



brighton natural health
foundation



Gujarati Cultural Society

Evaluation of yoga classes with the Brighton South Asian Women's Group

Healthy Communities, Healthy City, Healthy Planet



Report October
2024



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I like the meditation at the end. It make me feel very relaxed and energetic
It has given me a pain free body which has enabled me to be more focussed in other areas
of my life.*

Background

This feedback relates to a 12-week free yoga course run by the Brighton Natural Health Foundation and run in conjunction with the South Asian Women's Group for people over 55 which is part of the city's Gujarati Cultural Society. The course was funded by Sport England.

The course was started as part of Brighton Public Health Team's *Stay Strong Steady and Independent* campaign - a programme of local events designed to improve the ageing experience by improving balance and strength. The taster day was attended by 30 people who expressed a wish for the classes to continue. We were then able to fund 12 further classes - reaching up to 30 students each week.

We worked with Lisa Nicholls Rider, an experienced local teacher with a strong understanding of South Asian culture - a fact that was appreciated by the participants.

Who we are

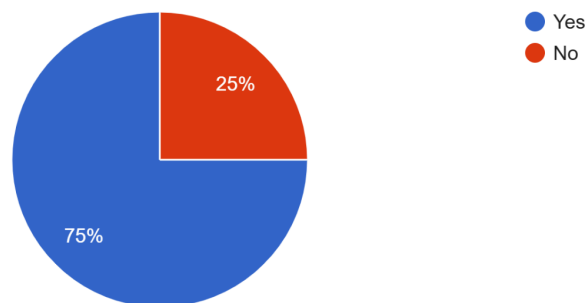
Brighton Natural Health Foundation

We are a charity that is passionate about empowering people and communities to embrace mindful movement for a happier, healthier lifestyle. We offer free, accessible classes for people facing health inequalities as well as acting on a source of information and advice.

Evaluation Results

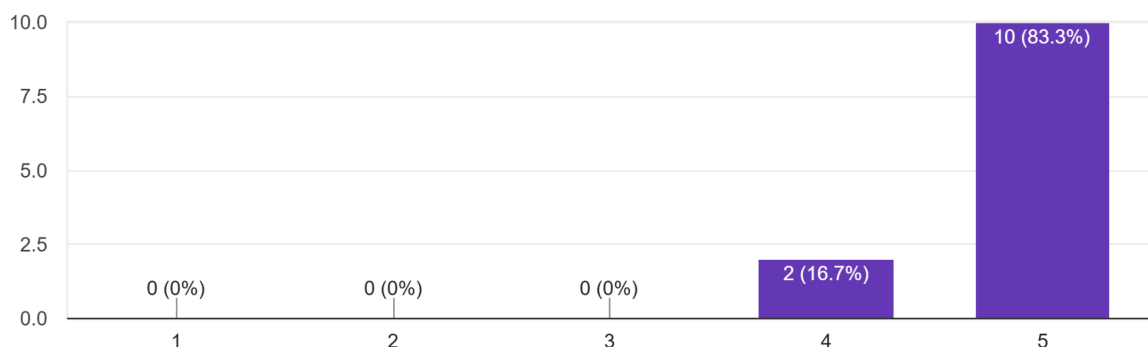
Had you ever done a regular yoga class before this course started?

Most people had done some form of mindful movement in the past.



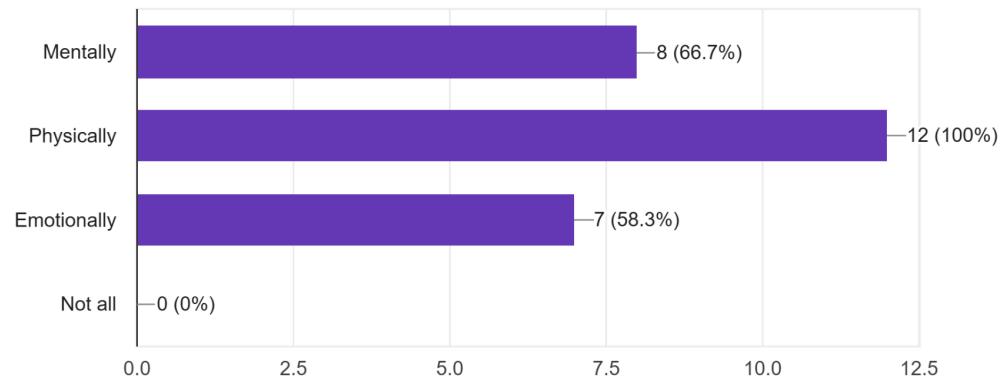
Overall - how was your experience of the course on a scale of 1-5 (where five is very positive)?

100% of respondents rated their experience of the course as positive.



In which ways did you benefit from the sessions? Please tick the ones that apply

100 % of participants said they benefited from the class physically, $\frac{2}{3}$ said they benefitted mentally and just over half said they benefitted emotionally.



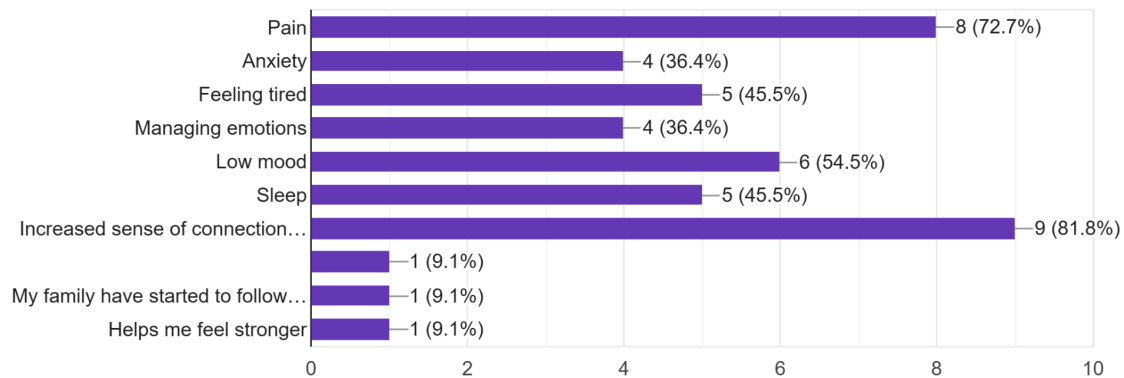
Could you say a bit more about what the benefits were?

All respondents mentioned the physical and mental health benefits of yoga with reducing stress being the most commonly cited improvement.

- Helped me to calm down and relax
- It is very energetic and spiritual
- Mum is 85 so it's good for her to move
- Keep fit and healthy
- Helped me relax and develop coordination.
- Regular application of what was taught during session helped me become more agile and sleep better
- I like the meditation at the end. It make me feel very relaxed and energetic
- It has given me a pain free body which has enabled me to be more focussed in other areas of my life.
- Feeling happier with myself
- Made us feel happy and relaxed
- Energetic and fun. Good for all levels.

Did yoga help with any of the following? (tick the ones that apply to you)

Students clearly valued the sense of connection that practising yoga together brought them with 82% citing this as an important benefit. The majority of respondents also cited reduced pain as a positive product of the class. One woman said that she had started to practise at home with her family.

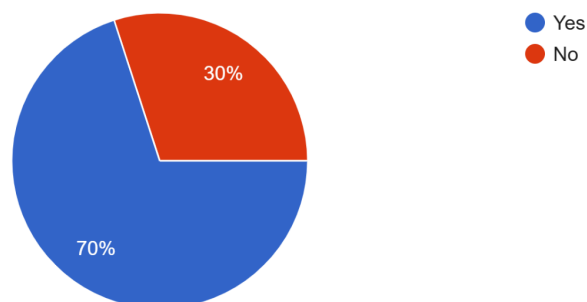


Is there anything that could have been improved? If so, what?

Two people asked if the class could be slightly early. Two others asked that the classes should continue regularly.

Did you try any of the yoga techniques at home?

Most people tried some of the yoga techniques they had learned in class at home and for some this seemed an important part of the process.



Is there anything else you would like to say about your yoga course?

Lisa is perfect and I would like more classes. She explains the benefits of stretches to us

Lisa is a fantastic teacher and a genuinely lovely person. I feel important when someone listens to me. She checks our positions constantly

Lisa is excellent. but could it start earlier as mum can only stay for half an hour

Meeting others and learning from them. Keeping healthy myself

More sessions in future. Lisa understood the culture from the East and was very understanding to the needs of the elderly. Sometimes having to repeat for some who have hearing impairment. Excellent yoga teacher. Would like to have more of her.

Lisa understands our culture.

It was lovely to see Lisa as a teacher. Such a wonderful class. I got so much from it. So thank you Sam for offering such a good teacher and helping with our yoga session

I find yoga a great way to get my thoughts together and help me concentrate for long periods. It's a good way to help me keep fit

The majority of people said they would want to go to future classes but cited lack of classes nearby as reasons they might not be able to attend.

Conclusions

The class was very well received and people clearly benefited physically and mentally - although most participants valued the physical benefits the most (this is higher than other groups we have worked with).

Retention rates were very high - possibly due to the fact that the group was already meeting regularly.

The majority of students practised at home, thereby increasing the benefits to their health. This correlates to the fact that most people had already done yoga before.

People clearly enjoyed the opportunity to practise together and the social aspect was important to many of the participants.

The students clearly had a strong connection with their teacher and valued her understanding of South Asian culture and her inclusive style of teaching.

There was some concern about the classes running out and people were keen for them to continue.

Ways Forward

- An earlier start could be considered to cater to the needs of those who have to leave early
- There is clearly concern that the classes will run out and BNHF are currently exploring funding options with the Gujarati Cultural Society, including local grant funding and a pay what you can model
- The high retention rates may be in part due to the fact that a group is already meeting and there is a high social value in the classes. This collaborative approach should be considered when planning future courses.