become positively engaged when a facilitator uses culturally responsive strategies and embraces

traits like empathy and cultural awareness. Level of engagement was discerned by the reports of

facilitators and group members who described a spectrum of interest and level of participation

among group members. As demonstrated in the individual experience and learning outcome

category, highly engaged group members were likely to ask questions and participate in group

and practice mindfulness independently. Higher levels of engagement were theorized to lead to

benefits such as increased coping, resilience, and self-awareness. Alternatively, less engaged

group members who did not participate in group or practice mindfulness independently were less

likely to experience such beneficial outcomes. Each category and process will now be presented

and supported by quotes from the participants in the study.

Figure 1

Facilitation Strategies and Group Member Engagement Theoretical Analysis
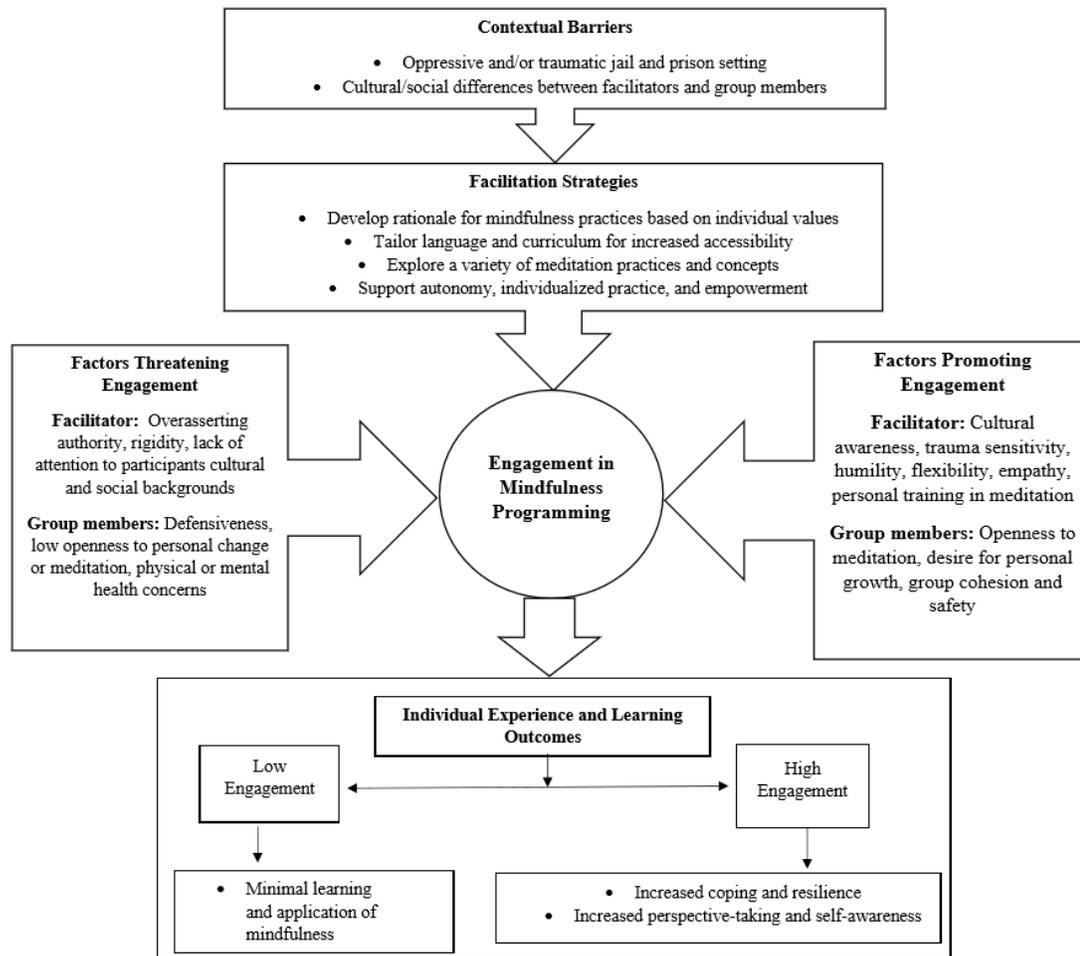
Category One: Contextual Barriers

Participants faced several contextual barriers that impacted their ability to facilitate mindfulness programs in correctional settings. Participants discussed barriers such as: (a) the oppressive and/or traumatic jail or prison environment and (b) cultural/social differences between facilitators and group members. As depicted in the grounded theory, these contextual barriers influenced the facilitation strategies meditation teachers utilized, which in turn influenced group member engagement.

Oppressive and/or traumatic jail or prison environment. Prisons and jails were barriers in and of themselves. Mindfulness teachers described a high level of "inhumane care"

from correctional staff and an environment that was stress-inducing for group members. As described by a formerly incarcerated woman, "the lights were always on, the building was either freezing cold or really hot, you're with people all the time, there's no privacy, there are doors slamming and locking behind you." Being subject to poor living conditions such as this, and the constant of "being watched" and "told what to do" by correctional staff may create a feeling of "powerlessness" among incarcerated individuals. While group members may sign up for a meditation program to seek "reprieve" from this environment, the oppression they experience may be a difficult obstacle to starting a meditation practice.

The oppressive and often traumatic environment also influenced the subtext of the mindfulness groups. According to one facilitator, "people are really hurting and bad things are happening every day. That sort of underlies a lot of the conversation." This demonstrates that people bring their pain with them to the group. This, in turn, influenced the facilitation strategies of facilitators, who would have to intentionally create a safe and compassionate environment for group members. Additionally, facilitators felt an effect from the institutions they volunteered in, which impacted their ability to facilitate groups. As described by one facilitator:

> I feel like the entire institution is a barrier, it was really interesting to just to learn how challenging it is just to run programs, to grow programs, to get volunteers, to get people released to go to groups, you know the whole thing is kind of a barrier in itself, just sort of the physical representation of it. To go do these groups you have to go through these giant walls and um, behind all these gates and unlock so many doors there's nothing that's really easy about doing it, so yeah there's been a ton that's been challenging about it.

This quote summarizes the institutional barrier that prison settings are for facilitators. Facilitators commonly experienced their settings as "unpredictable" and "chaotic." Facilitators shared being

refused entrance to teach due to their clothing, correctional staff not calling in participants to group, and officers interrupting groups in progress. Additionally, several facilitators encountered space constraints such as not having access to a private classroom or not having the space to fit all group members comfortably. One facilitator shared how it was like leading a group with 16 men in a small room: "were packed tighter than sardines in there, we can do a little bit of stretching but it has to be very, very constrained, there's a lot we can't do." Despite the daily challenges of running a prison program, facilitators described their persistence in their work as it was immensely "rewarding" to them. They described how their volunteer work "important" and "enriching." By constantly showing up to teach, facilitators were able to run successful programs and gain more "institutional support" over time, especially as staff noticed the benefits of such programs.

Cultural/social differences between facilitators and group members. In addition to institutional barriers, participants expressed concern regarding differences in the social and cultural backgrounds of facilitators and group members. There were often wide gaps in racial and economic privilege between facilitators and group members as stated by one facilitator:

> We're going into a system that disproportionately affects certain people, and a lot of, in my experience, a lot of people who are volunteering, who have the space in their schedule, um the flexibility to go and the ability to take time off work or not get paid or you know, to go volunteer are usually people who aren't disproportionately affected by the system of incarceration. I think it's incredibly important to just be aware of the inherent power inequities that exist by merely going into prison as a free person and then you know you get leave at the end of this versus the groups who stays inside.

The "inherent power inequities" described above are often magnified by differences in race, class, level of education, and exposure to the criminal justice system. As described by one facilitator:

> I think the main issue is teacher-student misalignment, and um, most of the teachers tend to be Buddhist, they tend to be upper-middle-class White people, um, yeah, and the participants come from very different backgrounds. The awareness of racial disparities, income disparities, cultural disparities, is just essential.

This awareness can influence the facilitation strategies facilitators use as they attempt to avoid the potential to "harm" participants by re-enforcing systems of power and privilege. For example, facilitators may use strategies to "equalize" their power position by taking a non-hierarchical facilitation approach. For group members, cultural and social differences may lead to "mistrust" of group leaders or difficulties connecting with facilitators who lack cultural understanding and awareness of their privilege. As described by one former group member:

> Even though your intent is not malicious it could still come across that way, it could come across very preachy and like white saviory, um, and even though we might not have the vocabulary to like articulate that we're feeling like you're a white savior, we still feel it. Um, and that can really build a wall.

This quote exemplifies the need for culturally responsive facilitators. While the presence of social and cultural differences and the oppressive context of incarceration can "build a wall," facilitators attempted to overcome barriers through facilitation strategies that aimed to empower group members.

Category Two: Facilitation Strategies

Participants described several facilitation strategies they used to overcome contextual barriers and promote the engagement of group members in mindfulness programs. These strategies include: (a) develop a rationale for mindfulness practices based on individual values, (b) tailor language and curriculum for increased accessibility, (c) explore a variety of meditation practices and concepts, and (d) support autonomy, individualized practice, and empowerment. In the grounded theory, these facilitation strategies were directly connected to the engagement of group members, which in turn influenced their individual and learning outcomes. It is theorized that all the described approaches can increase group member engagement if correctly utilized.

Develop a rationale for mindfulness practices based on individual values. It was important for facilitators to develop a rationale for mindfulness practices as many group members did not have prior exposure to meditation or were not motivated because they signed up for external reasons (e.g. the ability to get out of their cell). To increase engagement from group members, facilitators first had to get "buy-in" from group members. To do this, facilitators would share with group members the "science" behind meditation (e.g. its physical and mental health benefits) and/or of disclose the benefits they've received from meditation:

> So, the first thing I would say is that you can improve your health. Yeah, it has benefits in your health, in my case, I was an anxious person and after meditation practice, it was my tool when I feel anxious and it always works. So that's the first thing that I say because it's my own experience with meditation.

Additionally, facilitators described using an "interactive" approach so that the program did not feel like a "lecture." According to one facilitator:

So, I would say, the main thing is to get the folks involved and motivated to participate in

the class, and then most important, to connect. And so, with the discussion, that's meant

to sort of get the buy-in and get people's involvement.

Through conversation and dialogue, facilitators were able to connect mindfulness to the values

and worldviews of group members. Often this meant discussing how mindfulness can help one

live more according to their values and goals such as being a good parent or staying out of jail.

Facilitators discussed how mindfulness could be used a "tool towards choice." Facilitators

emphasized how mindfulness could help group members be less "reactive" and more conscious

in their decision-making as one shared:

And that's one thing that I try to emphasize a lot that this is not about like we're trying to

manage your behavior; this is about you having the capacity to make choices that are in

service of your own life. Your own life in whatever that means, and most likely that

means for a lot of the guys, how they can show up better for their families, how they can

um, demonstrate, a lot them, their children are already in prison, so like how they can be

a good dad. Those are little morsels that are really meaningful to a lot of the men. How

do I show up as a good dad?

By connecting mindfulness to their values and goals, group members may be more interested and

motivated in practicing mindfulness. Facilitators also used group dialogue to develop a rationale

for mindfulness by asking guiding questions. This approach can be used to "elicit a real-life

experience that confirms a key concept." This approach may be more empowering and feel less

like a "lecture":

Instead of telling people, you ask, so what do you know about stress? And they say that,

and you say well what do you usually do when you're stressed out? And you know kind

of build up your point, okay so does that help? It doesn't usually help, so how much

attention do you pay to stress or do you just want to try and get rid of it? Well can you

really fix something you don't understand? Can you understand something you don't pay

any attention to? So that's what we're going to do in this class, we're going to pay

attention to stress instead of just trying to get rid of it. And this way you know, you get

their wheels turning, let them draw on their own wisdom or their own experience, and

then you know, get their interest that way.

This approach may be highly useful for developing a rationale and empowering group members

as active participants. Lastly, facilitators described how just leading a simple mindfulness

practice could get group members interested via the relaxation it may produce. When leading

mindfulness activities, it was important for facilitators to use commonly understood terminology.

Tailor language and curriculum for increased accessibility. Mindfulness teachers

attempted to "tailor the curriculum" to the needs, experiences, and language of group members.

For mindfulness teachers, this could mean trying to facilitate in a way that corresponds to the

norms of group members:

I would say, it's been a learning process, and so initially I think like most teachers,

mindfulness teachers beginning to teach, I wasn't completely comfortable. You sort of

begin with what you are most familiar with, so I pushed sort of an intellectual

perspective, with handouts, and then I learned pretty quickly that I needed sort of meet

the students where they are, um, and begin to tailor the curriculum in ways that were

more accessible to them.

For facilitators this often meant infusing their curriculum with topics they believed would be

culturally relevant and using an "interactive" approach rather than just lecture. In order to do

this, several participants described soliciting requests for topics of discussions and building off previous discussions in class to pick relevant topics. This approach was used to empower individuals to participate as active learners and feel a sense of ownership of the class.

Multiple facilitators also highlighted the need for "flexibility" in teaching and altering the topic to focus on the needs of the group. As described by one facilitator: "I would say that I think the best groups and the teachers who were able to most safely and consistently hold space were really willing to adapt to whatever was most alive in the group" For example, facilitators spoke about how class discussions would emerge around coping with feelings of "grief" and/or "powerlessness," learning from past "mistakes", handling conflict if someone's struggling with their "celli," or "how to self-soothe when you're feeling agitated."

Several facilitators also described using the *Path of Freedom* curriculum which was developed specifically for teaching mindfulness in correctional settings. The *Path of Freedom* includes content on understanding triggers, limiting core beliefs, non-violent communication, and using mindfulness to discover a "more empowered way of living." According to one former group member, the curriculum helped her connect more to the practice:

> Sometimes that's hard to do that when you're incarcerated because someone's coming from the outside and their telling you how to live, but they're not living where you're living, but I found it extremely helpful, I think because the curriculum was based specifically for people who are incarcerated, it just made it easier for me to see how it applied to me.

Participants also described efforts to use more "accessible" language and metaphors when describing mindfulness rather than more "esoteric descriptions." As described by one facilitator and prison chaplain, "I've heard meditation instructors use language that people might not get,

certainly this population might not get." He went on to describe how he works to "explain some of the language of meditation to them so we all have a common language to talk about." For instance, when teaching mindful breathing:

So, feeling the sensations of your breath, they may get it or not, so I might explain what kind of sensations, maybe there's a sensation in your body, noticing any tingling or tightness, or itchiness, okay so that's what a sensation is. You know, or as people say, breathe in and feel the breath, what the hell is that, feel the breath, huh? But when I say, feel the air passing through the nostrils, oh, I can do that, that's it.

This sentiment was mirrored by one former group member now working as a mindfulness teacher: "yeah it's a different language, it's a different language we're not talking like that, and you've got to speak in ways we can understand. Learn how to simplify it or say it in a different way."

Participants also spoke about tailoring the use of metaphors to describe mindfulness which they thought would be more accessible to students. For example, a facilitator volunteering in a maximum-security prison described having to adjust his style to the dominant masculine culture: "I had to really cut it to something that was really palatable for a grown man who is in jail." He described calling meditation "mind-training" and describing meditation like "working out, but only with your mind." This approach may correspond more to the worldview and cultural norms of his group members. Facilitators also described other of metaphors they used such as envisioning shooting a "free-throw" and connecting with that moment of focus, or visualizing themselves as a "tree" rooted in the ground.

Participants also spoke about how they purposely avoided overtly religious language when introducing mindfulness. According to one facilitator, "someone might have a strong

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Christian background or a strong Catholic background, and others complete Atheist. So, if they are all in the same room together, we kind of keep it very plain, very secular." Some facilitators attempted to highlight how group members could use mindfulness within whatever religion they already practice, for example using mindfulness to "settle down before entering the sacred space of prayer." In this way, facilitators tailored the curriculum to group members who were culturally and spiritually diverse, by electing not to associate mindfulness solely with Buddhism.

Explore a variety of meditation practices and concepts. Participants commonly taught a variety of meditation practices within their groups. Facilitators introduced common mindfulness practices like "focusing on the breath" (i.e. Shamata meditation), "mindfulness of thought and feelings," body-scan meditation" (which consists of systemically paying attention to different parts of the body), and "heart-centered meditation" (e.g. loving-kindness and compassion). Participants also described commonly teaching mindful movement practices like Qigong and yoga postures to help group members connect more to their bodies.

In particular, several facilitators emphasized the role of mindfulness in "dealing with emotions" including how to "sit with feelings" and notice when you're triggered. In this way, facilitators emphasized "emotional intelligence" which can play in role overcoming addiction or healing from trauma. Facilitators included specific ideas coming from insight meditation such as the practice of RAIN:

> Um, so I did come in originally with a lot of ideas about, I mean I'm not a Buddhist, but a lot of Buddhist ideas and all kinds of things about accessing your emotions and how to feel them and like this concept of RAIN, which is recognizing, accept, investigate, and non-identify with your feelings, like a way to deal with that. Ways of taking kind of a pause when you have an emotion and feeling it instead of acting on it or even a sensation.

So, I've always talked a lot about emotions, that for me personally is the most interesting

thing, and I feel it's the most useful thing.

Additionally, facilitators commonly introduced brief mindfulness practices that group members

can use as "tools" in everyday life. For example, several facilitators described teaching the

practice of "pausing" when you feel triggered and taking "five conscious breaths" before

reacting. Many facilitators noted how simple breathing practices have helped incarcerated

individuals avert conflict and manage stressful situations: "often when they report back the only

thing they remember is the pause, but I've had several women, um, report kind of in amazement

how powerful and useful that pause is."

Commonly, facilitators described the importance of answering questions like how to

meditate in a noisy environment, how to manage pain, and how to meditate with distracting

thoughts. Facilitators understood that developing a regular meditation practice can be a

"struggle" for anyone. Thus, facilitators tried to clarify the intent of mindfulness by saying how

meditation may help you "quiet your mind" but the purpose is not to "shut your mind off". And

making it clear that mindfulness is a "practice" and "you're not expected to start off as a master."

Facilitators also sought to provide "practical" strategies for practicing mindfulness such as how

to meditate by focusing on sounds in the environment or walking meditation:

I definitely orient my classes towards what I imagine will be of practical use to them. I

teach walking meditation a lot. Because particularly in the jail, um, it's very difficult to

find the time, the space and quiet to be able to practice sitting meditation. And women are

often um, mocked and needled by other prisoners for you know "doing that weird shit"

So I teach them walking meditation so that they can meditate without being detected.

In addition to teaching concrete practices and skills, facilitators also described exploring concepts related to mindfulness and meditation with group members. For example, several facilitators described exploring the concept of "basic goodness" which in the Path of Freedom refers to the idea "that no human being is born bad" and that underneath everyone's conditioned habits and identities there is a foundation of innate goodness. Facilitators described basic goodness as an important concept in empowering participants that they are "complete just the way they are." and that "they're not broken, and don't need to be fixed." Facilitators described exploring basic goodness as it relates to a feeling of wholeness during meditation, and as an antidote to feelings of shame that may arise for group members.

Support autonomy, individualized practice, and empowerment. Participants frequently shared about the importance of taking an "empowering" stance as a facilitator. Facilitators shared an awareness that group members are "regulated" most of the day and are looking for something different in group. With this awareness, facilitators described taking a "horizontalized" approach by emphasizing to group members their autonomy and limiting their use of authority: "I don't use language that assumes that I'm the expert of what they see and what they feel, they're that expert." In order to empower participants, meditation teachers emphasized their role as facilitator rather than teachers: "I do say I'm not here to tell you what to do, if you don't like something I say, just ignore it. You are your own best teacher." This approach appeared to be valued by former group members. As described by one woman:

> It didn't feel like it was someone talking at me, this is what you need to do to fix your life. It was more like, here are these tools, and you can use them how you want. There are a couple of different versions of them, and then see what works for you. And I think that's more what people need as opposed to let me tell you how to fix your life.

Facilitators often described taking an "invitational style" when leading meditation practices aligned with trauma-sensitive protocols in which group members are empowered to "determine their own experience" with meditation. As described by one facilitator:

> So, when we're practicing, they never have to do anything, it's a suggestion. And so, if I suggest that they sit and focus on their breath, they can do that, um, they don't have to close their eyes, they can leave their eyes open. So, it's very much a part of the approach that I prefer, trauma-sensitive for sure.

Facilitators described seeking to empower group members in developing their own meditation practice that is comfortable with them so they are not reliant on a teacher. As described by one facilitator:

> That's been kind of my big approach for teaching is to try and empower people to have their own practices because then it doesn't become dependent on me as a teacher or any teacher that you know if you have your body and you have your breath that you could take yourself through some sort of practice that would still have a calming and stabilizing effect. So anytime I'm teaching and again that's meditation as well yoga, that's kind of my approach to support whomever I'm working with in developing their own practice however that might look for them.

Facilitators also sought to empower people to begin an independent meditation practice by emphasizing how any length of practice can be helpful: "it was more about getting them to commit to a practice even if it was only two minutes, even if its three minutes. We used to talk about the one-minute meditation, it doesn't have to be 20 minutes." When possible, facilitators provided resources such as handouts and workbooks so group members could practice on their own.

Category Three: Factors Promoting Engagement

In addition to the use of culturally responsive facilitation strategies, participants identified several other factors that they believed contributed to greater levels of engagement within correctional mindfulness programs. These factors were divided into (a) facilitator factors and (b) group member factors.

Facilitator. There were several traits and dispositions that facilitators identified as being helpful in facilitating an engaging mindfulness group such as: (a) cultural awareness, (b) trauma sensitivity, (c) humility (d) flexibility, (e) empathy, and (f) personal training in meditation. In the grounded theory, these factors were theorized to positively influence group member engagement.

Cultural awareness. Participants described "cultural awareness and sensitivity" as a valuable factor for leading prison mindfulness programs. Facilitators acknowledged the degree of spiritual, racial, gender, age, and socio-economic diversity of group members and discussed the need to continually "self-examine" and "self-reflect" regarding their privilege and cultural identity. These efforts were seen as critical to providing mindfulness "without causing more injury." Facilitators shared about their individual and collaborative efforts to increase their cultural awareness by participating in workshops and training, studying under meditation teachers of diverse cultural backgrounds, and reading books concerning mass incarceration. Participants described this work as especially critical for White individuals who facilitate groups with racially diverse populations: "cause a teacher role already is a power position and then you add to that we're White so whatever we can do to try and equalize that a little bit, and then recognizing that it's there also and not trying to pretend that it's not." Thus, having awareness of racial privilege can translate into taking a more non-hierarchical teaching position. One

facilitator shared the need for overcoming implicit biases and stereotypes to better serve people who are incarcerated:

> So, I mean, yeah crime is not only in less-resourced communities, crime is everywhere. Policing is in less-resourced communities like we have to educate ourselves about all of these things and undue our assumptions that are both racist and classist and like everything else, um, like we really, really, really have to do that work.

As shared by the facilitator, overcoming bias and stereotypes is necessary for culturally responsive facilitation. Developing a critical awareness of the criminal justice system can also lead to facilitators being able to bring that awareness into the group, as described by a facilitator:

> So, you know, and every now and then I'll say directly something about, well particularly when I'm talking about our tendency to beat ourselves up, um, I'll talk about how punishment doesn't work, and we know that punishment doesn't work and the criminal justice system is a based on a tragic fallacy, I'll say stuff like that.

In this quote, the facilitator was able to deliver a mindfulness teaching on self-compassion, while also openly acknowledging the unfairness of the criminal justice systems. Participants also identified cultural self-awareness as impacting the way they dress, their physical disposition, the language they used, and how they facilitated groups. For example, the majority of the facilitators shied away from mentioning Buddhism and encouraged group members to integrate mindfulness with their religious background. This was shared by one facilitator:

> I frequently begin my classes by telling people that I have no interest in converting them to Buddhism, that the technique and teachings that I offer will help them deepen their relationship to whatever faith they are already connected to.

Additionally, facilitators identified efforts to openly acknowledge their privilege and seek to create a classroom environment where everyone felt invited to engage. As described by one facilitator: "what seems to work for me and for the student is for me to acknowledge, I'm a white guy, … I um, can't feel a lot of what you feel period, and be very honest about that." The facilitation format of discussion and collaboration may also create a venue for minimizing hierarchies. As former group member shared:

> I think it had a lot do with the facilitation style, it wasn't, they were never, you know like, standing in front in of us, or talking at us, it was always in a circle. And we were always encouraged to offer input, we were always encouraged to disagree, or ask if we didn't understand something and it was never like a high-pressure environment as opposed to all the other classes.

Trauma-sensitivity. Participants described "trauma-sensitivity" as an important characteristic when facilitating mindfulness groups. While only a minority of individuals reported receiving specialized training in trauma-informed yoga and meditation, participants spoke about the need to recognize the prevalence of trauma, especially facilitators who worked with women. As described by one facilitator:

> Trauma sensitivity is important, I find the more I teach inside the more I find it vital to this approach because I would say 100% of the women have had trauma, most of them sexual traumas, domestic violence. And the men as well.

Participants shared how in addition to having many trauma survivors in a group, incarcerated individuals are exposed to ongoing traumatic stress just by being incarcerated. As described by one facilitator who worked with women, trans, and non-binary people: "you know they are all trauma survivors. If they weren't before they got to jail, they are now." For example, a facilitator

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described how such the integration of a sensitive needs yard exposed group members to traumatic stress:

> A lot of people were scared and at-risk um, you know just attacks… and there were a lot more deaths happening in the prison I was working at and one day people came in and were talking about that and someone shared about how they just feel so scared all the time and how that feels in their body and they ended up describing some of what sounded to me, like again from my understanding of trauma, sounded a lot like he was describing a dissociative experience.

Participants shared the importance of being able to recognize and accommodate individuals presenting with the signs and symptoms of trauma. Facilitators described tailoring their approach to be trauma-sensitive by avoiding using commanding language: "I never say do this, do that. I never tell people what to do with their body, I always say, we could…"

Further, several facilitators described the intentional incorporation of body-based meditation (e.g. paying mindful attention to your feet or the feeling of sinking into your chair) and the use of mindful movement practices. Participants identified the importance of these practices in helping participants avoid dissociation and learn how to better inhabit their bodies. As described by one facilitator:

> So that's one [approach] creating a lot of body-based, grounding languaging, and also keeping a lot of options and naming when something feels like too much, just the possibility of backing off like we're not here to go full throttle into our deepest wounds, and I don't ever encourage that in that space, because it's just not appropriate. I don't have the tools for it, I don't have the environment for it.

By creating a group atmosphere sensitive to the needs of individuals with trauma, facilitators can encourage engagement in mindfulness programs in a way that's accessible and empowering.

Humility. Participants frequently described a feeling "humility" being present in their volunteer work at prisons and jails. Facilitators often shared how they learned to "recognize that my students are my teachers." Participants also shared being purposeful not to "elevate" themselves above group members. As described by one facilitator:

> There's a tendency when doing any kind of like work in a setting like in a prison or a jail, or any kind of setting where there's a tendency to look at people as less than you, as a poor suffering other, instead of just recognizing that I have an anger problem just like you do, and if I don't have anger problem maybe I have a jealousy problem, I have a craving problem, maybe I have a craving problem just like someone who has an addiction issue you know…

Participants often shared how they will self-disclose their troublesome tendencies and life issues with group members to connect on a more "human" level and "make the playing field more level." Participants also shared how they chose to identify as "facilitators" rather than "teachers" to acknowledge that they are not experts on anyone else's experience. As described by one facilitator "what I'm mainly doing is going there, and looking into people's eyes, seeing them, offering them respect, and just being with them, and not trying to pretend that I know what they're going through because I don't." One facilitator described how she makes the distinction to group members regarding mindfulness: "I don't bring this in and give this to you, you have this inside yourself."

From a multicultural perspective, humility can also be used as a way of minimizing harmful power inequities, especially those associated with incarceration. As described by one

facilitator, humility is a way of creating safety and learning about experiences different from your own:

> I think that's the best thing most people can do for creating safety and space for these practices to unfold in these different environments, is taking a very humble approach, and then continuing to learn from people who are affected by these systems of oppression.

When facilitators demonstrate humility, they may be able to counteract defensiveness among group members and promote greater engagement. As described by a former group member, hearing facilitators talk about their own difficulties brought her peace:

> We'd have different instructors and to talk to people who have been practicing this type of stuff for a long time and to kind of talk to them and understand that they may have been in a chaotic place in their life too and this had helped them. Um, and it brought me a little, I don't even want to say a little, it brought me a lot of peace.

Flexibility. Facilitators frequently shared the importance of "flexibility" when offering mindfulness groups in correctional settings. Facilitators described the need to "respond to what's in the room" whether that be strong emotional reactions of group members, changing dynamics due to new group members or recent events in the jail/prison, or interruptions by correctional officers:

> I'm working with different people even if some of the people show up, they just are in completely different space then when I was there the previous week. As a teacher, especially an insight meditation teacher, that is really powerful for my practice because you just show up and respond wisely to the situation, you're walking into with no real preconceptions about what it's going to be like. So often its completely different, and just

offer what you can and be as present as you can and just know that it's not really about

me.

As facilitators developed flexibility, they learned how to change their plans: "every single time I go there I have a plan, and every time I go there my plan changes." Similarly, several facilitators described how they learned to just be "receptive" and "show up for what they are saying, feeling and doing." This approach is often different than what's typical for meditation teachers:

I don't have a plan as much, because I'm really watching and feeling what's going on more, so sometimes I'm starting to explain something and people are fidgeting and I'll just switch to, we'll go stretch or you know, so it's different. When I'm teaching on the street, I more just have a plan and I go through it.

Former group members also commented on the importance of their facilitators being flexible:

I think you've got to cater to your audience, whatever your conversation was about that day, I think you've got to figure out what your people need. And go with that. Cause sometimes you can go in there with a plan and something happened that day and they need a whole other meditation or they need a whole other activity and maybe ya'll just need to talk, maybe ya'll don't need to meditate that day. Maybe they just have to get stuff off their chest. So, I think being kind of fluid in that way is going to be most helpful.

Similarly, facilitators described the importance of being able to tailor the group's focus, discussion, and experiential activities to whatever's most "alive" in the room. As described by one facilitator "every single time I go there I have a plan, and every time I go there my plan changes." Facilitators described adapting certain meditations to the needs of participants:

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It's really based on what's in the room. Like you just feel what is needed, like okay we

really need to do you know loving-kindness, people are being hard on themselves. Or

whatever it is, let's do um, breathing, there's a lot of agitation or something like that yeah

Additionally, facilitators described the importance of having flexibility in the way meditation is

taught. For example, it was important for facilitators not to have a "one-size fits all" approach

and to encourage participants to use whatever "organic" mindfulness practice they may already

have.

  Empathy. Participants commonly shared about the importance of bringing in a genuine

sense of empathy, compassion, and warmth to participants to help create an "environment where

people feel safe." Participants shared the importance of simple acts like trying to memorize

everyone's name, shake people's hands, look people in the eyes, smile, and be "as friendly as

possible." As shared by participant:

When people come in they are not only coming into a classroom that feels safe, but it's

actually, there's a sense of warmth and I just like, for many inmates I guess, and I also

have heard that that's a place they can feel a sense of warmth that is not in existence in

any other place in their um, day week, year, you know, possibly decade, you know.

Facilitators also described the importance of inquiring into group members' experience of life

and listening with empathy. Facilitators shared how it's important to "just sit there and feel it"

rather than attempting to "fix anything" about what participants may be sharing. As described by

one facilitator: "just be there with them, and be willing to have a feeling that just feels so basic to

what we're teaching, willingness to have our feelings." Similarly, facilitators shared the

importance of validating group members' experiences and their "fundamental okayness" as

humans. As described by facilitators, "they like to be reinforced, that you are not your crime" and

"that they are bigger than the worse thing they've ever done." As described by one woman who volunteers with young adult men:

> Yeah, they know I love them. They totally know I love them, they call me grandmom (laughter) we end the class both with the meditation and the yoga, by just constantly telling them, I'm so glad they come, so glad that they try something so out of our culture and um, and how much I love them, and that I see their light, yeah they know I love them, so they come back.

Demonstrating empathy and compassion to group members may encourage engagement and deeper healing through the impact of a caring relationship. As described by a facilitator who worked with men on death row "with them… it's just more about being there and connecting with them as a human because they don't that much contact." As she described "we talk a lot, you know. It's very familiar, I don't stand up there and preach, I've very close to these guys." Amid an empathic relationship, group members may feel more willing to self-disclose and experiment with new coping mechanisms like meditation.

> ***Personal training in meditation.*** Mindfulness teachers commonly identified having a strong background with meditation as the fundamental pre-requisite for facilitating mindfulness programs. Facilitators shared the importance of their meditation practice in helping them cultivate greater presence and empathy as facilitators so they can teach from the "heart" rather than in a way that feels "mechanical." Similarly, a facilitator shared: "I think true compassion or true empathy or true listening only can come from presence…that's why our practice is so important." In this way, it was important for facilitators to "embody" their practice of mindfulness:

See, I think for guys in jail, the proof really is in the pudding, all this talk stuff is just

talk. Either walk the walk or you don't, and ugh, um, the mindfulness practice, if I don't

embody it then there is no use in me telling anybody else how to do it.

The majority of facilitators had at least ten years of experience meditating before they started to

facilitate. Many described seeing their work as volunteers as an extension of their meditation

practice in that offering service to others is a natural way to embody mindfulness and

compassion.

By having a depth of personal training in meditation, facilitators may also be better able

to answer questions from group members and help individuals avoid common pit-falls or

difficulties that may occur when beginning a meditation practice. As described by one facilitator

"there's an important interaction between what I teach and what I do." Additionally, facilitators

shared about the importance of their meditation practice in promoting self-care in their volunteer

work in prison.

Group members. There are several factors that can promote the engagement of group

members such as (a) openness to meditation, (b) desire for personal growth, and (c) group

cohesion and safety. As described by participants, individuals have varying sources of

motivation for coming to mindfulness programs such as the opportunity to get out of their cell,

for "good time" (reducing the length of their sentence), and/or out of a genuine desire to explore

meditation.

Openness to meditation. Participants reported differing levels of openness to meditation

among group members. While some group members may be "skeptical" about the benefits of

meditation, others may a high level of openness to meditation.

Everyone who comes in is volunteering for it, they are not being forced to do it, but in many cases, you know they are just wanting to get out of their cells, or have something different because jail is boring, some of them are very, very interested in the material so you get a lot of different things.

Even though group members may be motivated to participate due to external factors like getting out of their cell, the majority had at least some interest in participating. Facilitators typically described group members as "receptive":

They're interested, they're very receptive, some of them roll their eyes a little bit at first, um, but they generally follow the instruction that I give and that is a beautiful thing, you know. Nobody refuses, you know, they'll like try, just try, and that's all I say to do, nothing is going to hurt here. It's just you try and you see what it is to you.

The openness to try meditation is intimately connected to their level of engagement and learning outcomes. For example, the most open students often went on to become regular meditators. Sources of openness to meditation often came from prior exposure to meditation or hearing positive reports about mindfulness programming. One former group member described her initial draw as coming from walking past the room of a meditation class when she was first incarcerated:

I remember walking past this room, and it had windows on it. And inside there were probably twelve women sitting on um, pads, and cushions and there were two women in there, and one was wearing a formal Zen robe, and the other was dressed in normal clothing. And the peace in that room and the women just sat in those postures, and it was a typical response on my part. I just felt like, this. This right here. And one of the reasons I felt like it worked so well was because there was no dogma, I needed to learn in order to

sit in that cushion, it looked like a place I could just walk into. And just sit, and listen,

and be my complete wretched confused self, and know that good would come of this. I

just knew it. And so, that was my invitation, it was a visual one.

Similarly, the two other former group members interviewed described the draw of meditation

coming from the lack of "dogma." Both individuals described themselves as "atheist" and

described how they were looking for means of self-improvement beyond typical religious-based

programs offered in their prison. The appeal of meditation may also lie in the ability to connect

to something larger than themselves, as described by one former group member: "you're a part of

something that is worldwide and you're doing a practice just as deeply in the physical sense as

anyone out there in the world." By having a high level of openness to meditation, group

members may become more engaged and derive greater benefits from the program offered.

    Desire for personal growth. The desire for personal growth can be a major factor

influencing an individual's level of engagement. Facilitators typically described participants as

having a deep sense of motivation for change: "these guys are willing. They don't want to be

where they are, but they, a lot of them, they don't know how not to come back." Former group

members shared that they were looking for "coping mechanisms" and ways to deal with their

grief and anger when they signed up for mindfulness programs. As described by participants,

often there is an increased degree of vulnerability and desire for personal growth than what's

typically found in a mindfulness program outside of a correctional setting. As described by one

facilitator:

I think what's different about this setting is in some way these guys are more open to it

and maybe hungrier for it and more vulnerable because they're in this facility whereas if I

taught a regular class which I don't think I ever really have, but I've been in them, and

you have people rushing in from work, and different places and some people take it

seriously and others aren't. You have, more distractions and you have people who are less

open to the group. So, in this case, I can be very open because they will be very open. So,

there is that potential more than just a regular kind of class.

Thus, as the facilitator shared, individuals who are incarcerated may be more motivated towards

personal change and therefore willing to participate in mindfulness programs.

Group cohesion and safety. Facilitators often spoke about how it was the "atmosphere

of safety and connection" which led to the most profound experiences in prison mindfulness

programs. As described by participants, correctional facilities are often unsafe and filled with

constant noise, whereas the meditation group offers a place for quiet, safety, and reflection. As

described by one facilitator, they come "because that's a quiet place to get deeper into their own

beings." Similarly, one facilitator shared:

You go to the jail, there's no silence and there is no safety, and there's a lot a lot of

violence. In our room, they are safe. And the other thing is, that we encourage the men to

speak from a place of vulnerability and so they are being heard.

Coming into an atmosphere of safety can have real impacts on the mindset of individuals who

are so used to having to be on guard while incarcerated. This was commented on by one former

group member:

And um, so when I got in there it was quiet, and I could hear someone breathing that's

how different it was, there was no shouting, no cursing, no keys, no doors, and you know

I didn't have to think. I didn't have go, you know, I was told never turn my back to the

room, what else do I need to remember, all those kinds of things. I didn't have to think, I

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just had a little bit of peace, and I was able to take my mind off survival and actually

absorb into the classes. And um, I hadn't had that quiet and safety in a long time.

Realizing the need for safety, facilitators spoke about their efforts "hold the safety of the space."

Safety and group cohesion were important variables for having meaningful periods of guided

meditation as well as conversations where vulnerability is expressed. This safety was recognized

by several facilitators as an important aspect of their groups which allowed group members to

engage and self-disclose:

> So some of what we experienced would be just sharing about either about things going on
>
> inside the prisons that were causing people stress, sometimes people would share things
>
> going on inside their personal life that were really weighing on them, and it became
>
> pretty clear that, meditation and yoga groups were a really safe space for people to come
>
> in and let their guard down and kind of talk about their vulnerabilities and things that
>
> were going on um in their personal experience that emotionally they really couldn't share
>
> comfortably outside of these groups.

Through greater safety and group cohesion, new norms are established which encourage

participation, greater mindfulness, and the expression of vulnerabilities. This environment may

be one of the few places for group members to feel safety creating a sense of "community,"

"connection," and "solidarity in silence."

Category Four: Factors Threatening engagement

Several factors were identified which could threaten the engagement of group members. These

factors are divided into (a) facilitator and (b) group member factors.

Facilitator. Participants identified several ways in which a facilitator may

unintentionally discourage engagement among group members through (a) over asserting

authority, (b) rigidity, and a lack of attention to social and cultural backgrounds of group members.

Over asserting authority. As volunteers, facilitators have the opportunity to distance themselves from the correctional staff and avoid being seen as another source of authority. As described by a former group member "we were looking for a break from that, like everywhere we go we're being watched and were being told what to do and how to do it. We were looking for something different." However, some mindfulness teachers noted a tendency to fall back into an authoritative role. As described by one facilitator:

> I feel like I go in there and I'm in authority, and I kind of like being in authority, being a former teacher, it's a safe place being in a place of authority, and I want to take that apart, like um, that's not, in a way that's not okay.

In this example, the facilitator identified how even as she sought to take her authority apart, she had difficulties stepping out of the authority role. Similarly, group members often engaged in giving long talks because it felt more "productive." Participants also identified the potential of teaching meditation in correctional settings to have a "shadow" side. The shadow was identified as using service to gratify one's ego or "as a means to get love." This shadow could lead facilitators to focus more on their needs rather than the needs of the group. This is especially concerning considering the vulnerability of the population:

> We're going in we're working with a very vulnerable group and we've got the power in this situation and what are we doing with that? Are we using our power to you know to control the group so we can feel like we did this great dharma talk and like feel really good about our contribution or are we going in service of the group and what they need?

While the majority of facilitators discussed awareness of the "shadow" and how they worked

through it, it is a factor that could lead to disempowering the group. It may be difficult for

teachers to learn how to give up their authority, but in this grounded theory, non-hierarchical was

found to be beneficial in promoting group member engagement.

Rigidity. Participants also identified how being overly rigid could discourage group

member engagement. Facilitators who adhere to a strict lesson plan or rituals could disempower

group members by not adapting to their needs. As shared by one facilitator:

> Sometimes coming in with a lot more structure and ritual and things being done in a very
>
> particular way would end up feeling constricting to the group, they are regulated and so
>
> controlled most of the day that giving some freedom of choice and freedom of practice in
>
> a way that feels good to you um, was really empowering.

This facilitator acknowledged the importance of providing to choices to group members, which

may be especially considering the typical structure and authority they face. This may threaten

engagement because group members may feel the program is just another environment where

they are controlled:

> The groups responded a lot more positively to those types of teachers and then were able
>
> to get deeper into their meditation practices because they're not pushing against this like
>
> little, subtle tension that would come up if someone was like it needs to be done in a very
>
> particular way, right, people resist that, especially when working with people who are
>
> incarcerated because that's every other moment of their day.

By being open to the different perspectives and needs of group members, facilitators could invite

group members to be active participants. This is especially important when a group member may

have something significant to share with the group (e.g. stress they've been facing, grief from the

loss of a family member, etc.). By "glossing over" important self-disclosures of group members to focus on planned material, this could give the message what they have to share is not important. Group members who do not feel valued or cared for may be less likely to continue attending groups. With that said, facilitators also noted the importance of "re-directing" the group when it veers off-topic or if there is someone who is "monopolizing" the group. Facilitators must walk a fine line between providing structure without being overly rigid.

Lack of attention to participants' cultural or social background. Ignoring social and cultural differences could result in "causing harm to participants." For facilitators, it was important to recognize their "unearned privileges" to facilitate an empowering group. Many times, facilitators attempted to overcome differences by focusing on "what they have in common" with group members to increase connection. While this approach may help "connect" it could also discourage engagement because it may belittle the "inherent power inequities" that exist and discrimination group members face. Additionally, when teaching mindfulness, it was important for facilitators not to describe mindfulness as a cure-all as group members may be facing multiple legal, familial, and social stressors: "you know working with people in jail, you have to understand that their lives involve so many constraints, you have to be willing to accept and acknowledge that."

In addition to acknowledging racial and economic diversity, facilitators described the importance of attending to the spiritual and religious backgrounds of participants. A lack of attention to the beliefs of group members could lead facilitators to using terminology consistent with Buddhism, which may threaten the engagement of some group members:

Probably 50% have some religious background whether they're Islamic or Christian or

Catholic, Catholics probably have a better attunement to meditation because it's common

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to their tradition, but for the others, it's not. So, to also tread cautiously with that, is it going to be secular or is it going to be Buddhist? Some guys might not attend because of that, and if it's not Buddhist, then not using some of this overt Buddhist terminology and theology for lack of a better word. Um, that will matter to some guys because they'll think it's against their religion, so that kind of sensibilities matter and are important.

Thus, while facilitators may offer mindfulness meditation teachings that developed in Buddhism, using overtly religious terminology may negatively impact engagement. The majority of facilitators used primarily "secular" terminology while a minority of facilitators described specific efforts to guide individuals on how to infuse meditation into their religious background (e.g. contemplative prayer).

Lastly, facilitators and former group members shared the importance of recruiting more racially and culturally diverse meditation teachers. As shared by one former group member: "I think, having more facilitators of color is necessary, is so necessary, we need representation." This could potentially help organizations and facilitators offer mindfulness in a way that is more culturally responsive. Two facilitators shared their current efforts to recruit currently and formerly incarcerated individuals to act as mindfulness facilitators. This could empower these individuals and help alter the dynamics of a program to be more empowering (however formerly incarcerated individuals are often denied access to volunteering in correctional settings". As shared by one facilitator in the process of training incarcerated men to facilitate: "they are really able to transmit in a way that I never could, the value of the practice within the context that the men are in."

Group members. In addition to the influence of facilitators, group members may have certain dispositions and attitudes that could threaten their engagement in mindfulness programs

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such as (a) defensiveness, (b) low openness to personal change and meditation, and (c) physical or mental health concerns. In the grounded theory, these factors could threaten engagement, however, facilitators could overcome these threats through their facilitation strategies and dispositions.

Defensiveness. Group members may be defensive or "skeptical" when starting a mindfulness program, especially when attendance is mandatory or for external reasons (e.g. "good time.). Defensiveness was typically characterized by group members being "disruptive" or challenging facilitators. In many ways, this defensiveness may be a natural reaction to having volunteers from outside lead a program. Group members may test facilitators to see what they are "going to allow" or view class as an opportunity to socialize. Additionally, group members may be defensive due to wanting to protect themselves from appearing "vulnerable" as a means of self-protection. Specifically, facilitators noted young men, in particular, may want to look "cool" and avoid participating due to the norms of being incarcerated.

Group members may also resist new ideas presented by volunteers. As described by one volunteer, there is frequently having at least one strong "challenger" in any group who will take issue with the ideas presented. While facilitators can overcome these challenges by using the aforementioned strategies (e.g. developing a strong rationale and using an interactive approach), they can be considered threats to engagement. A minority of participants identified instances where group members were physically or verbally "disruptive" during mindfulness programs. In such instances, facilitators noted the importance of "redirecting" behaviors to maintain the "safety" of the group.

Low-openness to personal change or meditation. Group members who take a mindfulness program for external sources of motivation (e.g. "good time") may have lower

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openness to meditation and personal change. These individuals may not be ready to change or connect with the idea of meditation. Additionally, group members without prior exposure to meditation have preconceptions that meditation is "wimpy," "effeminate" or "weird." Such beliefs may limit the willingness of some group members to participate in mindfulness programming. Additionally, some group members may fear that mindfulness meditation contradicts their religious beliefs due to association with Eastern spirituality, as previously discussed. Facilitators using the aforementioned strategies may be able to dispute these conceptions about mindfulness and help to develop a rationale for practice that is relevant to participants. However, if group members maintain a low level of openness to meditation, it is unlikely they will experience positive learning outcomes, as the biggest impacts come through regular mindfulness practice.

  Physical or Mental Health Concerns. Group members with physical or mental health concerns may experience some difficulties learning meditation. While researchers have found many benefits from the practice of meditation, beginners with physical or mental health concerns may struggle to be able to sit quietly during periods of meditation. In particular, individuals who have experienced trauma may become emotionally triggered during certain meditation practices:

> Um, and some folks are not, unless you're very skilled, but teaching meditation to them is not good because they're very, traumatized, and sitting and breathing and that kind of stuff is a big trigger for them. And um, so that's things to be considered and they might not be ready.

While facilitators can assist group members through the use of trauma-sensitive "grounding" practices, participating in a meditation group may be unadvisable to individuals struggling with

severe forms of trauma unless they are also working with a skilled therapist. Similarly, group

members with some physical health problems may have difficulties participating:

> I have one guy I told him not to come back, it wasn't for him. He had medical issues he
> was falling asleep in the class. And snoring even. Two guys, actually I kicked out of the
> class, well not kicked out, but I said hey I don't think you're ready. So, you know, at some
> point they might be, but you have to know how to manage that if some guys snoring in
> the class, it disrupts everyone else trying to meditate. And he couldn't help it because of
> his condition, and I got that. You know it probably, you doing this in a group is not going
> to work right now.

While mindfulness facilitators sought to make their programs "accessible" to the widest amount

of people, there were occasional instances where a facilitator felt unable to accommodate group

members. However, in the majority of times, facilitators shared being able to adapt to group

member needs. Thus, even group members who may be initially resistant or have difficulties

with meditation can become engaged in the program.

Core Process: Engagement in Mindfulness Programs

The core process, engagement in mindfulness programs, describes the way in which the

aforementioned factors come together to affect how engaged group members were in

mindfulness programs. Engagement was determined by the level of interest shown by group,

their participation in discussions, and development of an independent mindfulness practice. As

described by facilitators and former group members, many contextual barriers and factors

threatening engagement can be overcome through the use of culturally responsive facilitation

strategies. For example, while individuals may enter group with a high degree of defensiveness,

facilitators who "meet participants where they are at" may be able to increase their "buy-in" by

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providing a strong rationale for meditation. As put by one facilitator: "even skeptics come around after a while."

Facilitators often witnessed changes in the level of engagement of group members. As one facilitator shared: "my favorite moments are in those first two or three classes when guys will be like, well I took this class just for the good time, but I honestly think this may be really important for my life." By connecting mindfulness to the goals and values of participants, facilitators can increase their engagement and willingness to participate. One facilitator described how there was often at least one "challenger personality" in his classes who took issue with mindfulness at first. However, by presenting a strong rationale and engaging in a collaborative discussion about the purpose of mindfulness, he "often found that those turned out to be some of the strongest supporters and practitioners towards the end."

This facilitator described how one group member who appeared quiet and dismissive in the several groups appeared to gain core messages from his program. In one encounter, he described seeing this participate open up:

> He just all the sudden opened up and realized that um, he had two sons that he was not
> able to be with and he was very traumatized by that and he said he wanted them to love
> him but he knew the women, the mothers of these two, they were two different mothers,
> that were just talking bad about him all the time so he was not going to be able to develop
> a relationship with them that he wanted to. He couldn't reach out to them and this was
> very, very sad for him in his life. But he said all a sudden he realized he can't control that
> and in a way, it's kind of selfish on his part because he's worried about what he gets out
> of the deal but not maybe what's best for the guys … it was amazing he was talking about

how compassion, how not being centered on yourself releases you from pain and how

you can still be loving and giving and yet you don't hold on.

Here, the group member appeared to reach an important insight into his life experience which he was able to share with other group members. By the facilitator "holding the safety of the space" and allowing group members to feel empowered, initially resistant group members could choose to engage on their terms.

The centering practice of meditation may also play a major role in getting group members to feel safe and relaxed enough to participate in meaningful discussions. As shared by one facilitator, "the meditation is maybe just the calming effect so we can have those conversations." By creating a calm and safe atmosphere, facilitators can encourage a gradual process of engagement, which often entails group members being able to let down their guard. This could be especially important considering all the hardships group members go through:

Because particularly in that environment there's a lot of very tough broads around, and

you know the automatic reaction to that is armor. So, allowing themselves to feel the

tenderness of their grief and remorse and, not all of them are remorseful but some are.

Um, and the horrors of being, having been separated from their children and in some

cases, their children are being told terrible stories about them. And their boyfriends are

cheating on them, I mean there's all kind of stuff they are having to deal with and just

being able to feel it, um, and let down their guard is often. I see them, come out of

themselves and I see beautiful connections between women in my classes, women really,

really supporting each other in very moving ways.

As shared here, the group process can unfold in a very natural and healing way which is significant to group members and facilitators. Group members may have a chance to connect and

get in touch with their emotions in a way they might not otherwise have the opportunity or space to. In this way, a mindfulness program can go far beyond its original aims of stress reduction as shared by one participant:

> Stress reduction is something you can kind of get your mind around when it's brand new, but once you get into it you find out it's about your childhood karma, and your um, you know your current feelings and it's about your spiritual path, and it's about death, it's about everything.

Once facilitators can get "buy-in" on goals such as stress reduction, they can help group members learn to address significant areas of their life by applying mindfulness. However, for some group members the most they will get out of the program is a "quiet" and "safe place." In instances where group members are defensive or facilitators are unable to fully connect with them, low engagement may persist. Facilitators described how group members may just stop coming. In these instances, facilitators hoped they were at least "planting a seed" by exposing individuals to mindfulness practice. In sum, the accumulation of the contextual barriers group members face, their personal beliefs and attitudes, and those of the facilitator all contribute to their level of engagement. The last category will describe how different levels of engagement may contribute to one's learning outcomes.

Category Five: Individual Experience and Learning Outcomes

Individual experience and learning outcomes describe how group members who engaged at varying levels experienced learning outcome of mindfulness programs. While group members have become engaged on the spectrum from low to high engagement as depicted in Figure 1; here they will be described broadly as (a) high engagement and (b) low engagement group members.

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High engagement. Facilitators described highly engaged group members as individuals who showed interest in discussions regarding mindfulness and developed in an individual practice. Although, facilitators were often unable to know whether someone would practice meditation in the long-term, they often reported group members could become very engaged while in their programs. For example, two of the former group members who participated in this study reported taking the Path of Freedom twelve-week program multiple times. It is theorized that group members who were highly engaged practiced mindfulness independently such that they were able to experience various benefits such as improved sleep, decreases in anxiety, and stress reduction. Two subcategories emerged to described highly engaged group members: (a) increased coping and resilience, and (b) increased self-awareness and perspective-taking.

Increased coping and resilience. Highly engaged group members were able to utilize mindfulness practice for increased coping and resilience. Former group members described how while incarcerated, meditation helped them "find reprieve" from the negative atmosphere of prison life and receive much needed "nourishment." As described by a former group member:

> It helped me inside a lot to kind of remove myself from the chaos of prison even if it was short-lived to ground myself and bring myself to a place where I could be at peace even though it was complete chaos around me.

The ability to find "a little bit of peace in an unpeaceful place" helped the incarcerated women feel more in empowered which enhanced their resilience:

> It was powerful and it was also empowering um, because in a place that can be as negative as it is and where's there some staff that don't want to see people happy. Um, it was kind of empowering to be like you know this is what I've got and there's nothing you can do to take it from me.

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By experiencing a sense of control, group members were able to feel more resilient. Additionally, facilitators described hearing how group members used mindfulness skills such as "pausing" to avert conflict with correctional officers and/or other incarcerated individuals: "I've heard this definitely about a dozen times that they stopped and took a breath, felt their breath, and they did something differently, then they normally would have." Along these lines, one facilitator heard how a woman applied the practice to help herself in court:

> Um, one woman who frequently, who had a mental health diagnosis and she used to not
> be able to contain herself in court, she would like have outbursts and start cursing out the
> judge and everything, which obviously doesn't work very well. Um, and she said that
> breathing helped her not do that.

Similarly, another facilitator shared how a group member reported how using mindfulness help her cope while awaiting trial in holding cell:

> One woman told me that, she would do warrior poses and then mountain pose while she
> was watching her breath while she was in the holding cell, and she was trying to do it
> very surreptitiously, you know like one leg just a little bit in front of the other, and just
> trying to feel into the groundedness, and she said that it helped her. But she felt a little
> silly, but it helped her, um, stay more, less anxious, then when she didn't, it was a tool she
> used, and I thought that was very helpful.

As described above, mindfulness helped group members cope with stresses while incarcerated. Additionally, former group members were able to continue using mindfulness as a coping skill during their reentry into the community for handling different life stressors:

> I don't always sit down and say I'm going to meditate; you know. But sometimes I just
> say I need a minute to myself, and I'll go to a quiet area of my house or work, or

wherever I can find it and focus on my breathing, and as far as I'm concerned that's

meditation. You know that's bringing myself back, and saying okay now I can see things

with a clearer lens. And I find it, I find it liberating really, to just not get caught in that

anxiety and stress and just nonsense that keeps me stuck and not wanting to move

forward.

While participants may not always engage in extended formal meditation practices, they found

great benefit from being able to return to mindfulness practice during difficult times.

Increased perspective taking and self-awareness. Mindfulness practice also assisted

group members with greater perspective-taking and self-awareness. For example, one former

group member described how it helped her deal with her anger and process her past:

Yeah, I had to really deal with my anger. So that was kind of also a tool that I used to

deal with that. I was away from my child, away from my family, I was in prison on things

that didn't really involve me, I could have stayed out of, so I had to reconcile all of that

and mindfulness was the tool.

Additionally, she described how this helped her take her power back. Here she describes how

mindfulness helped her gain a sense of control which she often felt was lacking due to the

marginalization she faces as a person of color.

I felt like I could take my power back and have options, that's what drew me to

mindfulness practice, especially as a person of color there's so much of our lives that's out

of our control, or feels out of our control, and this kind of helps you put things in

perspective.

By having the tools provided by involvement in a mindfulness program, she was able to do inner

work which contributed to greater healing and personal growth. Similarly, one woman described

how participation in the mindfulness program assisted her in gaining greater perspective and compassion for others:

> I feel like it definitely made me a more compassionate person … you know everything that people do is a way for them to make their own lives a little bit better, even if it's completely misguided. And it really helped me kind of put myself in that other person's space and really try to understand why they've done things that may have hurt me or been hurtful to somebody else … it stopped me from looking just at my view of the world but to try to open that view a little bit more and see the world from other people's eyes better.

The use of meditation to self-reflect and develop greater empathy and self-compassion is well-documented and may be especially beneficial for group members who are dealing with issues such as anger, regret, or shame. Developing increased compassion and perspective-taking may also make group members helpful resources to other incarcerated people. As described by one former group member:

> By being approachable and calm and I had a lot of young women come to talk to me and that's how they started telling me their stories … And I wouldn't have been, anyone who they would have given the time of day to if I hadn't had that steadiness you know. I would have, I would have been talking about my own life and waiting until they were done talking just to interject.

For this woman, this effect also extended to the domain of her familial relationships:

> At some point maybe three years into my six-year sentence it started to just be a way of life. So now, I had a more important thing to do and that was to walk the walk with my family. And over time they could see the changes in me. They could see how I wasn't

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desperate for their approval as much or. I started reacting just a little more skillfully and

they saw a shift.

In sum, highly engaged group members may derive benefits from mindfulness practice including increased self-awareness and perspective-taking which can be highly beneficial to their well-being and relationships. As demonstrated in the grounded theory, meditation teachers who provide "tools" in a non-authoritative way can enable engagement leading to these outcomes.

Low-Engagement. Despite efforts to increase engagement, not all group members became engaged participants throughout their attendance. Facilitators reported how not all group members who attended showed an interest in learning about mindfulness or were able to practice independently. Thus, those who did not practice regularly were likely to experience only minimal learning and application of mindfulness.

Minimal learning and application of mindfulness. It was difficult for facilitators to know the impact of mindfulness on less engaged group members. Facilitators hoped they would benefit from being exposed to the topic and being in a quiet space: "I think honestly, some people the most they are going to get out of it is to be in a quiet relaxed space for an hour and a half." However, facilitators believed it was unlikely attendance would have a significant impact. Similarly, a former group member noted that it takes effort and openness for mindfulness to have an effect:

Like I said, with this you have to buy-in. So, the women who I saw who really wanted to commit to it and make a change, I saw it have an effect. Um, but the women who were kind of just going through the motions and faking the funk, I just mean. It is what it is. When you're ready for it, then that's when it's going to transform you.

Due to an individual's life experience and attitudes, they may not be ready for a meditation practice. Thus, for facilitators, it's important to remember "many people aren't going to get out of it what you want them to… I think just remembering this isn't a lesson that can be taught at this particular time in their life, so really kind of keeping that in mind and remembering, every seed that's planted is growth." Thus, while facilitators attempted to use facilitation strategies to increase engagement, it may not always make a difference. Such group members may benefit from alternative programs or additional strategies to promote motivation and engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The criminal justice system has become one of the largest providers of mental health services in the U.S. (Roth, 2018). There are currently more individuals with mental health disorders incarcerated than in psychiatric hospitals (Roth, 2018). This is a major concern and researchers have begun to investigate the application of new treatment and rehabilitative programs such as mindfulness-based interventions (Himelstein, 2010; Malouf et al., 2017; Shonin et al., 2013). Scholars have highlighted how mindfulness interventions are an effective counseling approach for issues common among incarcerated individuals such as addiction, depression, PTSD, and anxiety (Himelstein, 2010; Shonin et al., 2013). Additionally, scholars have argued mindfulness programs may be more empowering than traditional rehabilitative programming because they do not require acceptance of a deficit-based label and they promote individual agency and growth rather than shame (Kerrison, 2017; Spears, 2019). In particular, volunteer-run programs may facilitate social change through their emphasis on nonduality, "the oneness of helper and helped," and promotion of social ties through the development of sangha, the community of meditation practitioners (Lyons & Cantrell, 2016, p. 1369)

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching practices and techniques of experienced volunteers who facilitate mindfulness programs in correctional settings. Specifically, this study sought to understand how mindfulness facilitators modify and adapt teaching practices for incarcerated individuals to increase engagement. By investigating this topic, the researcher sought to develop a grounded theory of correctional mindfulness programs to assist counseling professionals within the criminal justice system in providing empowering and culturally responsive mindfulness training.

While researchers have found psychological and behavioral benefits from correctional mindfulness programs (Auty, Cope, & Liebling, 2017; Shonin et al., 2013), few studies have addressed the challenges of running such a program and what cultural adaptations may helpful in promoting group member engagement (Kerrison, 2017). Further, there is little to no research on the work of volunteer mindfulness teachers who have led correctional programs in the criminal justice system for well over 30 years (King, 2009; Maull, 2015). This was a critical gap in the literature because experienced mindfulness facilitators possess expertise regarding ways to offer mindfulness programming in correctional settings which counselors and researchers may lack.

This study adds to the literature by providing a grounded theory of mindfulness facilitation and programming in correctional settings which was informed by fifteen experienced mindfulness facilitators, as well as three former group members. The findings of this study reflect the real-world nature of facilitating mindfulness programs in correctional settings including the challenges and obstacles facilitators face, necessary strategies and dispositions to provide effective programming, and their impact on participant engagement. This grounded theory may be also be used to inform the development of novel mindfulness interventions for use with justice-involved individuals.

The findings of this study supported previous research on culturally-adapted mindfulness programs which support the use of more commonly understood terminology when describing mindfulness, incorporating trauma sensitivity, working to identify and overcome barriers to mindfulness practice, and integrating mindfulness with familiar cultural and spiritual beliefs (Amaro et al., 2014; Spears et al., 2017; Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014). This study also adds to the research on cultural adaptations of mindfulness by demonstrating how culturally responsive approaches to mindfulness may promote engagement of group members in

correctional mindfulness programs. Additionally, this grounded theory suggests specific

strategies which may be unique to correctional settings such as the importance of taking an

empowering, non-hierarchical teaching approach, connecting mindfulness to common goals (e.g.

becoming a better parent or staying out of jail), and assisting individuals in developing skills

which can be used to meditate within the chaotic atmosphere of prison.

This study also affirms previous literature regarding mindfulness facilitation which

outlines the importance of teachers embodying a mindful presence, establishing safety, building

empathic relationships with students, and flexibly responding to the needs of the group (Griffith

et al., 2019; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; McCown, 2016). In this grounded theory, the researcher found

these processes to be critical in overcoming the lack of safety and mistrust common in prison

settings to promote engagement and positive learning outcomes. This study also adds to this

literature because the majority of qualitative studies on mindfulness facilitation have focused on

groups with more privileged backgrounds (Cormack et al., 2018; Van Aalderen et a., 2014). This

grounded theory adds to the literature by highlighting processes which influence engagement

with culturally diverse and marginalized group members.

Summary of the Study

Three research questions were developed to gain an in-depth understanding of how

mindfulness teachers facilitate correctional mindfulness programs:

1. How do expert mindfulness teachers attempt to provide culturally responsive and
   empowering mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?
2. What strategies do mindfulness teachers perceive as helpful when providing
   mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

3. How do mindfulness teachers overcome institutional barriers to implement mindfulness programming in correctional settings?

The collective experiences and perspectives of the interviewed facilitators and former group members resulted in the construction of a grounded theory composed of five categories and one core process. All of the teachers were former or current mindfulness facilitators who volunteered in either jails or prison settings. Additionally, three former group members were interviewed for triangulation. All interviews were transcribed and coded by the researcher. Member checking was utilized by providing transcribed interviews to participants to allow them the opportunity to redact or amend statements. The researcher used Charmaz's (2014) grounded theory coding processes including initial and focused coding, axial coding, analytic memos, and diagramming to construct the final grounded theory.

As depicted in Figure 1., the grounded theory constructed in this study consisted of five categories: (a) contextual barriers, (b) facilitation strategies, (c) factors promoting engagement, (d) factors threatening engagement, and (e) individual experience and learning outcomes. Within the grounded theory, contextual barriers described how the oppressive context or prisons and jails and sociocultural differences between group members and participants could create a barrier to offering mindfulness programming. For example, a group member who is constantly told what to do by correctional staff may be less motivated to follow instruction from a volunteer with a more privileged background. These barriers influenced the facilitation strategies of mindfulness teachers who sought to connect with group members in an engaging and empowering way. Facilitators used facilitation strategies such as (a) develop the rationale for mindfulness practices based on individual values, (b) tailor language and curriculum for increased accessibility, (c) explore a variety of meditation practices and concepts, and (d) support autonomy, individualized

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practice, and empowerment. These strategies were theorized to positively influence group member engagement and learning outcomes.

In addition to the use of culturally responsive facilitation strategies, the researcher identified several factors that could promote or threaten engagement. In the grounded theory, these factors were divided into facilitator and group member factors. For example, it was found that facilitator factors such as (a) cultural awareness, (b) trauma sensitivity, (c) humility, (d) flexibility, (e) empathy, and (d) personal training in meditation were supportive of group member engagement. Alternatively, facilitator factors including: (a) over asserting authority, rigidity, and lack of attention to participants' cultural and social backgrounds would threaten engagement. At the group member level, factors such as (a) openness to meditation, (b) desire for personal growth, and group cohesion and safety promoted group member engagement. However, factors including (a) defensiveness, (b) low openness to personal change or meditation, and (c) physical or mental health concerns could threaten engagement.

In the grounded theory, contextual factors, facilitation strategies, and factors which threaten and promote engagement all influenced the level of group member engagement such that while a group member who is initially defensive and not open to meditation may become more engaged when a facilitator uses culturally responsive strategies and embodies qualities such as empathy, humility, and flexibility. The final category, individual experience and learning outcomes, describes how high engaged and low engaged group members experienced the outcomes of mindfulness programs. The researcher found highly engaged group members often reported increased resilience, coping, self-awareness and perspective-taking, while less engaged group members were unlikely to experience such benefits. Next, the researcher will discuss how the results of this grounded theory can be used to answer the original research questions.

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Question One: How do expert mindfulness teachers attempt to provide culturally responsive and empowering mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

The first step in providing culturally responsive and empowering mindfulness programming was for mindfulness facilitators to recognize the hardships group members face due to their incarceration as well as the power inequities that exist via their privilege. Facilitators commonly shared about the need to self-reflect and examine their privilege and how to lead groups without causing more harm to group members. By recognizing the potential to cause harm to group members, facilitators sought to avoid re-enforcing their privilege by taking a non-hierarchical teaching approach. Facilitators attempted to do this by not using expert language and instead choosing to emphasize to group members that "you are your own best teacher." In this way, facilitators demonstrated *cultural humility*, which is described in the multicultural counseling literature as a way of addressing power imbalances in counseling relationships through taking an "other-oriented" interpersonal stance (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013, p. 354). Facilitators did this by inquiring into the experiences of group members and not acting like an expert on their experiences. The cultural humility approach has recently been suggested as a way of offering mindfulness interventions in a way that is culturally responsive (see Davis et al., 2019).

Additionally, facilitators also demonstrated humility by not elevating themselves as teachers and disclosing their own struggles to try and connect with students on a "human to human" level. This aspect of meditation facilitation correlates with what Lyon and Cantrell (2016) attributed to the Engaged Buddhism principle of non-duality. They argued that by embracing non-duality, facilitators see themselves as the same as their students, rather than viewing themselves as experts. As a consequence of this belief, facilitators may use inquiry as a

teaching approach that seeks to "elicit experiences rather than instruct" (Lyons & Cantrell, 2018, p. 1370). In this grounded theory, this approach was shown to be empowering because group members felt like they were being provided tools rather than being told "how to fix your life."

Additionally, facilitators commonly recognized that group members often had different worldviews, values, and beliefs than themselves. Thus, facilitators sought to incorporate mindfulness into the worldview of participants in a way that is congruent with the accepted multicultural and spiritual competencies (Sue et al., 1992; ASERVIC, 2009). Facilitators did this by emphasizing ways mindfulness could help group members achieve their goals like being a better parent or staying out of jail. Additionally, facilitators used more common terminology and culturally congruent metaphors like describing meditation as a form of "mind-training." Lastly, facilitators avoided using explicitly Buddhist terminology and instead discussed how mindfulness could be used by group members to deepen whatever faith they already practice. These changes correspond to recent scholarship on cultural adaptions of mindfulness programs for culturally diverse and/or marginalized groups (Amaro et al., 2014; Davis et al., 2019; Hicks & Furlotte, 2010; Spears et al., 2017). There is preliminary evidence that culturally-adapted mindfulness interventions may outperform control groups in promoting engagement and retention as well as positive psychological outcomes (Black & Amaro, 2019; Ortiz, Smith, Shelley, & Erickson, 2019).

As previously described, meditation teachers described using facilitation strategies to "elicit real-life experiences to confirm key concepts." This approach was used to empower group members as active learners, rather than passive recipients. In many ways, this style of group leadership mirrors the counseling approach of motivational interviewing, wherein clinicians use an empathic approach to guide clients towards behavioral change in a way that is more

empowering than traditional directive approaches (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). While the facilitators may have lacked training in this approach, their leadership style of empathy and inquiring into group member goals and values is similar to the approach. This may have been beneficial, as recent scholarship affirms that motivational interviewing may be a useful counseling approach for increasing engagement in justice-involved clients (Stinson, 2018). Additionally, researchers have found that incorporating motivational interviewing into mindfulness interventions may increase the retention and engagement of culturally diverse group members (Ortiz et al., 2019).

Question Two: What strategies do mindfulness teachers perceive as helpful when providing mindfulness training to individuals in correctional settings?

As described in the grounded theory, facilitators perceived several strategies as helpful when providing mindfulness training. The first strategy described in the grounded theory was to develop a rationale for a mindfulness practice based on individual values. Facilitators often used dialogue and discussion to connect mindfulness to the goals of participants such as being a better parent or staying out of jail. By doing this, facilitators were able to increase the buy-in of group members who then may be able to perceive how practicing mindfulness could be helpful to them. This approach may be less necessary in typical MBIs, where group members self-select to participate. However, by using an approach comparable to motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2013), facilitators were able to promote engagement among group members who lacked the internal motivation to participate. In correctional settings where group members may take a group for external motivations, this approach could be especially beneficial.

The second strategy described in the grounded theory was to tailor the language and curriculum for increased accessibility. Facilitators described how they would adapt lessons to be

congruent with the specific challenges of being incarcerated and use commonly understood

terminology rather than "esoteric descriptions" of mindfulness. As previously described, this

approach corresponds to prior qualitative research regarding the use of mindfulness with racially

and culturally diverse populations which recommends the using familiar terms like "paying

attention," working to identify and overcome barriers to mindfulness practice, and incorporating

mindfulness within the religious and spiritual background of participants (Spears et al., 2017;

Woods-Giscombé & Gaylord, 2014).

The third strategy was to explore a variety of meditation practices and concepts.

Facilitators commonly introduced breathing practices and specific techniques related to

processing emotions. In particular, facilitators implemented strategies they thought would be of

practical use to participants such as "pausing" and "taking five conscious breaths." While the

aforementioned practices are all typical to MBIs (Brown et al., 2013), the specific emphasis on

practical skills that can be used to meditate in the chaotic prison environment is significant.

Additionally, facilitators incorporated practices that emphasized self-compassion like

recognizing one's "basic goodness." This practice may be especially beneficial for incarcerated

individuals who have been labeled negatively by society (King, 2009; Maull, 2005).

Lastly, meditation teachers used the facilitation strategy of supporting autonomy,

individualized practice, and empowerment. To do this, facilitators emphasized group members'

power to "determine their own experience with meditation" by reminding group members of

their agency over their mind and body. Mindfulness teachers also sought to support group

members in developing an individualized meditation practice so they won't have to be reliant on

a teacher. This facilitation style may differ from typical MBIs that assign standardized

meditation practices which are between 20-45 minutes (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). The approach of

helping group members develop shorter, individualized practices may be beneficial for group

members who cannot practice for extended periods due to safety or noise concerns and who may

lack access to meditation teachers when released from prison. Additionally, by emphasizing

empowerment, facilitators were consistent with recommendations for trauma-sensitive and

culturally responsive MBIs (Treleaven, 2018; Spears, 2019). This strategy has been described as

useful because an individual may be "empowered by their capacity for growth" unlike traditional

correctional approaches which emphasize deficits (Kerrison, 2017, p. 582).

In the grounded theory, the aforementioned strategies were all theorized to positively

promote engagement. In addition to these strategies, the researcher found several dispositions

that facilitators also found helpful in providing mindfulness training. While these traits were not

specific strategies, they entailed a willingness to be flexible, demonstrate humility and empathy,

and maintain cultural awareness and trauma sensitivity. Mindfulness teachers believed that these

attributes were essential to providing mindfulness programming to people experiencing

incarceration. Many of these traits are similar to previous findings regarding mindfulness

teaching which demonstrates the importance of facilitators embodying the mindfulness practice,

establishing safety, and building supportive relationships with students (McCown, 2016; Griffith

et al., 2019). Among these traits, establishing safety and trauma-sensitivity is receiving increased

attention in the mindfulness literature (Treleaven, 2018). Given the high rates of trauma among

incarcerated individuals, this approach is especially noteworthy (Rousseau et al., 2019).

Researchers have found many benefits from mindfulness practices such as yoga in the healing of

trauma (van der Kolk, 2014). To provide mindfulness in a trauma-sensitive way, facilitators

emphasized the need to avoid commanding language and promote body-based mindfulness

techniques, which may be grounding for people who've experienced trauma. This strategy was critical to promoting the safety and resilience of group members.

As demonstrated in the grounded theory, strategies that facilitators found helpful were also commented upon by former group members. For example, group members shared that that they were looking for something different from the authoritative environment they experienced on a daily basis. Thus, when facilitators sought to minimize hierarchies and engage group members in discussion, they were more likely to engage. As shown in the grounded theory, using strategies that engaged group members often led to positive learning outcomes such as increased coping, resilience, and perspective-taking. These positive outcomes are consistent with prior research on the use of mindfulness in correctional settings (Himelstein et al., 2011; Malouf et al., 2017; Rousseau et al., 2019). Mindfulness practice is associated when many positive physiological and psychological outcomes (Creswell, 2017), and may especially assist individuals in managing the stresses of incarceration and community reentry (Maull & Crisp, 2018).

Question Three: How do mindfulness teachers overcome institutional barriers to implementing mindfulness programming in correctional settings?

Facilitators described several institutional barriers to their work in prison settings. For example, facilitators described the unpredictability of their environment which included being refused entrance or having group members who aren't called to the group. This is consistent with prior research documenting barriers to implementing prison programming (Singh, 2018) Additionally, facilitators commented on the physical representation of the prison as a barrier in itself to being able to set up and run programs. These findings are additions to the literature, as the majority of research on mindfulness in correctional settings has focused on psychological

outcomes rather than the real-world experiences of conducting correctional mindfulness programs.

To overcome these barriers, facilitators described their persistence in showing up as volunteers to offer programs. In the grounded theory, facilitation strategies were also described as being direct responses to institutional barriers, such as offering an empowering experience to group members to counter the oppression they experience while incarcerated. Additionally, for facilitators, there is a need to have a high degree of flexibility when dealing with correctional staff, the changing dynamics in classrooms, and the different mindsets of group members. By having flexibility, facilitators were able to focus on "responding to what's in the room" regardless of what they had planned. Researchers have previously identified flexibility and holding the safety of the group as critical to mindfulness facilitation (Griffith et al., 2019), and these factors may be even more important when teaching in correctional settings.

Lastly, facilitators described how they were often able to gain institutional support over time through the success of their programs. By being persistent and continuing to focus on offering empowering programs, facilitators were able to see positive effects of their work. While not explicitly addressed in the grounded theory, some facilitators commented on how they gained institutional support by showing existent curriculums to correctional staff (i.e. *The Path of Freedom Curriculum*). This allowed facilitators to demonstrate that mindfulness is an accepted approach for correctional programming.

Implications

The findings of this study may provide valuable insights regarding best practices for facilitating mindfulness programs in correctional settings. The grounded theory demonstrated culturally responsive facilitation strategies, dispositions that are critical to promoting

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engagement (e.g. empathy, humility, trauma sensitivity), as well factors that may threaten engagement such as defensiveness or a lack of attention to cultural factors. This information can inform counselors who work with justice-involved individuals, researchers studying cultural adaptations of mindfulness, and other stakeholders interested in developing mindfulness programming for people experiencing incarceration. While prior literature has suggested mindfulness may be an empowering intervention for individuals experiencing incarceration (Kerrison, 2017; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016), this study provides a clear theoretical framework of how to enact such an approach. The findings of this study also highlight how empowering mindfulness facilitation can positively impact the well-being of justice-involved individuals. This, in turn, could promote more counselors to offer mindfulness programs in correctional settings.

Counselor Education Programs

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP, 2016) includes specific guidelines regarding the incorporation of: "ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan" (p. 12). Mindfulness is one approach to promoting wellness and resilience which is becoming increasingly popular amongst counselors (Brown et al., 2013), yet little research exists regarding the cultural relevance of mindfulness with marginalized populations. As stated by the *Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies* (Ratts et al., 2015) and the *Spiritual Competencies* (ASERVIC, 2009), counselors use culturally responsive interventions that align with the values, beliefs, and communication patterns of their clients. Thus, counselor educators must train counselors on how to deliver mindfulness interventions in a way that is culturally responsive to the worldview of marginalized clients.

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As shown by this research, mindfulness teachers volunteering in correctional settings utilize culturally responsive facilitation strategies to increase the engagement of group members in mindfulness programs. Counselor educators should strive to train their students on how to introduce mindfulness practices in a way that is culturally relevant and empowering to participants from diverse backgrounds. Thus, counselor educators could include discussions on utilizing mindfulness interventions into multicultural counseling and counseling skills courses using this grounded theory. Counselor educators can help students recognize the various factors which can impact the outcomes of a mindfulness program (e.g. barriers, client motivation, etc.).

This grounded theory also outlines the importance of facilitators of mindfulness programs embodying mindfulness when teaching and responding to group members with empathy and humility. Mindfulness training may be one effective way of promoting these qualities (Dunn et al., 2013; Greason & Cahswell, 2009). Counselor educators can incorporate mindfulness practices into counseling pedagogy by leading brief meditation practices, providing resources, and referring counseling students to local meditation centers (Hilert & Tirado, 2019). This is important because counselors must have a personal practice to competently and ethically train clients in meditation (Stauffer & Phersson, 2012). If counselors do not have a robust experience and knowledge of mindfulness, they may inaccurately represent mindfulness teachings and do harm to clients by not adjusting practices to client's unique needs (e.g. trauma, culture, etc.)

This grounded theory may also be helpful to counselor educators in providing training to counselors-in-training who may work with justice-involved clients. Due to the increasing prevalence of justice-involved individuals with mental health needs, there is a great need for counselor educators to prepare students to work with this population. As stated by the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) and MCSJCs (2016), counselors seek to promote social justice by taking action

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and working to alleviate barriers to the well-being of marginalized clients. Clients facing incarceration are a marginalized population subject to disproportionate and severe punishment and abuse, poor living conditions, and discrimination which may exacerbate issues of mental health (Carrola & Brown, 2018). Despite their status as a marginalized population, little attention is paid towards correctional counseling in the literature (Carrola & Brown, 2018), thus counselor educators may not be prepared to assist students in correctional counseling strategies. This research may assist counselor educators in training counselors to recognize barriers that might exist and counseling approaches and group leadership styles that may be effect for clients who are incarcerated.

Clinical Practice

The findings of this study are important for counselors who are currently working with justice-involved populations. Counselors can utilize the facilitation strategies described in this grounded theory to offer mindfulness programming. For example, counselors can teach incarcerated clients mindfulness practices with a focus on non-hierarchical leadership and promoting a focus on self-compassion. Additionally, correctional counselors can benefit clients by partnering with volunteers to start mindfulness programs if they do not have the skills or expertise to provide such programs. Counselors can contact local meditation centers and communities to recruit volunteers to lead meditation programs. Counselors can utilize the results of this grounded theory to help prepare volunteers to lead such groups.

Additionally, clinical mental health and addiction counselors may benefit from developing mindfulness programs for returning citizens using the suggestions from the grounded theory. This could be highly beneficial considering the high number of stressors returning citizens face (Visher & Travis, 2011; Olusanya & Cancino, 2012). Additionally, helpful factors

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discovered in this grounded theory (e.g. empathy, supporting client autonomy, flexibility) may be helpful for counselors offering any type of group treatment (e.g. psychoeducational CBT, DBT skills groups, etc.) to justice-involved clients. By emphasizing client empowerment, taking a non-hierarchical approach, and tailoring content to the worldview of participants, group leaders may be able to increase engagement.

Given the growing popularity of mindfulness, the results of this study are also important to counselors working with culturally diverse and/or marginalized populations. Counselors who routinely incorporate mindfulness interventions in their work may benefit from using cultural adaptions which this grounded theory suggests may increase engagement. This is important because mindfulness could play a role in reducing health disparities (Creswell, 2017; Giscombé-Woods & Gaylord, 2014; Spears, 2019;). As shown in prior researcher, mindfulness may buffer the impact of discrimination on stress and mental health (Brown-Iannuzi et al., 2014; Shallcross & Spruill, 2017). It is important for counselors to provide outreach to marginalized populations and mindfulness groups may be one such avenue for promoting wellness in culturally diverse and marginalized populations.

Counselors are also expected to incorporate advocacy to help alleviate injustices that affect the mental health of clients (Ratts et al., 2016). Based on the results of this study it is also important for counselors to advocate on behalf of incarcerated populations for improved access to counseling services and volunteer-run programs, and improved living conditions and treatment by correctional staff. These changes are important for improving the mental health and well-being of incarcerated populations (Carrola & Brown, 2018). One potential intervention a clinician could organize is the training of correctional staff in mindfulness, which may enhance their levels of empathy and compassion toward incarcerated individuals (King, 2009). There is

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also a need for counselors to advocate for trauma-informed care training within correctional settings, diversion programs for individuals with mental health and substance abuse concerns, and other criminal justice reforms consistent with reducing racial bias and the disproportionate sentencing of individuals with mental health disorders.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to explore how mindfulness teachers facilitate programming within correctional facilities. The researcher aimed to construct a grounded theory of culturally responsive mindfulness programming that could promote the well-being of justice-involved populations. The sample size and homogeneity of participants could be considered a limitation of this study. The majority of individuals interviewed were volunteer facilitators. While three former group members were interviewed, this number may not have been significant enough to represent the voices of incarcerated participants of mindfulness programs. By limiting the voice of formerly incarcerated participants, it is still unclear how the majority of group members perceive the helpfulness of mindfulness programming.

Additionally, all of the facilitators who were interviewed were volunteers and not individuals with mental health counseling backgrounds. While the researcher sought out to study this population due to their extensive knowledge and training with mindfulness-based approaches, this may limit the transferability of this study to mental health counselors who undergo different training and have different ethical standards. Additionally, of the fifteen meditation teachers interviewed, the majority (n=11) were White. There is a need to interview more racially diverse facilitators who may have varying ideas about integrating multicultural and social justice perspective in correctional mindfulness programs.

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Lastly, the researcher identified potential limitations due to the study's reliance on retrospective recall and self-report. While the interviews were conducted with individuals currently volunteering as meditation teachers, they may inaccurately recall their experiences described in the study. Additionally, reliance on their self-report could lead to social desirability bias. Participants may have wanted to present their work positively and therefore be more willing to disclose positive experiences while minimizing negative experiences. This could have limited the study, in that important information regarding negative outcomes in teaching were left out.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research about the use of mindfulness in correctional settings has commonly focused on the psychological and behavioral outcomes of an intervention (Auty et al., 2017; Shonin et al., 2013). While previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness, this study provides additional insight into specific cultural adaptions and facilitation strategies that may be used to increase engagement among group members. Further, this study shows specific obstacles and challenges facilitators may face when leading mindfulness programs.

A replication of this grounded theory study with a larger sample that includes a higher percentage of formerly incarcerated group members who are diverse by age, race, and gender is warranted. Further research with formerly incarcerated individuals may add depth to the understanding of how group members experience mindfulness programming and ways to better adapt group leadership to their needs. The participants in this study were mostly volunteer facilitators. Further exploration of how professional counselors could integrate mindfulness into correctional counseling is also necessary. Additionally, further grounded theory research should utilize direct field observations of mindfulness programming to reduce social desirability bias.

Participants in this study suggested specific adaptions and facilitation strategies useful for promoting engagement in correctional mindfulness programs. For example, participants described taking a relational and interactive approach, using accessible language and terminology, and emphasizing empowerment to group members. These cultural-adaptations could be used to create a novel manualized mindfulness intervention which could then be compared to a standard approach like MBSR. The cultural adaptation of evidenced-based interventions is considered a critical component of designing and developing social programs and this research could help that aim (Fraser & Galinksy, 2010). Researchers could also investigate specific factors found relevant in this study (e.g. group cohesion, cultural humility, etc.) to see if they affect participation in outcomes within correctional mindfulness programming.

Another topic that needs further exploration is the long-term impact of mindfulness programming with justice-involved clients. The majority of research has focused on short-term outcomes following mindfulness-based interventions (Shonin et al., 2013). However, it is still unclear if and how formerly incarcerated individuals continue to utilize mindfulness in the years following their community reentry. Prior research suggests that mindfulness may be more effective in the long-term in preventing relapse than traditional approaches such as 12-step programs and CBT (Bowen et al., 2014). The results of this study suggested that group members may continue to derive psychological benefit from mindfulness practices long after their release. Further investigations with larger sample sizes could clarify the long-term effectiveness of correctional mindfulness programming and determine if it impacts important measures such as recidivism.

The results of this research also demonstrated the importance of mindfulness facilitators having an extensive background in meditation. This research confirms previous research which

states the importance of mindfulness teachers being able to embody a mindful presence when teaching (Cormack et al., 2018). While mindfulness is growing in popularity among professional counselors, it is unclear whether they have comparable personal experience to long-term meditation teachers. Researchers could further seek to investigate the effect on personal meditation training by comparing the outcome of mindfulness interventions delivered by facilitators with and without an extensive background in mindfulness training. Such research may prove valuable to the counseling field considering the growing popularity of mindfulness.

Researcher Reflection

 I was unsure of what to expect from this study. From my experience as a former mindfulness teacher, I believed that participants would have a lot to share about their approach. While I was sure that their experience would differ from that of a typical mindfulness teacher, I wasn't sure how. What I found was surprising and helpful. Mostly, I found individuals who were sincerely interested in offering the most impactful and engaging program possible. People committed to meeting people with compassion and becoming better at what they do. There are different expectations placed on volunteers than on professional counselors, yet, all of the participants took their work quite seriously and sought to develop mindfulness programs that were going to be beneficial and engaging to group members. All of the facilitators clearly valued they work. They shared how it was one of the most rewarding things they got to do. I learned a lot from their compassion and diligent efforts. Additionally, I learned a lot by speaking to former group members. While I was only able to speak to three people, each interview was encouraging and inspiring. They were each committed to their healing and giving back to others. It inspires me to know mindfulness can make a helpful difference in people's lives.

The ideas present in this study also resonated with my current experience as a substance use counselor. I believe I have been able to immediately apply a lot from this research into my clinical work. As a group leader, I am more focused on inquiring into group members' experiences and tailoring my content to their needs and perspectives rather than using a typical psychoeducational approach. I am also more conscious of how I am working to empower group members to become actively engaged. While I'm far from perfect at it, I think I have gotten better thanks to this research and the experience I have had to conduct. I am also more sensitive to the experience of incarceration and the long-term impact that can have on people as they seek to move on and live a meaningful life. I am extremely grateful to all of the participants in this study and hope that others find this useful as well.

Conclusion

This study explored the teaching practices and techniques of experienced mindfulness facilitators who volunteer in correctional settings. Using a grounded theory approach, the researcher identified contextual barriers, culturally responsive facilitation strategies, and factors which threaten and promote engagement. The grounded theory described the relationships between these categories and their impact on individual experience and learning outcomes. Currently, there is a lack of mental health and substance abuse programming for individuals experiencing incarceration. The findings of this study demonstrate how mindfulness programming may be effective in promoting positive coping, self-awareness, and resilience for this population. Counselor educators and clinicians should be aware of the need for correctional counseling as well as specific cultural adaptations when offering mindfulness programming to justice-involved clients. Future research is necessary to explore the long-term impacts of mindfulness training on individuals experiencing incarceration. As demonstrated in this study,

mindfulness training may be one empowering approach to improving the well-being of individuals experiencing incarceration. Counselors can use the results of this grounded theory to help provide the space and tools for justice-involved individuals to manage the stresses of incarceration and experience the transformative potential of mindfulness practice.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Can you please describe your training and meditation experience prior to volunteering?
2. What motivated you to begin volunteering in the criminal justice system?
3. Could please describe the settings in which you teach?
4. What is the typical format for when you teach mindfulness?
5. What have been your biggest challenges in volunteering at your setting?
6. How would you describe your approach to teaching mindfulness in the criminal justice setting?
7. What steps do you take to make your mindfulness teachings culturally responsive to participants?
8. What challenges do you find participants face when learning mindfulness?
9. Do you take any steps to make sure your teachings are trauma-sensitive?
10. What impact do you feel your instructions have on participants?
11. Could you please tell me your age and how you identify by race, gender, and sexual orientation?

Appendix B

Informed Consent

This is to certify that I have been given the following information with respect to my participation in this study:

1. Purpose of research: To understand the practices of volunteer mindfulness teachers in correctional settings.
2. Procedure to be followed: Participants will complete an interview of approximately one hour.
3. Discomforts and risks: There are no known risks associated with this study.
4. Duration of Participation: Participation in this study will take approximately one hour.
5. Statement of confidentiality: Your participation is confidential. The data you contribute to the research will be identifiable only by a number assigned by the experimenter. Once you complete the study, there will be no way to connect your responses with your personal identity.
6. Voluntary participation: Participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.
7. Incentive for participation: There is no incentive for participation.
8. Potential benefits: There are no known benefits of participating in the study. However, your participation in this research will contribute to the development of our understanding about the nature of the study.
9. Termination of participation: Participation may be terminated by the experimenter if it is deemed the participant is unable to perform the tasks presented.
10. Questions or concerns regarding participation in this research should be directed to Dr. Tom Ward, EDIRC chair at 757-221-2358 I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this project. I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this study to Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Ph.D., the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee by telephone (757-221-3862) or email (jastev@wm.edu)

Signature_____ Date _____

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Publications

Mullen, P. R., Sperandio, K., Hagedorn, W. B., & **Hilert, A.** (2019). School counselors' use of SBIRT for substance use screening. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*, *5*, 275-289. doi:10.1080/23727810.2019.1671759

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