### **Electronic Supplementary Material 3.** Qualitative Feasibility and Acceptability Sub-Study: Mindfulness-Based College

### **Methods**

Qualitative evaluations were done via focus group discussions (FGD). Participants who completed the MB-College course (N=39) were invited to participate in the FGD, of which 16 accepted. A meal was provided during the FGD but no further reimbursement, and FGD attendance was optional. Findings should be interpreted with the knowledge there may be biases in the method of selecting the FGD sample, that could reduce generalizability of these findings. FGDs were held at Brown University. Qualitative methods explored *a priori* domains consistent with intervention acceptability (e.g. support materials, intervention delivery modality), and areas identified as specific to mindfulness interventions (e.g. instructor competency, mindfulness practice adherence). FGDs were administered using standardized procedures (see **Electronic Supplementary Material 4**). FGD participants rated the usefulness of MB-College customizations via a *closed card sort activity,* where they were asked to categorize the customizations as “very useful”, “somewhat useful”, “not useful” (**Electronic Supplementary Material 5**) (52). Finally, FGD participants completed a short open-ended survey assessing opinions of MB-College class and retreat duration (e.g. “Each weekly session was 2.5 hours long. Do you think the session should be 2 hours, 2.5 hours, or 3 hours, and why? The retreat was scheduled as being 7.5 hours long. How long do you think the day should be [5, 6, 7, or 8 hours’? Why? Please write any additional feedback or comments about the MB-College course below”]).

In order to reduce investigator biases, the principal investigator (E.L.) did not have access to the master dataset and was not present at FGDs or IDIs. For qualitative data and analysis, two of the co-authors (W.N., L.F.) coded and analyzed the data independent of the principal investigator under the supervision of a qualitative expert (A.H.).

Qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo v.11. Structured codes were developed from study objectives (e.g. acceptability of intervention components) and the theoretical framework shown in Figure 1, described elsewhere (21). FGD transcripts were double coded by two members of the research staff (W.N. A.W.). Staff used directed content analysis, a structured, deductive process appropriate in instances of existing theoretical frameworks and predefined study hypotheses to create codebook categories (see **Electronic Supplementary Material 6**) (37, 38). Cross-checks and consistencies in coding were reviewed by research staff and emergent themes were reviewed by the PI and qualitative expert (A.H.) for consistency.

**Results**

Qualitative results indicated that, overall, the participants found the program acceptable and feasible. Detailed feasibility and acceptability themes, with coding samples are listed in **Electronic Supplementary Material 7**. Participants indicated no difficulty accessing resources (e.g. digital audio files) or attending classes (e.g. accessibility, location of course). They explained that the course was important as a held space away from academic pressures which allowed regular opportunities to practice meditation and reflect. Some indicated that they would have practiced more if there was a designated space for meditation available throughout the day. Most often the practices outside of class were applied during academically stressful events such as when they made a mistake, or to relax following a challenging situation. These practices were most often unscheduled and could be both formal (e.g. yoga, breath awareness) as well as informal (e.g. paying attention to scenery on a walk). Some reported practicing during long periods of studying to reduce stress. A few students shared that homework instructions for practicing 10-45 minutes every day was stressful at first. Some explained that, over time, they came to realize that these were less rules, and more recommendations, for practice. These students suggested clearer practice guidelines and to gradually increase the home practice frequency from select days per week to every day.

Students thought instructors were dedicated to helping them with the practice which increased their program engagement. The teachers’ anecdotes about their own meditation experiences were relatable and important. Students believed the instructors genuinely wanted them to do well and were interested in their well-being. Some explained it would have been helpful to have more discussion of instructors’ personal difficulties with meditation as examples to help them navigate practice.

One intervention module that was difficult for students was communicating about goal-directed activities for alcohol. Some students shared they were uncomfortable and unsure when asked about alcohol specifically. Several participants who reported using alcohol/drugs reported not sharing accurately due to lack of confidence about confidentiality, or general discomfort. Some participants who did not use alcohol/drugs said they were unsure what to say, and wondered if they were expected to speak about it. General discomfort in talking about alcohol use was expressed. Most participants were under-aged to legally drink. As a result, we removed group discussion of alcohol or substance use in MB-College curriculum, version 2.0, but created opportunities for it to be explored personally and informally with peers and the instructor outside of the formal program, if they want to. Version 2.0 MB-College will be tested in a future study.

In terms of quantitative findings on the usefulness of MB-College customizations (detailed results in **Electronic Supplementary Material 5**), the highest rated activity was performing a “deep relaxation meditation” in class. Eighty two percent of participants rated it as “very useful” (mean score=1.64, on a scale where not useful=0, useful=1, very useful=2). The second highest rated customization was the deep relaxation meditation home practice (55% “very useful”, mean score=1.55). Furthermore, physical activity in class, and creating goals to improve well-being, were rated equally useful intervention customizations (55% “very useful”, mean score=1.45). The least useful customizations were documenting pleasant (45% “not useful”, mean score=0.64) and unpleasant (55% “not useful”, mean score=0.73) events for alcohol consumption and diet during the week.

Participants responded that 2.5 hours was an effective amount of time for class (**Electronic Supplementary Material 8**) with an average preferred time of 2.3 h (n=14) and that any longer would have been undesirable. Students also indicated that the retreat was a “good length” (FGD1, FGD3) with a preferred average time of 7.1 hours (n=14). Most participants expressed that they would prefer 7.5-8 hours (n=10). Two participants preferred less time, as by the end of the retreat they were overwhelmed or fatigued.