

Mindfulness Classes Transform the Experiences of Postpartum Women

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Background

The postpartum period can be a challenging experience for many women as they adjust to the physical and social changes of new motherhood.

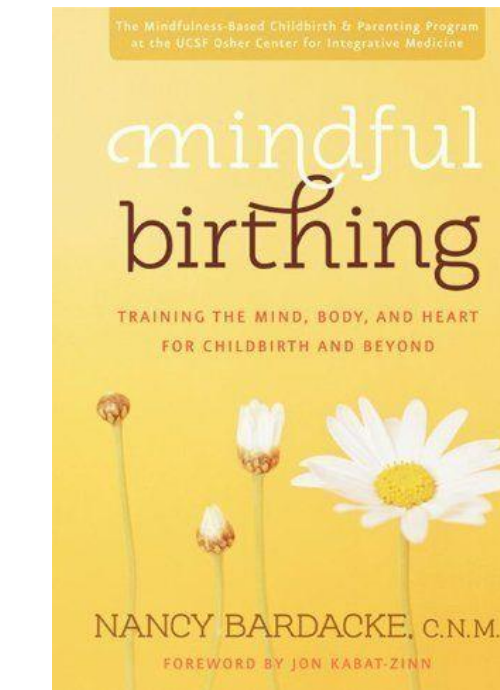


Breastfeeding is one of the postpartum tasks that may be more difficult than expected. Additionally, many women may feel that their postpartum body fails to meet an idealized image, leading to body dissatisfaction.



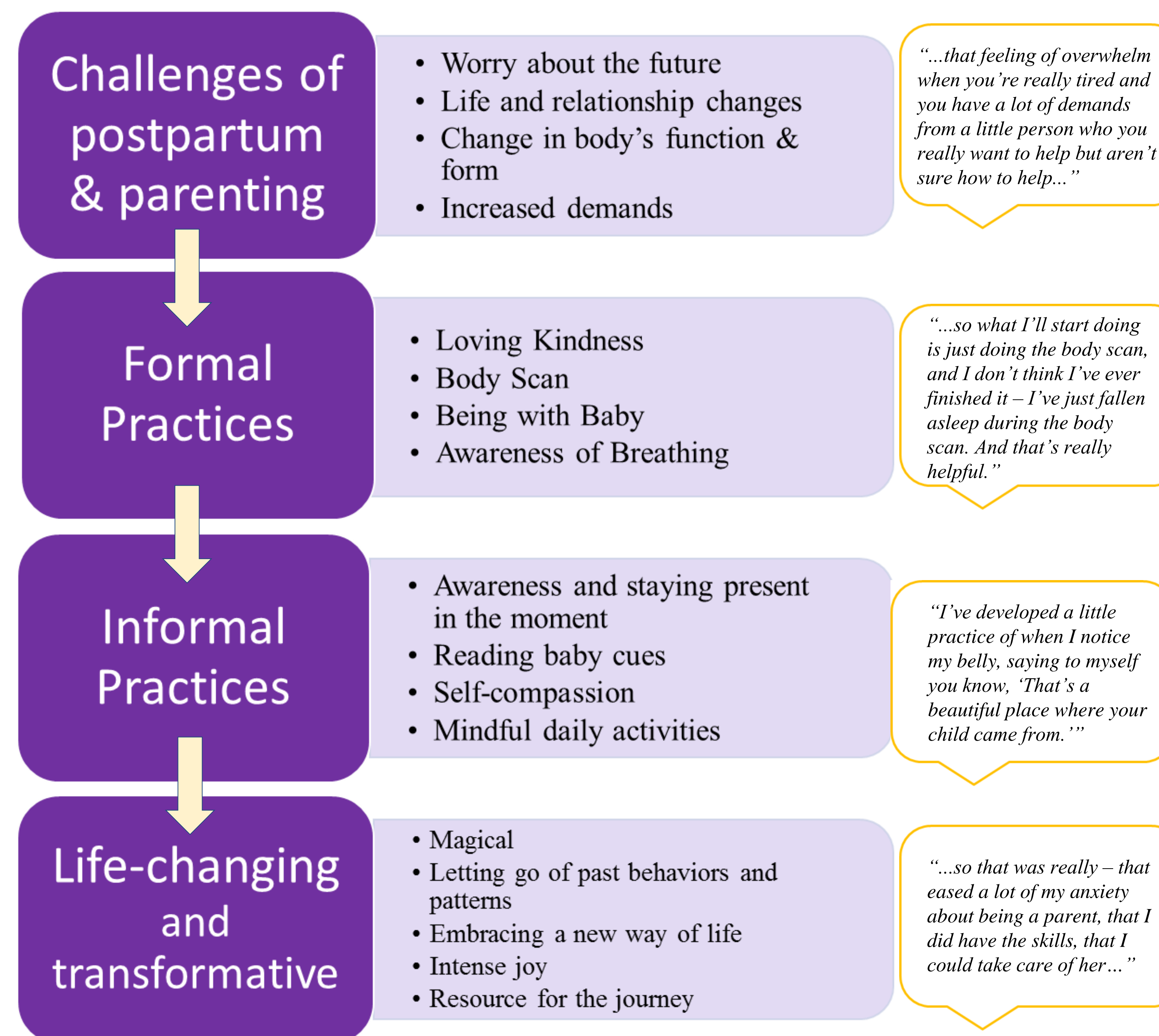
Mindfulness-based interventions have been developed for stress reduction in a variety of health contexts, including pregnancy. Such interventions may provide strategies for new mothers to handle the challenges of breastfeeding the infant and to improve their body image. The purpose of this study is to explore the postpartum experience of participants in a mindfulness based childbirth and parenting class (MBCP).

Mindfulness: The awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.



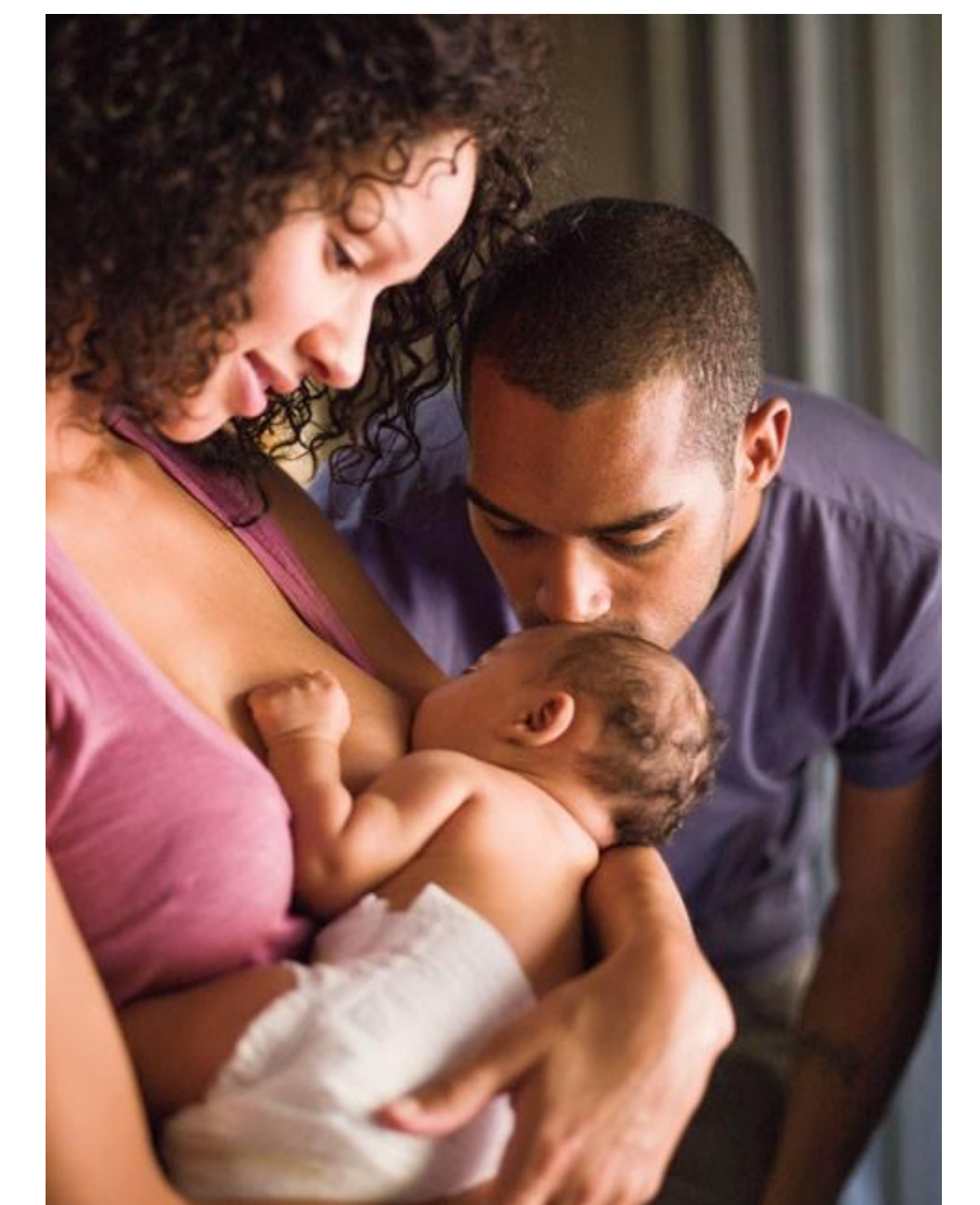
Methods

Eleven women who participated in a ten week Mindfulness for Childbirth and Parenting course during pregnancy were interviewed within the first year postpartum to discuss their experiences. Data analysis included a coding and categorization process as described by Granaheim (2004). The results of this process are visualized below.



Limitations

This is a preliminary study, and is limited by the relative homogeneity of race, age, and education among participants (most were white, older than 30, and college educated). Future studies should include a wider variety of participants.



Conclusions

Through the analysis, it was found that mindfulness does have an impact on women's postpartum experiences. Through a variety of formal and informal mindfulness practices, women expressed feelings of positive transformation and life-change.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the Office of Nursing Research and the Center for Child and Family wellbeing for their financial support, Becca Calhoun for providing the list of participants and Dr. Ira Kantrowitz-Gordon for his guidance on this project.

**Photos are not of actual participants*