

# “Mindfulness for parents who care” or “Mindfulness for parent carers?” Re-framing a mindfulness course to align with parent carers’ identity increases uptake: A formative evaluation

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## BACKGROUND

Parent carers of children with special educational needs have an increased risk of mental and physical ill-health [1,2]. Many parents don't see themselves as 'carers' and so it can be problematic to engage parents in well-being support [3]. We examined whether expressions of interest (EOI), and applications to, our Mindfulness for Parent Carers (MPC) group were increased by aligning the promotion of the group with parent carer's identity and through settings that support that identity.

## METHOD

**INTAKE 1**  
Promoted as 'Mindfulness for Parent Carers'

Participants were recruited via email, poster and telephone contacts to local carer charities, NHS services, and local voluntary action mailing list (a reach of 1,300 individuals).



**INTAKE 2**  
Promoted as 'Mindfulness for Parents who Care'

Participants were recruited via local workplace settings (18) and primary and secondary schools (397 including 15 special needs schools).



## RESULTS

EOI questionnaire, fourteen people completed the EOI questionnaire for intake one, and seventeen people for intake two. ( $\chi^2(1) = 0.29$   $p = 0.59$ ). For full applications, intake one had one application; intake two had six applications ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.57$ ,  $p = 0.05$ )

Qualitative data provides context: *'I am a parent who cares. The caring element is not separate from being "Mum." I am not sure I would have approached you if I'd seen the course advertised in a doctor's surgery or the like, receiving the contact through school felt more approachable and personal.'*

## CONCLUSION

Aligning intervention promotional material with a parent carer's primary identity (i.e. a parent first), and via setting (schools/workplace) resulted in a significantly greater number of applications to the MPC group. However, numbers were low across both intakes, and thus more work is needed to understand how to work with parent carers and offer support how and when they need it.

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