Does Mindfulness Mediate the Influence of Stress Upon Parenting Relationships in a Foster Care Population: A Pilot Study of the Effectiveness of a Mindfulness Based Parenting Program for Foster Carers.

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Submitted: March 2014

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This thesis is submitted as partial requirement of the Masters of Clinical Psychology degree.
Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository**, subject to the provisional of the Copyright Act 1968.

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has been done in collaboration with other researchers. I have included as part of the thesis a statement clearly outlining the extent of collaboration, with whom and under what auspices.

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Statement on the contribution of others

I wish to acknowledge my supervisor Dr Linda Campbell for her commitment and support throughout the duration of this research. The high level of academic support provided to me is truly appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Life Without Barriers for providing Kylie Bear and I the platform on which to access foster carers whilst we were both employed workers. The support of staff provided at Life Without Barriers, in particular Deirdre Thompson was invaluable to the success of this research. I also wish to acknowledge Peter Kelly on behalf of Kylie Bear, for his support and guidance in developing this program.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Kylie Bear, the creator and facilitator of the Mindful Parenting Program. The commencement of this research and the collection of the invaluable data was completed by Kylie Bear as part of her PhD research. I am eternally grateful to be a part of seeing this through for you Kylie. You are truly missed by all whose lives you touched.
Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, support and patience of my supervisor Dr Linda Campbell. Thank you for your invaluable support and guidance throughout this process.

I would also like to thank my husband Michael, for being so supportive, so understanding and so patient. I couldn’t have finished this without you.

Finally, I would like to pay the utmost gratitude and thanks to Kylie Bear. This thesis would not exist without you and it is due to your hard work, your persistence and your love for helping others that made this research possible. I am so blessed to have been able to have the opportunity to work with you; you were such a support for me at our time together at Life Without Barriers and at University. I am truly honoured to have been able to be a part of this research that you were so passionate about.
Abstract

There is a shortage of foster carers which has been linked to the stressors associated with the demands of the role. This current shortage of carers in conjunction with an increasing number of children needing out-of-home care placements reflects the need for increased support and training for foster carers. Foster carers are responsible for providing a nurturing and supportive environment to support children to develop positive attachments and to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. It is for this reason that the parent-child relationship is a crucial factor in a successful foster care placement. High stress levels of foster carers has been recognised as a substantial contributing factor to placement breakdowns and the resulting difficulty of retaining foster carers. Mindfulness has been found to be an effective strategy in improving parenting relationships in natural parents and their children however there is limited research in using mindfulness based parenting strategies in the foster care population. The aim of this study is to determine if mindfulness is a mediating factor between stress and parenting relationships and to evaluate the effectiveness of a mindfulness based training program within a foster care population with the ultimate aim of improving resilience in foster carers and thereby improving carer retention.