

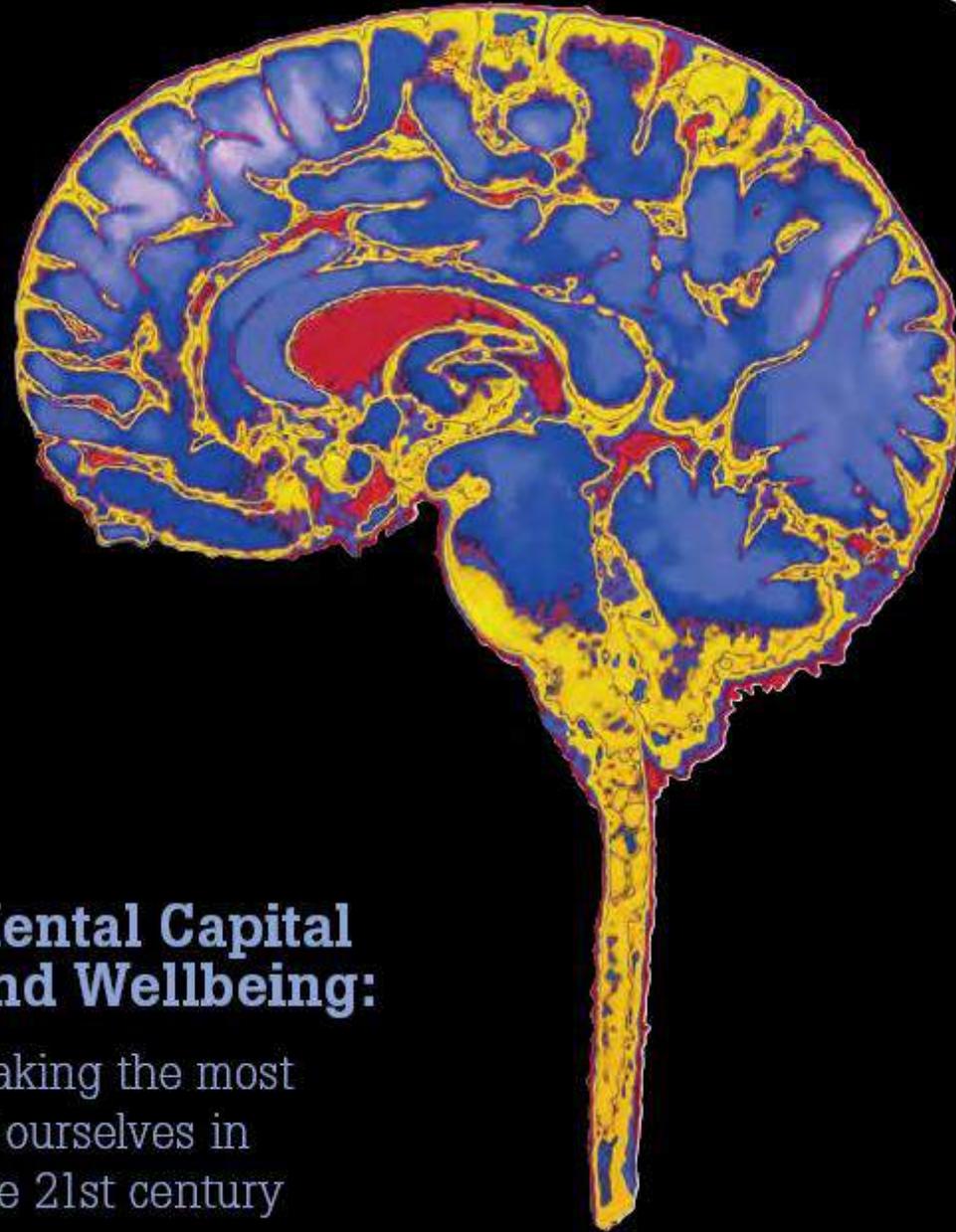
Mindfulness and Compassion as the Foundations of Well-being

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Mental Capital and Wellbeing:

Making the most
of ourselves in
the 21st century

Five ways to well-being

UK Government Office for Science

Five ways
to wellbeing

Connect

With family, friends,
community

Five ways
to wellbeing

Be active

Exercise, dance, play

Five ways
to wellbeing

Take notice

Be curious, be aware of
your experience

Five ways
to wellbeing

Give

Your time, your
presence, your
appreciation

Keep learning

Try something new,
set new challenges

What is mindfulness?

Put simply, mindfulness is the ability to be aware of our experience as it is happening, while maintaining an attitude of gentle curiosity.

Effects of mindfulness

- **A peaceful space in our busy lives**
- **Deeper listening, seeing more clearly**
- **Greater insight and understanding**
- **Better choices, wiser decisions.**

Mindfulness as mental training

Training covers some very basic skills

Awareness

ATTENTION

Non-reactivity

Emotion regulation

Mindfulness has two components

What to do

Pay attention
Notice
Observe
Be aware

How to do it

With friendly curiosity,
Openness, acceptance
Non-judgement
Kindness

The science of mindfulness

Benefits of Mindfulness Training

Review of high quality research – Creswell, Annual Reviews Psychology, 2017

Mental and physical health

- depression, anxiety
- substance abuse
- chronic pain
- stress response

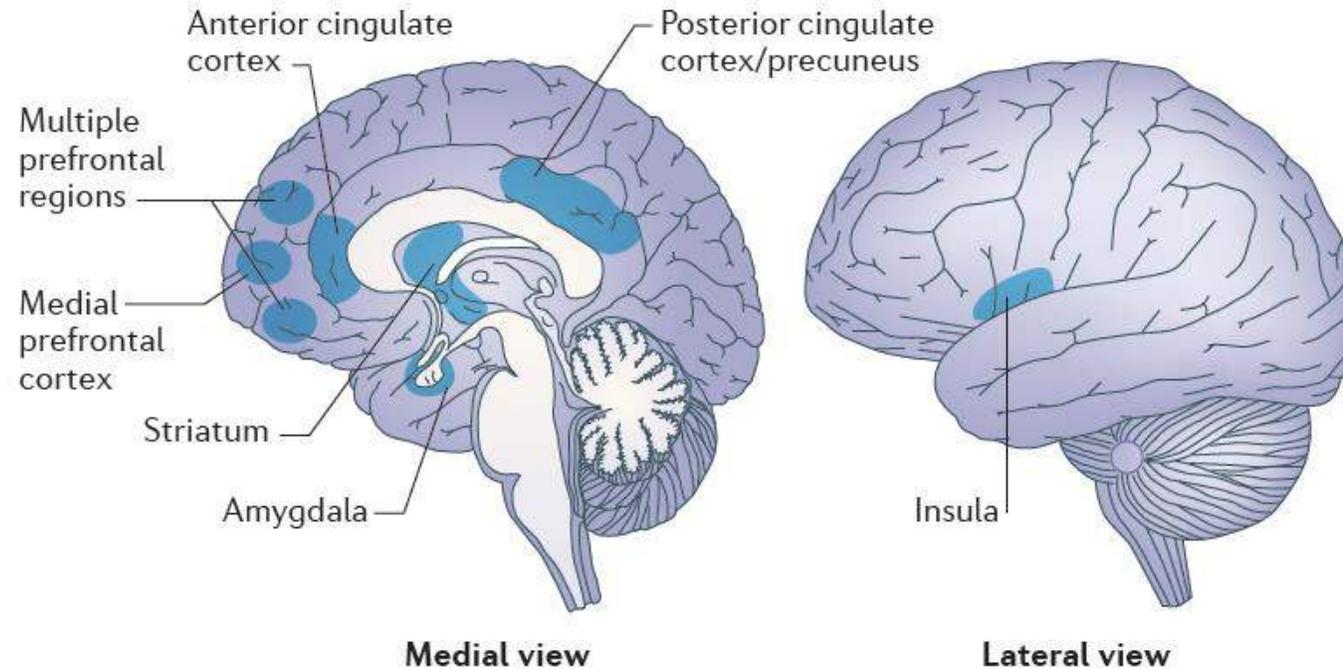
Interpersonal outcomes

- relationship quality
- perspective taking
- pro-social behaviour

Cognitive and affective processes

- Sustained attention, working memory
- problem solving
- positive mood
- emotion regulation

Brain regions that show the greatest activity during mindfulness practise



attention control

emotion regulation

self-awareness

Structural brain changes after mindfulness training

A standard 8 week MBSR course lead to increased grey matter density in brain regions associated with:

- **attention, learning and memory**
- **emotion regulation**
- **self-awareness**
- **bodily awareness**
- **compassion**

Applications of mindfulness training

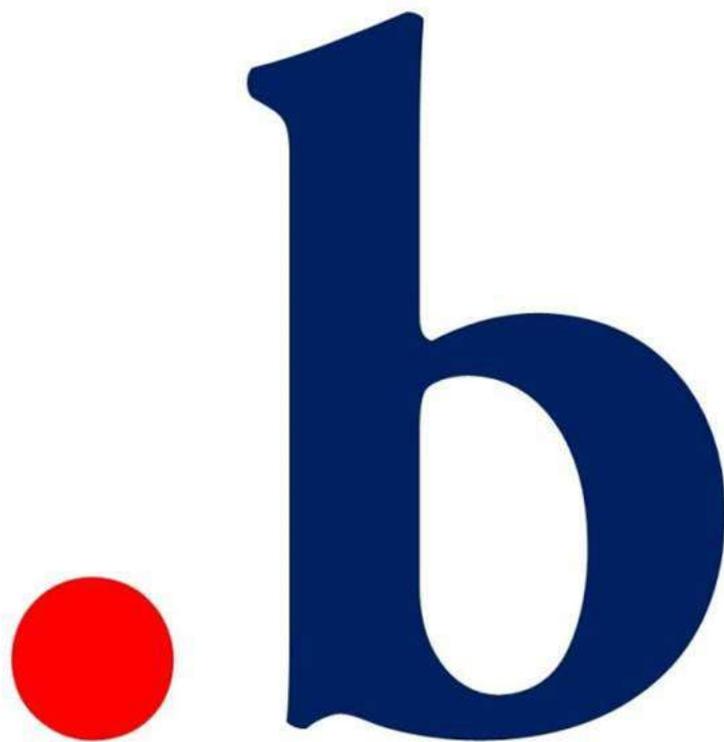
- Clinical
- Schools and education
- Business organisations
- Military
- Sport
- Family/couples counselling
- Prison
- Parliament – politicians

Mindfulness and Education

Effects of mindfulness in students

Reviews by Meiklejohn et al, Mindfulness, 2012; and Weare, in The Psychology of Meditation: Research and Practice, 2016

- **cognitive skills - attention and working memory**
- **academic skills**
- **social skills**
- **emotion regulation**
- **self-esteem**
- **improvements in mood**
- **decreases in anxiety, stress and fatigue**

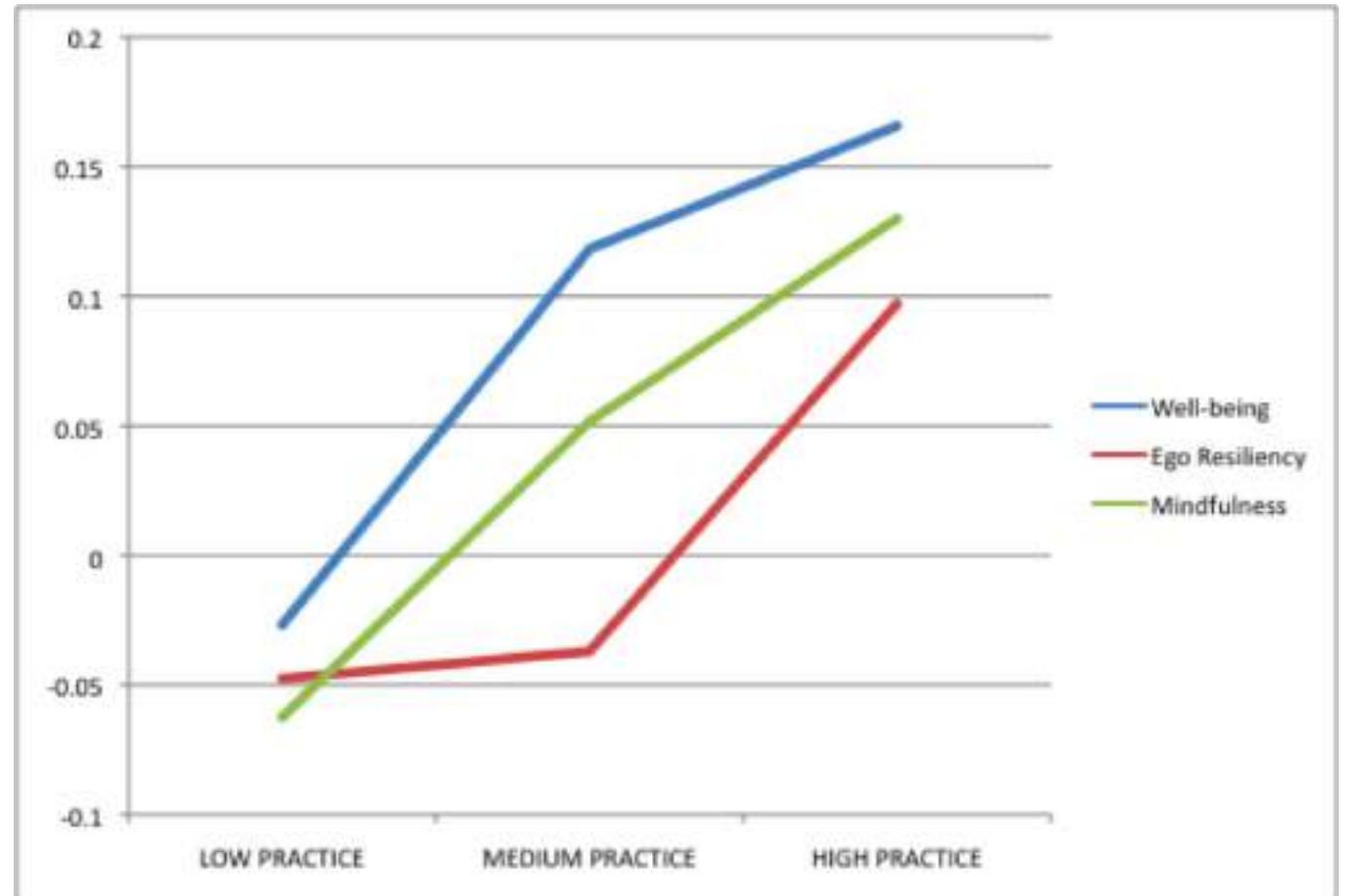


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<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/>
<https://mindfulnessaustralia.net.au/>

School-based mindfulness training improves well-being

Huppert & Johnson, Journal of Positive Psychology, 2010



Mindfulness in Schools

Outcome comparisons in adolescents at post-intervention and 3-month follow-up (N=522)

Kuyken et al., Brit. J. Psychiatry, 2013

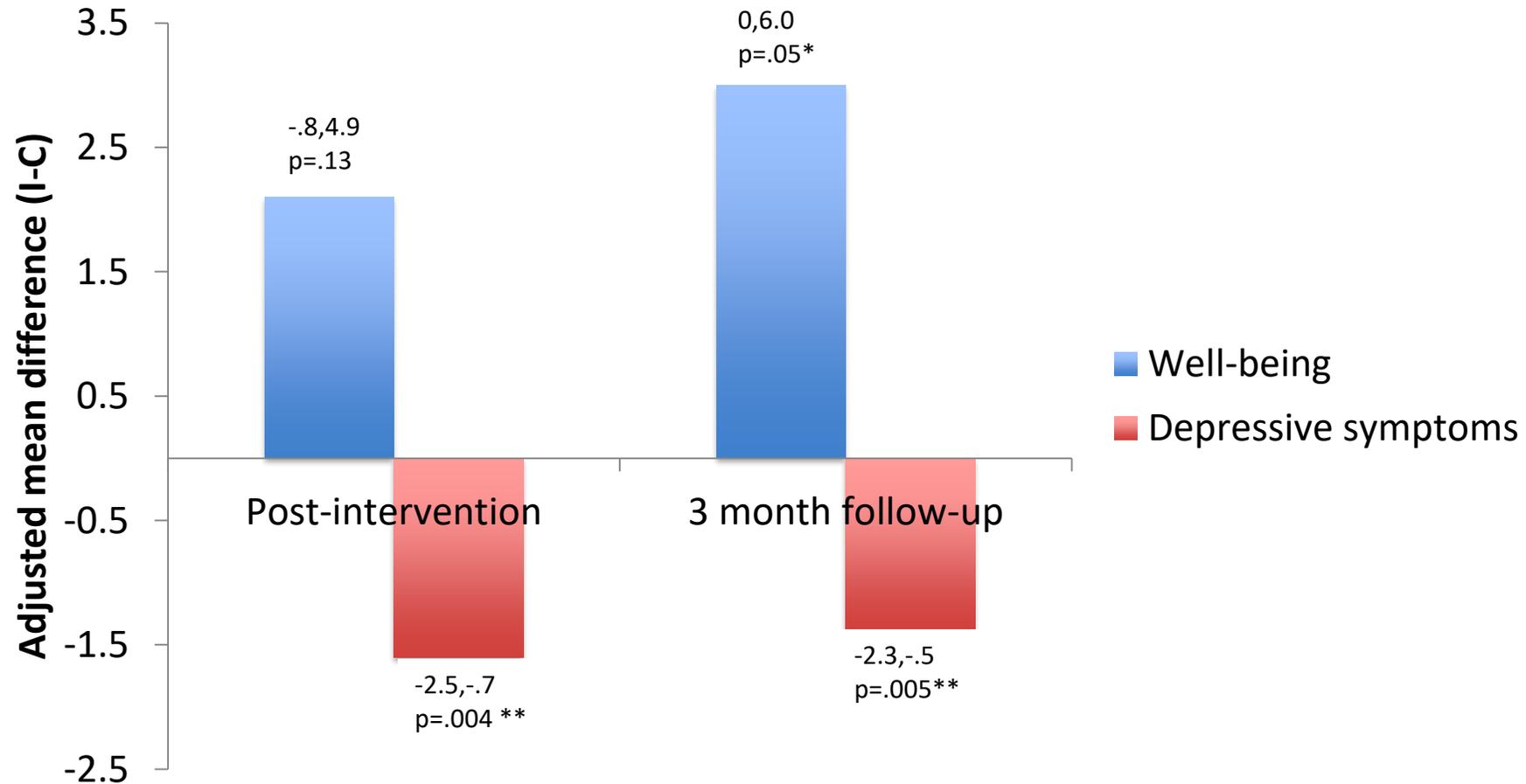


Figure. Outcome Comparisons at Post-intervention and 3-month follow-up (N=522); Kuyken et al., 2013

MYRIAD

Mindfulness and Resilience in Adolescence

Led by Oxford Mindfulness Centre, funded by the Wellcome Trust, UK

- Randomised controlled trials of:
 - teacher training
 - student training
- 2 year follow up

Effects of mindfulness-based teacher training

Systematic review by Hwang et al, Teaching and Teacher Education, 2017

Personal training in mindfulness skills can increase:

- teachers' well-being
- emotion regulation
- reductions in stress, distress and burnout
- teaching self-efficacy
- ability to manage classroom behaviour
- ability to establish and maintain supportive relationships with students

Effects of self-compassion training or induction

- Prevents depression relapse

Kuyken et al., Behaviour Research & Therapy, 2010

- Increased happiness

Shapiro & Mongrain, Journal of Positive Psychology, 2010

- Increased motivation to change for the better

Breins & Chen, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 2012

Compassion towards others

Benefits of compassion training

Systematic review and meta-analysis by Shonin et al., Mindfulness, 2015

Better mood,
less distress

Positive
thinking

Interpersonal
relationships

Empathic
accuracy

Enhancing self-regulation and pro-social behaviour in young children

The Kindness Curriculum

Randomised controlled trial with 68 pre-school children.

12 week mindfulness-based pro-social skills training versus waitlist control.

Benefits of kindness curriculum:

- **social competence**
- **cognitive flexibility**
- **delayed gratification**

Findings from neuroscience of compassion

Brain activation of regions associated with:

Affiliation

Positive emotions

Reward processing

The importance of critical thinking

Critical thinking

Applications

Developing media literacy

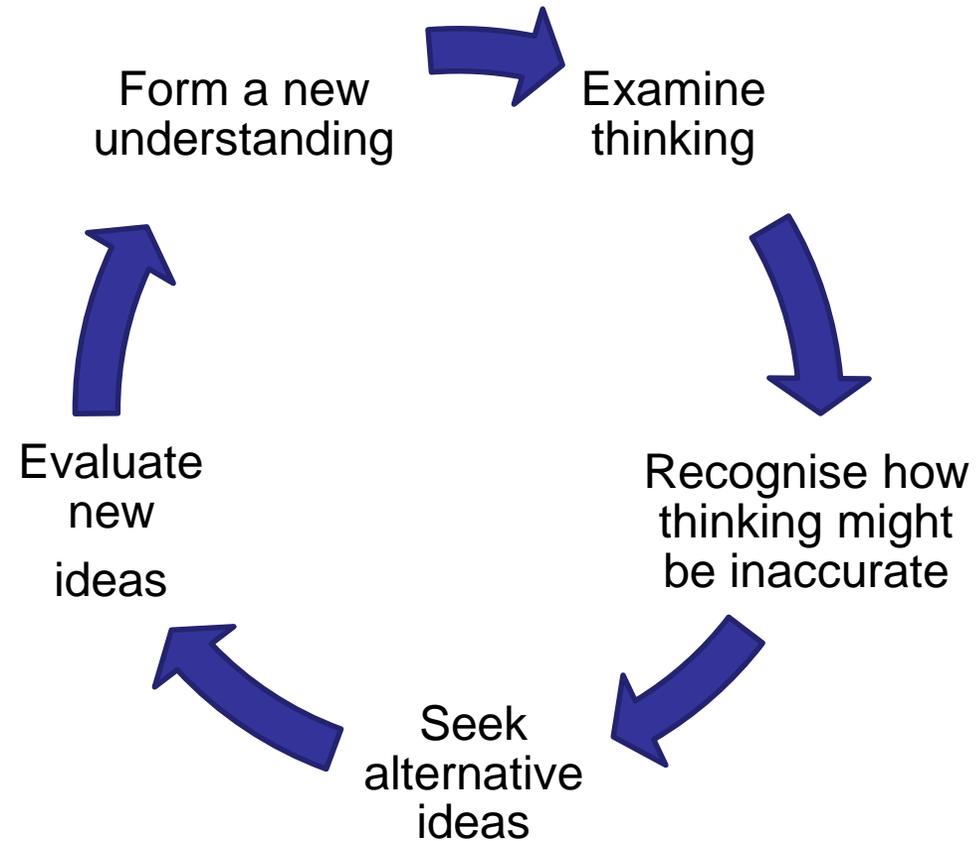
ability to interpret media rather than take it at face value

- distinguishing 'fake news' from 'reality'
- recognising source and intent of media message

Challenging social biases

- distinguishing facts from beliefs

Critical thinking

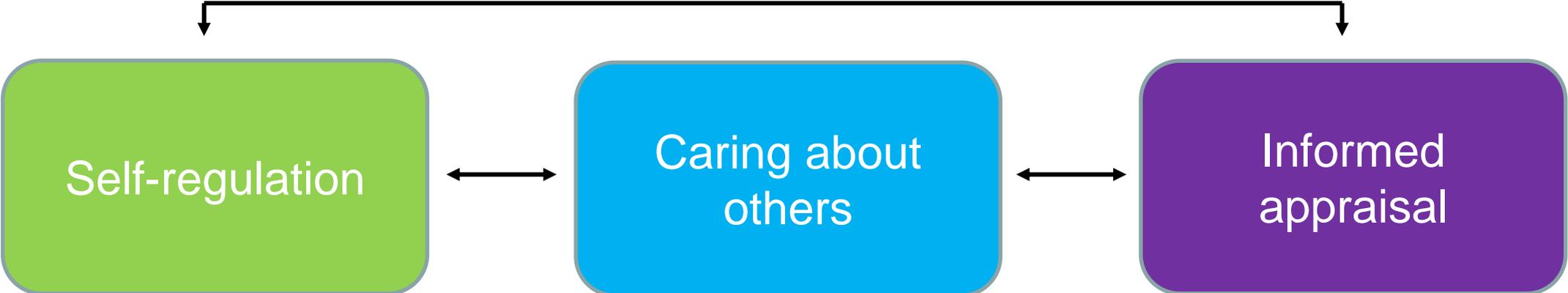


Mindfulness and Critical Thinking

Dispositional mindfulness is correlated with executive functions that underlie critical thinking.

What are the foundations of well-being?

Foundational skills for well-being in education



↑
**Mindfulness
training**

↑
**Compassion
training**

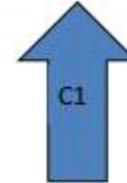
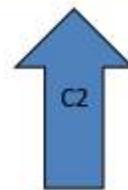
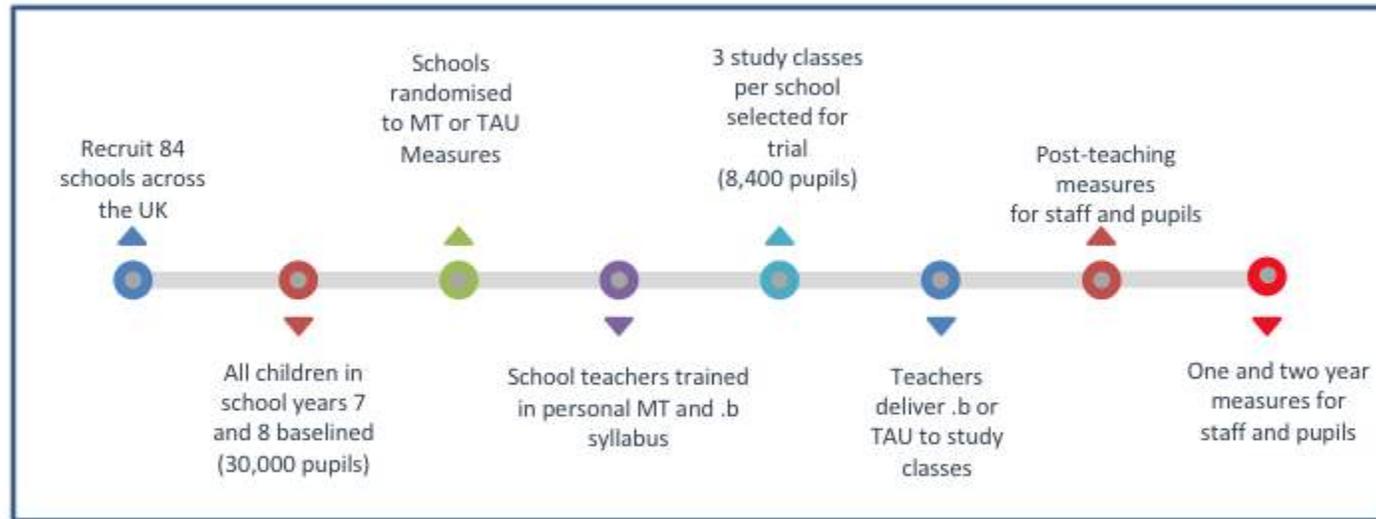
↑
**Critical thinking
skills**

Mindfulness practice

Practicing mindfulness can create a peaceful space in our busy lives.

- Allows us to pause and reflect on our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, rather than reacting to them in a habitual manner.
- Enables us to make wiser choices about how to respond.

MYRIAD Trial Current Status





THE WANDERING BRAIN.

Effects of compassion training

