Mindfulness and Power Posing Interventions to Decrease Emotional Distress

Lydia Carlson  
*University of Northern Iowa*

Cori Bohnenblust  
*University of Northern Iowa*

See next page for additional authors

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Increased mindfulness has been correlated with decreases in negative physiological and psychological processes and increases in desired physiological and psychological processes (Bostic et al., 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 2005). E.g., anxiety, chronic pain. Researchers suggested that power posing increased testosterone and decrease cortisol (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010). Leading to increases in feelings of power and self-confidence. Not replicated (Ranehill et al., 2015).

Methods and Materials

Participants: 4 college freshman from a Midwestern university. Students were asked to complete a measure of emotional distress, CESD-R; those who reported a moderate level of emotional distress were invited to participate in the interventions. Single case design: ABACAD. Participants randomly assigned to order of intervention implementation.

Participants taught mindfulness, power posing (practicing mindfulness while in a power pose), and a combination intervention - mindful-power posing (practicing mindfulness during the intervention phases, but no different than baseline levels). Participants participated in the interventions.

Participants implemented intervention once per day and rated their emotional distress using the Patient Health Questionnaire – 2 (PHQ-2). Participants did not fully adhere to daily practice of the intervention and progress monitoring. Pre and Post differences in CESD-R scores (no post intervention data was gathered for Participant A).

Implementation Integrity:

- Participants were trained by PI prior to beginning each intervention phase, but were responsible for daily independent intervention adherence and monitoring of emotional distress.
- Participants did not fully adhere to daily practice of the intervention and progress monitoring.
- Integrity of intervention completion was varied from 45%-100%.

Results

Participants B, D, and T all had slight reductions in scores on the guilt subscale suggesting improved view of self. Participants B showed lower emotional distress; one not more effective than another. Participant A showed lower emotional distress during mindful-power posing combination compared to other intervention phases, but no different than baseline levels.

Conclusions

- Participants T and D seemed to benefit from intervention, but not one intervention over another. Possible that first intervention lowered emotional distress.
- Conclusions tentative due to: Implementation integrity issues.
- Partial return to baseline, inconsistent baseline.
- Limitations: Students participation level.

Limitations

- Small number of PHQ-2 daily questions.
- Studies have arisen suggesting power posing is not an effective way of changing state of mind.

For future studies

- Increase participation.
- More representative sample.

References


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Contact Information: nicole.skaar@uni.edu