Establishing the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and depressive and anxiety symptoms in the LGBT community

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Introduction/Background

Mindfulness can be described as “paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally.” As this definition implies, mindfulness involves attention and awareness to the present moment in an intentional and objective manner that attempts to remove judgment from one’s initial experiencing of experiences. The idea is that a mindful person will assess any situation in a reasonable manner, affording them the clarity to make decisions that lead to desirable outcomes. The development of mindfulness has its origins with the core teachings of the Buddhist religion. The language of Buddhist psychology is called Sati, which dates back 2,500 years ago. Sati in Buddhist signifies awareness, attention and remembering. Dispositional mindfulness describes the innate characteristic to be mindful, and can be measured using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). The FFMQ is a self-reported assessment that evaluates the five facets or components of mindfulness. The table below outlines the Five Components of the FFMQ:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Examples from FFMQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observing</td>
<td>Awareness of one’s internal and external experiences</td>
<td>Example: I am good at finding words to describe my feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting with Awareness</td>
<td>The ability to entertain internal experiences.</td>
<td>Example: I often pay attention while performing tasks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Judgment</td>
<td>Disregard of initial opinion regarding thoughts, emotions, perception, and thought</td>
<td>Example: I am not quick to judgment with my emotions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>Detachment from internal experiences affording the internal experience to “flow freely” without forcing to react to them.</td>
<td>Example: I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence suggests that mindfulness impacts depressive and anxiety symptoms. Research into mindfulness has increased over the last decade in many professional disciplines. Healthcare professionals, lawyers, athletes and educators have utilized mindfulness based interventions (MBI) to relieve stress and enhance focus. MBI has demonstrated clinical benefit in the treatment of anxiety disorder; bipolar disorder, depression, and diabetes. 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) are 21-question self-reported surveys that measure signs, symptoms, and traits characteristic of depression and anxiety respectively. There will also be a section for demographic information including past mindfulness practices. After completion, participants will be provided an internet link to review their FFMQ score and what it means.

Inclusion Criteria
- LGBT-identified adults ages 18 and older

Exclusion Criteria
- Severe visual impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- Non-English speaking

Participants will be recruited from a community health center that primarily serves LGBT-identified adults ages 18 and older. Recruitment Site

• The FFMQ is a self-reported assessment tool consisting of 39 questions that measure 5 components of mindfulness. It uses a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Methods

The objective of this study is to establish the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and depressive and anxiety symptoms in the LGBT community. If a relationship is found, this could lead to more targeted mindfulness interventions in the future to improve anxiety and depressive symptoms in the LGBT community.

This is a cross-sectional study where participants will be given three surveys. The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) will be given to assess dispositional mindfulness in five facets: awareness, describing, acting with awareness, non-judgment, and detachment. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) are 21-question self-reported surveys that measure signs, symptoms, and traits characteristic of depression and anxiety respectively. There will also be a section for demographic information including past mindfulness practices. After completion, participants will be provided an internet link to review their FFMQ score and what it means.

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Expected Outcomes

It is expected that lower dispositional mindfulness scores will associate with greater anxiety and depressive symptoms, and that higher dispositional mindfulness scores will associate with lower anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Selected References