Interpretation of interview 2

18ys anxious

The interviewee has a strong preference for participation mindfulness which to her is doing an activity with a preference of it being with other people. She seems to value the connection to other people within the mindfulness exercises and the possibility of the exercise being fun when done with others. Being with others and having fun seems to give the interviewee a connection – being involved- and this for her is a positive outcome of engaging with mindfulness.

***REC: Like, in like the mindfulness bit, definitely liked the participation bit, like, that, that …***

***… really stood out for me because, like, it was, I found, I found that one the easiest to use. Lines 30-34***

***REC: Like, there was this one, um, and like the participation one where we had to, like, do this, like, little kind of dignity game mindfulness thing, called, like, Aunt Sally goes to Shop, …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … and um, it was like um, they said to us to, like, remember everything, like, from A-Z, my Aunt Sally went to, like the shop and bought an apple, for example; and then the next person has to say that and, like, starting with B, something we had to remember.***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: That was, like, really fun to do.***

***INT: Yeah. So it was fun.***

***REC: Yeah.***

***INT: So what was it … how did that affect you, that you were doing this fun mindfulness exercise?***

***REC: It affected me ‘cos, like, um, I guess ‘cos, like, whilst we was doing it I was, like, really, like, fun to ,like, remember everything, and it was, like, fun to actually think of, like, what, what I’d like on the spot, and, like, when people said, like, really funny words, they were like, it was really funny.***

***INT: OK. So it make you laugh, or …?***

***REC: Yes.***

***INT: OK. And what, what difference did that make then?***

***REC: I guess, like, the difference it made was that, like, that, that one, like we all felt a lot more relaxed during that one, like, and with the other ones, the other ones just like a bit more trickier to do ‘cos, like, we wasn’t really that involved.***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: Like with this one we was, like, really involved and, like, really getting into it. Lines 46-74***

**REC: Like, the, the particip-, participation bit, um, we basically had to, like, um, you know, make … like get involved in the mindfulness, like …**

**INT: OK.**

**REC: … except like, just like listening, we had to, like, kind of, remember things, and like, say it out loud, and, like, that’s what, like, that’s what the participation one was about, and, like, that one, like we all found really good. Lines 150-154**

It is not clear where distraction stops and mindfulness begins although the interviewee describes the difference as being the type of focus on the activity. The preference for activity with an external input is very strong. Just sitting or listening to what is around or noticing her own feelings, does not give her what she is looking for from mindfulness.

***REC: the other ones just like a bit more trickier to do ‘cos, like, we wasn’t really that involved Line 70***

***INT: OK. Can you think of any of the ones that were quite tricky?***

***REC: Um, like, for example, one of them, like, the observe ones was, like, we had to just listen to the sounds, like, this was like what we did on our first session, and we found that one really hard. Lines 76-78***

***INT: It’s not just some random thing I’m being asked to do – can you remember what it was about that process, you’re saying its sort of having to say things out loud, do things with other people – what was it about that process that made a difference?***

***REC: I guess, ‘cos it … we was … be … we was able to like distract ourself from our thoughts for a bit, and, like, that’s what really, like benefitted us. Lines 160-162***

***INT: And what did, what sort of things did you use when you weren’t in the group?***

***REC: Um, I use like, things like listen to music; like that’s the one I use on a regular basis. And I also, like, watch a lot of U-tube videos ‘cos, like, that’s, that’s like, a bit like the participation one as well. Like, so that I distract myself by watching a lot of Um-tube videos as well. Lines 172-174***

***Like, basically it helps me, like, when, when I’m focussing on U-tube video itself it kind of helps me to, like, kind of distract myself from everything round me, and of course, like, ‘cos I have my earphones in, which is like, like they’re noise cancelling as well, it just like cancels everything out, of like what the surrounding, like, area, so it helps me focus on, like, what I’m actually doing, and actually relaxes me. Line 190***

***I fell like the difference was that I was able to, like, kind of distract myself from, like, wanting to hurt myself. And, like, with, like colouring in, I obviously like … she had to kind of take away the red um, pen so I wouldn’t, like, have any more urges. And, like, with, like, colouring in um, it kind of helped me just focussing on, like, what I was actually colouring in; like, not going out the lines, and things like that. And like, yeah, it really like benefitted me. Line 346***

***No. Like, for example, when I’m being observed, is where we just have to, like, just, like, listen in to sounds and, like, stay silent. Like, that’s the one I kind of avoided because whenever I do that it just triggers so many thoughts and, like, I just can’t seem to, like, distract myself from all my thoughts when we have to stay silent. Line 378***

***Um, I think it was like when I said I was going to wear my skinny jeans out in public, um, like some people, like, kind of said to me that if I used, like, participation, like mindfulness for example, like listening to my music out and about when I’m walking, and just like kind of using wise mind as well, um, then that would like, kind of help me, and it did. Line 484***

The interviewee uses the focus on activity to be in her own little world away from difficult thoughts and associates being mindful with the absence of stress, unpleasant emotions and thoughts.

***REC: Um, there was also another one where we had to listen to music, and that one, like, ‘cos I like to listen to music anyway, like, that really relaxes me, um, that one I, it really stood out because, like, that one was, like, so relaxing. Line 134***

***REC: It’s like when … I was kind of, like, told that when I’m doing mindfulness, that when I’m actually like, kind of, listening to, like, music, and, like, kind of … and there’s no thoughts in my head at all, and all of a sudden I’m like, thinking I’m being mindful here, like, I, I … like, I’m really relaxed. And that’s when I know I’m being really mindful Line 254***

***REC: It’s like, … it’s probably, like, at the most its ever been, but it’s like quite … it’s quite high lately.***

***INT: And the time when it was the most it’s ever been, what … what made it the most then?***

***REC: I guess ’cos, like … ‘cos I was, like, feeling really relaxed then, and, like, I had no worries that week, and nothing was stressing me out, and yeah I was … that, that week was, like, really, really relaxing for me. That’s when it was like the most. Lines 500-504***

The interviewee uses mindfulness activities as a way of solving problems, like an emotional first aid, and is encouraged to do this by the therapists and other group members. When she notices an unwanted emotion i.e. anxiety she will use an activity i.e. music to focus away from her thoughts and feelings. The external replaces the internal.

***REC: Um, I use like, things like listen to music; like that’s the one I use on a regular basis. And I also, like, watch a lot of U-tube videos ‘cos, like, that’s, that’s like, a bit like the participation one as well. Like, so that I distract myself by watching a lot of Um-tube videos as well. Line 174***

***REC: Like, basically it helps me, like, when, when I’m focussing on U-tube video itself it kind of helps me to, like, kind of distract myself from everything round me, and of course, like, ‘cos I have my earphones in, which is like, like they’re noise cancelling as well, it just like cancels everything out, of like what the surrounding, like, area, so it helps me focus on, like, what I’m actually doing, and actually relaxes me. Line 190***

***, so I had to leave the session, and when um, members of the team had to come out and, like, try and calm me down, and we used, like, mindfulness for example, like colouring in; like we asked one of our participation ones, and with me and colouring in, that actually did work. And we was like, use bubbles as well, and, like, we had, like the teddy bear which I had to stroke, which, like, really worked like, so obviously, basically use a lot of, like, participation mindfulness with me to try and calm me down, and it did work.Line 342***

***REC: No. Like, for example, when I’m doing observe, is where we just have to, like, just, like, listen in to sounds and, like, stay silent. Like, that’s the one I kind of avoided because whenever I do that it just triggers so many thoughts and, like, I just can’t seem to, like, distract myself from all my thoughts when we have to stay silent. Line 378***

***REC: I think it’s ‘cos like when I was, like, really anxious my thoughts was, like, kind of going all over the place, and I was like really racing; and then, like, as soon as I got into a mindfulness activity they just kind of … I was able to distract myself for a moment, like, just myself into the moment, and that’s what I was able to do.***

***INT: OK. And then did the therapy session go?***

***REC: And then, that, that … after I did the mindfulness activity I felt a lot more calmer during the therapy session.Line 222-226***

***REC: Like, for example, um, when I’m using the ‘phone – ‘cos I get really anxious using the ‘phone – um, he suggested me, um, use the mindfulness for that, like, before, during and after, so I can, like, focus in on what I’m actually doing. And also, like, whilst I’m doing, like, quite anxious things like talking to someone in person, like, he also said that I should use mindfulness then like before and after. Line 234***

***Yeah. Like, basically, um, there was one time in \*[00.19.44] when I was, like, in the session and – this going to sound really bad – but I had a huge urge to self-harm, and um, basically what happened was that um, I had a panic attack as well, so I had to leave the session, and when um, members of the team had to come out and, like, try and calm me down, and we used, like, mindfulness for example, like colouring in; Line 342***

***REC: Like, basically, when … they was like when someone’s like discussing about a problem that they had during the week, um, we was all able to, like, kind of contribute, and like I say, different mindfulness, like activities that they could try. Um, yeah, that’s just what we did. Line 476***

She finds that when she has completed a mindfulness exercise that she can respond differently to the situation.

***REC: Like, when I was before … when I was using it before, like, I know I was, like, really anxious, like, I felt in myself that I was, like, really anxious, and so when I actually used it before, I tried to use it to, like, calm myself down; and then afterwards I used it to just, like, just like bring my thoughts, like, back, like, here, like in the present, ‘cos I only did that that afterwards, my thoughts would have gone like really crazy, and, like, they would have been racing again. So, yeah.Line 242***

When she describes using mindfulness to deal with anxiety around eating there seems to be a different emphasis. She does not use an external activity to distract her from the eating she chooses to focus completely on the process of eating and the food itself and focus away from negative thoughts about eating.

***REC: Yeah. Like, for example, like, say I used to have an eating disorder, um, like, I used, I used to have to, like, use mindfulness when I was, like, eating as well.***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: Like, to kind of distract myself from what I’m actually eating from, like, the calories and fat, and, like, just focussing on, like, what I’m actually eating. Even though, like, we found that one really tricky in mindfulness, I was actually practising it a lot, and um, when I was actually practising it a lot more, it kind of got a bit easier, like …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … during the times I was practising it.***

***INT: OK. And, and the practising of it, was that something you chose to do? Something …?***

***REC: It’s actually I voluntarily chose to do.***

***INT: OK. How come? How come you kind of …?***

***REC: I think it’s because, like, I wanted to, like, kind of, break free from my eating disorder, and, like, I wanted to, like actually have, like, a bit of relaxation from all my thoughts, like, from my eating disorder, I kind of just wanted to, like, practise it, so to try and feel a bit more calm when I’m eating.***

***INT: OK. And so the thing you did when you were eating was something about focussing just on the food …***

***REC: Yeah.***

***INT: … rather than stuff that was in your head, is that right?***

***REC: Yeah.***

***INT: And, so what … how … take me through how you did that?***

***REC: ‘Cos, like, basically, um, when I was actually like making, like, the food, I was actually focussing in on, like, like, not the calories and, like, fat or anything like that, but focussing on, like, the food, and, like, the colour of it, and the smell of it; and then, like, as I was eating it I was just focussing on the taste, and …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … like, nothing else.***

The interviewee refers to two concepts of mindfulness that were not connected to an activity. She seemed a little unsure of these concepts and used mindfulness language to explain them. She seemed positive about the use of wise mind and the way it helped her get into the middle.

***REC: Like, one idea that I’ve really stuck with is, like, wise mind, which, like, is like, obviously like … that’s the one that’s really stuck with me, ‘cos, like, I’ve literally been doing that one every single day, and, like, that’s one idea which, like, they also really reinforce every single week, and um, yeah that … so like that’s one I do that really stuck with me.***

***INT: And can you explain what you do? Do you do it every single day, what is it that you do that …?***

***REC: Um, like the wise one is basically about, like, just challenging our thoughts, and like, so like …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … there’s, like, there’s the, like emotional thought there, the rational thought, and like the wise mind thought …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … and like we have to basically, like, recognise how we’re feeling, like our emotional, like, mind; that’s like how we’re, like, kind of feeling about a situation; like the rational mind is like, I’ve got to do this; and the wise mind is like, thinking inbetween, so like thinking dialectically about it.***

***INT: OK. And how does that help you?***

***REC: Um, it helps me ‘cos, like, I’m … ‘cos I’m challenging my thought and everything, and it kind of, like, helps me because, like, I’m able to, like, … I’m able to, like, kind of think inbetween, like, about, like, my other two thoughts, and, like, I’m able to, like, kind of think about an easier solution to what, like, I’m meant to be doing.***

***INT: And, and so you, you know when you’re doing it?***

***REC: Yeah.***

***INT: How do you know that you’re doing it?***

***REC: ‘Cos, like, when I, when I’m doing it it’s ‘cos I’m actually thinking ahead, like, I … I kind of, like, thinking to myself about, like, the situation, like, the … yeah. Line 388-412***

However, she was negative about the use of non-judgemental as she was left feeling confused about how to do it and whether it was even possible. She said she chose to stay away from this idea as it confused her and seemed to stay away from any parts of mindfulness that were difficult either through being too unfamiliar or did not produce a distracting effect.

**REC: … we were meant to, like, not judge when we’re judging other people, like not judging ourselves when we’re judging other people. And, like, that’s actually really hard, because like, obviously, like, everyone judges everyone else, like that’s just, like, a normal society. But, like, it’s so hard to, like, kind of think to myself, Oh no! we’re judging someone; Oh no, we can’t do that, ‘cos then we’re judging ourself for judging other people. It’s just really confusing.**

**INT: OK. So is that something that you’re trying to get your head round? Or you just think, Oh, I’ll just stay away from that now?**

**REC: I’m trying to stay away from it because it is just so confusing. Line 432-436**

The interviewee described several processes going on including: Focus, relaxation, insight, observing, shifting focus, being in the moment. At times she associated these processes with feelings and at others with thoughts. Most often these processes were associated with the distraction from rather than connection with thoughts and feelings. A relaxation element of mindfulness seemed important to the interviewee along with a sense that she could break free, feel calm and slow her thoughts.

***REC: Um, there was also another one where we had to listen to music, and that one, like, ‘cos I like to listen to music anyway, like, that really relaxes me, um, that one I, it really stood out because, like, that one was, like, so relaxing. Line 134***

***REC: It kind of, like, when I cancel everything out it feels like that, I’m in my own little world, and, like, I’m in, like, my own little world where I can just like relax, and, like, I’m just free really. Line 194***

***REC: Like, when I was before … when I was using it before, like, I know I was, like, really anxious, like, I felt in myself that I was, like, really anxious, and so when I actually used it before, I tried to use it to, like, calm myself down; and then afterwards I used it to just, like, just like bring my thoughts, like, back, like, here, like in the present, ‘cos I only did that that afterwards, my thoughts would have gone like really crazy, and, like, they would have been racing again. So, yeah.Line 242***

***REC: It’s like when … I was kind of, like, told that when I’m doing mindfulness, that when I’m actually like, kind of, listening to, like, music, and, like, kind of … and there’s no thoughts in my head at all, and all of a sudden I’m like, thinking I’m being mindful here, like, I, I … like, I’m really relaxed. And that’s when I know I’m being really mindful.Line 254***

***REC: I think it’s because, like, I wanted to, like, kind of, break free from my eating disorder, and, like, I wanted to, like actually have, like, a bit of relaxation from all my thoughts, like, from my eating disorder, I kind of just wanted to, like, practise it, so to try and feel a bit more calm when I’m eating Line 282***

***But then, like, we was told to practise it, and um, when we was actually practising it a lot more it kind of just felt natural, it’s like focussing on how we’re actually feeling. Like, for example, when we’re having panic attacks, or something like that, we’re able to, like, recognise, like, symptoms, and, like, the physical sensations; so we’re able to, like, calm ourself down and bring us back into the moment Line 330***

***REC: … and like we have to basically, like, recognise how we’re feeling, like our emotional, like, mind; that’s like how we’re, like, kind of feeling about a situation; like the rational mind is like, I’ve got to do this; and the wise mind is like, thinking inbetween, so like thinking dialectically about it. Line 400***

The interviewee showed a change in her relationship over time with mindfulness showing some surprise that she had found some positive effects of doing mindfulness. She had found the explanation of mindfulness and her first experiences weird and was unsure as to the point of doing mindfulness. She continued to have some uncertainty and confusion but could see her continuing mindfulness activities as a way of problem solving in the future.

***REC: Like, it was like really kind of odd really, like, knowing that we had to, like, just be put into a mindfulness activity straight away, ‘cos like we didn’t really understand what we were doing, and, like, it was weird, just like, just sit down in silence and listen to the clock, it was like, it felt very weird.***

***INT: And can you remember anything that went through your mind about that then?***

***REC: Like, it just, like, what went through my mind was, like, I was just thinking, this is, like, really weird, like, why are we doing this? Like, I don’t think this is going to help me in any way. But, like, that, that’s what I kind of thought in the first kind of session.Line 102-106***

***REC: Um, like, at first it was really weird, like, kind of just focussing on how we’re feeling, and, like, it was like really weird to, like, yeah, focus on how we’re feeling, and like, focussing on our physical sensation, what we’re feeling. Like, It was, like kind of really weird at first. But then, like, we was told to practise it, and um, when we was actually practising it a lot more it kind of just felt natural, it’s like focussing on how we’re actually feeling. Line 330***

***REC: Like, when my first session started, I like, had thoughts, like, what’s going on; and then, like, actually like, during half, like halfway through DBT um, my thoughts kind of changed, just like thinking, like, this is actually helping me, and, like, there is actually some kind of, like, purpose in doing this, like, really. Yeah.***

***INT: And can you remember what it was about it that felt like it was, there was a purpose to it, or felt like it was helping you?***

***REC: I think it’s because when we did a lot more participation um, um, mindfulness activities, that’s when I actually thought, this is actually helping me.Lines 142-146***

***REC: I just, like, managed to just focussing on how I was feeling, like, I guess, like, obviously we did learn about, like, how to do it, but, like, I think what, what happened was that um, by the time we was just, like, practising it a long while it just came natural to us, that, like, us focussing on our feelings really. Line 338***

The interviewee is influenced in her relationship with mindfulness by other people suggesting that she uses it in certain situations, internalised rules about what mindfulness is and isn’t and others perceptions of her being mindful at times.

***REC: When I’m, like, … ‘cos, like, I remember, like, I told one of the therapists um, in the DBT group one time that, like, even though I was feeling quite, like, kind of anxious and low, um, during one week, and they said that I was still being mindful ‘cos I was, like, focussing in on my, kind of how I’m feeling, like …***

***INT: OK.***

***REC: … ‘cos I was feeling anxious and low, and, like, they knew that; so I was like … they said I was being un-mindful … um, yeah, I was being, like, … they knew I was being mindful because I was being un-mindful, like that kind of thing. Line 520-524***