



mindfulness training to attenuate loneliness and foster social connection

Kirk Warren Brown



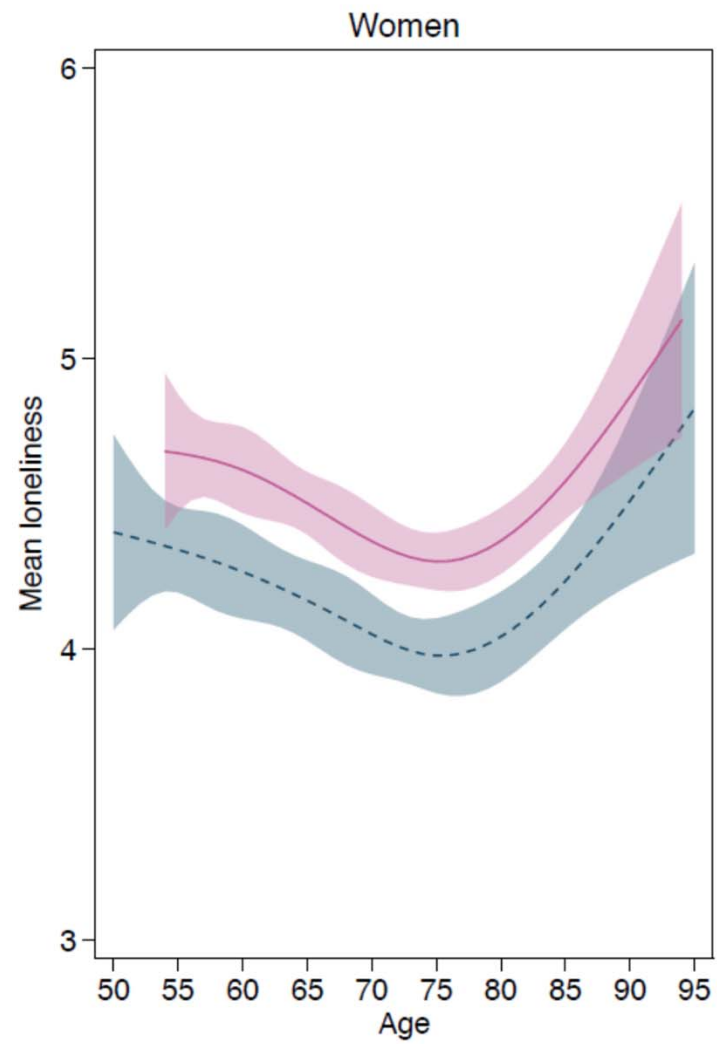
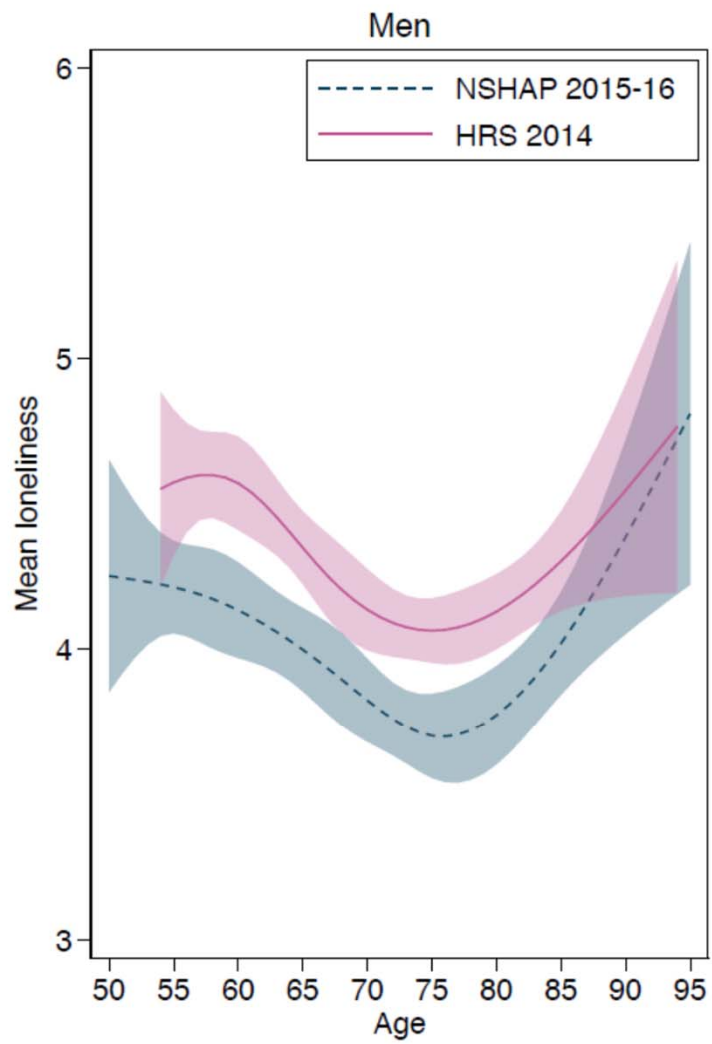
VCU

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A photograph of an elderly person with white hair, seen from behind, sitting on a blue plastic chair. They are on a pier or boardwalk with several other identical chairs. The background shows a calm body of water under a cloudy, overcast sky. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

35%

of Americans over 45
are chronically lonely



source: Hawkey et al., 2019

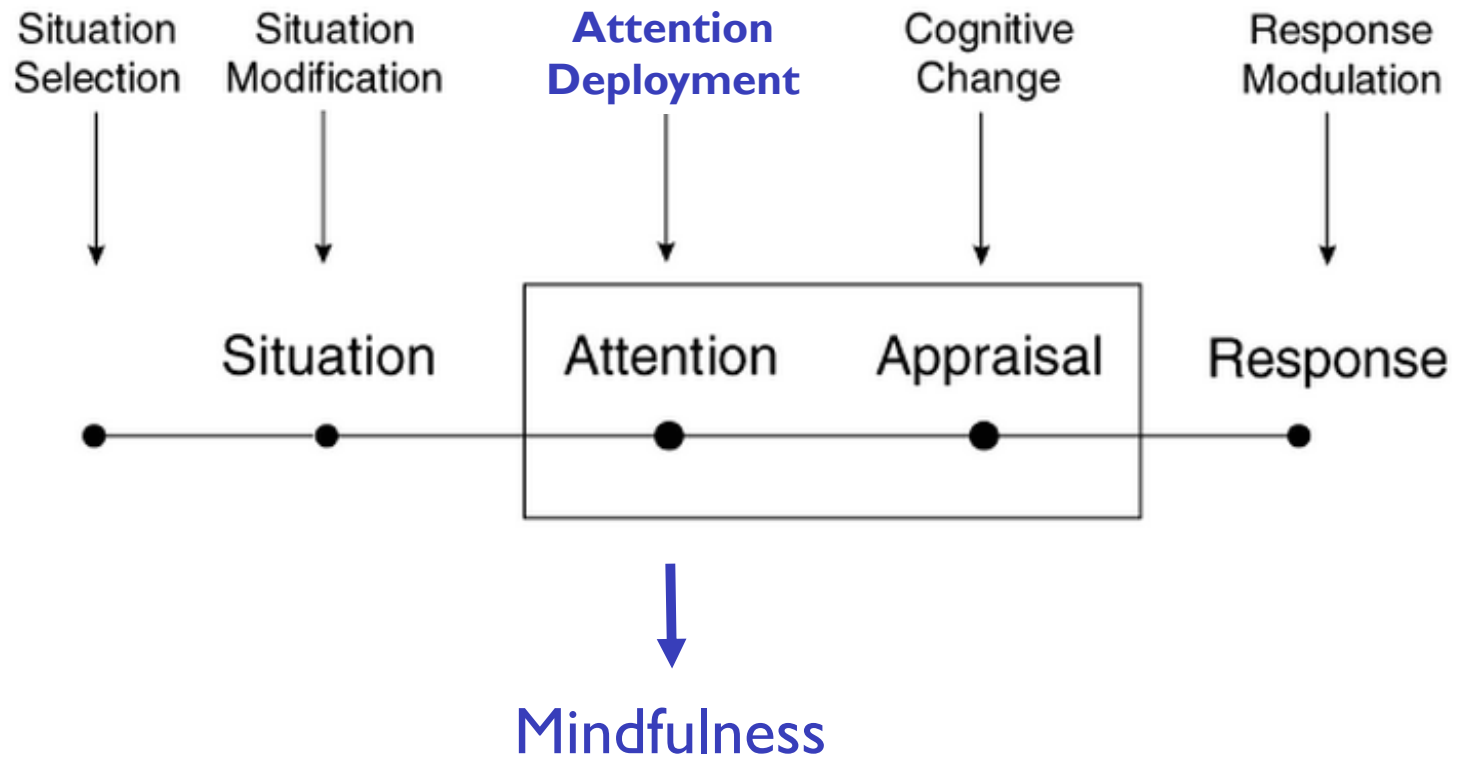
feeling alone – **loneliness** – and being alone – **lack of social ties** – are among the most robust known risk factors for poor health and accelerated mortality

“...loneliness interventions to date have not attained the degree of efficacy achieved by interventions targeting other social and behavioral outcomes”

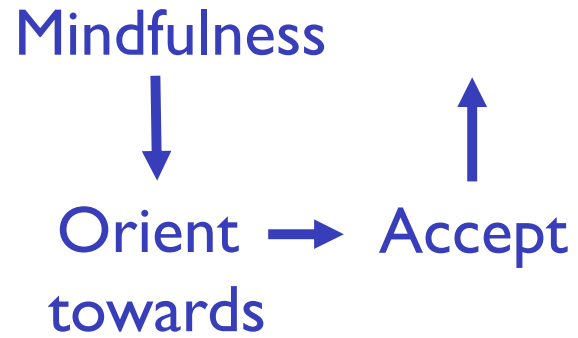
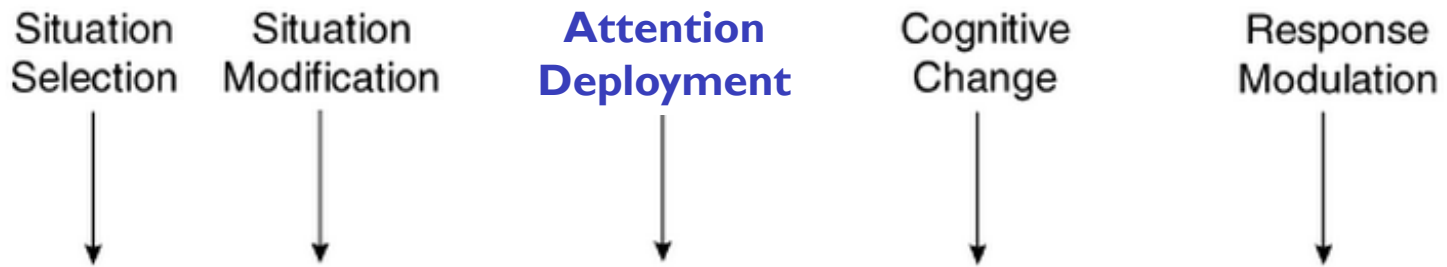
Masi, Chen, Hawkley, & Cacioppo (2011)

A group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are shown in profile, looking down with their eyes closed. They appear to be in a state of focused attention or meditation. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light. The overall mood is calm and serene.

mindfulness
training



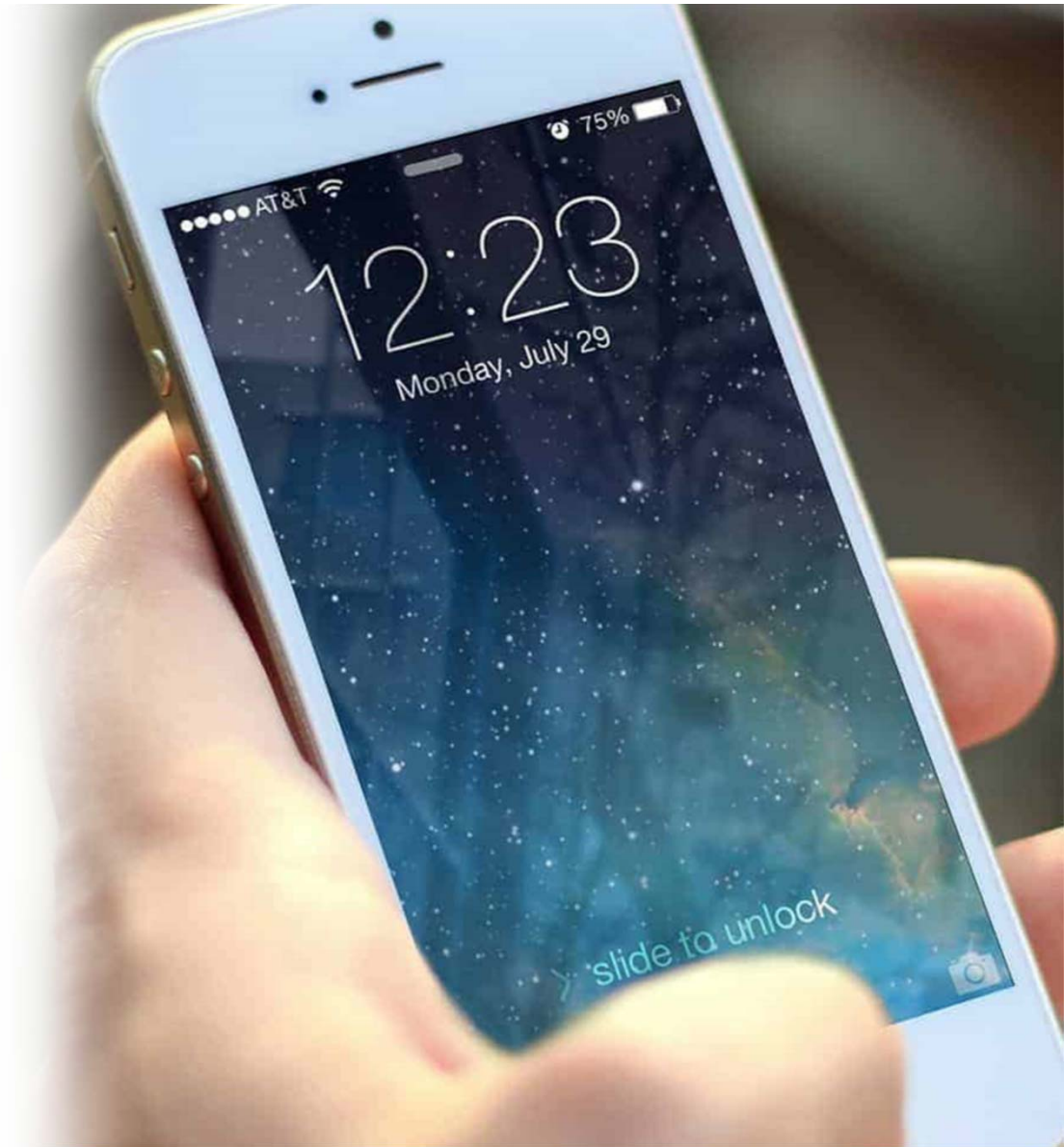
adapted from: Gross & Thompson, 2007

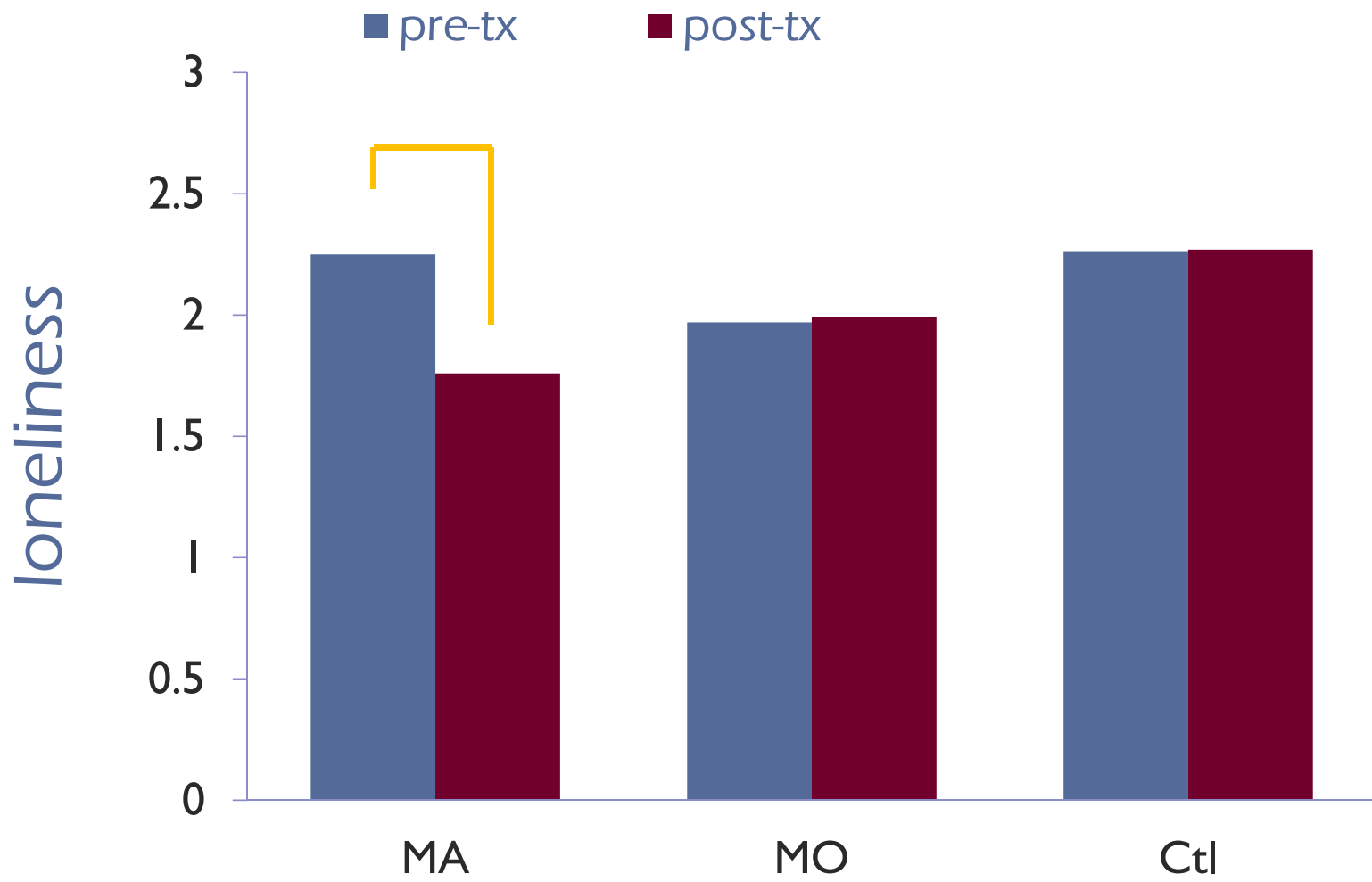


adapted from: Gross & Thompson, 2007

acceptance as **equanimity** with feelings of loneliness or social disconnect, thereby reducing social threat and obstacles that hinder social engagement

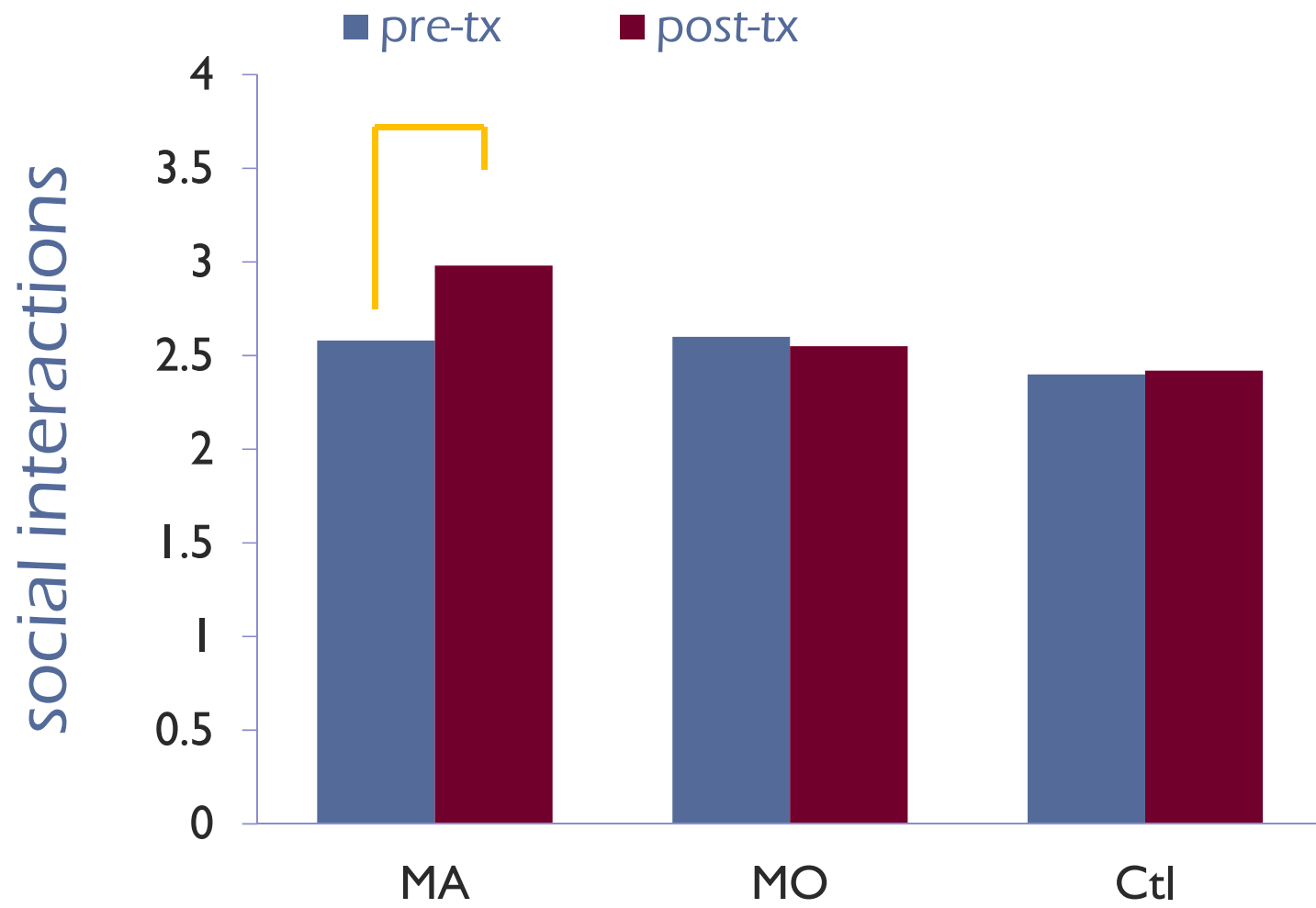
smartphone-
based
mindfulness
training





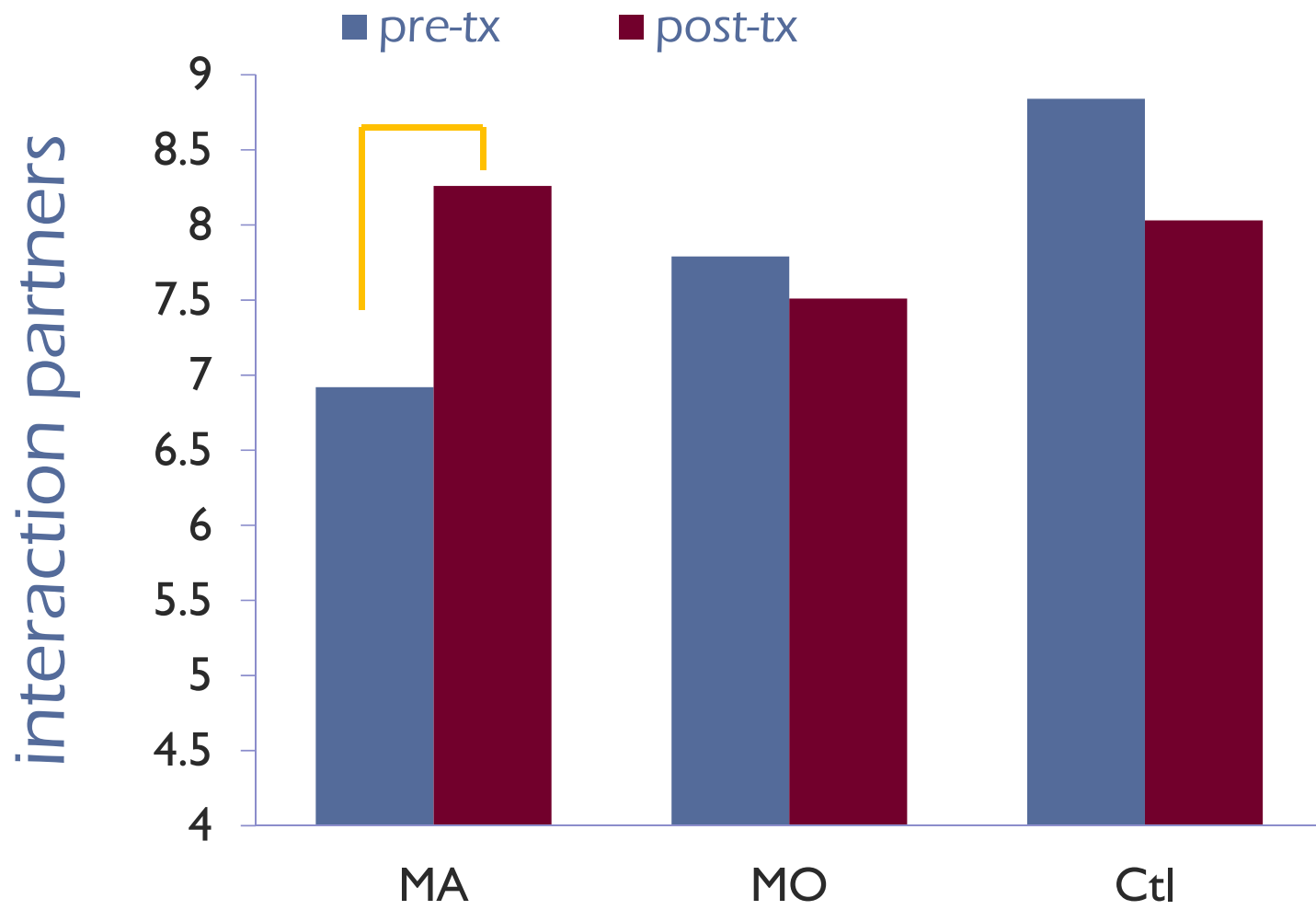
training

source: Lindsey et al., 2019



training

source: Lindsey et al., 2019



training

source: Lindsey et al., 2019

awareness of social cues and emotional reactions to them (**monitoring/orienting**) while adopting a receptive, nonreactive attitude (**acceptance**) may aid in regulating emotions, thereby reducing social threat perceptions

monitoring the emotional discomfort of loneliness while maintaining an accepting attitude may allow lonely feelings to dissipate.... social distress is reduced, encouraging more **social engagement**

sustainability of effects

need to **target** the lonely, socially isolated

technology challenges

National Center for
Complementary and
Integrative Health

Mind and Life Institute

1440 Foundation

Yoga Science Foundation

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