

Mindfulness Yoga for Body and Mind Program Promotes Self-Compassion and Depression for Care-Workers

Michiyo Ando¹, Hiroko Kukihara² & Sayoko Ito³

¹ Faculty of Psychology Counseling, Department of Child, Nishikyusyu University, Saga, Japan

² Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Reiwa Health Sciences University, Japan

³ Research Student (Clinical Psychology), Graduate School of Letters, Ryukoku University, Japan

Correspondence: Michiyo Ando, Faculty of Psychology Counseling, Department of Child, Nishikyusyu University, Saga, Japan.

Received: April 14, 2026

Accepted: May 20, 2026

Online Published: May 29, 2026

doi:10.20849/jed.v10i2.3014

URL: <https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v10i2.3014>

Abstract

Background: Care workers experience much stress because of physical and emotional labor. They often were hurt. Mindfulness yoga is one of the most useful intervention.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of mindfulness yoga on self-compassion, depression, resilience, and happiness of care workers.

Method: Participants were 11 care workers consisting of nurses and nursery schoolteachers with the program recruited by flyers. A profession of mindfulness yoga made a program focused on self-compassion. The program was made for promoting self-compassion for about 20 minutes. They received the program online and answered the questions from google scholar. Questionnaires consisted of the Self-Compassion Scale (SC), the K 6 for depression, the Resilience scale (Resilience), and Happiness scale (Happiness). They received the first time and second time after one week at any time. They completed questionnaire before the first practice and after the second practice.

Result: The score of K6 significantly decreased from 11.2 to 9.1 ($p<.05$) and the score of SC significantly increased from 35.8 to 39.9 ($p<.05$). There was no significance in Resilience and Happiness. There was significant correlation between SC and Resilience ($r=.70$), SC and Happiness ($r=.59$), and SC and K6 ($r=-.41$). K6 correlated with Resilience ($r=-.43$), and to Happiness ($r=-.34$).

Discussion: Mindfulness Yoga for Body and Mind is useful for self-compassion and depression for care workers. Action of tough or hug for themselves in the program particularly promoted self-kindness, regulated emotions, and affected emotion. The fact that self-compassion, depression, resilience, and happiness related to each other suggest that these variables contribute to well-being.

Keywords: care-workers, mindfulness yoga, body and mind, self-compassion, depression

1. Introduction

Care workers feel both physical and mental stress. They were required consideration for others in their work.

Previous studies showed that healthcare professionals work in continuous contact with maties, making their practice highly stressful. This situation led to vulnerability, causing both emotional and physical exhaustion (Ruiz-Fernandez, et al., 2000). The World Health Organization (WHO) shows the importance of self-care in the guideline, stating that “self-care interventions are essential to achieving universal health coverage, promoting health, and serving vulnerable populations (World Health Organization, 2020).

Mindfulness is defined as “the practice of focusing full attention of the present moment intentionally and without judgement” by Kabat-Zin (1990). Mindfulness-based intervention like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction [MBSR] (Kabat-Zin, Massion, Kristeller, et al., 1992) or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive therapy (Sipe & Eisendrath, 2012) showed the reduction of stress of people. Mindfulness was effective on psychological well-being such as anxiety or depression. Also, mindfulness plays role in emotional self-regulation, and depression vulnerability (Guendelman, et al., 2017).

Self-compassion is defined as “being touched by and open to one’s suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating desire to alleviate one’s suffering, and to heal oneself with kindness (Neff, 2003). From meta-analysis, there is positive significant association between mindfulness and self-compassion (Stead, et al, 2025). The eight-week Mindful self-compassion program was effective on mental health of general people comparing Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction intervention (Crego, et al., 2025).

Resilience is defined as a dynamic and flexibly process of adaptation to life changes that enables an individual to cope with and recover from stress, and to flourish when faced with adversity (Rutter, 1985). Some studies showed the relation between resilience and mindfulness (Joyce, et al., 2018). Also, resilience is mediating role in the impact of mindfulness on different outcomes (Bajaj & Pande, 2016). Perez-Aranda, et al. (2021) showed that resilience might partially mediate the effect of mindfulness and self-compassion on depression, but not on anxiety.

Kukihara, et al. conducted Web-based mindfulness for health care workers, however, it did not include self-compassion factor, and we needed to investigate usefulness of mindfulness including self-compassion factor. Knudsen, et al. (2023) investigated experiences regarding how attending an MBRS course influenced their work like, including relationships with patients and colleges. However, this study was observational study, and effects of intervention were not clear. Thus, we needed to an interventional study including self-compassion. Moreover, previous studies showed the factor of resilience, and we included resilience factor. Woking might be related with subjective happiness, and we included happiness factor.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of mindfulness yoga on depression, self-compassion, resilience, and subjective happiness, and relationships.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were care workers of nurses and nursery home. Inclusion criteria were to conduct mindfulness yoga for about 20 minutes. Exclusion criteria were to have serious depression or mental problems.

2.2 Mindfulness Yoga Program

A professional yoga instructor and researchers talked about contents and made the program focused on self-compassion (Table 1). We made the program for body and mind; thus we called Mindfulness Yoga for Body and Mind (MYBM). Unlike general yoga that primarily focuses on physical fitness, this program is characterized by its emphasis on body sensations (such as interoception) while enhancing self-compassion. Specifically, verbal cues are utilized to facilitate dual attention—focusing simultaneously on the movement of the body and the awareness of breath entering and leaving through the nose—thereby enabling a deeper cultivation of mindfulness.

Table 1. Mindfulness Yoga for Body and Mind (MYBM) program

-
1. Feeling body: trying to feel various body sense.
 2. Hand body scan: touching body from head to toe by hands.
 3. Making starting position: straighten your back after rounding your back.
 4. 1) Raising your left hand slowly.
 - 2) Stretch the soles of the left foot.
 - 3) Twist your waist to the left side.
 - *The same practice for right side.
 5. Hand body scan: touching your body from head to toe with feeling of gratitude.
 6. Observing your body, touching your parts of body where you feel well, and breathing. Then say gratitude to your body which did best.
 7. Hug your body with gratitude for yourself.
 8. Wake-up action: bring the shoulder blades together
-

2.3 Questionnaires

We used the following four kinds of questionnaires. Both validity and reliability of these questionnaires are approved by another research.

- 1) Self-Compassion Scale (Arimitsu, et al., 2016) based on a previous study (Neff, 2003): it consisted of 12 question items. Participants answered from 1 point to 5. A high score shows high level of self-compassion.
- 2) K6 for depression (Furukawa, et al., 2008) based on an original study (Kessler, et al., 2002). It consisted of 6 question items for screening depression. High score means high depression.
- 3) The Brief Resilience Scale-Japanese version (Tokuyoshi & Moritani, 2015) based on an original (Smith, et al., 2008). It consisted of 6 question items measured by 5 Likert scale from 1 to 5. High score means high resilience.
- 4) Subjective Happiness (Kawano & Emori, 2015). It is visual analog scale from 0 point to 100 point. However, we use Likert scale from 0 to 10 to make measurement to be simple.

2.4 Procedure

We recruited care worker (nurses and nursery schoolteacher) by flyers through manager of facilities in Western Japan. Participants got documents of explanation of this research, and the researcher got informed consent by documents. They practiced mindfulness yoga program online once a week for about 20 minutes, total 2 times. They completed questionnaires pre and post mindfulness yoga by google scholar.

2.5 Data Analysis

We calculated basic statistics and mean scores about each questionnaire. First, we conducted *t*-test to examine the difference between pre and post the intervention. Next, we conducted a correlation analysis among Self-Compassion, Depression, Resilience, and Subjective Happiness.

2.6 Ethics

This study was approved from the ethical board of Nishikyusyu Univesity. Researcher got informed consent from participants and was performed accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

3. Result

We show the result of *t*-test for each scale (Table 2). The score of Self-Compassion significantly increased from 35.8 to 39.9 ($p < .05$). The score of K 6 (depression) significantly decreased from 11.2 to 9.1 ($p < .05$). There was no significance in scores of Resilience and Subjective Happiness.

Table 2. The Result of *t*-test on scores of pre and post mindfulness yoga

Questionnaire	Pre	Post	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Self-Compassion	35.8 (8.0)	39.9 (6.0)	-2.28	$p = .05$
K 6 (Depression)	11.2 (2.8)	9.1 (3.2)	2.57	$p = .05$
Resilience	19.8 (4.4)	18.5 (2.5)	0.90	n.s
Subjective Happiness	7.27 (2.20)	2.27 (2.2)	0.00	n.s.

Next, we conducted the coefficient correlation analysis among variables (Table 3). Self-Compassion score significantly correlated with K6 ($p < .001$), Resilience ($p < .01$), and Subjective Happiness ($p < .001$). K6 score correlated with Resilience ($p < .01$) and Subjective Happiness ($p < .05$).

Table 3. Correlation coefficients among variables after mindfulness yoga

	Self-Compassion	K6	Resilience	Subjective Happiness
Self-Compassion	-			
K6 (Depression)	-.41 ***	-		
Resilience	-.67 **	-.43 **	-	
Subjective Happiness	.59 ***	-.34*	.42 **	-

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

4. Discussion

4.1 Effects of Mindfulness Yoga

The Self-Compassion score significantly increased. This is because our mindfulness program was effective for self-compassion. The program included both mind and body action, although others include only mind aspect with breathing or yoga exercise. As for body, “touch body from head to toe by hands” or “Hug your body” promoted self-kindness. The concept of self-compassion includes 6 factors (Neff, 2003). One of the factors was “self-kindness” which is an attitude of kindness and understanding towards the self when facing suffering and hardship. Thus, body work like touch or hug much promoted self-compassion, and the Self-Compassion score might increase.

Moreover, the K6 of depression significantly decreased. Paluan, et al. (2025) showed that the interplay between mindfulness and compassionate feelings is likely to involve the process of emotion regulation. Emotion regulation entails strategies for managing emotional experience and expression (Gross, 2015). Integrating these insights, the YBM program affected self-compassion, it affected emotional regulation, then depression decreased. It supports the previous study Wu, et al. (2021) which showed the finding that mindfulness helps to reduce stress.

There was no significance pre and post in Resilience score. This is because the time of MYBM program was 2 times for two weeks. Resilience was defined as a dynamic and flexible process of adaptation to life changes that enable an individual to cope with and recover from stress, and to flourish when faced with adversity (Rutter, 1985). It may be said that coping with stress, and it may not change in short term. So, the resilience did not change in this study.

Moreover, there was no significance in Subjective Happiness score. This is because the mean score of Subjective Happiness was over 7 in full 10 score. It may generally be high scores both pre and post, and there was no significance.

4.2 Correlation Among Variables and the Most Effective Factor on Happiness

There was significance among variables (Table 2), then we referred to some points. Self-Compassion correlated with K6 (depression). Care-workers with high self-compassion feel low depression. Positive factors of Self-Compassion were “mindfulness,” “self-kindness,” and “common humanity.” If they confront difficult problems, they could cope with them, accept themselves, and feel low feelings. The present study also supports partly (Knudsen, et al., 2023). They showed positive change, shifting from neglective personal needs/self-care to greater self-compassion and compassionate towards others, reduced burnout. Self-Compassion alleviated depression or burnout.

Self-Compassion correlated with Resilience. People with high self-compassion may recover and adapt to environments. Mindfulness promoted self-compassion, and self-compassion promoted resilience. It supports a previous study in which resilience is somehow promoted by the practice of mindfulness skills and self-compassion. These imply practicing emotion and attention regulation abilities (Hanley, et al., 2017), which in turn, are closely related to the capacity of recovering from stressful situation (Mayordomo, et al., 2016).

Self-Compassion is also significantly correlated with Subjective Happiness. The positive factor of self-compassion was “mindfulness,” “kindness,” and “common humanity.” If they confront the problems, they observe the state non-judgmental attitude and maintain healthy mental health. Awareness attitude contributes to non-judgement and increases happiness (Corthorn, 2018). Self-Compassion is a strong predictor of reduced depression and trait anxiety, and greater life satisfaction (Van Dam et al, 2011). Thus, Self-Compassion is related to Subjective Happiness.

4.3 Limitation of the Study

There are some limitations. 1) The number of participants was so small. So, we can't generalize these results. We need to include many more participants. 2) There was no control group to compare the intervention group. Next, we need to establish the control group to confirm our results. 3) The time of practice was only two and the effects of practice duration was not clear. So, we need to investigate effects of practice duration.

5. Conclusion

Mindfulness Yoga for Body and Mind (MYBM) program for care workers increased self-compassion and decreased depression. Variables like Self-Compassion, depression, resilience, and subjective happiness were correlated with each other.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. We do not have any funding support.

References

- Arimitsu, K., et al. (2016). Construction and validation of a short form of the Japanese version of the Self-Compassion Scale. *Komazawa Annual reports of Psychology*, 18, 1-9.
- Bajaj, B., & Pande, N. (2016). Mediating role of resilience in the impact of mindfulness on life satisfaction and affect as indices of subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 93, 63-67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.09.005>
- Corthorn, C. (2018). Benefits of Mindfulness for parenting in mothers of preschoolers in Chile. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 17, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01443>
- Crego, A., et al. (2025, April 28). Long-term effectiveness of the mindful self-compassion program compared to a mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention: a quasi-randomized controlled trial involving regular mindfulness practice for 1 year. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1597264>
- Furukawa, T. et al. (2008). The performance of the Japanese version of the K6 and K10 in the World Mental Health Survey Japan. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 17(3), 152-158. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.257>
- Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion regulation: Status and future prospects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.940781>
- Guendelman, S., et al. (2017). Mindfulness and emotion regulation: insights from neurobiological psychological and clinical students. *Frontier in Psychology*, 8. Article 220. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00220>
- Hanley, A. W. (2017). Relating dispositional mindfulness, contemplative practice, and positive reappraisal with post traumatic cognitive coping, stress, and growth. *Psychological trauma: theory, research, practice and policy*, 9, 526-536. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000208>
- Joys, S., et al. (2018) Road to resilience. A systematic review and meta-analysis of resilience training programs and interventions. *BMJ Open*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-017858>
- Kabat-Zin, J., et al.. (1992). Effectiveness of a meditation-based stress reduction program on the treatment of anxiety disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 149(7), 936-943. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.149.7.936>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. New York: Delacorte Press.
- Kawano, A., & Emori, Y. (2021). The relationships between subjective euphoria, childcare stress, and mental health in mothers raising infants. *The Japanese Journal of Maternal Health*, 61(4), 596-604.
- Kessler, R. C., et al. (2002). Short screening scales to monitor population prevalences and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychological Medicine*, 32(6), 959-76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291702006074>

- Knudsen, R. K., et al. (2023). The influence of mindfulness-based stress reduction on the work life of healthcare professional-a qualitative study. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 53. Article 101805. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctcp.2023.101805>
- Kukihara, H., et al. (2024). The impact of web-based mindfulness yoga on elderly caregiver's insomnia, sleep quality, and beliefs in ideal care: a repeated measure analysis. *Open Journal of Nursing*, 14, 626-636. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojn.2024.1412046>
- Mayordomo, T., et al. (2016). Resilience and coping as predictors of well-being in adults. *Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 150, 809-821. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2016.1203276>
- Neff, K. D. (2003). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860902979307>
- Paluan, E., et al. (2025). How do trait mindfulness facets relate to compassion of self and others: a network analysis on the heartfelt aspects of mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 16, 3564-3580. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-025-02700-x>
- Perez-Aranda, A., et al. (2021). Impact of mindfulness and sel-compassion on anxiety and depression: the mediating role of resilience. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 21, 100229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2021.100229>
- Ruiz-Fernandez, M. D., et al. (2020) Mindfulness therapies on health professionals. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 29(2), 127-140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12652>
- Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147, 598-611. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.147.6.598>
- Sipe, W. E. B., & Eisendrath, S. J. (2012). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy: theory and practice. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 57(2), 63-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/070674371205700202>
- Smith B., et al. (2008). The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15(3), 194-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972>
- Stead, G. B., et al. (2025, August 20). Mindfulness and self-compassion: a meta-analysis. *Trend in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43076-025-00489-1>
- Tokuyoshi, H., & Moritani, M. (2015) Development and validation of the Brief Resilience Scale-Japanese version (BRS-J). *The proceeding of the 79th annual convention of the Japanese Psychological Association*, p. 354. https://doi.org/10.4992/pacjpa.79.0_1EV-055
- Van Dam, N. T., et al. (2011). Self-compassion is a better predictor than mindfulness of symptom severity and quality of life in mixed anxiety and depression. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 25, 123-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2010.08.011>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). Self-care for health and well-being.
- Wu, X., et al. (2021). Nurses' experiences of the effects of mindfulness training: a narrative review and qualitative Meta synthesis. *Nurse Education Today*, 100. Article 104830. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.104830>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).