

THE ARSENAL

Augusta University's Undergraduate Research Journal

ISSN 2380-5064 | The Arsenal is published by the Augusta University Libraries | <http://guides.augusta.edu/arsenal>

Volume 5, Issue 1 (2023)
Special Edition Issue

MINDFULNESS SERVING AS MEDIATION FACTOR FOR DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL RISKS

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Citation

Singh, A., Amerson, A., Flinn, R., Stepleman, L., & Drescher, C. (2023). Mindfulness serving as mediation factor for depression and suicidal risks. *The Arsenal: The Undergraduate Research Journal of Augusta University*, 5(1), 67-68.

<http://doi.org/10.21633/issn.2380.5064/s.2023.05.01.67>



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Mindfulness Serving as Mediation Factor for Depression and Suicidal Risks

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ABSTRACT

The LGBTQ+ community faces tremendous amounts of discrimination. Youth identifying as LGB had increased rates of generalized anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, and depression compared to their heterosexual peers. Transgender and gender diverse people face high rates of depression and suicidality explained by minority stress processes. The minority stress theory is a model which explains the adverse health effects that sexual minority individuals face, with experiences of marginalization, stigmatization, or prejudice increasing the likelihood of depression or suicide compared to their heterosexual and LGB cisgender counterparts. Little research has been completed for transgender and gender diverse persons regarding this particular issue. We conducted a study with a sample of 96 transgender and gender diverse individuals from the Southeastern United States to test the mediating relationship of mindfulness with depressive symptoms and suicide risk. Our study used assessments that measured an individual's depression level, mindful awareness, emotional dysregulation, along with any substance use or alcohol dependency. In our study, depression and suicidal endorsement are positively associated. Using test bivariate associations, two-block multiple regression, and a mediation analysis, we tested the hypothesized mediation of the significant relationship between depressive symptoms (the "independent variable") and suicide risk factor endorsement (the "dependent variable"), by mindful attention (the hypothesized mediator). With this, we generated a significant, indirect effect of depressive symptoms and suicidality through mindful attention. In our results, mindfulness contributed to roughly 14.5% of the link between depressive symptoms and suicide risk. This suggests that the practice of mindfulness can help transgender, gender diverse, and sexual minority individuals be more aware of their

coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse or loneliness through self-isolation. In this study, mindfulness correlated with less depressive symptoms, which in turn can lead to a decreased risk of suicide or suicidal ideation for transgender and gender-diverse people. Mindfulness-based feminist therapies show a possible aid for transgender and gender diverse individuals, and future research should focus on mindfulness and other mindfulness-based feminist therapies as mediators to reduce suicidal ideation among sexual minority and transgender individuals.

Received: 02/15/2023 Accepted: 03/29/2023

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