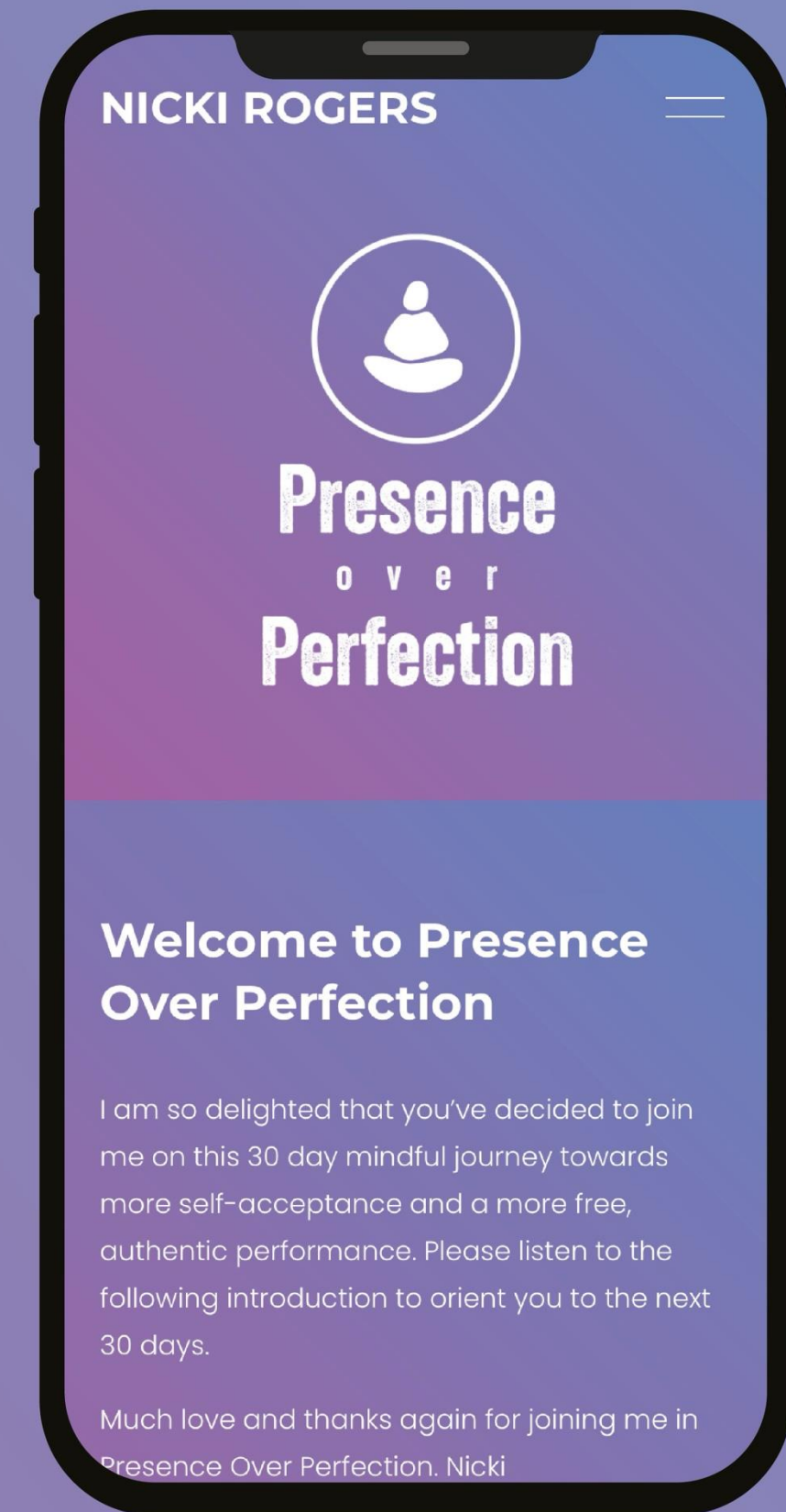


PRESENCE OVER PERFECTION:

A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of a 30-Day
Mindfulness Course for Perfectionistic
Music Performance Anxiety

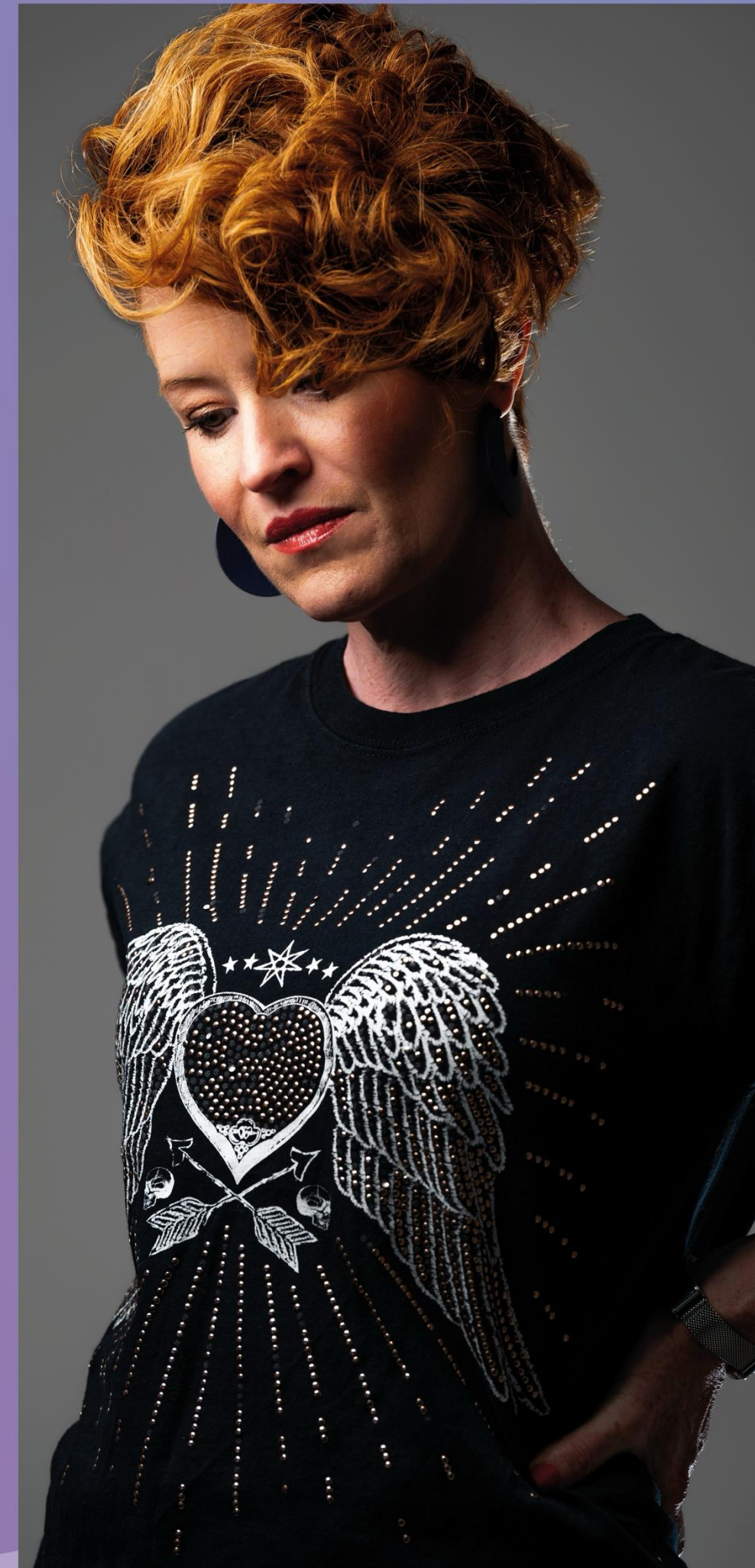
Module 6 BMPF7010

Nicola Currie



MY PRACTICE

- Singer/songwriter
- Vocal coach 1-2-1
- Yoga and mindfulness coach
- Choirs
- Workshops
- Majority Amateur
- Seek vocal tuition for holistic purposes
- MPA and Perfectionistic concern



PRACTICE ISSUE

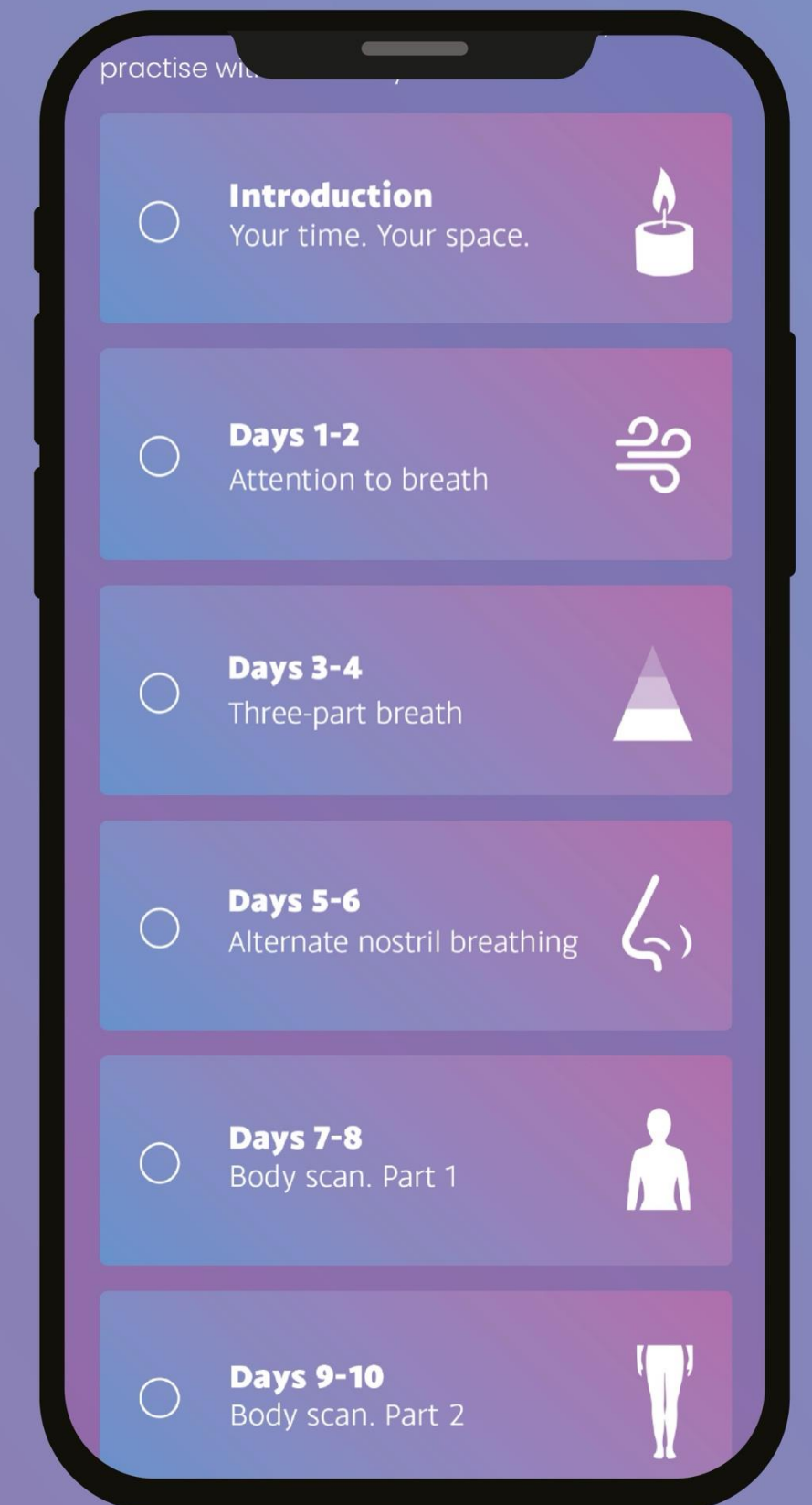
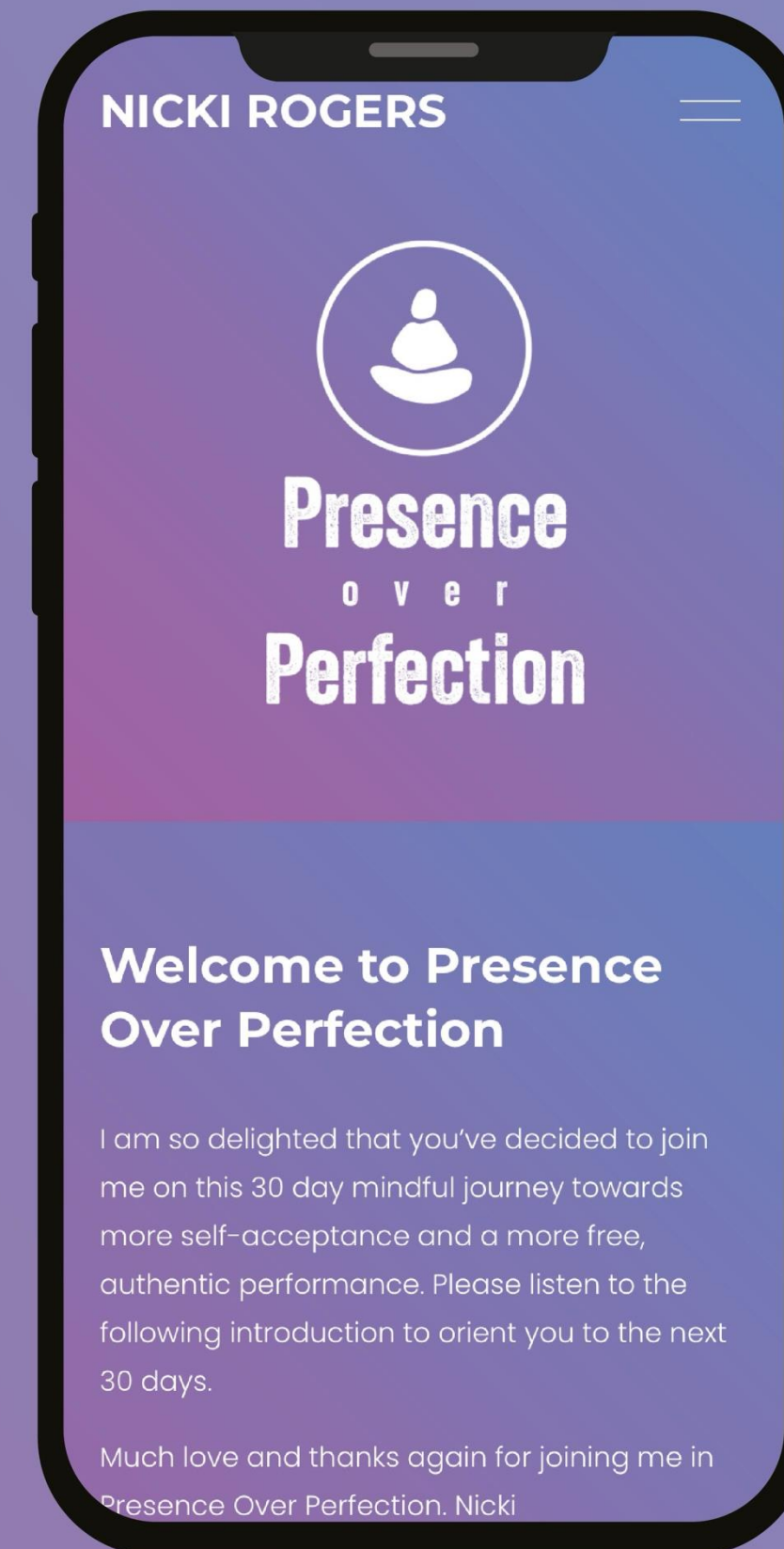
- Time in the studio
- Ethical risk
- Inhibits and undermines progress and enjoyment
- Not perceived as problematic enough to warrant help
- Personalised as lack of talent
- Time and Money
- Accessible resource

“The teaching experience can reveal counseling and therapeutic needs even while not providing an appropriate environment”

Scott, 2024

30 DAY MINDFULNESS COURSE FOR SINGERS

Module 5



To what extent can a 30-day, self-guided mindfulness course reduce perfectionistic MPA in adult amateur singers, and ***how is it experienced*** in terms of usefulness and accessibility?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The literature

MPA

Social Anxiety Disorder

Currently classified as a subtype of SAD (DSM-5)

Generalised Anxiety Disorder

May be more closely aligned with Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Wiedemann et al., 2022

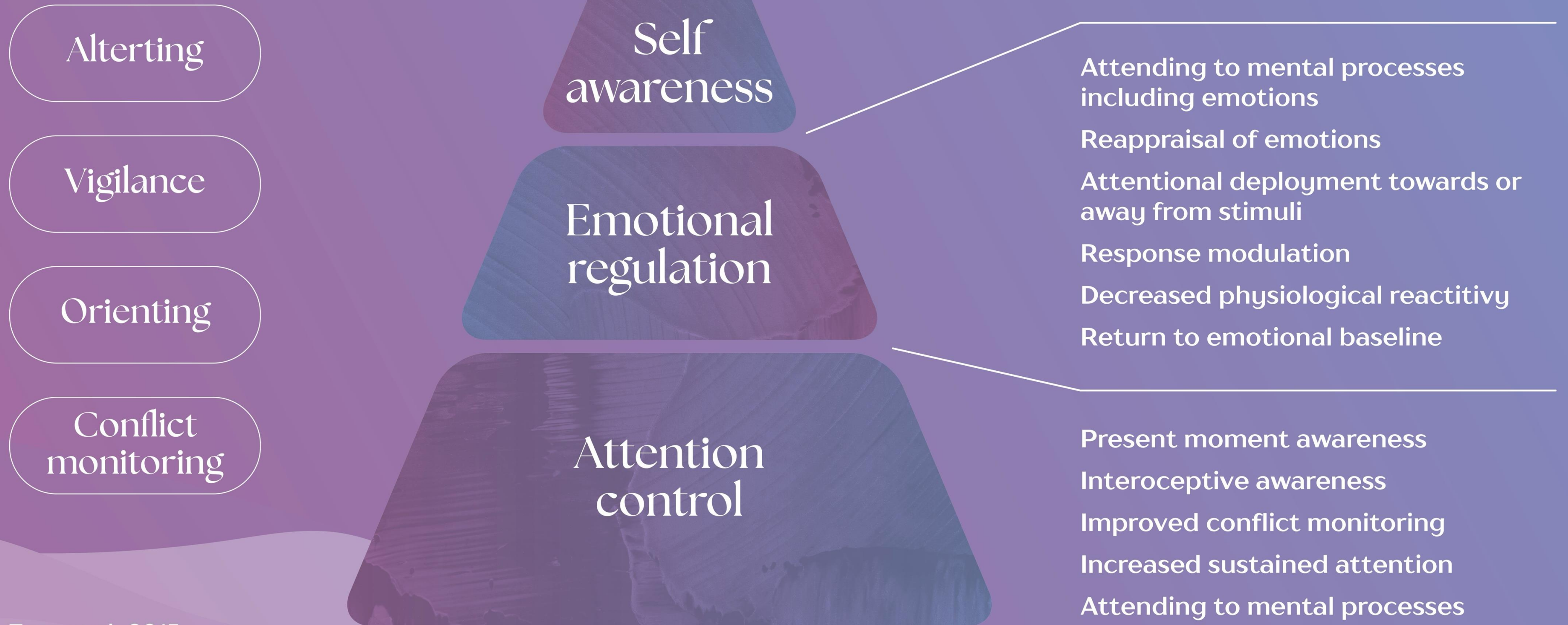


Perfectionism as a transdiagnostic, maintaining factor

MINDFULNESS



TRIPARTITE MODEL OF MINDFULNESS



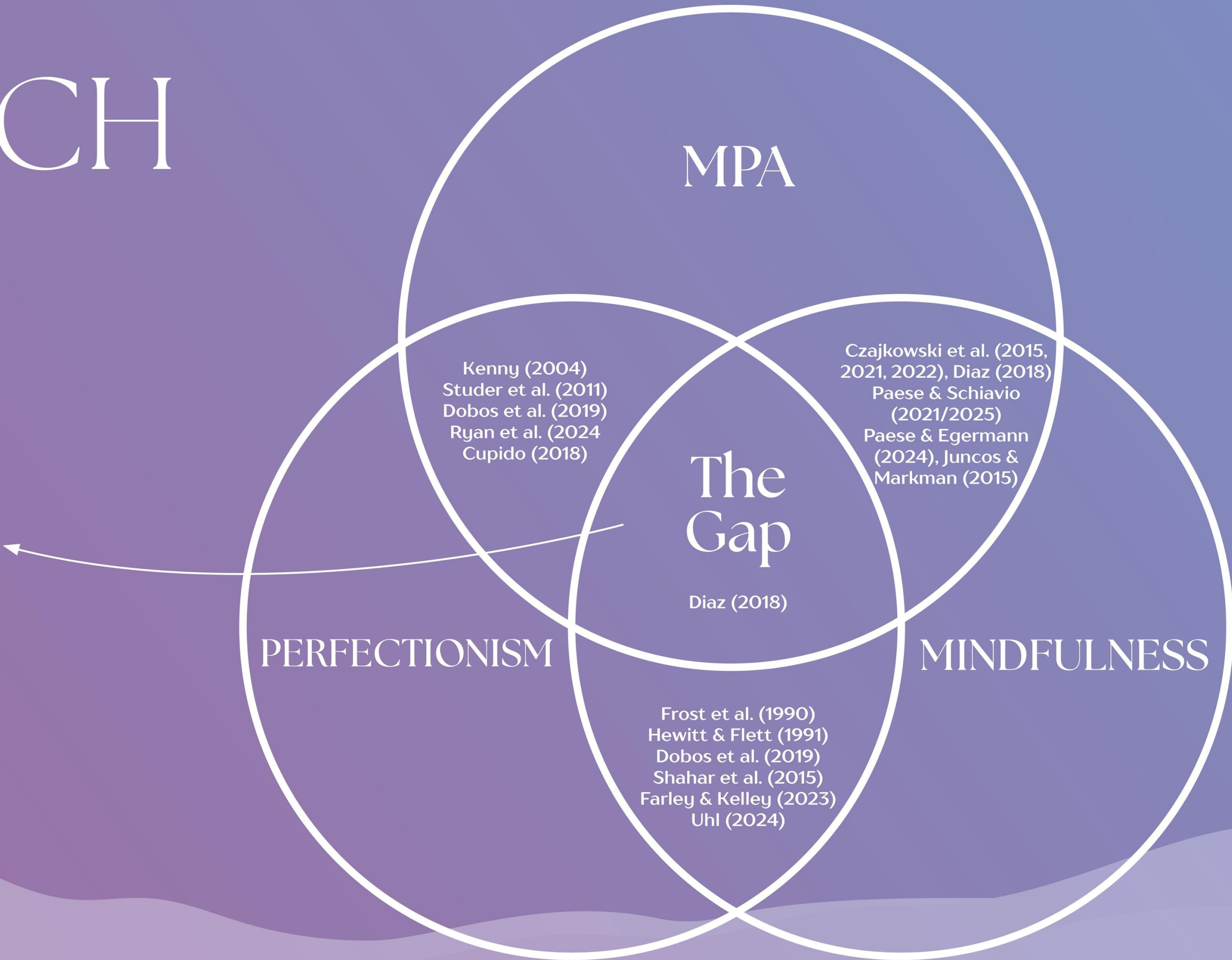
MPA & PERFECTIONISM

The present study conceptualises MPA and perfectionism not as separable constructs, but as interwoven expressions of an anxious–perfectionistic disposition that elevates perceived performance stakes across performer contexts.

RESEARCH

The Gap

- Mixed Method
- Amateur focused
- Combined mindfulness–perfectionism MPA research
- Self led formats
- Short form ≤ 30 Days



AIMS

Test

Whether a short, self-guided mindfulness course can reduce perfectionistic music performance anxiety in adult amateur singers.

Establish

Feasibility and usability

Generate

Evidence to refine future course design and research

OBJECTIVES

Deliver

A 30-day online mindfulness programme

Measure

Change in MPA and perfectionism pre-post

Explore

Participant experience and perceived impact.

Track

Engagement and attrition

Integrate

Quantitative and qualitative findings.

Refine

The next iteration

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Support Tool Creation
- Professionally Relevant – Ethically Grounded
- Experience – Mixed Methods
- Reflexive Student Engagement
- Critical Evaluation – Teaching and Design
- Bridge Yoga and Singing

EMBEDDED MIXED – METHODS DESIGN

Pre Course Quantitative Measures

Music Performance
Anxiety
(K-MPAI)

Perfectionism
(FMPS-Brief)

Midway Qualitative Measures

Open-ended midpoint
questionnaire

Selected Five
Facet Mindfulness
Questionnaire (FFMQ)
items, adapted as
open-ended questions

Post Course Mixed

Music Performance
Anxiety
(K-MPAI)

Perfectionism
(FMPS-Brief)

Open-ended post
course questionnaire

Post-course focus
group 10 participants ·
1 hour

Analysis

Paired sample T-tests

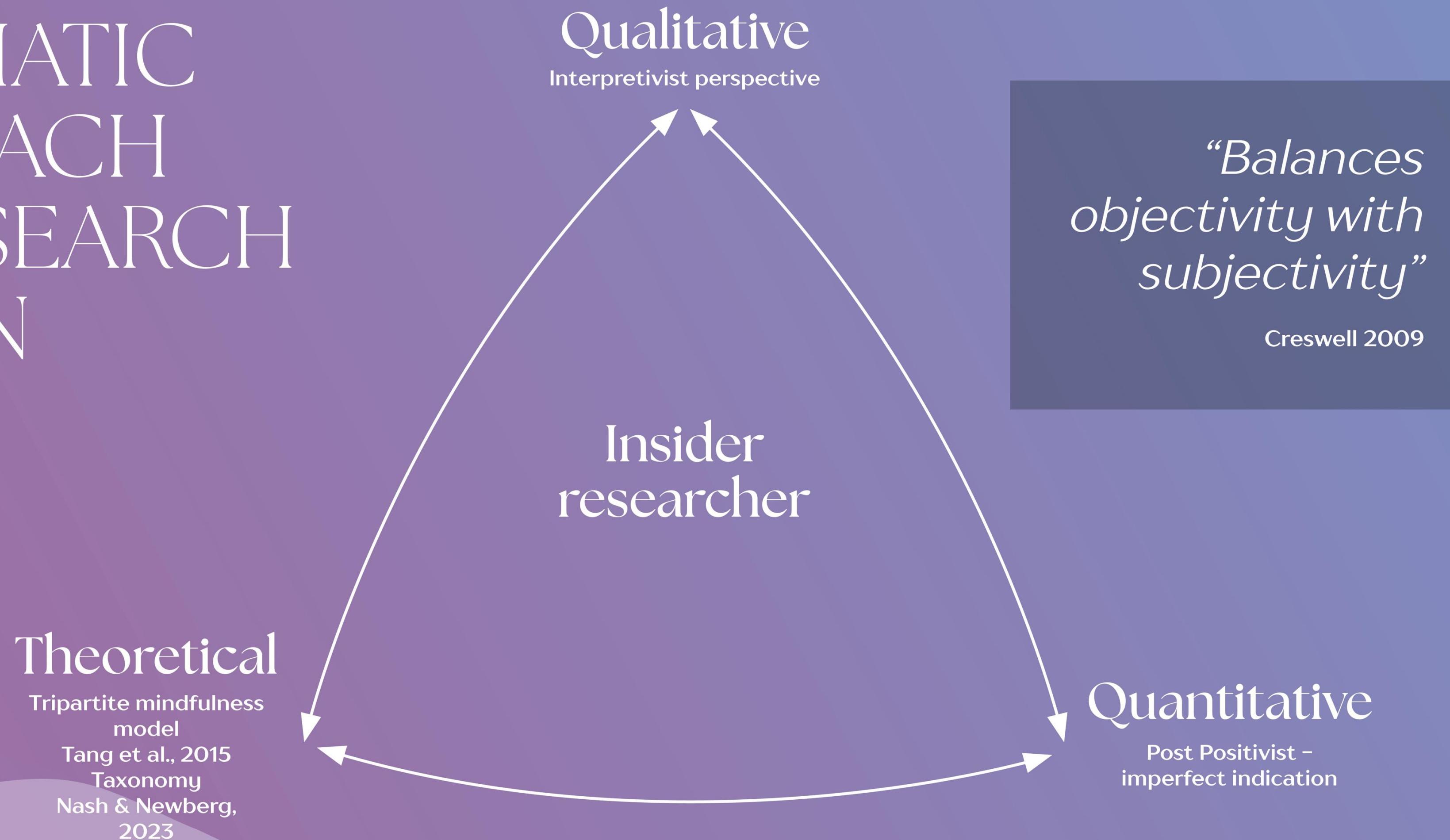
Reflexive thematic
analysis following
Braun and Clarke's six
phases (2006, 2021).

Write report

Taxonomy
Nash & Newberg,
2023

Tripartite mindfulness
model
Tang et al., 2015

PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO RESEARCH DESIGN



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Informed
consent



Non-clinical
framing

Affective vulnerability

Self-declaration



Tutor–
student
relationship

Reporting bias

Expectation of
symptom improvement



Pseudonymised

Monitoring
limited



Asynchronous
online delivery

Monitoring
limited

FINDINGS

N=31 Female participants

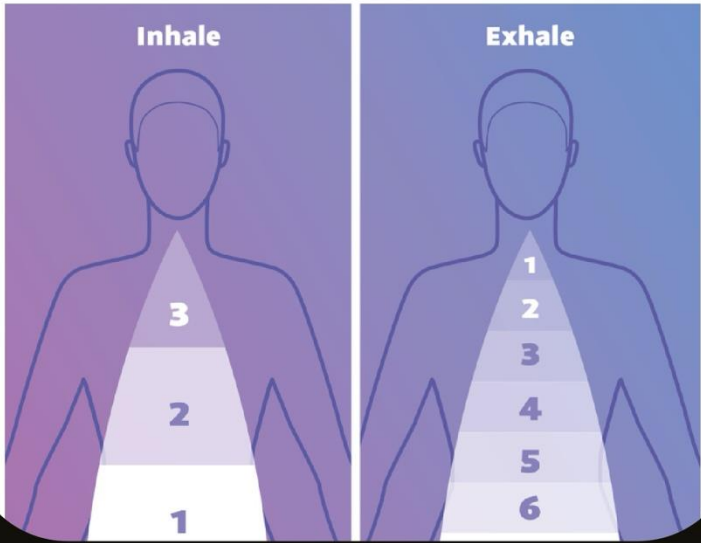
Oct 1st -30th 2025

Day 1 & 2 Attention to breath

Day 1 and 2 are a very simple 10 minute practice where we use the breath as an anchor for the mind. So get comfortable and close the door on all of the noise and enjoy 10 minutes of mindful bliss.



Day 1 & 2 Presence Over Perfection
Nicki Rogers

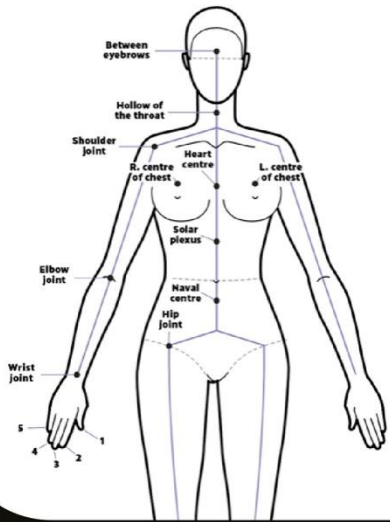


Day 5 & 6 Alternate Nostril Breathing - Nadi Shodhana

This is a FANTASTIC breathing exercise that will bring total balance to your nervous system and prepare you for any performance. Practice this every day and you'll notice the benefits in no time!



Day 5 & 6 Alternate Nostril Breathing
Nicki Rogers



Day 11 & 12 Loving Kindness and Compassion Meditation

In this first LKCM we will be focussing in a little more on the emotions. We'll start with focussing on a friend and then a more remote person.



Day 11 & 12 LKCM Friend and Stranger
Nicki Rogers

Day 13 & 14 Loving Kindness and Compassion Meditation

In this LKCM we move towards a Friend and a more challenging situation or person

Day 13 & 14 LKCM Friend and

MINDFUL PROGRESSION

An overview



EARLY STAGE FOCUSSED ATTENTION

Self
awareness

Emotional
regulation

Attention
control

Mechanism

- Improved attention

- Improved response modification

- Decreased physiological reactivity

What participants said

“It surprised me how quickly I could become focused and untroubled” (VA79 PCQ)

“For the first time, I completely focused without mind wandering” (DE70 MWQ)

“Able to deal with my stress quicker” (NI75, MWQ)

“Realising when I’m tense helps me relax and breathe differently” (DE70 MWQ)

“Less anxious and irritable” (CA60, MWQ)

“Not so on edge” (Maroon MWQ)

REPORTS OF DIFFICULTY WITH COGNITIVE DIRECTED METHODS

Cognitively demanding

“My brain was constantly wandering”

(RO56 PCQ)

Highly varied response to somatic anchors

Alternate Nostril Breathing: 60% favoured

Body Scan: 20% favoured

Self evaluative response to effort

“I must be doing it wrong” (Rebecca FG)

*“I couldn’t really feel what I thought I was
supposed to feel”* (CA60 PCQ)

Time commitment

*“Time was difficult so felt like I had to
catch up sometimes”* (JO87 PCQ)

AFFECT DIRECTED METHODS LKCM

Self
awareness

Emotional
regulation

Attention
control

Mechanism

Early decentring

The capacity to relate to thoughts as mental events rather than as accurate reflections of self or reality

Perspective taking

The process of considering how one or another would think or feel in a particular situation.

Self Compassionate attitude

Affective activation followed by return to baseline

What participants said

“It’s shown me that it’s OK to be **aware** of them (thoughts) and **acknowledge them**” (GL57 PCQ).

“The negative **thoughts aren’t necessarily true**. I am my **harshest critic**” (VE62 PCQ)

“I have been thinking people are judging me when it’s **my perception** rather than **reality**” (WI60 PCQ).

“I was able to **identify** times when I have been hyper-critical of myself and **consider** how it would feel if I gave myself more **self-compassion**” (CA60 PCQ)

“Loving kindness and compassion brought me to tears. Good, cleansing tears” (VE62 PCQ)

REPORTS OF DIFFICULTY IN AFFECT DIRECTED EXERCISES

Identifying safe people

But with there was a part of it where you had to think of a time and a person where you felt completely safe, and I couldn't think of a single one. No, I had to back out of that. I was like, I don't have an experience to relate that to" (Lisa FG)

Difficulty disengaging from emotionally salient stimuli

"I had to dredge that right back" in order to identify a relevant person"(Sally FG)

"I found some difficulty in focusing or getting past a person in my head on quite alot of the compassion/ guidance sessions" (RA78 PCQ).

Destabilising focus

I overthink it, which leads to me losing focus"
(VA79 MWQ)

"My mind kept wandering when selecting a person"
(Be56 MWQ).

Expectations of relaxation

"Sending out kindness and forgiveness vibes didn't suit me and I found thinking of people who had annoyed me jarred, I didn't want that in my headspace with this" (IT63 PCQ)

Weirdly this stressed me, thereby undermining the relaxation and calm I had been working towards.
(NA63 MWQ)

THE INTRODUCTION OF REAPPRAISAL EXERCISES

Self
awareness

Emotional
regulation

Attention
control

Mechanism

Re-appraisal

The process of changing how one thinks or feels about situations and events in such a way that one's response to them is altered.

Agency

Imperfection as connection

What participants said

“I am more **willing to accept** that the physical feelings of nervousness... are **part of the performance** and not a failure of preparation” (ST59 PCQ).

“Those fearful feelings being the same energy as excitement” (CA60 PCQ)

“Being nervous is energy and it needs acknowledging but isn't there to control” (WI60 PCQ)

“You're always going to be here... but you're not the boss of me” (Justine FG).

“I am human and humans make mistakes” (NI75 PCQ).

“It didn't matter if I was perfect, because these girls will support me anyway” (Lisa FG).

AUTHENTICITY AS A GUIDING VALUE

I am beginning to appreciate my voice for being uniquely mine alone and to accept authenticity can result in imperfection (NA63 PCQ).

“If I’ve sung true to me, that’s what is important” (WI60 PCQ).

“Authenticity is way more important than perfection, getting that balance right” (Jane FG)

“I’m OK saying that it’s a work in progress” (JA70 PCQ)

“Being authentic precludes worry about being negatively evaluated... Think of yourself as a “work in progress” Carson et al., 2006

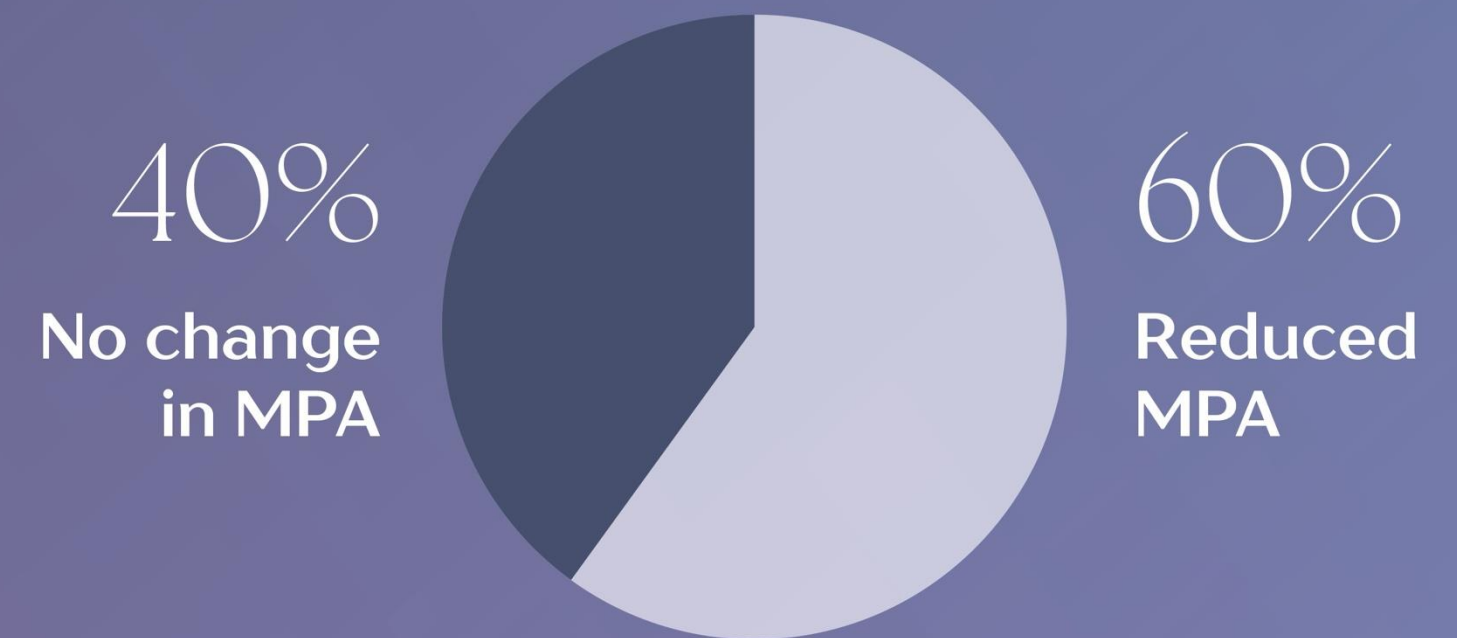
PAIRED SAMPLE T-TESTS

K-MPAI
P=.0007

FMPS
P=.0002

Music performance anxiety and perfectionism both decreased at group level, with reductions in mean and median scores indicating consistent change rather than outlier-driven effects. These decreases were statistically significant ($p < .05$ for both outcomes).

SELF-REPORTS OF MPA



SELF-REPORTS OF PERFECTIONISM



DESCRIPTIVE CHANGES IN SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF PERFECTIONISM

Non Perfectionists

M CHANGE = 5.50

Perfectionists

M CHANGE = 5.25

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Personal fit

Modalities and style

Person +
Context

Individual Baseline
Psychology

Monitor +
Acceptance

Educational
framing

Anticipate, Prepare,
Support

Threat arousal

Towards + away

Safety learning

Independent of context

KEY PRACTICAL CHANGES

Offer varying anchors

Somatic Auditory Visual

Offer flexible practice time

Retention and engagement

Speed of results

Affect centred considerations

- Graduated relational exposure
- Extended FA stabilisation
- Flexible engagement, not forced endurance
- Allow prior time

Perfectionistic Cohort considerations

Train acceptance explicitly and concurrently with monitoring

Psychoeducation as key component throughout

prepare • normalise • reassure • explain encourage • embed

Encourage safe, real-world exposure.

Possible post performance reflection prompts

CONCLUSION

Research Question

To what extent can a 30-day self-guided mindfulness course reduce perfectionistic MPA, and how is it experienced?

Outcomes

Statistically significant reduction in perfectionism and MPA.

Participants self-reported feeling improvement.

Notable improvements: reduced self-criticism and enhanced acceptance.

Varied responses to focused attention and loving-kindness practices.

Interpretation

Change was driven by cognitive reappraisal and personal context.

Early decentering occurred, but not stable self-awareness.

Varied responses reflect that different mindfulness styles suit different individuals.

Patterns align with early-stage mindfulness development, not top-level.

Participants found it accessible, though time was a challenge.

Overall Conclusion

This course offers a promising first-step mindfulness support tool for early-stage mindfulness practice.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

- Outcomes relied on performance exposure (not included)
- No formal performance testing
- Varied baseline profiles (not all perfectionists or high MPA)
- No broad mental health screening (not clinical)
- Engagement varied by motivation and attentional fit
- No long-term follow-up on use or impact

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR MINDFULNESS-BASED DEVELOPMENT

- Improve baseline assessment and fit.
- Move beyond one-size-fits-all models.
- Align measures with both amateur and professional performers.
- Strengthen teacher oversight and accountability.
- Ensure clear referral pathways.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Clarified the vision for the tool I am developing.
- Identified what the tool is, offering key boundaries.
- Deepened my understanding of user complexities.
- Broadened my view on diverse mindfulness responses.
- Reaffirmed mindfulness's value and its personal impact.
- Embedded mindfulness more deeply in my research approach.
- Became more aware of my own sensitivity to criticism.
- Opened up new possibilities for my business and future teaching.

THANK YOU

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