

# Integrated Meditation Program 2024 – Evaluation Results Summary

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# Introduction

This report summarizes the results of three quizzes and a questionnaire completed by participants of the inaugural cohort of the Integrated Mindfulness Program (IMP), running from January – July 2024.

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to understand the impact of the program on participants' psychological well-being and to gather insights that can inform future improvements to the program. This evaluation focuses on outcomes – real and perceived changes in key factors amongst participants. It does not include an assessment of program operations, format, or administration.

## Understanding Key Terms

- **Quantitative Data:** Data that is numerical and can be measured. In this report, quantitative data comes from the scores on the ECR-R, FFMQ, and Schema questionnaires.
- **Statistical Significance:** This means that the results we observed are likely not due to chance. When we say something is statistically significant, it means there's strong evidence that the change or difference we see is real. For this study, a p-value of less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicates statistical significance, at a 95% confidence interval.
- **Paired T-Test:** This is a statistical test that compares two sets of results from the same group of people, such as before and after a program. It helps us determine if there is a significant change over time.
- **Qualitative Data:** Data that is descriptive and explores participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In this report, qualitative data is gathered from participants' written responses about their experiences in the program.

## Methods

### Participants

We included 11 participants in this study who completed both the incoming (before the program) and outgoing (after the program) questionnaires. Nine of these participants also provided written responses to additional questions about their experiences.

### Assessments

1. **ECR-R (Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised):** This quiz measures attachment styles, specifically how anxious or avoidant people feel in their relationships. This quiz is made of two sets of questions (resulting in two sub-

scores), one to measure avoidant attachment and one to measure anxious attachment.

2. **FFMQ (Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire):** This quiz measures mindfulness. It has five different parts (sub-scores) that look at various aspects of mindfulness: awareness, describing, nonjudging, nonreactivity, and observing. These sub-scores can also be averaged to provide a total score for the FFMQ.
3. **Schema Questionnaire:** This quiz measures negative thoughts and beliefs people might have about themselves and the world. The Schema is comprised of twenty different parts (sub-scores) that investigate specific thoughts and beliefs: abandonment, approval-seeking, defectiveness, dependence, emotional constriction, emotional deprivation, enmeshment, entitlement, failure, fear of losing control, insufficient self-control, mistrust, negativity, self-punitiveness, punitiveness to others, self-sacrifice, social isolation, subjugation, unrelenting standards, and vulnerability to harm.

## Procedure

Participants completed the ECR-R, FFMQ, and Schema questionnaires at two points: before starting the IMP and after completing the program. The same group of participants was used for both sets of quizzes to allow for direct comparison of pre-program and post-program results.

## Data Analysis

Paired t-tests were used to compare the scores from the quizzes before and after the program. This statistical method helps determine if there are significant changes in the participants' scores.

In addition to the quizzes, participants answered written questions about their experiences in the program. These responses were reviewed to identify common themes across participant's written answers.

## Results

### Quantitative Results

This section presents the quantitative findings from the ECR-R, FFMQ, and Schema questionnaires, comparing participants' scores before and after participating in the Integrated Mindfulness Program (IMP).

Graphical analysis and results are summarized in the Appendix.

## ECR-R (Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised)

### 1. **Anxious Attachment:**

- There were no statistically significant differences in anxious attachment scores before and after the program.

### 2. **Avoidant Attachment:**

- Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences in avoidant attachment scores pre- and post-program.

**Observation:** Post-program scores were slightly higher for both anxious and avoidant attachment, indicating heightened levels of anxious and avoidant attachment – however the increase was not great enough to be statistically significant. This trend is opposite to the expected result following completion of the IMP (we would hypothesize that participants would exhibit more secure attachment, rather than less). This small increase could be due to external factors not measured in this study – things like personal life events, enrolment in other programs, or changes in participants' social environment.

## FFMQ (Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire)

### 1. **Total Mindfulness Scores:**

- There was a statistically significant improvement in overall mindfulness scores ( $p = 0.032$ ).

### 2. **Nonreactivity Sub-Scores:**

- Scores for nonreactivity (not reacting immediately to thoughts and feelings) showed significant improvement ( $p = 0.025$ ).

### 3. **Awareness Sub-Scores:**

- Awareness of thoughts and feelings showed an almost significant improvement ( $p = 0.0816$ ).

**Observation:** All sub-scores showed an increase of some degree, although only the above reached statistical significance. This suggests an overall enhancement in mindfulness among participants.

## Schema Questionnaire

### 1. **Vulnerability to Harm:**

- Scores for vulnerability to harm significantly improved ( $p = 0.0026$ ).

### 2. **Negativity:**

- Scores for negativity showed significant improvement ( $p = 0.041$ ).

### 3. **Unrelenting Standards:**

- Scores for unrelenting standards showed an almost significant improvement ( $p = 0.07$ ).

### 4. **Failure:**

- Scores for failure showed an almost significant improvement ( $p = 0.083$ ).

**Observation:** There was a general downward trend in scores post-program, indicating a reduction in negative thoughts and beliefs.

In summary, the quantitative analysis revealed significant improvements in mindfulness and reductions in certain negative schemas among participants. Although there were no significant changes in attachment styles, the overall trend suggests positive effects from the IMP.

## Qualitative Results

Nine participants completed the written questions, offering insights into their experiences and perceived changes resulting from the program. These responses were analyzed to identify common themes and highlight the overall impact of the program on participants' lives.

### Key Themes from Written Responses

#### 1. **Self-Relationship:**

- **Changes Reported:** 89% (8 out of 9) of participants reported changes in their relationship with themselves (answered *Yes* to “Do you think that your relationship with yourself has changed over the last six months (since the beginning of the IMP)?”).
- **Common Themes:**
  - **Self-Compassion:** Participants noted increased self-compassion, finding themselves kinder and more accepting of their own experiences. Examples included becoming calmer during meditation and being more loving toward themselves.
  - **Improved Listening:** Several participants mentioned an improved ability to listen to their inner selves while interacting with others, leading to more intimate and meaningful communication.

- **Confidence and Self-Awareness:** Participants reported increased confidence in their self-observations and a deeper awareness of their emotions and thoughts.
- **Emotional Resilience:** Many participants felt more capable of staying present with both difficult and joyful experiences, feeling less vulnerable to being overwhelmed by negative thoughts and behaviors.

## 2. Relationships with Others:

- **Changes Reported:** 100% (9 out of 9) of participants reported changes in their relationships with others (answered Yes to “Do you think that your relationships with others have changed over the last six months (since the beginning of the IMP)?”).
- **Common Themes:**
  - **Comfort and Confidence:** Participants felt more comfortable and confident in reaching out to others, taking the initiative to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones.
  - **Kindness and Compassion:** Participants noted becoming kinder and more compassionate in their interactions, less judgmental, and more understanding of others’ needs.
  - **Attunement and Connection:** Many experienced a stronger sense of attunement and connection in their relationships, feeling more seen and heard, and craving this deeper connection in all their interactions.
  - **Seeking Quality Relationships:** Participants expressed a desire to cultivate relationships where positive qualities like empathy and mutual support were present, and to distance themselves from relationships that were critical or insensitive to their needs.
  - **Boundaries and Self-Care:** There was an increased awareness of the importance of setting boundaries and prioritizing self-care in relationships.

## 3. Handling Strong Emotions:

- **Changes Reported:** 67% (6 out of 9) of participants reported changes in how they handle strong emotions (answered Yes to “Do you think that the ways you manage and respond to strong emotions have changed over the last six months (since the beginning of the IMP)?”).
- **Common Themes:**
  - **Tools and Support:** Participants valued the tools and support provided by the IMP, such as the Inner Parent Figure (IPF) and Safe Space practices, which helped them manage strong emotions effectively.

- **Openness and Curiosity:** Participants felt more open to experiencing their emotions, approaching them with curiosity and compassion rather than avoidance or suppression.
- **Increased Awareness and Resilience:** Many reported being quicker to recognize and address their emotions, staying present and resilient in the face of both positive and challenging experiences.

#### 4. Experiences with Meditation:

- **Changes Reported:** 78% (7 out of 9) of participants reported changes in their experiences with meditation and meditation retreats (answered Yes to “Has your experience or relationship with meditation and/or meditation retreats changed over the last six months (since the beginning of the IMP)?”).
- **Common Themes:**
  - **Calmness and Self-Compassion:** Participants experienced a calmer and more self-compassionate approach to meditation, feeling less judgmental and more accepting of their experiences.
  - **Integration of IPF and Supportive Practices:** Many integrated the IPF and other supportive practices into their meditation, finding these techniques valuable for maintaining presence and emotional balance.
  - **Emotional Processing and Integration:** Participants described processing strong emotions during meditation, leading to a sense of integration and healing from past trauma and grief.

#### 5. Overall Impact of the IMP:

- Participants were finally asked “What do you think is the most valuable or useful thing you have learned, practiced, or gained through your participation in the IMP?”
- **Common Themes:**
  - **Connection and Community:** One of the most valued aspects of the IMP was the sense of connection and community. Participants appreciated the opportunity to connect with peers, co-regulate, and support each other, enhancing their overall experience and growth.
  - **Stability and Self-Acceptance:** Participants reported gaining more stability and self-acceptance, trusting in themselves and the practices learned through the IMP.



## Key Findings

### Quantitative Results:

- There were significant improvements in overall mindfulness and certain schema scores, indicating that the IMP positively impacted participants' mindfulness and reduced some negative thought patterns.
- No significant changes were observed in attachment styles, with some unexpected increases in post-program scores, possibly due to external factors.

### Qualitative Results:

- Participants reported significant positive changes in their relationships with themselves and others, demonstrating increased self-compassion, emotional resilience, and better interpersonal connections.
- The community and peer support aspects of the IMP were highly valued, providing participants with a sense of belonging and mutual support.
- The integration of tools like the IPF and Safe Space practices were perceived to be instrumental in helping participants manage strong emotions and enhance their meditation practices.

## Notes on Interpretation

Without a control group, we must be cautious about attributing changes in participants' well-being directly to the IMP. However, we can still make several claims based on the observed outcomes:

- 1. Reported Improvements:** Participants reported improvements in their written answers, particularly in mindfulness, emotional resilience, and interpersonal relationships, suggesting the program may contribute positively to these areas.
- 2. Participant Feedback:** Qualitative feedback highlights that participants found the community and tools provided by the IMP valuable and supportive.
- 3. Trends in Data:** The quantitative data shows trends of improvement in specific areas, such as increased mindfulness and reduced negative schemas, which align with the program's goals.

We cannot definitively state that the IMP caused these changes, but the data and feedback suggest a positive association between participation in the program and the observed improvements. Further studies with a control group would be needed to make more definitive causal claims.

## Appendix: Graphs and Quantitative Interpretation

This appendix summarizes analysis for the Schema, ECR-R, and FFMQ quizzes undertaken as part of the evaluation of the Integrated Meditation Program, 2024 cohort.

Paired incoming and outgoing scores were available for 11 participants, and were compared using paired t tests when the assumption of normality was met, and Wilcoxon tests when it was not.

Initial investigation was carried out by examining box plots for pre- and post- scores for each sub-category of each questionnaire. A boxplot is a graph that gives a visual indication of how a data set's 25th percentile, 50th percentile, 75th percentile, minimum, maximum and outlier values are spread out and compare to each other.

### Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire

We hypothesize that scores on this questionnaire would be LOWER on the post questionnaire, after engagement in the program. I.E. After engaging in the IMP program, participants experienced less anxiety and/or less avoidance in their close relationships.

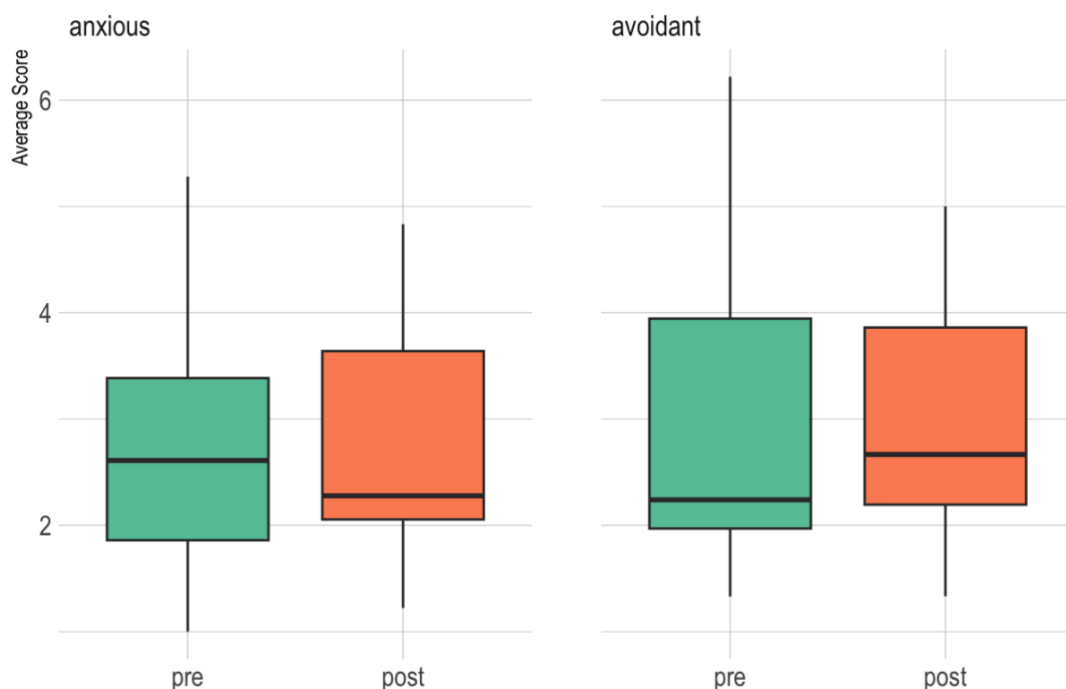


Figure 1. ECR-R pre and post scores, anxious and avoidant attachment

No significant differences pre-post in either the anxious or avoidant ECR scores.

## Five Factors of Mindfulness Questionnaire

We hypothesize that scores on this questionnaire would be HIGHER on the post questionnaire, after engagement in the program. I.E. After engaging in the IMP program, participants experienced more factors related to mindfulness.

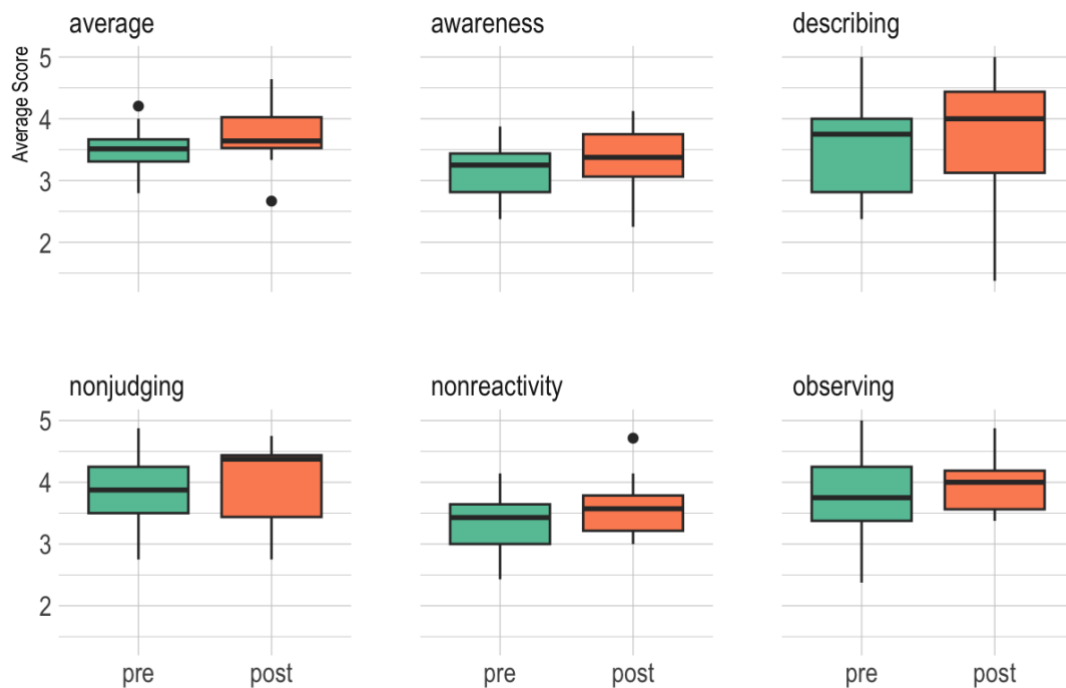


Figure 2. FFMQ scores pre and post, including average score and sub-scale scores

Significant difference pre-post in total average FFMQ scores ( $p = 0.032$ ), and nonreactivity ( $p=0.025$ ), almost significant difference in awareness ( $p=0.0816$ ).

## Schema Questionnaire

We hypothesize that scores on this questionnaire would be LOWER on the post questionnaire, after engagement in the program. I.E. After engaging in the IMP program,

participants experienced less phenomena associated with Schema factors (negativity, approval-seeking, etc).

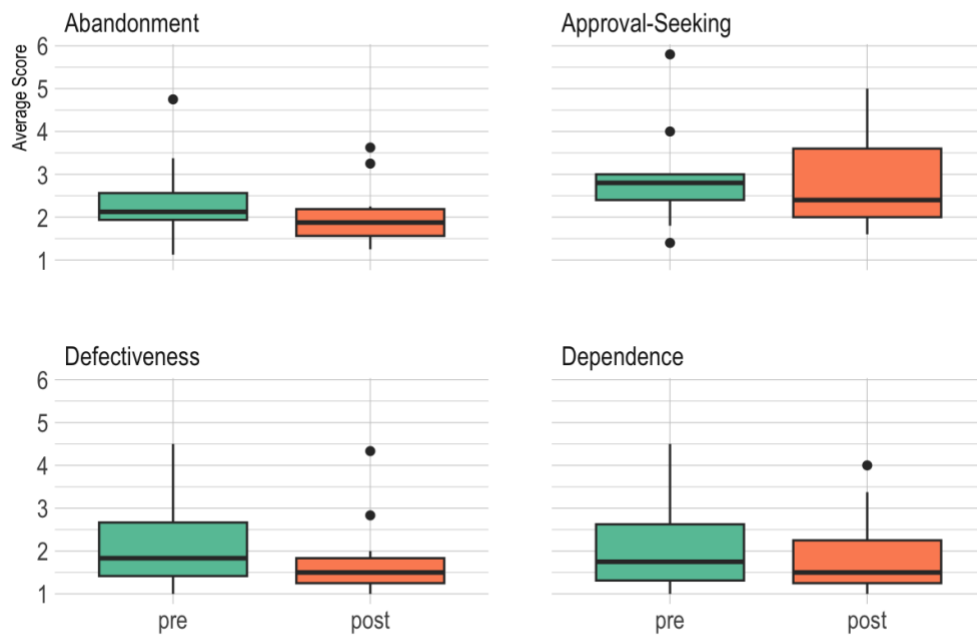


Figure 3. Schema Questionnaire scores pre and post by sub-scale, abandonment, approval-seeking, defectiveness, and dependence

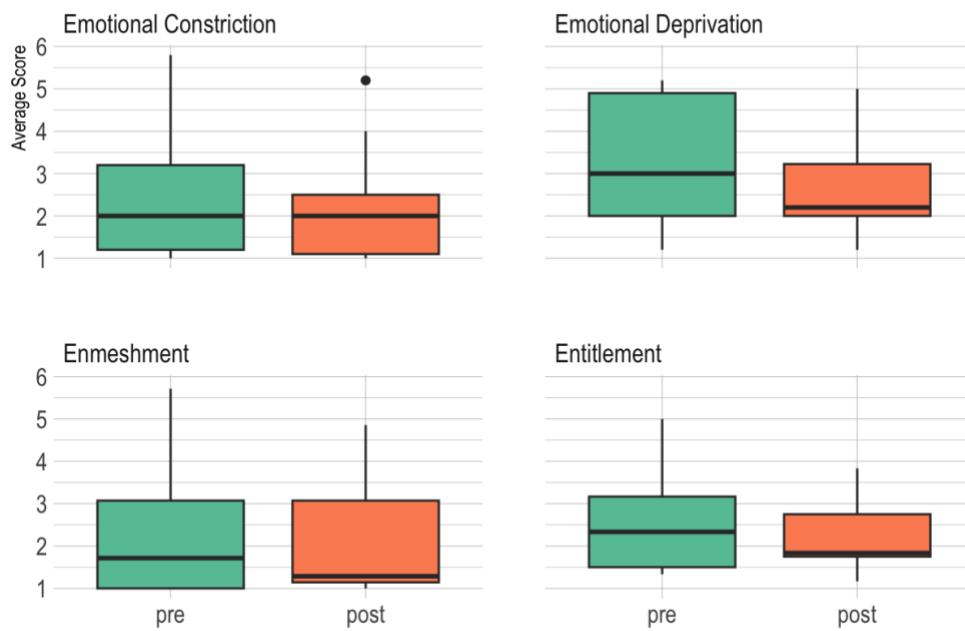


Figure 4. Schema Questionnaire scores pre and post by sub-scale, emotional constriction, emotional deprivation, enmeshment, and entitlement

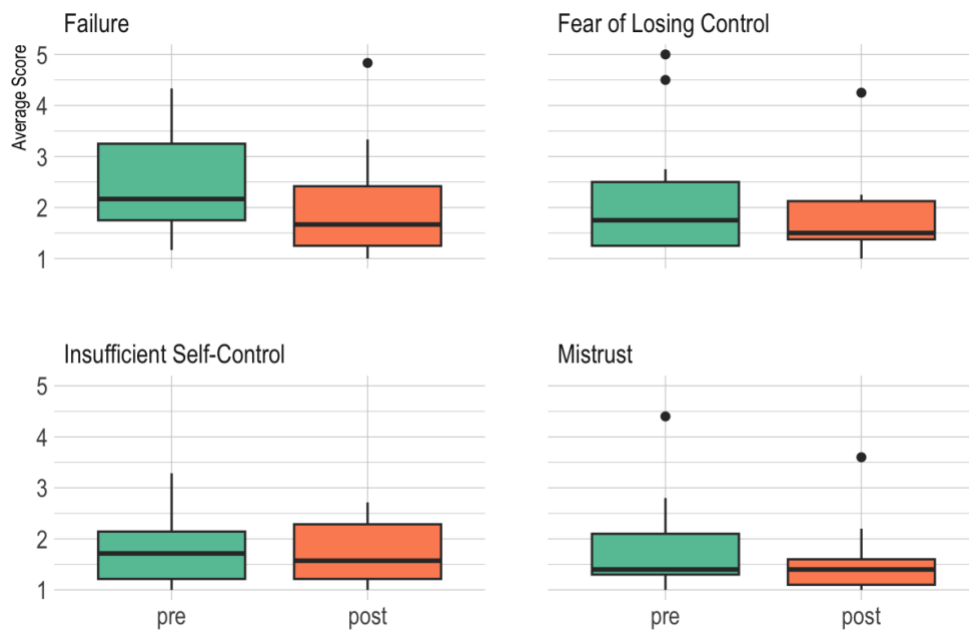


Figure 5. Schema Questionnaire scores pre and post by sub-scale, failure, fear of losing control, insufficient self-control, and mistrust

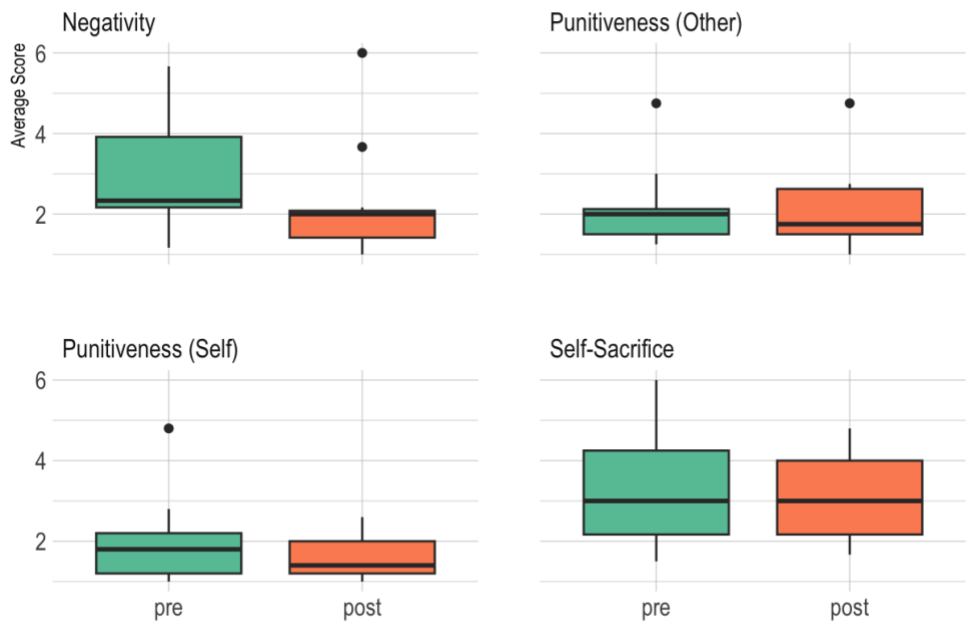


Figure 6. Schema Questionnaire scores pre and post by sub-scale, negativity, punitiveness to others, punitiveness to self, and self-sacrifice

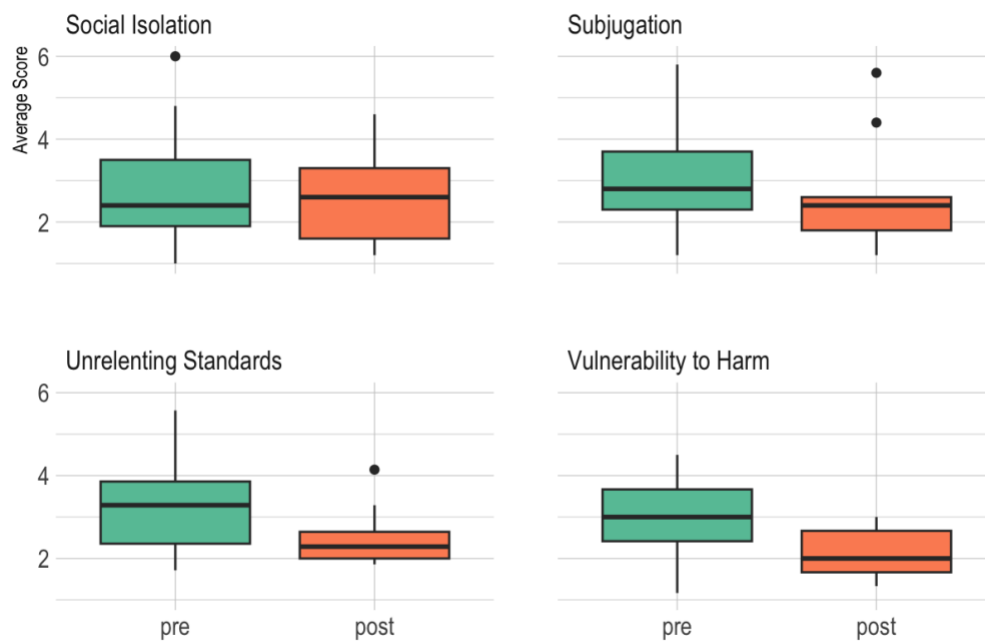


Figure 7. Schema Questionnaire scores pre and post by sub-scale, social isolation, subjugation, unrelenting standards, and vulnerability to harm.

Significant difference pre-post in vulnerability to harm ( $p = 0.0026$ ), negativity ( $p = 0.041$ ), and almost in unrelenting standards ( $p = 0.07$ ) and almost in failure ( $p = 0.083$ ).