

MindSpring – a mixed-method study of a group intervention for newly arrived refugees

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WHY

A need for evidence based interventions for newly arrived refugees in order to:

- Prevent that pre-migration trauma and post-migratory stressors evolve into psychiatric disorders.
- Facilitate timely referral for individuals who are in need of psychiatric treatment upon their arrival to the host country.

THE INTERVENTION

The MindSpring intervention:

- Group intervention designed to prevent psychological and psychosocial problems among newly arrived refugees.
- Consists of nine two-hour sessions, and groups are facilitated by a trainer with refugee background.
- Features themes such as stress, identity, trauma and general challenges related to living in exile.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was to study the acceptability and self-reported effects of the MindSpring programme

WHAT WE DID

98 newly arrived Arabic speaking refugees living in Denmark who participated in the MindSpring programme signed informed consent to participate in the study.

All participants were asked to complete:

- A brief **demographic questionnaire** at baseline
- An **intervention specific questionnaire about outcome** upon evaluation
- The **WHO-5** wellbeing questionnaire (which is also validated as a depression screening tool) before and after the intervention.

Focus groups were undertaken with participants from 4 MindSpring groups.

Focus group questions were:

- Please try to explain your outcome of the MindSpring intervention in the way you would do to a family member or a friend.
- What has it meant to you to be in this group and get to know the other group members.

Using **theme cards** we furthermore asked:

- Which themes did you like the best?
- Which themes did you find to be the hardest to discuss?
- Did you find any of the themes to be of little relevance to you?
- Can you think of themes which you would like to be included?

In the present poster only quantitative results are presented, as the focus group data are currently being transcribed and prepared for further analyses.

WHAT WE FOUND

A total of 70 participants returned at least one questionnaire. Baseline demographics are listed in table 1.

- Results showed **high satisfaction** with the intervention among the participants and a large percentage reported a positive outcome (table 2).
- WHO-5 questionnaires were available for only about 1/3 of the participants. The paired ttest however showed a **highly significant pre-post difference** on 15.29 points ($p=0.003$).

PERSPECTIVE

- **Preliminary results are very promising with a highly significant pre-post improvement on WHO-5 and a high satisfaction with the intervention among participants**
- **The intervention is currently being tested on a larger cohort with more outcome measures in a controlled design.**

Table 1. Baseline demographic variables

Variable	Number	Percentage
Sex		
• Male	19 (70)	27.1%
• Female	51 (70)	72.9%
Country of Origin		
• Syria	38 (40)	95%
• Palestine	2 (40)	5%
Somatic problem		
• Yes	17 (58)	29.3%
• No	37 (58)	63.8%
• Not certain	4 (58)	6.9%
Psychiatric problem		
• Yes	8 (55)	14.5%
• No	43 (55)	78.3%
• Not certain	4 (55)	7.3%

Table 2. Self-reported outcome on new knowledge of different MindSpring themes, life choices, preparedness for life in Denmark and overall satisfaction with the MindSpring programme.

Theme	Yes, a lot (%)	Yes, some (%)	No, only little (%)	No, nothing (%)
Family life	18 (33)	34 (63)	2 (4)	0
Mental health problems	14 (27)	32 (62)	4 (8)	2 (4)
Life choices	16 (30)	32 (60)	4 (8)	1 (2)
Preparedness for life in Denmark	19 (35)	33 (61)	1 (2)	1 (2)
Overall satisfaction	33 (62)	20 (38)	0	0

References:

- www.mindspring-grupper.dk
- www.ctp-net.dk (research sections in English)

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