

**Freedom from the Real Cause of Depression**

*Out of the Blue*

**Melbourne Workshop**

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**FULL REPORT by**

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## Freedom from the real cause depression - *Out of the Blue* workshop evaluation – Melbourne

### 1. Background

Around 359 million people worldwide (source: World Health Organization) suffer with depression and emotional shutdown. We often learn at an early age to keep our emotions in check, under wraps, hidden, and that it is easier to keep feelings or emotions at bay, especially the 'unwanted' ones that create discomfort for our loved ones or are judged by society as inappropriate.

**Out of the Blue** was designed to get to the root cause of any sign of shutdown and depression and set oneself free of limitation. In this workshop, the participant is guided to be open to the energy, passion, and joy of life.

This paper reports on the evaluation results of the *Out of the Blue* 2½-day Workshop held in Melbourne, Australia on the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014. A *Summary Report* can be downloaded at <https://emotional-wellbeing.com.au/resources.html>

### 2. Workshop designer and facilitator

Kevin Billett (CEO and co-founder of *The Journey Method*) is an inspiring model of the possibility of becoming totally free from the trap of depression. Having suffered from chronic depression for over 20 years, he used journeywork to get to the very root of it, and is now a living example of the liberation from the shackles of depression. Kevin has now taken this work further in his *Out of the Blue* 2½-day Workshop, in a very inspired way, to help others set themselves free.

Twenty-four delegates and 23 trainers attended the Melbourne workshop (n=47). Prior to commencing the workshop, 41 (87.2%) participants agreed to complete the 21-item self-report *Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS<sub>21</sub>)* questionnaire.

### 3. Aim of the workshop evaluation

To measure any changing levels of distress reported by participants before, and 4-weeks after attending the workshop.

### 4. The measurement tool: The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS<sub>21</sub>)

**It is important to know that this is not a diagnostic questionnaire; it is only a snapshot in time, of how distressed people may have been feeling at each time point.**

In completing the questionnaire, the participant is asked to indicate the presence of a symptom over the previous week. Each item is scored from 0 (did not apply to me at all over the last week) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time over the past week).

- The *DASS<sub>21</sub>* is a quantitative measure of distress along the axes of depression, anxiety (symptoms of psychological arousal) and stress (the more cognitive, subjective symptoms of anxiety).
- It is **not** a categorical measure of clinical diagnoses.
- Emotional syndromes like depression and anxiety are intrinsically dimensional – that is, they vary along a continuum of severity (independent of a specific diagnosis).
- The *DASS<sub>21</sub>* was used in this context to show any change that may have occurred following the workshop.

## 5. Method

Participants who attended the *Out of the Blue* 2½-day Workshop were invited to complete the *DASS<sub>21</sub>* questionnaire. The workshop evaluation and use of the questionnaire was explained. Verbal consent was given by those who volunteered to complete the questionnaires. Pre-workshop *DASS<sub>21</sub>* questionnaires were completed in paper format just before commencement of the workshop. To ensure anonymity, participants chose their own identifying code. The post-workshop questionnaire was completed 4-weeks after the workshop, using the *SurveyMonkey* online software because participants were from all over Australia.

Analysis of data was conducted using descriptive analysis and a paired sample t-test. In the post-workshop questionnaire, space was provided for open-ended responses related to any comments, questions or concerns.

## 6. Results

Forty-one participants completed the pre-workshop questionnaire and 19 completed the post-workshop questionnaire. Following the workshop, some people had forgotten their identity code, resulting in only 14 participants with both pre and post responses (i.e. matched pairs) being available for analysis.

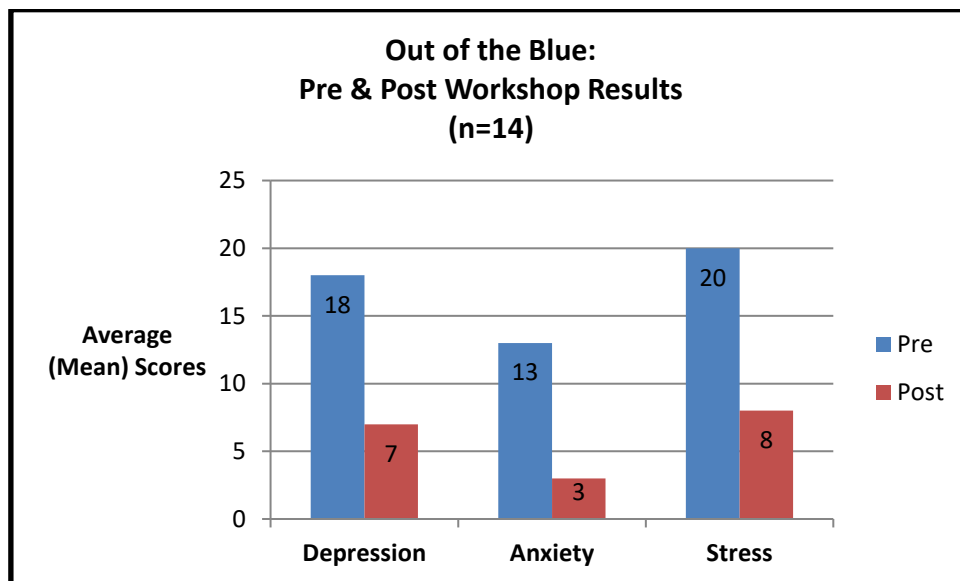
### 6.1 Results: Descriptive statistics

As shown in figure 1, the average (mean) scores for levels depression, anxiety and stress for the 14 matched pairs decreased following attendance at the workshop. Based on the available Australian population norms (table 1), the pre-workshop responses in figure 1 suggest a moderate level of depressive, anxiety and stress symptoms; with the post-workshop responses indicating normal levels of depressive, anxiety and stress symptoms.

#### ***Please Note: Interpretation of results***

- The severity labels (normal, mild, moderate, severe) are used to describe the full range of scores in the population, so 'mild' for example means that the person is above the population mean but probably still way below the typical severity of someone seeking help (**i.e. it does not mean a mild level of disorder**).
- The individual DASS scores do not define appropriate interventions.
- They should be used in conjunction with all the clinical information available in determining appropriate management for any individual.

Figure 1: Average (mean) scores for levels of depression, anxiety and stress for the 14 matched pairs



N.B. These results are for those who completed both the pre and the post questionnaire  
 The figures presented in the graph were **multiplied by 2**, to enable comparisons with normative Australian data that used the DASS 42-item instrument – see table 1.

Table 1: DASS<sub>42</sub> Ratings based on a survey of a number of Australian samples  
 (Source:[www.psy.unsw.edu.au/groups](http://www.psy.unsw.edu.au/groups))

	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0 – 9	0 - 7	0 – 14
Mild	10 – 13	8 – 9	15 – 18
Moderate	14 – 20	10 – 14	19 – 25
Severe	21 – 27	15 – 19	26 – 33
Extremely Severe	28+	20+	34 +

**Norms:** Normative data are available on a number of Australian samples. From a sample of 2914 adults the means (and standard deviations) were 6.34 (6.97), 4.7 (4.91), and 10.11 (7.91) for the depression, anxiety, and stress scales, respectively. A clinical sample reported means (and standard deviations) of 10.65 (9.3), 10.90 (8.12), and 21.1 (11.15) for the three measures.

## 6.2 Results: Statistical significance

To assess if there was a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-workshop mean scores, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of attending the workshop on participants' DASS<sub>21</sub> depression, anxiety, and stress scores. The results are shown in table 2.

### Depression scores

There was a statistically significant decrease in depression scores from Time 1 (pre workshop) ( $M=9.14$ ,  $SD=6.48$ ) to Time 2 (post workshop) ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=3.16$ ),  $t(13)=2.97$ ,  $p<.05$  (two-tailed). The mean decrease in depression scores was 5.71 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.55 to 9.87. The eta squared statistic (0.40) indicated a large effect size.

### Anxiety scores

There was a statistically significant decrease in anxiety scores from Time 1 (pre workshop) ( $M=6.64$ ,  $SD=5.26$ ) to Time 2 (post workshop) ( $M=1.50$ ,  $SD=1.99$ ),  $t(13)=3.46$ ,  $p<.05$  (two-tailed). The mean decrease in anxiety scores was 5.14 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.93 to 8.35. The eta squared statistic (0.48) indicated a large effect size.

### Stress scores

There was a statistically significant decrease in stress scores from Time 1 (pre workshop) ( $M=10.36$ ,  $SD=5.50$ ) to Time 2 (post workshop) ( $M=4.00$ ,  $SD=1.96$ ),  $t(13)=5.57$ ,  $p<.05$  (two-tailed). The mean decrease in stress scores was 6.36 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 3.89 to 8.82. The eta squared statistic (0.70) indicated a large effect size.

**Table 2: Paired sample t-test: Pre-/post-workshop evaluation: depression, anxiety and stress**

		M† (SD) ††	t ‡	df ‡‡	Sig. (2-tailed) p value	95% CI§ of the difference		Effect size††† Eta squared
						lower	upper	
<b>Depression</b>	Pre	9.14 (6.48)	2.968	13	.011	1.554	9.874	0.40
	Post	3.43 (3.16)						
<b>Anxiety</b>	Pre	6.64 (5.26)	3.462	13	.004	1.933	8.352	0.48
	Post	1.50 (1.99)						
<b>Stress</b>	Pre	10.36 (5.50)	5.568	13	.000	3.891	8.824	0.70
	Post	4.00 (1.96)						

† Mean

†† Standard Deviation

‡ t-test

‡‡ degrees of freedom

§ Confidence Interval

††† Magnitude of workshop effect: .01=small effect; .06=moderate effect; .14=large effect

## 7. Participant post-workshop open-ended responses: Comments, questions or concerns

Participant responses are shown in table 3. Any identifying information has been omitted.

Overall, responses indicate that the majority of respondents experienced benefits such as an improvement in “state of mind”, with increased “strength and courage to manage [stressful situations] in positive way”. Some, felt increasing “gratitude ...in life”, and others felt “more at peace” with themselves, “more positive” relating to others, and “a sense of calm resonating underneath” the challenging situations around them.

Respondents were grateful for the tools and support during the workshop and “would recommend this course to everyone.... a must to set yourself free even more”.

**Table 3: Respondent’s post-workshop open-ended responses**

<p>My state of mind has definitely improved. I did have one occasion where I backed away from trying something that I felt I would have done badly - and was mad at myself about that - feelings of being an idiot and what would people think. But someone reached out to me about it - maybe because I was able to be more open about what I was feeling - and the bad feelings quickly went.</p>
<p>It was a real test of where I am at doing the questionnaire today, as I have just had very sad and unexpected news that a dear friend that I have just caught up with again after many years, only has 2 months to live, and another very close friend started chemo for the 2nd time this morning. But instead of sinking into depression and hopelessness, I have this strong feeling of using this precious time left to be with them and bringing some sort of happiness into their remaining life.....this might sound odd.....! ... Thankyou all for giving me the strength and courage to manage this situation in positive way. The course with Kevin was brilliant, and left me with a very comfortable feeling of stability, and gratitude for everything in my life. Originally, I was envious of the other participants getting amazing insights in to their lives, but after the small process of gratitude we did, I realised that "all was well" in my life. I still feel the loneliness of my husband’s death, but now feel equipped with the knowledge that these feelings are just emotions.</p>
<p>I found it hard to unwind this past week due to working in a busy emergency department and certain scenarios are still on my mind. Since going to the course, I feel more at peace with myself due to all the forgiving processing :) Thank you</p>
<p>During the seminar, I 'held back' from asking questions and/or offering feedback because of my self-conscious state that has plagued, and still is present in me. ... In general, I experienced a major change, but alas, this feeling was short lived. I am looking forward to follow up seminars to reinforce the changes, albeit small changes, that were made.</p>
<p>My iron levels got really low this last month, so have that contributing to lack of energy/enthusiasm - thought something was not quite right! The course was brilliant! I got to a deep-seated issue in one of the simplest processes! Aware of more peacefulness since - many thanks :-)</p>

Table 4: Respondent's post-workshop open-ended responses, continued...

<p>Last week was my period and I am normally more stressed and weepy at that time. I noticed I was getting agitated and intolerant in the days prior but have enough awareness to know what is triggering it and since the period has finished those symptoms have settled down.</p>
<p>I found that when I travelled home to QLD the stressors and triggers remained and I found integration difficult. I am still struggling with my Post Natal Depression. I am making slow but small changes in relation to diet &amp; exercise &amp; trying not to let the story define the emotion. I learnt a lot at the program. I feel I need improving in the continued implementation of what I've learnt.</p>
<p>Since doing the workshop, I have become much more positive and am able to relate to my wife much better.</p>
<p>Has been a very stressful time - changing business structure, waiting for finance approval etc. Even with all this going on and the extreme situations there is still a sense of calm resonating underneath and at the base of it all; a sense of watching and awareness of the experience whilst simultaneously being in the centre of it. This extreme stress situation may affect answers that would normally be answered differently. Thanks.</p>
<p>Definitely feeling more optimistic and easy-going since the weekend. One of my most powerful experiences discovering that firstly I had this belief and secondly that it might be true!!! Can see how it had underpinned my whole life. Would recommend this course to everyone.... A must to set yourself free even more. Thanks Kevin and team xx</p>
<p>I felt I experienced the "fan winding down" as Brandon calls it, especially in the first week or two following the Seminar. Some issues were in my face immediately, and I felt as though I had the necessary tools to address them...even when I chose to let the issues stew for a bit! I felt I was also able to observe rather than be "in" my responses to situations much more, and be far less self-critical. I returned to my course in Mental Health, and really wrestled with the way mental illness is still very much believed to have a "genetic" propensity. And I felt much more empowered to challenge this belief system, and not to take it as a given. I feel I still have a ways to go with it all, and look forward to it! Much gratitude here :)</p>

## 8. Limitations and Recommendations

This was a small self-selecting sample, without a control group, therefore a larger randomised controlled trial, with an active control group, is recommended.

Further, it is well known that relapse in depression is common, consequently, a longitudinal study for example at 3, 6, and 12 months would be useful.

## 9. Conclusion

Following the *Out of the Blue* workshop, there was a statistically significant decrease in scores on all scales at 4 weeks, with a large effect size, indicating a significant improvement in stress levels of the participants.