

# Using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale to Evaluate an Extension Program

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## Introduction

Educational methods used in mindfulness trainings should “draw on educational principles that are experiential, interactive, participatory, student-centered and relationship-centered” (Crane, Brewer, Feldman, Kabat-Zinn, Santorelli, Williams, & Kuyken, 2017). It is also imperative that Extension professionals use evaluations to determine if the curriculum and lessons are meeting the needs of the participants and reflecting the goals of the lessons.

## Background

The authors of the Mindful Wellness curriculum reviewed evaluation methods to best complement an educational class and chose the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown and Ryan, 2003). This tool best captured the intent of “paying attention at a particular moment” as a focus point of the classes. The tool is self-reporting, brief, thorough and can work for a series of lessons as pre/post participant survey.

How MAAS has been used with the Mindful Wellness curriculum:

- Used as a pre and post survey for a mindfulness series that included at least three separate classes
- Demographic questions were added to the pre-program survey
- Additional, open-ended questions were added to the post survey to capture participant satisfaction and intentions to use the information in the future
- Two additional questions were added to both the pre and post surveys to assess the days and minutes spent on mindfulness exercises

**Example from post-survey on amount of time practiced:**  
**Days per week of mindfulness practice went from less than one day a week to 3.7 following classes and from 8.7 minutes a day to 15 minutes per day.**

Examples from open responses:

- *I didn't realize how unaware I was until I took this class. I now pay more attention to my wife and my son.*
- *I now take “mindful walks” and use my senses to enjoy the moment.*
- *Presented real life applications I could use.*

## Updates to MAAS

After gathering data for several months, ambiguous questions were identified. A few changes were made to the original pre and post surveys.

- Eliminated one of the 15 statements from the MAAS because it was confusing and distracting to participants.
- Moved the first two statements from the top of the chart to the bottom of the chart. They were important but not the main focus of the lessons.
- The scale of 1-6 was kept but updated so the range read from low to high for easier readability and use.
- Made minor edits to 5 statements to delete extra words such as (original): “It seems I am ‘running on automatic’ ....” verses (new): “It seems I ‘run on automatic’ ...”

Front page of the updated pre-program survey

Back page of the post-program survey

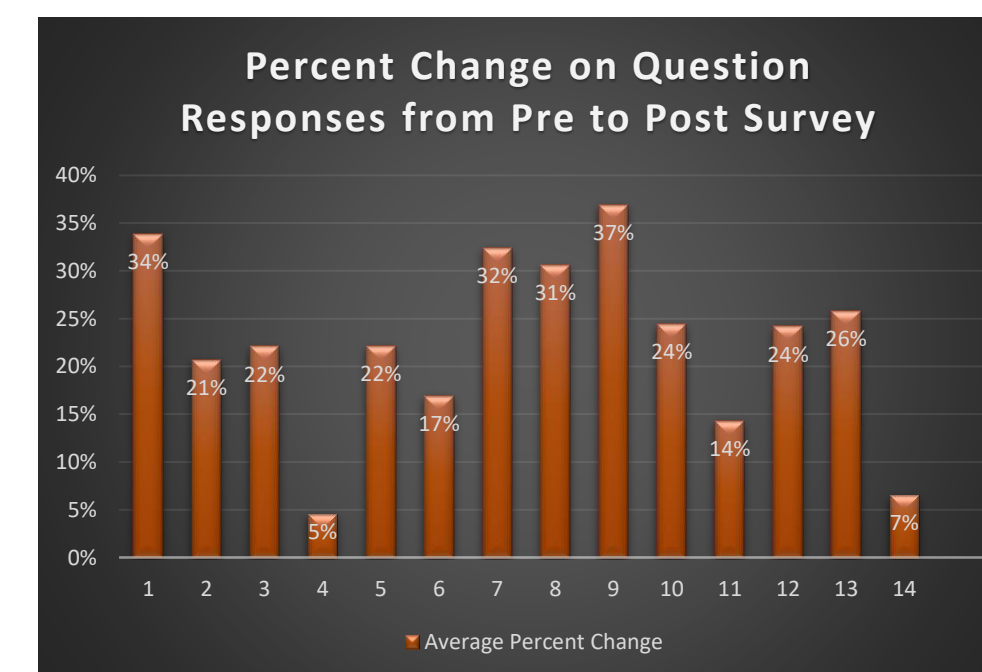


Cover of Mindful Wellness curriculum

## Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) is a survey with 15 statements about everyday experiences, with a scale of 1-6 to reflect frequency or infrequency of each experience.

## Results



This graph shows the average percent change for the participant responses to pre and post survey questions. The higher the percent, the more change indicated by participants.

## Summary

- Plans for continued use of the updated MAAS as the evaluation tool for the state mindfulness curriculum
- Will continue to assess amount of time practicing mindfulness and changes in pre and post surveys
- Will continue to ask open-ended questions and offer space for open responses.
- Address low-literacy reading levels on future evaluations
- Although one premise of mindfulness is non-judgmental, it is possible that participants will still attach “should” or “shouldn’t” to the MAAS statements.

## References

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