

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Adolescence

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jado

Brief report: Feasibility of a mindfulness and self-compassion based mobile intervention for adolescents



Elizabeth Donovan ^{a, *}, Rachel F. Rodgers ^b, Tara M. Cousineau ^a,
Kayla M. McGowan ^a, Stephanie Luk ^b, Kayla Yates ^b, Debra L. Franko ^b

^a BodiMojo, Inc., 1631 Canton Ave., Milton, MA 02168, USA

^b Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 May 2016

Received in revised form 1 September 2016

Accepted 23 September 2016

Available online 1 November 2016

Keywords:

Adolescence

Mindfulness

Self-compassion

Technology

Mobile

App

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to test the feasibility of a mindfulness and self-compassion based program for adolescents, to be delivered through mobile phones. Twenty racially and ethnically diverse US adolescents enrolled in a study to use the app for 30 days, after which they provided satisfaction data and participated in focus groups to describe their experiences and offer suggestions for improving the app. Usage data were also captured. Results indicated that participants used the app on the majority of days over the intervention period, reported finding it helpful for managing stress, and provided suggestions for substantive areas for improvement. These findings suggest that a mobile app may be a feasible way to disseminate a mindfulness and self-compassion based program widely among adolescents.

© 2016 The Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Adolescence is a challenging period characterized by rapid cognitive, physiological, and neurological changes (Giedd, 2008) as well as increasing emotional and social demands. Interventions that foster coping and well-being are particularly important during this period.

Constructs drawn from Eastern contemplative traditions such as mindfulness and self-compassion are associated with well-being (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011; Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015) and may play a role in the pathway to emotional well-being in adolescents (Bluth & Blanton, 2013; 2014). Mindfulness focuses on awareness and attentiveness to immediate experience (Grossman, 2010), encouraging openness, curiosity and a compassionate acceptance of oneself. Interventions aiming to develop mindfulness skills in adolescents show a positive effect on a broad range of outcomes (Zoogman, Goldberg, Hoyt, & Miller, 2014) including decreased negative and increased positive affect (Broderick & Metz, 2009; Ciarrochi, Kashdan, Leeson, Heaven, & Jordan, 2011), as well as increases in well-being (Huppert & Johnson, 2010). Similarly, self-compassion emphasizes a compassionate way of relating to oneself through self-kindness, mindfulness and an appreciation of common humanity (Neff, 2003b) with an emphasis on self-soothing when encountering suffering (Germer, 2009). A controlled study of a mindful-self-compassion based intervention for adolescents resulted in greater self-compassion, greater life satisfaction, and significantly lower depression (Bluth, Gaylord, Campo, Mullarkey, & Hobbs, 2016).

* Corresponding author. Department of Psychology, Simmons College, 300 Fenway, Boston, MA 02115, USA.

E-mail address: donovanelizabeth@gmail.com (E. Donovan).

Mobile phone applications have a high potential for teaching these skills to a large number of adolescents. Almost three quarters of adolescents (73%) have or have access to a smartphone (Lenhart, 2015). Mobile interventions are effective at changing a range of health behaviors (Free et al., 2013). Thus, the aim of the current study was to test the feasibility of a novel approach to teaching mindfulness and self-compassion to adolescents through a mobile-based program.

1. Method

1.1. Recruitment and setting

Adolescents were recruited from an after-school organization providing employment in the arts to underserved youth. Inclusion criteria for the study were: (a) being enrolled at the organization; and (b) owning an iPhone or iTouch.

1.2. Intervention

Participants used the BodiMojo mobile app, with content based on Neff's (2003a; 2003b) conceptualization of self-compassion which includes 3 constructs: mindfulness (non-judgmental awareness of ones' thoughts and emotions); self-kindness (showing warmth and understanding towards oneself, especially in times of suffering), and common humanity (recognition that suffering and feelings of personal inadequacy are part of the shared human experience).

To facilitate engagement, the app features a customizable (color, facial features) partially animated "buddy" and consists of two daily activities: (1) tracking feelings and (2) reviewing/practicing a wellness tip. Tracking feelings involves selecting words that populate a "mood cloud," providing a visual representation of the participant's mood (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The daily wellness tip prompts adolescents to engage in mindful acceptance, self-kindness and self-regulation and is sometimes linked to an audio relaxation. Daily wellness tips draw on self-compassion and mindfulness approaches and positive psychology (Bolier, Haverman, Westerhof, Riper, & Bohlmeijer, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 2003, 1996; Neff, 2003a, 2003b). See Table 1.

1.3. Procedure

Participants provided signed parental consent and assent. Research staff met with the participants to download the app. During the 30-day intervention period, participants were instructed to open the app daily to: (1) record their feelings and review the personalized feedback; and (2) review a daily wellness tip. After the intervention period, participants completed a short satisfaction questionnaire prior to participating in a 30-min focus group. The goals of the focus groups were to: (1) explore adolescents' experience with the app; and (2) elicit suggestions for improvements. Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants were compensated with a \$50 gift card. The study was approved by the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board.

1.4. Measures

Participants provided age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Two outcomes were obtained: (1) usage data, (number of days that participants used the app); and (2) a nine-item satisfaction questionnaire assessing overall enjoyment, helpfulness, value of the program, and opinions about the design and preferences for features in the app.

1.5. Statistical analyses

Descriptive statistics were calculated for usage and satisfaction. Qualitative data were analyzed using a modified version of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis. Specifically, two members of the team read the transcripts and

Table 1
Sample content messages.

Self-compassion construct	Sample messages
Self-kindness	Life is impossible to get through without some embarrassment, [[username]]. When you feel shame, place your hand over your heart and (say ouch this hurts and) wish yourself well. Are you too hard on yourself? Me too. Tell yourself what you'd say to a good friend who needs support.
Common humanity	When something goes wrong, it's easy to think you're the only one going through it. You're not alone. Others have felt the same way. Hang in there and stay hopeful!
Mindfulness	Ever find yourself saying, "FAILED," when something doesn't go your way? Laugh at yourself. It's just part of being human! Take a deep breath, [[username]]. Does breathing in feel cool or warm? What about breathing out? Can you feel the air moving in your body? Where? Look around and notice one beautiful thing. The light on a tree, the feel of the wind on your face, the color of the sky. Name what you see.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5033901>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5033901>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)