

# **Presence Over Perfection:**

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

**Nicola Currie: 2029342**  
Module 6 BMPF7010

# CONTENTS

## PROJECT PROPOSAL

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Justification.....                  | 1 |
| Aims.....                           | 2 |
| Objectives.....                     | 2 |
| The Immediate and Wider Impact..... | 3 |
| Outlined Intention.....             | 3 |
| Research Design Flowchart.....      | 4 |
| Timeline & Design .....             | 5 |
| Ethical Considerations.....         | 5 |
| Expected Learning Outcomes.....     | 6 |

## PROJECT REPORT

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 6 |
|-------------------|---|

## LITERATURE REVIEW

|                                                                            |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Wider Context of MPA.....                                              | 9  |
| Perfectionism and MPA.....                                                 | 9  |
| Moving Towards a Solution – Mindfulness.....                               | 10 |
| Methodological Trends in MPA, Perfectionism, and Mindfulness Research..... | 11 |
| Measurement Approaches in MPA, Mindfulness, and Perfectionism.....         | 12 |

## METHODOLOGY AND MEASURES

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Outline of Intention.....      | 13 |
| Research Paradigm.....         | 14 |
| Methodology.....               | 14 |
| Methods.....                   | 14 |
| Sampling and Participants..... | 14 |
| Quantitative Measures.....     | 15 |

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Data collection, handling, and scoring.....       | 16 |
| Quantitative Analysis.....                        | 16 |
| Qualitative Methods.....                          | 16 |
| Qualitative Analysis.....                         | 17 |
| Procedure.....                                    | 18 |
| Ethical Integrity, Risk, and Trustworthiness..... | 18 |
| Summary.....                                      | 19 |

## **FINDINGS**

|                                                                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Stage 1 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 1-10.....                                  | 19 |
| Theme 1:                                                                                        |    |
| Emerging Interoceptive Awareness.....                                                           | 19 |
| Theme 2:                                                                                        |    |
| Alternate Nostril Breathing (ANB) as an Accessible Regulatory Practice.....                     | 20 |
| Theme 3:                                                                                        |    |
| Anchoring Attention: Regulatory Benefits and Attentional Challenges Across Somatic Anchor ..... | 21 |
| Stage 1 Summary.....                                                                            | 22 |
| Stage 2 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 11-15.....                                 | 22 |
| Theme 1:                                                                                        |    |
| Labelling and Early Metacognitive Awareness.....                                                | 22 |
| Theme 2:                                                                                        |    |
| Perspective Gains from Decentring through Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM)..... | 23 |
| Theme 3:                                                                                        |    |
| Discomfort with Negative Emotional Engagement, Focus Drift, and Threat Bias.....                | 24 |
| Stage 2 Summary.....                                                                            | 25 |
| Stage 3 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 16-30.....                                 | 25 |
| Theme 1                                                                                         |    |
| Developing a Kinder and More Accepting Self-Relationship in Performance.....                    | 25 |

|                                                                                                                        |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Theme 2                                                                                                                |    |
| From Threat to Agency in Performance Anxiety.....                                                                      | 26 |
| 2.1: Reinterpreting Physical Fear.....                                                                                 | 26 |
| 2.2: Threat Reduction Through Compassion and Affiliation.....                                                          | 27 |
| Stage 3 Summary.....                                                                                                   | 27 |
| Authenticity as an Alternative to Perfectionism.....                                                                   | 28 |
| Quantitative Results .....                                                                                             | 28 |
| Paired Samples T-Test: Music Performance Anxiety (K-MPAI) .....                                                        | 28 |
| Paired Samples T-Test: Perfectionism (FMPS).....                                                                       | 29 |
| Descriptive Changes in Self-Identification of Perfectionism.....                                                       | 29 |
| Correlation Matrix: Associations Between Music Performance Anxiety (K-MPAI) and<br>Perfectionism (FMPS).....           | 31 |
| Constraints on Observed Change and Transfer.....                                                                       | 32 |
| Transfer, Exposure, and Post-Performance Rumination.....                                                               | 32 |
| Experience and Understanding of Intent as Accelerators of Engagement.....                                              | 33 |
| Imagery and Instructional Language.....                                                                                | 33 |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                                                                                                      |    |
| 4. Synthesis and Implications of the Presence over Perfection Project.....                                             | 34 |
| 4.1 Overview of Key Findings.....                                                                                      | 34 |
| 4.2 What This Project Shows About Change Processes.....                                                                | 34 |
| 4.3 Implications for the POP Course Design: Psychoeducation, Threat Bias, and<br>Sequencing.....                       | 35 |
| 4.4 Personalisation, Engagement, and Developmental Fit: Design Implications for<br>Short-Term Mindfulness Courses..... | 36 |
| 4.5 Transferability, Context, and Ethical Design Considerations for Practice.....                                      | 37 |
| 4.6 WEFT-Informed Adaptation of the Liverpool Mindfulness Model. ....                                                  | 38 |
| Table x. The Liverpool-WEFT Tiered Design Framework for Perfectionistic MPA....                                        | 39 |
| <b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....                                                                            | 40 |

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>REFERENCES</b>                                  | 42 |
| <b>Appendix A</b>                                  |    |
| Participant Consent Form                           | 52 |
| <b>Appendix B</b>                                  |    |
| Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) | 57 |
| <b>Appendix C</b>                                  |    |
| Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale – Brief | 68 |
| <b>Appendix D</b>                                  |    |
| Midway Questionnaire Day 15                        | 71 |
| <b>Appendix E</b>                                  |    |
| Post Course Questionnaire                          | 80 |
| <b>Appendix F</b>                                  |    |
| Full data set Quantitative                         | 92 |
| <b>Appendix G</b>                                  |    |
| Focus Group Application Form                       | 93 |
| Focus Group Guide Questions                        | 96 |

**Nicola Currie: 2029342**

## **Module 6 BMPF7010**

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

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

I am a vocal coach and leader of a women's community choir in Milton Keynes, working with around 80 adult singers weekly. I am also a qualified yoga teacher, though these practices have remained separate. This study examines the feasibility and perceived impact of a brief, self-guided mindfulness course for adult amateur singers experiencing perfectionistic music performance anxiety.

An increasing number of clients report music performance anxiety, self-criticism, and rumination, patterns consistent with perfectionism linked to MPA (Frost et al., 1990; Stöber, 1998). Around one-third of musicians experience MPA, with women disproportionately affected (Kenny, 2011; Studer et al., 2011). MPA is classified as a subtype of social anxiety disorder (Kenny, 2023), and socially prescribed perfectionism is recognised as a central driver of this distress (Flett et al., 2021). Reviews of mindfulness-based interventions indicate that high-quality protocols, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and multimodal approaches, integrate mindfulness as a core component, particularly when addressing perfectionism-related distress (Faur et al., 2023; Kinney et al., 2025; Neff & Germer, 2013; Woodfin et al., 2021). In response to this evidence, I developed the 30-day online programme, 'Presence over Perfection.'

Positioned at the intersection of professional practice and emerging mindfulness research, the project investigates whether a short, accessible course can support singers experiencing perfectionistic MPA, while also examining the practical and ethical considerations involved in delivering such support within a community-based, non-clinical context.

### **Justification**

Adult amateur singers frequently report perfectionistic rumination and anxiety, yet consider their difficulties insufficient for therapy. Surveys show musicians perceive mental health services as inaccessible or stigmatised (Bačlija Sušić, 2018; Mazzarolo et al., 2023), with cost and waiting lists further limiting access. Consequently, singers turn to teachers, who report feeling underprepared to respond (Mazzarolo et al., 2023). Consequently, many anxious singers look to their teachers instead of clinicians (Mazzarolo et al., 2023; Ryan, 2021; Studer et al., 2011; Tahirbegi, 2022), yet teachers consistently report feeling underqualified and underresourced (Mazzarolo et al., 2023; Moura & Serra, 2021; Tahirbegi, 2022). UK conservatoires call for scalable, evidence-based resources that fit timetables and budgets (Mazzarolo et al., 2023; Paese & Schiavio, 2025; Perkins et al., 2017).

Perfectionism itself acts as a barrier as self-presentation concerns deter help-seeking (Dang et al., 2020) and undermine therapeutic rapport (Hawley et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2017). A private, self-guided format, therefore, aligns with calls to respect user preferences to minimise power imbalances (Flett et al., 2021).

Work by Czajkowski et al. (2022) shows that an 8-week singer-specific course can yield wellbeing gains, yet only Paese & Schiavio (2025) have tested a condensed four-week

programme for musicians, reporting qualitative improvements. Their findings, although implicit, support meta-analytic evidence that multi-component mindfulness, paired with self-compassion, helps reduce perfectionistic rumination (Crane et al., 2017; Kinney et al., 2025; Neff & Germer, 2013). Single brief sessions can also boost wellbeing (Howarth et al., 2019), and short programmes of 30 days or fewer have been shown to rival eight-week outcomes while improving adherence (Boileau et al., 2024). However, no study has examined a fully self-guided,  $\leq 30$ -day, mixed-methods intervention for amateur perfectionistic singers.

Responding to critiques of purely positivist approaches in vocal pedagogy (Winter, 2021), this embedded mixed-methods study combined quantitative measures of change, using the K-MPAI and FMPS-Brief (Burgess et al., 2016; Kenny, 2023), with reflexive thematic analysis of participant reflections. This design enabled the integration of replicable symptom metrics with rich qualitative accounts of lived experience, allowing statistical outcomes to be interpreted alongside participants' meaning-making.

In sum, the project fills a triple gap: the lack of affordable, teacher-deployable resources for perfectionistic MPA; the absence of research on short, self-guided mindfulness for singers; and a shortage of mixed-method studies that integrate quantitative rigour with practitioner-led context.

## **Aims**

**Evaluate Impact:** Determine whether a fully self-guided 30-day mindfulness course is associated with reductions in MPA and perfectionism traits in adult amateur singers.

**Assess Feasibility and Usability:** Examine participant engagement, satisfaction, and perceived usefulness to evaluate the feasibility of delivering the course as a low-cost, accessible, non-clinical resource.

**Inform Iterative Development:** Identify strengths, limitations, and participant feedback to refine course content, sequencing, and research design in future iterations.

## **Objectives**

Implement the online 30-day programme, integrating practices that target attention, self-regulation, and self-compassion.

Collect quantitative data - administering K-MPAI and MPS pre- and post-course; compute descriptive stats, paired t-tests, and effect sizes.

Collect qualitative data – run mid-point and post-course questionnaires plus a focus group; apply Braun & Clarke's (2023) 6-step thematic analysis.

Monitor engagement – track completion logs and attrition.

Triangulate findings – examine convergence and divergence between psychometric outcomes and participant narratives to interpret mechanisms of change and contextualise overall impact.

Draft recommendations – identify concrete adjustments for the next release.

## **The Immediate and Wider Impact**

This 30-day programme responds to students' requests for support with perfectionistic MPA. It aims to reduce anxiety and rumination while supporting sustainable mindfulness practice. The curriculum progresses from attentional stabilisation to self-compassion, reflecting evidence that perfectionism and mindfulness operate at opposing ends of self-evaluation (Flett et al., 2021). As a low-cost, asynchronous resource requiring no therapist input, it may offer a scalable model for teachers seeking structured well-being support (Paese & Schiavio, 2025). The study also contributes mixed-methods evidence to debates regarding intervention length and dosage (Boileau et al., 2024; Crane et al., 2017).

## **Outlined Intention**

This project uses an embedded mixed-methods design within an interpretivist frame (Creswell, 2014; Fetters et al., 2013). This choice consciously addresses Winter's (2021) critique of "scientisation" in vocal pedagogy studies: by pairing psychometric data with rich narrative, it balances methodological rigour with practice-led insight (Van Aken, 2005).

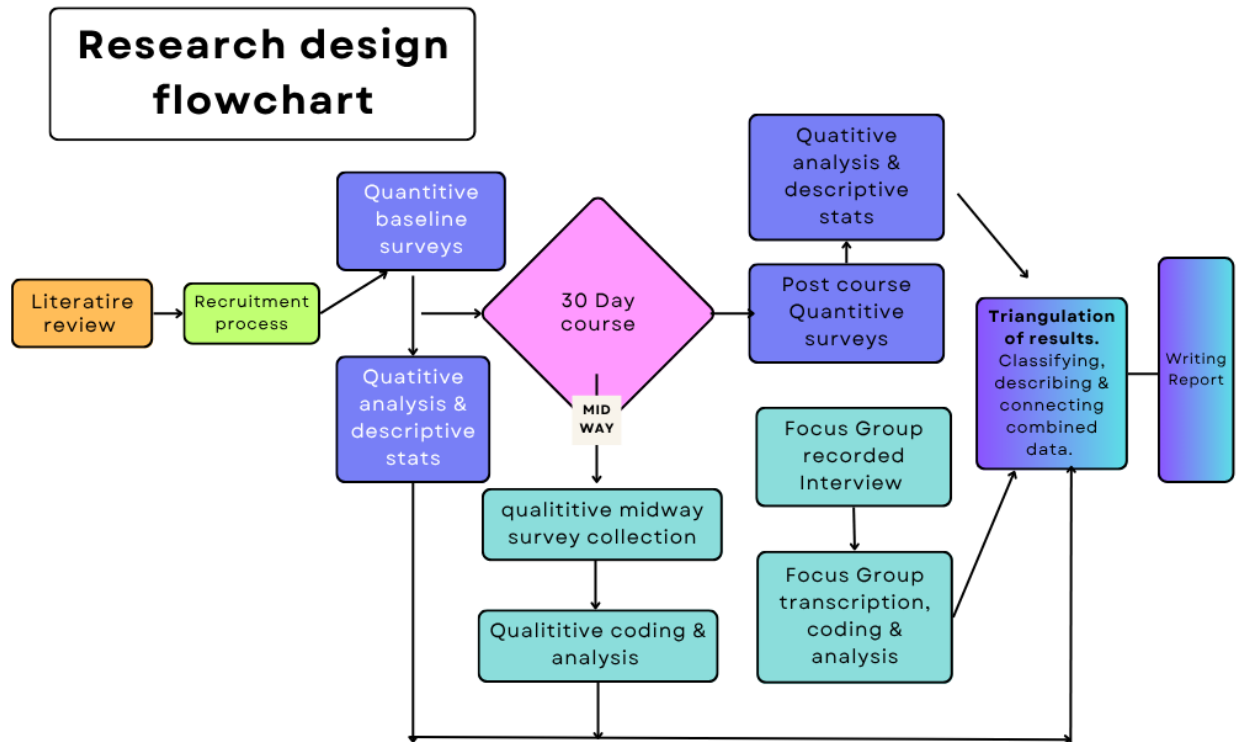
**Sample:** A purposive sample of up to 35 adult female singers who self-report perfectionistic MPA reflects the work-based focus and allows tight alignment between research aims and studio reality. Participants will be drawn from my teaching practice and, via snowball referrals, from trusted colleagues' practices.

**Quantitative strand:** All singers completed the K-MPAI and FMPS-Brief at pre- and post-course assessments. Pre–post scores were compared using paired-samples t-tests to examine statistically significant change. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and 95 % confidence intervals, were reported to illustrate the magnitude and precision of effects.

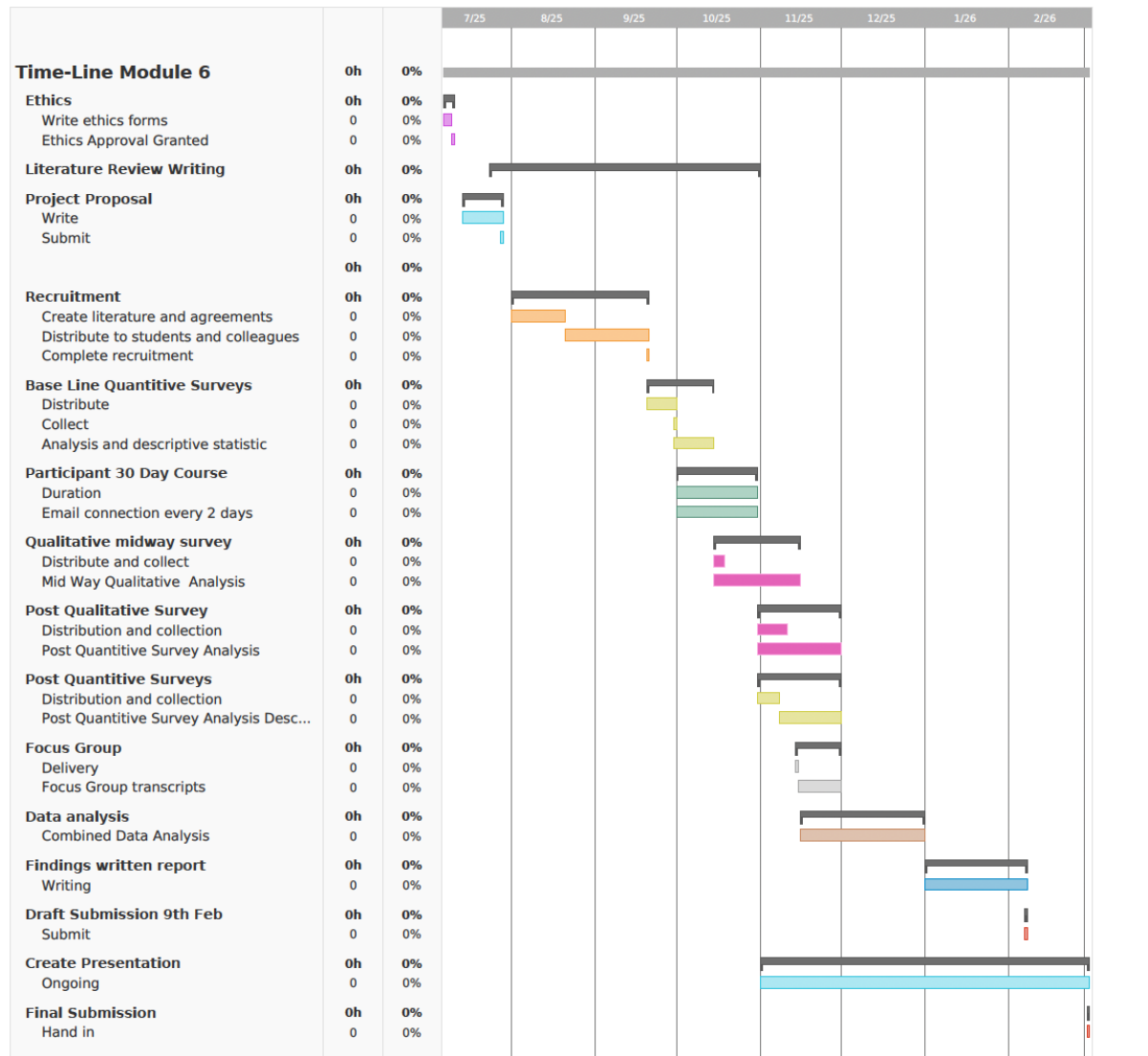
**Qualitative strand:** Brief open-ended surveys at Day 15 and Day 30 capture process reflections; a single focus group (10 volunteers) adds collective sense-making. Texts undergo Braun & Clarke's (23) 6-step thematic analysis.

**Integration:** Quantitative change scores and qualitative process data, which have been collected concurrently during the 30-day intervention, are then connected at interpretation for collective sense-making (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Fetters et al., 2013). Findings will be triangulated to assess convergence, complementarity, or divergence, yielding a nuanced picture of whether and how this course can relieve perfectionistic MPA while remaining feasible for everyday singers.

The following flowchart shows the research design process.



**Timeline & Design** (short-term longitudinal; Grey 2004, see Gantt): Literature review (Jul 2025), recruitment (Aug/Sept), 30-day intervention (Oct), data collection (pre/mid/post), analysis and write-up (Nov 2025 – Mar 2026).



## Ethical Considerations

Participants are adult singers from my own studio, constituting an insider sample who already know me and, in some cases, one another. As participants self-identify with anxiety and perfectionism, the cohort may be considered emotionally vulnerable, and engagement with reflective mindfulness practices and post-course discussion may heighten affective exposure. Key ethical risks, therefore, include perceived coercion, misinterpretation of the course as a therapeutic intervention, unmet expectations, and attrition within a 30-day self-guided format.

To mitigate these risks, I will: (i) obtain informed, opt-in consent and reiterate the right to withdraw without penalty throughout the study; (ii) explicitly frame all materials as non-clinical and provide external mental health signposting; (iii) deliver the course fully online and

asynchronously, maintaining clear boundaries in lessons on research-related discussion; (iv) over-recruit by approximately 25% and use light-touch check-ins to reduce attrition (Creswell & Creswell, 2023); (v) store all pseudonymised data on encrypted, password-protected drives; and (vi) explicitly state that participation or withdrawal will not affect the tutor–student relationship. These procedures align with Costley’s (2010) guidance on insider research and UWTSD requirements for consent, anonymity, and data security.

While procedural safeguards were implemented, they cannot fully resolve the ethical tensions inherent in dual-role practitioner research. Anonymisation does not eliminate relational expectations, and reliance on self-report screening limited formal assessment of baseline psychological variability. These risks were addressed through explicit boundary-setting, non-clinical framing, graded sequencing of affect-centred practices, and external signposting; however, in a perfectionistic cohort, even well-intentioned symptom framing may inadvertently reinforce evaluative pressure when change is not immediately realised (Giommi; Mikail et al., 2022). Such tensions cannot be eliminated in short-term, self-guided formats, only carefully anticipated and responsibly managed.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

While I have developed critical academic skills through desk-based research, I have not yet designed or conducted my own empirical study or interpreted real-world data. Although I understand methodological rigour in theory, I have not previously gained practical research experience.

I have deliberately withheld applying the findings from my earlier mindfulness research to my teaching practice until I could test them within a structured, ethically approved framework. Confidence in the programme will grow through critically learning from both its successes and its shortcomings.

Conducting this applied study will clarify how mindfulness applies to voice teaching, highlight what needs refinement, and produce a concise, shareable tool that singers and teachers can use on tight schedules.

Although not a direct replication, this project closely parallels recent short-form mindfulness trials and extends them by adding mixed-methods evidence and a singer-specific, fully self-guided format, offering fresh insight that can inform and refine future interventions.

## **PROJECT REPORT**

### **Introduction**

Over the past 25 years, I have worked as a vocal coach and choir leader with amateur and semi-professional singers. While vocal technique and musicianship are central to this work, a substantial portion of teaching time is devoted to addressing psychological difficulties that interfere with vocal freedom and expressive confidence. Most commonly, these difficulties present as perfectionistic distress and music performance anxiety (MPA).

In practice, singers frequently describe fear of judgement, heightened self-criticism, and a persistent sense of threat that emerges not only in formal performance settings but also in rehearsals and one-to-one lessons. These experiences often limit technical progress,

undermine confidence, and reduce enjoyment of singing as a creative and social activity. Such patterns are widely reflected in the literature, with evidence suggesting that approximately one-third of musicians experience elevated performance anxiety, and that women are disproportionately affected (Kenny, 2011; Studer et al., 2011). Perfectionism, particularly in its socially prescribed form, is increasingly recognised as a significant contributor to the maintenance of this distress (Flett et al., 2021).

In teaching contexts, singers frequently understand anxiety as evidence of limited ability or insufficient talent, rather than as a response shaped by interpretation, expectations, or evaluative habits. This tendency to personalise anxiety has been noted within recent research on musicians' experiences of performance-related distress (Paese & Egermann, 2024; Pecen et al., 2018). When anxiety is interpreted in this way, it often appears to reinforce cycles of self-monitoring, avoidance, and repetitive negative thinking, which have been identified as maintaining features of perfectionistic performance difficulties (Dobos et al., 2019; Paese & Egermann, 2024; Xie et al., 2019).

I strongly identified with vocal educators who acknowledge that skill-focused training alone does not always address repetitive or embedded patterns of performance-related thinking (Dobos et al., 2019; Paese & Egermann, 2024). Within my own practice, I observed that for some singers, increased emphasis on technical correction was accompanied by heightened frustration and reduced tolerance of perceived failure, a pattern consistent with accounts of threat sensitivity and evaluative concern in music performance anxiety (Diaz, 2018; Dobos et al., 2019).

Many of my students express a strong desire to build confidence and move towards performance, yet tolerance for exposure varies considerably. In some cases, heightened performance demands appear to re-activate earlier adverse experiences, underscoring the need for psychologically informed, trauma-aware preparation. For singers, whose voices function as both instruments and personal expression, self-conscious affect may be particularly salient. Within this context, perfectionistic shame may compound negative self-appraisal and fear of social exposure, intensifying anxiety and reinforcing avoidance (Monti et al., 2017).

Alongside vocal pedagogy, I trained as a yoga teacher, where mindfulness and meditation are central. Although these domains were initially separate, increasing psychological distress within my singing practice revealed that technical instruction and ad hoc coping strategies were insufficient for some singers. Structured approaches supporting internal awareness, physiological regulation, and a different relationship to self-critical thoughts appeared more beneficial.

Previous research, alongside professional experience, suggests that while singing teachers commonly recognise anxiety-related difficulties in their students, many feel underprepared to address these concerns beyond technical instruction (Mazzarolo et al., 2023; Monti et al., 2017; Pecen et al., 2018; Suzuki & Pitts, 2024). This realisation was personally significant, as it clarified that I possess relevant skills through my combined training in vocal pedagogy and mindfulness, and that these skills could be shared more widely through a resource designed to run alongside, rather than replace, singing lessons. Such an approach also acknowledges that teachers themselves may experience similar pressures and anxieties,

positioning the intervention as potentially supportive for educators as well as students (Cupido, 2018).

For many singers, performance-related distress is managed outside clinical pathways. Support, therefore, often takes the form of self-directed strategies that can be integrated into everyday musical practice, with increasing emphasis placed on self-management approaches to music performance anxiety (Diaz, 2018; Hu, 2024; Suzuki & Pitts, 2024; Tahirbegi, 2022). Within this context, mindfulness-based approaches have demonstrated potential to address transdiagnostic processes relevant to MPA, including self-criticism, emotional regulation, and attentional control (Hofmann et al., 2011; Nash & Newberg, 2023). Rather than functioning as a single technique, mindfulness is increasingly understood to encompass a range of related practices that engage attentional control, emotion regulation, and self-awareness in distinct yet interacting ways (Tang et al., 2015).

Despite growing interest in mindfulness-based approaches, short-term, self-guided interventions tailored specifically to singers remain under-examined. Where mindfulness resources are available to the public, they are often generic, fragmented, or accessed inconsistently, limiting their applicability to performance-related concerns and sustained engagement. This gap is particularly salient for adult amateur singers who may not perceive their distress as severe enough to warrant clinical intervention, yet continue to experience anxiety that affects confidence, participation, and self-concept.

The present project was undertaken to address this gap. It sought to examine whether a brief, structured mindfulness intervention could meaningfully support adult amateur and semi-professional singers experiencing perfectionistic music performance anxiety. The intervention, titled 'Presence Over Perfection' was designed as a 30-day, self-guided online course intended to integrate into everyday life without the requirement for clinical support or intensive time commitment.

The central purpose of the project was to investigate the extent to which participation in a 30-day self-guided mindfulness course could reduce perfectionistic music performance anxiety, and to explore how participants experienced the intervention in terms of usefulness, accessibility, and perceived impact. To address both outcome and experience, the project employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative outcome measures with participant-reported reflections.

The project's intended impact was twofold. At a local level, it aimed to inform the development of more psychologically responsive approaches within my own vocal teaching practice. At a broader level, it sought to contribute practice-based evidence relevant to the design of accessible, low-cost mindfulness interventions for creative populations operating outside clinical or conservatoire contexts.

In addition to its practical aims, the project supported specific personal learning outcomes. These included gaining experience in designing, delivering, and evaluating an applied intervention in a real-world teaching context; strengthening skills in mixed-methods research design and analysis; and deepening reflexive awareness of ethical considerations in insider research. By critically engaging with the intervention's strengths and limitations, the project aimed to enhance my capacity to integrate research and practice in an ethically grounded, methodologically transparent, and responsive way that responds to participants' experiences.

This report begins with a review of relevant literature on music performance anxiety, perfectionism, and mindfulness-based approaches, with particular attention to short-term, accessible interventions. A detailed account of the methodological framework and the intervention design follows. Findings are then presented using an integrated mixed-methods format, and the report concludes with a reflective discussion of implications for vocal pedagogy, course refinement, and future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Wider Context of MPA**

Over the past 25 years, Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) has commonly been conceptualised within psychiatric frameworks, particularly the performance-only specifier of Social Anxiety Disorder (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). However, emerging evidence suggests that MPA may align more closely with broader anxiety profiles, with Generalised Anxiety Disorder mediating its relationship with other anxiety subtypes (Kenny, 2023; Wiedemann et al., 2022). This raises questions about whether MPA is best understood as a circumscribed performance phobia or as part of a broader pattern of pervasive threat appraisal (Kinney et al., 2025).

Research interest in MPA reflects its high prevalence: approximately 36.5% of students report clinically significant symptoms (Kinney et al., 2025) and estimates among professional musicians approach 50% (Faur et al., 2023; Fernholz et al., 2019). Despite this, the literature has largely focused on professionals and those in formal training (Diaz, 2018; Juncos & Markman, 2016; Nicholson et al., 2015; Zarza-Alzugaray et al., 2018), overlooking evidence that performance anxiety contributes to distress and withdrawal across performer levels (Castiglione et al., 2018; Gross & Musgrave, 2017; Herman & Clark, 2023; Studer et al., 2011). Findings from non-elite populations confirm that MPA is not confined to professional contexts (Sickert et al., 2022; Spahn et al., 2023), while research on community singing highlights the importance of self-efficacy, self-concept, and perceived adequacy in sustaining participation (Demorest et al., 2017; Hendry et al., 2022; Hutchison & Beynon, 2014).

Despite growing attention, the field has been described as conceptually and methodologically stalled. Herman and Clarke (2023) note that large-scale studies have yielded limited advances in treatment, with continued emphasis on symptom categorisation over mechanisms of change. Ongoing inconsistencies in terminology and measurement further blur diagnostic boundaries (Gómez-López & Sánchez-Cabrero, 2023; Herman & Clark, 2023).

Together, these limitations highlight the need for mechanism-informed approaches to maintain processes, such as perfectionistic self-evaluation, particularly within under-researched populations of amateur singers.

### **Perfectionism and MPA**

Against this backdrop, transdiagnostic models of anxiety increasingly identify perfectionism as a maintaining process across both Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), operating through mechanisms including self-criticism, threat sensitivity, and persistent worry (Egan et al., 2011). In musician populations, perfectionistic evaluative concerns are consistently associated with heightened vulnerability to MPA and erosion of self-worth (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Flett & Hewitt, 2005). Given evidence linking MPA to both SAD and GAD profiles (Handley et al., 2014; Stevenson &

Akram, 2022; Tyler et al., 2021), perfectionism's transdiagnostic relevance is particularly salient. Within this framework, MPA and perfectionism may be understood not as discrete constructs, but as interwoven expressions of an anxious–perfectionistic disposition characterised by elevated perceived performance stakes and chronic evaluative self-monitoring. Nevertheless, they remain operationally distinct in measurement, a distinction with implications for short-term intervention research (Dobos et al., 2018; Egan et al., 2011; Kenny, 2023).

Perfectionism is typically defined as the pursuit of excessively high standards accompanied by critical self-evaluation (Flett et al., 2021; Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt et al., 2022). While some accounts distinguish between “perfectionistic strivings” and “evaluative concerns,” framing the former as potentially adaptive (Stoeber, 2012), this distinction becomes less clear within performance cultures that implicitly tie high standards to personal worth and fear of negative evaluation (Ryan et al., 2024). Critics have argued that perfectionism, as the pursuit of error-free achievement, is inherently unattainable and psychologically costly (Greenspon, 2000; Pacht, 1984), particularly where performance identity is central to self-concept.

From a cognitive–affective perspective, perfectionism amplifies threat appraisal through rigid self-standards and internalised evaluative scrutiny (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Stevenson & Akram, 2022). Elevated self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism are associated with higher MPA (Dobos et al., 2023; Diaz et al., 2023; Kenny, 2004), as well as trait anxiety and gender-linked reporting differences (Kenny, 2011; Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2020). Collectively, this literature describes a profile characterised by heightened threat sensitivity, persistent self-monitoring, and intolerance of perceived imperfection.

Crucially, where self-worth is contingent on error-free execution, increased awareness of internal states may intensify distress unless accompanied by acceptance and self-compassion. Interventions that focus solely on symptom reduction, exposure, or technical skill acquisition may therefore fail to address the evaluative concerns and self-relational patterns maintaining perfectionistic MPA. Approaches targeting tolerance of imperfection, flexible self-appraisal, and altered self-relating may be more theoretically aligned with this profile, particularly within the non-clinical performer population.

### **Moving Towards a Solution – Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has gained increasing prominence within interventions for anxiety and is now incorporated into many contemporary approaches to music performance anxiety (MPA) (Gómez-López & Sánchez-Cabrero, 2023). Through focused attention (FA) training on anchors such as the breath or bodily sensation, mindfulness cultivates present-moment awareness and attentional regulation, supporting disengagement from habitual self-critical rumination (Xie et al., 2019). Neurocognitive research indicates that mindfulness practice engages networks implicated in attention regulation, emotional processing, and metacognitive monitoring, and is associated with reduced reactivity to threat-related stimuli over time (Tang et al., 2015). These mechanisms are directly relevant to perfectionistic MPA, where heightened threat appraisal and evaluative self-monitoring maintain anxiety responses.

Mindfulness training is often described as developmentally progressive, beginning with effortful attentional stabilisation and gradually supporting greater efficiency and regulatory

flexibility (Gotink et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2015). For individuals with elevated perfectionistic tendencies, however, early attentional practice may initially increase awareness of self-critical processes (Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Stevenson & Akram, 2022). Without complementary acceptance-based skills, such heightened awareness may intensify distress rather than reduce it. This dynamic helps explain why reassurance, exposure alone, or technical skills training may be insufficient for performers whose anxiety is rooted in evaluative self-relating.

Within this context, acceptance and compassion emerge as critical complementary mechanisms. Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM) has been shown to influence psychological and neural processes associated with self-criticism, evaluative thought, and emotional regulation (Hofmann et al., 2011; Lippelt et al., 2014; Shahar et al., 2015; Stevenson & Akram, 2022). By fostering a kinder stance toward internal experience, compassion practices directly address the tension between evaluative perfectionism and psychological acceptance described in both early conceptual critiques (Greenspon, 2000; Pacht, 1984) and contemporary vulnerability models (Flett et al., 2021). Beyond intervention research, correlational findings indicate that higher state mindfulness is associated with lower state perfectionistic tendencies in musicians, suggesting that moment-to-moment attentional and acceptance processes may buffer evaluative self-criticism (Diaz, 2018).

For individuals characterised by heightened threat appraisal and evaluative self-monitoring, evidence increasingly suggests that integrated approaches combining attentional stabilisation with compassion-based practices may enhance regulation more effectively than either element alone (Keng et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2023). In this configuration, attentional training reduces reactivity to internal cues, while compassion practices reshape self-relating and evaluative stance (Paese & Schiavio, 2025). Together, these processes may operate as graded exposure, increasing tolerance of distressing internal experiences central to perfectionistic MPA (Brown et al., 2022; Czajkowski et al., 2022).

Collectively, this literature suggests that mindfulness-based interventions are theoretically well-suited to perfectionistic MPA when designed to balance attentional regulation with acceptance- and compassion-oriented practices. However, much of the existing research has focused on intensive, professionally delivered programmes, with less attention given to brief, mechanism-aligned sequences accessible to amateur performers.

### **Methodological Trends in MPA, Perfectionism, and Mindfulness Research**

Research in MPA, perfectionism, and mindfulness has employed diverse methodologies, although quantitative, self-report designs have predominated. Survey-based studies demonstrate robust associations between perfectionism, anxiety, and MPA (Dobos et al., 2019), as well as contextual variation in MPA expression, including higher anxiety in online compared to in-person performance settings among novice singers (Ryan et al., 2024). However, such approaches are limited in their capacity to capture experiential processes and are frequently constrained by small samples, heterogeneous protocols, and limited standardisation, reducing comparability across studies (Kinney et al., 2025). Reported gender differences in MPA should also be interpreted cautiously, as higher female scores may reflect participation patterns or reporting biases rather than inherent vulnerability (Becker, 2022; D. Kenny, 2011). Together, these limitations highlight the need for contextual sensitivity when interpreting self-report data in performer populations.

In response, mixed-methods designs have increasingly been adopted to integrate outcome measurement with experiential insights. Studies combining pre–post surveys with qualitative reflection report reductions in performance anxiety alongside perceived changes in breathing, bodily awareness, and attentional focus, enhancing ecological validity by illuminating how change is experienced as well as whether it occurs (Czajkowski et al., 2015; 2021). Qualitative work has further identified body-based, breath-centred, and compassion-focused practices as particularly relevant for addressing self-criticism in musicians (Paese & Egermann, 2024). Extending this approach, Paese and Schiavio (2025) linked specific meditation practices to proposed mechanisms of change, including attentional regulation, interoception, and cognitive diffusion, while identifying shame and fear of failure as persistent experiential challenges aligned with perfectionism.

Despite these advances, methodological gaps remain. Recent scholarship calls for clearer articulation of practice-to-mechanism links and more consistent use of pre–post intervention designs (Paese & Schiavio, 2025), while continued reliance on small, heterogeneous samples limits generalisability across the MPA literature (Kinney et al., 2025). Although intensive interventions such as eight-week MBSR-informed programmes have demonstrated beneficial effects, their time commitment and cost raise concerns regarding accessibility and scalability, particularly for non-professional musicians (Czajkowski et al., 2022).

Taken together, these trends indicate that while mindfulness-based interventions show promise, existing research has prioritised intensive, professionally delivered programmes and professional musicians. Mixed outcomes may reflect differential responsiveness across symptom domains, with some interventions reducing depression or perfectionism without corresponding changes in anxiety (Shahar et al., 2015; Woodfin et al., 2021). These considerations support the use of mixed-methods designs that integrate measurable change with qualitative insight and articulate clearer links between specific practices and proposed mechanisms, particularly when evaluating brief, accessible mindfulness- and compassion-based interventions for musicians.

### **Measurement Approaches in MPA, Mindfulness, and Perfectionism**

The measurement of music performance anxiety (MPA) has developed alongside theoretical models of anxiety. The Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) remains one of the most widely used and comprehensive measures, grounded in a psychodynamic–cognitive framework that captures cognitive, somatic, and affective components of performance anxiety (Kenny, 2023). It is frequently administered alongside broader anxiety measures such as the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) and the Performance Anxiety Inventory (PAI). Although these instruments demonstrate strong psychometric properties, their sensitivity to contextual variation may be limited in non-clinical or amateur performer populations, where anxiety is often anticipatory, situational, or shaped by limited performance exposure rather than repeated evaluative experience (Papageorgi et al., 2007; Ryan et al., 2024).

Measurement challenges are similarly evident in mindfulness research. Despite widespread use in clinical and educational contexts, the field remains theoretically and operationally fragmented, with ongoing debate regarding construct definition, facet overlap, and scale validity (Karl & Fischer, 2022; Nash et al., 2013). The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006) is one of the most comprehensive instruments available; however,

its length can impose substantial participant burden, limiting feasibility in applied or small-scale studies.

Perfectionism research has likewise involved substantial measurement complexity. Frost et al.'s (1990, 1997) Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale and Hewitt and Flett's (2016) multidimensional model have both demonstrated robust reliability, but concerns regarding length and cross-loading have prompted the development of abbreviated forms (Cox et al., 2002). The FMPS-Brief (Burgess et al., 2016) offers an efficient alternative, capturing the higher-order dimensions of Strivings and Evaluative Concerns while maintaining good internal consistency across clinical and community samples, making it well-suited to applied contexts.

Evidence from the broader mindfulness literature indicates that brief, low-burden interventions can produce meaningful reductions in anxiety and related outcomes, including in self-guided online formats (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Howarth et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2023). Meta-analytic and dose–response findings suggest that shorter daily practices may offer benefits comparable to longer programmes for novice practitioners, supporting the feasibility of accessible formats beyond traditional eight-week interventions such as MBSR and MBCT (Crane et al., 2017; Howarth et al., 2019). However, few studies have examined such approaches in amateur singer populations or specifically in relation to perfectionistic MPA.

Despite growth in the field, three gaps remain evident. First, research continues to prioritise professional musicians and intensive programmes, with limited evaluation of self-guided digital interventions for amateur singers. Second, few studies have examined brief, mechanism-aligned sequences integrating attentional training, breath and body awareness, and compassion practices in relation to perfectionistic MPA. Third, outcome reporting remains inconsistent, with limited use of change-sensitive pre–post designs that include transparent reporting of adherence and effect estimates.

Together, these theoretical and methodological gaps highlight the need for brief, accessible, mechanism-informed interventions evaluated using transparent longitudinal designs within amateur singer populations. In response, the present study evaluates a 30-day, self-guided mindfulness and compassion resource using validated short-form measures within a pre–mid–post framework to examine its association with reductions in perfectionistic music performance anxiety among amateur and semi-professional singers.

## **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### **Outline of Intention**

This project evaluates the feasibility, accessibility, and perceived impact of the *Presence over Perfection* 30-day mindfulness course for singers experiencing perfectionistic music performance anxiety (MPA). The research question asks: to what extent does participation in a self-led mindfulness course relate to changes in perfectionistic MPA in amateur singers, and how is the intervention experienced in terms of usefulness, accessibility, and emotional impact?

The course was delivered online in a fully self-led format, providing sequentially progressive guided practices across 30 days. Researcher involvement during delivery was minimal, supporting unprompted engagement and ecological validity. Although broadly applicable, the

study focused on adult women, reflecting both the demographic most represented in the researcher's practice and evidence linking higher MPA and perfectionistic concerns with female singers (Kenny, 2004, 2011; Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2020). Reported gender differences in MPA should be interpreted with caution, as higher scores among women may partly reflect participation patterns, reporting tendencies, and evaluative styles such as heightened self-scrutiny, rather than indicating uniform or biologically fixed differences in anxiety prevalence (Kenny, 2011; Wu, 2026).

## **Research Paradigm**

Ontologically, the study adopts a pragmatistic stance, recognising MPA and perfectionism as real and consequential while acknowledging their mediation through subjective meaning-making (Crotty, 1998). This situates the research largely within an interpretivist paradigm, in which knowledge is understood as co-constructed between researcher and participant (Charmaz, 2008). Accordingly, analysis privileges meanings as they emerge from participants' reflections rather than imposing predefined categories or hypothesis testing, supporting an inductive, practice-based approach.

Quantitative measures were included pragmatically, not to establish causal explanations, but to respond to calls for more replicable designs capable of evidencing change in comparable ways (Kinney et al., 2025). Mixed methods, therefore, address both experiential and outcome-oriented dimensions of the research question.

## **Methodology**

An embedded mixed-methods, pre–post design was employed. Quantitative measures assessed measurable change, while qualitative data explored participants' experiences of the intervention. This approach is particularly relevant in perfectionistic populations, where impression management and stigma may shape self-report (Hewitt et al., 2017; Kenny, 2011).

Purely quantitative designs offer outcome data without explanatory depth, while purely qualitative approaches provide narrative richness without evidencing change over time. Mixed methods were selected to balance rigour and feasibility and to enable triangulation across data types (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), consistent with Crotty's (1998) view that methodology links philosophical assumptions to specific methods.

## **Methods**

### **Sampling and Participants**

A non-probability, purposive sampling approach recruited adult women who self-identified as experiencing distressing perfectionistic thoughts affecting musical performance or confident engagement in singing (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Eligibility criteria required participants to be female, aged 18 or above, and actively engaged in singing through a choir, group, band, or solo pathway. Participants were expected to be regularly involved in singing activity with either an active performance element or a clear desire to perform that had not yet been realised.

The sample predominantly comprised amateur and semi-professional singers, reflecting the demographic of the researcher's practice. This focus reflected both the profile of the researcher's teaching practice and the consistent association between female gender and

higher MPA in the literature (Kenny, 2004, 2011; Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2020; Ryan et al., 2024). Rather than aiming for gender generalisability, the study deliberately narrows its focus to examine perfectionism-linked MPA in women and to evaluate a brief, self-led mindfulness intervention within this group.

Recruitment was conducted through the researcher's teaching practice and trusted pedagogical networks, with snowball sampling via peer referrals where appropriate (Naderifar et al., 2017). Thirty-three singers enrolled in September 2025 (27 amateur, 5 semi-professionals, 1 professional). All signed the initial agreement and consent forms, see Appendix A, and self-reported no current clinician-diagnosed anxiety disorder. All but two participants were known to the researcher through teaching or community networks.

Of the participants who consented, 31 completed the baseline psychometric measures; accordingly, baseline quantitative analyses use  $N = 31$ . Paired pre–post analyses include only participants with complete data at both time points. No data imputation was undertaken.

### **Quantitative Measures**

Three instruments were used to assess changes in music performance anxiety and perfectionism across the intervention timeline, alongside exploratory, facet-informed reflective prompts regarding the experience of mindfulness.

#### **1. Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI; Kenny, 2009).**

Grounded in Kenny's psychodynamic–cognitive model, the 40-item K-MPAI uses a 0–6 Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater music performance anxiety. Reverse-keyed items were scored in accordance with instrument guidelines so that higher totals consistently reflected greater anxiety. Two minor wording adaptations were made to ensure relevance for singers without altering construct intent ("ruin my career" amended to "ruin my career/performance opportunities"; "whether I played" amended to "whether I sang well enough"). The K-MPAI was administered at baseline and post-intervention.

#### **2. Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale – Brief (FMPS-Brief; Burgess et al., 2016).**

The FMPS-Brief was selected for its concise focus on concern over mistakes and doubts about actions, domains closely associated with perfectionistic distress in singers. A single wording adjustment omitted the word "school" to ensure suitability for an adult sample. The scale was administered at baseline and post-intervention.

#### **3. Mindfulness-related reflective items.**

Mindfulness was explored qualitatively through a small number of post-course open-ended prompts that examined awareness, reactivity, and acceptance in performance contexts. Prompts were informed by established mindfulness constructs but framed experientially rather than psychometrically, enabling contextualised reflection while minimising participant burden (Howarth et al., 2019).

See Appendix B for the full Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory and Appendix C for the full Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale.

## **Data collection, handling, and scoring**

Psychometric responses were collected anonymously via Google Forms and exported to Excel for ordering, cleaning, and scoring under pseudonymous study IDs. Participants were assigned unique identifiers at the point of data extraction to ensure confidentiality and enable accurate pre–post matching.

Audio recordings from the focus group were stored securely and retained only until transcription and analysis were complete, after which the recordings were deleted. Email correspondence was used solely for administrative purposes and was deleted on request. All data were stored in accordance with GDPR and institutional data management requirements.

Where duplicate submissions occurred due to participant correction or resubmission, the most recent complete entry was retained to reflect final responses

## **Quantitative Analysis**

Quantitative analyses were conducted in Jamovi. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all measures, followed by paired-samples t-tests to examine pre–post change in total scores on the K-MPAI and FMPS-Brief. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stated that there would be no statistically significant difference between pre- and post-intervention mean scores on each measure. Statistical significance was evaluated at  $\alpha = .05$ . Effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$  for repeated measures) and 95% confidence intervals were reported to characterise the magnitude and direction of change. Assumptions of normality were assessed using Shapiro–Wilk tests; when these were not met, nonparametric equivalents were applied.

To explore patterns of change in perfectionism, FMPS-Brief change scores were examined descriptively across baseline perfectionism groupings (non-perfectionist, perfectionist, newly identified perfectionist). Given small and uneven subgroup sizes, these analyses were descriptive rather than inferential.

Associations between changes in perfectionism and music performance anxiety were examined using correlational analyses of change scores on the FMPS-Brief and K-MPAI. These analyses were exploratory and intended to examine the co-occurrence of change rather than test causal or mediational hypotheses.

See Appendix F for the full dataset used in the analysis.

## **Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative data were gathered at four points to complement the psychometrics. At enrolment, brief open-ended statements about current experience and motivation were collected to provide a qualitative baseline snapshot. A mid-course questionnaire, administered in October, invited open-ended reflections at the halfway point. A post-course questionnaire, administered in early November, captured immediate reflections and perceived impact.

Because Days 1–10 explicitly trained noticing, monitoring, and returning attention, the midpoint questionnaire (Day 15) was designed to capture early engagement, perceived challenge, and emerging awareness. The post-course questionnaire provided a second reference point to examine whether early experiences consolidated or shifted over time,

including after the introduction of Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM) and mixed practices in later stages.

Finally, a focus group discussion, conducted in mid-November, enabled collective reflection and exploration of shared themes. The focus group took place in person at a neutral venue to reduce perceived power dynamics and encourage open dialogue. As Berg (2001) notes, small focus groups can create dynamic interaction that builds on individual reflections.

See Appendix D for the Midway Questionnaire, Appendix E for the Post-Course Questionnaire, and Appendix G for the Focus Group Preparation.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six phases (2006, 2021). The study adopts a Big Q qualitative approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019), situated within an interpretivist, practice-based epistemology, in which researcher subjectivity is understood as integral to analysis rather than a source of bias. Analysis was conceptualised as a creative, interpretive process generated through sustained engagement, immersion, and reflexive meaning-making.

Themes were treated as outcomes of the analytic process, developed inductively through close engagement with participants' accounts rather than as pre-existing patterns. Analytic rigour was pursued through careful reflexive attention to meaning, context, and coherence across the dataset, consistent with an understanding of qualitative knowledge as co-created.

Data were coded inductively at both semantic and latent levels, focusing on meaning rather than frequency. Atlas.ti software was used to organise datasets, manage codes, collate extracts, and support iterative theme development. Analytic decisions and theme generation remained researcher-led, and no inter-rater reliability was sought, as reflexive thematic analysis treats themes as interpretive constructions rather than objective units requiring coder agreement. Candidate themes were reviewed against coded extracts and the full dataset, then refined, defined, and named around central organising concepts.

Conceptual interpretation was informed by Tang et al.'s (2015) triphasic model of mindfulness mechanisms and by Nash et al.'s (2013; 2023) taxonomy of attentional, constructive, and deconstructive meditation types, which served as sensitising frameworks for interpreting experiential change rather than deductive coding schemes.

Qualitative datasets comprised midpoint (n = 28) and post-course (n = 25) open-ended questionnaire responses, analysed both independently and comparatively to identify developmental trajectories across the 30-day course. Reflexive integration of quantitative and qualitative strands supported triangulation and a nuanced understanding of participants' lived experiences of change.

AI-assisted tools (ChatGPT, OpenAI) were used during the writing process to support editing for clarity, concision, and consistency, including identifying repetition and surface-level errors. All analytic decisions, interpretations, and final wording remain the responsibility of the researcher.

## **Procedure**

The 30-day *Presence over Perfection* course was delivered online in October 2025 in a fully self-led format. Participants were invited to engage in daily mindfulness practices lasting approximately 15–20 minutes, delivered via streamed MP3 audio files hosted on a dedicated course website. Audio files were not downloadable. All practices were designed and recorded by the researcher, a 200-hour Registered Yoga Teacher with additional training in mindfulness practices.

To support engagement and continuity, brief reminder and guidance emails were sent every other day throughout the intervention period. These emails outlined the intended focus of each phase of the course and encouraged adherence to practice, but did not include individualised feedback.

A single introductory video was provided at the outset of the course to offer orientation and psychoeducational context regarding course structure and the expected challenges of early mindfulness practice. Engagement with this video was optional, and viewing was not monitored.

As outlined in the Literature Review, the programme followed a progressive attention-training structure, beginning with breath-based attentional anchors and gradually introducing practices involving greater affective engagement.

## **Ethical Integrity, Risk, and Trustworthiness**

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and all procedures adhered to institutional policy and GDPR requirements. Participants received detailed information outlining the study aims, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was secured prior to participation, and all data were pseudonymised and stored securely. Given the sensitivity of music performance anxiety, participants were reminded they could omit questions, pause participation, or withdraw if distress arose, with appropriate support resources provided.

The researcher occupied an insider role as choir leader and vocal coach. While this facilitated access and rapport, potential power dynamics and impression management were addressed by emphasising voluntariness, extending recruitment beyond existing students, and anonymising responses at the point of analysis (Mercer, 2007; Winter, 2021). The researcher's professional training as a 200-hour Registered Yoga Teacher with mindfulness specialisation supported safe and appropriate delivery of the intervention, and professional insurance was in place.

Potential risks primarily involve emotional discomfort during reflection or practice. Although no serious adverse events were reported, some participants described moments of frustration or heightened self-criticism, which were treated as expected aspects of early mindfulness engagement rather than harm. Trauma-informed principles were therefore embedded throughout delivery, including flexibility of posture, pacing, and engagement, and participants were reminded that practices could be adapted or paused as needed. Organisational risk was minimal, as the project did not involve clinical intervention or high-risk procedures.

Trustworthiness was supported through data collection at multiple time points, the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, and the inclusion of a focus group to enable collective reflection and challenge emerging interpretations. Transferability is limited by the all-female sample; however, a detailed description of the intervention context and analytic process helps readers assess relevance to other settings. Dependability and confirmability were enhanced through transparent documentation of procedures and analytic decisions, alongside dialogic reflexivity with a trusted peer and the researcher's spouse, particularly when engaging with negative or ambiguous feedback.

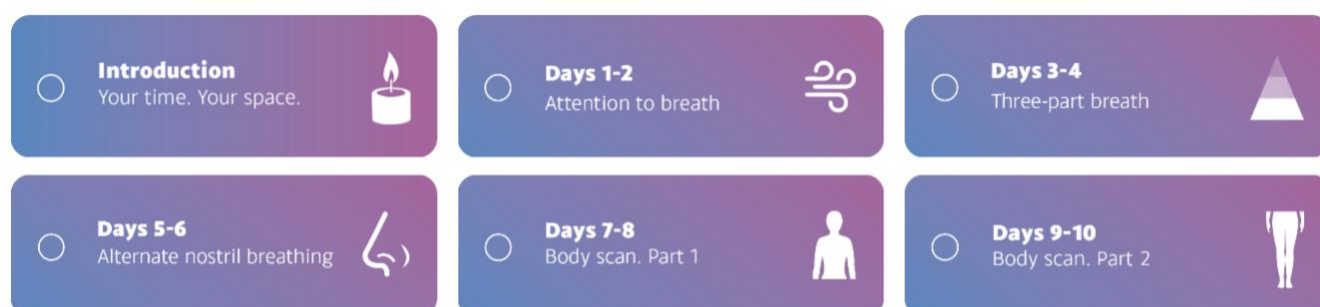
## Summary

By integrating validated psychometric measures with participant-led qualitative data across a pre-, mid-, and post-timeline, this embedded mixed-methods design enabled a nuanced evaluation of both outcomes, change, and lived experience.

The following chapter presents findings in a practice-informed structure. Although the analysis was inductive and reflexive, themes are organised around core practice clusters to reflect the study's intervention focus and participants' repeated linking of experience to specific exercises. Theme labels are therefore used as analytic organisers of patterned meaning, rather than as claims of discrete or uniform mechanisms.

## FINDINGS

### Stage 1 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 1-10



These practices were intentionally restricted to attentional training, reflecting the course design rationale of stabilising attention before introducing affective or cognitive work.

### Theme 1: Emerging Interoceptive Awareness

Early feedback at the midpoint indicated that, among participants who engaged with focused-attention practices, increased interoceptive awareness was accompanied by reduced perceived stress and emotional reactivity. Participants frequently described feeling calmer or less reactive following practice, with comments such as “not so on edge” (Maroon MWQ) and “less anxious and irritable!” (CA60 MWQ). These early shifts align with evidence that focused-attention training supports disengagement from distressing stimuli and facilitates a return toward emotional baseline (Lutz et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2015).

For many participants, heightened present-moment awareness coincided with improved recognition of bodily tension, emotional triggers, and stress cues, as well as the deliberate

use of practices to restore regulation. Participants described being “able to deal with my stress quicker” (NI75 MWQ) and “realising when I’m tense helps me relax and breathe differently” (DE70 MWQ). This pattern reflects enhanced interoceptive signalling, whereby noticing bodily sensations associated with stress enables more adaptive regulatory responses (Price & Hooven, 2018).

Participants also reported actively applying breath-based strategies in response to these cues both within and beyond musical contexts, for example, “using breath to get calmer” (RO56 MWQ). Among those who performed during the intervention period, some described increased embodiment and breath awareness while singing: “I’m much more conscious of my breathing while singing now” (CA60 PCQ).

Post-course questionnaire data indicated that 72% of participants reported improved bodily awareness. A minority (24%) did not report a clear change, most commonly attributing it to pre-existing breathing strategies, limited performance opportunities, or uncertainty about whether change had occurred.

Taken together, these findings suggest that early focused-attention practices primarily supported recognition rather than transformation of internal experience. Increased bodily awareness functioned as an initial point of contact with stress and arousal, laying groundwork for later processes without guaranteeing immediate relief or performance-specific change.

## **Theme 2: Alternate Nostril Breathing (ANB) as an Accessible Regulatory Practice**

Across midpoint and post-course reflections, ANB emerged as the most consistently accessible and positively experienced Stage 1 practice. Participants described it as easy to engage with, adaptable to daily life, and effective in producing rapid calm and focus. Typical comments included “a lifeline” (WI60 PCQ), “can be done anywhere” (BE56 PCQ), and “the most immediate and tangible benefits” (JE61 PCQ).

Many reported quick improvements in attentional control, describing reduced distraction and increased mental clarity. This combination of calming and sharpening appeared to make ANB particularly effective as a preparatory practice, leaving participants “ready for the next stage” and “more open to what follows” (EL57 PCQ).

These reports align with evidence that slow, paced breathing and alternating nasal airflow reduce sympathetic arousal and enhance vagal regulation (Rajam Krishna & Saikumar, 2016; Saoji et al., 2019; Telles et al., 2014), with brief ANB practice also associated with improved attentional performance (Krishna et al., 2024; Yadav et al., 2022). One participant perceived a reduction in blood pressure (Jane FG); while typically associated with longer-term practice, ANB has been linked to progressive parasympathetic dominance (Ghiya, 2017; Kanorewala & Suryawanshi, 2022). Importantly, such interpretations functioned as experiential confirmation of regulation, reinforcing engagement regardless of objective measurement.

A small number of participants experienced difficulty due to nasal congestion, which disrupted the technique. One participant reflected, “I found one of my nostrils blocked and ended up thinking about that – i.e. I didn’t know I was congested / what’s wrong with me /

what does it mean, etc!” (RA78 MWQ). Minor physical disruption occasionally prompted evaluative thinking, discussed further in relation to perfectionistic appraisal.

Overall, ANB functioned as a highly acceptable regulatory anchor, supporting rapid calming and attentional stabilisation with low cognitive demand. Acting “on the breath... at the edge of the ‘involuntary system” (Paese & Egermann, 2024, p. 10), its simplicity and adaptability likely contributed to its consistent uptake within this anxiety-prone cohort.

### **Theme 3: Anchoring Attention: Regulatory Benefits and Attentional Challenges Across Somatic Anchor**

The early focused-attention practices, including three-part breath and the 31- and 61-point body scans, were designed to cultivate attentional stability and deepen somatic awareness. Across both practices, a shared pattern emerged: while some participants reported clear regulatory or attentional benefits, many experienced these practices as mentally effortful, describing discomfort, agitation, or attentional fatigue over time.

A minority of participants described heightened attentional engagement, reporting that focus was “best with three-part breath” (VE62 PCQ) or noting moments of sustained attention such as “for the first time, I completely focused without mind wandering” (DE70 MWQ). Others described increased somatic presence despite challenge: “a much more heightened awareness of my physicality although I found it a challenge generally” (GL57 PCQ). For some, capacity appeared to develop gradually, culminating in later reflections that the body scan had become more manageable and meaningful: “By the end of the course...I had started to feel the benefits and appreciate awareness of the whole body in relation to performance” (JE61 PCQ).

However, frustration with these more demanding focused-attention tasks was prominent across the dataset. Only 39% of participants expressed a preference for three-part breath or body scan practices at the midpoint, falling slightly to 36% post-course, making these the least preferred practices overall. Participants frequently described attentional overload or strain, noting that the scan was “very difficult to focus” (SU73 PCQ), that “my brain was constantly wandering” (RO56 PCQ), or that pacing felt “slow and hard to maintain focus” (VE62 PCQ). One participant reported claustrophobic sensations during the three-part breath, echoing broader descriptions of these practices as cognitively demanding.

While many participants described neutral disengagement, such as sleepiness or drifting (n = 9; “I kept falling asleep... restarting it,” Lisa FG), others expressed frustration directed inward. Difficulties engaging with subtle bodily sensations were sometimes interpreted evaluatively: “I found the body scans challenging as I couldn’t really feel what I thought I was supposed to feel” (CA60 PCQ); “I must be doing it wrong” (Rebecca FG). Several participants described actively abandoning the practice altogether rather than persisting through perceived difficulty.

Taken together, Theme 3 indicates that while three-part breath and body scan practices supported attentional anchoring and somatic awareness for some participants, they were also experienced as demanding and effortful by many, particularly during early exposure. Focused-attention practice is inherently effortful for novice practitioners, and early difficulty is therefore expected; importantly, such difficulty does not necessarily reflect low engagement

or motivation, but rather the cognitive demands of sustained attentional training, which may be amplified by perfectionistic interpretations of effort or perceived failure.

**Stage 1 Summary:** preferential practice emerged early, with ANB widely endorsed for accessibility and regulation, while more demanding FA practices elicited effort and fatigue. These responses highlight the interaction between attentional load and evaluative tendencies at the outset of training.

## **Stage 2 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 11-15**



Early Metacognition and Affective Activation

### **Theme 1: Labelling and Early Metacognitive Awareness**

A central process to emerge during Stage 2 was labelling, understood as the capacity to notice and name internal experiences such as thoughts, emotions, and bodily states (Lieberman et al., 2007; Lutz et al., 2013). For many participants, this represented a new way of relating to internal experience, even when emotional tone or behaviour had not yet changed.

Several participants described this gain in simple terms, emphasising recognition rather than regulation: “It’s shown me that it’s OK to be aware of them and acknowledge them” (GL57 PCQ). Others reported increased clarity about the presence and patterning of thoughts and emotions, even when these felt intensified: “I am more aware of them and try to listen to them and use them” (SU73 PCQ); “Because I know they’re happening, and what they’re all about, I can more readily acknowledge and accept them” (JA70 PCQ). Around four-fifths of participants (20/25) reported new or heightened awareness of internal experience, indicating a marked increase in inward attentional orientation during this stage.

Importantly, not all participants experienced this increase in awareness as helpful. A minority described awareness itself as the primary challenge, particularly where long-standing self-criticism was already highly salient: “I’ve always been highly aware of my own self-criticism, it’s controlling that... I struggle with” (KA71 MCQ). End-point reflections echoed this concern: “I don’t think they’ve changed, I think I’ve become more solidly aware”; “Awareness has become more acute, although self-critical thoughts haven’t really altered” (RO66 PCQ); “I was always very self-aware... not sure any change there” (SQ73 PCQ). For this smaller group (5/25), increased monitoring appeared to outpace acceptance, resulting in heightened awareness without accompanying relief or integration.

Across the dataset, the labelling function primarily served as a preparatory process. For many participants, increased awareness altered how internal experiences were noticed, creating space for later processes such as acceptance, decentring, and cognitive flexibility. For others, awareness highlighted the limits of monitoring in the absence of sufficient acceptance, rendering early practice effortful or uncomfortable rather than regulating.

Overall, Theme 1 suggests that Stage 2 was characterised by a shift toward deliberate observation of internal experience rather than immediate change. Increased awareness marked an important point of contact with habitual patterns of thought and emotion, but did not in itself guarantee reduced distress. In some cases, monitoring-dominant attention coincided with heightened self-critical focus, consistent with evidence that awareness alone can amplify pleasant, neutral, and unpleasant experience without necessarily conferring immediate regulatory benefit (Desrosiers et al., 2014; Hamill et al., 2015; Fisak & Von Lehe, 2012; Perestelo-Perez et al., 2017).

## **Theme 2: Perspective Gains from Decentring through Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM)**

For a subset of participants, engagement with Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM) appeared to support early decentring, understood as the capacity to relate to thoughts as mental events rather than as accurate reflections of self or reality (Britton, 2019). Participants described recognising evaluative or self-critical thoughts as exaggerated, habitual, or perception-based rather than factual: “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” (PCQ WI60).

Several accounts suggest that these perspectives emerged through affective and relational engagement rather than through deliberate cognitive analysis. LKCM invited participants to adopt a kinder stance toward their own experience, often by imagining how they would respond to others in similar situations: “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” (PCQ CA60). In this way, compassion practices appeared to facilitate cognitive diffusion, loosening identification with self-critical narratives without requiring their suppression (Dahl et al., 2015).

For some participants, this process was accompanied by emotional release. Experiences of unexpected tears were reported as calming or relieving rather than distressing: “Loving kindness and compassion brought me to tears. Good, cleansing tears” (VE62 PCQ); “Why do I have tears? Very strange” (Maroon MWQ). Such responses may reflect the softening of rigid evaluative schemas or the emergence of affiliative affect, consistent with evidence that compassion practices can support emotional regulation and resilience even following brief training (Engen & Singer, 2014).

However, affective engagement did not uniformly lead to ease or relief. For some participants, LKCM increased emotional load or disrupted attention, particularly where emotionally salient material was activated. One participant described entering a compassion-focused “headspace” as misaligned with their immediate needs, noting that “this stressed me, thereby undermining the relaxation and calm I had been working towards” (NA63 PCQ). Another reported that “sending out kindness and forgiveness vibes... didn’t suit me,” explaining that thinking of people who had caused irritation or conflict felt jarring rather than regulating (IT63 PCQ).

Participants also reported difficulties in relation to identifying appropriate relational figures for use within the practice. Several participants described overthinking the selection of people or scenarios, which disrupted focus and reduced engagement: “It has been challenging to come up with people or situations... I overthink it, which leads to me losing focus” (VA79

MWQ); “My mind kept wandering when selecting a person” (BE56 MWQ). In cases where participants prepared these figures in advance, engagement improved: “With my examples readily identified, the session worked much better” (NA63 PCQ).

Beyond difficulties related to focus and task execution, some participants also described discomfort arising from the underlying meaning of compassion-based messages themselves. One participant, Rebecca, articulated difficulty with messages emphasising acceptance or “enoughness”: “So just that my voice is enough, that’s the one I struggle with, because I intellectualised it and went, then why am I learning? Why am I developing? If it’s enough, then I should stop... I don’t want to stop.”

In Rebecca’s account, perfectionistic striving appeared to function as a maintaining belief rather than merely a source of distress, reflecting concern that acceptance might undermine motivation or progress. This interpretation is consistent with research indicating that perfectionism is often perceived as protective or performance-enhancing despite its associated psychological costs (Flett et al., 2021).

Overall, Theme 2 indicates that LKCM supported perspective gains and early decentring for some participants, while simultaneously increasing emotional and cognitive demands for others. Affective engagement appeared to amplify both supportive and challenging responses, depending on individual readiness, familiarity with compassion-based practices, and sensitivity to emotionally salient material. This variability highlights the dual potential of affect-centred practices to facilitate meaningful perspective change while also exposing participants to material that may be difficult to regulate at this stage of training.

### **Theme 3: Discomfort with Negative Emotional Engagement, Focus Drift, and Threat Bias**

A perfectionistic “fix-it” impulse frequently accompanied early metacognitive gains. Participants described noticing self-critical thoughts and attempting to replace or pre-empt them: “I catch myself when self-critical and replace the negative thought with a positive thought” (VE62 MCQ); “My self-critic is learning to be quiet.” (ST59 MCQ); “I can hopefully acknowledge them in advance to head them off” (IT63 MCQ). These accounts indicate effective monitoring but also an evaluative stance in which control and correction precede a more accepting stance.

Although acceptance-oriented language was embedded throughout the course scripts (e.g. “allowing,” “letting go”), acceptance skills may be less accessible at baseline for individuals high in self-evaluation, rendering early focused-attention practices experienced as exposing rather than soothing (Flett et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2019).

For a small number of participants, engaging a compassion-focused “headspace” (IT63 PCQ) felt misaligned with their immediate needs, undermining anticipated effects such as calm or relief. One participant reflected, “This stressed me, thereby undermining the relaxation and calm I had been working towards” (NA63 PCQ). Another noted that “sending out kindness and forgiveness vibes... didn’t suit me... thinking of people who had annoyed me jarred” (IT63 PCQ), adding that compassion practices “didn’t gel with me.”

The emotional salience of interpersonal material shaped engagement with affect-centred practices for a subset of participants. Several reported difficulty disengaging from threatening or unresolved relational representations, despite guidance to work with mildly challenging or neutral figures. One participant described having to “dredge that right back” to

identify a relevant person, noting that such figures were no longer present in their current life (Sally FG). At the same time, another reported difficulty “getting past a person in my head” during compassion-based practices (RA78 PCQ).

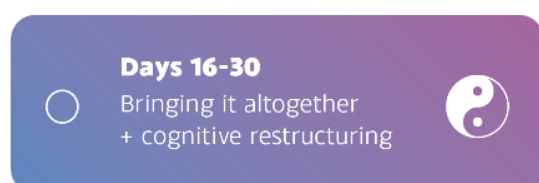
In some cases, participants reported an absence of readily accessible ‘safe’ or supportive figures for use within the practice, which appeared to increase cognitive load and emotional strain during LKCM.

For several participants (n = 7), identifying appropriate people or scenarios became a source of overthinking and attentional disruption; “It has been challenging to come up with people or situations... I overthink it, which leads to me losing focus” (VA79 MWQ); “My mind kept wandering when selecting a person” (Be56 MWQ). When this selection process was completed in advance, engagement improved: “With my examples readily identified, the session worked much better” (NA63 PCQ).

For participants who had begun to stabilise attention through FA, a sudden shift toward emotionally salient relational objects appeared to increase cognitive load and reactivity, sometimes resulting in irritation or focus drift (Britton, 2019). These findings are consistent with evidence that affectively oriented practices such as LKCM recruit neural and cognitive networks distinct from those engaged by focused-attention (FA) training (Nash & Newberg, 2023). While FA practices relied on relatively simple noticing, LKCM required sustained generation and maintenance of affective stored imagery, potentially increasing vulnerability to distraction (Tang et al., 2015).

**Stage 2 Summary:** These accounts suggest that for certain individuals, affect-centred practices activated emotionally salient material that was difficult to regulate or contextualise within the structure of the exercise, contributing to disrupted attention and discomfort rather than ease or relief. Stage 2 shows that affect-centred, deconstructive practices can both support and challenge singers with perfectionistic MPA, particularly where baseline threat sensitivity is elevated.

### Stage 3 of the Presence Over Perfection Course. Days 16-30



Cognitive Flexibility and Reappraisal

### Theme 1: Developing a Kinder and More Accepting Self-Relationship in Performance

For some participants, later-stage practices supported an emerging understanding of compassion not as the removal of self-criticism, but as a different way of relating to it, particularly in performance contexts. Participants described a softening in how self-criticism was held, alongside increased perspective and emotional balance: “I have been more

compassionate and had more perspective over the month with my rehearsal and performance” (RA78 PCQ); “Although I still have an awareness of self-criticism, I am more willing to begin to learn to accept my own voice” (ST59 PCQ). The same participant linked this change to broader wellbeing: “thinking about self-acceptance has had the most positive impact on my emotional wellbeing” (ST59 PCQ).

Across these accounts, self-criticism was no longer experienced as something that had to be eradicated or controlled, rather as something that could be noticed without escalation: “I try to allow these things to occur without them taking over” (NA63 PCQ). This pattern resonates with Neff and Germer’s conceptualisation of self-compassion as a balanced stance toward suffering, involving “neither ignoring nor ruminating on disliked aspects of oneself or one’s life” (2013, p. 13), and is consistent with evidence linking compassion to increased tolerance of discomfort (Roca et al., 2021). Importantly, participants did not report liking themselves more; rather, they reported reacting less punitively to internal experience.

This relational change was illustrated by participants who described pausing before automatic self-judgement and allowing alternative interpretations: “I was able to identify times when I have been hyper-critical of myself and considered how it would feel if I gave myself more self-compassion” (CA60 PCQ); “when I make mistakes, I’m going to try and think, wonder why that happened instead of ‘I’m useless’” (Jane FG).

For some, this change extended into how performances were evaluated. One participant described a move away from narrow error-monitoring toward a more global appraisal: “Terrified to watch it, but I’ve watched it three or four times... and each time I’ve been kinder, looked at the overall rather than picking bits” (Rebecca FG). This suggests a loosening of evaluative focus, with attention distributed more broadly across the performance rather than anchored to isolated flaws.

## **Theme 2: From Threat to Agency in Performance Anxiety**

### **2.1: Reinterpreting Physical Fear**

A central later-stage change involved participants’ reappraisal of physiological sensations previously associated with threat. Several described recognising arousal as a normal feature of performance rather than evidence of inadequacy: “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).

Others described increased tolerance and regulatory confidence: “I recognise when my mind is racing, or my head is spinning, and have accepted that this is going to happen, but I can regulate now” (NI75 PCQ). Here, regulation was framed as staying present rather than suppressing sensation.

Some participants described reframing arousal as potentially facilitative: “Those fearful feelings being the same energy as excitement” (CA60 PCQ); “The racing heart, stomach churning is energy... it can be there but not take over” (WI60 PCQ). Rather than indicating symptom resolution, these accounts reflect a change in how arousal was interpreted, with anxiety understood as workable rather than adversarial: “I recognise that I have nothing to be afraid of – I just need to channel anxiety into positive energy” (CA60 PCQ).

For several participants, this reframing supported a growing sense of agency: “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). Agency here appeared to arise through altered meaning-making, rather than certainty or absence of fear.

Consistent with research highlighting intolerance of uncertainty in anxiety (Treanor et al., 2011), participants often framed change prospectively. Rather than reporting confirmed outcomes, they described increased confidence in coping: “I haven’t had the opportunity to test this, but I am confident that I can quell anxiety a little better now” (EL57 PCQ); “I do have a performance coming up, so I’m curious to see how that goes” (BU86 MWQ).

## **2.2: Threat Reduction Through Compassion and Affiliation**

A broader sense of common humanity emerged for some participants, with imperfection reframed as shared rather than isolating: “I am human and humans make mistakes” (NI75 PCQ).

Compassion appeared to shape not only self-evaluation but anticipations of social evaluation. Imperfection could be disclosed rather than hidden, and feedback approached as information: “I’m OK saying that it’s a work in progress and that feedback would be appreciated” (JA70 PCQ), even where ambivalence toward praise remained.

This relational change was especially evident in supportive contexts. One participant described attending an open-mic without previous physiological anxiety, attributing this to expected acceptance: “It didn’t matter if I was perfect, because these girls will support me anyway” (Lisa FG). Here, threat appeared to be reduced through a reappraisal of the social field, as much as through changes in self-perception.

These accounts align with evidence linking compassion to reduced social threat and increased affiliative orientation (Dahl et al., 2015; Engen & Singer, 2014; Vago & David, 2012). Taken together, participants’ descriptions suggest a loosening of evaluative threat, particularly where imperfection was no longer experienced as uniquely personal or isolating (Hofmann et al., 2011; Zheng et al., 2023; Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2021).

**Stage 3 Summary:** Across Stage 3, acceptance appeared to function as a mediating process enabling cognitive and physiological reappraisal, rather than as an endpoint. As participants became more willing to remain with arousal rather than avoid it, they described greater flexibility in interpreting and responding to internal cues. This pattern can be understood alongside models proposing that acceptance reduces threat-based appraisal and supports adaptive reappraisal (Garland et al., 2011; Lindsay & Creswell, 2017).

Within this framework, cognitive change was not characterised by positive thinking, but by increased decentring, tolerance of uncertainty, and emerging agency. Although uncertainty can amplify fear, it may also open space for anticipation and choice (Alquist & Baumeister, 2024; Bar-Anan et al., 2009). Accordingly, the changes described in Stage 3 are best viewed as proximal indicators, including increased tolerance of arousal, flexible reappraisal, and anticipatory confidence, rather than confirmed distal outcomes such as sustained reductions in performance anxiety.

## Authenticity as an Alternative to Perfectionism

Finally, several participants highlighted the emergent role of authenticity as a guiding principle in performance. Rather than perfection functioning as the primary marker of success, participants increasingly emphasised congruence, personal expression, and self-validation as values to align with. As one participant reflected, “Accepting that an error is a mark of authenticity means I worry less about making mistakes” (NA63 PCQ). Another similarly noted, “If I’ve sung true to me, that’s what is important” (WI60 PCQ).

For some participants, this shift involved a developing appreciation of individuality: “I am beginning to appreciate my voice for being uniquely mine alone” (NA63 PCQ). This reframing was echoed in focus group discussion, where authenticity was positioned as more meaningful than technical flawlessness: “Authenticity is way more important than perfection, getting that balance right” (Jane FG). In this context, perfectionism was increasingly recognised as an unattainable and costly standard. One participant observed, “The course has reminded me that I am losing out by constantly aiming for something I am never going to achieve” (NO60 PCQ).

Importantly, participants described a softening of pressure and an increased willingness to engage: “Before, perfectionism would paralyse me... since the course started, that pressure kept reducing... I now understand how powerful our thoughts are and that the way we speak to ourselves does indeed affect our quality of life...I am learning to channel it better. To use it as a strength rather than an excuse to procrastinate” (Maroon PCQ).

These comments suggest that authenticity functioned as an alternative organising framework to perfectionism, in which value was grounded in alignment with the self rather than in meeting idealised external standards. For participants with strong fears of being perceived as imperfect, evaluative threat diminished as self-worth became less contingent on performance outcomes. Vulnerability was reframed as a meaningful and acceptable aspect of creative engagement, consistent with values-oriented action rather than attempts to eliminate discomfort (Hayes et al., 2011; Shaw et al., 2020).

## Quantitative Results

### Paired Samples T-Test: Music Performance Anxiety (K-MPAI)

Paired Samples T-Test

|           |            |             | statistic | df   | p     | Mean difference | SE difference |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| KMPAI PRE | KMPAI POST | Student's t | 2.95      | 24.0 | 0.007 | 14.8            | 5.02          |

Note.  $H_a: \mu \text{ Measure 1} - \text{Measure 2} \neq 0$

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

|           |   |            | W     | p     |
|-----------|---|------------|-------|-------|
| KMPAI PRE | - | KMPAI POST | 0.925 | 0.067 |

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

Descriptives

|            | N  | Mean | Median | SD   | SE   |
|------------|----|------|--------|------|------|
| KMPAI PRE  | 25 | 137  | 141    | 27.5 | 5.50 |
| KMPAI POST | 25 | 122  | 123    | 23.6 | 4.71 |

## Paired Samples T-Test: Perfectionism (FMPS)

Paired Samples T-Test

|                |                 |             | statistic | df   | p     | Mean difference | SE difference |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| BRIEF FMPS PRE | BRIEF FMPS POST | Student's t | 3.58      | 24.0 | 0.002 | 4.52            | 1.26          |

Note.  $H_a: \mu_{\text{Measure 1}} - \mu_{\text{Measure 2}} \neq 0$

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

| Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) |   |                 | W     | p     |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|-------|
| BRIEF FMPS PRE                | - | BRIEF FMPS POST | 0.934 | 0.109 |

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

Descriptives

|                 | N  | Mean | Median | SD   | SE   |
|-----------------|----|------|--------|------|------|
| BRIEF FMPS PRE  | 25 | 27.4 | 26     | 6.84 | 1.37 |
| BRIEF FMPS POST | 25 | 22.9 | 23     | 6.82 | 1.36 |

Descriptive statistics indicated reductions in both music performance anxiety and perfectionism at the group level. For K-MPAI total scores, mean self-reported anxiety decreased from 137 (SD = 27.5) at baseline to 122 (SD = 23.6) post-course, with a comparable reduction in median scores (141 to 123), suggesting that outliers did not drive change. A paired-samples t-test confirmed this reduction as statistically significant,  $t(24) = 2.95$ ,  $p = .007$ . As  $p < .05$ , the null hypothesis of no mean difference was rejected. Similarly, FMPS-Brief scores showed a reduction in perfectionism, with mean scores decreasing from 27.4 (SD = 6.84) to 22.9 (SD = 6.82) and median scores decreasing from 26 to 23. This change was statistically significant,  $t(24) = 3.58$ ,  $p = .002$ . The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Similarly, FMPS-Brief scores showed a reduction in perfectionism, with mean scores decreasing from 27.4 (SD = 6.84) to 22.9 (SD = 6.82), and medians from 26 to 23. This change was statistically significant,  $t(24) = 3.58$ ,  $p = .002$ . The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

## Descriptive Changes in Self-Identification of Perfectionism

N-0: No self-identified perfectionism

N-1: Pre-existing self-recognition of perfectionism

N-2: Perfectionism recognised during the course

| Descriptives       |               |             |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                    | Perfectionist | FMPS_change |
| N                  | 0             | 10          |
|                    | 1             | 12          |
|                    | 2             | 3           |
| Missing            | 0             | 0           |
|                    | 1             | 0           |
|                    | 2             | 0           |
| Mean               | 0             | 5.50        |
|                    | 1             | 5.25        |
|                    | 2             | -1.67       |
| Median             | 0             | 4.50        |
|                    | 1             | 3.50        |
|                    | 2             | 0           |
| Standard deviation | 0             | 6.65        |
|                    | 1             | 6.02        |
|                    | 2             | 3.79        |
| Minimum            | 0             | -3          |
|                    | 1             | -2          |
|                    | 2             | -6          |
| Maximum            | 0             | 18          |
|                    | 1             | 16          |
|                    | 2             | 1           |

Participant self-reports contextualise the group-level reduction in FMPS-Brief scores by illustrating variability in the experience of change. Thirteen participants reported a subjective reduction in perfectionistic distress at post-course assessment, while twelve reported no perceived change. Of the 12 who identified perfectionism at baseline (N-1), 8 reported improvement by the end of the programme, broadly aligning with the overall mean reduction.

Descriptive subgroup analysis further clarified this pattern. Participants with no self-identified perfectionism (N-0; M change = 5.50) and those with pre-existing perfectionism (N-1; M change = 5.25) demonstrated mean reductions in FMPS-Brief scores. This suggests the shift was more about how perfectionism was experienced rather than changing core identity. In contrast, participants who first recognised perfectionism during the course (N-2; M change = -1.67) did not show mean reductions. Although this subgroup was small (n = 3), the pattern suggests that increased awareness may precede symptom reduction, with monitoring and recognition temporarily amplifying perceived difficulty before acceptance develops.

For one participant, this emerging awareness represented a substantial re-evaluation of the nature of her difficulties, with perfectionism identified as a central driver of anxiety rather than anxiety itself:

“If my singing isn’t perfect, then it’s not worth bothering with at all... I realised I could apply that to other areas of my life... it’s not about anxiety... that really opened my eyes to something I was really unaware of” (Jane FG).

## Correlation Matrix: Associations Between Music Performance Anxiety (K-MPAI) and Perfectionism (FMPS)

| Correlation Matrix |                | KMPAI_change | FMPS_change |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| KMPAI_change       | Pearson's r    | —            |             |
|                    | df             | —            |             |
|                    | p-value        | —            |             |
|                    | Spearman's rho | —            |             |
|                    | df             | —            |             |
|                    | p-value        | —            |             |
| FMPS_change        | Pearson's r    | 0.371        | —           |
|                    | df             | 23           | —           |
|                    | p-value        | 0.068        | —           |
|                    | Spearman's rho | 0.246        | —           |
|                    | df             | 23           | —           |
|                    | p-value        | 0.236        | —           |

Reductions in MPA showed a related but less tightly coupled pattern. Although K-MPAI scores decreased significantly at the group level, individual reports indicated variability in perceived improvement. Fifteen participants reported reduced MPA, while ten reported no noticeable change. Correlation analysis indicated a small-to-moderate positive association between reductions in perfectionism and reductions in MPA,  $r(23) = .37$ ,  $p = .068$ , suggesting partial overlap between the two processes rather than parallel change.

At the individual level, seven participants who reported reduced perfectionistic distress also reported improvements in MPA. However, six participants who reported no change in perfectionism nevertheless described reduced performance anxiety. To examine whether reductions in perfectionism and MPA tended to co-occur at an individual level, a correlation analysis was conducted. Correlation analysis indicated a small-to-moderate positive association between reductions in perfectionism and reductions in music performance anxiety ( $r(23) = .37$ ,  $p = .068$ ), suggesting that while related, changes in the two constructs do not occur uniformly or in lockstep. This interpretation aligns with accounts from participants who entered the course without perfectionistic concerns but identified performance anxiety as their primary difficulty.

Taken together, these findings indicate that while reductions in perfectionism and MPA were statistically observable at the group level, the relationship between the two was heterogeneous at the individual level. Improvements in MPA sometimes accompanied reductions in perfectionistic distress but also occurred independently of measurable changes in perfectionism. Likewise, both self-identified perfectionists and non-perfectionists showed comparable improvements. This suggests that mindfulness influenced how participants related to perfectionism, regardless of whether they identified with that label.

While most participants reported some degree of benefit or emerging change, a small minority reported no perceived improvement. One participant indicated no benefit across all rated measures, and another expressed disappointment that the techniques did not work for them. These accounts serve as important counterpoints, illustrating variability in response and underscoring that the intervention was not universally effective. For participants who did not report improvement in MPA, qualitative analysis pointed to evaluative and contextual barriers to recognising change, rather than a complete absence of effect. The following section, therefore, examines aspects of course design and participants' contexts that may have influenced outcome appraisal.

### **Constraints on Observed Change and Transfer**

Several participants felt that 30 days was too soon to determine whether the awareness they had gained could be maintained in evaluative or high-pressure situations. While mindfulness practices were often experienced as helpful in everyday contexts, applying them during performance remained uncertain for some.

Among those who selected 'no change,' many attributed this uncertainty not to an absence of impact, but to having had few opportunities to perform during the 30-day period: "I'll know better when I perform" (IT63 PCQ); "I have not had many opportunities to put the practice to the test" (ST59 PCQ). Performances were repeatedly described as the most meaningful context in which participants felt able to evaluate whether change had genuinely occurred.

This preference was reflected in participants' views on assessment. 60% indicated that they would have welcomed a performance-related measure, suggesting a desire for more ecologically valid ways to evaluate change. However, 28% were unsure whether a performance measure would be helpful, and 12% reported that adding a performance element would have discouraged participation.

### **Transfer, Exposure, and Post-Performance Rumination**

For participants who performed during the course, transfer of skills into live contexts was mixed. While some described increased capacity to regulate anticipatory anxiety, difficulties often persisted during or after performance. One participant reflected, "Couldn't address it (anxiety) during the performance though, would have derailed me completely!" (JA70 PCQ), indicating that strategies effective in preparation did not always translate into in-the-moment regulation.

Post-performance rumination remained particularly salient. In the focus group, Lisa described successfully talking herself down prior to singing, yet returning afterwards to cycles of negative self-evaluation. Similarly, another participant noted, "I still find myself returning to the negative thoughts afterwards" (RA78 PCQ). These accounts suggest that while preparatory awareness and breathing strategies were adopted, evaluative threat appraisals and rumination patterns were more resistant to modification.

Such patterns indicate that perceived "no change" responses may reflect limits in performance exposure and belief consolidation rather than the absence of impact. Where opportunities to test revised responses under evaluative conditions were limited, changes may have remained context-bound. The implications of these findings for exposure, rumination, and threat-based belief revision are examined further in Sections 4.2 and 4.5.

## **Experience and Understanding of Intent as Accelerators of Engagement**

A small number of participants demonstrated clearer alignment between practice use and intended mechanism, often drawing on prior experience with mindfulness or body-based practices. For these participants, effort, neutrality, or reduced mental activity were interpreted as features of attentional training rather than as indicators of relaxation or failure. One focus group participant explicitly distinguished the present course from relaxation-oriented mindfulness encountered previously, noting: “The mindfulness I’ve done previously was very much more leading you to a place of relaxation and peace, whereas I think the focus of this mindfulness was about focus and being a feeling of levelness... understanding the intent helped me figure out I was actually getting where I was meant to aim for” (Jenny FG).

A similar pattern emerged for participants whose understanding developed experientially over time rather than through prior knowledge. One participant contrasted the POP body scan with approaches they had previously found more relaxing, noting that the practice involved acknowledging sensations “even if they are not positive,” and concluding, “This technique has helped me feel more focused, which I hope is the point!” (VA79 MWQ/PCQ).

Together, these accounts suggest that understanding of practice intent, whether pre-existing or gradually acquired, shaped engagement and tolerance of effortful experience. The implications of expectation-setting and psychoeducation for early-stage training are examined further in the Discussion (Sections 4.3 and 4.4).

### **Course-Specific Facilitators and Constraints: Time Pressure, Session Length, and Feasibility of Engagement**

Time pressure emerged as the primary barrier to engagement. At midpoint, 39% of participants reported time constraints, rising to 60% at endpoint, suggesting that sustaining a daily 20-minute practice for 30 days was challenging alongside work and family commitments.

Early difficulty maintaining attention for the full session was commonly reported, although several participants described improvement over time as familiarity and attentional stamina increased. One participant reflected, “Finding a comfortable space without any noise distractions for a full 20 mins was tough... towards the end of the course, I realised I was much less easily distracted by outside influences” (NA63 PCQ). Preferences regarding session length varied, with some participants indicating that shorter or more flexible options may support engagement.

Delivery format also affected feasibility. In the first half of the programme, practices were split across two audio tracks, requiring manual transition between breathwork and body scan, which some participants found disruptive. From Day 15 onwards, practices were combined into a single track, reducing attentional interference and supporting continuity.

### **Imagery and Instructional Language**

Overall delivery was rated very positively, with all participants describing the guidance as clear and encouraging at the midpoint. Aside from minor feedback regarding music style or volume (n = 2), no general delivery issues were reported.

A small number of participants reported difficulty engaging with imagery-based instructions, particularly where metaphors were interpreted literally or required sustained visualisation. One participant commented, “I can’t ‘send’ my breath to my lower body” (CA60 MWQ).

Variation in engagement with imagery-based guidance is considered further in the Discussion (Section 4.4).

## **4. Discussion: Synthesis and Implications of the Presence over Perfection Project**

### **4.1 Overview of Key Findings**

This project examined whether a 30-day, self-guided mindfulness intervention could reduce perfectionistic music performance anxiety (MPA) in adult amateur singers. Quantitative findings indicated statistically significant reductions in both self-reported MPA and perfectionism at the group level, while qualitative data revealed changes in attentional awareness, emotional regulation, and participants’ relationships to self-critical thought. At the same time, the reported benefit was not uniform, and the change did not consistently translate into immediate performance-specific outcomes within the 30-day timeframe.

Taken as a whole, the findings suggest that the course supported change through process-based mechanisms rather than discrete techniques, and outcomes appeared influenced by attentional readiness, expectation, motivational stance, and contextual opportunity. This aligns with contemporary accounts of mindfulness as an interacting set of processes that unfold over time rather than as a practice-specific solution targeting a single symptom domain (Tang et al., 2015; Lindsay & Creswell, 2017). These findings suggest that capacities such as agency may begin to emerge within the initial 30-day timeframe, indicating that this course serves as an early developmental step rather than a final outcome.

### **4.2 What This Project Shows About Change Processes**

As demonstrated in Stage 2, increased monitoring and metacognitive awareness consistently preceded acceptance and self-compassion, indicating that early change was characterised by observation rather than immediate emotional relief. This monitoring often involved reappraising anxiety and perfectionistic thoughts, altering their meaning and authority rather than eliminating them. For some participants, heightened awareness in the absence of sufficient acceptance coincided with evaluative effort, uncertainty, or continued self-criticism, particularly where perfectionistic concern or threat sensitivity was elevated. Similar patterns have been observed in early-stage mindfulness research, where monitoring-dominant attention may initially amplify distress before regulatory benefits consolidate (Britton, 2019; Desrosiers et al., 2014). These findings help explain why subjective benefit did not always correspond with immediate reductions in performance-related anxiety, despite evidence of developing attentional skill.

The project also highlights the role of contextual opportunity in how change is perceived and evaluated. Where participants had limited opportunities to perform during the intervention period, confidence in assessing performance-specific change was reduced, even when benefits were reported in everyday contexts. As outlined in the integrated exposure and rumination-based interpretation, limited performance exposure may support context-bound coping confidence without yet revising broader threat expectations (Barry et al., 2015).

Importantly, improvements in MPA were observed both alongside and independently of reductions in perfectionism. The modest association between change in these constructs supports the interpretation that mindfulness-based change operates through multiple, partially overlapping pathways rather than a single linear mechanism (Lindsay & Creswell, 2017; Tang et al., 2015). Within this framing, reductions in perfectionistic self-evaluation may facilitate performance-related change for some participants, while others may experience improved regulation of anxiety without parallel changes in trait-level perfectionism.

#### **4.3 Implications for the POP Course Design: Psychoeducation, Threat Bias, and Sequencing**

One of the clearest implications of this project concerns the role of psychoeducation and expectation-setting in supporting early engagement. Participant feedback indicated that discomfort or disappointment often arose not solely from the practices themselves, but from misunderstandings about what mindfulness involves and how progress should feel. Focused-attention practices were sometimes expected to produce calm or relaxation, despite early training typically involving effort, fluctuation, and attentional conflict (Ferreira Afonso et al., 2020; Lumma et al., 2015). Without adequate framing, these experiences were open to being interpreted as personal inadequacy rather than as expected features of learning.

A further design implication concerns the demands placed on psychoeducation when working with perfectionistic populations. Mikail et al. (2022) highlight that individuals high in perfectionism often seek certainty, precision, and prescriptive solutions, describing a tendency to insist on “concrete answers, direction or being given specific exercises that will ease their angst” (p. 255), with this need to “do things right” sometimes expressed in a challenging or resistant manner (Cheek et al., 2018; Stoeber, 2018). This pattern was echoed in the present project, where some participants requested more precise instructions, clearer rationales, or specific techniques for particular symptoms, such as post-performance rumination. While understandable, this stance reflects a symptom-driven orientation that sits in tension with mindfulness principles, which emphasise process, relationship to experience, and tolerance of uncertainty rather than targeted symptom elimination. Without careful framing, the absence of prescriptive solutions may be experienced by perfectionistic participants as insufficient support, reinforcing evaluative self-judgement or frustration rather than fostering acceptance. These findings suggest that psychoeducation within mindfulness-based resources for perfectionistic singers may need to explicitly address the urge to “fix” internal experience, clarifying why symptom-chasing is discouraged and how discomfort, ambiguity, and non-linearity are not obstacles to progress but core features of the training process.

This interpretation is supported by participant responses to the optional science-based information page introduced midway through the course. Most participants (17/25) reported that the page helped contextualise their experience, while seven indicated that it did not make a noticeable difference, and one reported no interest in scientific explanation. This pattern suggests that psychoeducation does not function uniformly, but for many participants may play a meaningful role in normalising effort, reducing evaluative self-judgement, and supporting persistence during early-stage training.

In addition to expectation-setting, motivational stance at course entry may meaningfully shape engagement in short-form, self-guided delivery. Entry motivations within this cohort

were varied, including performance-related anxiety, broader self-development interests, and relational trust within the studio context. Not all participants identified strongly with perfectionism at baseline, and levels of intrinsic commitment appeared to differ. Experimental evidence indicates that pre-practice motivation and attentional anchor modality predict experiential engagement in mindfulness training (Anderson & Farb, 2017), suggesting that both intention and anchor compatibility may influence early adherence. While not formally tested as mediators of change in the present study, participants who reported greater sustained change frequently described an ongoing commitment to practice and an intention to continue beyond the course period. These observations suggest that psychoeducation may function not only as interpretive clarification but also as motivational scaffolding, supporting autonomous engagement rather than outcome-driven striving. Future course design may therefore benefit from explicitly acknowledging diverse entry motivations and framing participation around curiosity and willingness rather than symptom elimination.

A key extension of this finding concerns threat bias. Although Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM) is often framed as inherently soothing, participant accounts suggest that discomfort was more frequently linked to socially oriented threat than to self-directed kindness. Imagery involving others appeared to activate evaluative or relational threat for some participants, amplifying discomfort rather than reducing it. As discussed in the integrated exposure- and rumination-based interpretation, affect-centred practices may initially activate threat where baseline evaluative sensitivity is elevated (Britton, 2019).

These findings have important implications for psychoeducation and sequencing. Explicit explanation of threat systems, social threat sensitivity, and the non-linear nature of compassionate engagement may be critical in preparing participants for affect-centred practices (Brown et al., 2012; McNally, 2019). Rather than assuming LKCM to be universally safe or regulating, short-term interventions may benefit from introducing other-focused compassion later, following attentional stabilisation and some development of internal safety. Framing distress as an understandable response to threat activation, rather than as failure or lack of compassion, may reduce evaluative self-criticism and support continued engagement.

#### **4.4 Personalisation, Engagement, and Developmental Fit: Design Implications for Short-Term Mindfulness Courses**

Findings also underscore the importance of individual fit and developmental engagement. Participants varied in how they experienced attentional anchors and affect-centred practices, with some practices perceived as accessible and regulating, while others were perceived as effortful, distracting, or emotionally activating. These differences are unlikely to reflect variation in motivation or willingness to practise alone but may instead relate to differential alignment between practice demands and individual attentional styles and baseline threat sensitivity. This variability extended to imagery-based instructions, which some participants found difficult to engage with, underscoring the importance of offering alternative attentional anchors and guidance modes to accommodate individual differences in cognitive processing and attentional style.

Consistent with the “too much of a good thing” principle, psychological processes are not inherently adaptive across contexts; rather, their utility depends on the interaction between person and context (Anderson & Farb, 2018; Britton, 2019). This interpretation is

supported by evidence that attentional anchors are often perceived as arbitrary despite substantial individual differences in compatibility, and that frustration or confusion during practice may heighten adverse effects and undermine engagement (Anderson & Farb, 2017, 2018; Farias & Wikholm, 2016). Participant accounts further indicated that the understanding of practice intent, whether pre-existing or acquired through experience, played a key role in sustaining engagement and in reinterpreting effortful experiences as part of learning rather than failure. This supports existing work emphasising the importance of instruction-comprehension in mindfulness training, where misunderstanding of practice intent can undermine engagement and perceived benefit (Anderson & Farb, 2018a; Ding et al., 2015; Baer 2019).

Taken together, these findings suggest that meditation style, attentional anchor, and sequencing are not universally transferable, and that uniform delivery may limit engagement or heighten threat for some individuals. Greater flexibility and psychoeducation in course design may therefore be required. This aligns with calls to tailor mindfulness-based interventions to individual neurocognitive profiles rather than prescribing standardised practices (Anderson & Farb, 2018b; Brown et al., 2012; Ding et al., 2015; Tang et al., 2015). Anchor modality and sequencing should thus be treated as core design considerations in short-term mindfulness provision for perfectionistic, anxiety-prone singers.

#### **4.5 Transferability, Context, and Ethical Design Considerations for Practice.**

Interpretation of these findings must be situated within the context of the participant cohort and the insider research position of the facilitator-researcher. Several participants reported enrolling due to existing trust or familiarity rather than prior mindfulness experience, resulting in wide variation in readiness, expectation, and conceptual understanding at baseline. While this likely supported engagement and retention, it may also have contributed to early misalignment between practice design and participant expectations, particularly where rapid or technique-specific outcomes were anticipated.

Patterns of engagement and attrition further contextualise these findings. Thirty-one participants enrolled at the start of the programme, 28 completed midpoint measures, and 25 completed the full 30-day course. Attrition occurred primarily during the early stages. Although reasons for withdrawal were not systematically collected, this pattern may tentatively reflect the effortful nature of early focused-attention practices and variation in participants' readiness for sustained attentional training in a self-guided format. This interpretation remains speculative but highlights engagement and retention as important considerations in the design of short-term mindfulness interventions (Nam & Toneatto, 2016).

These contextual factors limit statistical generalisation but strengthen ecological relevance for community-based singing populations. They also highlight the importance of transparent expectation-setting and reflexive awareness of insider dynamics in the design and evaluation of wellbeing interventions. Framing mindfulness as a transdiagnostic process that operates over time, rather than as a targeted technique for performance anxiety alone, may be particularly important when working with heterogeneous cohorts and short-term, self-guided formats.

Future iterations of the POP course may therefore benefit from extended timeframes, follow-up assessment, and greater opportunities for performance exposure to support consolidation

and evaluation of transfer. Inclusion of measures capturing confidence, willingness to perform, or relationship to anxiety may also provide a more nuanced picture of change than symptom reduction alone.

These contextual findings have implications beyond the present study, particularly for the ethical design of short-term, self-guided mindfulness courses delivered within the context of vocal pedagogy. Drawing on the ‘warp and weft’ distinction in mindfulness-based programme design (Crane et al., 2017), the findings point to the central importance of Tier 1 (psychoeducation, expectation-setting) and Tier 2 (practice selection, dosage, sequencing) adaptations when working with perfectionistic populations in unmonitored formats. In unmonitored, self-guided formats, these early tiers function not only pedagogically but ethically, as safeguards against premature affective activation and misinterpretation of practice difficulty.

#### **4.6 WEFT-Informed Adaptation of the Liverpool Mindfulness Model.**

The following framework adapts the Liverpool Mindfulness Model (Malinowski, 2013), considering the present findings to inform both practitioner-led research and the delivery of mindfulness courses for perfectionistic and broadly anxious populations. Drawing on the warp–weft metaphor (Crane et al., 2017), it distinguishes core scientific and ethical foundations from context-sensitive design adaptations, enabling population-specific refinement without diluting programme integrity.

The five-tier architecture is retained, with adaptation foregrounded at the level of the weft, where pedagogical stance, framing, duration, and practice selection are treated as active elements of delivery. In short-form, self-guided formats, primary adaptation occurs across Tier 1 (interpretive and motivational scaffolding) and Tier 2 (practice selection, dose, and sequencing), operating in parallel.

Findings indicated that for perfectionistic learners, assumptions about the difficulty of practice and the reduction of symptoms can undermine engagement. Without explicit reassurance and acceptance-based framing, effort and distraction may be interpreted as personal failure. Psychoeducation, therefore, functions as ongoing interpretive and motivational scaffolding. Evidence that pre-practice motivation and anchor modality influence engagement (Anderson & Farb, 2017) further supports expectation-setting as both regulatory and educational.

Refinements within Tier 3 (core skill development) and Tier 4 (attitudinal change) reflect the primacy of embodied tolerance. Rather than assuming reappraisal follows directly from attentional training, Tier 3 prioritises interoceptive tolerance before reflective meaning-making. Tier 4 emphasises acceptance-based attitudinal development, with authenticity treated as emergent rather than instructional.

An additional “Outside Core Model” domain addresses contextual transfer. In short-form delivery, early reductions in anxiety may reflect altered appraisal rather than revised threat expectations, reinforcing the need for staged transfer opportunities. Low-stakes exposure is therefore included to scaffold generalisation without reinstating evaluative threat.

Explanatory notes support teacher decision-making, emphasising that delivery language and stance are active components of intervention. The framework thus translates empirical findings into structured, ethically grounded design guidance aligned with established mindfulness-based programme integrity.

**Table X.** The Liverpool–WEFT Tiered Design Framework for Perfectionistic MPA  
Adapted from the Liverpool Mindfulness Model (Malinowski, 2013) and the WEFT framework (Crane et al., 2017) and informed by findings from the present study.

| Liverpool Tier                                                            | WEFT Design and Delivery Focus<br>(What is adapted)                                                        | Mechanism Supported<br>(How it helps)                                                                                  | Ethical Rationale in Self-Guided /<br>Online Delivery                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 1:<br/>Engagement &amp;<br/>Orientation</b>                       | Clarification of practice intention and values-based engagement at entry                                   | Supports autonomous motivation and sustained participation                                                             | Reduces dependency on outcome-driven reinforcement in self-guided formats                                           |
|                                                                           | Explicit psychoeducation on non-fixing, non-linear change, and mindfulness as transdiagnostic              | Reduces threat appraisal and perfectionistic striving; reframes effort as learning                                     | Without clear framing, participants may interpret difficulty as failure, increasing self-criticism or disengagement |
|                                                                           | Normalisation of variability in response, pace, and readiness                                              | Supports tolerance of imperfection and reduces evaluative self-monitoring                                              | Prevents misattribution of misfit to lack of capacity or motivation                                                 |
|                                                                           | Psychoeducation revisited prior to affect-centred practices                                                | Attentional compatibility and regulation without overload                                                              | Ongoing framing functions as regulatory scaffolding in the absence of in-person monitoring                          |
| <b>Tier 2: Practice<br/>Selection, Dose<br/>&amp; Sequencing</b>          | Multiple focused-attention anchors (breath, body, sound, visual; imagery optional)                         | Anticipatory meaning-making and emotional preparedness                                                                 | Misfit between anchor and attentional style may heighten frustration or threat                                      |
|                                                                           | Short initial dosage (≈10 minutes) with optional extension                                                 | Reduces cognitive and affective strain                                                                                 | Limits risk of overwhelm in unmonitored formats                                                                     |
|                                                                           | Sequencing prioritising attentional stabilisation before affect-centred work                               | Supports readiness and gradual exposure                                                                                | Premature affective activation may undermine engagement or safety                                                   |
| <b>Tier 2<br/>(Extended):<br/>Affect-Centred<br/>Practices<br/>(LKCM)</b> | Graded exposure LKCM introduction (external/neutral targets towards carefully selected relational targets) | Graded affective engagement; development of warmth without overload. Return to safe focus of attention anchor explicit | A standard generic LKCM pathway may inadvertently activate threat or avoidance                                      |
|                                                                           | Explicit guidance on how and why to choose LKCM targets, with two days' notice                             | Supports agency, preparation, and psychological safety                                                                 | Ethical transparency in non-clinical delivery                                                                       |
|                                                                           | Clear explanation of risks associated with unsuitable target selection                                     | Increases metacognitive awareness                                                                                      | Premature affective activation may undermine engagement or safety                                                   |
|                                                                           | Very light-touch engagement with unfavourable or complex relational figures                                | Limits emotional reactivation                                                                                          | Protects participants with high self-criticism or shame sensitivity                                                 |

| Liverpool Tier                                                      | WEFT Design and Delivery Focus<br>(What is adapted)                                                                                                                                                                                      | Mechanism Supported<br>(How it helps)                                                                                                                                                                | Ethical Rationale in Self-Guided /<br>Online Delivery                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 3:<br/>Core Skill<br/>Development</b>                       | Affect-centred practices structured to develop interoceptive awareness and tolerance prior to reflective meaning-making; guided prompts designed to allow cognitive reframing to emerge without instruction                              | Builds tolerance of internal sensation and emotion; reduces threat reactivity; supports perspective-taking and emergent reappraisal through embodied awareness                                       | Avoids effortful cognitive control or “doing it right”; supports reframing without evaluative pressure in self-guided formats                                                                                  |
|                                                                     | Attentional and interoceptive skills supported but not assumed; explicit reassurance that there is no “right way” to practise; affirmation of individual pace and encouragement to return to preferred or regulating practices           | Gradual stabilisation of attention and bodily awareness; reduced self-doubt and evaluative monitoring; increased confidence to adapt and own practice                                                | Short-term courses should avoid implying mastery or completion; in perfectionistic cohorts, lack of feedback may amplify uncertainty, making reassurance essential to prevent self-criticism and disengagement |
| <b>Tier 4:<br/>Acceptance-<br/>Based<br/>Attitudinal<br/>Change</b> | Acceptance explicitly prioritised; gratitude and exploration of individual voice used to embed acceptance without striving; authenticity framed as emergent rather than instructional                                                    | Consolidation of acceptance through appreciative self-recognition; reduced evaluative comparison; strengthened decentring and self-compassion                                                        | Framing authenticity or self-expression as goals may reinstate evaluative pressure; appreciation supports acceptance without introducing new performance demands                                               |
| <b>Tier 5:<br/>Outcomes</b>                                         | Outcomes described descriptively rather than prescriptively; emphasis on what may follow from acceptance (e.g. increased willingness, flexibility, agency, reduced avoidance), rather than targets to be achieved                        | Translation of attitudinal change into everyday functioning and behaviour; enhanced psychological flexibility and wellbeing                                                                          | Presenting consequences rather than goals avoids reinstating striving or failure appraisal in perfectionistic populations                                                                                      |
| <b>Outside<br/>Core Model:<br/>Contextual<br/>Transfer</b>          | Optional, low-stakes but variable opportunities to sing or perform across different contexts (e.g. informal sharing, small-group performance, observation, varied venues, differing audiences). participation without evaluative demand) | Strengthen inhibitory safety learning by allowing participants to test and update threat expectancies across contexts, rather than relying solely on internal regulation within meditation practice. | Transfer is unlikely within 30 days without contextual variation. Low-pressure but varied exposure reduces reinstatement of threat while strengthening durable safety associations.                            |

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This project examined whether a 30-day self-guided mindfulness intervention could reduce perfectionistic music performance anxiety (MPA) in adult amateur singers. Quantitative findings demonstrated statistically significant reductions in both perfectionism and MPA, indicating that the intervention met its primary objective within the study timeframe. Importantly, reductions in perfectionism were observed across both self-identified perfectionists and those who did not adopt that label, suggesting that the intervention influenced evaluative cognitive tendencies dimensionally rather than solely at the level of identity.

While these results are encouraging, the pattern of change suggests that the intervention is best understood as a foundational, first-phase programme. Mixed-method integration revealed instances in which measurable improvement was not fully reflected in participants’ qualitative descriptions of their experience. For some, practice felt effortful or destabilising despite reductions in symptom scores. This discrepancy may reflect early-stage monitoring processes within mindfulness training, where increased awareness precedes stabilised

acceptance. In this sense, the 30-day timeframe appears sufficient to activate attentional and cognitive mechanisms but may not allow for full consolidation of change.

The project also clarified that a change in performance anxiety can occur even where real-world performance opportunities are limited, suggesting that cognitive appraisal of performance plays a significant role in symptom reduction. Rather than functioning purely through physiological regulation, the intervention appears to have supported shifts in how participants interpreted and related to performance-related thoughts and sensations. This reinforces the value of integrating attentional training with constructive elements such as reappraisal and compassion-based practices.

Several methodological considerations temper these conclusions. Readiness, prior mindfulness experience, and contextual life demands were not formally measured, though qualitative responses suggest these factors likely influenced perceived benefit. Additionally, the short duration and absence of follow-up assessment limit conclusions regarding durability of change. These limitations do not undermine the statistical findings but highlight the importance of viewing the programme as developmental rather than definitive.

Conducting this research has significantly shaped my professional stance. Most notably, it has broadened my understanding of change as non-linear, effortful, and developmentally variable. Early discomfort within mindfulness practice should not be equated with failure but recognised as part of cognitive and attentional retraining. This has cultivated a more tolerant and patient approach to beginners and strengthened my commitment to realistic expectation-setting when working with perfectionistic populations who may seek rapid, outcome-focused solutions.

The central learning emerging from this work is that adaptive design is more important than rigid structural fidelity. Although the course demonstrated measurable benefit, no single pathway supported all participants equally. Future development will therefore prioritise greater flexibility within the existing framework, enabling participants to engage with practices that align with their attentional style, emotional tolerance, and stage of development. Accessibility through self-guided formats must continue to be balanced with ethical clarity regarding scope, pacing, and the gradual nature of meaningful change.

This project contributes an evidence-informed, low-cost model that responds to calls for practical tools within vocal pedagogy. At the same time, it underscores the responsibility inherent in offering mindfulness-based interventions within evaluatively sensitive populations. Authentic performance and psychological growth require courage and sustained engagement. Mindfulness is not an immediate corrective but a commitment to self-awareness over time. Supporting that process demands patience, discernment, and recognition that while many may benefit from mindful practice, they will not experience it in the same way or at the same pace.

Finally, by integrating empirical findings with ethical reflection and adaptive design principles informed by the Liverpool Mindfulness Model, this study offers both outcome evidence and a context-sensitive approach to developing mindfulness-based work within vocal pedagogy.

## REFERENCES

- Alquist, J. L., & Baumeister, R. F. (2024). Dealing with uncertain situations. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 19*(6), 923–946.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2023.2282781>
- Anderson, T., & Farb, N. A. S. (2018). Personalising practice using preferences for meditation anchor modality. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02521>
- Bačlija Sušić, B. (2018). The Relation between Pedagogical Approaches in Music Education and Students' Performance Anxiety. *Revija Za Elementarno Izobraževanje, 11*(2), 143–157. <https://doi.org/10.18690/rei.11.2.143-157.2018>
- Bar-Anan, Y., Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2009). The Feeling of Uncertainty Intensifies Affective Reactions. *Emotion, 9*(1), 123–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014607>
- Barry, T. J., Vervliet, B., & Hermans, D. (2015). An integrative review of attention biases and their contribution to treatment for anxiety disorders. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00968>
- Becker, R. (2022). Gender and Survey Participation: An Event History Analysis of the Gender Effects of Survey Participation in a Probability-based Multi-wave Panel Study with a Sequential Mixed-mode Design. *Methods, Data, Analyses, 16*(1), 3–32.
- Boileau, K., Stanson, N., Fang, Z., Barbeau, K., Hansen, U., Comeau, G., & Smith, A. (2024). Examining how brief mindfulness training influences communication within the brain of musicians with music performance anxiety: A resting state fMRI study. *Psychology of Music*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356241288551>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and becoming a knowing researcher. *International Journal of Transgender Health, 24*(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597>
- Britton, W. B. (2019). Can mindfulness be too much of a good thing? The value of a middle way. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 28*, 159–165.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.12.011>
- Brown, K. W., Weinstein, N., & Creswell, J. D. (2012). Trait mindfulness modulates neuroendocrine and affective responses to social evaluative threat. *Psychoneuroendocrinology, 37*(12), 2037–2041.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2012.04.003>
- Burgess, A. M., Frost, R. O., & DiBartolo, P. M. (2016). Development and Validation of the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale–Brief. *Journal of*

- Psychoeducational Assessment*, 34(7), 620–633.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282916651359>
- Castiglione, C., Rampullo, A., & Cardullo, S. (2018). Self representations and music performance anxiety: A study with professional and amateur musicians. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 14(4), 792–805. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v14i4.1554>
- Cavanagh, K., Strauss, C., Cicconi, F., Griffiths, N., Wyper, A., & Jones, F. (2013). A randomised controlled trial of a brief online mindfulness-based intervention. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 51(9), 573–578.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2013.06.003>
- Charmaz, K. (2008). Constructing Grounded Theory. In *The SAGE handbook of social research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 461–478). Sage.
- Cheek, J., Kealy, D., Hewitt, P. L., Mikail, S. F., Gordon, S. A., Flett, L., Flett, G. L., Ko, A., & Jia, M. (2018). Addressing the Complexity of Perfectionism in Clinical Practice. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 46(4), 457–490.
- Cox, B. J., Enns, M. W., & Clara, I. P. (2002). The multidimensional structure of perfectionism in clinically distressed and college student samples. *Psychological Assessment*, 14(3), 365–373. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.14.3.365>
- Crane, R. S., Brewer, J., Feldman, C., Kabat-Zinn, J., Santorelli, S., Williams, J. M. G., & Kuyken, W. (2017). What defines mindfulness-based programs? the warp and the weft. In *Psychological Medicine* (Vol. 47, Number 6, pp. 990–999). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291716003317>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Fourth). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Sixth Edition). SAGE Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.
- Crotty, M. (1998). The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process. *The Foundations of Social Research*, 1–256.
- Cupido, C. (2018). Music Performance Anxiety, Perfectionism and Its Manifestation in the Lived Experiences of Singer-Teachers. *Muziki*, 15(1), 14–36.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2018.1467367>
- Czajkowski, A. M. L., & Greasley, A. E. (2015). Mindfulness for singers: The effects of a targeted mindfulness course on learning vocal technique. *British Journal of Music Education*, 32(2), 211–233. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051715000145>

- Czajkowski, A. M. L., Greasley, A. E., & Allis, M. (2021). Mindfulness for Singers: A Mixed Methods Replication Study. *Music and Science*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043211044816>
- Czajkowski, A. M. L., Greasley, A. E., & Allis, M. (2022). Mindfulness for musicians: A mixed methods study investigating the effects of 8-week mindfulness courses on music students at a leading conservatoire. *Musicae Scientiae*, 26(2), 259–279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864920941570>
- Dahl, C. J., Lutz, A., & Davidson, R. J. (2015). Reconstructing and deconstructing the self: Cognitive mechanisms in meditation practice. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 19(9), 515–523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2015.07.001>
- Dang, S. S., Quesnel, D. A., Hewitt, P. L., Flett, G. L., & Deng, X. (2020). Perfectionistic traits and self-presentation are associated with negative attitudes and concerns about seeking professional psychological help. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 27(5), 621–629. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2450>
- Demorest, S. M., Kelley, J., & Pfordresher, P. Q. (2017). Singing Ability, Musical Self-Concept, and Future Music Participation. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 64(4), 405–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429416680096>
- Diaz, F. M. (2018). MENC: The National Association for Music Education Relationships Among Meditation, Perfectionism, Mindfulness, and Performance Anxiety Among Collegiate Music Students. *Source: Journal of Research in Music Education*, 66(2), 150–167. <https://doi.org/10.2307/48589036>
- Ding, X., Tang, Y. Y., Deng, Y., Tang, R., & Posner, M. I. (2015). Mood and personality predict improvement in creativity due to meditation training. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 37, 217–221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2014.11.019>
- Dobos, B., Piko, B. F., & Kenny, D. T. (2019). Music performance anxiety and its relationship with social phobia and dimensions of perfectionism. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 41(3), 310–326. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X18804295>
- Engen, H. G., & Singer, T. (2014). Compassion-based emotion regulation up-regulates experienced positive affect and associated neural networks. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 10(9), 1291–1301. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsv008>
- Faur, A. L., Pinte, S., Vaida, S., & Opre, A. N. (2023). The efficacy of cognitive and behavioral interventions upon music performance anxiety: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of Music*, 51(2), 357–372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356221115461>
- Fernholz, I., Mumm, J. L. M., Plag, J., Noeres, K., Rotter, G., Willich, S. N., Ströhle, A., Berghöfer, A., & Schmidt, A. (2019). Performance anxiety in professional musicians:

- a systematic review on prevalence, risk factors and clinical treatment effects. *Psychological Medicine, CUP*, 2287–2306. <https://doi.org/10.17169/refubium-32666>
- Ferreira Afonso, R., Kraft, I., Adelia Aratanha, M., & Harumi Kozasa, E. (2020). Neural correlates of meditation: a review of structural and functional MRI studies. *Frontiers in Bioscience, Scholar*, 12, 92–115.
- Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs - Principles and practices. *Health Services Research*, 48(6 PART2), 2134–2156. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.12117>
- Flett, G. L., Nepon, T., Hewitt, P. L., & Rose, A. L. (2021). Why Perfectionism Is Antithetical to Mindfulness: a Conceptual and Empirical Analysis and Consideration of Treatment Implications. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, (19), 1625–1645.
- Frost, R. O., Marten, P., Lahart, C., & Rosenblate, R. (1990). The Dimensions of Perfectionism. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 14(5), 449–468.
- Garland, E. L., Gaylord, S. A., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2011). Positive Reappraisal Mediates the Stress-Reductive Effects of Mindfulness: An Upward Spiral Process. *Mindfulness*, 2(1), 59–67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-011-0043-8>
- Ghiya, S. (2017). Alternate nostril breathing: a systematic review of clinical trials. *International Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, 5(8), 3273. <https://doi.org/10.18203/2320-6012.ijrms20173523>
- Gómez-López, B., & Sánchez-Cabrero, R. (2023). Current Trends in Music Performance Anxiety Intervention. In *Behavioral Sciences* (Vol. 13, Number 9). Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI). <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13090720>
- Gross, S. A., & Musgrave, G. (2017). *Can music make you sick. A Study into the Incidence of Musicians' Mental Health Part, 2*.
- Hawley, L. L., Ho, M. H. R., Zuroff, D. C., & Blatt, S. J. (2006). The relationship of perfectionism, depression, and therapeutic alliance during treatment for depression: Latent difference score analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74(5), 930–942. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.74.5.930>
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2011). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change*. Guilford press.
- Hendry, N., Lynam, D. S., & Lafarge, C. (2022). Singing for Wellbeing: Formulating a Model for Community Group Singing Interventions. *Qualitative Health Research*, 32(8–9), 1399–1414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221104718>

- Herman, R., & Clark, T. (2023). It's not a virus! Reconceptualizing and de-pathologizing music performance anxiety. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1194873. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1194873>
- Hewitt, P. L., Flett, G. L., Mikail, S. F., Kealy, D., & Zhang, L. C. (2017). Perfectionism in the therapeutic context: The Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model. In J. Stoeber (Ed.), *The psychology of perfectionism* (pp. 1–394). Routledge.
- Hofmann, S. G., Grossman, P., & Hinton, D. E. (2011). Loving-kindness and compassion meditation: Potential for psychological interventions. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*(7), 1126–1132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2011.07.003>
- Howarth, A., Smith, J. G., Perkins-Porras, L., & Ussher, M. (2019). Effects of Brief Mindfulness-Based Interventions on Health-Related Outcomes: a Systematic Review. *Mindfulness, 10*(10), 1957–1968. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01163-1>
- Hu, W. (2024). Self-management of stage fright by vocal music performers: which techniques are the most effective? *Current Psychology, 43*(42), 33105–33114. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06849-x>
- Hutchison, J., & Beynon, C. (2014). “It’s All about Confidence and How You Perceive Yourself”: Musical Perceptions of Older Adults Involved in an Intergenerational Singing Program.
- Juncos, D. G., & Markman, E. J. (2016). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for the treatment of music performance anxiety: A single subject design with a university student. *Psychology of Music, 44*(5), 935–952. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735615596236>
- Kanorewala, B. Z., & Suryawanshi, Y. C. (2022). The Role of Alternate Nostril Breathing (Anuloma Viloma) Technique in Regulation of Blood Pressure. *Asian Pacific Journal of Health Sciences, 9*(2), 48–52. <https://doi.org/10.21276/apjhs.2022.9.2.12>
- Karl, J. A., & Fischer, R. (2022). The State of Dispositional Mindfulness Research. In *Mindfulness* (Vol. 13, Number 6, pp. 1357–1372). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-022-01853-3>
- Kenny, D. (2011). *The psychology of music performance anxiety*. OUP Oxford.
- Kenny, D. T. (2009). The Factor Structure of the Revised Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory. *International Symposium on Performance Science.*, 37–41.
- Kenny, D. T. (2023). The Kenny music performance anxiety inventory (K-MPAI): Scale construction, cross-cultural validation, theoretical underpinnings, and diagnostic and therapeutic utility. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1143359. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1143359>

- Kinney, C., Saville, P., Heiderscheit, A., & Himmerich, H. (2025). Therapeutic Interventions for Music Performance Anxiety: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), 138. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020138>
- Krishna, D., Amit, N., & Amit, K. (2024). Neurobiological Correlates of Breathing Practices on Cognitive Functions: A Narrative Review. *Biospectra: Interdisciplinary Science*, 19(2), 85–92. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15077455>
- Lindsay, E. K., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). Mechanisms of mindfulness training: Monitor and Acceptance Theory (MAT). *Clinical Psychology Review*, 51, 48–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2016.10.011>
- Lumma, A. L., Kok, B. E., & Singer, T. (2015). Is meditation always relaxing? Investigating heart rate, heart rate variability, experienced effort and likeability during training of three types of meditation. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 97(1), 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2015.04.017>
- Malinowski, P. (2013). Neural mechanisms of attentional control in mindfulness meditation. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, (7 FEB). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2013.00008>
- Mazzarolo, I., Burwell, K., & Schubert, E. (2023). Teachers' approaches to music performance anxiety management: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1205150. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1205150>
- McNally, R. J. (2019). Attentional bias for threat: Crisis or opportunity? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 69, 4–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CPR.2018.05.005>
- Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980601094651>
- Mikail, S. F., Hewitt, P. L., Flett, G. L., & Ge, S. (2022). Group dynamic-relational therapy for perfectionism. *Research in Psychotherapy: Psychopathology, Process and Outcome*, 25(3), 249–257. <https://doi.org/10.4081/ripppo.2022.635>
- Miller, R., Hilsenroth, M. J., & Hewitt, P. L. (2017). Perfectionism and therapeutic alliance: A review of the clinical research. *Research in Psychotherapy: Psychopathology, Process and Outcome*, 20(1), 19–26. <https://doi.org/10.4081/ripppo.2017.264>
- Monti, E., Kidd, D. C., Carroll, L. M., & Castano, E. (2017). What's in a singer's voice: The effect of attachment, emotions and trauma. *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, 42(2), 62–72. <https://doi.org/10.3109/14015439.2016.1166394>

- Moura, N., & Serra, S. (2021). Listening to teachers' voices: Constructs on music performance anxiety in artistic education. *Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts*, 13(2), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.34632/jsta.2021.9853>
- Nam, S., & Toneatto, T. (2016). The Influence of Attrition in Evaluating the Efficacy and Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Interventions. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 14(6), 969–981. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-016-9667-1>
- Nash, J. D., Newberg, A., & Awasthi, B. (2013). Toward a unifying taxonomy and definition for meditation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00806>
- Nash, J. D., & Newberg, A. B. (2023). An updated classification of meditation methods using principles of taxonomy and systematics. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1062535>
- Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2013). A Pilot Study and Randomized Controlled Trial of the Mindful Self-Compassion Program. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69(1), 28–44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.21923>
- Nicholson, D. R., Cody, M. W., & Beck, J. G. (2015). Anxiety in musicians: On and off stage. *Psychology of Music*, 43(3), 438–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735614540018>
- Paese, S., & Egermann, H. (2024). Meditation as a tool to counteract music performance anxiety from the experts' perspective. *Psychology of Music*, 52(1), 59–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356231155968>
- Paese, S., & Schiavio, A. (2025). Meditating musicians: investigating the experience of music students and professional musicians in a brief mindfulness course to address music performance anxiety. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1567988>
- Palmer, R., Roos, C., Vafaie, N., & Kober, H. (2023). The effect of ten versus twenty minutes of mindfulness meditation on state mindfulness and affect. *Scientific Reports*, 1(13), 20646.
- Papageorgi, I., Hallam, S., & Welch, G. F. (2007). A conceptual framework for understanding musical performance anxiety. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 28(1), 83–107.
- Pecen, E., Collins, D. J., & MacNamara, áine. (2018). "It's your problem. Deal with It." Performers' experiences of psychological challenges in music. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(JAN). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02374>
- Perkins, R., Reid, H., Araújo, L. S., Clark, T., & Williamon, A. (2017). Perceived enablers and barriers to optimal health among music students: A qualitative study in the

- music conservatoire setting. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(JUN).  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00968>
- Rajam Krishna, S., & Saikumar, P. (2016). Alternate nostril breathing at different rates and its influence on heart rate variability in non practitioners of yoga. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 10(1), CM01–CM02.  
<https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2016/15287.7094>
- Ryan, C. (2021). Performance anxiety in young contemporary musicians. *Journal of Popular Music Education*, 5(3), 313–335. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme\\_00064\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme_00064_1)
- Ryan, C., Andrews, N., & Tsang, J. (2024). Music performance anxiety and perfectionism: A comparison of in-person and virtual contexts. *Musicae Scientiae*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10298649241297229>
- Saoji, A. A., Raghavendra, B. R., & Manjunath, N. K. (2019). Effects of yogic breath regulation: A narrative review of scientific evidence. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, 10(1), 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2017.07.008>
- Shahar, B., Szepeswol, O., Zilcha-Mano, S., Haim, N., Zamir, O., Levi-Yeshuvi, S., & Levit-Binnun, N. (2015). A Wait-List Randomized Controlled Trial of Loving-Kindness Meditation Programme for Self-Criticism. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 22(4), 346–356. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.1893>
- Shaw, T. A., Juncos, D. G., & Winter, D. (2020). Piloting a New Model for Treating Music Performance Anxiety: Training a Singing Teacher to Use Acceptance and Commitment Coaching With a Student. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00882>
- Sickert, C., Klein, J. P., Altenmüller, E., & Scholz, D. S. (2022). Low Self-Esteem and Music Performance Anxiety Can Predict Depression in Musicians. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 37(4), 213–220. <https://doi.org/10.21091/mppa.2022.4031>
- Spahn, C., Tenbaum, P., Immerz, A., Hohagen, J., & Nusseck, M. (2023). Dispositional and performance-specific music performance anxiety in young amateur musicians. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1208311>
- Stöber, J. (1998). The frost multidimensional perfectionism scale revisited: More perfect with four (instead of six) dimensions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 24(4), 481–491. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(97\)00207-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(97)00207-9)
- Stoeber, J. (2018). Comparing Two Short Forms of the Hewitt–Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale. *Assessment*, 25(5), 578–588.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191116659740>
- Studer, R., Gomez, P., Hildebrandt, H., Arial, M., & Danuser, B. (2011). Stage fright: its experience as a problem and coping with it. *International archives of occupational*

and environmental health. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 7(84).

Suzuki, A., & Pitts, S. (2024). Toward effective performance psychology interventions in tertiary music education: An exploration of students' experiences, attitudes, and preferences. *Psychology of Music*, 52(4), 438–454.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356231204859>

Tahirbegi, D. (2022). Higher Music Education Students' Experiences and Management of Performance Anxiety: A Qualitative Study. *Psychology of Music*, 4(50), 1184–1196.

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Tang, Y. Y., Hölzel, B. K., & Posner, M. I. (2015). The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 16(4), 213–225.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn3916>

Telles, S., Sharma, S. K. umar, & Balkrishna, A. (2014). Blood pressure and heart rate variability during yoga-based alternate nostril breathing practice and breath awareness. *Medical Science Monitor Basic Research*, 20, 184–193.

<https://doi.org/10.12659/MSMBR.892063>

Treanor, M., Erisman, S. M., Salters-Pedneault, K., Roemer, L., & Orsillo, S. M. (2011). Acceptance-based behavioral therapy for GAD: Effects on outcomes from three theoretical models. *Depression and Anxiety*, 28(2), 127–136.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/da.20766>

Vago, D. R., & David, S. A. (2012). Self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-transcendence (S-ART): A framework for understanding the neurobiological mechanisms of mindfulness. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, (OCTOBER 2012).

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00296>

Van Aken, J. E. (2005). Management research as a design science: Articulating the research products of mode 2 knowledge production in management. *British Journal of Management*, 16(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2005.00437.x>

Winter, D. (2021). Voicing a Practitioner Research Methodology: Further Framing the Conversation. *Voice and Speech Review*, 15(1), 76–88.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23268263.2020.1843270>

Woodfin, V., Molde, H., Dundas, I., & Binder, P. E. (2021). A Randomized Control Trial of a Brief Self-Compassion Intervention for Perfectionism, Anxiety, Depression, and Body Image. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.751294>

- Xie, Y., Kong, Y., Yang, J., & Chen, F. (2019). Perfectionism, worry, rumination, and distress: A meta-analysis of the evidence for the perfectionism cognition theory. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 139, 301–312.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.11.028>
- Yadav, A., Verma, S., Panwar, M., & Yadav, N. K. (2022). Role of Yoga practices on cognitive functions. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 3288–3304.  
<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6ns3.6341>
- Zarza-Alzugaray, F. J., Orejudo, S., Casanova, O., & Aparicio-Moreno, L. (2018). Music Performance Anxiety in adolescence and early adulthood: Its relation with the age of onset in musical training. *Psychology of Music*, 46(1), 18–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735617691592>

# A 30 Day Mindfulness Course for Singers

\* Indicates required question

---

## Access to Participant Information and Sign-Up Form

### Presence Over Perfection - A 30 Day Mindfulness Course for Singers.

Thank you for your interest in taking part in my research study exploring mindfulness and music performance anxiety. This study is part of my postgraduate research at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and is being delivered through my private business as a vocal coach and mindfulness facilitator. The project has received full ethical approval from UWTSD's Ethics Committee.

#### 1. Purpose of the Study

Like so many singers, performance anxiety and a feeling of self-doubt and self-criticism can sometimes take the joy out of singing. This study explores whether 30 consecutive days of brief, self-led mindfulness practice might help reduce some of those difficult symptoms and increase a sense of calm, confidence, or freedom in performance. The goal is to understand whether accessible, low-intensity mindfulness tools could offer meaningful support to amateur and semi-professional singers.

Your experience and feedback will help us understand not only whether this kind of brief, self-directed course is helpful, but also how effective, usable, and accessible it feels in practice. We're particularly interested in exploring to what extent it may support singers with performance anxiety and perfectionistic thinking.

While this is not a therapeutic or clinical course, it is designed to encourage personal reflection and may offer useful wellbeing strategies.

## **2. What Taking Part Involves**

- **Daily online practice:** Each day between 1 and 30 October 2025, you'll be invited to follow a pre-recorded guided mindfulness session, lasting between 10 and 20 minutes. You can do this at a time and in a space that suits you—whether that's first thing in the morning, during a break, or winding down in the evening.

The course is designed especially for beginners, so there is no need for any previous experience. Each session is easy to follow, and you'll also receive visual guides to help you understand what to expect each day. Some practices repeat to help things feel familiar, and by halfway through, you'll have more choice and flexibility in your practice as you grow in confidence.

The course introduces progressive mindfulness techniques, including breath awareness, body scans, and compassion-based meditations. These practices aim to strengthen present-moment focus, emotional regulation, and self-kindness, offering strategies that support both daily life and musical performance.

Although the course is self-led, you won't be on your own. I'll be available throughout the month if you have questions or need a little extra support to stay on track or get the most out of the experience.

- **Two surveys will be completed before the course begins and again after it ends.** One is a very short 8-question survey (about 3 minutes), and the other is a longer music performance anxiety questionnaire (taking around 10–15 minutes). These help us understand if and how your experiences change during the course.

- **Two reflective questionnaires** will be completed midway through the course (Day 15) and at the end (Day 30). These give you the chance to share your experience in your own words—how things are going, what's been helpful, and how you found the overall journey. Your responses are anonymous, and each one will take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

- **Optional focus group:** You're warmly invited to take part in a relaxed, small-group conversation on Tuesday 11 November 2025 (around 45 minutes). It's a chance to share your experience, hear from others, and reflect on what worked—or didn't—for you. We'll also chat about future ideas or improvements. Whether you're full of thoughts or just want to listen in, your voice is welcome.

All materials are delivered online and can be completed on a phone, tablet, or computer.

## **3. Voluntary Participation & Right to Withdraw**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to join, skip any activity, or withdraw at any point during the 30-day course, the focus group, or the follow-up without giving a reason and without any impact on your singing studies, performance opportunities, or relationship with me or the university. Any data you have provided up to that point will be destroyed if you request it.

## **4. Confidentiality & Data Protection**

- All survey and questionnaire responses will be stored under a pseudonym (e.g., "P-07"); no identifying information will appear in any publications.

- Recordings or notes from the focus group cannot be fully anonymised because voices are audible to

other participants. We will ask everyone to respect each other's privacy.

- Data will be kept on encrypted, password-protected university servers and destroyed five years after the end of the study.

## **5. Benefits & Considerations**

While many participants find mindfulness pleasant and calming, this study is not designed to provide clinical treatment. Rarely, mindfulness may bring up uncomfortable thoughts or emotions. If this happens, you may pause or stop the practice and contact me, your GP, or the university wellbeing service for appropriate support.

### **Please note:**

This course is not suitable for individuals who are currently experiencing unmanaged depression, serious psychological conditions, or active substance use. If this applies to you, I kindly ask that you do not take part at this time. This is to ensure your wellbeing and to make sure you are supported by the right kind of care. If you're unsure, you're very welcome to contact me in confidence.

## **6. Contacts**

Primary Researcher: Nicola Currie, MA in Voice Pedagogy -The Voice Study Centre part of University of Wales, Trinity St David

Email: nicki@nickirogers.com Tel: 07766148802

Academic Supervisor: Joshua Lee-Cummins UWTSD

Email: joshua@voicestudycentre.com

## **Consent**

1. By signing below, you confirm that: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ You have read and understood the information above.
- ☐ You are at least 18 years old and an amateur or semi-professional singer.
- ☐ You confirm that you are not currently experiencing unmanaged mental health issues or substance use that would prevent you from safely taking part.
- ☐ You voluntarily agree to take part in the 30-day course and related research activities.
- ☐ You consent to your anonymised data being used for academic reporting and future publication.
- ☐ You consent to your personal data being stored securely until the project ends.
- ☐ You understand that you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

2. Full Name (to serve as your digital signature): \*

---

3. Date: \*

---

*Example: January 7, 2019*

4. Please can you state your full name and a very brief description of your singing experience.

---

---

---

---

---

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

33 responses

 [View in Sheets](#) 

Summary Question Individual

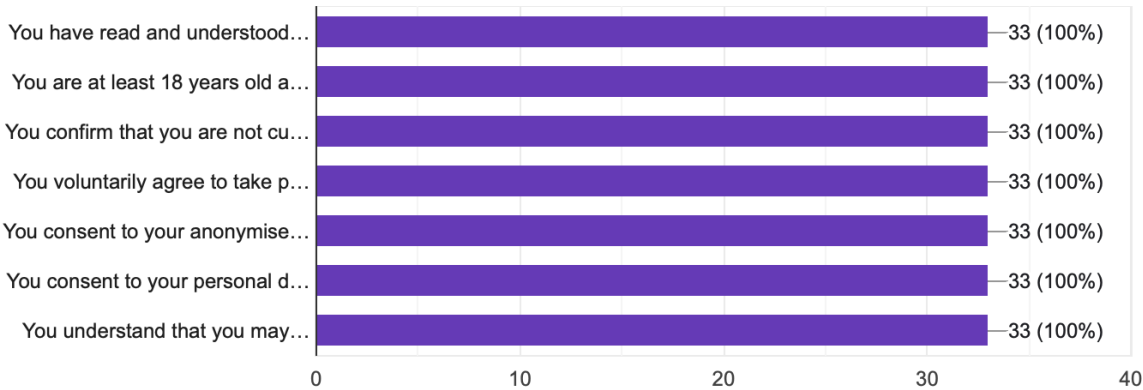
Presence Over Perfection - A 30 Day Mindfulness Course for Singers.

Consent

 [Copy chart](#)

By signing below, you confirm that:

33 responses



# Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) Pre-Course

This questionnaire looks at experiences related to music performance anxiety. It has **40 short statements**. Please read each one carefully and choose the response that best reflects how true it feels for you. There are no right or wrong answers—what matters is your own experience. Try to answer every question, and take your time.

*\* Indicates required question*

---

1. Please create for yourself a **unique anonymous code** using the first two letters of your mother’s name and the last two digits of your birth year. Use this same code each time you complete the survey

2. 1. I generally feel in control of my life \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0123456

StroStrongly Agree

3. 2. I find it easy to trust others \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0123456

StroStrongly Agree

4. 3. Sometimes I feel depressed without knowing why \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

5. 4. I often find it difficult to work up the energy to do things \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

6. 5. Excessive worrying is a characteristic of my family \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

7. 6. I often feel that life has not much to offer me \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

8. 7. Even if I work hard in preparation for a performance, I am likely to make mistakes \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

9. 8. I find it difficult to depend on others \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

10. 9. My parents were mostly responsive to my needs \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

11. 10. Prior to, or during a performance, I get feelings akin to panic \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

12. 11. I never know before a concert whether I will perform well \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

13. 12. Prior to, or during a performance, I experience dry mouth \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

14. 13. I often feel that I am not worth much as a person \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

15. 14. During a performance I find myself thinking about whether I'll even get through it \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

16. 15. Thinking about the evaluation I may get interferes with my performance \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

17. 16. Prior to, or during a performance, I feel sick or faint or have a churning in my stomach

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

18. 17. Even in the most stressful performance situations, I am confident that I will perform well

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

19. 18. I am often concerned about a negative reaction from the audience \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

20. 19. Sometimes I feel anxious for no particular reason \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

21. 20. From early in my music studies, I remember being anxious about performing \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

22. 21. I worry that one bad performance may ruin my career/performance opportunities. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

23. 22. Prior to, or during a performance, I experience increased heart rate like pounding in my chest

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

24. 23. My parents almost always listened to me \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

25. 24. I give up worthwhile performance opportunities \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

26. 25. After the performance, I worry about whether I played/sang well enough \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

27. 26. My worry and nervousness about my performance interferes with my focus and concentration

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

28. 27. As a child, I often felt sad \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

29. 28. I often prepare for a concert with a sense of dread and impending disaster \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

30. 29. One or both of my parents were overly anxious \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

31. 30. Prior to, or during a performance, I have increased muscle tension \*

*Mark only one oval.*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

32. 31. I often feel that I have nothing to look forward to \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

33. 32. After the performance, I replay it in my mind over and over \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

34. 33. My parents encouraged me to try new things \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

35. 34. I worry so much before a performance, I cannot sleep \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

36. 35. When performing without music, my memory is reliable \*

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

37. \*

35. Prior to, or during a performance, I experience shaking or trembling or tremor

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

38. 37. I am confident playing from memory \*

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

39. 38. I am concerned about being scrutinised by others \*

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

40. 39. I am concerned about my own judgement of how I will perform \*

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

41. 40. I remain committed to performing even though it causes me great anxiety \*

Mark only one oval.

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

# Perfectionism Questionnaire - Adapted from the FMPS - Brief (Burgess et al., 2016). Pre-Course

This short measure of perfectionism includes 8 questions. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale from 1 (Strongly **disagree**) to 5 (Strongly **agree**). There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all questions to the best of your ability.

\* Indicates required question

---

1. Please create for yourself a **unique anonymous code** using the first two letters of your mother's name and the last two digits of your birth year. Use this same code each time you complete the survey

---

2. If I fail at work, I am a failure as a person. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

---

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

---

3. If someone does a task at work better than me, then I feel like I failed at the whole task. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

---

Stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

---

4. 3. Sometimes I feel depressed without knowing why \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

5. 4. I often find it difficult to work up the energy to do things \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

6. 5. Excessive worrying is a characteristic of my family \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

7. 6. I often feel that life has not much to offer me \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

8. Other people seem to accept lower standards from themselves than I do. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly agree |

9. : I expect higher performance in my daily tasks than most people. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|      |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|      | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |                |
| Stro | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly agree |

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

# Mid-Point Questionnaire (Day 15)

Thank you for reaching the halfway point! This check-in is intentionally short. Please tick the option that fits best and add a quick word or two if you want. Short answers are perfect. Please also note the code detail below.

\* Indicates required question

---

1. Please enter your user code exactly the same as you did before, so your answers can be matched up. (e.g. if you used the first two letters of your mother's name and the last two digits of your birth year, use the same again now). Reminders are in your day 15 email.

---

## Early Changes

This section helps us notice any early shifts — in mood, focus, confidence, or how you respond to pressure or self-criticism. These changes are often small and gradual, but recognising them can be really encouraging. It also helps me understand which parts of the course are beginning to make a difference, so I can refine the delivery and support future participants more effectively.

2. Since starting the course, have you noticed any changes in how you relate to your thoughts or feelings?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes, positive change
- ☐ No real change yet
- ☐ Not sure

3. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to. I've given you more space here just in case you want to expand.

---

---

---

---

---

4. Have you noticed any changes in your body or breath when stressed or singing? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes, calmer/more aware  
☐ No real change yet  
☐ Not sure

5. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

6. Have you become more aware of self-critical thoughts or feelings? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ More aware of self-criticism  
☐ Less aware of self-criticism  
☐ Not noticed a change in awareness so far

7. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

## Usability

Your reflections really help me understand how the course is landing for you – what’s working, what feels challenging, and how the practices are affecting your focus, mood, or confidence. This feedback helps me refine the delivery so it supports real people, not just a theory. It also helps you pause and notice your own progress – sometimes the changes are subtle but significant.

8. The pace of the course so far feels: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Too fast  
☐ About right  
☐ Too slow

9. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

10. How are you finding the length of each practice so far? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Too short  
☐ About right  
☐ Too long

11. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

12. Accessing materials (emails, website, audio, diagrams) has been: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Mostly fine
- ☐ A bit tricky
- ☐ Difficult

13. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

14. The delivery style feels: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Clear and encouraging
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Confusing or off-putting

15. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

16. I feel supported and encouraged to continue: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

17. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

18. The practice that has appealed to me most so far is: \*  
(please choose just one option).

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Breath awareness
- ☐ Three-part breath
- ☐ Nadi Shodhana
- ☐ Body scan
- ☐ Loving-kindness/compassion

19. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

20. The practice that has appealed least to me is: (please choose just one option). \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Breath awareness
- ☐ Three-part breath
- ☐ Nadi Shodhana
- ☐ Body scan
- ☐ Loving-kindness/compassion

21. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

22. Have you experienced any barriers to practice (time, clarity, motivation, etc.)? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

23. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

24. Have you used any of the practices before or after a performance so far? \*

*Check all that apply.*

☐ No

☐ Yes

25. If yes, please could you say a few words about how you found this?

---

---

---

---

---

### *Expectation Check*

This short check-in helps us pause and notice how your experience so far compares with what you expected at the start. It isn't a test or a measure of success — it's simply a chance to reflect on whether your expectations are shifting, softening, or staying the same. Understanding this helps me see how the course is meeting people where they are, and it helps you track your own journey with a bit more awareness and self-kindness.

26. 10. Is this course what you expected so far? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes, it matches my expectations
- ☐ Partly – some aspects are different
- ☐ No, it's not what I expected

27. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

28. Before this course, how much experience did you have with mindfulness? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ None, this is new to me
- ☐ A little (I've tried it before but not regularly)
- ☐ Quite a lot (I've practiced regularly)

29. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

30. How does the course feel so far in terms of engagement, given your experience? \*

---

---

---

---

---

31. Final question: If I could change one thing about the first half of the course, it would be: \*

*Check all that apply.*

☐ Nothing – it's fine

☐ Something

32. Please say a few words about your answer if you would like to.

---

---

---

---

---

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

# Presence Over Perfection: Post-Course Questionnaire

Thank you so much for completing the 30-day Presence Over Perfection mindfulness course. This questionnaire helps me understand how the course may have impacted your experience of music performance anxiety and perfectionism. There are no right or wrong answers – please respond as truthfully as possible based on your current experience.

**IMPORTANT:** You'll notice that certain key words are in **bold** – this is simply to help you focus on the specific aspect being asked about. For example, some questions refer to **awareness**, while others focus on your **ability to regulate** or **change**.

---

\* Indicates required question

1. Please select your unique anonymous code from the list below - **Please be VERY accurate**  
- **some codes are very similar to each other.**

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ GL1957
- ☐ NI75
- ☐ Maroon
- ☐ Ka71
- ☐ Ja70
- ☐ BU86
- ☐ DE70
- ☐ Na63
- ☐ IT63
- ☐ Sq73
- ☐ Wi60
- ☐ Ra78
- ☐ 44
- ☐ Br56
- ☐ WO60
- ☐ No60
- ☐ Be56
- ☐ st59
- ☐ Je49
- ☐ R066
- ☐ Su73
- ☐ CA60
- ☐ je61
- ☐ Ve62
- ☐ R056
- ☐ Jo87
- ☐ WI48
- ☐ VA79
- ☐ EL57
- ☐ SM69
- ☐ AL76
- ☐ I can't see my code.

2. Would any of these following statements be true to you? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ I would not consider myself to be a perfectionist
- ☐ I became aware that I have perfectionistic tendencies through taking this course
- ☐ I knew I was a perfectionist prior to starting the course
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Broadly speaking which of the following statements most closely matches your experience or sense of perfectionism over the last 30 days?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ My perfectionism has become worse
- ☐ No noticeable change in my experience of perfectionism
- ☐ My perfectionism has improved

4. Would you like to expand on the statement above? Please note section 2 - 3 go into more detail.

---

---

---

---

---

5. Broadly speaking, which of the following statements most closely matches your experience or sense of music performance anxiety over the last 30 days?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ My music performance anxiety has become worse
- ☐ No noticeable change in my music performance anxiety
- ☐ My music performance anxiety has improved

6. Would you like to expand on the statement above? Please note section 2 - 3 go into more detail.

---

---

---

---

---

#### Awareness and experience of Inner Dialogue and Performance Anxiety

7. How has your **awareness** of self-critical thoughts or inner dialogue changed during or after the course?

---

---

---

---

---

8. How has your ability to **relate to and accept** your thoughts, feelings, and experiences changed (for example, before, during or post performance)?

---

---

---

---

---

9. Have you noticed any changes in your **physical awareness** or **ability to regulate your body and breath** during performance or practice?

---

---

---

---

---

Specific mindfulness practices and your experience.

10. Which mindfulness practice or combination of practices did you find **most helpful**, and which did you find **most challenging**?

Here are a reminder of the practices:

- Mindful breathing (e.g., simple breath awareness, 3-part breath)
- Body scan (half scan, full scan)
- Guided imagery (e.g., body as instrument, energy of performance, gratitude & grounding)
- Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM)
- Nadi Shodhana (alternate nostril breathing)

---

---

---

---

---

11. Considering your answer to the above questions in the **midway questionnaire**, did your preferences change or surprise you in any way by the end of the course? Please expand.

---

---

---

---

---

12. Which practice helped you **focus** most successfully and which was the **hardest to find focus** during?

Here are a reminder of the practices:

- Mindful breathing (e.g., simple breath awareness, 3-part breath)
- Body scan (half scan, full scan)
- Guided imagery (e.g., body as instrument, energy of performance, gratitude & grounding)
- Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM)
- Nadi Shodhana (alternate nostril breathing)

---

---

---

---

---

13. Can you describe any particular practice that had a significant impact on your **emotional wellbeing**?

---

---

---

---

---

14. Can you describe any particular practice that had a significant impact on your experience of **mental rumination, apprehension or critical thinking**?

---

---

---

---

---

15. Can you describe any particular practice that had a significant impact on your **physical awareness** or your **ability to regulate your body and nervous system**?

---

---

---

---

---

16. How effective do you feel the **combination** of mindfulness practices was in addressing your **performance anxiety**?

*Mark only one oval.*

|     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |                |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Not | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Very effective |

17. How effective do you feel the **combination** of practices was in addressing your **perfectionism or self criticism**.

*Mark only one oval.*

|     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |                |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Not | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Very effective |

18. How well do you feel the pace and progression of the course supported your mindful development journey — from focus, to awareness, to regulation?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Very well – I clearly felt that each stage built on the last
- ☐ Quite well – I noticed some progression overall
- ☐ Somewhat – a little progression but not strongly
- ☐ Not very well – the stages didn't feel connected
- ☐ Not at all – I didn't notice any clear progression

19. Please feel free to expand on your answer to these questions.

---

---

---

---

---

### Applying, Reflecting, and Moving Forward

20. Have you found yourself using any mindfulness techniques in daily life or outside of singing? Please give an example.

---

---

---

---

---

21. Did anything make it difficult to fully engage with the course (e.g., time, space, emotional factors)

---

---

---

---

---

22. The course length and daily practice time were designed to give the best chance for mindfulness changes to take effect in a short form course.

If you knew that **shorter or less regular sessions** might make progress slower or smaller would you still have preferred a shorter course?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes, I'd still prefer a shorter course  
☐ Possibly – depends on my schedule or energy  
☐ No, I'd rather keep the full version for the best results

23. Do you think having a short performance opportunity before and after the course would have helped you notice changes in your confidence or anxiety more clearly?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Maybe

24. If yes, what kind of performance setting do you think would best reflect your real experience (e.g., informal group, recorded video, live audience)?

---

---

---

---

---

25. Was the addition of having a webpage to explain mindfulness techniques and their scientific basis helpful to you?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes I like knowing the how's and why's  
☐ No, I am not interested in the science  
☐ It didn't make a difference to me

26. Would being in a mindfulness community via online group forums be something you would have liked throughout the course?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Maybe

27. Do you intend to continue using any of the mindfulness techniques? Why or why not? \*

---

---

---

---

---

28. How did you find the level of **contact and support** during the course? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Too much  
☐ About right  
☐ Too little

29. Is there anything that would help you stay motivated or supported in continuing a mindfulness practice?

---

---

---

---

---

30. Would you recommend this course to other singers experiencing performance anxiety?  
Please can you say why you gave your answer.

---

---

---

---

---

31. Do you have any suggestions for improving the course? You may have mentioned these suggestions midway, can you briefly mention how you feel now.

---

---

---

---

---

32. Overall, how would you rate your experience of the mindfulness course? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

|       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |           |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |                       |           |
| <hr/> |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |           |
| Very  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent |
| <hr/> |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |           |

33. Could you state which of the following best describes your professional status. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Professiona singer
- ☐ Semi-professional singer
- ☐ Amateur singer
- ☐ Non performer

34. Finally would you like to stay connected to Presence over Perfection and receive life long access to future iterations of the course?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Yes please  
☐ No thanks.
- 

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

## Appendix F

### Full data set Quantitative

|    |  a A |  KMPAI PRE |  KMPAI P... |  BRIEF F... |  BRIEF F... |  Perfectio... |  FMPS_ch... |  KMPAI_c... |  |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | GL1957                                                                                | 151                                                                                         | 160                                                                                          | 24                                                                                           | 18                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 6                                                                                              | -9                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 2  | NI75                                                                                  | 152                                                                                         | 136                                                                                          | 35                                                                                           | 25                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 10                                                                                             | 16                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 3  | Maroon                                                                                | 133                                                                                         | 78                                                                                           | 22                                                                                           | 22                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 0                                                                                              | 55                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 4  | Ka71                                                                                  | 180                                                                                         | 147                                                                                          | 34                                                                                           | 22                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 12                                                                                             | 33                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 5  | Ja70                                                                                  | 139                                                                                         | 97                                                                                           | 26                                                                                           | 28                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | -2                                                                                             | 42                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 6  | DE70                                                                                  | 143                                                                                         | 143                                                                                          | 12                                                                                           | 13                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | -1                                                                                             | 0                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 7  | Na63                                                                                  | 166                                                                                         | 140                                                                                          | 26                                                                                           | 23                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 3                                                                                              | 26                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 8  | IT63                                                                                  | 67                                                                                          | 93                                                                                           | 15                                                                                           | 15                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 0                                                                                              | -26                                                                                            |                                                                                     |
| 9  | Sq73                                                                                  | 143                                                                                         | 137                                                                                          | 27                                                                                           | 24                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 3                                                                                              | 6                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 10 | Wi60                                                                                  | 182                                                                                         | 95                                                                                           | 36                                                                                           | 20                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 16                                                                                             | 87                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 11 | Ra78                                                                                  | 135                                                                                         | 134                                                                                          | 27                                                                                           | 30                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | -3                                                                                             | 1                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 12 | No60                                                                                  | 140                                                                                         | 112                                                                                          | 28                                                                                           | 13                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 15                                                                                             | 28                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 13 | Be56                                                                                  | 141                                                                                         | 110                                                                                          | 26                                                                                           | 22                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 4                                                                                              | 31                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 14 | st59                                                                                  | 143                                                                                         | 150                                                                                          | 40                                                                                           | 33                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 7                                                                                              | -7                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 15 | Je49                                                                                  | 111                                                                                         | 119                                                                                          | 32                                                                                           | 14                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 18                                                                                             | -8                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 16 | RO66                                                                                  | 122                                                                                         | 130                                                                                          | 23                                                                                           | 29                                                                                           | 2                                                                                               | -6                                                                                             | -8                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 17 | Su73                                                                                  | 155                                                                                         | 146                                                                                          | 33                                                                                           | 31                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 2                                                                                              | 9                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 18 | CA60                                                                                  | 139                                                                                         | 114                                                                                          | 32                                                                                           | 29                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 3                                                                                              | 25                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 19 | je61                                                                                  | 130                                                                                         | 123                                                                                          | 20                                                                                           | 19                                                                                           | 2                                                                                               | 1                                                                                              | 7                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 20 | Ve62                                                                                  | 163                                                                                         | 142                                                                                          | 40                                                                                           | 36                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 4                                                                                              | 21                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 21 | RO56                                                                                  | 157                                                                                         | 155                                                                                          | 30                                                                                           | 30                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 0                                                                                              | 2                                                                                              |                                                                                     |
| 22 | Jo87                                                                                  | 148                                                                                         | 100                                                                                          | 24                                                                                           | 11                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 13                                                                                             | 48                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 23 | WI48                                                                                  | 84                                                                                          | 86                                                                                           | 24                                                                                           | 17                                                                                           | 0                                                                                               | 7                                                                                              | -2                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 24 | VA79                                                                                  | 105                                                                                         | 111                                                                                          | 26                                                                                           | 25                                                                                           | 1                                                                                               | 1                                                                                              | -6                                                                                             |                                                                                     |
| 25 | EL57                                                                                  | 96                                                                                          | 96                                                                                           | 24                                                                                           | 24                                                                                           | 2                                                                                               | 0                                                                                              | 0                                                                                              |                                                                                     |

# Focus group application for post 30 Day Mindfulness Course for Singers

\* Indicates required question

---

1. Email \*

---

## Sign-Up Form

2. Please can you give your full name (not your secret code) \*

---

3. Please can you give your preferred email address \*

---

## Presence Over Perfection - focus group

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the focus group! 

This will be a relaxed and friendly in-person session where up to 10 of us (including me, Nicki!) will gather to reflect more deeply on your experiences of the *Presence Over Perfection* course.



**Date:** Saturday 8th November



**Location:** Milton Keynes (venue TBC)



**Time:** 2:00–2:45pm (please allow up to an hour including arrival)

Everyone will be known to one another by first name during the session, but please rest assured that **any comments used in my research will remain fully anonymous**. I'll be asking open-ended questions to help us explore your thoughts and reflections in more depth. The course will be recorded so that I can remember and code the information you give me.

If you'd like to be considered, please complete the form below. Participants will be randomly selected from those who express interest.

### **Confidentiality & Data Protection**

- Recordings or notes from the focus group cannot be fully anonymised because voices are audible to other participants. We will ask everyone to respect each other's privacy.
- Data will be kept on encrypted, password-protected university servers and destroyed five years after the end of the study.

By submitting this form, I confirm that: I understand this focus group is part of the research study "Presence Over Perfection."

I understand that the discussion will last approximately 45 minutes and will take place in person in Milton Keynes.

I am happy to be known by first name to other participants and to the researcher (Nicki Currie) during the session.

I understand that while the discussion is not anonymous in the moment, **any data or quotes used in research reporting will be anonymised**, and no identifying details will be included in the final dissertation or publications.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the focus group at any time without giving a reason.

I agree to keep what is shared by other participants confidential and will not repeat personal reflection outside the session.

I consent to the session being audio recorded for analysis purposes. Recordings will be securely stored and deleted after transcription.

4. Please tick to agree below: \*

*Check all that apply.*

☐ I agree (to serve as your digital signature)

5. Please can you date your submission \*

---

*Example: January 7, 2019*

## Official University of Wales Supervision Contacts

### **Contacts**

Primary Researcher: Nicola Currie, MA in Voice Pedagogy -The Voice Study Centre part of University of Wales, Trinity St David

Email: nicki@nickirogers.com Tel: 07766148802

Academic Supervisor: Joshua Lee-Cummins UWTSD

Email: joshua@voicestudycentre.com

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

# *Presence Over Perfection* – Focus Group Guide

These questions are meant as guide only, the group will be relaxed, and conversation may flow away from these questions. Please have a read simply to get your mind engaged with your experience and to highlight anything you feel is important to share!

## 1. Motivation to engage

If Nicki wasn't running this course....would you have been interested? What was your motivation? (it's totally fine to say... 'to help Nicki' if that's true!)

## 2. Fit of Measures, focus and experience

- Who would say anxiety plays a role in their lives more broadly?
- Who would say perfectionism affects their lives outside of singing or performance?
- How might this show up in your relation to singing?
- As mostly amateur singers, do you feel the **K-MPAI** (music performance anxiety) and FMPS short (perfectionism) were the right measure for you?
- If you don't perform much, what kinds of questions might have captured your experience of anxiety more accurately?
- Would a measure of more general anxiety or self-evaluation have felt more relevant?

## 3. Barriers to Engagement

- Mindfulness can feel repetitive, as you're learning to notice and be without the stimulation your brain usually seeks.
  - Do you think understanding this before starting would have helped?
  - Would it help if participants were told that mindfulness can sometimes feel worse before it feels better — almost like a “side effects” section of a medication leaflet?
  - What kinds of things made it harder for you to engage fully on certain days or with certain practices?

## 4. Expectations and Quick Results

- Some people hoped to “feel better” quickly.
  - How did your expectations about results shape your engagement with the course?

## 5. Emotional Responses to Mindfulness

- Most participants found mindfulness calming, while one or two found it uncomfortable or irritating and even disappointing.
  - What do you think made it feel that way for you?
  - Did your experience of discomfort change over time?

→ How do you interpret irritation or restlessness — as resistance, awareness, or something else

- → What would you say to someone who is wrestling with discomfort

## 6. Authenticity, Self-Connection, and Self-Care

- Authenticity was a strong theme in participant reflections.  
→ What did authenticity come to mean for you during this process?
- Many reflections linked acceptance to the integration of positive and negative experiences.  
→ What do you think the hallmarks of self-acceptance might look like for you?  
→ How did your relationship to self-care change (if at all) through the 30 days?

## 7. Perspective and Performance

- Did your sense of what's at stake in performance change?
- What is your strategy now with thoughts and emotions? Has it changed?

## 8. Breath and Body Practice Outcomes

### Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

→ Many participants found this the most helpful practice. What do you think it was about it that worked or didn't work for you?

### Body Scan

→ The body scan was more challenging for many people. How did you experience it personally?

→ Would a more open or flexible version (less detailed, more spacious) have suited you better?

### Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation (LKCM)

→ Some participants said this practice was emotionally difficult or uncomfortable.

→ Do you think it came at the right time in the course, or was Day 15 too early for you?

→ How did you relate to the practice of offering kindness or compassion — was it easy, or did it bring up resistance?

## 9. Letting Go and Taking On

- Looking back over the 30 days, is there anything you feel you've let go of that previously stood in your way of freedom in performance, self-acceptance or moving forward?
- And conversely, is there something you've taken on — maybe one thing — that now supports you in a healthier or more grounded way?

## 10. What Would You Call the Course?

- Would you still call it *Presence Over Perfection*, or would another name capture it better?
- If you could rename it, what ideas or words would you include?

## **11. Practicalities: Audio, Delivery, Diary, and Preparation**

### **Audio and Delivery**

→ Some participants mentioned the background music was loud at times — did you find this?

→ Thinking about the guided tracks — did you ever feel there was too much spoken guidance, would you have liked more silence and space?

### **Mindfulness Diary or Reflection Journal**

→ Some of you mentioned the idea of keeping a mindfulness diary — do you think that would have benefitted you?

### **Preparation for Practices**

→ Do you think it would have been helpful to know more about what Loving-Kindness or other practices might feel like beforehand and perhaps time to consider who you may imagine?

→ Would more explanation of potential emotional responses have supported you?

### **Performance Opportunities**

→ Would integrating live or shared experiences (like group practice or a performance) help embed learning?

## **12. Looking Ahead**

- If I came to see you in three months, how many of you think you'd still be practising mindfulness in some way?

## **13. Closing Reflection**

- In a few words, how would you describe your journey through the 30 days?
- Is there anything you wish others knew before beginning the course?
- Any final reflections or surprises about what you discovered in yourself?