

## **Using mindfulness techniques to improve focus and concentration for university students- a group based approach.**

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Research has indicated a high prevalence of psychological distress and mental health problems among university students compared to the general population. International students are a particularly vulnerable group as they experience more problems than the rest of the student population and they are less likely to seek support from a counselling service due to the associated stigma. As a pro-active approach for managing the high demand and providing other avenues for students to seek support, the UniSA counselling service developed a three week mindfulness based program focussing specifically on skills that help to improve academic performance, manage study and exam stress and improve overall well-being. A mindfulness based approach was chosen due to its effectiveness for reducing stress, improving psychological wellbeing and working memory in various groups of university students. So far the program has attracted 346 students including a significant number of international students. Evaluations from students indicate that it was beneficial for their study and overall wellbeing including reports of improvement in sleep, concentration and an increased ability to manage study related stress. This paper examines the effectiveness of mindfulness techniques as a tool for improving focus and concentration and general well-being of university students as well as outlining the program content, recruitment strategies, student profile and evaluations.