

Can mindfulness play a role in preventing suicide?

Suicidal ideation is a critical and severe mental health concern. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, there were an estimated 1.6 million suicide attempts in 2022. ([Suicide statistics | AFSP](#))

“Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn: Defining Mindfulness – Mindful

Mindfulness practices, including Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), have generated increased interest in the therapeutic treatment of stress, anxiety and depression, which are key factors contributing to suicidal ideation. Some of the ways that mindfulness may impact the factors that lead to suicidal ideation include improving emotional regulation, reducing rumination, fostering self-compassion and increasing cognitive flexibility. A 2020 meta-analysis of the literature on the effects of mindfulness-based interventions demonstrated there were significant clinical reductions in suicidal ideation and depression (Schmelefske et.al). Additionally, MBCT has shown to be effective as an additive treatment in the prevention of relapse in recurrent depression (Kuyken, 2008).

The research on mindfulness and the reduction of depression and suicidality is promising. Mindfulness can improve the ability to cope with distress, reduce rumination and improve emotional resilience. In addition to other therapeutic interventions, it shows promise in reducing the recurrence of depression. It is important to note that the practice of mindfulness, including the use of meditation, can require initiative and action on the part of the person experiencing depression, which may be challenging and require support and training.

There are [free apps](#) available that support a meditative, or mindfulness practice, as well as training, such as the [online training offered through the University of Massachusetts Medical Centers’ Center for Mindfulness](#). Visit TMF Health Quality Institute’s [Mindful Matters webpage](#) for additional resources.

REFERENCES

[Jon Kabat-Zinn: Defining Mindfulness - Mindful](#)

[Suicide statistics | AFSP](#)

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