

## 25 Specific Facets of Trait Mindfulness Show Differences in Associations with Affective and Cognitive Measures in Older Adults

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**Objective:** Trait mindfulness is associated with reduced stress and psychological well-being. However, evidence regarding its effects on cognitive function is mixed and certain facets of trait mindfulness are associated with higher negative affect (NA). This study investigated whether specific mindfulness skills were associated with cognitive performance and affective traits.

**Participants and Methods:** 165 older adults from the Maine Aging Behavior Learning Enrichment (M-ABLE) Study completed the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center T-Cog battery, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-SF.

**Results:** All five facets of trait mindfulness were associated with higher Positive Affect and lower NA, with the exception that Observation was not associated with trait NA. Partial correlations adjusting for age indicated that better episodic memory was associated with Observation, Describing, and Nonreactivity. Verbal fluency performance was associated with Observation, while Working Memory was associated with Nonjudgment. Executive Attention/Processing speed was associated with total mindfulness scores and showed a trend relationship with Nonreactivity.

**Conclusions:** Mindfulness skills showed specific patterns with affective traits and cognitive function. These findings suggest that the ability to maintain awareness, describe, and experience internal and external states without reacting to them may partly rely on episodic memory. Mindful awareness skills also may depend on frontal and language functions, while the ability to experience emotional states without reacting may require Executive Attention. Global mindfulness and a non-judgmental stance may require auditory attention. Alternatively, mindfulness skills may serve to enhance these functions. Hence, longitudinal research is needed to determine the directionality of these findings.

**Categories:** Aging

**Keyword 1:** cognitive functioning

**Keyword 2:** awareness

**Keyword 3:** emotional processes

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## 26 To 'Proxy' or Not to 'Proxy': The Differential Effects of Cognitive Reserve on Late-Life Neuropsychological Functioning

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**Objective:** As the population continues to age at a rapid pace, an important question that has been raised by clinicians and researchers alike, is "how can we preserve our cognitive abilities as older adults?" Cognitive reserve (CR) is thought to account for inter-individual differences in the cognitive trajectories of older people experiencing similar levels of brain pathology. Being a hypothetical construct, CR cannot be measured directly and therefore, must be operationalized through a combination of demographic and lifestyle variables. While there is sufficient empirical evidence supporting the relationship between individual CR proxies and cognitive functioning, few studies to date have explored which CR proxy is most important in predicting aspects of late-life cognitive functioning and whether composite measure of CR accurately predict cognitive functioning, above and beyond variables traditionally associated with late-life cognitive ability (e.g., age, gender, cardiovascular risk, depression). The present cross-sectional study sought to examine the relationship between three well-established CR proxies—educational attainment, mental workplace demands, crystallized intelligence—and baseline neuropsychological functioning in a clinical sample of older adults without dementia.

**Participants and Methods:** Using archival data from 248 older adult patients seen at geriatric specialist hospital in Ontario, Canada, we examined the cumulative and independent effects of educational attainment (years of formal education), mental workplace demands (mean analyst rating for 10 O\*NET variables measuring cognitively complex work activities),