

Canadian Women for Wellness Initiative:

Impact of Transcendental Meditation on Individuals Who Have Faced Sexual Misconduct Within the Department of National Defense or Department of National Defence (DND/CAF)

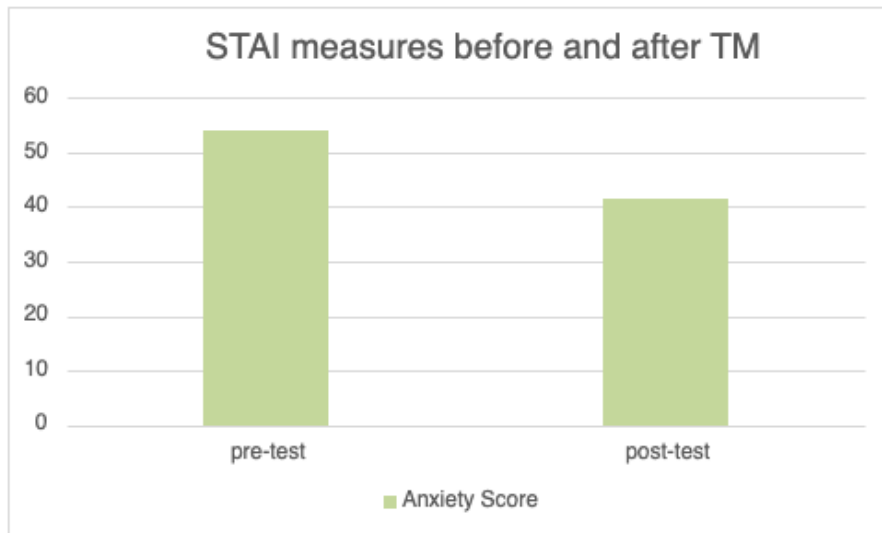
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Descriptive Statistics and Participant Information

Participants

- **Total Participants:** 158
- **Age:** Average 49 years old. Ages range from 34 to 80 years.
- **Gender:** 20.7% Male, 76.8% Female, 2.4% Prefer not to say
- **Ethnicity:** 82.9% Caucasian, 7.3% First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, 3.7% Prefer not to say, others in smaller percentages

Table 1. Anxiety: Significant reduction in feelings of tension, strain, and nervousness.



Largest Differences:

- "I feel tense": 46.3% (Pre) to 9.1% (Post)
- "I feel strained": 35.4% (Pre) to 3.0% (Post)

Anxiety t-test analysis:

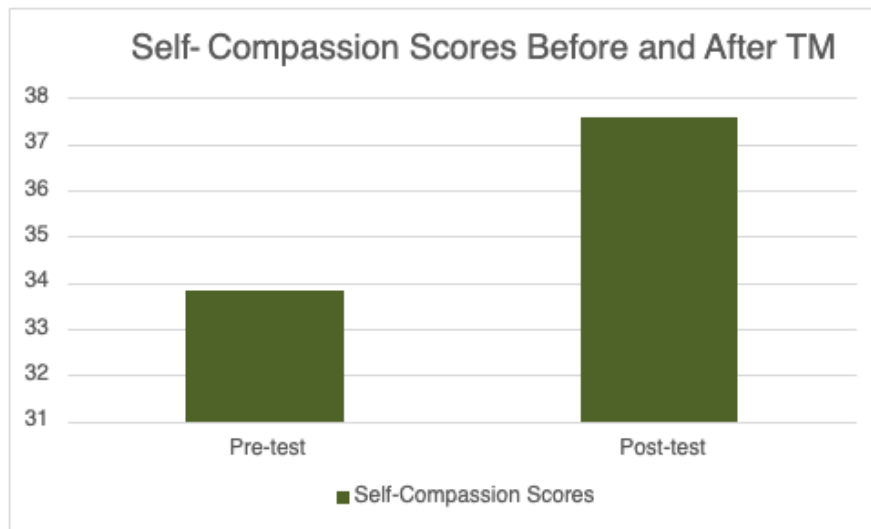
An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether TM meditation had a significant effect on anxiety levels. The pre-test (before meditation) and post-test (after meditation) scores were compared. The analysis yielded a p-value of 0.00000855, which is significantly below the alpha level of 0.01.

- H_0 (null hypothesis): There is no difference in anxiety scores after performing the meditation task.
- H_1 (alternative hypothesis): There is a difference in anxiety scores after performing the meditation task.
- Alpha (α): 0.01

Since $0.00000855 < 0.01$, we reject the null hypothesis.

Conclusion: this result indicates that the difference in anxiety scores is statistically significant. In other words, it is very unlikely that the change happened by chance, and we can conclude that TM meditation had a meaningful effect in reducing anxiety.

Table 2. Self-Compassion: Improvement in understanding and patience towards oneself.



Self-Compassion t-test analysis:

We conducted an independent samples t-test to examine the statistical significance of the difference in self-compassion scores between the pre-test (before meditation) and the post-test (after meditation). The p-value obtained was 0.000356.

- H_0 (null hypothesis): There is no difference in self-compassion scores after performing the TM meditation task.
- H_1 (alternative hypothesis): There is a difference in self-compassion scores after performing the TM meditation task.
- Alpha (α): 0.01

Since $0.000356 < 0.01$, we reject the null hypothesis.

Conclusion: This means the difference in scores is statistically significant. We can conclude that TM meditation had a meaningful effect on increasing self-compassion, and the observed improvement is unlikely due to chance.

Largest Differences:

- "When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy": 37.5% (Pre) to 19.4% (Post)
- "I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like": 38.8% (Pre) to 8.3% (Post)

Assessment and Evaluation of TM Course

Improvements after mediation:

- 75.9% reported reduced stress levels.
- 69.0% reported decreased anxiety.
- 48.3% reported improved health and better relationships.

Satisfaction:

- 93.1% were satisfied with their TM practice.
- 100% recognized the importance of meditating regularly.

Feedback – summary of findings:

- **Positive Feedback:** High satisfaction with the course and instructors.
- **Challenges:** Difficulty in maintaining a twice-daily meditation routine due to time constraints and lifestyle.

Common Themes:

- Increased calmness and reduced stress.

- Improved self-awareness and self-compassion.
- Challenges in maintaining regular practice due to busy schedules.

Actionable Areas or Opportunities

- **How might we** help clients find ways to integrate regular meditation into their daily life?
- **How might we** build on the positive shift in less judgment of self? Recognize it in other areas of life.
- **How might we** include meditation into DND workspaces, especially for those facing higher levels of anxiety and/or hard on themselves?

Breakdown of Survey Data:

Anxiety Survey (Trait Anxiety Inventory)

- **I feel secure:** Significant increase in feelings of security.
 - Pre-test: 21.9% felt "not at all" secure.
 - Post-test: 0% felt "not at all" secure.
- **I feel strained:** Major reduction in feelings of strain
 - Pre-test: 35.4% felt "very much" strained.
 - Post-test: 3.0% felt "very much" strained.
- **I feel upset:** Increase in feelings of calmness and reduction in upset feelings.
 - Pre-test: 29.3% felt "not at all" upset.
 - Post-test: 42.4% felt "not at all" upset.
- **I feel tense:** Higher levels of anxiety were reported.
 - Pre-test: 46.3% felt "very much" tense.
 - Post-test: 9.1% felt "very much" tense.

Self-Compassion Survey

- **When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation:**
 - Pre-test: 32.5% felt "almost never" balanced.
 - Post-test: 16.7% felt "almost never" balanced.
- **When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am:**
 - Pre-test: 37.5% felt "almost always" this way.
 - Post-test: 2.8% felt "almost always" this way.

- **When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure:**
 - Pre-test: 45.0% felt "almost always" alone.
 - Post-test: 8.3% felt "almost always" alone.
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Interviews:

Participants Interviews: A total of N = 7 TM students and teachers (including military veterans and trauma survivors)

Key Findings and themes that emerged from the interviews fell into 6 different areas:

1. Emotional Regulation and Reduced Anxiety

Participants reported a significant decrease in anxiety and emotional overwhelm. TM offered a non-reactive space to observe thoughts without becoming entangled in them.

"TM is like a light switch... stop the questions and learn to not identify with my thoughts." – TM Participant

"Worry stops, and we can see it more clearly without attachment." – TM Participant

2. Improved Sleep and Physical Relaxation

Consistent TM practice helped participants sleep more soundly and feel physically lighter. Muscle tension, especially in the back and shoulders, diminished.

"We feel physically lighter, not so tight in the shoulders and back." – TM Participant

"After her first session, she drove home without stopping once — a dramatic shift from her agoraphobia." – TM Teacher

3. Increased Self-Compassion and Identity Repair

TM became a gateway to self-worth, emotional gentleness, and healing from trauma-induced self-neglect. Participants learned to treat themselves with kindness and respect.

"TM teaches me to not hate myself. I am whole, and I deserve to be cared for." – TM Participant

"We remind each other to be kind. Meditation is part of our life now." – TM Participant

4. Stronger Relationships and Emotional Boundaries

Practitioners reported improvements in relationships, including more patience, less defensiveness, and a stronger ability to set healthy boundaries.

"People around me haven't changed — I have. And now I can actually connect to them."
– TM Participant

"I've learned boundaries around family who didn't protect me." – TM Participant

5. Empowerment and Stability Despite Ongoing Trauma

Even those with complex trauma, such as childhood abuse or military sexual trauma, described TM as a stabilizing force. It helped them stay grounded and develop daily self-care rituals.

"My life is not pretty. But I am stable because of TM." – TM Participant

"I am a trauma advocate now. There are tools. There is hope." – TM Participant

Additional Observations

Non-Therapeutic Environment: TM was praised for not requiring verbal recounting of trauma. This lowered the barrier to participation and made the practice feel safe and manageable.

Behavioral Shifts: Changes in posture, dress, and even voice tone were noted by teachers—indicating deeper confidence and nervous system regulation.

Barriers: The most common barrier to regular TM practice was finding uninterrupted time twice a day, though many found creative solutions such as meditating in their car or workplace.

CONCLUSION:

Impact of Transcendental Meditation (TM) on Survivors of Sexual Misconduct

Transcendental Meditation (TM) has shown significant promise in supporting individuals who have faced sexual misconduct. Research indicates that TM can be particularly effective in reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, which are common among survivors of sexual violence (Rosenthal et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2012).

One of the key benefits of TM is its ability to foster a sense of inner peace and stability. Survivors of sexual misconduct often struggle with feelings of insecurity and fear. The data from the study shows a statistically significant reduction in anxiety, indicating that TM had a meaningful effect in reducing feelings of tension and strain. In other words, it is very unlikely that the observed changes happened by chance, suggesting participants felt more secure and at ease. This is crucial for rebuilding a sense of safety and trust in oneself and the world.

Additionally, TM has been found to improve overall mental health and resilience, making it a valuable tool for long-term recovery (Leach & Lorenzon, 2024).

Increased self-compassion is another critical aspect of healing for individuals who have faced sexual misconduct. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness, recognizing one's shared humanity, and being mindful of one's suffering. Research has shown that self-compassion can significantly reduce feelings of shame and self-blame, which are common among survivors of sexual misconduct (McLean et al., 2018). By fostering a compassionate inner dialogue, survivors can begin to rebuild their self-esteem and sense of worth. This study's data highlights statistically significant improvements in self-compassion scores, with notable reductions in feelings of inadequacy and isolation. This means the difference in scores is unlikely to be due to chance, and TM meditation had a meaningful effect on increasing self-compassion. These findings align with existing research suggesting that self-compassion practices can lead to better emotional regulation and reduced symptoms of PTSD (Self-Compassion, n.d.).

In conclusion, Transcendental Meditation can play a vital role in the recovery process for survivors of sexual misconduct. TM provides a practical and effective method for reducing stress and anxiety while enhancing self-compassion to foster emotional healing and resilience. The regular practice of TM offers a non-invasive and cost-effective approach to supporting survivors on their journey to recovery.

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