



Intellectual Output 2

The Mindful Ageing Bootcamp

Facilitators' Guide

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Introduction

The Mindful Ageing Bootcamp has been developed as part of the project which aims to support older people in becoming more aware of the importance of mental and physical wellbeing. Alongside this the significance of preventing isolation and other mental or physical problems is emphasised. The programme in general advocates for maintaining a positive, healthy mindset, building resilience and looking after yourself. As part of this, the Bootcamp specifically delivers these ideas to a group of people, within the target group of 50+ citizens, through a 2-3 day programme. The Bootcamp presents positive psychology interventions and mindfulness techniques, as much research has shown the health benefits of such.

This guide fulfils the purpose of **providing information** for facilitators of the bootcamp as part of the Mindful Ageing programme. It will explore the different activities that can be carried out during the Bootcamp and aid the delivery of such. The lesson plan takes facilitators through various ideas and initiatives which have been tried with groups before. Overall the guide should aid a deeper understanding of what the project is about and how the Bootcamp can benefit people in relation to mindfulness and other techniques to look after their wellbeing.

Facilitators can also refer to the guide when explaining the ideas that provide the foundation for the course - it will provide examples of activities but also explain the meaning of them and demonstrate a **holistic approach**.

Outline of the Bootcamp Programme

The Mindful Ageing Bootcamp is designed to be run over 3 days as follows (a full, detailed plan is given in the section below):

<p>Day 1</p>	<p>A well-being audit: considering the impacts of ageing and the importance of good mental wellbeing. Identifying warning signs and planning for more positive ageing.</p> <p><u>Includes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Background to Mindful Ageing -Warning signs of poor mental health -Group dialogue and discussion about mindfulness practice, ageing challenges and how our judgement and preconceived ideas affect how we age -Discussion on the importance of physical health, mental health and positive psychology -Planning for positive ageing - What can people do? How to set goals? -Mindful Ageing Audit exercise -Impacts of ageing -Sharing personal experiences and interaction with each other
<p>Day 2</p>	<p>Developing a healthy and positive mind and body: tools and techniques to Ageing Mindfully.</p> <p><u>Includes:</u></p> <p>Mindfulness activities to improve your brain health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meditation, Deep breathing, Raisin exercise, Body scan, Mind mapping, Morning journal, Mood tracking -Interactive mental games <p>Neuro-Linguistic Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How to use NLP to change mindsets and develop a more positive approach to ageing
<p>Day 3 (optional for participants)</p>	<p>This day should include a range of practical, hands-on sessions aiming to give participants a ‘taster’ of activities they could try to help them be more active and positive in their approach to ageing.</p> <p>This may include (but is flexible based on group needs/expertise of partners):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Yoga sessions -Physical exercise sessions -Healthy eating & nutrition workshops

This is a good suggested outline, however facilitators may wish to review this based on the needs and interests of participants and the availability of speakers or workshop leaders. For example, in the UK pilots we invited teachers to deliver Zumba, TaiChi and yoga sessions, but because of their availability these were delivered across all 3 days. In the event, participants enjoyed this mix of theory and practical across all 3 days and most people attended the full 3 days of the Bootcamp (with 1 or 2 exceptions due to illness).

Suggested Session Plans and Activities

Overview

This section provides a detailed overview of the activities included across each day of the Bootcamp programme. Timings and descriptions for each activity are provided to aid the facilitator, however it should be noted that this can be flexible and adapted to the needs and interests of each group.

A set of Powerpoint slides and other resources have been developed to support the delivery of the Bootcamp sessions. Please see the Resources section of this document below.

Duration	DAY 1
15 min	<p style="text-align: center;">Ice-breaking activity</p> <p>1. Give your name and describe yourself in 3 keywords This method is used to introduce participants to each other and to get to know each other, and it also works for large groups. Each participant is allowed to use three keywords to introduce themselves to the others. It can be, for example, characteristics or hobbies to describe oneself. Particularly with new groups, this ice-breaker helps to make the participants more tangible.</p> <p>2. Two truths, one lie In this activity, participants must take turns expressing 3 facts about themselves. Two of them are true, one is false. The goal of the game is to find out which of the three facts is false. Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the activity to the group and allow a few minutes for everyone to think. 2. Ask for a volunteer to begin by stating their 3 experiences. The group then works together to find out which statement is false until they find the correct one. 3. Once the correct answer is found, the next person speaks and so on. 4. At the end of this Icebreaker, gather the participants around to let them discuss among themselves, because this workshop can arouse curiosity and create discussions! <p>Reference: https://raidboxes.io/fr/blog/online-marketing/online-ice-breakers/ https://www.klap.io/jeux-icebreakers/</p>
30 min	<p style="text-align: center;">Mindful Audit</p> <p>The facilitator will use the audit form (see 'Evaluation' section below) to ask participants questions about how they feel at the moment in terms of different aspects of their wellbeing. These same questions will be asked again at the end of the Bootcamp to notice if there is a change among participants, following the sessions.</p>
15 min	<p style="text-align: center;">Background to Mindful Ageing</p> <p>An introduction to the Mindful Ageing project and partners will be given as well as an overview of the background to the project, why it was developed and the importance of the topic.</p> <p>PPT slides are provided to use within the project itself. These could be adapted for use in future/external delivery.</p>

15-25 min	<p style="text-align: center;">Group dialogue exercise</p> <p>The objective of the group dialogue is to discuss one's own experience, to listen to others, to encourage the group to come together and build the energy and collective dynamic of the group.</p> <p>The facilitator starts the group dialogue by asking participants if they know what mindful ageing is and how they would define it.</p> <p>Then, the facilitator asks participants if they know some mindful ageing techniques and to give some examples.</p> <p>The facilitator asks to elaborate on the examples given and if participants have ever used those techniques.</p> <p>If they answer positively, the facilitator asks about their experience: How was it? Did they enjoy it? Did they feel better afterward? Would they do it again?</p> <p>If they answer negatively, the facilitator asks if they would be interested to try and what would motivate them to do so.</p> <p>Finally, the discussion closes with the facilitator asking participants to think about benefits that mindful ageing techniques could have.</p> <p>Reference: https://pleineconscienceintegrative.com/accueil-2/2-schema-complet-2/</p>
30 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Interactive mental games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trivia Quizzes - Sudoku - Arts & Crafts - Puzzles - Chess
30 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Warning signs of poor mental health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the topic - Group discussion
30 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion on spiritual health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short presentation on spiritual well-being. - Group discussion

30 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Planning for positive ageing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the concept of positive ageing. - Tips and tricks. - Share your experience and tips. Group work.
60 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Impacts of ageing (refer to Resources for further information)</p> <p>Changes brought by ageing– How do we adapt to them? Open dialogue about personal experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes towards ageing - what do you think about ageing? - What changes as you get older? - How do you personally maintain muscle strength and mobility? - Local exercise opportunities? - Nutrition - discuss the dish model and the nutritional pyramid - How does the dish model come true in my everyday life? - How has the change in the food pyramid in 2014 come true in your dining? - Where do you get your fibre, do you feel that you get a sufficient amount? - What kind of fat do you use and where? - What protein sources do you use? - Which veggies and fruits do you prefer? - Sleep and rest - what amount of sleep is enough for you? - What helps you fall asleep in the evenings? - Do you wake up at night? - Mental health - Social relationships - Meaningful doing - To refresh the memory - tips on how to do this? - Calming your mind - by what means do you calm your mind?
20 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Closing of day 1 - feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The day ends with Mindfulness training - Gathering feedback

Duration	DAY 2
<p>1 hour</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ice-breaking activity - World Cafe' concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin the day with a 'Breathing Space Meditation' - 5 minutes - See Resources section for script. - We follow this with a World Cafe style session: <p>Questions are put on tables and participants move between each table to discuss the different questions. Participants should gather at each table and discuss for approximately 20 minutes. They will then move to the next table. At the end, a representative from each table should share the final conclusions with the entire group.</p> <p>Tables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mindfulness- What is your understanding of mindfulness? Follow up questions: what are some misconceptions of mindfulness? How is it beneficial? 2. Ageing- How have you experienced the process of ageing? Follow up questions: what have been your experiences? What are some common stereotypes and generalisations regarding ageing? How do these make you feel? 3. Healthy lifestyle- What makes a healthy lifestyle? Follow up questions: what things do you need to do to maintain a healthy life? What do you already do to ensure you are keeping healthy? What does the term 'healthy' refer to- e.g. physical activity, mental health, nutrition? <p>See Resources section for further information on setting up a World Cafe session.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Meditation/Mindfulness</p> <p>Theory on what is Mindfulness, its benefits and research on the cognitive effects etc:</p> <p>Short 3 minute video explaining mindfulness: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjtfyuTTQFY</p> <p>Additional resources:</p> <p>TedTALK by Richard J Davidson- 'How Mindfulness Changes the Emotional Life of Our Brains.' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CBfCW67xT8</p> <p>This video discusses 4 problems that mindfulness can help to tackle:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distractibility 2. Loneliness 3. Negative self talk and depression 4. Loss of meaning and purpose in life <p>A 17 minute video, the talk on neuroplasticity starts from 13:30 minutes. Watch the last four minutes of the TED Talk. The talk ends with a 1 minute period of practice at the end. This can be practised by participants.</p> <p>Research from Peter Malinowski, Adam W. Moore, Bethan R Mead and Thomas Gruber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study of participants between ages of 55-75. Participants were randomly allocated to an 8-week mindful breath awareness training group. Before and after the training period, participants completed exercises which were designed to measure control and emotional regulation processes. Brain activity was measured and results showed that engaging in just over 10 mins of mindfulness practice five times per week resulted in significant improvements in behavioural and electrophysiological measures related to general task performance. This means that practising mindfulness has physical effects on the brain by altering your brain chemicals! - 'Overall, the results indicate that engaging in mindfulness meditation training improvised the maintenance of goal directed visuospatial attention and may be a useful strategy for counteracting cognitive decline associated with ageing.' The research article can be found here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288479759 Mindful Aging The Effects of Regular Brief Mindfulness Practice on Electrophysiological Markers of Cognitive and Affective Processing in Older Adults <p>Short Mindfulness exercise - Raisin Eating Script (see Resources section for the script):</p>
15 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Deep breathing</p> <p>The facilitator gives some information to the participants about this activity. - Short ppt presentation</p> <p>Follow the information on the Deep Breathing Exercise, provided in the Resources section.</p>
15 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Body Scan Meditation</p> <p>The facilitator gives some information to the participants about this activity. - Short presentation.</p>

	Follow the information on the Body Scan Meditation, provided in the Resources section.
15 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Mind mapping</p> <p>The facilitator presents ways that you can schedule your mind map and after that all participants are invited to create their own mind map.</p> <p>Participants produce their own Mindmap relating to their thoughts/ feelings/ ideas around Mindful Ageing and what they would like to change for themselves.</p>
15 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Morning Routines</p> <p>The moderator presents ways you can plan your morning routine for a good start to the day. After that, the participants are invited to create their own plan for a mindful morning routine.</p> <p><u>STEPS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting up and getting active helps to wake you up more fully than a cup of coffee, and it can help you stay awake longer. Starting your day off with a little moving around also helps you get some exercise before your brain can object. Whether you're a marathon runner or you just do a few sets of yoga positions, this is a very important part of healthy morning rituals. 2. Having a full, healthy, well-rounded breakfast is shown to help improve healthy food choices throughout the rest of the day. A good breakfast should include a source of carbohydrates, healthy fats, and protein. Including some veggies here and there during breakfasts is great, whether you prefer them to the side or in a green smoothie! 3. While you're probably used to having a plan, learning to prioritise while you plan is a great habit to pick up. <i>Choose 1 – 3 big or important things that you need to get done that day.</i> Try to get them done at the beginning of your day so that you can fill up the rest of your day more productively. This would be a great time to start a mindfulness morning journal to develop a deeper more relaxing mindful morning. And, of course, make time for yourself!
20 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">Mood tracking</p> <p>The facilitator presents some templates of mood trackers and asks for the participants to track their everyday mood for this week.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">NLP and Reframing session</p> <p>Introduction to NLP- what is it and what does it mean?</p> <p>Watch this introductory video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vlcsFJyEXQ Explanation of NLP from co-creator Richard Brandler.</p> <p>Reframing exercise/ Kensho Moments Resource: Ask participants to think about a negative situation they recently found themselves in. Could be something as simple as they were delayed on public transport. Ask them to write down the scenario. What was the problem? How did it make them feel? Then ask them to reconsider the problem and think about ways they can reframe it to make it positive. Did anything good come from this situation? Did it teach you anything?</p>
	Closing of day 2 - feedback
Duration	DAY 3
	Ice-breaking activity
	<p>The aim of the third day is to develop a practical workshop to further explore how participants can become more active and engaged in wellbeing activities. External speakers may be invited or the facilitator may wish to base the day's programme on their own areas of expertise/interest. .</p> <p>It could include, for example, a yoga lesson, a guided meditation, a session on nutrition or a TaiChi taster session.</p>
<p>End of bootcamps - Evaluation and Feedback</p> <p>(Evaluation forms provided see 'Evaluation' section below)</p>	

Resources

The Mindful Ageing partnership has developed a range of resources to support the delivery of the Bootcamp programme. These can be found in the annexes to this document.

Resources include:

- Full set of Powerpoint Slides covering each days topics
- 'Impacts of Ageing' Information Resource
- Breathing Space Script
- World Cafe Information Resource
- Raisin Eating Script
- Deep Breathing Exercise
- Body Scan Meditation Script
- Mind Mapping Information Resource
- Kensho Moments Exercise

Guidelines on Working with the Target Group

There are numerous things to consider when working with the target group of those 50+, in particular those from vulnerable groups. This includes but is not limited to those particularly at risk of social isolation e.g. people living alone on low incomes/ in low-socio-economic areas; from minority ethnic groups; from LGBTQ+ groups and members of the disabled communities.

When working with the target group, it is paramount that factors are considered which may limit an individual's ability to comfortably participate in the activities of the Boot Camp. For example, asking participants to specify whether they have any accessibility issues prior to attending the Boot Camp will help to ensure that you have the appropriate practical support in place. Facilitators should enable people to opt out briefly from elements of the programme in addition to providing alternative ways of engaging.

Additionally, it is worth preparing alternative exercises to any physical activities so that participants who are unable or uncomfortable taking part in physical or strenuous exercise are not excluded. Alternative activities could include providing some Mindful Colouring sheets or puzzles. Some activities can be modified depending on individual needs for example simple stretches or chair exercise routines.

Another thing to consider is that some topics of discussion may be sensitive for some individuals. In particular, topics such as mental health. When addressing these issues it is important to monitor the conversation carefully and ensure that the group discussion is sensitive. It is worth setting some ground rules at the beginning of the session to ensure that issues do not arise. It may also be necessary to signpost individuals to organisations that can offer specialist advice.

Finally, working with diverse groups can be challenging; as inclusive facilitators we also wish to avoid stigmatising older people as some may be highly active with no age-related issues. They may be socially adept, with good support, perhaps still working and cognitively sharp. It is also essential to remember that, though we are working here with the target group of '50+ adults', there is a great difference between a 55 year old and an 75 year old. All sessions and activities should be planned with this in mind and adapted to suit the group and individuals within it. As facilitators we need to adapt our approach to personalise our interactions with all those taking part, handling situations sensitively. The Mindful Ageing Project also encourages the value of older people and this is a philosophy we would support in all our communication with learners.

Evaluation Resources

In order to assess the impact of the Bootcamps on participants, the following evaluation resources were developed:

1/ Mindfulness Audit Form - this was used to gain a better understanding of participants' understanding of Mindfulness, positive psychology and active ageing at the beginning of the Bootcamp. Participants rated how they felt on a number of statements and then repeated the form at the end of the Bootcamp. From here we can track if there has been a change in their perceptions relating to these areas as a result of the training. The Audit Form can be seen in Annex 1.

2/ A session evaluation form was provided at the end of each day, to gain feedback after each session. This form can be found in Annex 4.

3/ A final evaluation form was provided at the end of the Bootcamp. This added to the session evaluations and aimed to collect more information on the impact the Bootcamp had on participants' understanding of the tools we had explored and the changes they would make as a result. This form can be found in Annex 4.

References

- [*Elderly Breathing Exercises for Seniors – ELDERGYM®*](#)
- [*Body Scan Meditation \(Greater Good in Action\).*](#)
- [*Healey, T. \(2021, November 16\). A 10-Minute Full Body Scan Meditation. Mindful.*](#)
- [*Mental Health Delta Division. \(2021, August 28\). Interactive Games in Support of Mental Health.*](#)

