

Reflection Rounds

Intellectual Output 4

National Report

United Kingdom

Pilot 1

Prepared by Inova Consultancy
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1. Introduction

The Mindful Managers project is formed of four partners: Inova Consultancy in the UK; CARDET in Cyprus; VAMK in Finland; and Obelisk in Belgium. The aim of the project is to support public sector managers by providing them with mindful techniques which can be used to tackle stress and burnout. The project develops skills and competences to proactively and positively manage mental wellbeing and build resilience at work. The project utilises an e-learning tool, a training programme and Reflection Rounds in order to achieve these aims.

This report outlines the effectiveness of the first piloting of the Mindful Managers Reflection Rounds in the UK.

The three Reflection Rounds sessions took place in January and February 2020. The Reflection Rounds were divided into 3 sessions which lasted for approximately 3 hours and were held on Monday mornings as this suited the participants. Every session took place at Inova Consultancy in Sheffield. The location was suitable for the training as it is located in the city centre and is well connected via public transport.

The Reflection Rounds were facilitated by Val Boulding, who is an International Project Manager and Trainer at Inova. Val has extensive experience in Community Development, Sustainable Communities and Diversity Training. The participants had already worked with Val during the training programme, and therefore they were comfortable with her.

1.1. Overview of the Mindful Managers Reflection Rounds

The Mentoring Circles™ methodology was developed by Inova in 2001. These Circles help individuals through periods of personal reflection and self-development by utilising skilled facilitation, action learning techniques, coaching and mentoring in a group setting. This methodology has been adapted into Reflection Rounds for the Mindful Managers project. The Reflection Rounds focus on public sector management in order to provide managers with mindful techniques which tackle stress and burnout. Action learning is utilised by learners to present their issues of working in the public sector and the other participants offer peer support. Over the duration of the course, the participants can work through their issues of working in the public sector with the support of other team members. Participants are given 20-30 minutes (this depends on the size of the group) at each session to discuss their issue followed by group input on possible solutions. Time was allocated during each session for reflection, goal setting and personal action planning. By encouraging development of self-reflection and self-belief, the individual is helped to find the next steps forward in focusing on their mental wellbeing.

The Mindful Managers consortium felt that this methodology would pair with the Training Programme to make an innovative course. The Reflection Rounds have built on the knowledge shared during the training sessions. Moreover, they have enabled public sector managers to reflect on their problems, issues, opportunities and challenges with others going through similar experiences and supporting them to reflect on wellbeing at work.

1.2. Recruitment

For pilot 1 in the UK, the Reflection Rounds were promoted during the training programme. Due to the successful recruitment for the training programme, there was no need for additional recruitment.

Below are some of the recruitment materials from the training programme which also proved beneficial for the Reflection Rounds.

Be a Mindful Manager!

Start: Monday 25 November 2019 09:30

End: Monday 16 December 2019 12:30

Location: Quaker Meeting House 10 Saint James' Street Sheffield S1 2EW

Registration is now open for four FREE coaching sessions which focus on mindful management in the public sector workplace. You will be provided with a holistic and extensive training package. This mindful approach will help you develop new tools when managing a busy stressful workplace. You will learn about new habits to ensure a good work-life balance. You will cascade this learning to your team to enrich performance and productivity.

[Register >](#)



2. Overview of Participants

Four participants were recruited directly from the Mindful Managers training sessions and two of the members were new to the project and course. A summary of background data from each participant can be seen in Table 1.

Participant	Background
1	An employee of Sheffield City Council. She was eager to pass on this training to others in the council.
2	She is currently unemployed, but she is preparing to apply for jobs in the public sector and she wanted to acquire some training first.
3	She is currently unemployed, but she is preparing to apply for jobs in the public sector and she wanted to acquire some training first.
4	She is currently unemployed, but she is preparing to apply for jobs in the public sector and she wanted to acquire some training first.
5	A manager at Sheffield Hallam University. She was eager to use mindfulness in the workplace.
6	She is currently unemployed, but she is preparing to apply for jobs in the public sector and she wanted to acquire some training first.

3. Piloting Reflection Rounds in the UK

Table 2. Sessions overview

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Date	13/01/20	20/01/20	27/01/20
Number of participants	5	3	3

Due to some of the participants having busy schedules and working full time, it was decided that a half-day session, held from 09.30 – 12.30, suited participants' needs the best. In addition, the facilitator was available at the end of the session to cater to any additional needs. The first piloting of the Mindful Managers Reflection Rounds was attended by a total of 6 participants in the UK. The sessions mostly focused on personal discussions of mindfulness and stress in the workplace. In addition, the facilitator used some PowerPoint presentations alongside

worksheets and activities. Interactive and engaging sessions were facilitated in order to ensure that the participants were comfortable discussing mindfulness in the workplace and sharing their own experiences on the topic.

3.1. First Session

Before commencing the first Reflection Rounds session, all participants completed a soft skills evaluation (Annex 8), which tracked their progression over the duration of the course. In addition, they all signed the attendance sheet and programme agreement forms

As there was a four week break between the training and the Reflection Rounds, Val started the first session with a catch up. This served as a good icebreaker and refresher of the topic. The group then created a Group Agreement, which ensured that learners felt safe and secure with issues such as confidentiality. Following on from that, Val introduced the concept of mind mapping and exhibited some examples. The group were encouraged to create mind maps of their own which related to their personal professional issues; these mind maps formed the basis for the group discussions.

The main content of the Reflection Rounds were the discussions on specific issues relating to public sector management; these issues were identified by each of the participants. Peer support was offered as part of these discussions and suggestions were made for addressing their concerns relating to mindful management. The purpose was not to tell others what they must do, but to support them to come to their own conclusions relating to their personal issues. Following on from the group discussions, each participant set themselves targets which they worked on before the next Reflection Round.

At the end of the session, all participants completed a session evaluation form (Annex 4).

3.2. Second Session

The facilitator completed all administrative tasks before commencing with the session (Annex 2). The participants were asked to revisit their issues from the previous session in order to assess whether there had been any progress or escalation over the week. This enabled the group to track their personal progression and ensure that they were able to meet their goals. Following on from the catch up, each member was provided with time to introduce a new issue relating to public sector management. Peer support was offered from all the other participants and they were encouraged to set personal goals to improve their situation. The facilitator used a PowerPoint to introduce the topic of “Thinking skills for mental wellbeing for self and others”, but the focus was on these discussions.

At the end of the session, all participants completed a session evaluation form (Annex 5).

3.3. Third Session

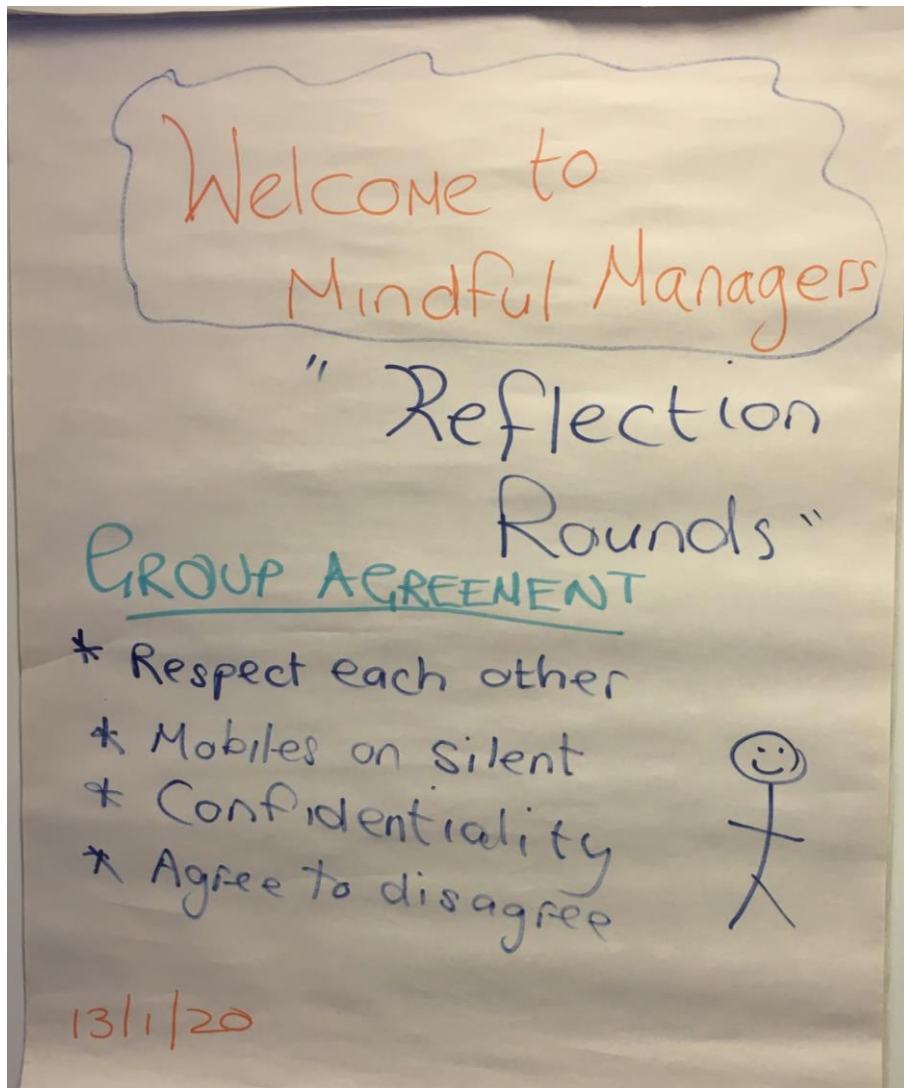
Before commencing with the session, the facilitator completed all administrative tasks (Annex 3). Each participant revisited their issues from the previous week and highlighted any progress or escalation. Afterwards, each member was provided with time to introduce a new issue relating to public sector management. Peer support was offered from all the other participants and they were encouraged to set personal goals to improve their situation. As well as discussing their personal issues, the group completed an exercise on Covey's circle of influence.

Over the three weeks, all the participants were provided with the opportunity to share their issues relating to management and working in the public sector. In addition, the group supported one another on their journey to resolving their concerns relating to Mindful Management.

As this was the final session, the participants completed the post course soft skills evaluation (Annex 9). This highlighted the progression they had made over the duration of the programme.

At the end of the session, all participants completed a session evaluation form (Annex 6). As this was the final training session, all participants completed an additional evaluation form at the end to assess the effectiveness of the training programme as a whole (Annex 7). The evaluations were positive, as can be seen below.

3.4. Photographs of Reflection Rounds



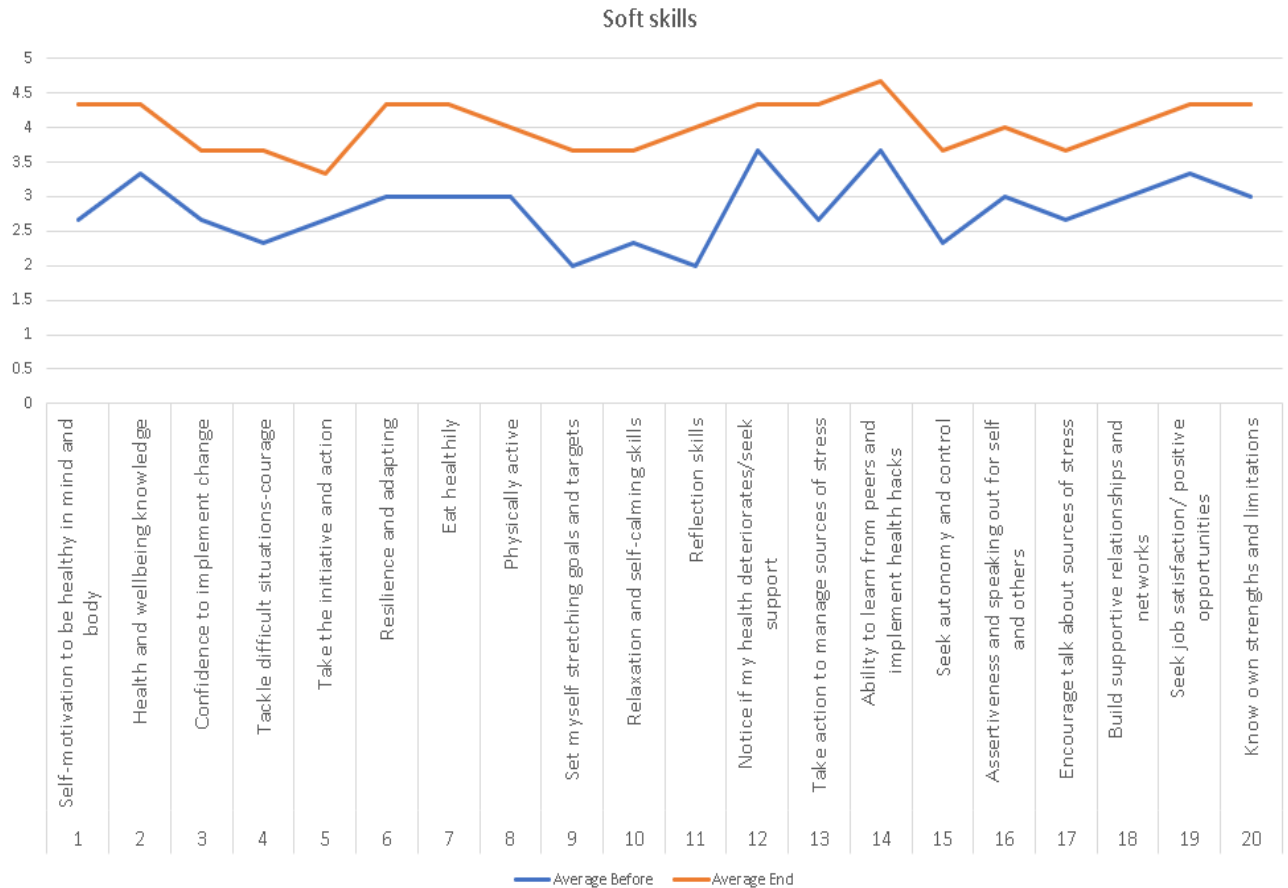


4. Impact of the Reflection Rounds

Evaluation forms were used in order to assess the Reflection Rounds. Session evaluation forms were completed by all participants at the end of each session (Annex 4 - 6). These forms enabled the facilitators to analyse the participants' opinions about the training and ensure that future sessions met their needs. Participants were asked about their expectations of the session, what they learnt and anything they would have changed about the session. These forms will provide the basis for the analysis of the impact of the Reflection Rounds below. An additional final session evaluation was completed after the last session.

4.1. Soft Skills Development

The Reflection Rounds participants completed the soft skills evaluations at the beginning of the first session (Annex 8) and at the end of the final session (Annex 9). These evaluations quantitatively analysed the soft-skill development of each of the participants. Through these evaluations, the participants and facilitators could better understand where the participants had developed their soft-skills and the areas where they were feeling less confident about their ability. An average of the participants' results in the UK are shown below.



Participants made significant improvements regarding their soft skills throughout the programme. The participants rated themselves as either improving or staying the same in the soft skills. On average, none of the soft skills decreased over the course of the programme; therefore, the participants clearly strengthened their skills over the duration of the Reflection Rounds.

Some of the soft-skill improvements were only minor; however, this shows impressive progress in just two weeks. Below is the average soft-skills rating of the three participants who completed the soft skills evaluation forms.

Skills and Attributes		Average		Difference
		Before	End	
1	Self-motivation to be healthy in mind and body	2.666667	4.333333	1.67
2	Health and wellbeing knowledge	3.333333	4.333333	1
3	Confidence to implement change	2.666667	3.666667	1
4	Tackle difficult situations-courage	2.333333	3.666667	1.33
5	Take the initiative and action	2.666667	3.333333	0.67
6	Resilience and adapting	3	4.333333	1.33
7	Eat healthily	3	4.333333	1.33
8	Physically active	3	4	1
9	Set myself stretching goals and targets	2	3.666667	1.67
10	Relaxation and self-calming skills	2.333333	3.666667	1.33
11	Reflection skills	2	4	2
12	Notice if my health deteriorates/seek support	3.666667	4.333333	0.67
13	Take action to manage sources of stress	2.666667	4.333333	1.67
14	Ability to learn from peers and implement health hacks	3.666667	4.666667	1
15	Seek autonomy and control	2.333333	3.666667	1.33
16	Assertiveness and speaking out for self and others	3	4	1
17	Encourage talk about sources of stress	2.666667	3.666667	1
18	Build supportive relationships and networks	3	4	1
19	Seek job satisfaction/ positive opportunities	3.333333	4.333333	1
20	Know own strengths and limitations	3	4.333333	1.33

4.2. Participants' testimonials

What were your expectations for today's session?

- "Learn some new knowledge."
- "Specific way about wellbeing."
- "Talking about actual experiences and talking about these as a group. Being given information."

Has today fulfilled these expectations?

- "Yes, we learnt in detail, and draw own mindmaps, had a good exercise and interaction."

What are the three things you have learned about yourself today?

- "Keep being positive. Change difficult things to challenges. Use "I" statement believe in myself."

- “That we should not assume. Use Oskar solutions focused coaching questioning model. Try and help in a positive way.”
- “Disorienting dilemma. Circle of influence. Creating our own circle of influence.”

What was the most worthwhile thing about your group session today?

- “Think a positive way and stay with positive persons.”
- “Case studies and different approaches.”
- “Seeing things from other people’s point of view and how you can build a support network.”

Is there anything you would like to have changed about the session or that you did not like?

- “At the moment I am benefiting.”
- “No, everything was great.”

Any other comments?

- “We love this course.”
- “Very interesting, innovative.”

As can be seen from the testimonials, the participants were generally satisfied with the content and quality of the Reflection Rounds. Their comments will be taken into consideration for the second pilots.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

A final outcomes evaluation form was completed by participants at the end of the final session. 3 participants completed the evaluation form at this stage (see Annex 7). The final evaluation form included questions about actions taken as a result of attending the Reflection Rounds and the development of soft skills during the programme. The responses from the first section of this form enable an analysis of the quantifiable impact of the Reflection Rounds on the participants.

The feedback from the participants was relatively positive and they were eager to participate in similar training programmes. In addition, one member stated that a full day session would be beneficial.

The Mindful Managers Reflection Rounds were a success, as can be seen from the facilitator’s comments and the participants’ evaluations. The sessions brought together a diverse group of

public sector managers and those seeking work in the public sector in order to create a space where they could delve into Mindful Management. This is a relatively underexplored area and the participants were grateful for the opportunity to discuss the topic. Over the course of the training, the participants were able to discuss complex issues and formulate and set goals to meet each week. In addition, many of the participants were eager to filter the content from the Mindful Managers Training Programme and Reflection Rounds amongst their contacts and colleagues.

5.1. Facilitator's Comments

The Mindful Managers Reflection Rounds were deemed to be a success by the participants, as can be seen on the evaluation forms. The participants formed a strong and supportive group, which was the perfect environment for the sessions. Each member shared their experiences of working in the public sector and managing a team. Over the course of the three weeks they touched on some complex and confusing topics and they worked well to support one another and to progress personally.

The Circles methodology, which was introduced during the sessions, was interesting and the participants were eager to learn about it and utilise it in their professional and personal life.

6. Annexes

In separate documents:

1. Attendance list session 1
2. Attendance list session 2
3. Attendance list session 3
4. Evaluation forms session 1
5. Evaluation forms session 2
6. Evaluation forms session 3
7. Final evaluation forms
8. Pre soft-skills evaluation forms
9. Post soft-skills evaluation forms