Title: Trauma- and Stressor-related History and Symptoms Predict Distress Experienced During a Brief Mindfulness Meditation Sitting: Moving Toward Trauma-Informed Care in Mindfulness-based Therapy

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Abstract: 1.54

Background and Objectives: Mindfulness meditation (MM) and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are each associated with alterations in states of consciousness, while MM has been used in treatment for PTSD, with some benefits, although not without reports of distress. The present study evaluated focused attention and participant experiences during a MM exercise, relative to participant exposure to lifetime trauma, life stress experienced in the past year, and PTSD-related symptoms experienced over the past month.

Methods: The present study utilized Meditation Breath Attention Scores (MBAS) to assess focused attention (FA) during a brief MM and self-report questionnaires assessing responses to MM among 151 participants recruited from a university introductory psychology course. All participants completed self-report questionnaires assessing trauma exposure, life stress, and trauma-related symptoms prior to the MM.

Results: Participant history of stressful and traumatic life events and trauma- and stressor-related symptoms that were assessed prior to the MM were predictive of distress experienced during the MM that was assessed immediately afterward.

Conclusions: MM-based therapy should be trauma-informed. Limitations of the study and future research directions are discussed.