

# Mantram Repetition to Improve Mental Health in Underserved Populations

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## BACKGROUND

There is a need for novel complementary therapies, especially in underserved populations where social disadvantage prevents access to care. (Williams DR, J Health Psychol. 1997;2:335–51).

Zumbro Valley Health Center (ZVHC) is a community behavioral health clinic serving the underserved population in Minnesota, USA.

Patients have a diagnosis of a mental health condition and/or a substance use disorder.

**Our patients reported using prayer, spirituality and music to improve mental health (Figure 1)** (Prasad K et al.

Use of Complementary and Integrative Medicine Among Low-Income Persons With Mental Health Disorders. Mayo Clin Proc Innov Qual Outcomes. 2024 Dec 13;9(1):100585).

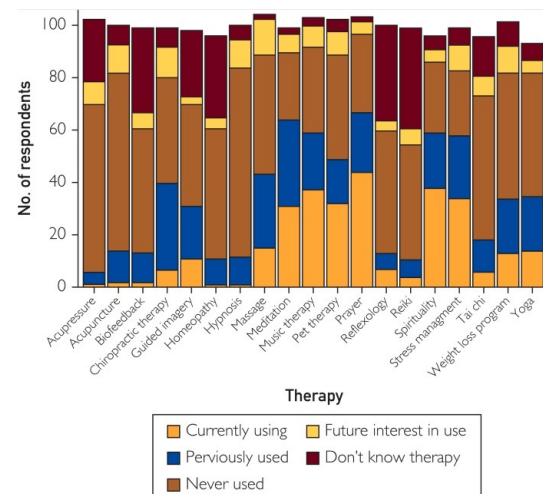
We introduced the Mantram Repetition Program (MRP), an individualized complementary health education strategy, that can be provided as a supplemental lifestyle intervention in an office-based setting (Oman, 2024).

MRP has been studied for over twenty years and is a simple, no cost, practical form of portable meditation that involves a mind-body-spiritual technique of mantram repetition (Figure 2, Hulett et al., 2022).

Patients are taught to silently repeat a self-selected mantram (a word or a phrase from a list, that has been repeated and sanctified over a sustained period within a group's traditional religious or spiritual practice). It can be practiced intermittently throughout the day and prior to sleeping. The practice involves intentionally slowing down thought processes through practicing one-pointed attention, thereby reducing mental stress.

**FIGURE 1**

Use and knowledge of Complementary and Integrative Medicine in Underserved Patients (from Prasad K et al. Use of Complementary and Integrative Medicine Among Low-Income Persons With Mental Health Disorders. Mayo Clin Proc Innov Qual Outcomes. 2024 Dec 13;9(1):100585).



## METHOD

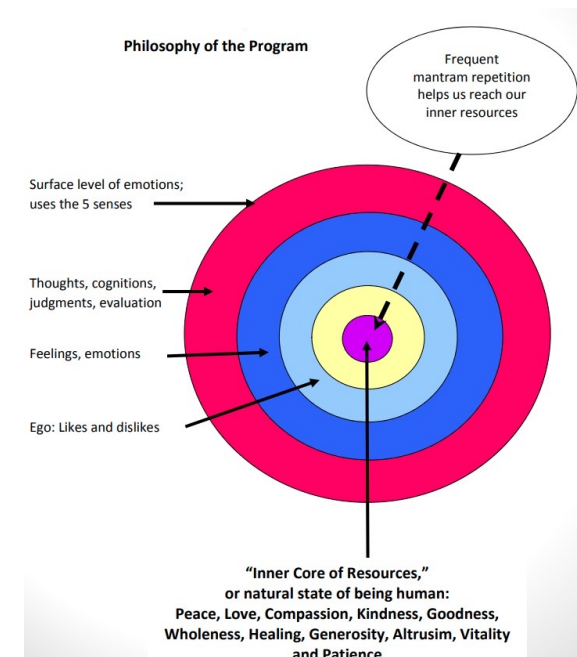
We report outcomes from a case (Figure 3,4), case series, and staff wellbeing (Submitted for publication; Figure 5).

MRP is an 8-week program (1 hour/week) or 1 on 1 sessions.

### OUTLINE OF 8 WEEK PROGRAM

- Class 1 Define and describe the characteristics of a “mantram”.
- Class 2 Identify ways to choose and use mantram repetition for training attention.
- Class 3 Describe the relationship between the stress response, mantram repetition and the “relaxation response”.
- Class 4 Describe at least two benefits of slowing down versus automatic pilot for stress reduction.
- Class 5 Describe at least two benefits of one-pointed attention versus multitasking for stress reduction.
- Class 6 Demonstrate how one-pointed attention and slowing down complement each other for making healthy choices.
- Class 7 List at least five strategies for making mantram repetition a part of your life.
- Class 8 Discuss applications of mantram repetition, one-pointed attention and slowing down for overall health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 2: PHILOSOPHY OF MANTRAM REPETITION PROGRAM**



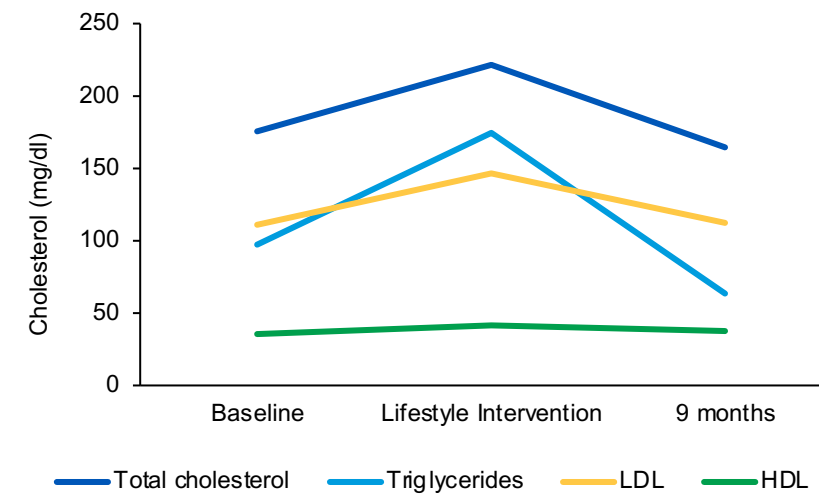
## RESULTS

### CASE REPORT OF MRP PRACTICE:

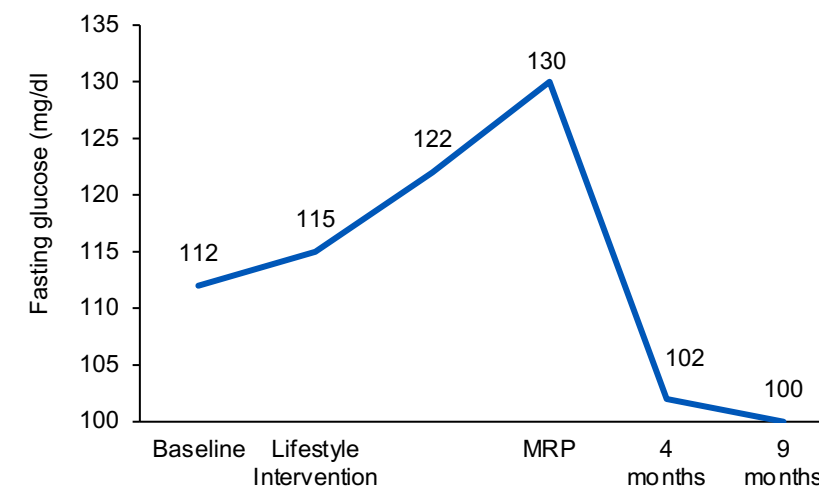
Adjunctive Mantram Repetition Program to Promote Lifestyle Modifications for Managing Impaired Glucose Tolerance in a 63-year old male with PTSD.

Figures 3 and 4 show changes in lipids and glucose following MRP practice.

**FIGURE 3: FASTING LIPID LEVELS OVER TIME**



**FIGURE 4: FASTING GLUCOSE LEVELS OVER TIME AND AFTER MRP**



### OUTCOMES FROM GROUP MRP IN PATIENTS

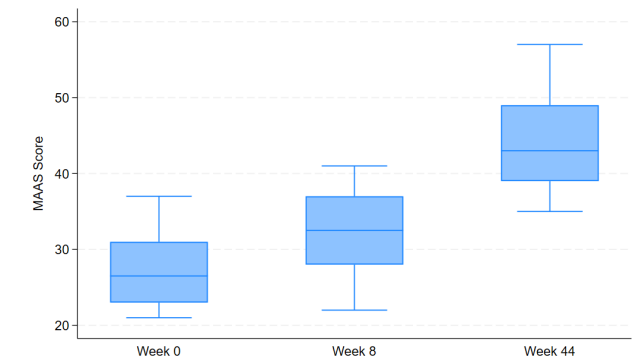
8-week MRP patient feedback.

PTSD symptoms (PCL-5) improved in 50% with positive feedback.

- *Mantram helps me relax. I feel positive and more peaceful.*
- *My stress, tension, and attention have improved.*
- *Mantram helps me pause and be aware of situations.*
- *One of the best tools I have learnt; It helps me deal with everything.*
- *It helps me manage substance cravings.*
- *I am aware of triggers for smoking.*
- *I feel more grounded. It helps regulate emotions. I use it for sleep.*
- *Using mantram relaxes my mind.*
- *I could walk away from a toxic person by repeating my mantram and not take drugs.*

**FIGURE 5: INCREASED MINDFULNESS WITH GROUP MRP AMONG CLINIC STAFF**

MRP 8-week staff program. MAAS: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale.



## CONCLUSION

- MRP can be effectively incorporated into Psychiatry clinics.
- MRP may be a useful adjunctive complementary therapy to promote lifestyle changes in patients with mental health diagnoses.
- MRP improves PTSD symptoms and preliminary data show its benefit in recovery from substance use.
- Integrating MRP into the workday enhanced mindfulness and reduced stress among mental health staff.

No funding was required for this project.