

Trauma Informed Mind-Body Wellbeing Program:

A controlled trial of a yoga-based program to reduce trauma symptoms and promote wellbeing in Rwanda, Africa.



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Introduction

- Trauma has a direct effect on an individual's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Trauma symptoms have been noted to improve through certain somatic practices such as yoga and mindfulness.
- In Rwanda, the effects of trauma are associated with a history of colonization, civil war, genocide, natural disaster and traumatizing events (e.g., car accidents). The trauma of past events exists to the present day.
- The purpose of this study explores the effects of participation in the *Trauma-Informed Mind-Body Wellbeing (TI-MBW)* Program. The study utilizes a non yoga control group as compared to a TI-MBW group.
- The TI-MBW curriculum is a 12-week, trauma-informed, yoga-based program designed to help individuals manage stress, maintain physical health, regulate emotions and foster a positive relationship with oneself and the community.
- The framework for the TI-MBW Program addresses four main areas: mindful practice, physical practice, inquiry (mind and body) and support (relationships). The curriculum is organized around 12 Principles for Growth. This serves as a guide for the TI-MBW teachers. (see Table 2)
- The TI-MBW Program was developed by Yogis In Service, Inc. (YIS), a non-profit community service yoga organization, in partnership with the Africa Yoga Project (AYP) and the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

Method & Data Analysis (continued)

- Assessment of program outcomes were measured in the following ways:
 - Distress & Trauma Symptoms** were assessed using the Life Event Checklist (LEC-5) and Somalia Psychological Distress Scale (SPDS-15).
 - Self-efficacy** was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE).
 - Self-regulation** was assessed using the Brief Self-Regulation Scale (BRS).
 - Mindful self-care** was assessed using the Mindful Self-Care Scale (MSCS).
 - Belief in personal growth** was assessed using the Personal Growth Beliefs Scale (PGBS).
- Descriptive statistics were calculated at baseline to describe participants in the TI-MBW student group and non-yoga control group. Participants were compared at Pretest (prior to day one), Posttest (15 weeks after the TI-MBW program started) and at 5-6 months follow up (after the program finished). Table 1

Table 1. Pre-test, Posttest and Follow-up Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Regulation, Distress, Self-Efficacy, Mindful Self-Care, and Belief in Personal Growth

		Self-Regulation	Distress	Self-Efficacy	Mindful Self-Care	Belief in Personal Growth
Time 1 (Pre-test)	TI-MBW student (n=109)	16.8 (3.75)	29.6 (9.36)	33.8 (6.66)	143.5 (26.2)	46.3 (6.37)
	Control Group (n=118)	16.3 (5.17)	28.7 (8.08)	31.9 (8.17)	130.0 (27.8)	42.9 (10.2)
Time 2 (Posttest) Data collected at 16 weeks	TI-MBW Student (n=82)	18.4 (3.03)** ↑	24.3 (6.32)** ↓	36.6 (5.91)** ↑	156.3 (23.4)** ↑	50.9 (5.83)** ↑
	Control Group (n=89)	14.9 (4.05)	31.8 (9.30)	30.4 (7.17)	119.4 (29.3)	38.8 (8.77)
Time 3 (Follow up) Data collected 6 months from posttest	TI-MBW Student (n=70)	18.4 (3.44)	25.8 (9.42)	36.6 (6.47)	156.7 (22.0)	50.0 (5.78)
	Control Group (n=72)	13.8 (4.21)	33.2 (12.3)	31.3 (9.69)	124.5 (28.2)	42.2 (9.13)

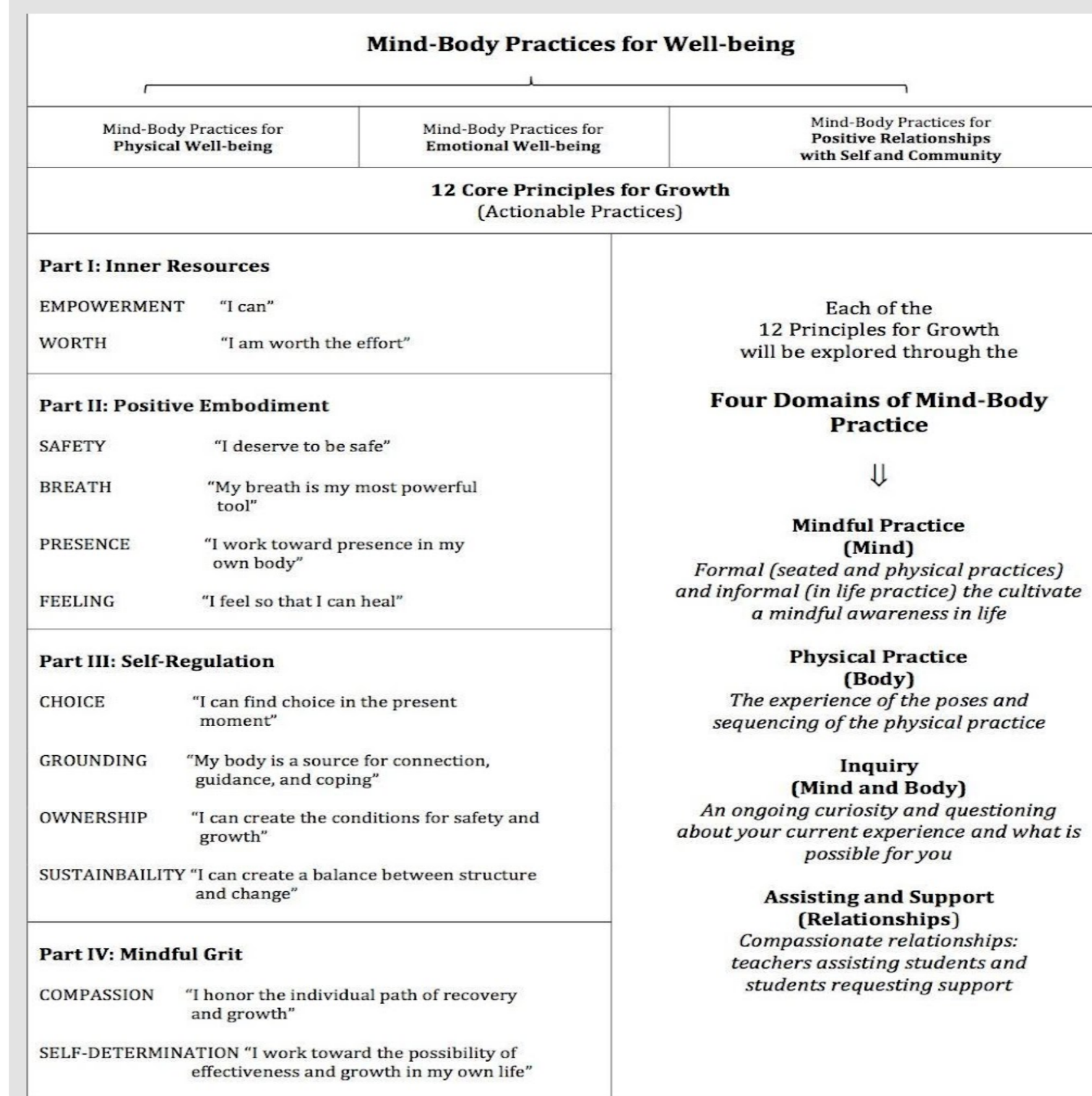
Note. * p < 0.05.
** p < 0.01.

Results

- Overall, results indicated that the program was both acceptable and feasible. The TI-MBW Program was found to be effective compared to controls in significantly improving self-regulation, self-efficacy, self-care, personal belief in growth, as well as reducing distress. No gender differences were found and outcomes were similar for both genders.
- Follow-up data indicated that continued participation in yoga maintained significant increases in self-regulation (controls decreased), self-efficacy (controls relatively unchanged), mindful self-care (controls relatively unchanged), and belief in personal growth (controls decreased). TI-MBW yoga participants maintained continued reductions in distress even 5-6 months after the yoga-based program ended.



Figure 1. Frame-work for Trauma informed Mind-Body Wellbeing Program



Conclusion

- Results suggest that trauma-informed yoga-based programs are acceptable and may be helpful in the remediation of trauma symptoms and promoting wellbeing in Rwanda. These results are consistent with previous studies in Somalia and Kenya which have effectively incorporated ease of access and community-wide programs to enhance wellbeing.
- The findings of this study are exciting as we believe this is the first controlled trial study (with follow-up) of a trauma-informed yoga-based program to have been conducted in Rwanda. The results of this current study affirms that this program is an effective and low-risk intervention for traumatized people.

Recommendations

- It is strongly suggested that the Trauma-Informed Mind-Body Wellbeing Program should be continued to decrease traumatic distress and increase wellbeing.
- Future research could focus on comparing TI-MBW to an active control group (i.e. group that receives only psychoeducation or regular yoga without the trauma-informed aspects).
- Future studies may consider the incorporation of qualitative data to have an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences in addition to self-reporting surveys.
- Booster sessions of the TI-MBW Program material may reinforce the principles, practices, and encourage treatment adherence. Mentoring programs can ensure TI-MBW Program integrity can be implemented to increase participant support and confidence in material.

Method & Data Analysis

- The present study included a sample of 227 Rwandan residents between 18 and 75 years of age (M = 27.9 years old, N= 227), with a treatment group of TI-MBW students (n=109) and non-yoga control group (n=118).
- A 70-question survey was composed of demographic questions and scales addressing constructs related to traumatic experiences and distress, self-efficacy, mindful self-care, a belief in one's personal growth and self-regulation. Participants were asked at the posttest to respond to the statement "I would recommend the TI-MBW program to a friend" and to give an answer of "yes/no". Data was collected at pretest, posttest and at follow-up.