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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Psychology

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs Towards the Therapeutic use of
Mindfulness Amongst Psychotherapists in New Zealand

at Massey University, Manawatū, New Zealand

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2016

Abstract

Mindfulness has infiltrated psychology in the last two decades, and clinical efficacy in utilising mindfulness is increasing worldwide. Very little research has explored what mental health professionals know about mindfulness, and their attitudes towards its therapeutic use. Understanding practitioners' knowledge and attitudes towards clinical tools is essential in future integration within therapy. The current study explored knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding various aspects of mindfulness among New Zealand psychotherapists, to identify whether knowledge of mindfulness was related to attitudes towards its use. A total of 53 psychotherapists completed a questionnaire that elicited quantitative responses about personal mindfulness, attitudes towards alternative therapies, and beliefs surrounding perceived competencies with use of mindfulness clinically. Psychotherapists are in agreement with proposed competencies, have positive attitudes towards its use, and are personally highly mindful. ANOVA revealed attitudes and competencies towards the use of mindfulness are related to religious affiliation and professional specialisation. Most had previous mindfulness education and believed it benefits their daily life, but suggested they would consider clinical use if their knowledge was greater. Psychotherapists' personal mindfulness was not associated with attitudes towards, or competencies with its use. Despite a number of limitations, possible implications of the findings suggest future clinical utilisation of mindfulness within New Zealand, is reliant on understanding its current location within the minds of mental health professionals. A lack of education about mindfulness may be the reason for low utilisation, and this research may provide insight into areas of deficiencies. Knowledge in therapeutic mindfulness is pertinent in the improvement of future utilisation and infiltration within mental health professions, in turn accomplishing its clinical potential.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and dedicate this thesis to my family. To my parents, Liz and Frank, and my brother Cameron; your constant love, support, and encouragement throughout this journey has been invaluable. Thank you for listening to my many opinions, and for keeping me mindful. Your endless belief in me means the world.

To my supervisor, Dr Natasha Tassell-Matamua, special thanks must be given for the important role she played throughout the research process. For excellent and prompt feedback on all of my work, at any time of the day, and for the dedication to see the research completed to an exceptional standard. I also wish to thank Tash for her unwavering support and guidance towards my academic and professional endeavours. Your passion and encouragement has been instrumental to the success of this research.

Special thanks must also go to my friends and family friends. I am grateful to you all for your help when I needed it, your unwavering friendship, and the opportunities to break away for fun and laughter when needed. Also, for your edits, feedback, and opinions during various stages throughout this research. A special mention to Elliot, for your superior statistical knowledge and guidance when needed, your patience was invaluable, so thank you. Warm appreciation to Karen Frewin, for her contributions and input toward the inclusion of my research questionnaire within her study. Thank you to those at work, I am grateful for your understanding and support during this time.

Thank you to the participants who gave their time in support of this research. Your contributions made this study a reality. To Massey University, for your support during my Masters qualification. I am immensely grateful for this opportunity.

Without the combined support of you all, this research would not have been possible. Thank you!

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