

What is learnt from Mindfulness Based Childbirth and Parenting – participants' experiences

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Conclusion

Inner resources

Our findings demonstrate that MBCP can prepare expectant parents for the challenges they meet when they go through the life-changing events of becoming parents. The phenomenon of participating in the intervention, integrating the teachings and embodying mindfulness seems to develop inner resources that foster the development of wisdom.

Introduction

This qualitative study is part of a research project that evaluates an antenatal group intervention called Mindfulness Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) regarding perinatal stress, anxiety and depression—potential hazards for both parents and children. The intervention is targeted to pregnant women at risk of mental health problems. Their partners are also invited. Here we seek to understand the participants' experiences of the intervention.

Method

Individual, in-depth interviews with 10 mothers and 6 fathers were conducted 4-6 months post-partum. Thematic analysis of the transcripts was conducted with a phenomenological and inductive approach.

Result

A new way of relating

To various degrees, the participants spoke about finding new helpful ways of relating to themselves and the world due to participating in the MBCP program. Thus, the main theme is “a new way of relating”.

Subthemes with quotes are presented below:

1) Different attitudes to learning mindfulness

“It eliminated some preconceived notions that I had had”

2) Relating to oneself with greater insight and self-compassion

*“I got tools to stop the spiral of worry.”
“I learned to be kinder with myself.”*

3) Help with coping with the pain and fear of childbirth

“You're not a slave under the pain or what's happening in the body but can choose to let it happen.”



Photo: Maria Bengtsson

4) Help with challenges caring for the baby *“It hasn't triggered this enormous stress that it would have done otherwise”.*

5) Relating to each other with more presence and patience *“He actually got to finish his sentences, the whole way. Sometimes I just sit quiet. I wait (for him to find his words) and I don't get irritated.”*

Taking part of these narratives has been very interesting and fun! Our next articles will be about the outcomes in the RCT; biomarkers as well as questionnaires.



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