Toward an Operational Definition of an Informal Mindfulness Practice: A Scoping Review and Stakeholder Consultation

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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ..... **v**

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP ..... **vi**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **vii**

PRELUDE ..... **viii**

ABSTRACT **1**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION **2**

1.1 Rationale, aims and research question 2

1.2 Issues and context 2

1.3 Mindfulness 4

1.4 Formal mindfulness practice 5

1.5 Informal mindfulness 6

1.6 Outline of Thesis 7

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD **8**

2.1 Qualitive design: methodology and epistemology 8

PHASE ONE 8

2.2 Scoping study 8

2.2.1 Search strategy *10*

2.2.2 Content analysis *11*

PHASE TWO 12

2.3 Stakeholder consultation 12

2.3.1 Participant recruitment *12*

2.3.2 Data collection *13*

2.3.3 Content analysis *14*

2.4 Quality and rigour 14

2.4.1 Reliability *15*

2.4.2 Validity *16*

2.5 Reflexivity 17

2.6 Ethical considerations 18

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS 20

PHASE ONE 20

3.1 Scoping literature review 20

3.1.1 Exposure of a formal practice 20

3.1.2 Intentionality 27

3.1.3 Everyday activities 29

3.1.4 Continuity 31

3.1.5 Awareness of breath 32

PHASE TWO 33

3.2 Stakeholder consultation 33

3.2.1 Definition One: 33

3.2.1.1 Not comprehensive enough 33

3.2.1.2 No need to explicitly state that it is practiced during routine activities ... 34

3.2.2 Definition Two: 34

3.2.2.1 Replace "doing" with "being" or "bringing" 35

3.2.2.2 It's a good definition 35

3.2.2.3 Needs to include senses 36

3.2.2.4 Needs to include intention 36

3.2.2.5 Goes beyond a basic informal mindfulness practice 37

3.2.3 Definition Three: 37

3.2.3.1 All-encompassing 38

3.2.3.2 The attitude of informal mindfulness 38

3.2.33 Additions to the definition 39

3.2.3.4 Not a good definition 39

3.2.4 Definition Four: 40

3.2.4.1 Inaccurate use of the word skill *40*

3.2.4.2 Vague definition *41*

3.2.4.3 Integration of a formally taught practice into daily life *41*

3.2.5 Definition Five: 41

3.2.5.1 Intention *42*

3.2.5.2 Shouldn't include challenging situations *42*

3.2.5.3 It does include challenging situations *43*

3.2.6 Alternative definitions 44

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION 47

4.1 Contextualisation of findings 47

4.2 Alternative definition 52

4.3 Implications and recommendations 53

4.4 Limitations and reflections 53

4.5 Avenues for future research 55

4.6 Conclusion 56

REFERENCES 59

APPENDICES 50

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet 50

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form 53

Appendix C: Indicative Interview Questions 54

Appendix D: Ethics Approval 55

Appendix E: Approval of Ethic Amendments 56

Appendix F: Sample of Definitions Presented to Stakeholders 57

Appendix G: Flow chart 58

Appendix H: Extracted Definitions from Scoping Review 59

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 13
Table 2 22
Table 3 43
Table 4 45

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed Date 17/11/2019

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PRELUDE

The little things? The little moments? They aren't little.

- *Jon Kabat-Zinn*

ABSTRACT

The current definitions of informal mindfulness practice proposed in the literature are inconsistent and obscure. It has been described by several studies yet, there has been no effort to establish the defining principles the constitute informal mindfulness practice. Therefore, there is no widely agreed on definition of informal mindfulness practice. Using a scoping literature review methodology, this research provides an overview of the various types of definitions of informal mindfulness. A content analysis of the scoping review identified 35 definitions that could be allocated into five categories. These five categories were: *exposure of formal practice*, *intentionality*, *everyday activities*, *continuity*, and *awareness of breath.*

In addition, mindfulness teachers, as participating stakeholders, were interviewed about the extent to which these definitions have utility for their practice and teaching. Information from these interviews helped to determine to what degree these definitions need to be modified. The stakeholders agreed that "exposure to a formal practice" and "intentionality" are crucial components to informal practice. The stakeholders felt the remainder of the categories needed to be altered or expanded on. Lastly, the stakeholders expressed that "attitude" is a fundamental element that needs to be included in an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice.

There was no current definition identified in the literature that included all of the fundamental elements identified from the research and stakeholder consultations. Therefore, the stakeholders provided an alternative operational definition of informal mindfulness practice. The researcher selected one definition from the five alternative definitions, that clearly represented all the fundamental facets identified by the scoping review and expressed by the stakeholders.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The interest in mindfulness has increased exponentially over the last three decades. This is evident in the growth in research and use of MBP (mindfulness-based programmes) in healthcare practices, schools, criminal justice programs and the workplace (Crane et al., 2014). The public interest of mindfulness has also continued to rise as there is an increase in mindfulness related workshops, retreats, apps and classes promoting the importance of living in the present moment (Crane et al., 2014). The utility of formal mindfulness-based practice has been shown to be efficacious with mental illness, quality of life, maladaptive behaviour, distress and emotion regulation (Bishop et al., 2004; Birtwell, Williams, Marwijk, Armitage, & Sheffield, 2018; Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Rosenzweig, 2001). While the benefits of formalised and structured mindfulness exercises and components of MBP are well understood, there are significantly fewer studies that focused primarily on mindfulness practice that occurs more informally.

1.1 Rationale, aims and research question

Currently, there is no widely agreed on definition of informal mindfulness practice. Using a qualitative phenomenological methodology and an interpretative epistemological and ontological approach, this research will provide an overview of the different types of definitions of informal mindfulness practice that have been proposed in the literature. This will be achieved by employing a scoping literature review. In addition to that, relevant stakeholders such as mindfulness teachers will be interviewed about the extent to which these definitions have utility for their practice and teaching. Information from these interviews will help determine to what extent these definitions may need to be modified. This may help to create a suitable operational definition that can be utilised in the professional practice of mindfulness-based interventions. The research question is: What are the fundamental features that engender informal mindfulness practice?

1.2 Issues and context

A preliminary literature review revealed that informal mindfulness practice has been described in several studies in the literature, however, there has been no systematic effort to ascertain the defining criteria that constitute informal mindfulness practice (Bishop et al., 2004; Birtwell et al., 2018). Some examples of informal mindfulness practice include *"mindfulness in everyday life*" or "*performing daily tasks mindfully*" (Bondolfi et al., 2010;

Zeller at al., 2011). The problem with these definitions is that they are ambiguous and give no insight into the mechanisms or components involved in an informal mindfulness practice. They also confuse the context in which informal mindfulness is used. The definition *"mindfulness in daily life"* appears to describe informal mindfulness practice as a generalised attitude that is applied throughout the day. Similar descriptions have been used for dispositional mindfulness which is thought to be more of a trait or characteristic where an individual has a tendency to act mindfully throughout the day while they engage in daily tasks (Kiken et al., 2015; Birrer, Rothlin, & Morgan, 2012). The practise of informal mindfulness is seemingly different from trait mindfulness it is a method to become mindful, whereas, dispositional mindfulness is the outcome (Birrer et al., 2012). However, the current conceptualisations of informal mindfulness practice do not describe the distinct components that highlight the differences between the two separate concepts.

There is also a distinction between informal mindfulness practice that encourages relaxation, stress management, and clinical applications of mindfulness. Relaxation meditation is a mindfulness-based practice that promotes a sense of calm, aids sleep and assists in decreasing stress (Carrington et al., 1980). This method attends to bodily sensations and the breath to assist in the deactivation of the sympathetic stress response. Clinical based applications of mindfulness in contemporary psychology such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is a manualised treatment program used to treat emotional and behavioural disorders (Kabat-Zinn., 1990). Similarly, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is based on MBSR and is delivered in a similar way, but it also combines cognitive therapy alongside the mindfulness practices (Teasdale et al., 2000). MBSR and MBCT are both a form of mental training to reduce reactive modes of the mind that increase cognitive vulnerability (Bishop et al., 2014). They involve methods that assist in attending to thoughts and emotions in a non-reactive way and they have been shown to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety (Teasdale et al., 2000). These are distinguishing components that are absent from current definitions and appear to create difficulties in the establishment of appropriate parameters in which to measure the phenomenon. By establishing a clear understanding of the fundamental features involved in the practise, informal mindfulness may be better represented in research. This may broaden our knowledge of its potential impact on health and wellbeing.

This study aims to establish an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice. Conceivably, it will provide insight into fundamental constructs that embody an

informal mindfulness practice. This study could further benefit theoretical development as construct specificity may stimulate investigation into the mediating role and mechanisms of informal mindfulness practice. Furthermore, it would allow for the development of relevant instruments needed for such investigations to proceed.

1.3 Mindfulness

The origins of mindfulness are believed to be part of 2,500-year-old Buddhist psychology first established by Shakyamuni Buddha (Siegel, Germer, & Olendzki, 2009; Shonin, Van Gordon, & Singh, 2015). According to traditional Buddhist teachings, Buddha recognised that the human mind had a tendency to become distracted (Shonin et al., 2015). Through mindfulness, attention is brought back from past or future-mindedness and into the present moment. The main objective of mindfulness was to strengthen ones' cognitive skills through intention, attention, and awareness to cultivate a higher-order quality of mind (Kang & Whittingham, 2010). In doing so, it was thought to regulate maladaptive thinking and enhance spiritual awareness, calm and focus (Shonin et al., 2015).

While mindfulness is associated with Buddhism, in contemporary psychology it is applied in a manner that exceeds its philosophical and traditional roots (Shonin et al., 2015). Its re-conceptualised aim in a contemporary context is particularly focused on improving health and wellbeing (Siegel et al., 2009). Similar to traditional teachings, research has found that maladaptive processes such as rumination and future-oriented apprehension distract the mind and are conducive to the development of psychological distress (Shonin et al., 2015). Mindfulness is believed to be an awareness that it established through intentionally attending to the present moment in a discerning manner (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017).

Comparatively, a study by Bishop et al., (2004) breaks down the concept of mindfulness into a two-component model. They propose the first component to involve self-regulated attention that is maintained on the current experience. This allows for increased recognition of the present moment (Bishop et al., 2004). The second component involves the individual adopting an orientation toward their experience such as openness, curiosity, or acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). By attending to the present moment, it trains the mind and body to be fully engaged in present moment experiences, whether they are negative, positive, or neutral. The process of mindfulness allows for an individual to change their relationship with a certain experience, as opposed to attempting to change the

experience through defence mechanisms such as avoidance (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). The practise of mindfulness increases capacity for awareness and understanding of ourselves, others, and the environment around us. It is thought to be the key to quality relationships, communication, intuition, creativity and wisdom as our attention affects the quality of our performance (Khisty et al., 2010).

1.4 Formal mindfulness practice

A formal mindfulness practice involves structured meditative practices that take place for an allocated amount of time. The most elemental mindfulness practice is the *awareness of the breathing*. Bringing awareness to the breath is practised in all mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) as it can be used as an anchor to guide awareness back into the present moment (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). *Awareness of the breathing* involves applying intentional awareness to the inhalation and exhalation of air. When the mind wanders, as it naturally will, the attention is gently brought back to the breath. This is generally repeated numerous times throughout the breathing exercise. This seemingly simple exercise naturally calms the sympathetic stress response while establishing a conscious practice on the training and cultivation of attention and presence (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). Jazaieri and Shapiro, (2017) explain that an activity can only become mindful when intentional awareness is practised. Once the elemental mindfulness practice is learned, intentional awareness can then be applied to other mindfulness practices such as the body scan. The body scan is where intentional awareness is focused on one part of the body at a time generally starting at the feet and moving upwards to the top of the head. When focusing your attention on one region of the body, any sensation or tension that may be present is simply noticed with a non-judgmental, patient, and accepting attitude. (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017; Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Three core elements structure the framework of mindfulness-based practices (Shapiro et al., 2006). The core elements are *intention, attention*, and *attitude*. *Intention* drives our motivation and establishes the context in which the practise takes place. *Attention* involves initiating moment-to-moment awareness. Whereas, a*ttitude* is the quality of our intentional awareness (Shapiro et al., 2006). According to Kabat- Zinn (1990), there are seven *attitudes* that provide the foundation of a mindfulness practice: non-judging - to suspend judgment or evaluation; patience - allowing things to unfold on their own; beginners mind - a readiness to see everything as if it were for the first time; trust -

confidence in our innate wisdom; non-striving - letting go of any particular outcome; acceptance – acknowledging and being open to the present moment regardless of whether we want it, like it, agree or disagree with it; and letting go – allowing things to be as they are. Kabat Zinn (1990) explains that the seven attitudes are all interconnected. In addition to these seven attitudes, Shapiro and Carlson (2009) added an additional four; curiosity – genuinely being interested and willing to explore one's experience; gentleness – being kind and tender with one's self; playfulness – exploratory and lighthearted approach; and loving-kindness – demonstrating love, warmth, and benevolence. All of these attitudes along with intentional awareness are thought to be fundamental in the facilitation of mindfulness practices.

Formal mindfulness practice has been found to lower rumination and emotion regulation difficulties while increasing adaptive characteristics such as reflection and self-compassion (Lykins & Baer, 2009). A reason for this is thought to be a combination of awareness and calming concentration, which brings insight or penetrative seeing. Penetrative seeing is obtained through periods of calming concentration when we begin to observe the mind observing itself as well as the temporariness of our existence (Lykins & Baer, 2009). The state of temporariness or impermanence reveals the transient nature of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions, allowing for greater emotion regulation. Similarly, Hodgins and Adair (2010) also found regular formal mindfulness practice was associated with cognitive flexibility and positive well-being. A benefit of the structured and prescribed nature of formal mindfulness is that it allows for systematic investigation into the efficacy of its use with psychological health and wellbeing.

1.5 Informal mindfulness

Informal mindfulness practice has been described by many researchers however, the descriptions often lack consistency and precision (Cebolla et al., 2017; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999; Kladnitski, Smith, Allen, Andrews, & Newby, 2018). The definition of informal mindfulness practice also tends to differ depending on the context in which it is practised. This is due to mindfulness being used across multiple scopes such as psychology, education, medicine and self-development (Khisty, 2010). Hindman, Glass, Arnkoff, & Maron, (2015) describe informal mindfulness practice as "bringing mindfulness principles into day-to-day life" (p. 874). They suggest there is an opportunity to practise mindfulness informally in any given moment such as when making a cup of tea, driving or sorting

laundry. Intentional awareness is directed to the present moment such as noticing the hot water in the cup change colour as the tea bag steeps, or the smell of tea wafting.

Comparatively, Singh et al., (2019) describe an informal mindfulness practice as a tool for self-management to control self-destructive behaviour's. An informal mindfulness practice is, therefore, utilised in daily life but specifically when a person is feeling triggered by challenging thoughts and emotions. Instead of reacting, the sensations attached to the difficult emotions and thoughts are curiously and non-judgmentally observed while allowing for the urge to pass (Singh et al., 2018). Both examples may be a form of an informal mindfulness practice, but both differ extensively in their purpose, application, and effect. It is acknowledged by several researchers there is a need for a clear operational definition of informal practices when referring to its identification of use (Grabovac, Lau, & Willett, 2011; Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017; Bishop, et al., 2004).

1.6 Outline of Thesis

In Chapter One, I have identified the rationale and aim of this research while outlining the research question. I provided an overview of the theoretical framework and introduced the issue and context of the research. Chapter one also introduced the origins and conceptualisation of mindfulness followed by introducing the concepts of formal and informal mindfulness practice. Chapter two describes the method and methodology applied in this study by discussing the scoping literature review methodology, qualitative design, data collection and method of analysis for both the scoping review and stakeholder consultations. Chapter three provides the findings from the scoping literature review and critiques the present literature on the definition of informal mindfulness. The inconsistencies in informal mindfulness definitions in the research will be identified, providing a rationale for this present study. Chapter three further presents the findings from the stakeholder consultations established through content analysis. Chapter four discusses the significance of the findings as well as deliberating on the limitations and implications of the study. Chapter four also makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

This research was comprised of two phases. A scoping review was employed as part of Phase One of the study. It provided an overview of the range of definitions that have been used for an informal mindfulness practice. In Phase Two, stakeholder consultations were performed to inform and validate the findings from the scoping review. Stakeholders were interviewed about the extent to which these definitions have utility in their practice. Due to the scope of the research, a qualitative phenomenological methodology and an interpretative epistemological and ontological approach was used.

2.1 Qualitive design: methodology and epistemology

A phenomenological methodology is useful for exploring how humans understand and interpret a particular context or phenomenon (Ozanne & Hudson, 1989; Kirsh, 1996). It fits well with this research as its purpose is to explore literature viewpoints as well as perspectives, opinions, and insights of stakeholders. According to Kirsh (1996), narrative methodology "recreates experience through the eyes of the experienced and brings with it the richness of personal history" (p. 56). It will, therefore, be useful when describing a specific culture of phenomena such as informal mindfulness.

An interpretative social constructionism epistemology takes a relativist position and believes our reality is constructed through our subjective interactions with others (Burr, 1995, 2003). This is a direct contrast to realism that posits that there is one reality where truth can be established in an unbiased and objective way. An interpretative epistemology is beneficial in exploring and understanding participants' personal experiences. Social constructionism assumes our perceptions of reality are understood through language and influenced by our personal experiences (Burr, 1995). These experiences are subjective yet internalised as knowledge. How these experiences are understood and communicated determines our reality (Burr, 2003). The experiences are dependent on historical and cultural factors as meanings can differ over time and in different cultures (Burr, 2003). They are also reliant on the social structure as the more they are enforced the stronger the constructs become. Consequently, to the extent to which our interpretation and communication of experiences may differ, our constructs of reality will also differ.

PHASE ONE

2.2 Scoping study

A scoping review method is particularly useful when exploring the scope and nature of research fields that have recently emerged, when topics are complex, or when little research has been comprehensively reviewed before. (Grant & Booth, 2009; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Systematic reviews aim to answer a well-defined research question from a relatively narrow range of quality studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews, in comparison, address broader topics and chart relevant literature in a field of interest (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). A scoping review was deemed an appropriate method as a preliminary review revealed a discrepancy in current definitions on informal mindfulness. A scoping review allowed for a comprehensive mapping of the current range of definitions.

The scoping study was directed by the guiding framework established by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The process of conducting a scoping study is iterative, not linear, as it requires the researcher to reflexively engage in each stage. There are five stages of conducting a scoping literature review.

Stage 1: *Identifying the Research Question*. The research question is what guides the direction of the search strategy (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As mentioned previously, scoping reviews are useful for exploring complex or recently emerged topics. With this in mind, the research questions of complex studies can be ambiguous and multifaceted. It is important to consider which facets are important to the research. Fortunately, that is not the case for the present study. The research question well defines the central aspects to be explored as it questions the fundamental features that engender an informal mindfulness practice.

Stage 2: *Identifying Relevant Studies.* As indicated, the significance of scoping studies is to be as comprehensive as possible when exploring articles relevant to the research question (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This was achieved through an extensive search strategy that was implemented. This is explained in detail in section 2.2.1.

Stage 3: *Study Selection.* A scoping study adopts similar methods to a systematic study where there is an application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria are outlined in section 2.2.1.

Stage 4: *Charting the Data.* This stage of the scoping study involved sorting the material according to key issues or themes. This involved charting the full definitions of informal mindfulness in a table with details on the type of MBI, author, and year of publication (Appendix H).

Stage 5: *Collating, Summarising, and Reporting the Results.* This is the final stage of a scoping review where the data is collated, summarised, reported on. While systematic reviews only include a small percentage of the studies in the final report, a scoping review presents an overview of all the articles that were reviewed (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This presents some issues on how to best present such a large body of material. The present study analysed the material using content analysis, which ordered the findings into five categories and provided some organisation to the presentation of data. It also provided insight into the predominant themes within the definitions and where significant gaps were.

Optional Stage: *Consultation exercise.* The consultation stage is an optional stage to a scoping review, however, if utilised, it is thought to enhance the established findings. It was a stage that was implemented in the present study was it was deemed to provide added value and insight to the review with increased potential to inform clinical practice. It also contributed to the external validity of the research as it enhanced the generalisability of the findings. The process of the stakeholder consultation is further explained in section 2.3.

2.2.1 Search strategy

After an initial familiarisation with the research, an iterative search strategy was adopted. It involved searching for research evidence using numerous sources such as electronic databases, hand searches, reference lists, and in text-reference. To limit the scope of the review, it covered literature from 2007 until May 2019. The literature search was conducted across the databases; Scopus, PsycINFO, and ScienceDirect. The search was refined to peer-reviewed, English journal articles.

The search identified 109 studies that referred to informal mindfulness. From those studies, there were 31 duplicates. Forty-eight of these did not provide a definition as they only mentioned the term “informal mindfulness”. The remaining 25 articles provided either a brief or descriptive definition on informal mindfulness practice. Eleven more studies were selected through bibliography and citation searches. A bibliography search involves searching reference lists for key articles that were not found through the databases (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). In contrast, citation searches involve searching for key articles mentioned in-text (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). There was an addition of two articles found in the reference lists. The remaining nine articles were found through in-text citation searches. Data saturation was reached when no further original definitions on informal mindfulness could be found. There were 35 articles selected in total. Appendix G refers to the flow chart that details the progression of this method.

2.2.2 Content analysis

A content analysis adds value to step Four and Five of the scoping review. Using content analysis, definitions were analysed to identify certain words and themes in each definition. The definitions were then coded into manageable content categories depending on the specific words and themes expressed (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Narrative methodologies have increasingly become a significant part of social science over the last 15 years (Lieblich et a., 1998). Narrative research is a study that analyses an individual's personal account of a phenomenon (Lieblich et a., 1998). It can be used to learn about a specific social phenomenon, historical period, or as a comparison among groups (Lieblich et al., (1998). Lieblich et al., (1998) explains there are four modes in which a narrative can be analysed: holistic-form, holistic-content, categorical-form, and categorical-content (p. 13).

In holistic modes, the integrity of the full narrative is preserved, whereas, in categorical modes, segments are taken from the narrative and sorted into various categories. The form modes take into account the plot structure, use of metaphors and words, and the style of narrative. The content modes take more of a focus on the explicit content such as, what, why and how it happened, or the implicit content such as, what the story conveys (Lieblich et al., 1998). This study used a categorical-content mode which is a form of content analysis.

This approach is useful when the research is interested in a phenomenon shared by a group of people (Lieblich et al., 1998). It is relevant to this study as we are interested in the shared perspectives in research, as well as mindfulness practitioners' perspectives on the current definitions of informal mindfulness. These perspectives will significantly contribute to the establishment of an operational definition. The process of categorical-content analysis is outlined below as defined by Lieblich et al., (2011). It is important to note it explains each step for both phase one - scoping literature review. Each step for phase two – stakeholder consultation will be further explained in section 2.3.3. All of the steps were conducted for phase one, which resulted in the establishment of the five sample definitions of informal mindfulness that were present in the stakeholder consultations for phase two.

Step one of the content analysis involves *Selection of The Subtext.* In the beginning process of content analysis, all significant sections of the narrative are selected to form a new file. In the scoping literature review, this simply involved extracting a definition of

informal mindfulness when it appeared in the literature (Lieblich et al., 2011). Definitions were presented verbatim. There were 36 definitions collected from the scoping review.

Step two involves the *Definition of the Content Categories*. The categories are various themes or perspectives that several subtexts share as a means for them to be classified (Lieblich et al., 1998). This involved identifying common words used or themes within the definitions. For example, the definition "Informal mindfulness is intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations" (Enkema & Bowen, 2017, p. 3), contains the theme that an informal mindfulness practice includes intentionality.

Step three involves *Sorting the Material into the Categories.* This step is closely linked to step two where the categories are defined. In this step, similar subtexts from several different articles are categorised (Lieblich et al., 1998). A category was created once several other definitions were also identified to share similar words or themes (Weber, 1990). This process identified five categories from the 36 definitions identified from the scoping literature review (refer to Table 2). One definition was selected from each of the five categories to create a list of sample definitions. These five sample definitions were presented to the mindfulness practitioners and contributed to the content analysis process for the stakeholder consultations (Phase Two) (Appendix F).

Step four involves *Drawing Conclusion From the Results.* In this stage of the process, the contents collected from content analysis formulate a picture of the phenomena in question (Lieblich et al., 1998). The five categories established through content analysis provided insight into the prodominate themes throughout the various definitions. The stakeholder consultation conducted in phase two gave further perspective into the importance of specific themes and their utility in practice.

PHASE TWO

2.3 Stakeholder consultation

The stakeholder consultation was decided to be an important stage to include as it provided insight on the utility of the definitions found from the scoping review. Utilising the supervisors' community networks, mindfulness teachers were contacted and invited to participate.

2.3.1 Participant recruitment

The study required the participants to be current mindfulness-based intervention teachers practising in the scope of MBSR or MBCT. This was an essential criterion as the goal of this study was to establish an operational definition of informal mindfulness that can be utilised in the professional practice of mindfulness-based interventions. Due to the scope of this qualitative research, four participants were considered to be an appropriate number for this study (Feng, Krägeloh, Billington, & Siegert, 2018). An email was sent to the participants explaining the purpose of the study and enquired if they would like to be involved. Once the participants expressed their interest, the researcher provided them with further details on the information sheet (Appendix A) and the consent form (Appendix B). There was no incentive offered to the participants to take part in the study. However, they were gifted a food or fuel voucher upon completing the interview as an appreciation for taking part and to compensate them for their time and transport costs. While conducting the interviews the participants were not referred to by their names to ensure confidentiality. Table 1 presents the pseudonyms of each of the participants that took part in the study.

Table 1

Pseudonyms of Research Participants

Participant Number	Participant Pseudonym
1	Dahlia
2	Eden
3	Amanda
4	Nathan

2.3.2 Data collection

The data for this research were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews by the researcher at a mutually convenient location in Auckland. The researchers developed a set of indicative open-ended questions that were used to guide the conversation in the beginning of the consultation (Appendix C). The indicative questions allowed for flexibility for the researcher to explore the concept of informal mindfulness further, if necessary. The participants were provided a sample of five definitions of informal mindfulness extracted from the scoping review using content analysis techniques (Appendix F). Participants were asked to reflect on all five definitions and discuss the significance and limitations of each one in relevance to how they understand and teach informal mindfulness. They were encouraged to elaborate on the definitions if they felt it was necessary. This allowed the interview to be both thorough while allowing for the participants to direct the interview

according to their perspective in relevance to their teachings of informal mindfulness. Each of the interviews took approximately 40 minutes in length and was recorded using a digital recording application on the researcher personal mobile phone.

2.3.3 Content analysis

The same approach was used in the scoping review however, this section focuses on the application of content analysis in relation to the stakeholder consultations.

Step one: *Selection of The Subtext.* Sections from the narrative were selected that referred to the stakeholders' perspective on the five sample definitions selected from the scoping review. Charateristically, all remaining content of the consultation is omitted as the selected sections are treated independently (Lieblich et al., 1998). Occasionally content that has been omitted contributes to the interpretation of the selected material. In this situation, the contribution of that material is validated.

Step two: *Definition of the Content Categories*. As mentioned, the categories are various themes or perspectives that several subtexts share as a means for them to be classified (Lieblich et al., 1998). This step involved grouping the selected subtexts which contain similar perspectives. Utilising the same definition used in Phase One as an example, "Informal mindfulness is intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations" (Enkema & Bowen, 2017, p. 3), a shared perspective may be that intention is an important aspect or that this definition is too brief. Categories were not created prior to the theme development. Due to the flexibility of content analysis, categories were created when groups of similar themes or perspectives were naturally formed (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Step three: *Sorting the Material into the Categories.* The shared perspectives on each definition were sorted into categories as shown in Table 3.

Step four involves *Drawing Conclusion From the Results.* The stakeholder consultations were an important aspect of the study as it provided rich data in this stage of the process. Having established the five categories identified from the scoping review, the stakeholder consultations provided further insight into the importance of these themes when applying them in a real-life setting. From here, conclusions were established on the fundamental elements that contribute to an operational definition of informal mindfulness.

2.4 Quality and rigour

Reliability and validity are two necessary aspects of all research to assure high quality and rigour. Is it a process of being accurate and thorough throughout the research process. It is also a way of demonstrating integrity and competence within the research process (Aroni et al., 1999).

2.4.1 Reliability

The framework for conducting a scoping review is similar to that of a systematic review. In order for the review to be reliable, the process needs to be done rigorously and transparently (Weber, 1990). Accordingly, the process has been well documented with sufficient detail for transparency and ease of replication. This explicit approach is thought to increase the methodological quality and rigour of the study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

The criteria necessary for reliability when doing content analysis are stability, reproducibility, and accuracy (Weber, 1990; Krippendorff, 2018). The stability of the data is also known as intra-reliability. It can be determined when one researcher codes the same content, in the same way, more than once (Weber, 1990). The stability of the data was accounted for through coding and re-coding of the data by the same researcher. This ensured the codes were consistent over time. Since there is one person coding, this form of reliability is seen as the weakest method of reliability (Weber, 1990). It is, therefore, important that the other two criteria of reliability are met.

Reproducibility is also known as inter-coder reliability. Reproducibility also involves the coding and re-coding of content to ensure consistency, however, reproducibility is accounted for through the use of more than one coder (Weber, 1990). This ensured there is a collective understanding between multiple coders that ensued the content being coded in the same way. This was accounted for in the present study through peer-reviewing the codes that had been categorised by the first coder. The codes were examined by multiple coders to ensure there was a group consensus in their categorisation. High reproducibility and stability is of importance in content analysis as stability measures the individual coder’s understanding and reproducibility measures the shared understanding held by multiple coders (Weber, 1990).

Accuracy can be maintained when the classification of a term corresponds to the norm (Weber, 1990). It is the strongest form of reliability, so it is an important criterion in content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). Accuracy was maintained in this research through the use of the scoping literature review. The scoping literature review ensured there was a

significant variety of literature from a large range of contexts. This ensured that the terms that were used to code into categories corresponded to the standard terms used for informal mindfulness. The interviews conducted contributed to the confirmation of the accuracy of those terms. It was important for this research to engage with stakeholders to gain insight into the terms they use for informal mindfulness. This verified the accuracy of the terms that were being coded.

2.4.2 Validity

The credibility of research is comparable to internal validity. It explores the integrity of the researcher's representation of data. There are two distinctions of validity; the first being a distinction between concepts, variables, methods, and data; and the second being the generalisability of results and theory (Weber, 1990). The criteria that contribute to the validity of content analysis are the closeness of categories, the level of implication and the generalisability of the results (Weber, 1990). The validity of content analysis can be firstly achieved through the method of closeness of categories. This can be accomplished by multiple classifiers arriving at a congruent description of each category of codes. This was achieved in the present study through member checking. Closeness of categories is similar to reproducibility as the process of member checking allows for consistency and accuracy of the classification of categories (Weber, 1990). This strategy enables the interpretation of categories to be accurately translated from the participants' viewpoint and not influenced by the researcher's experience (Krefting, 1991).

A second criterion to ensure validity is the level of implication (Weber, 1990). The level of implication involves examining whether the conclusions correctly account for the data that are being analysed. This can occasionally be problematic if terms have inherently different meanings that can, therefore, be interpreted differently (Weber, 1990). This is similar to accounting for accuracy for the sake of reliability and one of the ways it was accounted for was also through the use of member checking (Krefting, 1991). This allowed for uniformity in the understanding of particular terms to ensure the analysis of data was consistent. It was also accounted for during interviews with the stakeholders by thoroughly explaining each term by giving it context and meaning. Any similar terms were compared and contrasted where the participants were encouraged to express any differing ideas. These were noted and will be further discussed in Chapter Four. It is important to note, terms that this section is referring to are terminologies within informal mindfulness definitions such as

“sensations” or “challenging moments”. It is not referring to the term “informal mindfulness”, as the rationale of this study is to create an operational definition as current definitions are inconsistent.

The third and final criterion to certify validity in content analysis is generalisability. Generalisability refers to the external validity of a study and describes the extent to which the findings can be applied to a setting outside of research. The generalisability of this study is accounted for through the use of stakeholder consultations. It was not enough to extract data from the scoping literature review to establish a comprehensive definition of informal mindfulness. It was important to consult with mindfulness practitioners that teach informal mindfulness on the most appropriate operational definition according to its application in a real-life setting. To ensure generalisability was met through this process, data saturation needed to be reached.

Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study or when coding is no longer feasible (Ness, 2015). In the stakeholder consultations, all participants were asked the same questions and given the same five samples of informal mindfulness definitions (Ness, 2015). This method allowed for accuracy and consistency in the analysis of content. Data saturation emerged when no new themes or data were being established in the interviews (Ness, 2015). Data saturation occured in the scoping literature review when no further original definitions of informal mindfulness were found. To ensure there is enough information for the study to be replicated, the method and methodology of the study is transparent and well documented in suffient detail.

2.5 Reflexivity

It is important to be aware of reflexivity when conducting qualitative research. Reflexivity allows the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences, perspective, and position as the researcher shapes the very process of their research (Malterud, 2001). My interest in mindfulness, therefore, needs to be acknowledged.

My experience with mindfulness expands over 15 years when I first started practicing yoga. The mindfulness-based practice that coincided with yoga was in the form of short breathing exercises. It is a practice that I have continued to practice both during and outside of yoga practice. I later learned more about mindfulness techniques involved in third wave therapies during my post-graduate study. I was naturally intrigued by the different mindfulness practices and the associated benefits that I started to integrate them

into my own life. I found the practices incredibly beneficial in cultivating a broader understanding of myself, the environment, and people around me. I tend to be intrinsically reflective, so I found it complimented my personality and values. I am aware of the influence this positive experience has had on my opinion of mindfulness. Because of this, I cannot be completely objective in this research.

During the stakeholder interviews, I felt we shared a common interest and appreciation of mindfulness. I felt this enabled me to build rapport quickly and, therefore, affected how comfortable and at ease the participants felt. When reflecting on the impact this may have had on the study; I can acknowledge how my rapport with the participants contributed to a more comfortable and free-flowing discussion. This allowed for a deeper and more reflective analysis of informal mindfulness. Without it, they may not have been as receptive and forthcoming with their opinions and experiences with informal mindfulness. This may contribute to a much richer understanding of informal mindfulness and what it entails. Reflexivity is thought to cause bias within research, however, as Malterud (2001) stated, "preconceptions are not the same as bias unless the researcher fails to mention them" (p.484). As I cannot take a purely objective stance due to the preconceptions I hold about mindfulness, through reflecting on them I have found my awareness as a researcher has only increased. As a result, it has allowed me to take a more comprehensive and thorough approach which in turn allowed for greater insight.

2.6 Ethical considerations

The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee granted an ethics amendment on the 04/07/2019 (Appendix D & E). The fundamental ethical considerations for the participants that are taking part in this research are informed and voluntary consent, as well as privacy and confidentiality. Informed and voluntary consent was addressed through the use of a participant information sheet (Appendix A). The information sheet expanded on the purpose and process of this research, the risks and benefits of taking part as well as highlighting participants protection of privacy. The contact details of the researcher and supervisor were also provided if the participants had any concerns. The participants were provided a consent form to ensure they had read through and understood the information (Appendix B). It also clarified that participation in the study was completely voluntary and the participants could withdraw at any time. It was explained that if participants did decide

to withdraw, removal of their data may not be possible after the findings of the study had been produced.

Privacy and confidentiality of the participants were of the greatest importance. Due to the process of the data collection, the participants could not preserve anonymity. However, no names were spoken during recording the interview to allow for the identities of the participants to remain anonymous. The participants were given pseudonyms that were referred to in the findings of the study. Audio voice recordings of the interviews were stored on the participants personal password-protected mobile phone and promptly deleted once they had been successfully transcribed.

Participants in this study were MBI teachers. Because of the nature of the study, they were not considered to be a vulnerable population. If at all necessary, the Information Sheet also included the contact details of free and confidential counselling services available through AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing Centre if the participant felt that it was necessary. All of the participants were happy to answer all questions throughout the interview, with no need for counselling services.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS

This chapter conveys the findings that were established through content analysis of both Phase One – the scoping literature and Phase Two – the stakeholder consultation.

PHASE ONE

3.1 Scoping literature review

The literature search identified 35 studies on mindfulness that included detailed definitions of informal mindfulness. Nine of those studies referred to informal mindfulness practice as an integration of formally taught mindfulness practice that was applied to daily life. Seven studies explained intention was a crucial factor in the practise of mindfulness in daily life. An additional 15 studies went on to suggest that informal mindfulness is practised while taking part in daily tasks or activities. Two studies stated that informal mindfulness involves continuity of mindfulness throughout the day, thus proposing that it is more of a state of mind maintained throughout the day, rather than a set practice. The last two studies stated that informal mindfulness involves attending to the breath and bodily sensations throughout the day.

3.1.1 Exposure of a formal practice

This category illustrates similar definitions of informal mindfulness practice that refer to an understanding of prior knowledge of mindfulness. This group of definitions refer to formally taught mindfulness practices that are integrated into daily life and practised informally. The studies state that an understanding of formal mindfulness practice supports the practise of mindfulness in day-to-day life.

Hindman et al., (2015) defined informal mindfulness practice as “bringing mindfulness principles into day-to-day activities” (p. 874). Hindman et al., (2015) did a study on the comparable stress levels of students. The students took part in either a programme that used both formal and informal practices (MSM) or one that used brief mindful exercises and an informal practice (MSM-I). Both programmes were taught using didactic psychoeducational content. The only difference between the two programmes was that MSM also used formal meditations to teach the cultivation of mindfulness. They found that the MSM programme was the most effective in decreasing stress in students. Hindman et al., (2015) state the success of the MSM programme is that the formal practice is

essential for guiding and cultivating an informal practice. They explain informal mindfulness practice can be taught through didactic education, but the practise is fostered and refined through formal meditation. The students that took part in the study would agree as 12 out of 13 students confirmed the importance of a formal practice for practising informal mindfulness (Hindman et al., 2015).

Meiklejohn et al., (2012) define informal mindfulness practice as "the weaving of mindful awareness into activities of everyday life" (p. 292). They suggest that formal mindfulness practice involves the "attending to thoughts, body sensations, feelings, and sensory experiences as they arise moment to moment, with acceptance and without getting caught up or identified with thoughts about the experience." (p. 292). They go on to explain that these principles are interwoven into informal practice in everyday life. The informal activities can include walking, eating, hygiene routines or interpersonal interactions. According to Meiklejohn et al., (2012) the definition of formal and informal mindfulness does not change, only the context of which it is applied changes.

This is similar to a description of informal mindfulness practice by Birtwell et al., (2018). Birtwell et al., (2018) believe informal mindfulness practice involves "weaving skills from a formal practice into existing routines that take place in every day life", (p. 90). Unfortunately, they do not state what the specific components of a formal or informal mindfulness practice involve. However, they do provide examples of activities when an informal practice may be cultivated. The activities include washing dishes, driving, walking, or watching nature. Most of the activities are similar to those mentioned in the previous study by Meiklejohn et al., (2012).

Research by Cebolla et al., (2017) explored various mindfulness facets and meditation practices. They defined informal mindfulness practice as "the integration of mindfulness skills into everyday life." (p. 173). According to their study, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) can be divided into three categories: focused attention meditation (FA), open-monitoring meditation (OM), and compassion meditation (CM) (Cebolla et al., 2017). FA involves narrowing the attention onto one single anchor such as awareness of the breath or attending to a candle flame. Whenever the mind wanders the attention is always brought back to the single item as a way to cultivate one-pointed concentration. OM, on the other hand, involves expanding the attentional scope and remaining attentive to emotions, thoughts and emotional content that may arise (Cebolla et al., 2017). In OM no sole focus or judgment is directed to one object as the awareness is

fluid and curious. According to Cebolla et al., (2017) informal mindfulness practice is a combination of both narrowing the attention on to one event while remaining attentive to emotions and thoughts that may arise. They give the example of washing the dishes where the attention is narrowed into certain aspects such as the sensation of your hands in the water or the hardness of the dish on the fingertips. Yet, instead of attending to a single object the entire time, the awareness is fluid and expands to other aspects also being experienced such as what one can see, smell and hear. Informal mindfulness practice is an interplay of cultivating one-pointed concentration and expanding the awareness scope to what is taking place moment to moment (Cebolla et al., 2017).

Birrer et al., (2012) define informal mindfulness practice as "consciously carrying over mindfulness principles or elements into everyday life" (p. 239). They state that formal practice makes use of three core components: intention, attention, and attitude. Unfortunately, they do not specifically describe the factors involved in informal mindfulness practice. It can only be assumed that informal practice may also include these three core components since the principles of mindfulness are carried over into everyday life. The definitions provided by Crane et al., (2014); Wong, Hassed , Chambers, & Coles, (2016); Riberiro, Atchley, & Oken, (2018), Burnett-Zeigler et al., (2016); and Zeller and Lamb, (2010) similarly suggest informal mindfulness practice consists of an integration of formal mindfulness practices into daily activities (refer to Table 2 below). While these articles provided clear definitions, they unfortunately also did not provide further comprehensive information on the mechanisms involved in informal mindfulness practice.

Table 2

Categorisation of definitions that emerged after content analysis of 36 studies. The definitions in bold are the five sample definitions selected for the stakeholder consultation. The selected five were seen to be the most comprehensive in each of their category

Themes	**Definitions of an informal mindfulness practice**

- Exposure of a formal practice	- "consciously carrying over mindfulness principles or elements into everyday life can be seen as informal mindfulness" (Birrer at al., 2012, p. 239) - "Informal mindfulness practice involves weaving mindfulness into existing routines through engaging in mindful moments and bringing awareness to everyday activities." (Birtwell et al., 2019, p. 90) - "Informal practices included integrating mindfulness into daily life" (Burnett et al., 2016, p. 61) - **"the integration of mindfulness skills into everyday life." (Cebolla et al., 2017, p. 173) (Sample definition four)** - "[in MBCT] individuals generalise mindfulness to daily life activities" (Crane et al., 2014, p. 23) - "informal mindfulness practice involves bringing mindfulness principles into day-to-day activities" (Hindman et al., 2014, p. 874) - "Informal mindfulness practice refers to the weaving of mindful awareness into activities of everyday life" (Meiklejohn et al., 2012, p. 292) - "Application [of mindfulness] in daily living activities." (Ping Wong et al., 2017, p. 3) - "informal mindfulness practice can be woven into daily life at any time." (Zeller et al., 2011, p. 117)

- Intentionality	- "Informal practices are short exercises that create present moment awareness and often involve sensory orientating" (Brody at al., 2018, p. 513) - **"Informal practices (intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations)" (Enkema et al., 2017, p. 3) (Sample definition five)** - "Mindfulness is the practice of constantly making an effort during one's daily activities to come back to, and be fully aware of, the present moment. This is what is termed informal mindfulness" (Khisty., 2010, p. 116) - "'informal' practices included intentionally attending to experience while performing daily activities or while in high risk or triggering situations" (Manuel et al., 2017, p. 363) - "'turning on' a mindful state in the midst of daily activities" (Mitchell at al., 2014, p. 173) - "informal practices refer to intentionally applying mindful awareness to daily activities." (Morgan et al., 2014, p. 174) - "awareness that arises from purposefully and nonjudgmentally paying attention to the present moment" (Shorey et al., 2019, p.2)

- Everyday activities	- "performing an everyday activity mindfully" (Bonfolfi et al., 2010, p. 227) - "mindfulness during daily activities" (Bowen et al., 2012, p. 273) - **"informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present." (Carmody et al., 2007, p. 24) (Sample definition two)** - "mindful of daily activities (i.e., Informal mindfulness)" (Dobkin et al., 2011, p. 32) - "mindfulness of daily experiences" (Dunn et al., 2013, p. 312) - "practicing while engaging in life's activities" (Eustis et al., 2016, p. 179) - "informal mindfulness practices (i.e., mindfulness of routine activities)" (Felder at al., 2016, p. 29) - "informal mindfulness practices (e,g., mindfulness of everyday activities)" (Hanley et al., 2015, p. 1095) - "informal mindfulness involves applying mindfulness to daily living" (Hayes et al., 2011, p. 273) - "During informal practices, individuals bring mindful awareness to routine activities throughout the day that occur throughout the day" (Hawley et al., 2014, p. 2) - "bringing mindfulness awareness to everyday activities" (Kladnitski et al., 2018, p. 42) - "informal practices require people to "bring mindful awareness to daily activities" (Lu et al., 2019, p.45)

	- "Mindfulness can be cultivated as one engages in everyday activities, which has been termed informal practice." (McClintock et al., 2019, p.1) - "informal mindfulness (becoming mindful in everyday activities)" (Rebeiro et al., 2018, p. 402) - "Informal mindfulness meditation practice involves moment-to-moment awareness in the course of daily activities, enabling one to respond versus to react to life events" (Reibel et al., 2001, p.190)
- Continuity	- "Being fully present and mindfully aware of daily experiences that mediate a sense of calm and a more focused mind." (Chen et al., 2017, p.2) - **[informal mindfulness] is an "everyday mindfulness where you remain open, accepting, and present focus of attention during day-to-day life." (Thompson et al., 2007, p. 1876) (Sample definition three)**
- Awareness of breath	- "Attention on breath along with an open and curious attitude without self-judgement to urges as they arise." (Singh et al., 2019, p. 2) - **"informal practice (e.g. notice the breath and bodily sensations at some point during the day)" (Stjernsward et al., 2018, p.47) (Sample definition one)**

3.1.2 Intentionality

This category provides a range of definitions of informal mindfulness practice that specifically refer to intentionality. The studies similarly state that intention is an essential element to practising mindfulness informally.

Manuel, Somohano, and Bowen, (2017) state that an activity can only become mindful when intentional awareness is practised. They define informal mindfulness practice as "intentionally attending to experience while performing daily activities or while in high risk or triggering situations" (p. 363). Manuel et al., (2017) go on to explain the facets of mindfulness include acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reacting. Interestingly, this research was one of the few to suggest informal mindfulness to be practised while in triggering situations. Unfortunately, they do not go into more detail on the components involved in managing challenging situations, and how that would differ to an informal practice while engaged in routine tasks.

A study by Enkema and Bowen, (2017) similarly defines informal mindfulness as a practise that can be applied during challenging situations. Their definition of informal mindfulness practice is "intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations" (p. 3). Enkema and Bowen, (2017) did a study on the treatment of substance use disorders using mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP). MBRP integrates mindfulness and cognitive behavioural approaches to lessen the craving sensations that are experienced which contribute to relapse rates. The informal mindfulness practice that is used during challenging moments is called urge surfing. Urge surfing involves using intentional 'penetrative seeing' through the combination of awareness and calming concentration (Enkema & Bowen, 2017). It is through penetrative seeing that the transient nature of our feelings, thoughts, and emotions are observed. Individuals are taught to ride out the temporary urges that may result in relapse. This is a similar practise of informal mindfulness that is used in the study by Singh et al., (2018) which is further described in section 3.1.5.

A study by Khisty, (2010) defined informal mindfulness practice as "the practice of constantly making an effort during one's daily activities to come back to, and be fully aware of, the present moment" (p. 116). Similarly, to Enkema and Bowen, (2017), they explain two fundamental qualities are necessary to cultivate both a formal and informal practice; a calming concentration and insight or penetrative seeing. Khisty, (2010)

elaborates on these terms and explains that the mind tends to jump from one thought to the next, always evaluating or anticipating current or future events. A calming concentration is achieved through fixing the attention on one thing. This is generally done by using an "anchor" which is commonly the breath. The attention is solely focused on the sensation of the breath which dissipates the turmoil of the mind while deepening concentration (Khisty, 2010). Anchors can also include other sensory elements such as visual, auditory, textiles, and taste. Khisty, (2010) explain that calming concentration is not dissimilar to intentional awareness where the attention is purposely directed to the present moment. Intentionality is a fundamental feature of informal mindfulness practice and it is applied during daily routine activities.

Brody, Scherer, Turner, Annett, and Dalen, (2018) explored how informal mindfulness practice may be integrated into therapy to enhance emotion regulation. They defined informal mindfulness practice as "short exercises that create present moment awareness and often involve sensory orientating" (p. 513). Some of the informal mindfulness exercises they refer to is the "S.T.O.P" practice used in MBSR. Patients were provided a mnemonic where each letter represents a step for purposely initiating a mindful state in daily life.

S= Stop

T= Take a breath

O= Observe the present moment

P= Proceed

In comparison, a study by Mitchell, Zylowska, and Kollins, (2015) similarly used the S.T.O.P exercise as an informal mindfulness practice to assist individuals with ADHD in becoming more aware of their inner states. Mitchell et al., (2015) define informal mindfulness practice as "'turning on' a mindful state in the midst of daily activities" (p. 173). They found informal mindfulness practice beneficial for individuals with ADHD as it provided them more opportunities to understand and engage in practise. Brody et al., (2018) state that when informal mindfulness is practised regularly people often become more aware of internal processes. They explain the increase in intentional awareness contributes to more skillful responding, enhancing their emotion regulation.

The definition provided from a study by Shorey, Ang, & Chee, (2019) on informal mindfulness is one Kabat-Zinn used interchangeably with formal mindfulness, "awareness that arises from purposefully and nonjudgmentally paying attention to the present moment"

(p. 2). Unfortunately, it is not clear how these characteristics are applied to informal mindfulness practice. Only that there is a sense of purposefulness or intention when practising informally. A similar perspective is shared by Morgan et al., (2013) who define informal mindfulness practice as "intentionally applying mindful awareness to daily activities." (p. 174). They also state that intention is a fundamental element to informal mindfulness practice but fails to expand further on how mindful awareness is purposefully illicited. All of the studies in this category include the elment of intentionality in their definitions of informal mindfulness practice.

3.1.3 Everyday activities

This category provides definitions of informal mindfulness practice that similarly state an involvement in daily activities. This group of definitions specifically mention that informal mindfulness is practised during routine activities that take place in day-to-day life. The studies state these activities can include tasks such as washing dishes or during conversations.

Carmody and Baer, (2008) conducted a study on the effectiveness of a home based practise of mindfulness on wellbeing. They explained that informal mindfulness involves "doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present"(p. 24) (Carmody & Baer, 2008). This definition is one of the few that describe the mechanisms that facilitate the practise of informal mindfulness. The authors expressed the importance of informal mindfulness practice as it establishes the capacity for mindfulness in everyday life. Research by Bowen and Kurz, (2012) similarly discuss the awareness of sensations, emotions, and thoughts while practising informal mindfulness during routine activities. They define informal mindfulness practice as "mindfulness during daily activities" (p. 237). Bowen and Kurz, (2012) went on to explain that often routine tasks are done mindlessly. When attention was brought to these activities it increases overall awareness of internal and external triggers as well as habitual reactions (Bowen & Kurz, 2012).

Research by Dunn and Callahan, (2013) explored the use of informal mindfulness in psychotherapy by clients and the therapist. They simply define informal mindfulness practice as "mindfulness of daily experiences" (Dunn & Callahan, 2013, p. 312)**.** They go on the describe the practise of informal mindfulness as the observation and acceptance of emotional experiences. Informal mindfulness can be practised by bringing awareness to

their internal experiences such as feelings, thoughts, and sensations at different points during the session. In doing so, clients can begin to identify when they are engaging in avoidance or defensive mechanisms and learn to become less reactive when faced with challenging emotions. This is similar a definition of informal mindfulness practice from a study by Reibel et al., (2001) that state "Informal mindfulness meditation practice involves moment-to-moment awareness in the course of daily activities, enabling one to respond versus to react to life events" (p. 190). Dunn and Callahan, (2013) state that informal mindfulness can also be practised by therapists during a session. The research explains therapists were found to be more present, attentive, and responsive to clients through attending to their feelings, thoughts, and sensations. This research is somewhat different from the previous studies as informal mindfulness is not necessarily being practised during routine activities as it has a clinical component. Informal mindfulness practice, therefore, utilises similar components as other research but uses it in a different context.

A study by Hanley, Warner, Dehili, Canto, and Garland, 2015 gives a basic definition of informal mindfulness as "mindfulness in daily life" (p. 1095). The study explored whether the classic example of informal mindfulness practice (i.e., washing the dishes, first created by Kabat-Zinn) can promote a state of mindfulness. Hanley et al., (2015) argue that there are a variety of activities used to cultivate mindfulness that often differs due to opposing schools of thought. The exercise of washing the dishes is often used in fields such as MBSR, whereas, other fields such as ABBT may use the exercise of mindful conversations. Hanley et al., (2015) explain that although informal mindfulness practices are integral to mindfulness-based interventions (MBI), they often lack experiential investigation. The research did find the practise of mindfully washing the dishes to increase state mindfulness (being in a mindful state) while decreasing negative affect.

Research by Lu et al., (2019) define informal mindfulness practice as a process that "brings mindful awareness to daily activities" (p. 45). This definition is similar to those of Eustis et al., (2017); Bondolfi et al., (2010); Dobkin and Zhao, (2011); and Felder et al., (2017) that simply define informal mindfulness as performing a daily activity mindfully. In the study by Lu et al., (2019) they explored the relationship between informal mindfulness practices and an increase in trait mindfulness. Trait mindfulness is believed to be a personal characteristic that features receptive attention and awareness of present moment experiences. In this study, trait mindfulness is believed to be cultivated through the practise of informal mindfulness. The authors go on the state that informal mindfulness is practised

through weaving mindfulness into everyday activities such as eating, working and talking. Similarly to the descriptions provided by Bowen and Kurz, (2012) and Carmody and Baer, (2008), the participants are taught to non-judgementally become aware of their stress-related responses such as emotions, thoughts, and sensations in a non-reactive way during routine tasks.

A review of the articles by Hayes-Skelton et al., (2013); Cebolla et al., (2017); Kladnitski et al., (2018); Bonfolfi et al., (2010); McClintock, et al., (2019); and Hawley et al., (2014) identified informal mindfulness practice is similarly defined as applying mindfulness to daily living (Table 2). Unfortunately, however, none of these articles go into detail about the components or facets involved when practising informal mindfulness.

3.1.4 Continuity

This category provides definitions that convey there is an element of continuity to an informal mindfulness practice. The definitions all similarly mention that informal mindfulness practice is a state that persists throughout the day.

Chen, Scott, and Benckendorff, (2017) defined informal mindfulness practice as "being fully present and mindfully aware of daily experiences that mediate a sense of calm and a more focused mind." (p. 2). The authors explored meditative mindful tourist experiences. It is the first paper to examine mindfulness being used in a tourist context. It can be practised in ways such as stopping to smell a flower, feel the breeze, or listening to the sounds around you. Chen et al., (2017) explain that traveling could be an ideal time to practise informal mindfulness as it provides an optimal context for contemplative practises. They explain that informal mindfulness practice creates a sensory perception associated with a relaxed sense of attachment. This offers a contrast to a perception based in past or future-orientated thought processes that contribute to a perceived sense of stress. This is similar to a study by Thompson and Waltz, (2007) who define an informal mindfulness practice as "everyday mindfulness where you remain open, accepting, and have a present focus of attention during day-to-day life." (p. 1876). They state that it is an orientation to the present moment with no distraction to thoughts of the past or future while maintaining a non-judgemental attitude. Chen et al., (2017) also explain that informal mindfulness involves a sense of being aware of your awareness. These components contribute to a state of ease which may be why exploring museums and other touristic sights create satisfying and harmonic states.

3.1.5 Awareness of breath

This category comprises of definitions that describe informal mindfulness as a practise that primarily involves attending to the breath. The definitions similarly mention the breath as a fundamental element in the cultivation of mindfulness in an informal setting. The studies state how the attention is directed to the breath at some point during the day.

Informal mindfulness practice is also emerging as appropriate self-management interventions for aggressive behaviour and substance abuse disorders (Singh et al., 2018). A study by Singh et al., (2018) focuses on interventions with substance abuse disorders. Practises such as informal mindfulness is used to increase awareness of the physical sensations in the body felt as urges. Singh et al., (2018) define informal mindfulness practice as "attention on breath along with an open and curious attitude without self-judgment to urges as they arise." (p. 2). The individuals learn that if they observe each urge without engaging with them, they rise, fall and slowly dissolve (Singh et al., 2018). Urge surfing has also been used for behaviour change by enhancing self-mastery with individuals with Autism and ADHD (Singh et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2015). It teaches increased awareness of rising anger and refocuses attention on a neutral area such as the breath. Urge surfing originates from the Buddhist notion of impermanence where all phenomena of the conditioned existence are believed to arise, abide and disband (Singh et al., 2018). This is a similar definition to Enkema and Bowen, (2017) and Manuel et al., (2017) that describe the practice of informal mindfulness as being utilised during challenging moments.

A study by Stjernsward and Hansson, (2018) define informal mindfulness practice as to "notice the breath and bodily sensations at some point during the day" (p. 47). Stjernsward and Hansson, (2018) explored the effectiveness of a web-based mindfulness programme for caregivers of people with a mental or somatic illness. The study showed that web-based mindfulness contributed to decreased levels of perceived stress and feelings of burden on the caregiver. The web-based program included both formal and informal mindfulness practices. An informal mindfulness practice involved the caregivers checking in with their breath, sounds, and scents regularly while they went about their day. This definition does not clarify whether informal mindfulness was to be practised while doing specific activities or focusing solely on the mechanisms involved in mindfulness.

This review has provided an overview of a range of definitions for informal mindfulness practice. Some definitions emphasise the significance of intentionality and

breath. There are definitions that state an informal mindfulness practice takes place during specific routine activities. Other definitions explain that informal mindfulness can be cultivated during day-to-day life. While certain descriptions state it is necessary to understand a formal mindfulness practice as it informs and contributes to informal practice.

PHASE TWO

3.2 Stakeholder consultation

This chapter presents the themes that were identified from the stakeholder consultations using content analysis. A summary of the categories found for each definition is displayed below in Table 3 and will be discussed in detail.

3.2.1 Definition One:

"informal practice (e.g. notice the breath and bodily sensations at some point during the day)" (Stjernsward et al., 2018, p.47)

The stakeholders considered definition one and reflected on its limitations as a definition of informal mindfulness practice. They expressed how it was not a comprehensive definition as it only mentioned the process of noticing the breath and bodily sensations. They explained that there are a lot more elements to the practise of informal mindfulness. Some stakeholders suggested the addition of attending to thoughts and emotions could make it more comprehensive. Another stakeholder mentioned that she occasionally does not include the element of noticing the breath while teaching informal mindfulness. She explained that focusing on the breath can be triggering for some people. As an alternative, she makes use of other senses to use as an anchor. The stakeholders also discussed how it was interesting that this specific definition did not mention the inclusion of applying informal mindfulness to routine activities as other definitions often do. On further contemplation, the stakeholders felt that it wasn't an overly important feature to include in a definition as we are often engaged in some kind of activity during the day so it, therefore, is implied.

3.2.1.1 Not comprehensive enough

Three out of the four stakeholders expressed that definition one was not comprehensive enough. They explained that an informal mindfulness practice includes many more components than attending to the breath and body sensations. One stakeholder stated that noticing the breath and body were only a very small part of informal mindfulness practice.

Another stakeholder expressed that by including other factors such as thoughts and emotions, may make it more comprehensive. Dahlia, another of the stakeholders, described how focusing on the breath can be triggering for some people, especially those with anxiety. She explained that she occasionally suggests for people to attend to other anchors such as the senses if it is more conducive to practising mindfulness.

> *Nathan: This one is not a comprehensive definition. It may be more comprehensive if emotions and thoughts were mentioned.*
> *Eden: To only notice the breath and bodily sensations is so limited. It doesn't begin to describe what people are going to notice when they practising.*
> *Dahlia: A lot of people now have increased levels of anxiety and actually really struggle with breath focus so I teach them a few different anchor points. It doesn't necessarily need to be the breath.*

3.2.1.2 No need to explicitly state that it is practiced during routine activities

The stakeholders discussed that definition one spoke of practising mindfulness at some point throughout the day where often other definitions specifically mention it is to be practiced during routine activities. The stakeholders initially felt this was strange but considered that we are always engaged in some activity during the day. They both mentioned it does not specifically need to be referenced as it is implied.

> *Nathan: What wouldn't be an activity throughout the day?*
> *Amanda: I suppose most of the time most of us are doing something.*

3.2.2 Definition Two:

"informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present." (Carmody et al., 2007, p. 24)

The stakeholders expressed that definition two was overall a very good one. They mentioned how it fits well with their understanding and teaching of informal mindfulness. They felt it was comprehensive as it included an awareness of movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings while engaged in everyday activities. However, they did feel that it

also needed to include an awareness of the senses as well as intentionality. There were also issues with the word "*doing*". Most of the stakeholders felt that the practise of *doing* an activity mindfully was not accurate. Instead, most agreed that the practice of mindfulness involved *being* in a mindful state while engaged in an activity. One stakeholder felt that attending to thoughts and feelings was an advanced practise of informal mindfulness. She went on to explain there are layers to an informal practice starting with attending to sensations and senses and then working your way up to thoughts and emotions as you advance your practice. Stakeholders also felt that attending with full awareness was not possible for most people that practice mindfulness informally. They went on the explain that informal mindfulness is not intended to be a practice that is all-encompassing.

3.2.2.1 Replace "doing" with "being" or "bringing"

When stakeholders first considered definition two, most of them were immediately drawn to the word "doing". They felt that it was an inaccurate description of mindfulness as it is more of a state of being. One stakeholder spoke of the word "doing" to be a loaded term. She expressed that often people are often in "doing mode" which is an external mode of living as they are constantly thinking about all of the things they need to do or complete. Whereas, mindfulness assists in tuning in to the "being mode" where the internal awareness is increased through bringing the attention back to your body and senses.

> *Nathan: Replace "doing" with "bringing awareness"*
> *Amanda: I don't like the second one much because it says "doing", mindfulness is more about "being". We are "being" mindful while we are doing the activity.*
> *Eden: I have an issue with the word "doing". Using the word doing is very loaded. Mindfulness is "bringing" attention with intention to everyday activities, it changes its tone. A lot of power getting people out of "doing" mode and back into "being" mode – back into the body and your senses.*

3.2.2.2 It's a good definition

Out of all of the definitions, most of the stakeholders liked this one the most. They found it the most comprehensive as it was descriptive and explained the elements involved in the practise of informal mindfulness. This includes the awareness of movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present. They also felt it was the most in line with their understanding and teaching of an informal mindfulness practice.

Nathan: Out of the 5 definitions it is the nearest to being the most comprehensive. It's a good definition overall
Eden: The second one is my favourite. That is the one that I thought was the most fitting with my understanding of informal mindfulness.
Amanda: I like this one.

3.2.2.3 Needs to include senses

The stakeholders were quite happy with definition two but felt that it needed to include senses to the description. They felt that sensory perception is a fundamental aspect to informal mindfulness practice. One stakeholder explained that without tuning into your senses you would not be experiencing informal mindfulness completely. Another stakeholder felt that the awareness of sounds was specifically missing.

Amanda: It includes everything but "sounds" is missing. I think activating people to the awareness of their senses is very much under the umbrella of informal mindfulness
Eden: What about senses? sensory perception is so important, particularly for informal mindfulness. If they are not using their senses they are not getting the full connection to informal mindfulness

3.2.2.4 Needs to include intention

The stakeholders felt that another fundamental addition to definition two was intentionality. Stakeholders felt intention is an important aspect of informal mindfulness. They expressed definition two was suitable but needed to include intention for it to be completely accurate. One stakeholder explained that the attention that is applied while practising informal mindfulness is intentional as you are intentionally drawing your attention back to the present moment. She also explained that she uses intention, quality, and attitude interchangeably as she considers them all the same thing.

Amanda: It would be good if "intention" was added.
Dalia: I've almost expanded on this one and said full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present with an open, friendly, and curious attitude. Brings more of the flavour of the attention you are

paying rather than bare attention. I use intention, quality, and attitude interchangeably

3.2.2.5 Goes beyond a basic informal mindfulness practice

Some stakeholders felt that definition two explained elements that went beyond an informal mindfulness practice. One stakeholder mentioned that it was unattainable to attend to an activity with full awareness. She explained that it was highly aspirational especially for those new to an informal mindfulness practice. She went on to explain that expecting to apply your full attention may make some people feel as though the practise of mindfulness is unattainable. Another stakeholder spoke about informal mindfulness practice being experienced in layers. The first and most basic layer would be to attend to senses and body sensations. The next layer would be to go deeper and to attend to thoughts and emotions. She explained this was a more advanced stage of mindfulness practice and usually only practiced by the more experienced.

Dalia: The checking in with thoughts and feelings. I don't know if that's more of a second layer or not. There's this physical dropping into sounds, bodily sensations, what we can see. The next layer to me would be how am I feeling, what is the internal weather pattern right now. Which I encourage people to do in an informal practice but not all the time, that would be more advanced.

Eden: "with full awareness" the wording is really aspirational. It's asking a lot. Informal mindfulness is really accessible but if you are saying they are going to bring "full awareness" you are putting a lot of expectations on them. Needs to be held more lightly.

3.2.3 Definition Three:

[informal mindfulness] is "everyday mindfulness where you remain open, accepting, and present focus of attention during day-to-day life." (Thompson et al., 2007, p. 1876)

The stakeholders felt that definition three was not a very good one. They expressed that it was very limited as it does not explain the process of informal mindfulness practice. They also felt that the language used in definition three implied that mindfulness is a constant state. The stakeholders expressed that it was unrealistic as not many people can remain mindful all the time. One stakeholder felt that it was also unattainable for enlightened beings such as the Dalai Lama. The stakeholders explained that informal mindfulness is

only practiced in small moments throughout the day. The stakeholders did like how definition three included the type of attitude that is practised during informal mindfulness. However, they did feel that it should also include qualities such as non-judgmental, kind, curious, and accepting.

3.2.3.1 All-encompassing

The stakeholders felt definition three implied that informal mindfulness is a state that is maintained throughout the day. They believed this was inaccurate as it is not something you do all the time but one that you practise in moments throughout the day. They also felt it would be intimidating for some people as remaining mindfulness throughout the day is an unrealistic goal. One stakeholder expressed that definition three may describe a mindfulness practice for an enlightened being. She went on to explain that even enlightened being such as the Dalai Lama would most likely also find difficulty in being mindful all the time.

> *Dalia: I do struggle with this definition as it's the fact that we should do it all day. This is where you get into the state mindfulness.*
> *Dalia: It insinuates that you would be doing it all the time but its moments, it's moments in the day.*
> *Eden: This is too much, especially when people are starting out. Applying mindfulness to your whole life is too much to ask. It's a goal of an enlightened being, that's intimidating for people. Its unattainable to people to bring a mindful attitude to their everyday life. It's all-encompassing*
> *Eden: Who can remain mindful all the time?! I don't think the Dalai Lama can do that.*
> *Eden: It's at one point too big – saying "remain" mindful your whole life. And then it's also not saying enough because it's only saying open, accepting, and present.*
> *Amanda: I don't know anyone who could manage that 24/7.*

3.2.3.2 The attitude of informal mindfulness

The stakeholders did approve of how definition three spoke about the attitude of informal mindfulness. They felt it accurately described the attitude that you bring to an informal mindfulness practice. One stakeholder explained how the other definitions described the practical elements of an informal mindfulness practice such as attending to sensations.

However, definition three accurately explained the type of attention that is applied while acknowledging components such as sensations. He further expressed that often this part of the definition is left out but it is a valuable addition that should be included.

> *Dalia: Opening, accepting, and present is talking to the qualities or attitudes of which you are bringing to informal mindfulness practice – I find that's an important part of the definition*
> *Nathan: Remaining open accepting and present, that can be valuable components of mindfulness practice also when practicing informally. They are good components in this definition. Previous definitions talk about what we notice not how we notice, whereas, this definition is how we notice. It talks about the attitude rather than the attention. That is a valuable addition in some way. The attitude in which we are doing it.*
> *Nathan: When we say "mindfulness" when we practise mindfulness the attitude should be inherent but I think we need to put it in words. We need to include what we pay attention to and how or the manner in which we do it.*

3.2.33 Additions to the definition

The stakeholders were happy with the mention of attitude in definition three as they felt it is a valuable addition. However, they also felt it needed to be expanded on. One stakeholder felt it needed to include curiosity, friendliness, and acceptance, whereas, another felt the addition of non-judgment and kindness were important attitudes that should be included. Eden felt definition three also needed the inclusion of where you should be applying that attention to.

> *Dalia: I'd add – curiosity, friendliness, and acceptance.*
> *Nathan: Non-judgemental, kind would be other kinds of attitude.*
> *Eden: You're missing out a huge number of things because, yes, you're open, accepting and present but where is your awareness of your senses, thoughts, or movements.*

3.2.3.4 Not a good definition

Overall, most of the stakeholders felt definition three did not accurately capture the essential elements of an informal mindfulness practice. They felt it was limited and not a definition that they would use.

> *Eden: it's very limited this one. It's not how I understand informal mindfulness. I understand it as making a choice to do informal mindfulness practice and then bringing your attention to being present, noticing, not judging.*
> *Nathan: It doesn't feel right to me.*
> *Amanda: That resonates with me less.*

3.2.4 Definition Four:
"the integration of mindfulness skills into everyday life." (Cebolla et al., 2017, p. 173)

The stakeholders considered definition four to be vague in its description of informal mindfulness practice. It does not describe the components involved in an informal practice. They explained that the use of the word "mindfulness" to describe a mindfulness practice contributed to its ambiguity. They did suggest it implies that an understanding and involvement in formal mindfulness practice is necessary to practising mindfulness informally. This is because the techniques learned through formal practice are thought to inform an informal practice. Stakeholders expressed that this definition inaccurately refer to informal mindfulness as a skill. They explain that mindfulness is our natural state and that mindfulness practice is assisting in the cultivation of that natural state.

3.2.4.1 Inaccurate use of the word skill

The stakeholders felt that the use of the word "skill" was inaccurate. They expressed that mindfulness is completely different to a skill as it is more a natural state. Mindfulness is a practise that allows us to reconnect with our natural state. Another stakeholder felt similar and described mindfulness as way of being.

> *Amanda: We run a risk when we call it a skill. It's completely different to a skill. Mindfulness is our natural state so mindfulness is helping us to reconnect with our natural state and getting to know ourselves more clearly and whatever happens to us happens in the mind.*

Nathan: I have a bit of an issue with "mindfulness skills" because mindfulness isn't exactly a skill or a technique it is a way of being.
Nathan: When you look at a definition that is meant to serve the people who teach mindfulness I don't find that definition useful to use "skills". I think it is inaccurate.

3.2.4.2 Vague definition

The stakeholders felt definition four was very general and vague as it does not elaborate on what the mechanisms of an informal mindfulness practice are. Nathan felt it was perplexing as the definition attempts to describe a mindfulness practice by using the term mindfulness.

Dalia: This one is very vague.
Nathan: Very general it doesn't say what mindfulness skills are or how you bring it into daily life.
Nathan: It isn't very clear as it is describing mindfulness by using the term mindfulness.

3.2.4.3 Integration of a formally taught practice into daily life

Two of the stakeholders felt definition four implied that, before practising mindfulness informally, there needs to be involvement and understanding of a formal practice. According to the stakeholders, formal mindfulness principles are integrated into an informal setting.

Dalia: This one is about applying a formal practice. A formal practice helps us really know what we are doing. It primes us to know what we are doing in our little practice.
Nathan: I think you need to understand what mindfulness is through a formal practice.

3.2.5 Definition Five:

"Informal practices (intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations)" (Enkema et al., 2017, p. 3)

All of the stakeholders expressed that definition five accurately described the intentionality that is involved in informal mindfulness practice. They expressed that intention was an element that was missing from all of the other four definitions. Half of the stakeholders felt that definition five was inaccurate in its inclusion of challenging moments. The stakeholders expressed that the management of challenging moments was beyond informal mindfulness practice. The stakeholders expressed that challenging moments were situations that were better managed through formal mindfulness practice. In contrast, other stakeholders felt that the inclusion of challenging moments was a significant part of informal mindfulness practice. An informal mindfulness practice cultivates the intention to respond skillfully when experiencing difficult moments in daily life.

3.2.5.1 Intention

All of the stakeholders felt that definition five accurately described the intentionality that is involved in informal mindfulness practice. They explained that intention was missing from all other definitions and that it is a crucial element to informal mindfulness. They expressed the practise of informal mindfulness is deliberate where we intentionally bring present moment awareness to the activities we are engaged in.

> *Dalia: I agree there's an intentionality to practise an informal mindfulness moment. It's a deliberate act.*
> *Eden: Intention is missing from all of the other ones. Intention is a key part of it.*
> *Amanda: Intention is an important aspect.*
> *Nathan: The word intention is a good one. When we practise mindfulness we intentionally bring attention.*

3.2.5.2 Shouldn't include challenging situations

Two of the stakeholders felt that definition five was not accurate due to the inclusion of challenging situations. They felt that working with challenging situations was something practised in formal mindfulness. The formal practices provide templates on how to best handle difficult situations. In contrast, informal mindfulness is a practise that is more casual and lighter in its approach.

Eden: Facing a challenging situation is ultimately where the deep work of mindfulness is going to be done. In MBSR they will be given formal practices which will be practised at home when facing a challenging situation; given a template on how to respond to a challenging situation which is very specific. It's a formal practice.

Eden: Up to then (challenging moments) the sentence made sense. I think if someone is facing a challenging situation that's quite serious, whereas, informal mindfulness is light and easy, it's easy entry

Amanda: Doesn't need to include challenging situations.

3.2.5.3 It does include challenging situations

In contrast, some stakeholders felt that informal mindfulness practice does include challenging moments. One stakeholder felt that it comes back to intention. When you make a deliberate choice on how to respond to difficult situations in the moment, it is a form of informal mindfulness practice. There was some contradiction, as Amanda initially said that informal mindfulness practice does not include challenging moments, she then later said that informal mindfulness helps us with deal with those challenging moments when they arise. She discussed how many people tend to respond with avoidance in those situations, whereas, with the practise of mindfulness they learn how to appropriately respond to them in daily life.

Dalia: I like that it mentions challenging situations. If you make a deliberate choice to not to react while on autopilot then it's informal mindfulness. It's about the intention.

Amanda: Mindfulness practice is helping us be with challenging situations we are all going to come across all of the time. Most people avoid them or get overwhelmed by them unless they have had mindfulness training.

Table 3

Overview of the categories identified from the stakeholder consultations

Overview of definitions	**Categories identified from consultation**
	- Too brief

1) informal mindfulness is to notice the breath and bodily sensations at some point during the day.	- Explanation regarding routine activities superfluous
2) Informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present.	- Replace “doing” with “being” or “bringing” - Good definition - Include senses - Include intention - Beyond basic informal mindfulness practice
3) informal mindfulness is an everyday mindfulness where you remain open, accepting, and present during day-to-day life.	- Too broad - Attitude of informal mindfulness - Additions - Poor definition
4) Informal mindfulness is the integration of mindfulness skills into everyday life.	- The term “skill” is inaccurate - Too vague - Integration of a formally taught practice
5) Informal mindfulness is intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations	- Intention - Omit challenging situations - Include challenging situations

3.2.6 Alternative definitions

The stakeholders established additional definitions of informal mindfulness practice. Interestingly, they were all based on elements from definition two, as well as additional components they felt were fundamental to informal mindfulness practice.

The first stakeholder, Dahlia, felt that definition two was an accurate description of informal mindfulness practice, although, she felt that it also needed to include the type of attitude that is applied during practise.

> *Informal mindfulness practice involves doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present with an open, friendly, and curious attitude.*

The second stakeholder, Eden, also felt that definition two accurately portrayed the practise of informal mindfulness but included intentionality into the description. She also expressed that applying one's full awareness to activities was unrealistic. She chose to emit that element from the definition.

> *Informal mindfulness practice is bringing intentional attention to everyday activities with an awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, feelings, and sensory perceptions that may be present.*

The third stakeholder, Amanda, similarly decided definition two was fairly accurate and likewise as Eden, decided to include the aspect of intentionality to the definition to make it comprehensive.

> *Informal mindfulness practice is an intentional practice of being present during everyday activities with full awareness of the associated sounds, movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present.*

The fourth stakeholder, Nathan, similarly chose to base the alternative definition on definition two. Similar to Eden, he felt that applying full awareness to activities was unrealistic and reserved for formal practice. He, therefore, chose to emit that element from the definition. He also felt intentionality was a fundamental element and that an implicit description of the type of attitude that is applied during informal mindfulness practice needed to be included.

> *Informal mindfulness practice involves intentionally bringing an open, kind, non-judgemental awareness to sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present at any moment during the day or whilst doing daily activities.*

Table 4

Overview of alternative definitions of informal mindfulness practice developed by stakeholders

Stakeholders	**Alternative definition of informal mindfulness practice**
Dahlia	Informal mindfulness practice involves doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions,

	and feelings that may be present with an open, friendly, and curious attitude.
Eden	Informal mindfulness practice is bringing intentional attention to everyday activities with an awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, feelings, and sensory perceptions that may be present.
Amanda	Informal mindfulness practice is an intentional practice of being present during everyday activities with full awareness of the associated sounds, movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present.
Nathan	Informal mindfulness practice involves intentionally bringing an open, kind, non-judgemental awareness to sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present at any moment during the day or whilst doing daily activities.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Chapter four discusses the findings that were identified from content analysis on both the scoping review and the stakeholder's consultation. It also presents an alternative definition that was established from the stakeholder's consultation. The implications and recommendations from the present study are discussed along with the limitations and reflections. The avenues for future research will then be considered.

4.1 Contextualisation of findings

This scoping study presented an overview of the current definitions of informal mindfulness practice in the literature. This provided information on the fundamental elements that are thought to be an important aspect when practising informally, as well as where the potential for the formation of an operational definition has not yet been established. There has been very little research comprehensively reviewed in this field, so a scoping study method (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) provided a suitable framework, as well as the additional value of the stakeholder consultations which provided insight into the utility of the definitions identified from the literature.

The scoping review identified 35 studies that included definitions of informal mindfulness practice. The definitions were from both clinical and experimental studies. Twenty-eight of the studies were reporting on MBI, with 14 of the studies focusing specifically on MBSR and MBCT approaches. Four articles reported on Acceptance-based Behavioural Therapy (ABBT) and the remainder used broad approaches (Appendix H). Through the use of content analysis, the 35 definitions were categorised into five separate groups depending on the overall theme of each definition. The themes were considered fundamental components that contribute to informal mindfulness practice. The five categories identified were intentionality, exposure of formal practice, awareness of breath, everyday activities, and continuity. The stakeholders stated that "exposure to a formal practice" and "intentionality" are crucial components to informal practice but felt the remainder of the categories needed to be altered or expanded on. Lastly, they expressed that "attitude" is a fundamental element that needed to be included.

The theme 'awareness of breath' identified through content analysis suggests that awareness to breath is an essential element to informal mindfulness practice. Stjernsward et al., (2018) explain that an informal practice involves checking in with their breath throughout the day. Similarly, research by Singh et al., (2018); Birtwell et al., (2018);

Hindman et al., (2015); and Thompson & Waltz, (2007) also explains that an increase in awareness during an informal mindfulness practice can be cultivated through focusing on neutral areas such as the breath. This perspective was shared by the stakeholders who also expressed that the breath is an important aspect of all mindfulness practices, as it is thought of as the most elemental of methods (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). However, the current definitions that only include this one component fail to acknowledge other crucial mechanisms involved in informal mindfulness practice.

During the consultations, the stakeholders expressed that attending to the breath and bodily sensations were only a small part of informal mindfulness practice. The breath is often used as an anchor to bring the awareness back into the present moment. A stakeholder suggested that while this may be useful for some people, it can be triggering for others. She described that when some people focus on the breath it can occasionally trigger feelings of anxiety. She went on to discuss other forms of anchors that may be beneficial for some individuals. This is supported by literature that suggests the senses, as well as objects, can also be forms of anchors as it is not restricted to only the breath (Cebolla et al., 2017; Khisty, 2010). Chen et al., (2017) explains that informal mindfulness practice creates sensory perception, as present moment awareness is created through the sensory experience. Similarly, Cebolla et al., (2017) state that informal mindfulness practice combines the narrowing of the attention on to one event such as washing the dishes while remaining attentive to the senses, such a feeling the warmth of the water, the hardness of the dish and the smell of the dish soap. Cebolla et al., (2017) describe informal mindfulness practice as an interplay between OM and FA. It involves cultivating one-pointed concentration while expanding the scope of attention to what is taking place moment to moment. Dunn and Callahan., (2013) further clarify that informal mindfulness also involves bringing awareness to internal experiences. Internal experiences include emotions, thoughts, and sensations. This process builds emotional intelligence as internal awareness enhances insight and understanding of one's emotions, allowing individuals to better respond to situations (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). This in turn also contributes to a better understanding of the feelings and behaviours of others.

The content analysis also identified the theme of intentionality. The majority of the stakeholders communicated the appropriateness of the inclusion of intentionality in informal mindfulness practice. They explained that intention is a fundamental aspect of all mindfulness. Jazaieri and Shapiro, (2017) would agree as they explained that three core

elements structure the framework of all mindfulness practices; intention, attention, and attitude. The element of 'attention' is the initiation of our moment-to-moment awareness, while, 'attitude' is the quality of our intentional awareness (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). Jazaieri and Shapiro, (2017) clarify that intention is the motivator to mindfulness practice. Khisty, (2010) would agree and say that intentional awareness is where the attention is purposely directed to the present moment. As all mindfulness practice involves attending to the present moment, intention is a fundamental feature of all mindfulness practice. One stakeholder elaborated that intention brings a certain "flavour" to the type of attention that is applied during informal mindfulness practice. This is supported by Jazaieri and Shapiro, (2017) as they explain intention not only sets the context but it brings an individual's values into the present moment. The values are what drives the intention to practise mindfulness.

There are numerous researchers that believe formal training teaches the foundational components of mindfulness that are filtered through into an informal context (Hindman et al., 2015; Birtwell et al., 2018; Cebolla et al., 2017). They state that informal mindfulness practice can be taught through didactic education, but the practise is fostered and refined through formal meditation. Thompson and Waltz, (2007) agree as they explain that a mindful state can be practised in formal "concentrated" practices for a specific period of time. The formal practices form a foundation for informal practice to be cultivated in daily life. Similarly, Hawley et al., (2014) state that formal mindfulness practice "builds the skill" whereas, informal mindfulness practice allows the practising of that skill in daily life. The stakeholders agreed that principles from a formal practice are integrated into an informal setting. They did, however, feel that the term "skill" was an inaccurate representation of mindfulness practice. One of the stakeholders expressed that "when you look at a definition that is meant to serve the people who teach mindfulness, I don't find the definition useful to use "skills", I think it's inaccurate" (refer to section 3.2.4.1). Another stakeholder shared the same view and explained that mindfulness is more of a natural state or a way of being. The practise of mindfulness is what allows us to reconnect with our natural state.

The scoping review identified definitions that described certain components of informal mindfulness as involving one's full attention. The stakeholders conveyed that "full attention" was an inaccurate term to use when describing informal mindfulness practice. Some stakeholders felt that it was highly aspirational as it is unattainable to apply one's full attention while practising mindfulness informally. This is due to informal mindfulness being practised during small moments throughout the day while being engaged in numerous

activities. The attention is, therefore, divided among various factors and not solely focused on one aspect. This is supported by Cebolla et al., (2017) as they explain a formal or focused attention meditation involves narrowing the full attention to solely focus on one anchor such as the breath or sound of a meditation singing bowl. Whereas, in informal mindfulness practice, the scope of attention is expanded to freely include numerous factors. The attention is drawn to the present activity while remaining attentive to any thoughts, emotions, or sensations that may arise (Cebolla et al., 2017). The term attention is an important aspect in the practise of informal mindfulness (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). Yet, if this definition was to be comprehensive the term "full" attention would need to be omitted to only include "attention".

The theme of 'continuity' identified through content analysis suggests that informal mindfulness practice involves remaining mindful throughout the day. The stakeholders found this component problematic as they expressed it was an idealistic interpretation of mindfulness. They explained that even the most experienced in practising mindfulness would fail to remain mindful continually throughout the day. There was also some confusion as to whether this definition may be more aligned with trait or dispositional mindfulness. Trait mindfulness is thought to be personal quality where one maintains a mindful perspective throughout the day (Birrer et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2019). Informal mindfulness is thought to cultivate trait mindfulness, but the two phenomena are quite different in their purpose and practice (Birrer et al., 2012). The stakeholders said that an important aspect of informal mindfulness practice is that it is practised during "moments" throughout the day. It is not a state that is maintained continuously. This is supported by several researchers who also state is it practised during moments in daily life (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017; Baer, 2006; Reibel et al., 2001). The element of continuity was, therefore, not considered to be a component of informal mindfulness practice.

There were definitions identified in the scoping review that stated informal mindfulness is to be practised during challenging moments. This created some discrepancy in the stakeholder consultations as some agreed, whereas, others did not. Some stakeholders expressed informal mindfulness practice should not include challenging situations as it was more suited to formal practice. Whereas, others expressed that dealing with challenging moments was very much part of informal mindfulness practice. They elaborated that a mindfulness practice allows us to appropriately manage challenging moments when they arise in our day-to-day life. Research by Brody et al., (2018) would agree as they state that

informal mindfulness enhances internal awareness contributing to skillful responding. The enhanced emotion regulation can assist in challenging moments when they arise. Both Enkema and Bowen., (2017) and Singh et al., (2018) refer to informal mindfulness practice called urge surfing. Individuals are taught how to manage their temporary urges that may result in relapse or inappropriate behaviour. Informal mindfulness practice has been found to have a significant impact on individuals experiencing challenging behaviour related to addiction and behavioural issues (Singh et al., 2018; Brody et al., 2018). Therefore, the research would propose it would be appropriate for the management of challenging moments to be included in informal mindfulness practice.

It is common for definitions of informal mindfulness practice to convey that it is practised during routine activities (Khisty, 2010, Manuel et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2015). The stakeholders at first thought this was an important aspect of a comprehensive definition. However, after some consideration, two stakeholders mentioned that it was not necessary to be explicit, as it is implied. One stakeholder elaborated that in our daily life we are rarely doing nothing, as we are often engaged in some activity whether that is reading, eating or walking. Likewise, if an operational definition did include 'routine activities', it would exclude the practise of informal mindfulness at other times during day-to-day life such as when dealing with challenging moments. Therefore, it may be unnecessary for an operational definition to explicitly state that informal mindfulness is to be practised during routine activities.

There were few definitions identified from the scoping review that referenced the type of attention that is fostered during informal mindfulness practice. One of the definitions presented to the stakeholders mentioned an attitude that was open, accepting and focused in the present moment. The stakeholders voiced that the "open, accepting, and present focus" attention was a valued addition to a comprehensive definition. They explained that other definitions often overlooked this element of mindfulness practice. As mentioned earlier, attitude is one of the three core elements that contribute to the framework of mindfulness practice (Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2017). Seven attitudes contribute to the foundation of mindfulness practice (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). They include a nonjudging, patient, trusting, non-striving, and accepting attitude where there is a readiness to see things if it were the first time while allowing things to be as they are (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). The stakeholders felt that alongside the attitude of openness, acceptance, and present focus, there needed to be the addition of non-judgmental, curiosity, and kindness. Kabat-Zinn,

(1990), would agree as he believes these are fundamental to the cultivation of mindfulness both formally and informally. This is also shared by Carmody and Baer., (2008) who state that an attitude of curiosity and non-judgment is applied to mindfulness practices while maintaining a beginner's mind.

While there were several fundamental facets to informal mindfulness practice identified from the scoping review, interestingly, there was no current definition identified that encompassed all of them. The stakeholder consultations provided valued insight into the utility of each of the components identified. An alternative definition established from the stakeholder consultations is presented below along with the implications and recommendations from the present study. The limitations and reflections are discussed and the avenues for future research will then be considered

4.2 Alternative definition

All of the stakeholders felt that definition two was the most accurate of all the definitions (i.e., "informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present" (Carmody & Baer., 2007, p. 24)). Two of the stakeholders expressed that "full awareness" should be omitted from the definition. As this does appear to relate more to a formal meditative practice it would seem like an appropriate element to exclude. The majority of the stakeholders also expressed the inaccuracy in the term "doing" and explained it would be better changed to "being".

Out of the five alternative definitions as well as the research explored through the scoping review, the definition suggested by the stakeholder, Nathan, appears to be a well-defined description of the fundamental facets belonging to informal mindfulness practice; "*An informal mindfulness practice involves intentionally bringing an open, kind, non-judgemental awareness to sensations, cognitions, and feelings that may be present at any moment during the day or whilst doing daily activities*". The definition contains all of the fundamental components that were both identified from the scoping review and validated by the stakeholders on their utility. The addition of "at any time of day or doing daily activities" allows for the suggestion of challenging moments to also be implied. The definition also includes intentionality and attends to the type of attention that is represented during informal mindfulness practice. This alternative definition is a comprehensive representation of an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice.

4.3 Implications and recommendations

The implications from these findings suggest that there are various facets to an informal mindfulness practice that contribute to the cultivation of mindfulness in daily life. It appears that the majority of definitions that currently exist in the literature individually describe only a limited range of components involved in the practise of informal mindfulness. Many appear to depict one or two fundamental components but there is inconsistency within the research. There was no current definition identified that includes all of the fundamental facets acknowledged by both the scoping literature review and the stakeholder consultation. The fundamental facets include:

- Intentionality (Enkema & Bowen, 2017; Khisty, 2010; Manuel et al., 2017)
- Attitude (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Shapiro et al., 2006)
- Awareness of cognitions, feelings, senses, sensations (Stjernsward & Hansson, 2018; Singh et al., 2018)
- Prior understanding of a formal practice (Cebolla et al., 2017; Hindman et al., 2015, Meiklejohn et al., 2012)
- Applied to daily life (including during activities, interactions, and challenging moments) (Bowen & Kurz, 2012; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Dunn & Callahan, 2013).

The implications arising from this study depict the need for an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice. An alternative definition was established by a stakeholder which appears to well-define the fundamental elements involved in an informal practice. Further research would need to be employed to empirically determine its utility across multiple MBIs that utilise informal mindfulness practice. This will be further discussed in section 4.9. By establishing an operational definition, the construct specificity of an informal practice would be established. This may contribute to theoretical development into the mediating role of informal mindfulness practice, therefore, broadening our knowledge of its potential impact on health and wellbeing. Furthermore, it would allow for the development of relevant instruments needed for such investigations to proceed

4.4 Limitations and reflections

The findings of this study should be considered alongside the study's limitations. Scoping studies are a useful method for charting complex research fields, research fields that have recently emerged, or when little research has been comprehensively reviewed before (Grant

& Booth, 2009; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The method of a scoping study is driven by a requirement to identify all relevant literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Therefore, the quantity of data that is identified can be considerable. This can cause difficulties in deciding between the importance of breadth, where all available material is utilised, or depth, where a smaller number of studies are selected but they are analysed at greater depths. A limitation of scoping studies is that they do not acknowledge the issue of synthesis as the weight of evidence is in favour to fewer studies of comprehensive data (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Consequently, the present scoping study provided a narrative account of the available literature. As part of the exclusion criteria, only literature containing a definition of informal mindfulness practice was considered as this was a fundamental aspect of this study. All other articles that mentioned informal mindfulness but failed to produce a definition were omitted. A limitation of this process was that some articles only produced a brief and non-descriptive definition of informal mindfulness practice. A benefit of a systematic review method is that the process undertakes quality appraisal which reduces the quantity and emphasises quality (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). However, the purpose of this study was to map relevant literature in a field where little research has been comprehensively reviewed. Therefore, resulting in a large quantity of literature both descriptive and brief but, ultimately, complying with the specific aim of this research.

Another limitation that needs to be acknowledged is that, due to scoping reviews being used for complex research fields it was important to ensure the relevant literature was going to be accurately located. To ensure the correct search terms were being employed to locate relevant literature, the following terms were applied, “informal mindfulness”, “informal mindfulness practice”, “informal practice”, “mindfulness in daily life”, and “everyday mindfulness”. Occasionally, some of the searches located research on trait or state mindfulness. It was important to differentiate between the literature that referred to trait or state mindfulness as an informal practice and the literature that categorised it independently. The literature that categorised it as an informal practice was included in this research and provided an important perspective of the differing components between them. This contributed to a thorough and critical analysis of the essential elements that contribute to informal mindfulness practice.

There were also limitations to the stakeholder consultations that were conducted. All stakeholders were MBSR teachers so their perspectives were based on one type of MBI. This may cause some bias as their understanding of informal mindfulness practices all

stream from their education, research, and teaching derived from one kind of MBI. This, therefore, may limit the diversity of understanding of the facets involved in informal mindfulness practice. The stakeholder consultations were intended to gauge the potential relevance of the findings in the literature review. In doing so, it also highlighted possible areas of future research which will be further discussed in section 4.9.

In relation to reflexivity, my perception of mindfulness must also be addressed. As mentioned in Chapter Two, I am aware that my experience with mindfulness may contribute to me being overly subjective in this field of research. I was most aware of this during the stakeholder consultations and while analysing the data as it increased the risk of being less critical or reflective during the analysis process. The risks were also considered during the evaluation of the findings. My subjectivity in this field could potentially shape the findings in such a way to support my opinions rather than grounding it on the perspectives of the research and stakeholder's expertise. However, qualitative interviews aim to explore and determine the meaning from the narratives and not to impose one's own assumptions onto the data (Braun et al., 2014). To minimise this risk, I adhered to the processes and steps of analysis determined by Lieblich et al., (1998) concerning content analysis. In following this process and clearly documenting the research method and analysis process, I provided a comprehensive audit trail. This enhanced the study's credibility and rigour.

4.5 Avenues for future research

The scoping literature review charted the research area and found there is a need for an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice. This is due to the inconsistent and inadequate definitions that currently exist in the literature. Future research in this field would benefit from applying further in-depth analysis of the data. The current study found the stakeholder consultation helpful in determining the utility of current informal mindfulness definitions as well as an alternative operational definition. Future research could also expand the stakeholder consultations to include various mindfulness practitioners who teach different forms of MBI. This would allow for a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the mechanisms that contribute to informal mindfulness practice. It would also be of benefit to assess the utility of the alternative definition established in the present study, to investigate if it is applicable across multiple MBIs. It may be that there are fundamental elements to an informal practice that slightly differ across the various MBIs. If

this was found to be the case, it would be of value to contrast and compare the various definitions from the different forms of MBIs. This would be an area of interest worthy of being explored more thoroughly in the future.

4.6 Conclusion

In summary, this study provided an overview of the different types of definitions of informal mindfulness practice proposed in the literature. This was achieved by employing a scoping literature review. In addition to that, relevant stakeholders were interviewed about the extent to which these definitions have utility for their practice and teaching. A phenomenological methodology was employed as it is useful when describing a specific culture of phenomena such as informal mindfulness. As we were interested in the perspectives of both the research and the stakeholders, an interpretative social constructionism epistemology was utilized.

Through the use of content analysis, the data from the scoping literature review indicated that there were inconsistent and inadequate definitions of informal mindfulness practice. Content analysis revealed the 36 definitions identified from the scoping review could be allocated into five categories depending on their apparent theme. The categories included exposure to formal practice, intentionality, everyday activities, continuity, and awareness of breath. The stakeholder consultation provided insight into the utility of the identified definitions according to their apparent theme. The stakeholders were in agreeance that exposure to a formal practice was important as formal training teaches the fundamental components of mindfulness that are filtered through into an informal context. They also agreed intentionality is a crucial component to informal practice. The stakeholders felt informal mindfulness practice can be initiated during routine activities but that it can also involve any moments in daily life including challenging situations. They expanded on the awareness of breath as they felt that it also includes awareness of senses, sensations, thoughts, and emotions. The stakeholders felt continuity was an inaccurate element to informal mindfulness practice as it was a more appropriate description for trait mindfulness. Lastly, the stakeholders expressed the type of attitude that is applied during informal mindfulness practice is a fundamental element that needs to be included in the operational definition. The stakeholders provided an alternative operational definition of informal mindfulness. From the five definitions, the researcher selected one definition that

eloquently represented all the fundamental facets identified by the scoping review and expressed by the stakeholders.

This study has identified there is a need for an operational definition of informal mindfulness practice. In doing so, it has provided valuable insight into the fundamental mechanisms of an informal mindfulness practice. It has also provided an alternative operational definition. Future research would benefit from employing a systematic literature review and an expansion of the stakeholder's consultation to include various stakeholders who teach different forms of MBIs. This would allow for a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the mechanisms that contribute to an informal practice and whether the alternative definition is an accurate representation of informal mindfulness practice.

“Live the actual moment. Only this actual moment is life”

- *Thich Nhat Hanh*

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

xx/xx/xxxx

Project Title

Developing an operational definition of informal mindfulness: A scoping review and stakeholder consultation.

An Invitation

You are invited to take part in a study on Informal Mindfulness.

My name is Nicole Andersen and I am a current MHSc student in Psychology at AUT. As part of my postgraduate Practice Research Project, I'm interested in developing an operational definition of informal mindfulness.

This Participant Information Sheet gives you more information about the research. It sets out why we are doing the study, what your participation would involve, what the benefits and risks to you might be, and what would happen after the study ends. We will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in this study. Before you decide, you may want to talk about the study with other people, such as whanau or friends. Feel free to do this.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form to indicate that you wish to participate (see the last page of this document). You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

This document is four pages long, including the Consent Form.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study aims to develop an operational definition of informal mindfulness. As it stands there is no widely agreed on definition of informal mindfulness. We believe it is not simply enough to produce an abstract definition. The efficacy of an operational definition can be maximised if stakeholder perspectives are considered. As a stakeholder, we are really interested in hearing about your perspective on what contributes to informal mindfulness practice. Subsequently, this research may then identify the fundamental features that engender an informal mindfulness practice. This will be of benefit to you the participant, as this may provide you with an operational definition that can be utilised in practice. You will also be provided with a summary of the research at the end of the study. The benefits of this research to the researcher will be expanding my academic achievements in gaining an MHSc as well as establishing an efficacious definition of informal mindfulness.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are a stakeholder who is actively involved in/or teaches mindfulness, or because you were apart of an earlier phase of the study.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

To participate in this research, you will need to complete the consent form which will be provided to you along with this information sheet. Once the consent form is completed, please note that your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time up until the findings have been produced, as thereafter removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

I will be inviting you to speak with me in a one on one, semi-structured interview about what you define informal mindfulness to be. The interviews will take place at a location that is mutually convenient during the month of July '19. The interview process will take no more than an hour of your time, and will be audiotaped with your permission, solely for research purposes. No name or personal details will be recorded, and your identity will be kept completely anonymous throughout the entire study. A transcript of the interview will be offered to you for confirmation, and once the research has been finished you will be provided a summary of the findings.

What are the discomforts and risks?

It is unlikely there will be any discomforts or risks with being involved in this research. However, if any concerns over the wellbeing of the participant are disclosed during the interview, the participant may be offered counselling services at AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing.

AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing is able to offer free sessions of confidential counselling support for participants that are current AUT students. To access these services, you will need to: drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling.

What are the benefits?

Involvement in this research may help provide an operational definition of informal mindfulness. One that could be utilised by mindfulness practitioners in practice. This could contribute to the efficacy of informal mindfulness. This will further benefit myself, the researcher, by expanding my academic achievements in gaining an MHSc.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your participation in this research will be kept completely confidential as no names or identifying information will be recorded during the interview. The final report will consist of analysing those perspectives and reporting any common themes. You can be assured no names or private information will be included.
All consent forms will be stored securely and confidentially at AUT North Shore Campus.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The only cost of participating in this study will be an hour of your time, where I will ask you a number of mindfulness related questions.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Before you decide you may want to talk about the study with other people, such as family, whanau or friends. Feel free to do this. You will have 7 days to consider this invitation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, once the study is completed you will receive a summary of the research findings.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Chris Krageloh, Chris.krageloh@aut.ac.nz Telephone number: 921 9999 ext. 7103
Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Nicole Andersen
Email: zfd3463@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Chris Krageloh
Telephone number: 921 9999 ext. 7103
Email: Chris.krageloh@aut.ac.nz
Charmaine Bright
Telephone number: 921 9999 ext. 7613
Email: Charmaine.bright@aut.ac.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *04th July 2019*, AUTEC Reference number *18/149.*

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Project title: **Developing an operational definition of informal mindfulness: A scoping review and stakeholder consultation.**

Project Supervisor: **Chris Krageloh and Charmaine Bright**

Researcher: **Nicole Andersen**

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated xx/xx/xxxx.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

Participants Signature : ……

Participants Name : ……

Participants Contact Details (if appropriate) :
……..
……..
……..
……..

Date :

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *04th July 2019*, AUTEC Reference number *18/149*.
Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this for reference

Appendix C: Indicative Interview Questions

Indicative Questions:

How do you understand informal mindfulness?

What does informal mindfulness practice look like?

What kind of informal mindfulness-based techniques do you teach?

Note: These questions were used as a guide to allow for the participant to reflect and express their personal experience of incidental mindfulness. The order of the questions may not have been relevant to the structure of the interview, and some questions may have been answered in the participants previous answers rendering them irrelevant for the researcher to ask. Alternative questions not included in the indicative questions may have also been asked depending on the nature of the participants previous answer.

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz

Appendix D: Ethics Approval

31 May 2018

Charmaine Bright

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Charmaine

Ethics Application: 18/149 Subjective wellbeing and students' perceptions and use of incidental mindfulness-based practices

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to advise that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved your ethics application at their meeting on 28 May 2018, subject to the following conditions:

1. Reflect on what will happen if the intention to harm self or others is disclosed by a participant;
2. Amendment the recruitment advertisement: include AUT logo, and ensure that inclusion and exclusion criteria are clear;
3. Amendment of the Information Sheet as follows:
    a. Suggest provide some examples of things that may count as incidental mindfulness that potential participants might relate to;
    b. State where and where interviews will take place;
    c. Clarify whether transcripts will be offered for confirmation.

Please provide me with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

Kate O'Connor

Executive Manager

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: , zfd3463@autuni.ac.nz

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
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T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
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Appendix E: Approval of Ethic Amendments

4 July 2019

Charmaine Bright
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences
Dear Charmaine

Re: Ethics Application: **18/149 Subjective wellbeing and students' perceptions and use of incidental mindfulness-based practices**

Thank you for your request for approval of amendments to your ethics application.

The amendments to allow an additional phase of participant interviews and the change to research personnel is approved.

The change in degree has been noted.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. On the Information Sheet in the 'how was I identified' section please make it clear that some participants may have been involved in an earlier phase of the research

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

I remind you of the **Standard Conditions of Approval**.

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

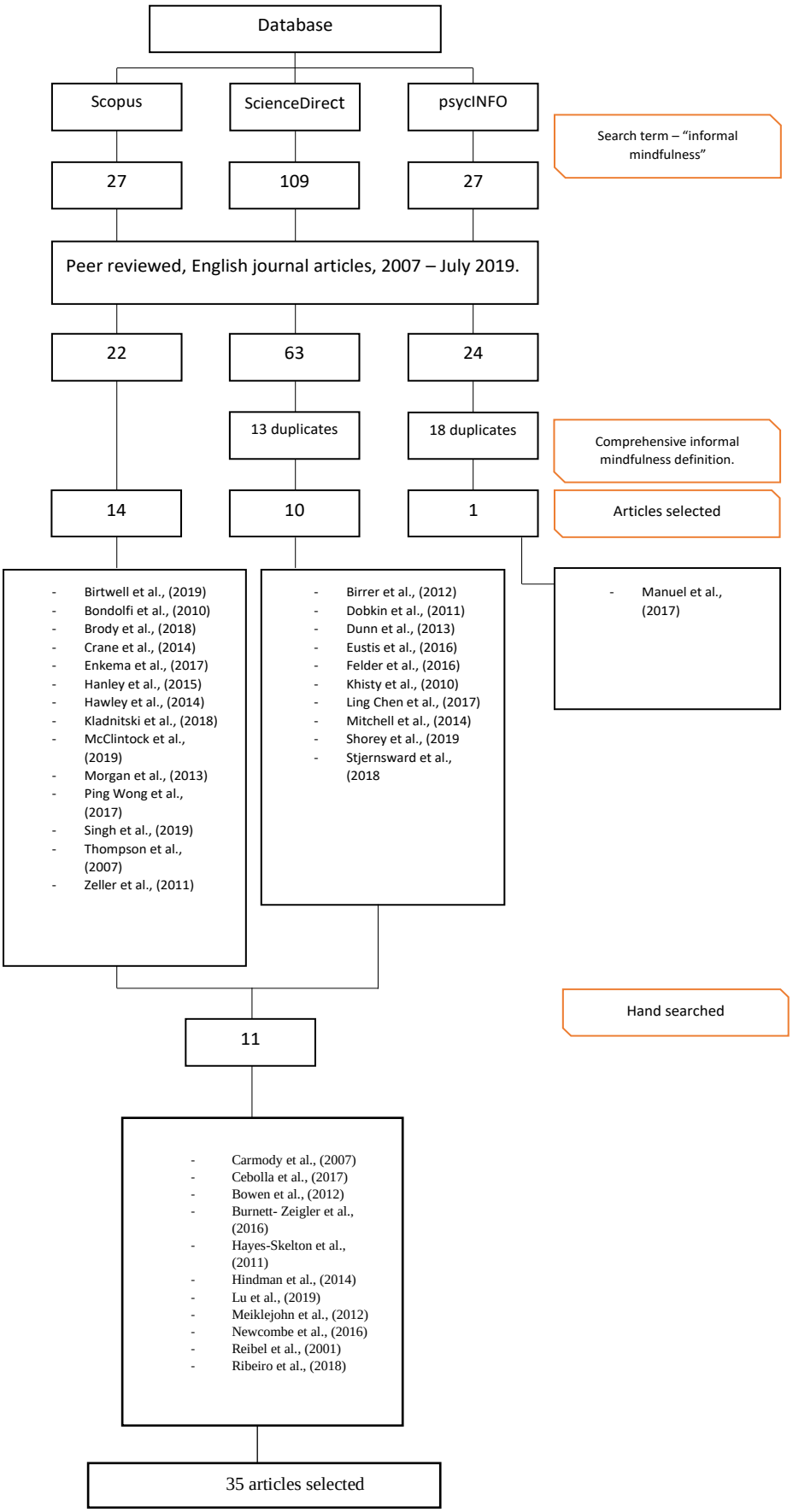
Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: zfd3463@autuni.ac.nz; Chris Krageloh

Appendix F: Sample of Definitions Presented to Stakeholders

- Informal mindfulness is to notice the breath and bodily sensations at some point during the day
- Informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present.
- Informal mindfulness is an everyday mindfulness where you remain open, accepting, and present during day-to-day life.
- Informal mindfulness is the integration of mindfulness skills into everyday life.
- Informal mindfulness is intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations.

Appendix G: Flow chart



Appendix H: Extracted Definitions from Scoping Review

Authors	*Identification of use*	*Definition of informal mindfulness*	*Method of informal mindfulness practice*	*Additional findings*
Birrer et al., (2012)	PST – psychological skill training	"consciously carrying over mindfulness principles or elements into everyday life"	How mindfulness can be used to help elite athletes successfully meet the demands of their sport.	
Birtwell et al. (2019)	MBSR	"Informal mindfulness involves weaving mindfulness into existing routines through engaging in mindful moments and bringing awareness to everyday activities." "informal mindfulness involves generalising mindfulness skills to everyday life."	"no widely agreed on definition of mindfulness"	Informal mindfulness was related in positive wellbeing and psychological flexibility
Bonfolfi et al., (2010)	MBCT	"performing an everyday activity mindfully"	(no details)	Participants were more inclined to continue incorporating informal mindfulness into their daily life after the intervention was completed
Bowen et al., (2012)	MBRP – mindfulness-based relapse prevention	"mindful during daily activities"	Purposeful attention to daily activities, triggers and habitual reactions.	Informal mindfulness may help increase formal mindfulness skills
Brody et al., (2018)	Mindfulness in family therapy	Informal mindfulness practices are short exercises that create present-moment awareness and often involve sensory orienting	"listening to a sound, such as a chime, until the tone can no longer be heard). Other informal methods include the "STOP" practice (Stop – Take a breath – Observe your internal states – Proceed with awareness."	Promotes non-judgemental awareness of thoughts and emotions that often lead to dysfunctional interactions. Teaching mindfulness in a family context

				provides opportunity to focus directly on strengthening weak relational bonds through influencing emotion regulation.
Burnett et al., (2016)	MBSR	"integrating mindfulness into daily life"	Noticing pleasant and unpleasant events, practicing pausing and slowing down and mindful communication.	
Carmody & Baer (2007)	MBSR	"informal mindfulness is doing everyday activities with full awareness of the associated movements, sensations, cognitions and feelings that may be present."	such as walking, washing the dishes and eating	Practice of mindfulness leads to improvements in psychological functioning
Cebolla et al. (2017)	MBI	"the integration of mindfulness skills onto everyday life."	"Noticing one's body while walking, being aware of thoughts and feelings while doing the dishes, bringing attention to one's breath upon awakening"	
Crane et al., (2014)	MBCT	"generalise mindfulness to daily life activities" "unscheduled mindfulness practice in daily life"	Unscheduled mindfulness practice during routine activities or in response to stressful experiences or "noticing" of moments	The amount of time the participant engaged in home practice (informal) contributed to how much impact it had on them
Dobson et al., (2011)	MBSR	"being mindful while engaging in daily tasks"	A person may make a point of being more aware while walking, eating and answering the phone. Awareness of breath.	Informal mindfulness predicted less stress in students but the practice of informal mindfulness is not explicitly defined
Dunn et al., (2013)	MBSR	"mindfulness of daily experiences"	What is happening moment-to-moment. In practicing informal mindfulness there's an opportunity for exposure	Informal mindfulness can be easily implemented into treatment plans

			and desensitisation – learn to become less reactive and more flexible.	regardless of theoretical orientation.
Elwafi et al., (2013)	MT	"performing daily activities mindfully, setting daily intentions and noticing mind-states, emotions and body sensations from moment to moment."	Uses RAIN – recognise, accept, investigate and note mind-states, emotions and sensations.	
Enkema et al., (2017)	MBRP - mindfulness based relapse prevention	"intentional mindfulness practice in the context of daily life or challenging situations"	"mindfulness of daily activity, urge surfing, "SOBER" breathing space.	formal mindfulness did reduce cravings, however, IM did not.
Eustis et al., (2016)	ABBT - acceptance - based behavioural therapy	"practicing while engaging in life's activities"	Mindful eating, commuting or walking. Is a skill that can be practiced flexibly and informally even in the context of busy lives.	Did not decrease anxiety arousal but participants only had a single session of mindfulness.
Felder et al., (2016)	MBCT/ MMB – mindful mood balance	"mindfulness of routine activities"	Making the bed and eating breakfast mindfully	MMB found to decrease severity of depression in mothers
Hanley et al. (2014)	MBI	"mindfulness of everyday activities"	"informal practices could be incorporated into any activity – from leisure to vocational responsibilities."	Mindful dishwashing enhanced positive affect and state mindfulness while decreasing negative affect. "informal mindfulness closely aligns with daily experiences and could facilitate a greater state to trait consolidation of mindfulness."
Hayes et al (2011)	ABBT – acceptance-based behavioural therapy	"applying mindfulness to daily living"	In the moment mindfulness that can be applied while spending time with daughter.	

Hawley et al., (2014)	MBCT & MBSR	"mindful awareness to routine activities throughout the day"	Informal mindfulness practices are less structured and do not require a set time. Due to spontaneity and generalisation of IM it may lead to reporting biases – hard to measure.	Individuals that engage in mindfulness may be better able to disengage from rumination. (formal mindfulness practices had better results)
Hindman et al. (2014)	MSM – Mindful stress management	"bringing mindfulness principles into day-to-day activities"	Such as doing the dishes or any method that increases an accepting attitude toward the present moment experiences.	Both formal and informal practices may be more effective for alleviating stress in university students
Kladnitski et al., (2018)	iCBT with MBI	"bringing mindfulness awareness to everyday activities"		iCBT with MBI may be a feasible treatment for anxiety and depression but more research is needed.
Khisty (2010)	MBI	"*informal mindfulness is* the practice of constantly making an effort during one's daily activities to come back to, and be fully aware of, the present moment"	Not to live life on autopilot. To practice mindfulness throughout the day.	With the practice of mindfulness, we develop new eyes
Kogler et al., (2013)	EBT – existential behavioural therapy	"informal mindfulness is performing daily activities mindfully"	Brushing teeth and preparing meals	IM improved meaning in life, QOF and psych distress.
Ling Chen et al., (2017)	Buddhism perspective	*Informal mindfulness is* being fully present and mindfully aware of daily experiences that mediate a sense of calm and a more focused mind.	Stopping to smell a flower, touching fabric, feeling the breeze, listening to sounds outside	Being in "the zone" during flow leads to a feeling of bliss, whereas, informal mindfulness leads to a state of being at ease.
Lu et al. (2019)	MT (trait)	"*Informal mindfulness is receptive* attention and awareness of present events and experience"	Observing the present moment experiences such as body sensations, emotions and thoughts. Acting with awareness by being open, receptive and lucid in the present moment.	Acting with awareness and in a non-judgmental, non-reactive way reduces stress

Manuel et al., (2017)	MBRP – mindfulness-based relapse prevention.	"intentionally attending to experience while performing daily activities or while in high risk or triggering situations"	Washing dishes	Type (formal vs informal), frequency and duration weren't found to be related to FFMQ scores
McClintock et al., (2019)	MBSR	Mindfulness can be cultivated as one engages in everyday activities.	taking a moment to notice your breath during your workday and walking mindfully from your kitchen to your living room.	Informal practice predicted stress reduction
McCloskey (2015)	MBSR/MBCT	"informal mindfulness can be applied in many different ways – focusing on the breath, walking or paying attention to the sensations of locomotion"	It can take many forms including sitting, breath and walking.	Meditators state of mind is an important part of mindfulness rather than posture or procedure. Focusing on state of mind helps to acknowledge feeling states and problem-solve ways to manage them
McConville et al., (2017)	MBSR	"informal mindfulness brings attention and awareness into all aspects of life"	Mindful awareness of daily routines and conversations	Found to have an increase in empathy
Meiklejohn et al., (2012)	MBWE-mindfulness-based wellness education	"weaving mindful awareness into activities of everyday life"	Showering, walking, eating.	Short but regular informal mindfulness awareness practices can strengthen one's ability to relate to experiences in a responsive rather than reactive and reflexive way.
Mitchell et al., (2014)	MBSR	"*Informal mindfulness* is turning on a mindful state in the midst of daily activities"	At-home assignments to mindfully observe a daily experience, often a routine behaviour. Encouraged to notice their breath throughout the day. Use of mnemonic S.T.O.P	Helps individuals become more alert to both inner state and outside environment.

Morgan et al., (2014)	MBI – ABBT	"intentionally applying mindful awareness to daily activities."	Bringing mindfulness more directly to everyday situations which may help mindfulness skills be applied in difficult situations during daily life.	Informal mindfulness was found to reduce worry and anxiety while enhancing QOL
Ping Wong et al., (2017)	MBI	"Application *of mindfulness* in daily living activities."	"Informal practice can be tied in with everyday activities and daily life experiences. Enhancing engagement in activities in daily life." "extending such attentiveness and awareness to engaging daily experiences"	
Reibel at al., (2001)	MBSR	"moment-to-moment awareness in the course of daily activity, enabling one to respond rather than react to life events"		Informal mindfulness practice promotes psychological resilience and resistance to stress through cognitive restructuring.
Ribeiro et al., (2018)	MM – Mindful meditation	"becoming mindful in everyday activities"	3-step breathing space (no set instructions on exercise), based on development of compassionate feelings towards others.	Requires a deeper understanding of the meaning of acceptance and self-compassion.
Shorey et al., (2019)	MBCP – mindfulness-based childbirth and parenting	"awareness that arises from purposefully and nonjudgmentally paying attention to the present moment during day-to-day life"	"Paying attention to the baby in my arms". - Slowing down to be in the moment - Experiencing positive emotions - Observing acceptance - Practicing self-compassion	"general mindfulness". Helped mothers cope with stressful, unpleasant and depressing situations through accepting these situations.
Singh et al., (2019) **"Urge surfing"**	MBI	"Attention on breath along with an open and curious attitude without self-judgement to urges as they arise."	Notion on impermanence. The momentary arising, abiding, and dissolution of all phenomena. Urges may arise like waves, increase in	An informal practice that has been used to produce behaviour change through enhanced self-

			intensity, peak and then dissipate. Attention on the breath can be used to ride out the waves.	control in adolescence with ADS. Utilises the notion of impermanence.
Singh et al., (2019) "Soles of the feet"	MBI	No definition of informal mindfulness	Grounding exercise Ground feet attend to sensations in feet.	Individuals with moderate Alzheimer's appear to be capable of effectively learning and using SOF for aggression and agitation control.
Stjernsward et al., (2018)	Web-based MBI	"to notice the breath of bodily sensations at some point during the day"	Can notice sounds, scents or sights throughout the day	May help increase psychological flexibility
Thompson and Waltz., (2007)	MBI	" 'everyday mindfulness', maintaining open, accepting, present focus of attention during day-to-day life. "	Observing experiences in everyday life	Being mindful may lower neurotic tendencies.
Zeller et al., (2011)	MBI	"mindfulness woven into daily life at any time."	Informal mindfulness can be woven into daily life at any time and can take on many forms. One common practice is to focus on one's breath; can be cultivated while paying attention on purpose; mindful walking.	