



An evaluation of a six week course for refugees, April 2025

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Healthy Communities, Healthy City, Healthy Planet

Mindful Movement Community Practitioner Course

"It's been an interesting and incredible week of learning. I feel grateful to be involved in this wonderful course." N, course participant



Introduction

This course was devised by the Brighton Natural Health Foundation and was aimed at people who wished to deliver simple mindful movement and breath practices in their communities.

Mindful movement is a way of bringing awareness to the body and breath during movement practice. This cultivates present moment awareness and feeling grounded and centred. It draws on practices such as yoga, qigong, and Pilates.

Brighton Natural Health Foundation

BNHF is passionate about mindful movement and its benefits for health and wellbeing. Our role is to help people facing the greatest health inequalities to access these benefits. We deliver free, accessible mindful movement to people who would not normally be able to access them in spaces that are familiar and local.

Course Overview

This course was designed by BNHF to equip trainers with the knowledge and skills to deliver a short mindful movement course. The course emphasises the importance of mindful movement in soothing the nervous system, reducing pain, managing mental and physical health, and working safely with vulnerable groups in a trauma-sensitive way. All the postures are taught seated to make it accessible. By the end of this training, participants are equipped to shape and deliver a mindful movement course that is inclusive, safe, trauma-informed and appropriate to their chosen audience. (For more course details, see Appendix One.)

Participants

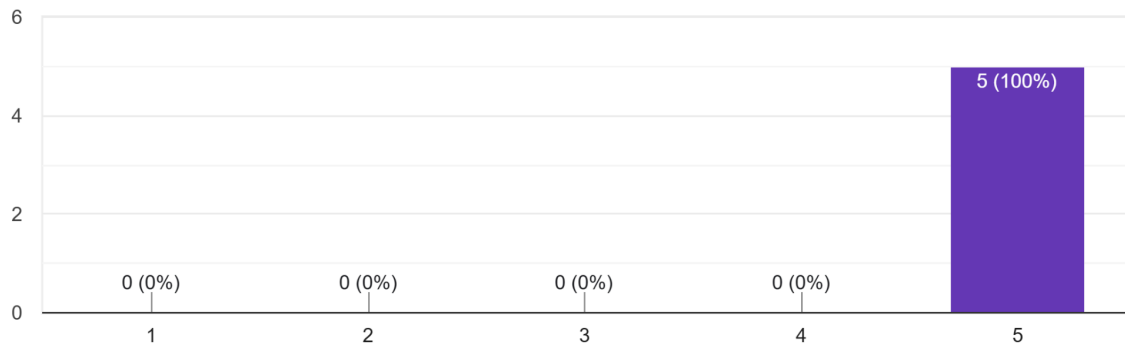
The course was delivered to 6 people with refugee status and one volunteer from the Sanctuary - a charity supporting refugees in Eastbourne.

Evaluation

The participants were given opportunities to feedback throughout the course and completed an end of course evaluation form on week six.

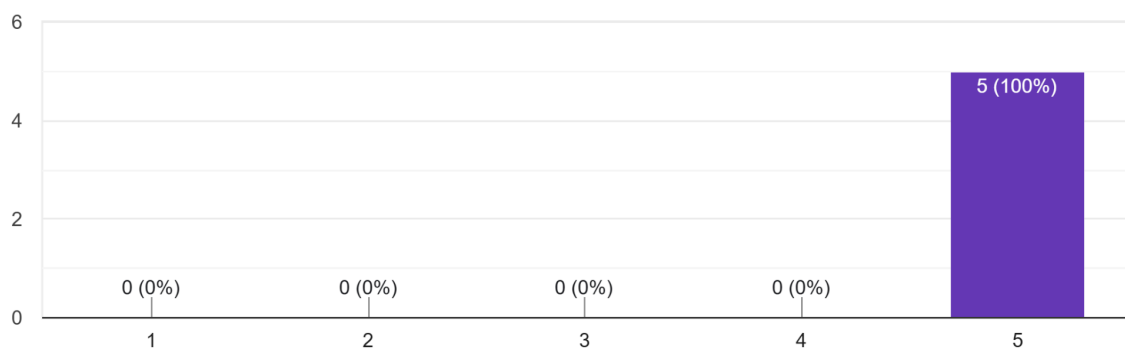
How satisfied were you with the course overall on a scale of 1-5 (where 5 is very good)

5 responses

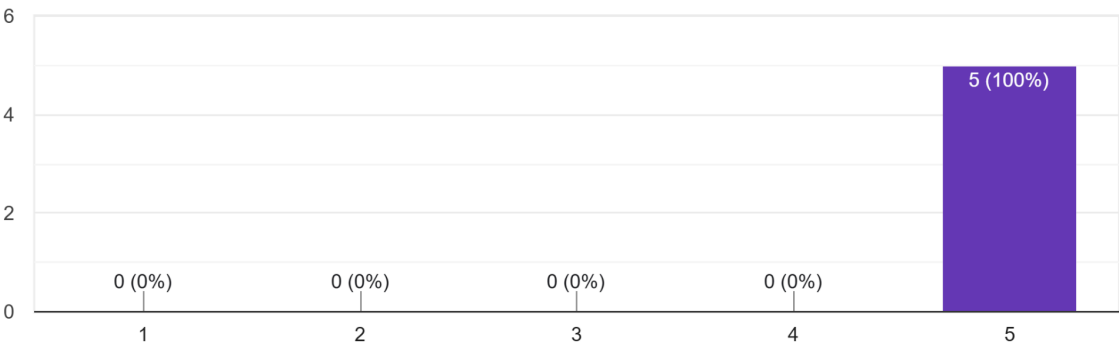


How satisfied were you with the course content?

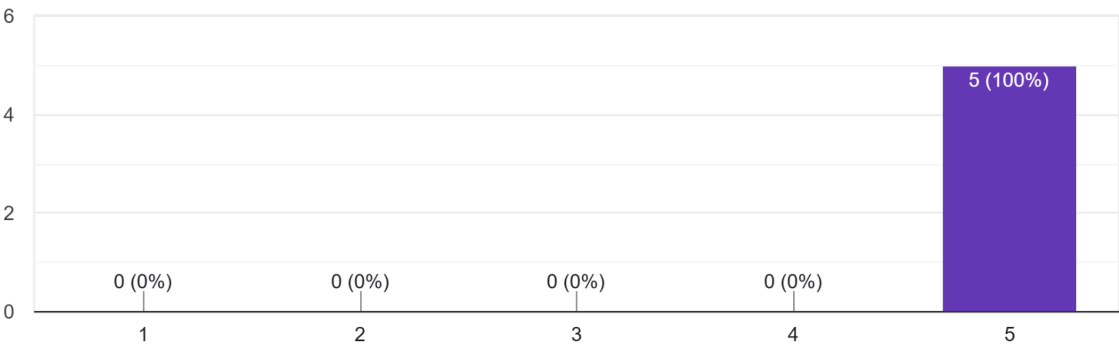
5 responses



How satisfied were you with the teaching (where 5 is very good)
5 responses

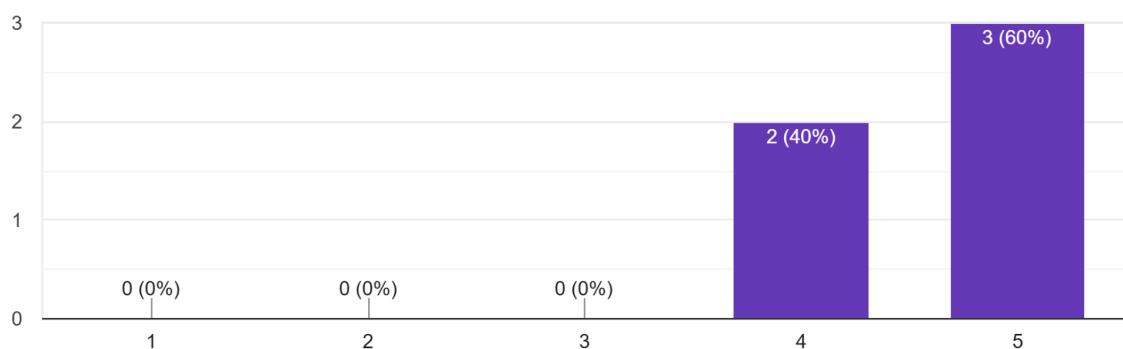


How satisfied were you with the course materials?
5 responses



How confident do you feel about teaching mindful movement now the course has finished?

5 responses



Please say if there was anything you particularly liked about the course.

I really liked the step by step style and approach to teaching. Very precise information in the presentation. Very positive and comfortable atmosphere.

I liked the course content and how the teachers broke it down to make it simple for others to understand.

I'd love to take a moment and thank the course leaders and the useful information provided, the patience and the friendly atmosphere.

I like how kind were our teachers their feedback for all students and how easy it was to understand the website.

The teaching was brilliant and so were the participants. The material is easily accessible, informative and interesting.

Please say if there is anything we could have done differently.

Everything was good, thank you.

Maybe add a video of Tammy running through a session. Something to look over again and again so we can use similar language.

Possibly a few sample sessions to help us starting out.

Participant Reflections

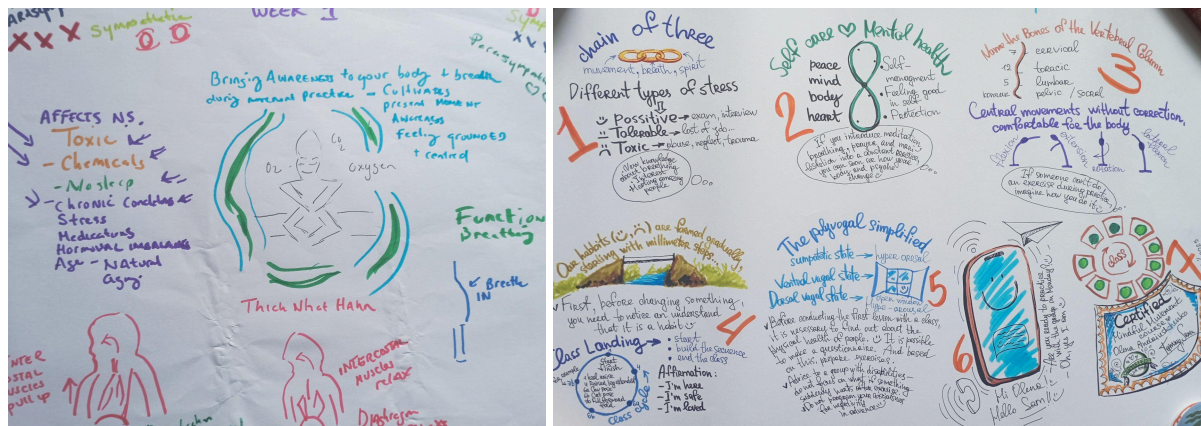
Keeping a reflective journal was an integral part of the course and these excerpts (shared with permission) demonstrate some of the learning and experiences that took place:

'The atmosphere is very welcoming and this helps me take in information more easily.'

'I find myself practising mindful breathing and movement every day.'

'It's incredible how powerful, grounding and life-changing good habits can be.'

Some participants decided to record their reflections through creative methods such as illustration or poetry:



“Final Sit”

– A Thank You Message

As we take our seats for the last time in this course, I wanted to offer a pause—a mindful breath—to say thank you.

In just a few weeks, I've learned to breathe deeper, sit taller, and occasionally untangle myself from a twist that got a little too enthusiastic. Who knew so much movement could happen from a chair?

To our amazing course leaders—your guidance has been like the perfect grounding breath, steady, kind, and always there when the brain wanted to wander off like a curious puppy. You've shown us that mindfulness isn't about emptying the mind—it's more like giving the mind a cozy chair to sit in and just... chill.

To my fellow mindful sitters—thank you for sharing this space with your stillness, your wobbles, and your wonderful energy. Whether we were reaching for the sky, rolling our shoulders, or closing our eyes for a few blissful moments of meditation, we were doing it together—with presence, with curiosity, and with the occasional chair squeak as background music.

This course has reminded me that even the smallest movement—like softening the jaw or unclenching the toes—can be revolutionary. And that sometimes, the bravest thing you can do is sit... and simply notice.

Warm regards
Mohabbat Mohseni
April 2025, Eastbourne



Commentary

As the evaluation shows, the students had an overwhelmingly positive experience of the course. Particularly valued were the teaching materials and the ability of the teachers to break the information down into smaller steps that were easy to understand - particularly important when working with students who do not have English as a first language.

Students also valued the friendly and welcoming environment which is of particular importance when working with people who may have experienced trauma.

Learning diaries and assessments revealed a pleasing depth of learning and most students said that the course had had a profound impact on their day to day lives in terms of bringing in more breath awareness and knowledge of the mind/ body connection.

The course scored lowest on students' confidence to deliver their own mindful movement sessions. This is to be expected. The course involved students delivering content to their peers from the outset but teaching outside the safe environment of the classroom is likely to pull students out of their comfort zone. For this reason, students were offered follow up support to develop and deliver their own sessions. At the time of writing, two students had delivered short breath and movement workshops to peers with positive results. The offer of support from BNHF had not been taken up but it is something that the trainers will be pursuing in the near future with follow up phone calls and sessions.

Improvements

We have taken onboard the feedback from the participants and will be developing videos and practice plans as suggested. We will make an effort to keep materials updated as new research in the field arises. We adapted our practice each week based on feedback from the group and learned that repetition and testing of key phrases and vocabulary was key.

The Way Forward

The results from the first course have been encouraging. The next steps are to

- Support the current cohort to start delivering their own courses
- Market the course to similar groups who may be interested in delivering to their peers
- Market the course to healthcare and third sector professionals who may want to use these skills with their clients
- Devise and seek accreditation for a shorter version of the course that could be delivered as a half day staff development course for healthcare and third sector professionals



Thank yous

We would like to thank the **Sanctuary** for working with us to put forward our wonderful students who we learned so much from.

We are very grateful to **Eastbourne Therapy Hub** who provided the beautiful space for us to practise in.

And many thanks go to **The Chalk Cliff Trust** whose funding helped us develop the course as well as **Estar** and **Homes for Ukraine** who funded the students' places.

Appendix One - Course Details

The course lasted six weeks with five hours each session - a total of 30 hours.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the benefits of mindful movement.
2. Recognize the role of mindful movement in soothing the nervous system, reducing pain, and improving mental health and general well-being.
3. Employ trauma-sensitive strategies for delivering mindful movement classes.
4. Learn to work safely with vulnerable groups, including people with chronic conditions, mental health challenges, or trauma.
5. Deliver and facilitate a short mindful movement course confidently.

Course Assessment

Students were assessed in three ways:

1. Assessment of mindful movement teaching to peers
2. Submission of a reflective journal
3. A written multiple choice test on basic anatomy and the nervous system

For more information about this course contact: samhart@bnhf.org