

CULTIVATING SACRED MOMENTS: EVALUATING A PILOT PROGRAM TO FOSTER
PSYCHOSPIRITUAL WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

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Sacred moments are characterized by the qualities of transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and spiritual emotions, experienced within a single period of time (Pargament et al, 2014). Originating from sanctification theory, such moments represent a specific spiritual resource with the potential to enhance psychospiritual wellbeing. Thus, a sacred moments wellbeing program was developed and evaluated. The six-week blended program offered a novel, accessible, and inclusive way of cultivating sacred moments in college students and helping them explore sacred qualities through didactic, experiential, and reflective exercises. A pretest-posttest design with random assignment to the treatment and waitlist control groups was used to examine the feasibility and initial efficacy of the sacred moments program. Participants reported high levels of treatment credibility at post-workshop and program satisfaction at post-treatment. The completion rate was high at 73%. Furthermore, the program demonstrated preliminary efficacy with respect to spiritual and growth outcomes. That is, participants reported significant gains in sacred perceptions, daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, and personal growth from baseline to post-treatment. Non-significant outcomes included life satisfaction, perceived stress, depression and anxiety symptoms, and meaning in life. Additionally, a series of two-way mixed ANOVAs yielded statistically significant interactions between group (treatment and waitlist) by time (baseline and post-treatment) on the aforementioned significant variables as hypothesized. Open-ended participant feedback supported the practical significance of these findings. However, most treatment gains were not maintained at one-month follow-up, possibly due to the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic

during the course of the study. Implications regarding spiritually integrated wellbeing programs and the unique role of sacred moments are discussed, along with possible interpretations of the findings. Overall, sacred moments appear to be promising phenomena that can be harnessed to promote growth and a healthy spirituality.

For my academic father,

Ken

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INTRODUCTION

The field of psychology has shifted from a heavy emphasis on pathology to factors that promote human flourishing. Positive psychologists have identified numerous constructs that signal wellbeing, including flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), practical wisdom (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006), meaning (Steger et al., 2006), and posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The spiritual dimension, however, has been relatively overlooked in its potential for fostering “the good life” (Pargament et al., 2016). Yet sacred matters may lie at the heart of what makes a life worth living. Conceptualized by Pargament (1999), spirituality is defined as “a search for the sacred” (p. 12). More specifically, spirituality involves the process of discovering, sustaining, and transformation a relationship with whatever the individual may hold sacred (Pargament & Mahoney, 2009). The sacred can be thought of as having two parts: core and ring (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). For many people, the core is God, the divine, a Higher Power, or a transcendent reality. Yet individuals may not necessarily identify with having a core. Regardless of whether one has a core, people may have a ring around the center of their lives. This ring contains aspects that are regarded as manifestations of the inner core, or perceived as having sacred qualities (Pargament, 2011). Of note, I am utilizing a psychological rather than theological conceptualization of the sacred. In other words, my discussion revolves around perceptions of the sacred rather than its ontological reality. Furthermore, spirituality is acknowledged to have a dark side, involving tensions, conflicts, and ruptures with the sacred; however, this project is dedicated to exploring the positive potential of the sacred.

The salubrious effects of a healthy spirituality have been theorized and supported empirically over the past few decades (Koenig et al., 2012; Pargament, 1997). For instance, individuals who draw upon spiritual resources to cope with life’s challenges tend to live longer

(Ironson et al., 2016), report that they grow in spiritual and secular ways (Desai & Pargament, 2015), derive meaning (Park et al., 2017), and experience better quality of life (Stroppa et al., 2018). Moreover, the positive role of spirituality has been documented in both clinical and non-clinical samples (Wong et al., 2018). Spanning indices of mental health and illness, evidence strongly suggests that spirituality can foster wellbeing across the lifespan.

Given the multi-dimensional nature of spirituality, this dissertation focuses on one aspect in particular that has promising implications for psychosocial wellbeing: sacred moments. More specifically, the goal was to develop and evaluate an intervention that cultivates sacred moments as a way of fostering psychosocial wellbeing. As such, my introduction reviews the literature on sanctification, defines sacred qualities, conceptualizes sacred moments in the context of their prevalence, predictors, and consequences, and offers a rationale for a novel sacred moments program.

Sanctification

Sanctification refers to the process of (a) perceiving manifestations of the divine or transcendent reality in everyday life, known as theistic sanctification, and/or (b) imbuing aspects of life with sacred qualities, or non-theistic sanctification (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). Of note, the two types of sanctification are often highly correlated and measured together, although this discussion will focus on the potential benefits of non-theistic sanctification (i.e., sacred qualities, and hence the term *sacred moments*). The emphasis on non-theistic sanctification allows for the inclusion of worldviews such as humanism, atheism, and agnosticism that may not relate to perceiving manifestations of God or a Higher Power.

The defining features of non-theistic sanctification are found in its sacred qualities: transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and spiritual emotions

(Pargament, 2011; Pargament et al., 2014). Transcendence involves perceptions of the extraordinary, or that which is set apart from mundane life. In the words of theologian Rudolf Otto (1928, p. 26), transcendence pertains to something “wholly other...quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the ‘canny’.” This quality is highlighted in a musician’s account of playing in a symphony:

Right before the soft note, there was a tiny pulse. That pulse, the moment of silence right before the climax was the moment when I experienced the sacred moment. It felt as if I were transcended into a different world, a world that was celestial. For that moment alone, it was worth living for. (Wong & Pargament, 2018a)

Boundlessness refers to perceptions of expansion in space or time. One’s consciousness may appear to swell and stretch into eternity. What is experienced may be a holistic vision, or a glimpse into what may be seen by a Higher Power or creative force (Wong & Pargament, 2017). In the spirit of boundlessness, the poet William Blake (1950) wrote, “To see a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower, / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand / and Eternity in an hour”. Individuals have endorsed boundless qualities during meditative states that encompass mindfulness practice, yoga, tai chi, breathing exercises, and guided meditations with imagery and visualization (Smith, 2021).

Ultimacy involves perceptions of an essential, universal truth. These truths may relate to existential questions regarding the cosmos, oneself, meaning, purpose, and what resides in the sacred core (Wong & Pargament, 2017). The quality of ultimacy captures what is perceived to be “really, real” (Geertz, 1966) in a foundational sense. These clarifying experiences seem to provide individuals with renewed vigor and commitment to life. For example, in Dostoevsky’s *A*

Writer's Diary (1876, p. 396), the suicidal protagonist exclaims upon waking from a sacred dream:

Oh, now – life, life! I lifted my hands and called upon the eternal truth, not called, but wept. ...It is an old truth, but there is this new in it. ...I saw the truth, I did not invent it with my mind. The one thing is – love thy neighbor as thyself – that is the one thing. That is all, nothing else is needed.

Deep interconnectedness involves the synchronous meeting of mind, heart, and soul with other beings. It is a relational quality that characterizes an “I-Thou” encounter (Buber, 1937). Deep interconnectedness can involve genuine connection with another person, a group of people, organism, or the wider web of life. Evoking the sense of ‘seeing’ and being ‘seen’, deep interconnectedness is central to authentic union. It follows that *oneness beliefs* may be a product of deep interconnectedness. Defined as “beliefs in the essential oneness and interconnectedness of all phenomena, living as well as nonliving,” oneness beliefs have predicted greater life satisfaction in two large non-clinical samples (Edinger-Schons, 2019, p. 6).

Spiritual emotions encompass awe and gratitude. Both of these emotions have been subject to empirical investigation and were predictive of wellbeing (e.g., Davis et al., 2016; Stellar et al., 2017; Yaden et al., 2018). What makes these and other emotions ‘spiritual’ are their close ties with experiences of God or the divine. These emotions tend to be rooted in different religious traditions. For instance, there are numerous examples in the Bible that reference awe of God (e.g., Ecclesiastes 5:7; Psalm 33:8; Hebrews 12:28). Yaden et al. (2018) have also identified dimensions of awe (e.g., connectedness, altered time perception, perceived vastness) that seem to overlap with the sacred qualities of boundlessness and deep interconnectedness. Awe of God, in particular, has been linked with greater life satisfaction through a heightened sense of

connectedness (Krause & Hayward, 2015). Similarly, gratitude and giving thanks to God or gods is heavily emphasized in many religious traditions, including Judaism (e.g., Sukkot, a holiday for gratitude and thanksgiving), Christianity (e.g., the Catholic refrain “Thanks be to God”), Islam (e.g., Eid Al-Fitr, a festival for thanksgiving), Buddhism (e.g., *kataññu kataveti*, meaning gratitude in the sacred language of Pāli), and Hinduism (e.g., the mantra “I am gratitude” or *kritajna hum* in Sanskrit).

Viewing life through a sacred lens has important implications. Sanctification has been associated with numerous positive outcomes across myriad life domains in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Mahoney et al., in press; Wong & Pargament, 2017). In their seminal study on relational sanctification, Mahoney et al. (1999) found that husbands and wives who perceived their marriage as having sacred qualities reported significantly higher levels of global marital adjustment, personal benefits from marriage, and collaborative behaviors. Not only did they have less marital conflict, the couples who sanctified more generally engaged in less verbal aggression, stalemate, and avoidance when reporting about their own behavior and their partner’s behavior. Similar positive findings have been observed in other studies on the sanctification of marriage and romantic relationships (Phillips et al., 2017; Reich & Kalantar, 2018; Rusu et al., 2015; Sabey et al., 2014; Stafford, 2016), sexuality (Hernandez-Kane & Mahoney, 2018; Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray-Swank et al., 2005; Phillips et al., 2017), caregiving for older adults (Wong & Pargament, 2018b), parenting (Brelsford & Righi, 2015; Lynn et al., 2016; Nelson & Uecker, 2018; Weyand et al., 2013), and parent-college student relationships (Brelsford, 2013). Broadly, perception of sacred qualities within relationships appears to predict greater personal investment and relational fruits for the sanctifier. The diversity of these samples is also worth highlighting, with relational sanctification being relevant to older adult couples

(Sabey et al., 2014), new parents (Kusner et al., 2014), Iranians (Reich & Kalantar, 2018), U.S. college students (Murray-Swank et al., 2005), Mechanical Turk workers (Leonhardt et al., 2019), and same-sex couples (Phillips et al., 2017).

In terms of non-relational sanctification, individuals have also been found to benefit from the sacred qualities imbued in learning (Phillips & Kitchens, 2016), personal strivings (Mahoney et al., 2005), work (Carroll et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2012), social justice (McConnell & Todd, 2015; Todd et al., 2015), the body (Grossoehme et al. 2015; Homan & Boyatzis, 2010; Jacobson et al., 2013, 2016; Kopp et al., 2017), and life itself (Krause et al., 2016). These samples have included college students (Jacobson et al., 2013; McConnell & Todd, 2015; Phillips & Kitchens, 2016), national and community U.S. adults (Krause et al., 2016; Mahoney et al., 2005), employees (Carroll et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2012), working mothers (Hall et al., 2012), Protestants (Jacobson et al., 2016), and adolescents (Kopp et al., 2017).

Overall, individuals have reported greater investment and commitment behaviors towards non-theistically sanctified life domains (Mahoney et al., in press). Although most of this literature is cross-sectional, findings suggest that sanctification is a pathway through which people can encounter what they perceive to be the sacred and reap the benefits. This dissertation focuses on one aspect of life that can be imbued with sacred qualities: moments in time.

Sacred Moments

Sanctification studies have recently focused on a single non-theistically sanctified moment in time. The notion of moments in life being sacred has been reinforced across religious and secular traditions. Consider the special significance of birth, coming of age, weddings, the Sabbath, deeply powerful encounters in nature and music, as well as soul-to-soul encounters with other people. *Sacred moments* are characterized by the interrelated qualities of transcendence,

boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and spiritual emotions within a single period of time (Pargament et al., 2014). Of note, other researchers have identified and studied concepts related to sacred moments. It is important to consider how sacred moments converge with and depart from these other constructs. For example, sacred moments are related to self-transcendent experiences (STEs). STEs refer to temporary mental states of decreased self-salience and increased feelings of connectedness (Yaden et al., 2017). However, sacred moments involve self-expansion of consciousness rather than ego loss. Thus, the construct would only partially fit within the STE classification.

Additionally, religious, spiritual, and mystical experiences (RSMEs) are characterized by a noetic quality, or a sense of ‘realness’ (Yaden et al., 2017). Sacred moments are a type of RSME, given the sacred quality of ultimacy which could be considered synonymous with the noetic quality. Even so, sacred moments are multi-faceted and contain qualities beyond the noetic. Another construct that incorporates a noetic quality is the *mystical experience* (Hood et al., 2001). Sacred moments and mystical experiences overlap in some ways. Namely, they share the qualities of awe, ultimacy, and boundlessness (Pargament et al., 2014; Yaden et al., 2017). However, sacred moments are distinctively grounded in sanctification theory and may function as a spiritual resource. Whereas mystical experiences have the additional qualities of annihilation, perfection, the aliveness of all things, and ineffability, sacred moments are less diffuse. The latter is more concrete, more relational, and less mind-bending. That sacred moments are effable allows them to be processed and understood. Therefore, individuals may find sacred moments easier to integrate into a coherent life narrative.

Prevalence of Sacred Moments

Sacred moments are not uncommon. Fifty-five percent of mental health providers (Pargament et al., 2014), 65% of nurses (Alvarado, 2016), and 24% of mental health patients (Pargament et al., 2014) reported experiencing a sacred moment over the past year when presented with a dichotomous response option (yes/no). Over half (52%) of family caregivers endorsed some degree of the sacred in their chosen moment over the past year when presented with a Likert-type response option. The number rises to 64% when caregivers reported on their lifetime prevalence of experiencing at least one sacred moment. (Wong & Pargament, 2018b).

However, the word ‘sacred’ may not resonate with some individuals, particularly those who are religiously unaffiliated or “mystical but not religious or spiritual” (Yaden et al., 2017, p. 250). Such persons may experience sacred qualities in a given moment without endorsing that the moment was ‘sacred’. As such, it is worth noting the higher level of agreement with specific items from the Sacred Moment Qualities measure (Pargament et al., 2014). This measure for sacred moments was adapted and elaborated upon from non-theistic sanctification subscale of traditional sanctification measures (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). For example, when recalling an important moment of their choosing in the past year, 79% of family caregivers responded with “slightly true” to “very true” to feeling that they were in the presence of something larger than themselves (Wong & Pargament, 2018b). Over 85% of them similarly endorsed experiences of ultimacy (e.g., “I felt that I was part of something that was really real”). Approximately 90% noted feeling deep interconnectedness with their care receiver in their chosen important moment. In addition, the vast majority of family caregivers responded with “slightly true” to “very true” to experiencing spiritual emotions of deep gratitude (87%) and awe (70%) (Wong & Pargament, 2018b). It follows that the prevalence rates regarding whether a moment was “sacred” may be

underestimated. Notably, the sacred moment qualities themselves are not explicitly theistic, such that the relevance of sacred moment scale items may span across spectrum of belief and non-belief.

Predictors of Sacred Moments

Several predisposing factors have been found for sacred moments. Most importantly, the centrality of religion and spirituality in a person's life is associated with perceiving sacred qualities in a moment. In a sample of mental health patients, those reporting higher levels of religiousness, spirituality, religious attendance, prayer, and meditation tended to report more sacred moments (Pargament et al., 2014). Similarly, religiousness and spirituality were correlated with sacred moments in a sample of psychiatric nurses and nursing assistants (Alvarado, 2016). Furthermore, religious belief salience, and supernatural spiritual beliefs were longitudinally predictive of more sacred moments (Wilt et al., 2018). Engagement in religious and spiritual activities has also been moderately linked with sacred moments (Magyar-Russell et al., 2020). Such activities include thinking about religious/spiritual issues, prayer/meditation, attempts to hear from God, religious/spiritual conversations, reading sacred texts, and watching or listening to religious/spiritual programs. Notably, perceived communication from God has been positively associated with sacred moments in two studies to date (Magyar-Russell et al., 2020; Wilt et al., 2018).

Certain precipitating factors have also been documented. People who experience sacred moments tend to endorse feeling supported and connected with another individual prior to the moment. Mental health providers and clients have both reported client tension, provider presence, and the client's security with the provider as predictors of sacred moments (Pargament et al., 2014). Perhaps the same situational factors that allow for vulnerable disclosure would

precipitate sacred moments. Accordingly, the therapeutic ‘holding space’ seems ideally suited for sacred moments to occur.

With respect to personality, openness to experiences and secure attachment tendencies were predictive of more sacred moments in an online sample of spiritual strugglers (Wilt et al., 2018). This study was prospective in nature, assessing for sacred moments at baseline, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months. The authors posited that individuals who are more open may be more receptive to perceiving experiences as extraordinary. It follows that they may approach rather than avoid conditions that are favorable for sacred moments. Similarly, people who are securely attached may be better able to socially relate to others, which may make room for a deepened connection (Wilt et al., 2018). Finally, ethnicity may play a role in predicting sacred moments, although findings are preliminary and modest. Wilt et al. (2018) observed that Caucasians may be slightly less likely and Middle Easterners slightly more likely to experience sacred moments over time.

Consequences of Sacred Moments

Overall, findings suggest that sacred moments are tied to spiritual and psychological flourishing. Sacred moments have been strongly linked to therapeutic gains and client gains as reported by samples of mental health providers and clients who received services in the past year (Pargament et al., 2014). In this cross-sectional study, the researchers asked two independent samples of mental health providers and clients to focus on an important moment in treatment. The degree to which mental health providers imbued their moment with sacred qualities was predictive of greater provider wellbeing, meaning in work, client gains, therapeutic relationship gains, provider gains, and provider work motivation. Similarly, mental health clients reported significantly fewer anxiety and depressive symptoms, in addition to greater meaning in life,

wellbeing, therapeutic relationship gains, client gains, satisfaction with their provider, client's sense of control over their mental health, mental health improvements, and working alliance (Pargament et al., 2014) That a single moment imbued with spiritual qualities could consistently predict a host of positive outcomes is notable. Also remarkable was the strength of these findings related to perceived consequences, which ranged in from $r = .52$ (provider work motivation) to $.73$ (self-reported client gains).

The restorative role of sacred moments has been further supported in a handful of empirical studies. For instance, using Pargament et al.'s (2014) method of asking participants to select a single important moment, Alvarado surveyed a cross-sectional, national sample of nurses and nursing assistants who worked in psychiatric units. The degree to which the important moment was perceived as sacred was significantly related to greater meaning in work and therapeutic alliance with patients (Alvarado, 2016). Although the role of sacred moments was rendered non-significant in regression models controlling for participants' sociodemographic factors, these null findings may have been largely due to low power ($N = 23$).

Sacred moments have also been examined in the context of caregiving for older adults with dementia (Wong & Pargament, 2018b). In a cross-sectional study of an online sample of family caregivers, Wong and Pargament (2018b) found that sacred moments predicted more personal growth, work satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and less burden after controlling for typical caregiving stressors and caregiver demographic variables. Again, the strength of these findings from a single sacred moment was noteworthy (e.g., $\beta = .46$ for personal growth). Similarly, Wong and Pargament (2018a) found sacred moments in music to be correlated with greater meaning in work after controlling for demographic variables in a cross-sectional sample of professional orchestra musicians.

Longitudinally, the transformative power of sacred moments has been noted in two studies to date. Sacred moments predicted more growth and less decline in wellbeing over six months in a sample of people with spiritual struggles (Wilt et al., 2018). Spiritual strugglers who experienced sacred moments had higher levels of struggle resolution and reported more positive effects from the struggle. Yet again, sacred moments strongly predicted positive transformations in examining between- and within-person effects. It may be that sacred moments function as high points or turning points that help guide or re-orient individuals during times of spiritual instability, tension, and conflict. In another longitudinal study, the increasing frequency of sacred moments over six months was significantly correlated with greater presence of meaning in life and positive emotion, as well as lower levels of perceived stress, depressed distress, and anxious distress (Magyar-Russell et al., 2020). Latent growth curve models also indicated that the frequency of sacred moments was linked to better mental health over the course of the study after accounting for time-invariant covariates such as religious participation (Magyar-Russell et al., 2020).

The enduring nature of sacred moments has further emerged as a theme in written responses and oral interviews. Both professional orchestra musicians (Wong & Pargament, 2018a) and family caregivers (Wong & Pargament, 2018b) have spontaneously expressed this unforgettable or timeless quality. Consider one remark from a family caregiver of a loved one with dementia about their sacred moment in caregiving: “I feel that I will forever remember this moment as the one that helped me become more conscious of [the] importance of relationships, life and love towards others” (Wong & Pargament, 2018b). Accounts of these experiences suggest that they are often seared into memory and recalled in vivid detail, akin to flashbulb

memories but positive in valence. As such, acts of sharing and revisiting sacred moments seem to hold therapeutic value.

Sacred Moment Interventions

Although further research is needed, several studies suggest that sacred moments may have beneficial effects. Thus, it may be advantageous to encourage and cultivate them. Bringing reflection, awareness, and attention to each of the sacred qualities and past sacred moments could set the stage for more sacred perceptions and greater psychosocial well-being, in turn. Within the context of psychotherapy, the majority of mental health clients have indicated their desire for spiritually integrated services (Oxhandler et al., 2018). Such programs that incorporate spirituality have generally fared better or equal to secular counterparts in terms of effectiveness (Captari et al., 2018; Pargament, 2011). Placing the sacred at the center, rather than the periphery, of a wellness program may help enhance wellbeing. No interventions to date have focused directly on the therapeutic potential of sacred moments and their qualities, although several have facilitated individuals ‘tuning into’ the sacred via other methods.

Notably, Goldstein (2007) offered a “sacred moments” group intervention to a non-clinical sample that fostered sanctification of a chosen object through mindfulness. Participants were invited to practice brief mindfulness, attend to a personal sacred object, and notice any sacred qualities occurring in the moment on a daily basis. These participants reported significant improvements in stress and wellbeing, although the sacred moments group did not experience greater change than a therapeutic writing comparison group. Schnitker and Richardson (2019) also experimented with framing gratitude journaling as prayer in a sample of college students. The participants were asked to generate 10 things for which they were grateful per week for five weeks. One group read aloud their journal entries to themselves, another group read their thanks

to another person, and a final group prayed their thanks aloud to God. Although all three types of gratitude journaling increased life satisfaction and decreased negative affect, the prayer condition uniquely resulted in the eudaimonic wellbeing outcomes of greater gratitude and hope. Prayer further amplified gains in both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing outcomes (Schnitker & Richardson, 2019).

While my focus is on wellness for the general population, some interventions involving clinical samples are relevant to sacred moments. For instance, McCorkle et al. (2005) piloted an intervention for social anxiety that involved exploring and encouraging sacred perceptions in a wide array of life domains. Such domains included focusing on sacredness of the body, sacred emotions, the present moment as sacred, sacred meaning, and sacred gifts. The patients responded positively overall, manifesting increases in perceptions of the sacred and decreases in anxiety prior to and after each session. Other successful psychospiritual interventions have emphasized strengthening connections with a Higher Power for HIV-positive adults (Tarakeshwar et al., 2005), processing spiritual struggles in college students (Oemig-Dworsky et al., 2013), and spiritual meditation for people with frequent migraines (Wachholtz et al., 2017). However, programs that feature sacred moments themselves and their qualities have yet to be developed and evaluated.

The Present Study

Sacred moments could potentially promote positive life transformations. This research was designed to provide an initial test of this claim. The sacred moments program represented a novel, inclusive way of harnessing a specific spiritual resource to potentially enhance psychospiritual wellbeing. The overarching goals were to foster psychospiritual wellbeing by helping individuals cultivate sacred moments and explore their qualities through didactic,

experiential, brief writing, and home practice components. In terms of program objectives, it was designed to help participants (a) increase their awareness of sacred qualities within their present lives, (b) integrate past sacred moments to draw upon as a spiritual resource, and (c) cultivate the potential for future sacred moments in their lives. It was delivered in six sessions for adults. The initial session involved a synchronous workshop, such that participants engaged with one another at the same time. The following five sessions were asynchronous and delivered online. The blended format offered additional flexibility for participants to engage with their spirituality at their convenience. Borrowed from educational literature, the term *blended* broadly refers to learning environments that incorporate traditional face-to-face approaches with technology-mediated instruction (Graham, 2006).

Through a pretest-posttest design with random assignment in which each participant served as their own control and a treatment vs. waitlist group comparison, this study examined the feasibility and initial efficacy of a brief program aimed at fostering sacred moments and psychospiritual wellbeing in adults. I hypothesized that the program would be acceptable and feasible. As such, it was expected that participants would report high levels of treatment credibility at post-workshop and program satisfaction at post-treatment. I also hypothesized that the program would demonstrate preliminary efficacy. Specifically, the treatment group would have greater gains in wellbeing than the waitlist group. Moreover, participants would report significant gains in life satisfaction, sacred perceptions, meaning, depression and anxiety symptoms, perceptions of stress, spiritual wellbeing, personal growth, and spiritual growth from baseline to post-treatment. These gains would be maintained at follow-up at four weeks after treatment.

METHOD

Sample and Demographics

College students were recruited from a rural university in the Midwest through announcements in an electronic campus newsletter, classes, and the undergraduate research subject pool. See Appendix C for the recruitment script. Moreover, demographic information was gathered regarding participants' age, gender, marital status, education level, household income, religious affiliation, and general religiousness. Overall, the sample of 252 was largely White (74.6%), Christian (61.5%), female (69.8%), single (55.6%), and emerging adults ($M_{age} = 20.16$, $SD = 2.94$). Their religious affiliations, religiosity, and self-rated spirituality generally mirrored national norms (Pew Research Center, 2014). See Table 1 for details.

Procedure

Recruitment of subjects occurred from January through February of 2020. After consenting to participate, all individuals completed a baseline survey (T1) and were randomly assigned to either an original treatment or waitlist control group. See Appendix D for the Institutional Review Board stamped consent document. Those in the original treatment group immediately registered for a sacred moments workshop. One week after they attended the workshop, participants completed a post-workshop survey (T2). They also completed five weekly booster sessions on YouTube, followed by a post-treatment survey (T3). Four weeks later, they completed a follow-up survey (T4). Those assigned to the waitlist control group completed the post-waitlist survey four to six weeks after T1 and were offered the opportunity to complete the sacred moments intervention. Participants attended their initial workshop between February 12 through March 12 of 2020. Figure 1 depicts the procedural flow. Of note, 18 additional participants were intentionally assigned to the original treatment group halfway

through the study. This decision was made in anticipation of greater attrition due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program

The Sacred Moments program was developed by the study author in conjunction with an expert in spiritually integrated psychotherapy, Kenneth I. Pargament, Ph.D. The 6-week program was offered in blended format, involving one initial in-person workshop and five weekly online modules. The two-hour workshop began with a broad discussion about personal definitions of spirituality and the sacred, followed by an overview of findings from the sanctification literature. Participants were then introduced to sacred moments through an experiential exercise involving a Treasure Chest meditation. This guided meditation was designed to re-immense participants in a sacred moment that occurred for them in the past, such that they could relive the moment, draw strength or comfort from the experience, and begin to integrate or cull meaning from the moment into their lives. Following the meditation, participants were invited to write about their experience and share with the group. Next, the facilitator assigned participants to smaller groups of 3-4 for a discussion on what sacred moments have in common. Finally, participants were invited to share their findings, which naturally overlapped with the theorized sacred qualities of transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and spiritual emotions.

The online sessions were designed to help individuals integrate past sacred moments into their lives by focusing on different qualities of the sacred each week: i.e., transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and spiritual emotions. These sessions involved brief videos, exercises, and prompts delivered through YouTube and Qualtrics. These online sessions typically opened with a definition of the respective sacred quality, followed by

examples, an experiential component, and home practice recommendations. See Figure 2 for an overview of the program and Appendices E-J for the protocol.

Measures

Measures can be found in Appendices K through U. Reference points to guide participants' responses to the measures were "the past four weeks" at baseline (T1) and post-waitlist, "the past week (since the workshop)" at one-week post-workshop (T2), "the past six weeks" at post-treatment (T3), and "the past four weeks" at follow-up (T4). Table 2 indicates when each measure was administered.

Treatment Credibility and Expectations

The Treatment Credibility/Expectancy Questionnaire (CEQ; Devilly & Borkovec, 2000) was used to assess treatment credibility and expectations. The CEQ has six items and two subscales that measure beliefs about treatment credibility and expectations of improvement. Four of the six items are rated on a nine-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very*). Two items are rated on a scale from 0-100% at fixed 10% increments. An index score is created by converting responses to standard scores and averaging across the items. Sample items are "At this point, how logical does the program offered to you seem?" (credibility item) and "By the end of the program, how much improvement in your wellbeing do you really feel will occur?" (expectancy item). The CEQ has demonstrated good test-retest reliability (credibility $r = .75$; expectancy $r = .82$) and high internal consistency (total scale $\alpha = .84-.85$; Devilly & Borkovec, 2000). In this sample, the CEQ demonstrated good internal consistency (total scale $\alpha = .86$).

Sacred Moments

Developed by Pargament et al. (2014), the sacred moment qualities measure (SMQ) evaluates the extent to which one has experienced sacred moments. The SMQ has 16 items on a

five-point scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all true*) to 5 (*Very true*). It has good internal consistency in both clinical and non-clinical samples ($\alpha = .88$). Results from an exploratory factor analysis have further supported a single factor solution (Wong & Pargament, unpublished data).

Participants are asked to consider past experiences and respond to items, such as “I had moments that felt set apart from everyday life” and “I felt connected to something ultimately true.” An index score is created by averaging across the items. In this sample, the SMQ had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

Daily Spiritual Experiences

The frequency of various spiritual perceptions and experiences was measured by the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES; Underwood, 2011). It contains six items on a six-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Never or almost never*) to 6 (*Many times a day*). Sample items include “I feel God’s love for me directly or through others” and “I find strength and comfort in my religion or spirituality.” The measure possesses sound psychometric properties and yielded an internal consistency of .94 in a previous sample (Underwood, 2011). In this sample, the DSES had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$).

Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth was measured by the Spiritual Transformation Scale - Growth Subscale (STS; Cole et al., 2008). To reduce participant fatigue, the author selected 25 items out of the original 29 from the STS. Participants respond to the items on a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all true for me*) to 7 (*True for me a great deal*). Sample items include “Spirituality has become more important to me” and “I have grown spiritually.” The STS is a validated measure that has yielded excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .98$) in a previous sample (Cole et al., 2008). In this sample, the STS had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .98$).

Personal Growth

Personal growth was measured using the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory-Short Form (PTGI-SF; Cann et al., 2010). The PTGI-SF contains ten items rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (*To a very small degree*) to 5 (*To a very great degree*). The instructions were adapted to reference respective time points (e.g., "Please select the degree of change you have experienced over the past four weeks.") Sample items include "I know better that I can handle difficulties" and "I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life." It has been validated and yielded good internal consistency in a previous sample ($\alpha = .93$; Cann et al., 2010). In this sample, the PTGI-SF had excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

Meaning in Life

Meaning in life was captured by the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006). The MLQ has two factors that assess the presence of and search for meaning in life. Participants respond to items on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*Absolutely untrue*) to 7 (*Absolutely true*). Each subscale contains five items. This measure has yielded good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) and robust psychometric properties in previous samples. Sample items include "My life has a clear sense of purpose" (presence of meaning in life) and "I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life" (search for meaning in life). An index score is created by averaging across the items. In this sample, the MLQ had good internal consistency for both presence ($\alpha = .87$) and the search subscales ($\alpha = .87$).

Satisfaction with Life

Life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The SWLS contains five items rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). Sample items include "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal"

and “I am satisfied with my life.” It has been widely used on non-clinical samples and has strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and high temporal reliability. In this sample, the SWLS yielded good internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$).

Perceived Stress

Appraisals of the ability to handle stressors were captured by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4; Cohen et al., 1983). The PSS has four items that are rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 4 (*Very often*). Sample items include “How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?” and “How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?” It has acceptable psychometric properties and demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in a large non-clinical sample ($\alpha = .77$; Warttig et al., 2013). In this sample, the PSS-4 had marginally acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$). Furthermore, Cronbach’s alpha would not have improved if any of the items were deleted.

Depression and Anxiety

Depression and anxiety were measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4; Kroenke et al., 2009). The PHQ-4 contains two factors, depression and anxiety, that form a total index score and is a validated screening tool for such disorders. The measure contains four items that are rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 4 (*Nearly every day*). Sample items include “Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge” (anxiety) and “Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless” (depression). The measure possesses sound psychometric properties and yielded an internal consistency of .85 in a previous sample. In this sample, the PHQ-4 had good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$).

Program Satisfaction

An original program satisfaction questionnaire was created for the purpose of this study. It contains ten items, three of which are scaled items and seven of which are open-ended questions. Participants respond to the quantitative items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Very*). Sample scaled items include “How helpful was the program to you?” and “How informative was the program to you?” Sample open-ended items include “What did you like most about the program?” and “What did you like least about the program?”

RESULTS

Completion and Attrition

A total of 252 college students were eligible for and consented to participate in the study. Of these, 117 were randomly assigned to the waitlist control group and 90 of these participants completed the post-waitlist survey after four to six weeks, resulting in 23.1% attrition in the waitlist group. Assigned to the original treatment group were 135 individuals. In-person workshop attendees were composed of 89 from the original treatment group and 46 from the waitlist group to total 138 in the full treatment group at T1. At post-workshop, 119 completed the T2 survey. After six weeks, 100 students completed the T3 post-treatment survey. Therefore, the completion rate for the program was 73.0%. After four weeks, 97 students completed the T4 follow-up survey. As such, attrition in the treatment arm from T1 to T4 was 28.1%. See Figure 3 for the CONSORT flow diagram of participants.

Treatment Adherence and Process

A significant proportion of individuals reported having sacred moments during the program. More specifically, across the weekly online booster sessions, slightly less than half of the participants reported experiencing sacred moments within the past seven days, ranging from 40.3-44.0%. The rates for understanding the sacred qualities were generally similar for the five sacred qualities, ranging from 86.5% (deep interconnectedness) to 100.0% (gratitude) for scores equal or greater than 5 out of 10. Similarly, the rates for experiencing the sacred qualities were generally similar for the five sacred qualities, ranging from 83.3% (deep interconnectedness) to 100.0% (gratitude) for scores equal or greater than 5 out of 10. As a reminder, the anchors for the understanding and experiencing scales were from 0 (no understanding/complete understanding) to 10 (complete understanding / experiencing). In terms of frequency of completing home

practice, participants were most engaged in the gratitude homework. The percentages for none ranged from 7.0% (gratitude practice) to 20% (Thin Spaces meditation), the percentages for one to two times ranged from 22.0% (gratitude practice) to 51.9% (Thin Spaces meditation), the percentages for three to four times ranged from 18.6% (Thin Spaces meditation) to 38.0% (gratitude practice), the percentages for five times or more ranged from 8.8% (Thin Spaces meditation) to 33.0% (gratitude practice). See Table 3 for additional details.

Program Efficacy

Program efficacy was evaluated using two types of analyses. The first analyses involved comparing the individuals in the original treatment group versus the waitlist group. These analyses required the groups to be independent; thus, that data from individuals in the waitlist group who decided to enter treatment later were counted only once as part of the waitlist group. The second analyses explored the changes in all of the individuals who completed the surveys at T1 (baseline), T2 (post-workshop), T3 (post-treatment), and T4 (one-month follow-up), including those individuals in the waitlist group who later decided to enter treatment.

Original Treatment versus Waitlist Group

A series of two-way 2 (group: original treatment and waitlist) x 2 (time: baseline and post-treatment) mixed ANOVAs were conducted. Per Lund Research Ltd. (2020) guidelines, outliers were examined using boxplots for values greater than 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box. Outliers were also noted as studentized residuals with values greater than ± 3 . Analyses were conducted with and without the outlier(s). In all cases, the results were unchanged. Thus, the reported results are derived from the full sample, including outliers. The assumption of normality was assessed using Q-Q plots of studentized residuals. If the data were skewed, appropriate transformations were applied. Levene's test was used to assess for homogeneity of

variance for within-subject factors. If this assumption was unmet, appropriate transformations were applied (i.e., a reflect-and-inverse transformation was applied for the SMQ variable; a square root transformation for the PSS variable). Box's test of equality of covariance matrices was used to determine homogeneity of covariances. If a significant group x time interaction emerged, simple main effects analyses were conducted. A summary of the raw means and standard deviations can be found in Table 4.

Sacred Moments. There was a statistically significant interaction between group x time on sacred moment qualities, $F(1, 157) = 12.35, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .073$. Simple main effects analyses revealed a statistically significant difference in sacred moments between groups at post-treatment, $F(1, 157) = 7.75, p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .047$, with higher scores among people in the original treatment group than in the waitlist control group. See Figure 4 for a graphical representation.

Daily Spiritual Experiences. There was a statistically significant interaction between group x time on daily spiritual experiences, $F(1, 156) = 10.87, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .065$. Simple main effects analyses revealed a statistically significant difference in sacred moments between groups at post-treatment, $F(1, 156) = 4.70, p = .032$, partial $\eta^2 = .029$, with higher scores among people in the original treatment group than in the waitlist control group. See Figure 5 for a graphical representation.

Spiritual Growth. There was a statistically significant interaction between group x time on spiritual growth, $F(1, 156) = 20.84, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .118$. Simple main effects analyses revealed that statistically significant difference in sacred moments between groups at post-treatment, $F(1, 156) = 13.55, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .080$, with higher scores among people in

the original treatment group than in the waitlist control group. See Figure 6 for a graphical representation.

Personal Growth. There was a statistically significant interaction between group x time on personal growth, $F(1, 156) = 4.41, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .078$. Simple main effects analyses revealed that statistically significant differences in sacred moments between groups at post-treatment, $F(1, 156) = 9.07, p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .055$, with higher scores among people in the original treatment group than in the waitlist control group. See Figure 7 for a graphical representation.

Satisfaction with Life. There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on life satisfaction, $F(1, 156) = 0.93, p = .337$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 156) = 1.41, p = .237$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. The main effect of group was not significant, $F(1, 156) = 0.02, p = .891$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$.

Search for Meaning in Life. There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on search for meaning in life, $F(1, 156) = 1.44, p = .233$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 156) = 0.40, p = .526$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. The main effect of group was not significant, $F(1, 156) = 0.76, p = .386$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$.

Presence of Meaning in Life. There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on presence of meaning in life, $F(1, 156) = 1.34, p = .248$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. The main effect of time was significant, $F(1, 156) = 11.93, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .071$, such that the presence of meaning in life was lower at post-treatment regardless of group. The main effect of group was not significant, $F(1, 156) = 2.52, p = .14$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$. See Figure 8 for a graphical representation.

Perceived Stress. There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on perceived stress, $F(1, 155) = 2.39, p = .125$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 155) = 2.66, p = .105$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$. The main effect of group was not significant, $F(1, 155) = 0.21, p = .647$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$.

Depression and Anxiety. There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on depression/anxiety, $F(1, 155) = 2.63, p = .107$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 155) = 2.29, p = .132$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$. The main effect of group was not significant, $F(1, 155) = 0.37, p = .542$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

Within-Subject Changes in the Full Treatment Group

One-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were significant changes in each of the outcome variables over the four time points: T1 (baseline), T2 (post-workshop), T3 (post-treatment), and T4 (one-month follow-up). The means and standard deviations are summarized in Table 5.

Sacred Moments. The assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(2) = 2.14, p = .342$. Statistically significant changes in sacred moment qualities occurred over the course of the program, $F(2, 192) = 22.76, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .192$, with sacred moment qualities increasing from T1 ($M = 2.75, SD = 0.89$) to T3 ($M = 3.34, SD = 0.78$) and then decreasing at T4 ($M = 2.93, SD = 1.05$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that sacred moment qualities significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 0.59, 95\% CI [.37, .81], p < .001$, and decreased from T3 (post-treatment) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -0.40, 95\% CI [-.60, -.20], p < .001$, but not from T1 (baseline) to T4 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = .18, 95\% CI [-.05, .41], p = .161$. See Figure 9 for a graphical representation.

Daily Spiritual Experiences. Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(5) = 28.07$, $p < .001$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\epsilon = 0.855$). Statistically significant changes in daily spiritual experiences occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.57, 246.36) = 5.13$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .051$, with daily spiritual experiences increasing from T1 ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.51$) to T2 ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.48$), increasing at T3 ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.59$), and decreasing at T4 ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.59$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that daily spiritual experiences significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 0.31$, 95% CI [.09, .53], $p = .002$, but not from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{diff} = .17$, 95% CI [-.05, .38], $p = .240$ or T1 (baseline) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = .17$, 95% CI [-.06, .40], $p = .307$. Neither was there a significant change between T3 (post-treatment) and T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -.14$, 95% CI [-.29, .01], $p = .088$. See Figure 10 for a graphical representation.

Spiritual Growth. The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 22.90$, $p < .001$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\epsilon = 0.862$). Statistically significant changes in spiritual growth occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.59, 248.16) = 18.80$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .164$, with spiritual growth increasing from T1 ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.90$) to T2 ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.74$), increasing at T3 ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.79$), and decreasing at T4 ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.84$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that spiritual growth significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{diff} = 0.41$, 95% CI [.03, .80], $p < .030$, and increased from T2 (post-workshop) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 0.59$, 95% CI [.21, 0.97], $p < .001$, but not from T3 (post-treatment) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -.25$, 95% CI [-.55, .06], $p = .182$. See Figure 11 for a graphical representation.

Personal Growth. The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 15.24, p = .009$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.896$). Statistically significant changes in personal growth occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.69, 257.91) = 10.62, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .100$, with personal growth decreasing from T1 ($M = 2.79, SD = 0.88$) to T2 ($M = 2.60, SD = .94$), increasing at T3 ($M = 3.05, SD = .96$), and decreasing at T4 ($M = 2.94, SD = 1.00$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that personal growth significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = .27, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .51], p < .001$, but not from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{diff} = -.19, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.40, .01], p = .080$ or from T1 (baseline) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = .15, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.12, .42], p = .822$. Neither was there a significant change between T3 (post-treatment) and T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -.12, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.33, .10], p = .857$. See Figure 12 for a graphical representation.

Satisfaction with Life. The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 12.92, p = .024$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.917$). Non-significant changes in life satisfaction occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.75, 264.00) = 1.47, p = .222$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$.

Search for Meaning in Life. The assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 5.27, p = .383$. Non-significant changes in the search for meaning in life occurred over the course of the program, $F(3, 288) = .64, p = .59$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$.

Presence of Meaning in Life. The assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 9.16, p = .103$. Statistically significant changes in the presence of meaning in life occurred over the course of the program, $F(3, 288) = 9.66, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .091$, with presence of meaning in life decreasing from T1 ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.18$) to T2 ($M =$

4.25, SD = 0.95), increasing at T3 (M = 4.47, SD = 1.01), and decreasing at T4 (M = 4.42, SD = 0.99). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the presence of meaning in life significantly decreased from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.49$, 95% CI [-.74, -.25], $p < .001$, and subsequently remained the same at T3 (post-treatment), $M_{\text{diff}} = .22$, 95% CI [-.04, .48], $p = .159$ and T4 (follow-up), $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.49$, 95% CI [-.27, .17], $p = 1.000$. See Figure 13 for a graphical representation.

Perceived Stress. The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 18.53$, $p = .002$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.876$). Non-significant changes in perceived stress occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.63, 252.27) = .56$, $p = .639$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$.

Depression and Anxiety. The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 11.35$, $p = .05$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.923$). Non-significant changes in depression and anxiety symptoms occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.77, 265.85) = 2.59$, $p = .053$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$.

Additional Post Hoc Analyses

Waitlist Opt-In, Waitlist Opt-Out, and Original Treatment Groups. Additional post hoc analyses were conducted to address the possibility that individuals who self-selected into the treatment group after the waiting period of four to six weeks represented a biased subset of the waiting list sample. In other words, those who self-selected into treatment from the waitlist may not have done so at random. Specifically, those who self-selected into the treatment group from the waitlist may have differed in their levels of perceived stress and mental health. As such, there may have been three potentially distinct groups: original treatment, waitlist opt-in, and waitlist opt-out. To clarify, the waitlist opt-in group refers to the participants who were randomly

assigned to the waitlist group and later opted into treatment, whereas the waitlist opt-out group refers to those who elected to withdraw from the study after the wait period of four to six weeks. Thus, a pair of two-way 3 (groups: original treatment, waitlist opt-in, waitlist opt-out) x 2 (time: baseline and post-treatment) mixed ANOVAs were conducted, one in which perceived stress served as the dependent variable and other in which anxiety and depressive symptoms served as the dependent variable.

There was no statistically significant interaction between group x time on perceived stress, $F(2, 154) = 1.96, p = .145$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 154) = 0.99, p = .322$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. However, the main effect of group was significant, $F(2, 154) = 4.45, p = .013$, partial $\eta^2 = .055$. Simple main effects analyses revealed statistically significant differences in means between groups, such that the waitlist opt-out group ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .19$) scored significantly higher on perceived stress than the waitlist opt-in group ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .19$), $M_{\text{diff}} = .11$, 95% CI [.02, .20], $p = .011$. See Figure 14 for a graphical representation.

Similarly, there was no significant interaction between group x time on depression and anxiety symptoms, $F(2, 154) = 1.39, p = .252$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$. The main effect of time was not significant, $F(1, 154) = 0.98, p = .323$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. However, the main effect of group was significant, $F(2, 154) = 4.81, p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .059$. Simple main effects analyses revealed statistically significant differences in means between groups, such that the waitlist opt-out group ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .99$) scored significantly higher on depression and anxiety symptoms than the waitlist opt-in group ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .64$), $M_{\text{diff}} = .49$, 95% CI [.10, .87], $p = .008$. See Figure 15 for a graphical representation.

Within-Subject Changes in the Original Treatment Group. Given that the within-subject changes in the full treatment group included those who joined from the waitlist and may

have been more impacted by the pandemic, it would be reasonable to explore the possibility that within-subject findings with only the original treatment group could be more pronounced. Thus, a second set of post hoc analyses was conducted involving one-way repeated measures ANOVAs on the original treatment group. To clarify, the original treatment group does not include participants from the waitlist who opted into the program later. Significant changes in the outcome variables were replicated on sacred moments, daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, personal growth, and presence of meaning in life across the four time points: T1 (baseline), T2 (post-workshop), T3 (post-treatment), and T4 (one-month follow-up).

For sacred moment qualities, the assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(2) = 2.12, p = .347$. Statistically significant changes in sacred moment qualities occurred over the course of the program, $F(2, 62) = 21.03, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .250$, with sacred moment qualities increasing from T1 ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.84$) to T3 ($M = 3.42, SD = 0.67$) and then decreasing at T4 ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.00$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that sacred moment qualities significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 0.67, 95\% \text{ CI } [.40, .93], p < .001$, and decreased from T3 (post-treatment) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -0.35, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.58, -.12], p < .001$, but remained higher at T4 (post-treatment) than T1 (baseline), $M_{diff} = .31, 95\% \text{ CI } [.05, .58], p = .015$. See Figure 16 for a graphical representation.

For daily spiritual experiences, Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(5) = 28.05, p < .001$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\epsilon = 0.787$). Statistically significant changes in daily spiritual experiences occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.36, 148.71) = 6.48, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .093$, with daily spiritual experiences increasing from T1 ($M = 3.01, SD = 1.53$) and T2 ($M = 3.09, SD = 1.48$) to T3 ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.57$), and decreasing at

T4 ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.57$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that daily spiritual experiences significantly increased from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 0.37$, 95% CI [.10, .65], $p = .003$, but not from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{diff} = .08$, 95% CI [-.16, .32], $p = .251$, or T1 (baseline) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = .22$, 95% CI [-.07, .52], $p = .114$. Neither was the decrease between T3 and T4 significant, $M_{diff} = -.15$, 95% CI [-.32, .02], $p = .114$. See Figure 17 for a graphical representation.

For spiritual growth, the assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 26.93$, $p < .001$. Thus, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ($\varepsilon = 0.768$). Statistically significant changes in spiritual growth occurred over the course of the program, $F(2.30, 145.18) = 18.39$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .226$, with spiritual growth increasing from T1 ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.93$) to T2 ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.76$), increasing at T3 ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.78$), and decreasing at T4 ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.73$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that spiritual growth significantly increased from T1 (baseline) and T2 (post-workshop) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = 1.16$, 95% CI [.57, 1.76], $p < .001$ and $M_{diff} = .787$, 95% CI [.31, 1.26], $p < .001$, respectively, but not from T3 (post-treatment) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{diff} = -.19$, 95% CI [-.54, .15], $p = .807$. See Figure 18 for a graphical representation.

For personal growth, the assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 8.67$, $p = .123$. Statistically significant changes in personal growth occurred over the course of the program, $F(3, 189) = 9.57$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .132$, with personal growth decreasing from T1 ($M = 2.76$, $SD = .91$) to T2 ($M = 2.65$, $SD = .97$), increasing at T3 ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .94$), and decreasing at T4 ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .98$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that personal growth significantly increased from T1 (baseline) and T2 (post-workshop) to T3 (post-treatment), $M_{diff} = .35$, 95% CI [.03, .66], $p = .033$ and $M_{diff} = .46$,

95% CI [.17, .75], $p < .001$, but not from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{\text{diff}} = -.11$, 95% CI [-.37, .14], $p = 1.00$, or from T3 (post-treatment) to T4 (follow-up), $M_{\text{diff}} = -.01$, 95% CI [-.28, .26], $p = .1.00$. At T4 (follow-up), personal growth was significantly higher than T1 (baseline), $M_{\text{diff}} = .341$, 95% CI [.01, .67], $p = .042$. See Figure 19 for a graphical representation.

For presence of meaning in life, the assumption of sphericity was upheld, as assessed by Mauchly's test, $\chi^2(5) = 5.29$, $p = .381$. Statistically significant changes in the presence of meaning in life occurred over the course of the program, $F(3, 189) = 5.83$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .085$, with presence of meaning in life decreasing from T1 ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 1.19$) to T2 ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .98$), increasing at T3 ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.03$), and remaining the same at T4 ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .96$). Post hoc analysis using a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the presence of meaning in life significantly decreased from T1 (baseline) to T2 (post-workshop), $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.46$, 95% CI [-.77, -.15], $p = .001$, and subsequently remained the same at T3 (post-treatment), $M_{\text{diff}} = .31$, 95% CI [-.00, .62], $p = .055$ and T4 (follow-up), $M_{\text{diff}} = 0.00$, 95% CI [-.27, .27], $p = 1.000$. Neither was there a significant difference in levels of presence of meaning in life between T1 and T4, $M_{\text{diff}} = -.15$, 95% CI [-.48, .18], $p = 1.00$. See Figure 20 for a graphical representation.

In summary, the within-group findings for the original treatment group were indeed more pronounced than the full treatment group, suggesting that the waitlisted individuals who opted into treatment later may have been less able to benefit from the program. For the original treatment group, treatment gains at T4 (one-month follow-up) for sacred moments and personal growth were at significantly higher levels than T1 (baseline). Additionally, treatment gains from

T3 (post-program) were maintained at T4 (one-month follow-up) for daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, and personal growth.

Program Credibility, Satisfaction, and Feedback

When queried after the in-person workshop, the vast majority of participants found the program to be logical (96.3%) and expected their wellbeing to improve somewhat to very much (86.2-91.3%). Similarly, at post-treatment (T3), the majority of participants noted that the program was helpful (77%) and informative (90%) to some degree. Table 6 provides further details on treatment credibility, expectations, and satisfaction rates.

Moreover, the open-ended responses were largely positive. In terms of what they liked, many participants noted that the program was inclusive of diverse worldviews and exposed them to new ideas, the content was well-organized and not overly burdensome, the in-person workshop was a highlight, the meditations were well-received, and the program length allowed for time to change and reflect, especially during troubling times. For example, one individual stated,

“I’ve always had a connection with my spiritual side but I was also involved with a religion that felt stifling and restrictive. Starting college allowed me to release myself from that religion, but I was missing some tools to regain a direction in my spirituality. I felt that this program provided me a few more tools, and I feel less lost in my spiritual life.”

In terms of what they disliked, many participants wanted to lengthen the program, shorten the videos, and meet in person more frequently. For instance, one student commented,

“I would provide more optional Face time. I felt more comfortable meditating with the group than on my own. Being able to share your experience with other people was uplifting and not something I can do when I’m out of that group.”

When asked if and how the program impacted them spiritually, most participants indicated that the program helped them spiritual emotions, feel connected with loved ones, feel

closer to God, and sparked a desire to integrate sacred moments into their lives. One person noted,

“It helped me change a few things in my life and actually think about who I want to be and what I want others to remember about me. This program did a great job of being an eye-opener for me.”

Suggestions for improving the program included having fewer surveys, de-bugging the survey, clarifying explanations of spiritual constructs, and adapting the program for people with fewer positive spiritual experiences. For example, one person said, “I also feel like a lot of this is geared towards happy memories and personally, those aren’t my most spiritual memories at all.”

Finally, when given the opportunity to comment more generally, many students acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on their personal lives. One representative quote was, “I’m so glad I participated in a program like this, it helped me realize there is so much more in life and gave me many methods to help with stress.” See Table 7 for more themes and representative quotes.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to develop and evaluate a sacred moments program on a sample of college students, using a randomly assigned pretest-posttest design with a waitlist control group. The program was designed to help individuals cultivate sacred moments and enhance wellbeing through experiential exercises, reflection, and didactic components. The initial workshop focused on sacred moments as a whole, followed by weekly themes that featured the theorized qualities of transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, and gratitude (i.e., one example of a spiritual emotion). In this section, the feasibility and acceptability of the program will be discussed. Next, I will comment on the preliminary efficacy of the program, reviewing key findings on the outcome variables in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications. The strengths and limitations of this project also will be noted.

Feasibility and Acceptability

As predicted, the sacred moments program demonstrated high feasibility, as evidenced by the high completion rate of 73.0% at post-treatment (i.e., six weeks). Comparatively, Woodworth et al. (2017) reported a completion rate of 50% at posttest (i.e., one week) for their web-based positive psychology interventions for a non-clinical sample. Another online wellbeing intervention retained 68.7% of participants at one-month follow-up (Cobb & Poirier, 2014). Moreover, the attrition rate of the full treatment group at follow-up (i.e., T4) was comparable at 28.1% to the waitlist control group at 23.1% after four to six weeks. Of note, some participants who withdrew from the study explicitly cited COVID-19 as their reason, including individuals who were progressing through the program, waitlisted, or in the midst of deciding whether to begin the program upon completion of the post-waitlist survey. Given the historical context, the

attrition rate for this study was reasonable and may even be considered low when compared to similar online interventions using non-clinical samples. For instance, an attrition rate of 84% was reported for an online wellbeing intervention that encouraged ten minutes of daily mindfulness practice over one month (Bailey et al., 2018).

Moreover, participants' open-ended responses suggested that they found the program to be generally suitable to their lifestyles and highly acceptable. The blended nature of the program allowed them to continue their sessions online throughout the pandemic. Indeed, many of the students indicated that the program was helpful with regard to their coping with pandemic-related changes in their lives. Moreover, treatment credibility was supported at post-workshop, with the vast majority indicating that the program was logical, both thinking and feeling that the program would improve their wellbeing to some degree. At post-treatment, the majority reported that they were satisfied with the program. The open-ended feedback further supported the conclusion that the program was feasible and acceptable.

Several considerations may enhance program feasibility and acceptability in the future. According to participant feedback, the majority expressed a preference for meeting as a group in person (i.e., synchronously), rather than online individually at their convenience (i.e., asynchronously). These preferences for synchronous in-person experiences align with the majority of U.S. students surveyed during the onset of the pandemic (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). It is thus recommended that future iterations of the program be delivered synchronously. Moreover, the selected meditations, reflections, and weekly themes did not resonate with all participants, given their varying life experiences and reactions to exploring their spirituality at the time in such a structured manner. Therefore, a sacred moments process group may yield similar or stronger results, which remains a question for future investigation. Borrowing

elements from group reminiscence (Stinson, 2009) and interpersonal process (Leszcz, 1992), a sacred moments variation program might involve weekly sharing of sacred moments while individuals co-create a sacred therapeutic space in session. Finally, Canvas (2020) reported that overall levels of student engagement in coursework were hampered by the pandemic. It would be reasonable to believe that this history effect diminished our findings on the program's feasibility and acceptability to some extent.

Preliminary Efficacy

With regard to program efficacy, the findings suggest that the sacred moments program had some positive impact, but the impact over time was not sustained for the majority of the outcomes. In partial support of my hypotheses, participants reported significant gains in sacred moment qualities, daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, and personal growth at post-treatment compared to the waitlist control group. The effect sizes ranged from small (e.g., daily spiritual experiences) to medium (e.g., spiritual growth) at post-treatment. Moreover, these findings were supported in the within-subject analyses for the treatment group. Thus, the sacred moments program appeared to have a positive effect on several growth indicators and spiritual variables that were compared at baseline to post-treatment. These significant findings add to past research on sacred moments that have supported their benefits. That most of the gains were not maintained at follow-up may be partly attributable to the impact of COVID-19, in addition to limitations in the program design and components. The negative impact of COVID-19 on U.S. college students' psychological wellbeing during Spring of 2020 has been well documented (Healthy Minds Network, 2020; Son et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Pew Research Center (2020) reported that less than a quarter of U.S. adults surveyed between April

20-26, 2020, said that their faith grew stronger as a result of the pandemic, with some variance by racial/ethnic groups and religious traditions.

The majority of students completed the program from March to May 2020. As such, baseline (T1) and post-workshop (T2) measures were completed from February 1 to March 16, 2020. Most of the post-treatment (T3) and follow-up (T4) measures were completed in late March through May of 2020. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) declared a worldwide pandemic due to COVID-19. Notably, at the university where the study was conducted, students were required to leave campus for Spring Recess, which began on March 16, 2020, for what was initially announced to be a two-week period. Students were prohibited from returning to campus to retrieve their belongings until after the Spring 2020 semester ended. During the study time period, the U.S. death toll as a result of COVID-19 escalated precipitously (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Thus, findings, both significant and non-significant, must be interpreted with caution and in context of elevated levels of distress found in college students at that time.

Of the non-significant outcomes among people who participated in the program, the lack of change in mental health symptoms and perceived stress across the four time points in the within-subject analyses is open to various interpretations. Consider the following: Scores on the PHQ-4 at baseline (T1) and post-workshop (T2) approximated the mean of the PHQ-4 validation sample, which involved primary care patients surveyed prior to the pandemic (Kroenke et al., 2009). Similarly, levels of perceived stress in this sample at baseline (T1) and post-workshop (T2) approximated a non-clinical normative adult sample who completed the PSS-4 prior to the pandemic (Warttig et al., 2013). These findings are congruent with expectations, given that T1 and T2 for the majority of participants occurred before the WHO announced the pandemic on

March 11, 2020, and pandemic-related changes were instituted by the university where the study was conducted and more broadly in the U.S. Soon thereafter, levels of perceived stress, anxiety, and depression surged in college students. For instance, Kecojevic and colleagues (2020) noted elevated mental health symptoms and perceived stress in a sample of U.S. college students surveyed in April 2020. Charles and colleagues (2021) also compared levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in college students from April 1 to early May 2020 to Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 semesters. They found that all three variables were significantly higher during the former period, which corresponds with the period during which the bulk of participants were engaging in the sacred moments program. Similarly, higher levels of anxiety and depression were found in a U.S. online sample of emerging adults surveyed from May 8-13, 2020 compared to June 9-15, 2020 (Kujawa et al., 2020). Strikingly, 45% of those individuals surpassed the cutoff for depression as measured by the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 in May (Kroenke et al., 2009).

With this context in mind, it may be somewhat surprising that the levels of perceived stress, anxiety, and depression in the present sample of those who participated the program at T3 and T4 remained comparable to levels measured at T1 and T2. As such, one possible explanation may be that the sacred moments program's positive impact on mental health and perceived stress was neutralized by the concurrent impact of COVID-19. Another possible interpretation is that this sample's mental health and stress levels would have deteriorated if not for the intervention. A third possibility is that the students who completed the sacred moments program represented a self-selected group of more resilient individuals, such that the pandemic was less detrimental to their mental health and levels of stress. Of note, the null finding on perceived stress may also be partially explained by the marginal acceptability of the PSS-4's internal consistency in this sample.

The remaining outcomes included the non-significant outcomes of life satisfaction and meaning in life. That the scores on the SWLS and MLQ-search remained relatively constant across four time points in the study is notable and open to interpretation. In addition, the only significant decline in the presence meaning in life occurred between T1 and T2. The following points may be considered: Scores on the SWLS at T1 and T2 were slightly lower than the mean reported on the validation sample of undergraduate students (Diener et al., 1985). Scores on the presence of meaning in life at T1 and T2 approximated the mean reported on the validation sample of undergraduate students, whereas scores on the search for meaning were somewhat higher than the mean reported on the validation sample of undergraduate students (Steger et al., 2006). In a national longitudinal German sample of adults, life satisfaction remained constant between December 2019 and March 2020, but declined from March to May 2020 (Zacher & Rudolph, 2020). In a cross-sectional Polish internet sample surveyed between April 1-4, 2020, life satisfaction scores were lower than the mean reported in original validation sample (Trzebiński et al., 2020; in reference to Diener et al., 1985). In a cross-sectional sample of undergraduate students in Turkey surveyed immediately after stay-at-home COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, scores on the SWLS were also somewhat lower than the mean reported in the validation sample (Arslan et al. 2020, in reference to Diener et al., 1985). No empirical studies conducted during the same time period as the present study utilized the MLQ or measured meaning in life in such a manner that would allow for comparisons and inferences with the validation sample and current study (e.g., Arslan & Allen, 2021; Trzebiński et al., 2020). Taken together, it is possible that the sacred moments program buffered the negative impact of the pandemic on life satisfaction. Given the lack of longitudinal studies on meaning in life conducted during the study period, the impact of the sacred moments program on college

student's presence and search for meaning in life outside of a pandemic remains an open question.

Post Hoc Findings

Post hoc analyses were conducted to examine the possibility of individuals in the waitlist influencing treatment outcomes. Findings from the additional mixed ANOVAs revealed that waitlist opt-out group reported higher levels of perceived stress and mental health symptoms than the waitlist opt-in group. Thus, the waitlist opt-in group may have been comprised of more resilient individuals in the face of the pandemic, such that they were more willing to dedicate their resources and time to the intervention. That the waitlist opt-in group seemed to be better adjusted may have influenced the results of the study for several reasons. If they were indeed more resilient, then they may have had less room to benefit from the program, particularly with respect to the more distal outcomes (i.e., perceived stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, life satisfaction, meaning in life). These post hoc findings also help explain the null findings on the distal outcomes (i.e., mental health, life satisfaction, and perceived stress) in the original mixed ANOVAs. First, the sacred moments program may have helped prevent the distal outcomes from declining in the treatment group. Second, the more resilient waitlisted individuals were combined with the less resilient waitlisted individuals, together yielding consistent levels across the distal outcomes in the waitlist group from T1 (baseline) to T3 (post-waitlist). In other words, the sacred moments program may explain the stability in the treatment group in spite of a damaging pandemic, while the more resilient waitlisted individuals may explain the overall stability in the waitlist group. Taken together, these possibilities may explain the null main effects and the lack of an interaction.

Another potential implication is that, because the more resilient individuals from the waitlist group joined the treatment arm later, these participants may have been impacted by the pandemic more, such that they may have been less engaged or could not benefit to the same degree as the original treatment group, thereby dampening the findings. As such, additional post hoc repeated measures analyses were conducted on the original treatment group only, which revealed several nuanced differences from the repeated measures findings of the full treatment group. For the original treatment group, treatment gains at T4 (one-month follow-up) for sacred moments and personal growth remained at higher levels than T1 (baseline). Moreover, treatment gains were maintained from T3 (post-program) to T4 (one-month follow-up) for daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, and personal growth. Taken together, these post hoc within-subject findings suggest that the waitlisted individuals who opted into treatment may have been less able to benefit from the program.

Implications

The significance of the sacred in people's lives during troubled times cannot be understated. Across 95 countries, Google searches for prayer skyrocketed to an all-time high during March of 2020 (Bentzen, 2020). In a cross-sectional sample of Brazilian participants surveyed in May 2020, 75% of participants reported utilizing various religious and spiritual strategies to cope with pandemic-related social isolation (Lucchetti et al., 2020). Among American Orthodox Jews surveyed between March 29 and April 22, 2020, the utilization of positive religious coping strategies was related to lower stress levels (Pirutinsky et al., 2020). In spite of the pandemic, sacred moments appear to be promising phenomena that can be harnessed by way of a structured program to promote growth and a healthy spirituality. Past sacred moments can be integrated through reflection and cultivated through brief re-immersive

meditation. Weekly focus on the sacred moments and qualities facilitated more sacred moments, daily spiritual experiences, spiritual growth, and personal growth. The findings underscore the potential power of the spiritual dimension in facilitating wellbeing. Spiritually integrated interventions have been found to be equally, if not more effective, than their equivalents (see Goncalves et al., 2015; Pargament, 2011). Thus, the incorporation of sacred moments exercises and processing into existing wellbeing programs may further improve outcomes. Such practices would align with a holistic model of mental health care.

Aspects of the sacred moments program have already been incorporated into the Awareness, Courage, and Love Global Project, an initiative designed to help individuals develop meaningful connections (ACL, 2019; Tsai et al., 2009). As such, the re-immersive meditation has been translated and implemented on web platforms in languages such as German, Spanish, and Portuguese for online participants. Other pandemic-related interventions that may benefit from incorporating aspects of the sacred moment program include life crafting (de Jong et al., 2020) and the spiritual hotline project (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Based in positive psychology and expressive writing, life crafting involves structuring people's search for meaning in life and the integration of new purpose(s) found during the pandemic (de Jong et al., 2020). A spiritual hotline was established by healthcare workers in Brazil to provide support for people's religious and spiritual needs during the pandemic and post-pandemic period (Ribeiro et al., 2020). The cultivation of sacred moments represents a recently conceptualized coping resource that can be quickly and easily disseminated to promote wellbeing.

Strengths and Limitations

Some strengths of the study design and program are worth noting. First, using a randomly assigned waitlist control group allowed for comparisons and inferences to be made about the

positive impact of the program on spiritual and growth variables. Second, the sacred moments program is unique in its blended format, which made it more accessible to off-campus and rural students with internet connections. Future iterations may be delivered fully online or in person synchronously. Third, the program distinctly drew from sanctification theory (Pargament & Mahoney, 2009) and provided weekly themes based upon the theoretical qualities of sacred moments (Pargament et al., 2014). Moreover, the program is a relatively benign intervention with little to no costs in comparison with other spiritual interventions designed to induce mystical or self-transcendent states. For instance, holotropic breathwork involves rapid breathing exercises may cause physiological discomfort, risk of seizure, and possible brain damage (Grof & Grof, 2010). Other safer pathways to cultivate sacred moments may include following the principles of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP, Kohlenberg & Tsai, 2012). Recently, FAP trainings have incorporated the re-immersive treasure chest meditation and framed psychotherapy as a sacred space (Tsai et al., 2020).

With regard to the limitations of this research, several threats to external and internal validity must be noted. The generalizability of the findings may have been undermined by the extraordinary pandemic circumstances during which the study occurred. Both the timing and the magnitude of the history effect require serious consideration. The levels of all outcome variables may have been differentially skewed for various cohorts in both treatment and waitlist arms at various timepoints. For instance, a cohort that attended the workshop one week earlier than another cohort may have been less affected by the unfolding events of the pandemic, resulting in qualitatively different cohorts that proceeded through the study. Another possibility is that the changes in the scores of the treatment group, as well as the difference in scores between treatment and waitlist groups, may have been magnified or diminished as a result of the nation's

evolving response to COVID-19 from February to June 2020. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to trace the improvements in spiritual and personal growth to the sacred moments program, given the non-significant changes in the waitlist control group. In otherwise normal circumstances, the non-significant outcome variables in the treatment arm may have yielded a more promising pattern. That is, life satisfaction and presence of meaning may have improved while perceived stress and depression/anxiety symptoms may have declined.

Future research should attempt to replicate the findings on college student and other populations. For instance, older adults may serve as natural candidates to reap the benefits of sacred moments and re-immersive meditative experiences. Known as the positivity effect, older adults typically attend to the positive aspects of events over the negative and selectively recall more positive memories (Mather & Carstensen, 2005). Lee and colleagues (2019) have also noted several potential benefits of augmented and virtual reality technologies on the wellbeing of older adults. Finally, the study solely relied on self-report from participants. Voukelatou and colleagues (2020) have noted that subjective wellbeing is traditionally captured using self-report. Nonetheless, obtaining information from other data sources, including objective and/or observational measures, would strengthen future evaluations of the program.

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APPENDIX A. TABLES

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Variable	Waitlist ($n = 117$)	Treatment ($n = 135$)	Total ($n = 252$)
Age $M(SD)$	20.44 (3.59)	19.91 (2.20)	20.16 (2.94)
Female	72%	68.1%	69.8%
Family income $M(SD)$	4.01 (1.76)	4.10 (1.68)	4.06 (1.71)
Under \$10,000	10.3%	8.9%	9.5%
\$10,000-\$29,999	17.1%	11.1%	13.9%
\$30,000-\$49,999	8.5%	17.8%	13.5%
\$50,000-\$69,999	21.4%	15.6%	18.3%
\$70,000-\$89,999	11.1%	16.3%	13.9%
\$90,000 and above	31.6%	30.4%	31.0%
Relationship status			
Single	54.7%	56.3%	55.6%
Committed relationship	39.3%	41.5%	40.5%
Married	4.3%	1.5%	2.8%
Other	1.7%	0.7%	1.2%
Year of school			
First year	38.5%	38.5%	38.5%
Second year	22.2%	27.4%	25.0%
Third year	12.8%	11.1%	11.9%
Fourth year	19.7%	15.6%	17.5%
Fifth year	2.6%	3.0%	2.8%
Other	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%
Race/ethnicity			
White	69.2%	79.3%	74.6%
African- American/Black	13.7%	10.4%	11.9%
Hispanic/Latino	6.0%	2.2%	4.0%
Asian/Asian-American	4.3%	2.2%	3.2%
Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic	6.8%	4.4%	5.6%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%
Religious affiliation			
Christian (Protestant, Orthodox, Non-denominational, or Other)	43.6%	40.7%	42.1%
Roman Catholic (Christian)	22.2%	17.0%	19.4%
Jewish	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%
Hindu	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%
Buddhist	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%
Atheist	9.4%	8.9%	9.1%
Agnostic	15.4%	23.0%	19.4%

Other	6.8%	9.6%	8.3%
General religiosity <i>M (SD)</i>	2.20 (0.96)	2.20 (0.94)	2.20 (0.95)
Not at all religious	29.1%	28.9%	29.0%
Slightly religious	30.8%	28.9%	29.8%
Moderately religious	31.6%	35.6%	33.7%
Very religious	8.5%	6.7%	7.5%
Self-rated spirituality <i>M (SD)</i>	2.65 (0.95)	2.66 (0.88)	2.64 (0.91)
Not at all spiritual	14.5%	8.9%	11.5%
Slightly spiritual	27.4%	34.8%	31.3%
Moderately spiritual	40.2%	37.8%	38.9%
Very spiritual	17.9%	18.5%	18.3%

Note. Values were taken from baseline assessment. Percentages are valid percentages.

Table 2

Administration of Measures at Study Time Points

	T1. Baseline	T2. One Week Post- Workshop	T3. Post- Treatment	T4. Follow- Up
Demographics	X			
Treatment Credibility		X		
Sacred Moment Qualities	X		X	X
Program Satisfaction			X	
Meaning in Life	X	X	X	X
Daily Spiritual Experiences	X	X	X	X
Life Satisfaction	X	X	X	X
Spiritual Growth	X	X	X	X
Personal Growth	X	X	X	X
Perceived Stress	X	X	X	X
Depression/Anxiety	X	X	X	X

Table 3

Treatment Process Summary

Booster Session	
Deep Interconnectedness	
Did you have any sacred moments in the past seven days?	40.3% Yes
Please rate your understanding of deep interconnectedness (0-10)	86.5% Equal or greater than 5
Please rate your experience of deep interconnectedness (0-10)	83.3% Equal or greater than 5
How many times did you practice the breathing together (<i>tonglen</i>) meditation in the past seven days?	14.5% None 43.7% One to two times 32.7% Three to four times 9.0% Five times or more
Ultimacy	
Did you have any sacred moments in the past seven days?	42.7% Yes
Please rate your understanding of ultimacy (0-10)	87.2% Equal or greater than 5
Please rate your experience of ultimacy (0-10)	86.4% Equal or greater than 5
How many times did you read your truths over the past seven days?	19.6% None 38.2% One to two times 32.3% Three to four times 9.8% Five times or more
How many times did you practice the Thin Spaces meditation in the past seven days?	20.6% None 51.9% One to two times 18.6% Three to four times 8.8% Five times or more
Boundlessness	
Did you have any sacred moments in the past seven days?	43.1% Yes
Please rate your understanding of boundlessness (0-10)	94.0% Equal or greater than 5
Please rate your experience of boundlessness (0-10)	93.1% Equal or greater than 5
	14.0% None

How many times did you reflect on your personal legacy in the past seven days?	39.0% One to two times 31.0% Three to four times 16.0% Five times or more
<p>Gratitude</p> <p>Did you have any sacred moments in the past seven days?</p> <p>Please rate your understanding of gratitude (0-10)</p> <p>Please rate your experience of gratitude (0-10)</p> <p>How many times did you intentionally practice gratitude in the past seven days?</p> <p>How many times were you able to express your thanks out loud to someone or something?</p>	<p>44.0% Yes</p> <p>100% Equal or greater than 5</p> <p>100% Equal or greater than 5</p> <p>7.0% None 22.0% One to two times 38.0% Three to four times 33.0% Five times or more</p> <p>2.0% None 29.0% One to two times 37.0% Three to four times 32.0% Five times or more</p>
<p>Transcendence</p> <p>Did you have any sacred moments in the past seven days?</p> <p>Please rate your understanding of transcendence (0-10)</p> <p>Please rate your experience of transcendence (0-10)</p> <p>How many times did you practice the Hidden Compartment meditation in the past seven days?</p>	<p>43% Yes</p> <p>95.0% Equal or greater than 5</p> <p>88% Equal or greater than 5</p> <p>14.0% None 39.0% One to two times 28.0% Three to four times 19.0% Five times or more</p>

Note. Percentages are valid percentages.

Table 4

Pre and Post for Original Treatment and Waitlist Control Group with Raw Means

	Original Treatment Group (<i>n</i> = 67)				Waitlist Control Group (<i>n</i> = 89-91)			
	Baseline		T3 (Post-treatment)		Baseline		Post-Waitlist	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sacred moment qualities	2.79	0.84	3.46	0.68	2.85	0.95	2.80	1.10
Daily spiritual experiences	3.08	1.59	3.46	2.46	2.89	1.42	2.88	1.50
Spiritual growth	3.13	1.96	4.33	1.80	3.04	1.87	3.18	1.94
Personal growth	2.80	0.93	3.13	0.93	2.79	0.86	2.64	0.99
Presence of meaning in Life	4.67	1.17	4.48	1.02	4.43	1.41	4.09	1.02
Search for meaning in life	5.28	1.25	5.33	1.17	5.24	1.23	5.09	1.20
Satisfaction with life	4.46	1.40	4.68	1.42	4.55	1.45	4.57	1.42
Perceived stress	1.99	0.64	1.84	0.59	1.98	0.66	1.99	0.77
Depression/anxiety	2.42	0.86	2.25	0.84	2.27	0.81	2.27	0.84

Table 5

Full Treatment Group Means and Standard Deviations on Outcome Measures (n = 97)

Variable	Time of Measurement	M	SD
Sacred moment qualities	T1 (Baseline)	2.75	0.89
	T3 (Post-treatment)	3.34	0.78
	T4 (Follow-up)	2.93	1.05
Daily spiritual experiences	T1 (Baseline)	2.96	1.51
	T2 (Post-workshop)	3.13	1.48
	T3 (Post-treatment)	3.27	1.59
	T4 (Follow-up)	3.13	1.59
Spiritual growth	T1 (Baseline)	3.03	1.90
	T2 (Post-workshop)	3.44	1.74
	T3 (Post-treatment)	4.02	1.79
	T4 (Follow-up)	3.78	1.84
Personal growth	T1 (Baseline)	2.79	0.88
	T2 (Post-workshop)	2.60	0.94
	T3 (Post-treatment)	3.05	0.96
	T4 (Follow-up)	2.93	1.00
Presence of meaning in life	T1 (Baseline)	4.75	1.18
	T2 (Post-workshop)	4.25	0.95
	T3 (Post-treatment)	4.47	1.01
	T4 (Follow-up)	4.42	0.99
Search for meaning in life	T1 (Baseline)	5.15	1.24
	T2 (Post-workshop)	5.23	1.14
	T3 (Post-treatment)	5.16	1.23
	T4 (Follow-up)	5.07	1.40
Satisfaction with life	T1 (Baseline)	4.64	1.44
	T2 (Post-workshop)	4.59	1.37
	T3 (Post-treatment)	4.75	1.41
	T4 (Follow-up)	4.82	1.34
Perceived stress	T1 (Baseline)	1.90	0.64
	T2 (Post-workshop)	1.90	0.83
	T3 (Post-treatment)	1.82	0.62
	T4 (Follow-up)	1.88	0.70
Depression/anxiety	T1 (Baseline)	2.26	0.81
	T2 (Post-workshop)	2.08	0.78
	T3 (Post-treatment)	2.24	0.84
	T4 (Follow-up)	2.25	0.83

Table 6

Treatment Credibility, Expectancies, and Satisfaction

Variable	
Credibility	
How logical does the program offered to you seem?	96.3% Somewhat to very logical
How confident would you be in recommending this program to a friend?	88.6% Somewhat to very confident
Expectancy	
How successful do you think this program will be in improving your wellbeing?	91.3% Somewhat to very much
How much do you really feel that this program will help you to improve your wellbeing?	86.2% Somewhat to very much
By the end of the program, how much improvement in your wellbeing do you think will occur?	$M = 53.04\%$ ($SD = 22.15$)
By the end of the program, how much improvement in your wellbeing do you really feel will occur?	$M = 55.57\%$ ($SD = 21.47$)
Satisfaction	
How helpful was the program to you?	$M = 3.96$ ($SD = 0.79$) 77% A little helpful to very helpful
How likely are you to continue using the resources you learned from the program?	$M = 3.80$ ($SD = 0.91$) 70% A little likely to very likely
How informative was the program to you?	$M = 4.49$ ($SD = 0.70$) 90% A little informative to very informative

Note. Percentages are valid percentages.

Table 7

Themes and Quotes from Open-Ended Responses at Post-Treatment

Question and Themes	Representative Quotes
<p>What did you like most about the program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program was inclusive of diverse worldviews and exposed participants to new ideas. • The content was well-organized and not overly burdensome. • The in-person workshop was a highlight. • The meditations were well-received. • The program length allowed for time to change and reflect, especially during troubling times. • The online format made the program feel accessible. • The experience felt personal and I felt that my beliefs were respected. • The facilitator's voice was pleasant and I felt relaxed. 	<p><i>I thought it was very enlightening to get exposure to different spiritual belief and practices.</i></p> <p><i>I like how open and accepting the program was when we met together for the first time. It was super supportive and relaxing and peaceful. I learned a lot and was exposed to more ideals [sic] that I never considered. I also loved how personal the experience is. Because when I ended up having a hard week and almost missed a meditation, I got emailed and checked on. It made me feel better.</i></p> <p><i>I liked that there was a new topic and activity every week. I thought it was very well-organized, and I liked that it wasn't very time consuming.</i></p> <p><i>I loved the meditations. I liked the hidden compartment part of the program because I really feel it simply ties every other thing we did into one.</i></p> <p><i>I liked its nonjudgmental attitude toward spiritual experience. I feel a lot of pressure usually to respond in a certain way when things like this are being talked about.</i></p> <p><i>I enjoyed the length of the program. I think that having this program spread out over many weeks allowed me to actually take the time to change and learn how different aspects of spirituality effected [sic] me in different ways.</i></p> <p><i>I liked setting aside the time to reflect on the moments and emotions that mean the most to me. Especially now, it's nice to have the time to remind ourselves that there is still some good out there. I also liked that the program was tolerant of many religious beliefs, even the lack of one.</i></p> <p><i>The first in person session</i></p> <p><i>It made me more aware of being thankful and connected spiritually.</i></p> <p><i>I love the online format and the exercises we went through.</i></p>

	<p><i>We learned how to do these exercises ourselves so I can do them whenever and wherever at anytime. It brings me to peace & helps me just take a moment away from everything.</i></p> <p><i>I liked how it seemed like it was a very personal experience and that it wasn't just a single session once a week, it was more like a mindset each week, to carry out through the whole week.</i></p> <p><i>Your voice is very soothing and easy to relax to. I liked that it made me really relaxed after doing it.</i></p>
<p>What did you like least about the program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of the program could have been longer, but the videos should be shorter. • In-person is preferable to online because it helps to hear others share. • I was bored and busy. • I do not like meditation or having to practice something every week. • It is overwhelming for me to have to pick one memory for my sacred moment. • There were too many surveys. • The pandemic affected my experience. 	<p><i>I wish it was more than once a week.</i></p> <p><i>I wish it was all year long!</i></p> <p><i>I loved pretty much all of it.</i></p> <p><i>I thought the videos could've been a little shorter.</i></p> <p><i>You can improve the program by making more meetings in person.</i></p> <p><i>I would've liked to elaborate more in a group (I know given the pandemic it would not have been possible but I really liked hearing everyone speak at the first session.</i></p> <p><i>I didn't like how hands off the week was. I found myself being so busy, that I felt guilty when I didn't complete a meditation that week. I also would have liked more face time and meeting that group of people again. I wanted to hear their opinion instead of meditating alone.</i></p> <p><i>There were times where I was busy so it seemed like a chore.</i></p> <p><i>I don't really have any complaints. Sometimes I got bored but for the most part it was fun.</i></p> <p><i>I did not like that I had to remember to practice something every week</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes hard to turn inwards, but that isn't the programs fault.</i></p>

	<p><i>I didn't like some of the styles of meditation like the hidden compartment because it was overwhelming for me to try and just pick one memory, because I felt like I needed to choose the most important memory in my life, and that's hard to choose.</i></p> <p><i>The surveys, however I don't think anyone actually enjoys surveys.</i></p> <p><i>It was hard sometimes to find time to do everything because of the transition of school due to the virus.</i></p>
<p>How did the program impact your personal and/or spiritual life, if at all?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program elicited spiritual emotions. • The program helped me realize that I do not need to be religious to be spiritual. • The program helped me connect with loved ones in my life. • The program helped me to think about my legacy. • I can't put it into words, but there has been a change. • I feel closer to God. • I was not affected spiritually but the meditations were pleasant. • The pandemic affected my experience. • I was able to reach deeper within myself. • It made me want to understand my sacred moments. 	<p><i>This program helped me so much with gratitude, meditating, and knowing what I want to pass down to the next generation. I appreciate how helpful this was for my spirituality.</i></p> <p><i>Since I am not religious this program made me realize I don't have to be religious to be spiritual and that has helped me mentally.</i></p> <p><i>The program sparked different conversations with my family members in my personal life because most of my memories and reflections were with them.</i></p> <p><i>It helped me change a few things in my life and actually think about who I want to be and what I want others to remember about me. This program did a great job of being an eye-opener for me.</i></p> <p><i>I am still trying to figure this part out. I know there has been a change in my life in utilizing these activities, however I struggle to put them into words.</i></p> <p><i>I feel more connected to my spirituality, especially God. I also feel closer to my family and friends.</i></p> <p><i>It didn't affect me spiritually, really. Mostly, the meditations tended to put me in a better mood after each one, but I think because I'm not very spiritually connected right now, they didn't affect me in that way.</i></p> <p><i>I've always had a connection with my spiritual side but I was also involved with a religion that felt stifling and restrictive. Starting college allowed me to release myself from that religion, but I was missing some tools to regain a</i></p>

	<p><i>direction in my spirituality. I felt that this program provided me a few more tools, and I feel less lost in my spiritual life.</i></p> <p><i>It brought me some peace, definitely though [sic] these hard times.</i></p> <p><i>Making me save more time of my day to do practices that helps me connect with my spirituality. It was not an obligation, but a kind reminder.</i></p> <p><i>It reached levels of myself that I forgot exist.</i></p> <p><i>I believe the program made me more aware of the many ways in which people can interpret events in their lives. It is really important to consider what people's sacred moments are and how they view them in order to understand where they are coming from spiritually.</i></p>
<p>What can we do to improve the program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technical difficulties in the survey were frustrating. • I would have liked feedback and group sessions. • I do not have many happy spiritual memories and this program was geared towards people who do have them. • The explanations were vague. 	<p><i>Sometimes after typing all my answers into the survey boxes it says the session timed out and I have to type everything in again which is kind of frustrating because I feel like the second time around I wasn't as clear or eloquent the second time around.</i></p> <p><i>Overall I enjoyed the program. I am not sure where I stand with my experiences. I feel like these activities in my opinion would be more beneficial if there was feedback, but I know some individuals would naturally know the impact of their experiences.</i></p> <p><i>One thing I would have liked would be to have more group sessions as we did at the first meeting. I think it was much more impactful and effective with that level of connectedness compared to just doing it online.</i></p> <p><i>I also feel like a lot of this is geared towards happy memories and personally, those aren't my most spiritual memories at all.</i></p> <p><i>I think the explanations of the different meditation themes could be the tiniest bit vague at times, but I still usually came out understanding the concept.</i></p> <p><i>I would provide more optional Face time. I felt more comfortable meditating with the group than on my own. Being able to share your experience with other people was</i></p>

	<i>uplifting and not something I can do when I'm out of that group.</i>
<p>How do you think we can cultivate more sacred moments in our lives or benefit from them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for them to occur and reflect on them. • Spend more time with loved ones and nature. • Notice and live in the present. • Be open to sacred moments. • Understand what is sacred to us. • Slow down. • Religious practices. 	<p><i>I don't think you can force sacred moments, but you have to wait for them to occur, and we benefit from them by reflecting on them and appreciating them.</i></p> <p><i>We can think about them and reflect on how we felt and even learn from them.</i></p> <p><i>For me creating sacred moments means spending more time with the people I am close to and getting out into nature.</i></p> <p><i>Step back and really notice things around you, think into depth of what is happening. Remember to breathe.</i></p> <p><i>I think the key to cultivating sacred moments is to always be looking for them. I have experienced so many sacred moments in my lifetime and hadn't even realized until participating in this program.</i></p> <p><i>Honestly being in quarantine makes it very difficult but just living life to the fullest</i></p> <p><i>I want to start living in the moment. Starting by finding things to enjoy in everyday and some days nothing really happens, but sacred moments can come from good or bad or moving thing in a day.</i></p> <p><i>Understanding what is sacred to us. For those who don't have a religion, and may be harder to identify these moments, this program was very helpful. But even for those who understand their sacred moments, saving some of your daily live to cultivate and increase your connection with your spirituality, like the meditations we did, visiting our deep emotions and understanding what make us feel really happy, in what we find meaning.</i></p> <p><i>If people were to sit back and relax for a short while and open up their mind to have a moment with themselves, people/items they cherish, it could bring up a lot of potential benefits for themselves</i></p> <p><i>Sacred moments are hard to create for me because I'm always moving and always busy with something. Now, being with family makes it even harder. But I think if I dedicated</i></p>

	<p><i>time to slow down (and not feel guilty about doing so) it would be easier to have spiritual sacred moments.</i></p> <p><i>Prayer! Daily mass! Connecting with other's of the same faith (or different!). These are all instances I have found where I cultivate sacred moments, just making a decision to grow closer to Christ is a huge step in the right direction.</i></p>
<p>Please share any additional thoughts or comments you may have about the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pandemic affected my experience, but the program helped me cope. • I have learned to slow down and look for sacred moments. 	<p><i>I'm so glad I participated in a program like this, it helped me realize there is so much more in life and gave me many methods to help with stress.</i></p> <p><i>This really encouraged me to seek out the sacred moments and influenced me to experience more by slowing down.</i></p> <p><i>I am glad that I participated in this program and would love to get involved in other similar programs in the future.</i></p> <p><i>I found this to very helpfully [sic] so I am going to tell my friends if they get the chance do this take it</i></p> <p><i>Another thought about it is that probably the coronavirus situations might have influenced some people's practical and verbal responses. That said I also believe that it is a good opportunity to see how people deal with their emotions and spirituality during crises like this.</i></p>

APPENDIX B. FIGURES

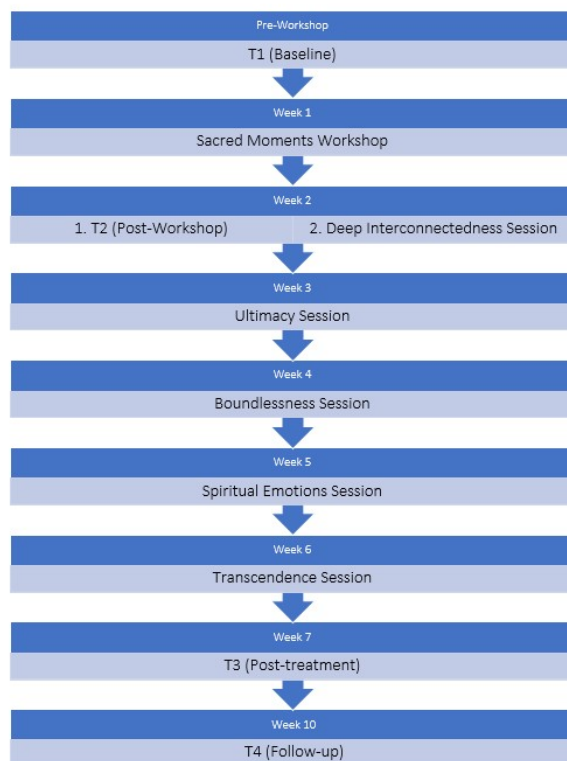


Figure 1. Procedural Flow of the Sacred Moments Program.

Component	Theme	Description
Workshop	Sacred Moments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the purpose of the program (i.e., to foster a healthy spirituality and wellbeing) and program components • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Treasure chest</i> exercise • Group discussion of sacred moment qualities • Reflection and commitment
Online 1	Deep Interconnectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of home practice • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Breathing together</i> exercise • Reflection and commitment
Online 2	Ultimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of home practice • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Thin spaces</i> exercise • Reflection and commitment
Online 3	Boundlessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of home practice • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Legacy</i> exercise • Reflection and commitment
Online 4	Spiritual Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of home practice • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Gratitude</i> exercise • Reflection and commitment
Online 5	Transcendence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of home practice • Psychoeducation with examples • <i>Hidden compartment</i> exercise • Reflection and commitment • Review of sacred qualities

Figure 2. Overview of the Sacred Moments Program.

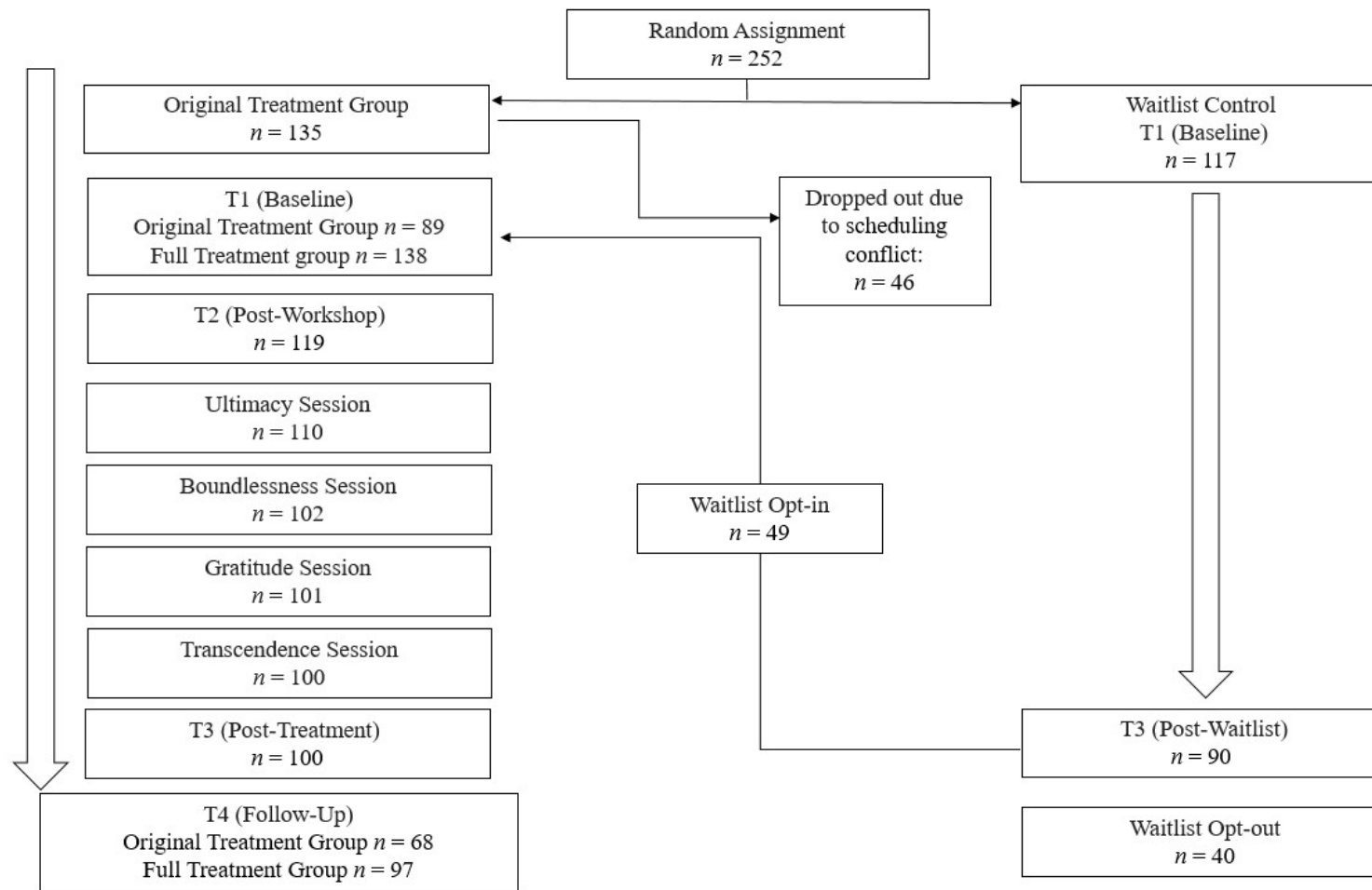


Figure 3. CONSORT Flow Diagram of Participants

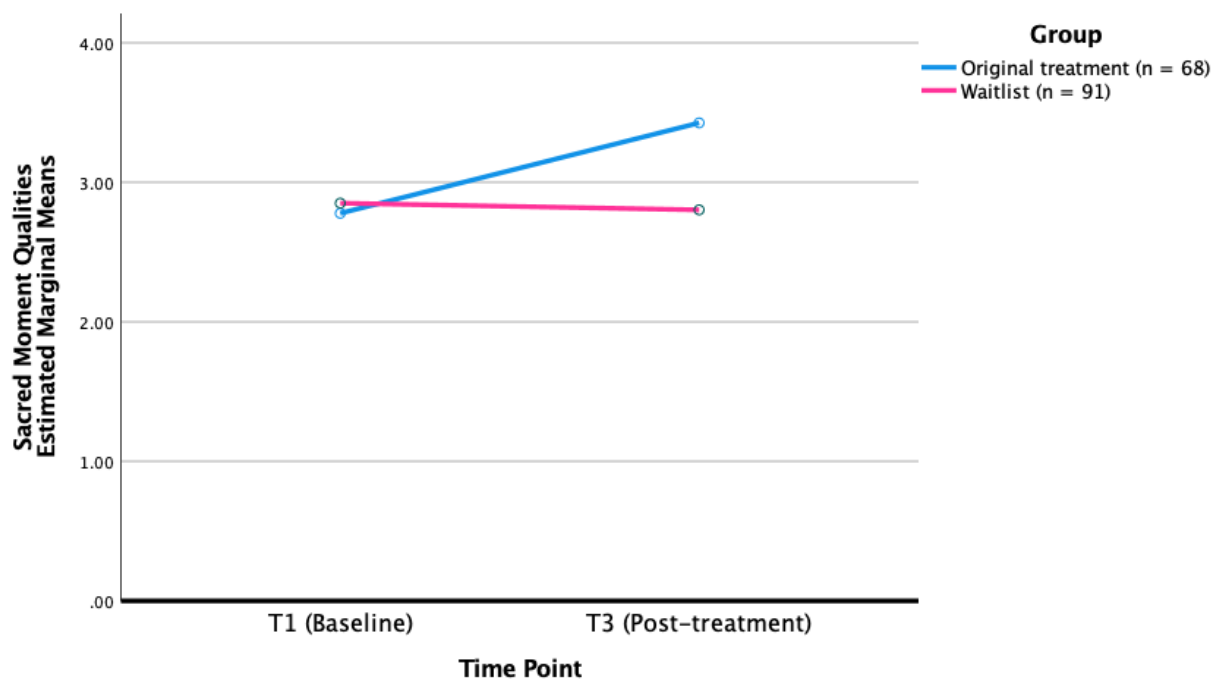


Figure 4. Significant group x time interaction on sacred moment qualities.

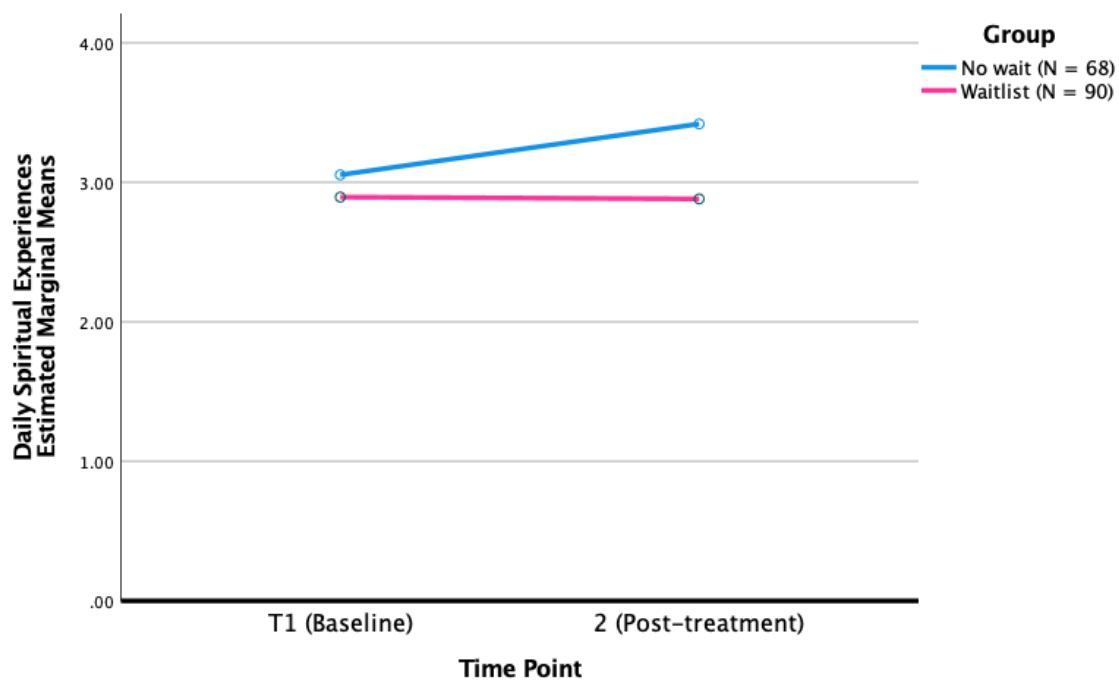


Figure 5. Significant group x time interaction on daily spiritual experiences.

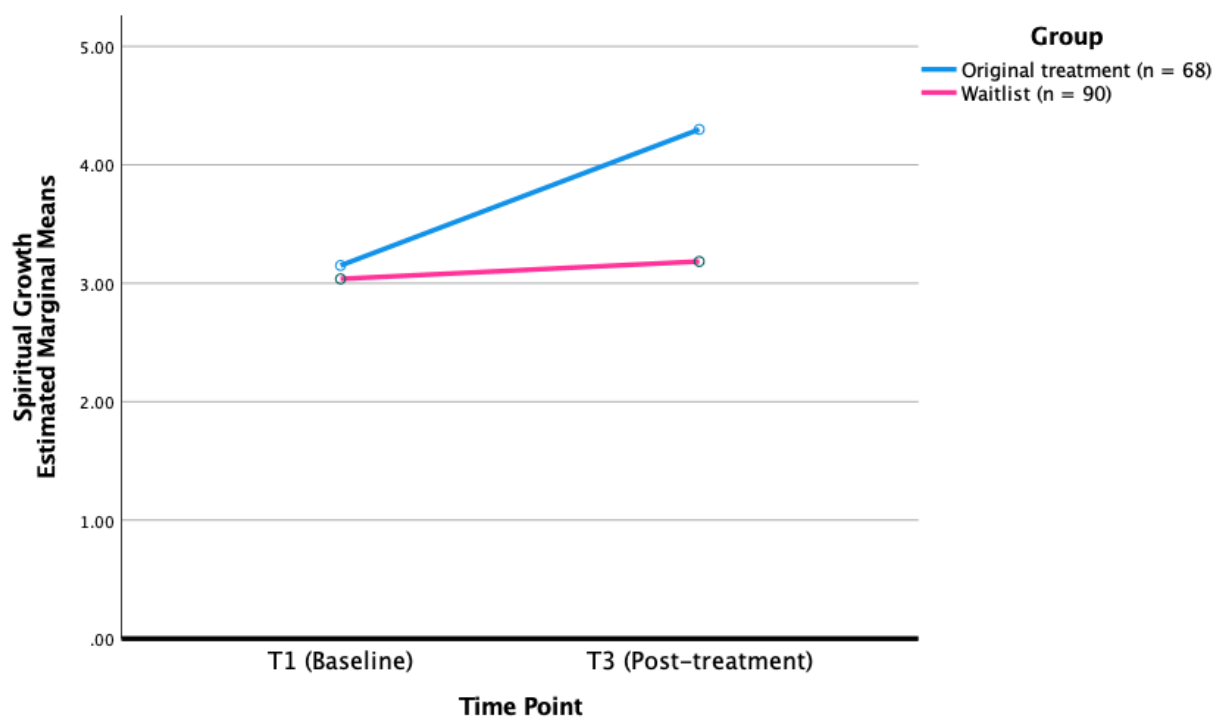


Figure 6. Significant group x time interaction on spiritual growth.

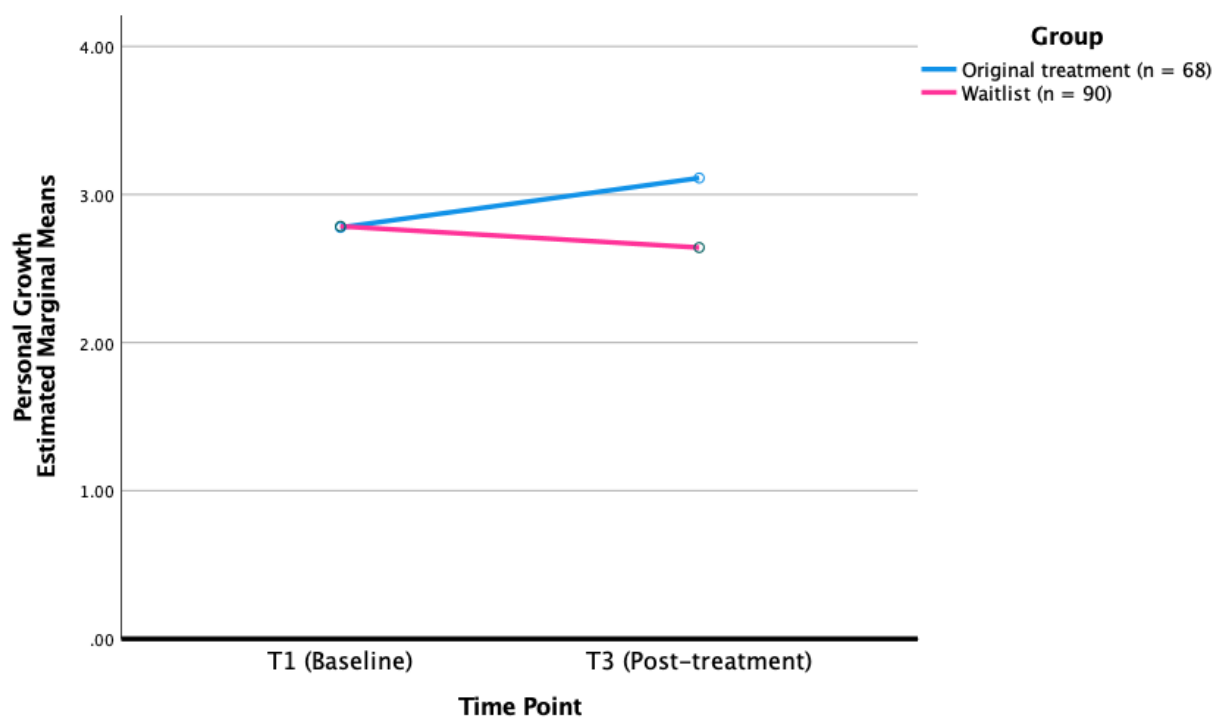


Figure 7. Significant group x time interaction on personal growth.

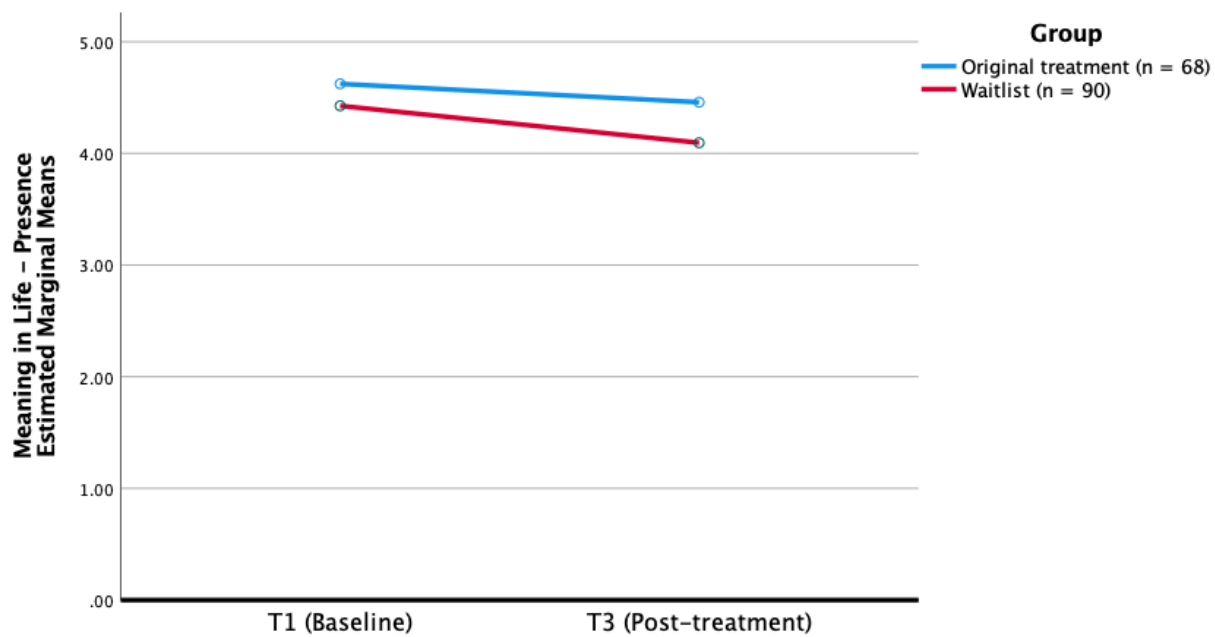


Figure 8. Main effect of time on presence of meaning in life.

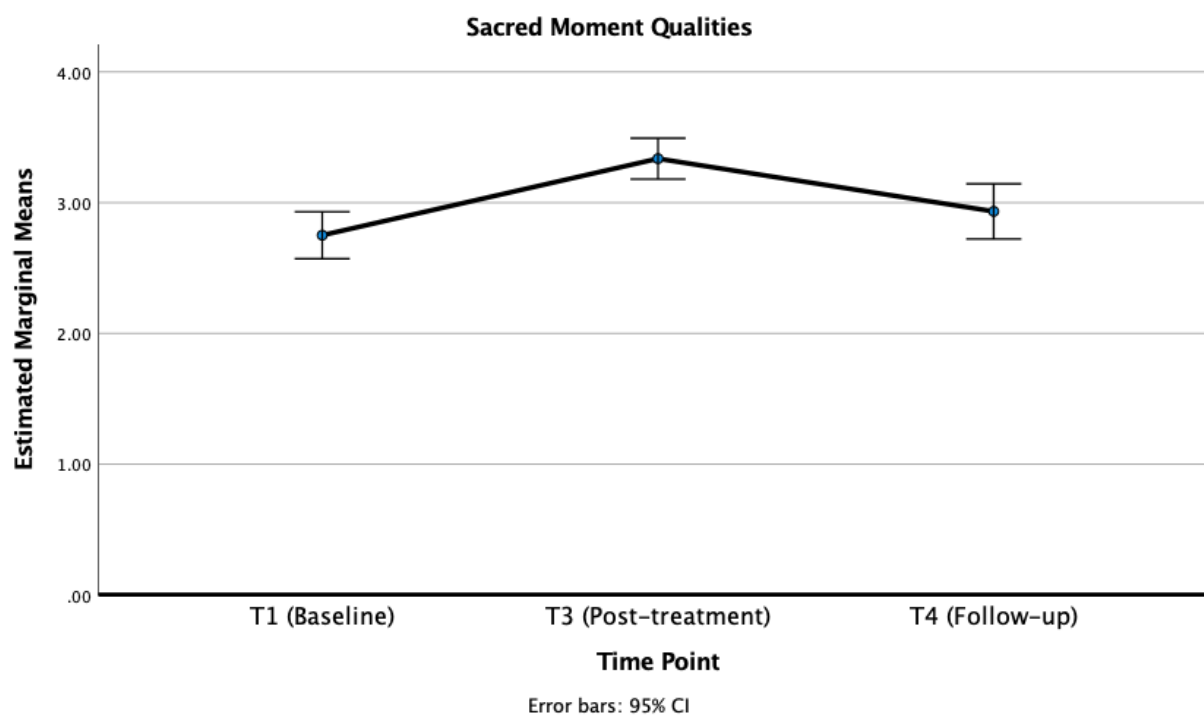


Figure 9. Full treatment group changes in sacred moment qualities over time ($n = 97$).

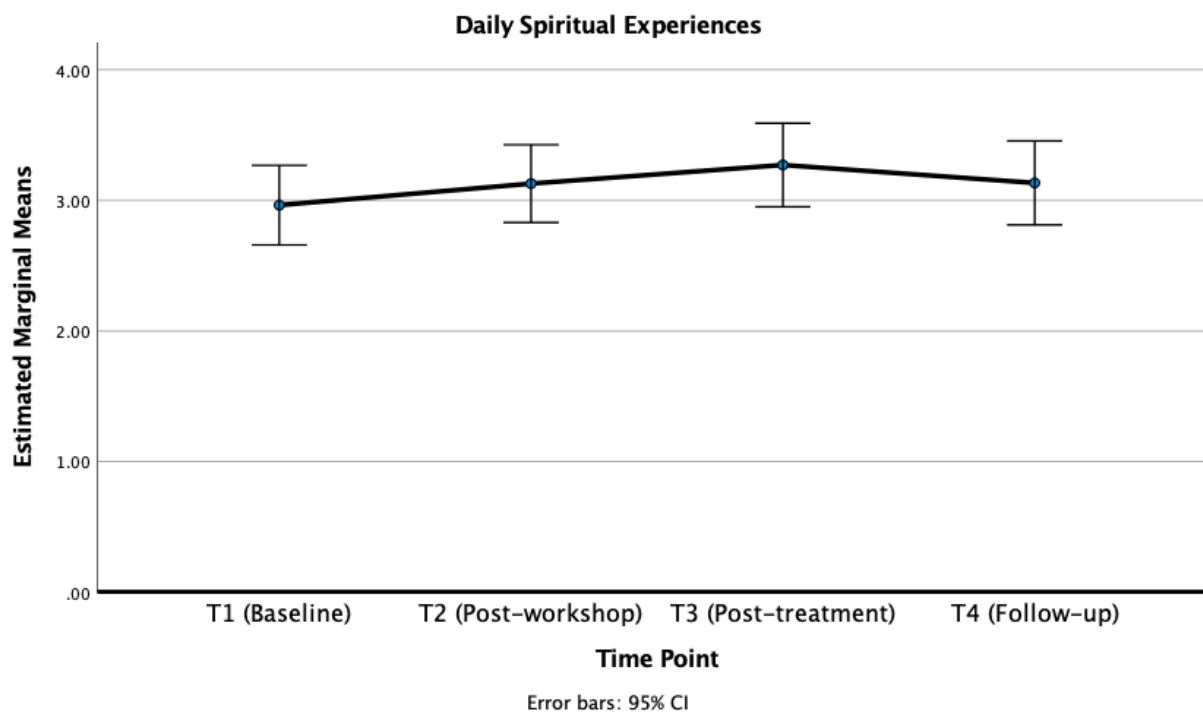


Figure 10. Full treatment group changes in daily spiritual experiences over time ($n = 97$).

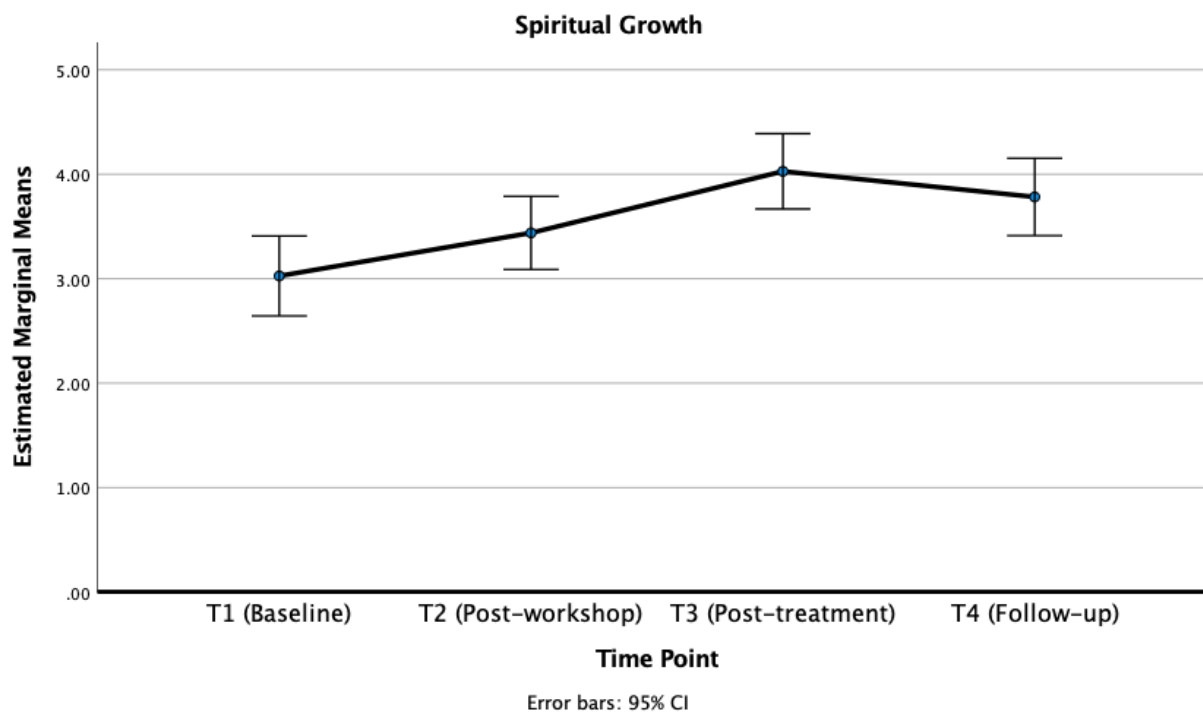


Figure 11. Full treatment group changes in spiritual growth over time ($n = 97$).

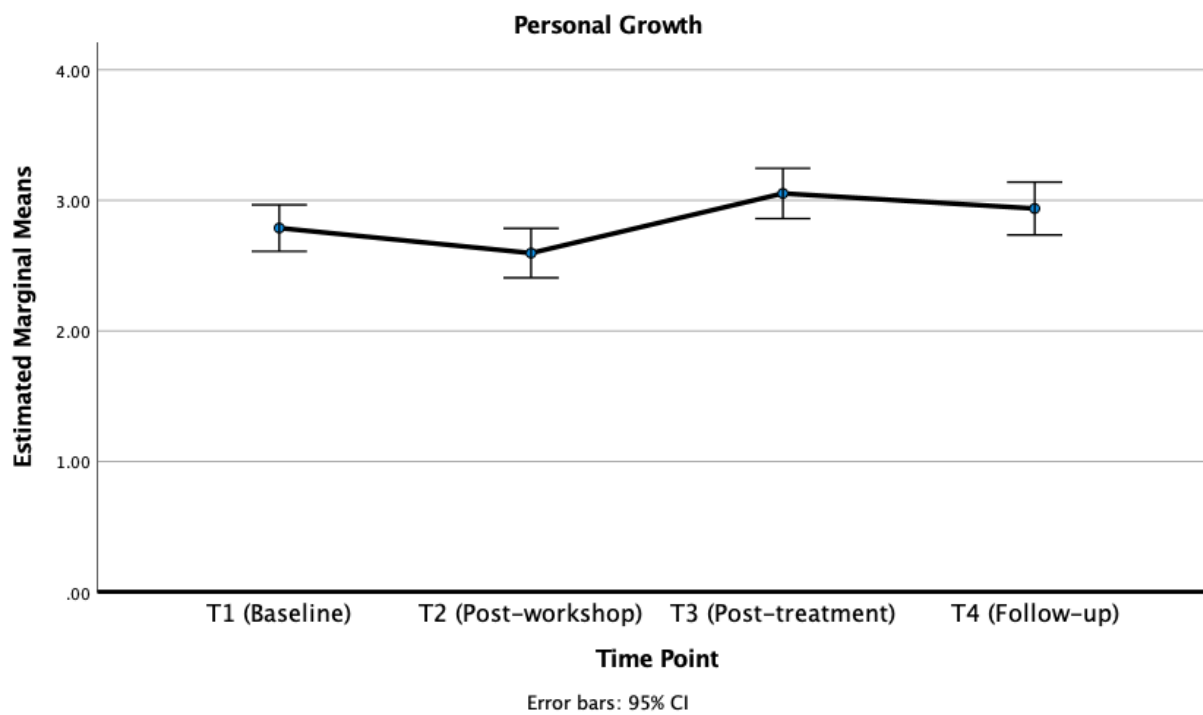


Figure 12. Full treatment group changes in personal growth over time ($n = 97$).

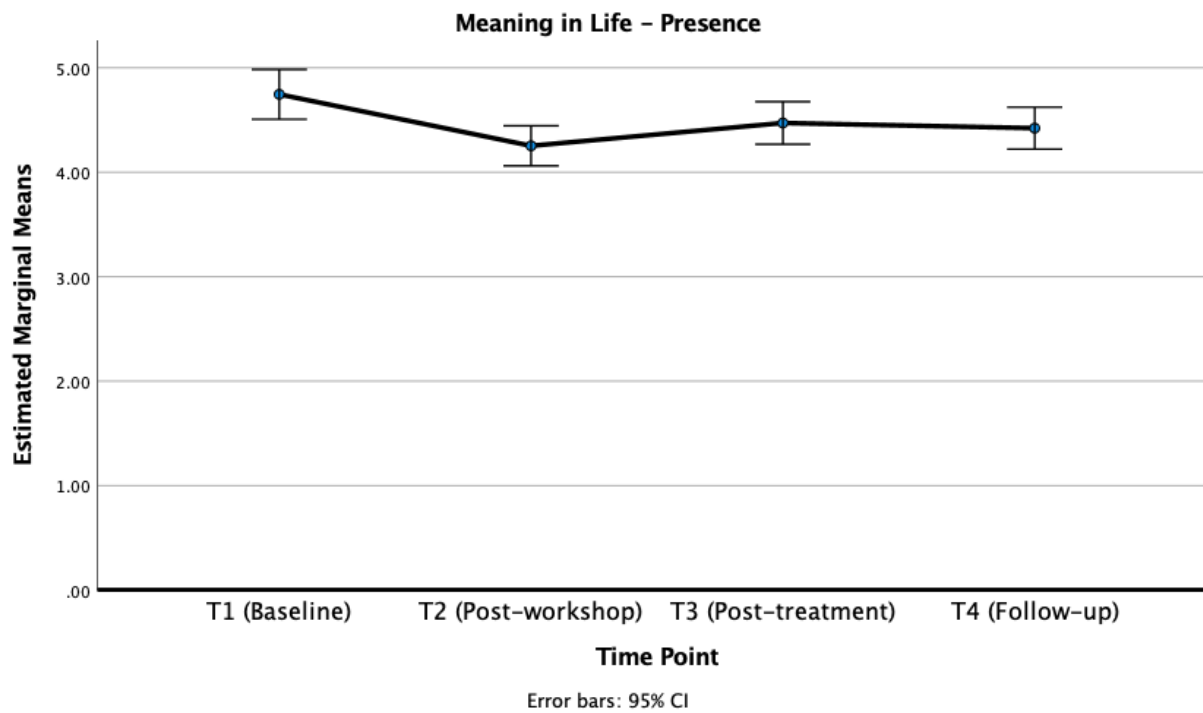


Figure 13. Full treatment group changes in presence of meaning in life over time ($n = 97$).

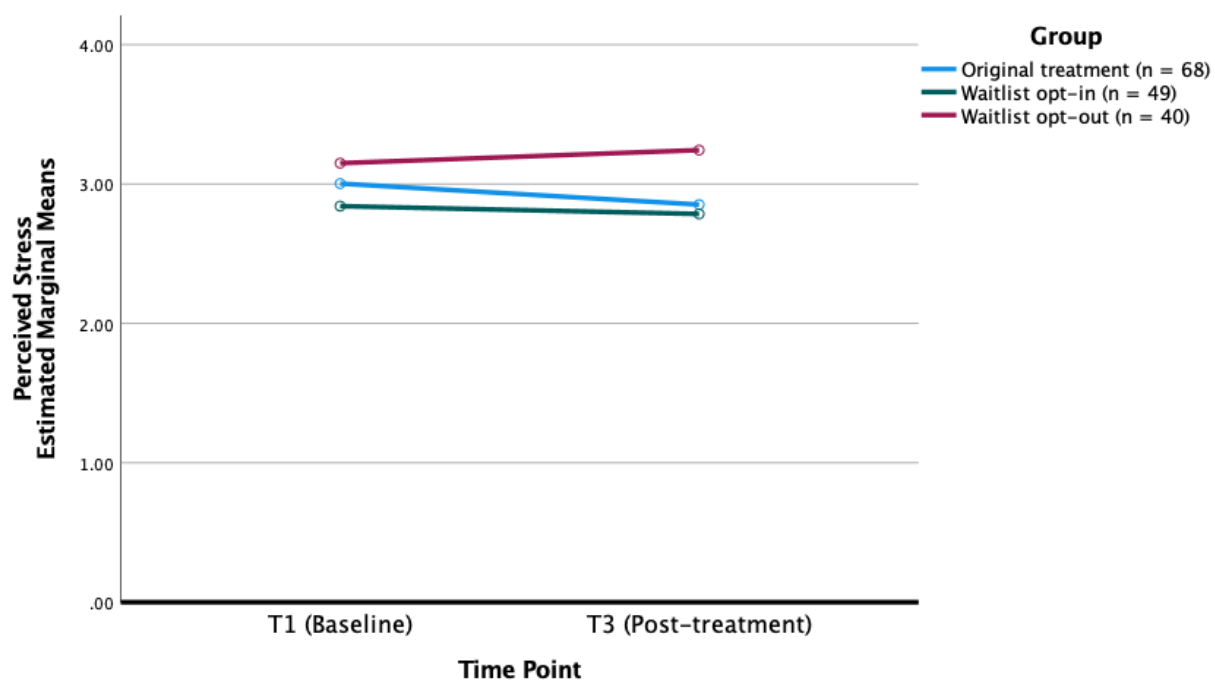


Figure 14. Main effect of group between waitlist opt-in and waitlist opt-out groups on perceived stress.

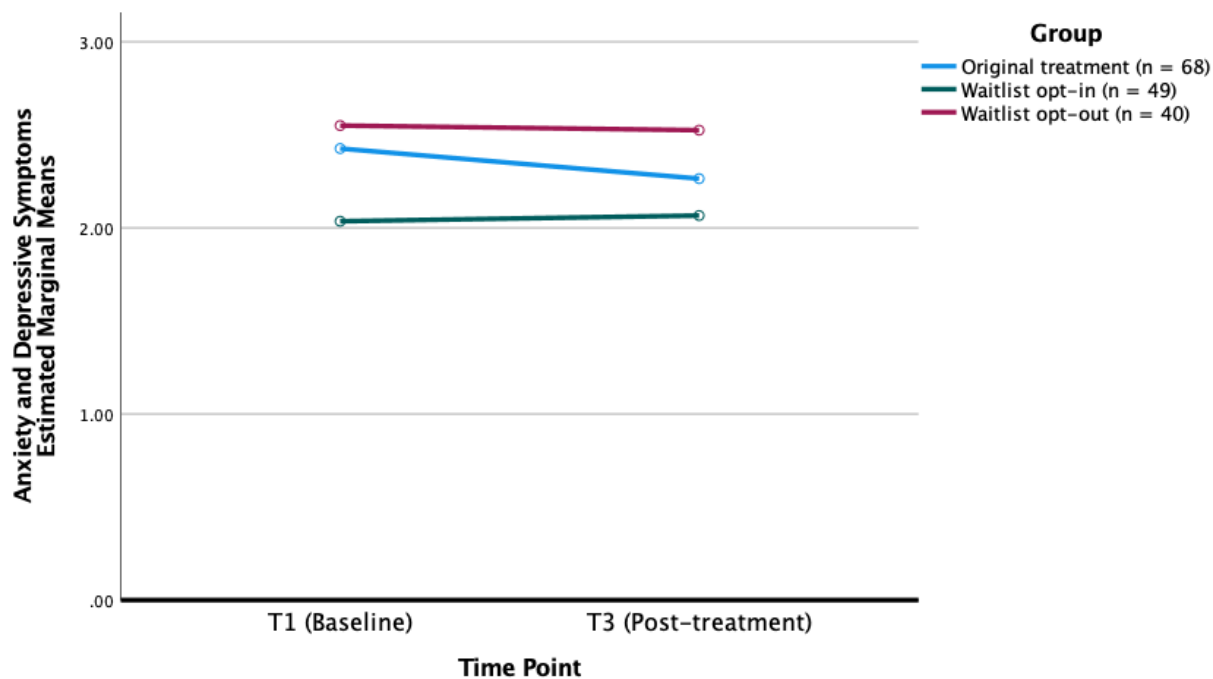


Figure 15. Main effect of group between waitlist opt-in and waitlist opt-out groups on anxiety and depressive symptoms.

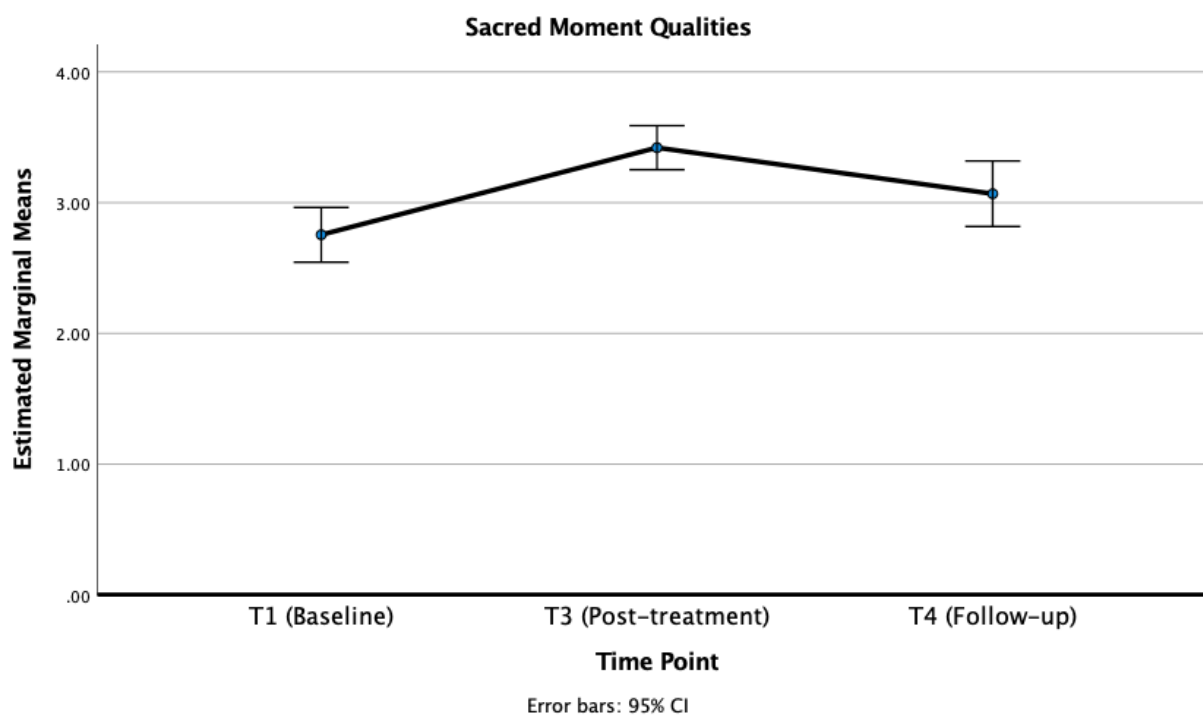


Figure 16. Original treatment group changes in sacred moment qualities over time ($n = 64$).

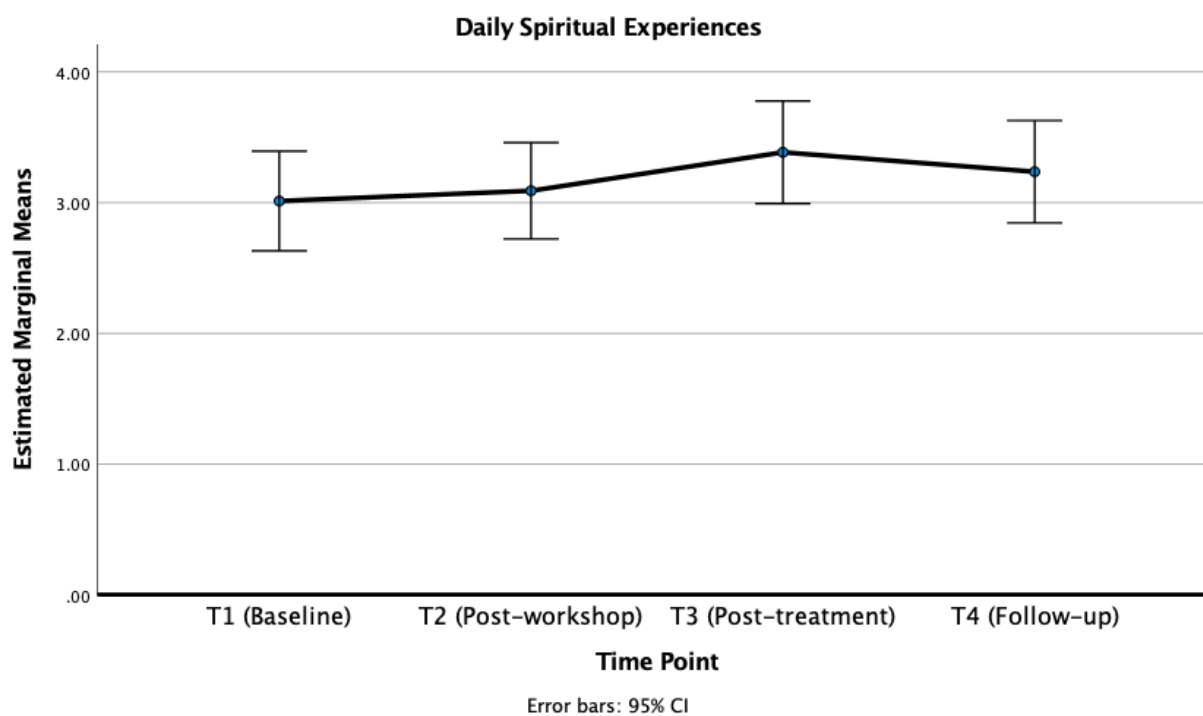


Figure 17. Original treatment group changes in daily spiritual experiences over time ($n = 64$).

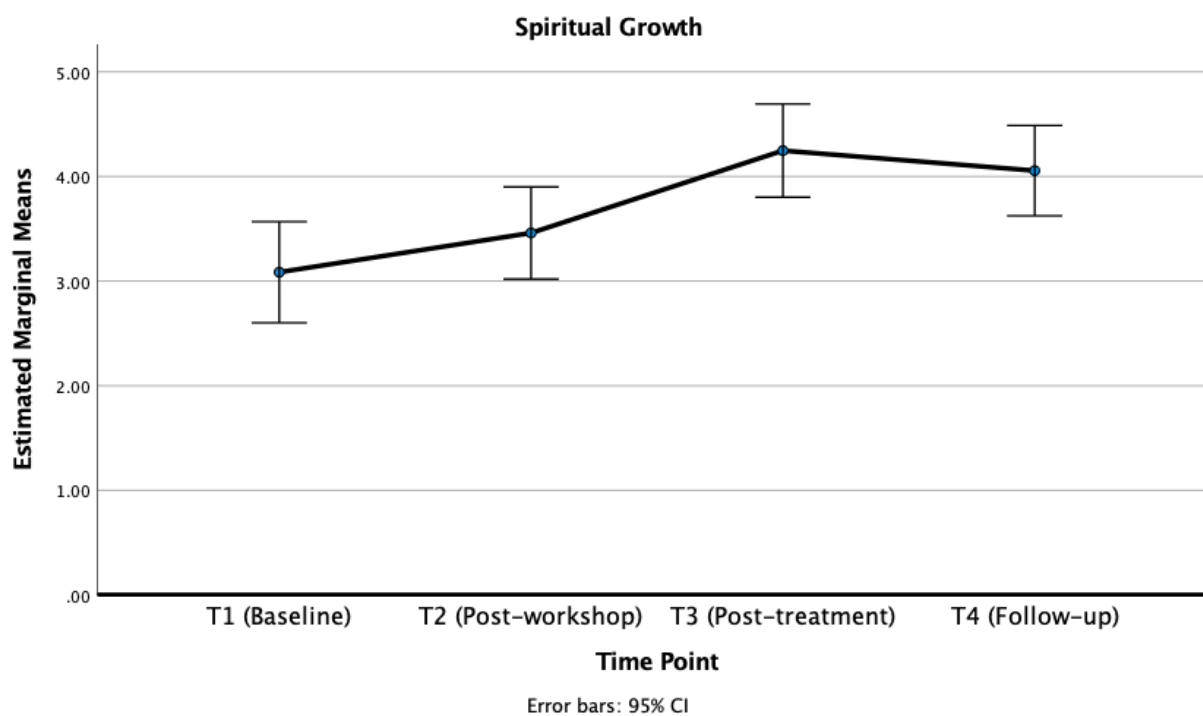


Figure 18. Original treatment group changes in spiritual growth over time ($n = 64$).

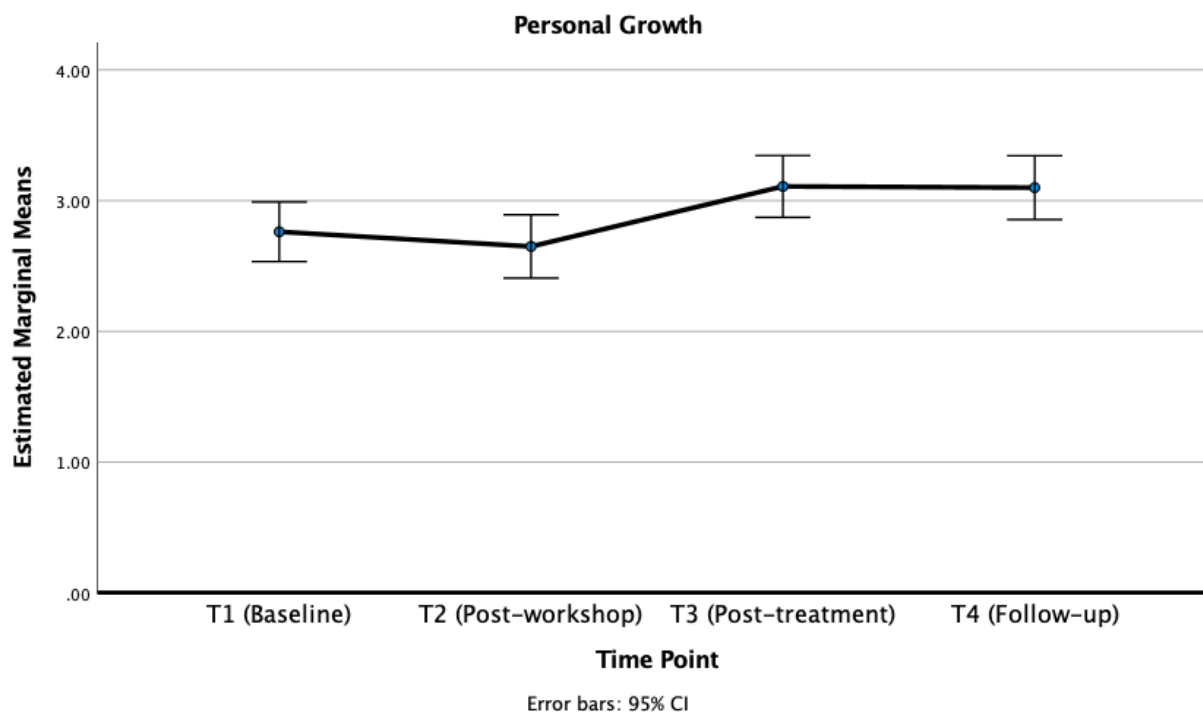


Figure 19. Original treatment group changes in personal growth over time ($n = 64$).

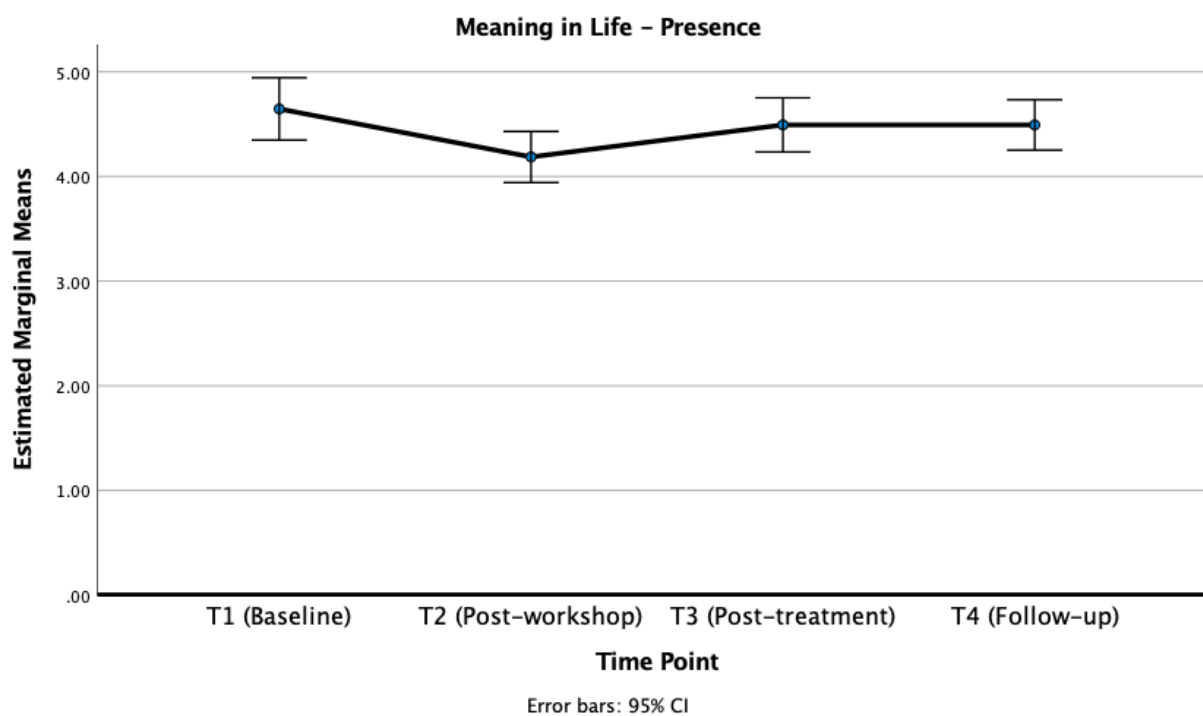


Figure 20. Original treatment group changes in presence of meaning in life over time ($n = 64$).

APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Spiritual Wellbeing Program: Are you looking to foster a healthy spirituality? Sign up for a free spiritual wellbeing program that is a part of a research project: [LINK]

Our program is not affiliated with any particular religion and is accepting of all worldviews, across the spectrum of belief and non-belief. The facilitator is a psychology doctoral student trained in research-supported approaches to spiritual wellbeing. For more information, please contact Serena at swong@bgsu.edu

APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM

**Spiritual Wellbeing Project****Informed Consent**

Summary: Our names are Kenneth I. Pargament, Ph.D. and Serena Wong, M.A., M.Ed. We are researchers from the Psychology Department at Bowling Green State University. The goal of our study is to develop and evaluate a spiritual wellbeing program. Anybody who is at least 18 years old can participate in this study and enter the program. The program features a live 60-90 minute workshop and five online booster sessions, lasting a total of six weeks. The total number of minutes of participation for the entire program is about 240. Your identity will be kept confidential. The risks of participating in our program are greater than those experienced in everyday life in terms of strong feelings. Strong feelings will be addressed in a supportive and validating manner by the program facilitator, Serena, who is a trained clinician.

Purpose: We would like to foster spiritual and psychological wellbeing in adults. This project may directly benefit you, and your responses will help the field of psychology better understand the role of spirituality in wellbeing. You might expect positive effects on your mood.

Procedure: If you consent to participating in our research, you will be randomly assigned to either (1) the no-wait group or (2) the waiting list group. You will then answer questions about yourself for about 20 minutes in this survey.

The no-wait group will enter the program immediately. The program features a live workshop (60-90 minutes) and five online booster sessions (20 minutes each), lasting a total of six weeks. Our program includes spiritual exercises, reflections, education, and videos. You will complete four research-related surveys (i.e., at pre-workshop, week one, end of the program, and one-month follow-up). These surveys range from 10 to 30 minutes in length. The total time commitment is approximately 240 minutes or 4 hours.

The waiting list group will complete two surveys within six weeks of each other. The total time commitment is approximately 35 minutes. After you complete both surveys, you can choose to participate in the program. Please see above the above paragraph for more information.

Voluntary Nature: Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

Reward:**If you are in the no-wait group:**

Customer's Choice
Customer's Choice

Customer's Choice
Customer's Choice

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EXPIRES 09/10/2020

You will earn 4.5 credits if you complete the program in six weeks. Additionally, if you complete the program and follow-up survey, you will receive an Amazon gift card of \$30.00 via e-mail. These cards can be redeemed by entering a code upon checking out at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

If you are in the waiting list group:

You will be emailed an Amazon gift card of \$10.00 if you complete two surveys within six weeks of each other. At that point, you will have the opportunity to enter the program, earn 4.5 credits, plus another Amazon gift card of \$30.00 (see above).

Confidentiality Protection: We encourage workshop attendees to respect each other's privacy. However, we cannot guarantee that everybody will maintain confidentiality. Therefore, please do not share anything you do not want others to know within the group setting.

When completing surveys online, remember to clear your internet browser and page history to protect your privacy. Some employers may use tracking software. You may want to complete the survey on a personal device.

No identifying information will be released by the researchers. If we quote your survey responses directly in publications, we will maintain confidentiality by giving you a pseudonym.

The data will be stored in a password-protected BGSU survey management account. Only we will have access to these files. The data will be stored for three years before it is destroyed.

Risks: If confidentiality is breached, you risk being identified by someone other than the researchers. We are safeguarding against these risks by not sharing our passwords.

The risks of participation are greater than that experienced in daily life in terms of strong feelings. The program is expected to have largely positive effects on mood, but some may experience some level of emotional distress.

Difficult feelings will be addressed in a supportive and validating manner by the workshop facilitator, Serena Wong, who is a trained clinician. If you feel upset, talking with a qualified clinician or counselor may help. The following psychological resources are available to you:

Free Emotional Support: <https://www.7cups.com/>

Find a Therapist on Psychology Today: www.psychologytoday.com

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EXPIRES 05/10/2020

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (1.800.273.8255) or text "MHA" to 741-741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

Contact Information: Please contact Dr. Pargament if you have any questions about this research or your participation. His email is kpargam@bgsu.edu and phone number is 419-372-8037. You may also contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board, at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time.

Completing and returning the survey indicates consent to participate.

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EXPIRES 09/10/2020

APPENDIX E. SACRED MOMENTS WORKSHOP PROTOCOL

Materials:

- Pens and paper
- Projector + pointer

The participants will be welcomed and encouraged to write their name on a nametag, if the group is small. If the group is small enough, they can form a circle. Otherwise, participants may be seated wherever they like. When everybody is settled in, the facilitator can begin:

Slide 1

Welcome to today's workshop on sacred moments. Thank you so much for coming today. My name is Serena and I am a doctoral candidate at Bowling Green State University. I am a part-time therapist, so I see patients with mental health issues, and I am a part-time researcher in clinical psychology. I work with Dr. Kenneth Pargament, and together, we research ways to foster a healthy spirituality.

Slide 2 – Optional (If the group is large, skip introductions.)

I'd like to get to know you. Let's go around with our names, where you're from, and what drew you to the workshop.

Before going further, I'd like to offer two group guidelines. First, we can honor each other by not sharing other people's stories outside of this group. Of course, feel free to talk about your own experiences of this workshop and if you want to give us a plug, be my guest! But I'm asking all of us to keep other people's stories private. We can call this the 'confidentiality' code—what is said here by others stays here. Unless you have their permission.

Second, we can honor each other by not judging someone for holding different beliefs. This workshop is not affiliated with any particular religion, and I would like to keep this space open and safe for everybody, so feel free to express yourself but know your beliefs and non-beliefs may not be true for others. It would be disrespectful to judge, interpret, or try to convert other people to your truth in response to their sharing. Instead, I would encourage us to thank others for sharing and say how it touches us. Let's call this the 'respect' rule. Do you think we can all agree on those two, the confidentiality code and the respect rule?

Is there anything else that we want to add to our group guidelines to create a safe, open space for talking about spirituality?

The facilitator will summarize the group guidelines once more if necessary.

Slide 3

Every one of us might have a unique definition for spirituality and what it means to them. I thought we could begin with a metaphor to think about spirituality. Spirituality is a way of seeing. It is about seeing the deeper dimension in everyday life.

This theme of 'seeing deeper' has roots in many different worldviews. In the Bible, when Saul converts to Christianity, a scale-like substance falls from his eyes upon being touched. Lighting candles to illuminate the darkness is a central ritual practice within Judaism. The Buddha has a third eye between his eyebrows that looks inward. It goes about an inch deep. In Taoism, Hinduism, and New Age spirituality, there are also references to the third eye, or the divine eye. And sacred writings within Sufi Islam are filled with the language of sight and vision.

Spirituality has been likened to seeing the world with new eyes. When this happens, what we see can take on a special, sacred significance. I hope each of you will be open to exploring this 'way of seeing' for yourself in this workshop, and potentially, in our next few weeks together. More about that later.

Slide 4

To get a sense of what I mean by seeing deeper, take a look at this image and tell me what you see.

Slide 5

What about this image? Is there something more to it?

Slide 6

And this one?

Sometimes we're not able to see deeper right away. We are told that something is there, but we don't see it with our own eyes. Seeing deeper may take time. You may return to a particular place just to pause there, open to the possibility of what else it can bring.

If spirituality is a way of seeing, then we can look at the world and our lives through sacred lenses. Sometimes we can perceive spiritual qualities in certain aspects of our lives more than others.

Slide 7

What do you hold sacred in your life? Take a moment to reflect silently on this. In what areas of your life have you seen deeper? In what areas do you *want* to see deeper? Would anyone like to share?

Slide 8

For some people, the deeper dimension is woven into loving relationships, like marriage. You may be familiar with the term ‘soulmates.’ Over 90% of husbands and wives from the Midwest said that their marriage was sacred to them. Stronger sacred perceptions have predicted better marital quality and stronger commitment in marriage. This goes beyond what people are *saying* that they do. On a survey, they might say, "Oh yes, I am a 10 out of 10 on commitment."

Annette Mahoney and her colleagues at Bowling Green went into married couples' homes and asked them to talk about contentious issues: you know, finances, boundaries – when a friend can drop by, or when your parents can come over, chores, the holidays.... They recorded these interactions on video, coded the couples' behaviors, and analyzed them. Couples who perceived sacred qualities in their marriage – they resolved real conflicts in warmer and more supportive ways.

Slide 9

Others might experience the sacred in loving relationships, with children, siblings, or friends. Ken/Dr. Pargament and I surveyed family caregivers of people who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementias. As we know, this is a growing population and I'm willing to bet that you know of someone who has dementia. We know that it takes a lot of time and energy to care for our loved ones with this disease. Seeing the sacred in caregiving predicted greater meaning in work, better relationship satisfaction, more personal growth, and less burden. Here's a sacred moment from a caregiver who says, when his dad turns to him one day to speak, "I saw the look in [my father's] eyes, and I felt like I was seeing his soul, and he was talking to me from a soul level. It was a little slice of reality in a sea of stress."

Slide 10

So we have talked about seeing the sacred in relationships. But perhaps some of you experience spirituality in other domains. Consider nature. If you see the sacred in nature, findings suggest that you may be more likely to preserve and protect the environment, donate to pro-environmental causes, and make sacrifices for nature - you know, recycle, re-use, and re-purpose. Consider this statement by Chief Seattle of the Squamish Nation: "Every part of this soil is sacred...Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as the swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people." Can you hear the deep connection and reverence for nature here?

Slide 11

People can also perceive the sacred in musical experiences. We spoke with some members of the Toledo Symphony Orchestra and sampled a group of professional orchestra musicians across the country. The majority of these musicians reported having sacred moments while engaging with music. This in turn predicted more job satisfaction and work-related meaning even after we statistically controlled for how much they were earning. Regardless of

their income, musicians who saw deeper into the music were happier with the jobs and had a sense of purpose in making music.

Slide 12

And finally, the sacred can be experienced in particular moments in time. We call these sacred moments. I'd also like to share with you an experience that Ken had while giving a talk on sacred moments.

He asked people to share their sacred moments (without defining them) in small groups. One very elderly man was sitting with his wife and apologized to others before he spoke, saying: "I may lose track of my thoughts here. You see I'm losing my mind. I mean literally. The dementia has set in. But I have sacred moments with my wife. Just look at her." His wife was sitting next to him, with eyes filled with love and sorrow, eyes that never left his. He said, "she brings me sacred moments every day." He said, "This is the worst time of my life." And after a pause, "This is the best time of my life."

The group sat hushed, feeling the sacredness of what he had shared. Sacred moments are what life make worthwhile. They are what we most treasure. The sacred moments we experience are what sustain us through our dark times.

Slide 13

Let's take a few minutes here to reflect on a sacred moment of our own.

Treasure Chest Meditation

Breathe. Settle into your chair, with your hands resting comfortably on your lap and your feet touching the floor. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Otherwise, settle your gaze on a space that's close to you.

Allow your attention to begin to turn inward. You can always return to your breath when you feel lost or when your mind wanders. Let your breath be your anchor. In. Out. Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing this exercise. Breathe.

Picture a treasure chest in your mind. See if you can envision this sealed chest that contains your most precious memories. Consider the size of your it – how big is it? How heavy? Perhaps your chest is made of wood, wicker, or lined with fabric. Notice its colors and the finish.

Now imagine opening your treasure chest. Maybe it creaks as it opens. Inside this box are your memories. Here are your life's treasured moments, collected in one place—as snapshots or moving pictures. You begin sifting through your chest of memories.

As you move through your memories, see if you can find one sacred moment. Maybe you experienced it in an encounter with another person, maybe outdoors, maybe in response to a piece of music, or maybe in something seemingly ordinary. In any case, it is a moment in time

that feels set apart from the others, when you connected with something greater than yourself. Perhaps it's a moment that lifted you up. A moment that feels timeless. A moment that opened your heart to something really real. A moment of deep connection. Perhaps, as you hold this moment, the edges of it even glow.

Imagine the essence of this moment wash over you and into you. Warmly enveloping you into this sacred memory. Drawing you into your sacred moment. Perhaps you are wholly absorbed into this scene.

Notice what's ahead of you, behind you, around you in the moment. Recall the sounds of this moment. The temperature. Any tastes, smells, or movements that you made. Breathe in this sacred moment and draw what you need from it. Whether it be comfort, gratefulness, or love from this moment. Take in all that you need. Continue to be in this sacred space for the next couple of minutes.

Now that you have been filled by this moment, allow yourself to let go of it until next time. It will always be there for you. You can return to your treasure chest at any time. Now gently turn your attention outward, into the room, into the present, and all through your body. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Slide 14

Now we have the remainder of our time together to share and listen. What was in your treasure chest? [Ideally, time-permitting, everyone will have a chance to share their experience.]

Thanks everybody for sharing. If you struggled to think of a moment, that's okay. Sometimes these moments are hard to access. If you are feeling blocked, you can always return to the meditation another time. It may help to think of a moment that you'd like to have.

Slide 15

Provide the groups with pens and paper. Now I have some contemplation questions for you. I'd like for you to take the next couple of minutes and respond to a few of them, perhaps the ones that speak the most to you. You'll have about ten minutes. Then we'll get into groups of 3-4 and go over your responses.

Reflection Questions: What made this moment sacred to you? What emotions were you feeling? What did you take from that moment? How did the moment change you?

Break into groups of 3-5 for reflection. Allow about 20 minutes for the groups to share. The facilitator can hop around the groups to check in on how people are doing. Dissolve the groups.

Now that we're all back together, let's aim to hear a little bit from each group.

Slide 16

We've spent some time exploring sacred moments and reflecting on their profound impact. I'd like to brainstorm with you now. What do these moments have in common? What goes into a sacred moment?

We have generated some ingredients that seem essential for sacred moments. *Summarize ideas.*

Slide 17

Here are some ingredients that come from research and Ken's thinking. Sacred moments are transcendent, timeless, revelatory of ultimate truths, and marked by feelings of deep connection and powerful spiritual emotions of awe, uplift, gratitude, and love. They are un-PTSD moments – seared into our hearts and souls as are traumatic experiences, but in a positive, life transforming way. *The facilitator will explain transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, deep interconnectedness, spiritual emotions, and manifestations of the sacred core (i.e., God, transcendent reality). Emphasize that these are our working definitions and that others may have their own interpretation of these words.* We'll be delving further into each one of these qualities in the upcoming weeks.

Slide 18

Having experienced the powerful effects of sacred moments, it's important to be able to continue benefitting from them. Here's what I'd encourage you to practice over the next seven days. If you're the kind of person who responds well to reminders or alarms, feel free to bring out your phones out now. For the next week, consider dedicating five minutes each day for reflection on your sacred moment. Just five minutes. Feel free to program that time into your phones now. Set those reminders. Think of it as watering your spirituality plant, if you like, to keep it happy and well. You are also welcome to download the sacred moments meditation from [<https://wongclinical.wixsite.com/sacredmoments>] to help with your reflection or explore other memories in your treasure chest.

There's a second part of this challenge. I encourage you to share your sacred moment with someone outside of this group, someone whom you trust. That exercise will help us move into the first online session on deep interconnectedness.

Slide 19

Thank you so much for coming today and being present. I'll look forward to sending you our online booster sessions and post-workshop survey. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. Does anybody have any questions right now?

APPENDIX F. ONLINE 1 – DEEP INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Slide 1

Welcome to our first online session. I'm going to invite you to ease yourself into the present moment. Just take a minute to bring your whole self here – do whatever you need to do. That might mean dimming the light to how you like it, getting into a comfortable position, closing the door, and tucking away what's distracting to you. Do whatever you need to do to focus on the here and now. Just ease yourself into this moment. I'll wait. Press pause if you need to take longer. [Pause]

Now let's check in with our minds. Maybe a part of you is revisiting something that happened in the past – it could be something that happened today, something that happened years ago, or whatever happened just a second ago. See if your mind can let go of what's behind you, just for now. You can always choose to visit the past later.

Or maybe your mind is zooming ahead with concerns about the future. See if you can let go of all the things that you have to do next. Let go of what's to come, just for the moment. Just for this session. And you can return to at the end.

Let's take three breaths together on a four count to center ourselves. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. Last one in...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. I hope you're feeling more present with me now.

Slide 2

Today we will explore the experience of deep interconnectedness. It is about fully tuning into another person, a group of people, or the wider web of life. You might feel connected with the universe or with God. Deep interconnectedness has the greatest chance of blossoming when we show up with an open heart, mind, and spirit, and when we see this reflected in others.

Let's listen to Emily's experience with her therapist.

Slide 3

[Voiceover] There was one moment in therapy. I'd just lost my best friend to an overdose. I didn't want to do this again. I didn't want to talk about it. I didn't want to listen. I was sick of the process and I just wanted to get out so I stood up and screamed at her. She didn't bat an eye. I thought she would tell me to go. Just another addict, just another waste of time.

Instead, she said, "I hear your anger, and I hear your pain, and it goes very deep. I also hear you're scared of ending up alone with no one in your life who truly understands you. I want you to know—I'm here for you."

Something about the way she spoke made me believe her. It was like she saw me. She wasn't leaving. So I sat down.

Slide 4

Take a moment now to write a word or phrase in Qualtrics about your reaction to Emily's experience. [Pause.]

Slide 5

What sets the stage for deep interconnectedness and sacred moments? Several studies have found that people who more frequently engage in spiritual activities such as meditation, or prayer, tend to experience more sacred moments (Wilt et al., 2018; Magyar-Russell et al., 2020; Pargament et al., 2014).

Certain conditions also seem to favor sacred moments. People have often said that they felt supported and connected with another person before experiencing a sacred moment. Like Emily, they were able to feel safe and vulnerable. Perhaps we can learn to create these sacred holding spaces for others and learn to recognize when others are present with us.

Slide 6

Breathing Together Meditation

This meditation was inspired by the Tibetan Buddhist practice of *tonglen*. The idea is to turn someone else's suffering into love with your own breath and intention. The following meditation will take about ten minutes.

Breathe. Settle into your chair, with your hands resting comfortably and your feet touching the floor. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Otherwise, settle your gaze on a space that's close to you.

Allow your attention to begin to turn inward. You can always return to your breath if you feel lost or when your mind wanders. In. Out. Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing this exercise. Continue to breathe naturally, noticing the in and out, the gentle rise and fall of your chest, the sounds of the air coming in and out of your nose.

I invite you to focus on someone whom you would like to connect with—someone who cares about you and who you care about. Whoever this person is, see if you can picture them in your mind. What do they look like? What is the expression on their face? Are they standing or sitting down in your mind? What is their posture like? What are they wearing? Can you hear them? Do they have a certain scent about them? Simply notice how it feels to be in their presence. [Pause.]

Maybe you feel drawn towards them. Perhaps you have the urge to move closer. If you do, go ahead and imagine yourself moving forward. Just spend the next few breaths in their

presence. [Pause]. Imagine, if you can, just breathing with them. Inhaling together. Exhaling. Notice what it is like to breathe together. Imagine your hearts connecting and beating in sync. Your connection getting stronger and steadier. A beam of light connecting your heart to theirs.

Each of us bears hidden yearning and pain. See if you notice this in their eyes. What is it that they may be hoping for? What could they be longing for in this moment?

With your next inhale, see if you can breathe in their struggle and suffering. Their silent wish or discomfort. Breathe this in and feel yourself expanding, making space. Notice how you are able to hold this and transform it into light. Continue breathing in their suffering. Breathe naturally.

On your next exhale, breathe out your light and compassion. Perhaps you send them comfort and healing wishes. You may breathe out companionship. You may breathe out warmth. Exhale whatever you sense that they need. Breathe naturally.

Keep this practice of breathing in and breathing out for the next few minutes. Breathing in suffering, breathing out compassion. [Pause].

When you're ready to part ways, allow their presence to fade gradually from your mind. Slowly let go of your connection to their heart for now. Breathing as you are, slowly shift your attention to your external surroundings. Imagine the room you're in. The chair you're sitting on. Your feet on the floor. Open your eyes whenever you're ready.

Slide 7

On Qualtrics, please describe your experience of this *breathing together* exercise. Please feel free to write whatever was true to your experience, whether it was positive or negative. I encourage you to write something balanced and honest. Here are some contemplation questions that you may choose to reflect upon: Who was the person you thought of? What was it like breathing in their suffering and yearning and breathing out compassion? How connected did you feel with this person?

Slide 8

What we've done today is bring up experiences of deep giving and connection. For home practice, I encourage you to do the *breathing together* meditation every day. I encourage you to practice witnessing and 'taking in' the suffering of someone you come across. And imagine the light in you dissolving the darkness, breathing out light that is emanating from your spirit. Maybe it will move you to say something. Maybe it will move you to do something. I hope you will experience a sense of connection this week through the meditation.

Thanks so much for joining me. See you next week.

APPENDIX G. ONLINE 2 – ULTIMACY

*Qualtrics home practice questions: How many times were you able to engage in the breathing together meditation? Describe your experience. Please rate your **understanding** of deep interconnectedness (0-10) in this moment. Please rate your **experience** of deep interconnectedness (0-10) in this moment Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

Slide 1

Welcome to our second online session. Again, I'm going to invite you to ease yourself into the present moment. Just take a minute to bring your whole self here – do whatever you need to do. That might mean dimming the light to how you like it, getting into a comfortable position, closing the door, and tucking away what's distracting you. Do whatever you need to do to focus here and now. Just ease yourself into this moment. I'll wait. Press pause if you need to take longer. [Pause]

Now let's check in with our minds. Maybe a part of you is revisiting something that happened today, something that happened years ago, or whatever happened just a second ago. See if your mind can let go of what's behind you, just for now. You can always choose to visit the past later.

Maybe your mind is zooming ahead with concerns about the future. See if you can let go of all the things that you have to do next. Let go of what's to come, just for the moment. Let's take three breaths together on a four count to center ourselves. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. Last one in...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. I hope you're feeling more present with me now. Welcome.

Today we will explore the sacred quality of ultimacy.

Slide 2

Ultimacy is about knowing to core of your being, that something is true and real. It captures what you know in your heart of hearts about life, about yourself, and about the world. Sacred moments can have a revelatory quality – where you feel like you arrive at a timeless, universal truth. These revelations makes sense, but even more so, they ring true to your core. Consider this example of ultimacy from Jewish psychiatrist Viktor Frankl in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (1985, p. 7). He provides an account of his experiences in captivity during the Holocaust:

Slide 3

[Voiceover]...I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth—that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that

human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love.

Slide 4

These are moments of clarity. These moments may bring coherence and meaning to life. And these truths often unfold in sacred spaces. Consider this modern example from Sarah:

[Voiceover] I moved to the city, but I drive back to the countryside when I can. I've always loved seeing the night sky from there. After sunset, I listen to the cicadas and night birds. The hay smells sweet and dry. And when you turn out the house lights, you have almost perfect darkness, away from all the light pollution.

What I like most about the countryside is the night sky. If you look up, you can see the Milky Way spread out above us. Countless stars, blinking in the dark. I know they're there in the daytime and in the city, too, but they're usually hidden from plain sight. And looking up, seeing them clearly, I get the sense that we are all meant to be here. Because we're only here for a moment, really. Each shining until we blink out. One day we'll return to the universe. I know to the core of my being that I belong here. We are meant to be here, at this place, at this time. And we have to take care of each other—be a temporary light.

Slide 5

Take a moment now to write a word or phrase in Qualtrics that describes your reaction to this woman's reflection. [Pause.] I invite you now to join me in the following personal reflection. This reflection was inspired by the Celtic Christian idea of thin spaces. I'll say more about thin spaces in a moment.

Slide 6

Thin Spaces Reflection

Breathe. Settle into your chair, with your hands resting comfortably and your feet touching the floor. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Otherwise, settle your gaze on a space that's close to you.

Allow your attention to begin to turn inward. You can always return to your breath if you feel lost or when your mind wanders. In. Out. Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing this exercise.

Thin spaces are places where the veil between this world and the realm of Heaven is thin. If you don't connect with the word Heaven, consider a transcendent plane, ultimate reality, or spiritual realm. Thin spaces are where you can view, just for a glimpse, what is divine and majestic. What is real, awe inspiring, and true.

See if you can think of a time when you stumbled upon a thin space. It could be anywhere on earth. Perhaps it was a particular room in a building. Or maybe it was outside in nature—at dawn or sunset. Maybe there is a river in your thin space. Mountains. See if you can recall what you saw as you looked around. What colors do you notice? What draws your attention? Notice the sounds of the space. What was in the air? How does it feel to be there?

Wherever you were, something about being there let you see the edge of Heaven. Perhaps this place is holy to you. Sacred. Maybe you were conscious of an energy from this place. What truth or truths can be found here? What has this space revealed to you? Take the next few minutes to reflect and explore this space. [Pause]

Now that you have revisited your thin space, allow yourself to let go of it until next time. You can return to your thin space at any time in your mind. Now gently turn your attention outward, into the room, into the present, and all through your body. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Slide 7

Take your time on Qualtrics now to reflect on your experience of this exercise. You might think back to your thin place or another one of your sacred moments. What truth or truths about yourself, your relationships, or your life emerged in that space? What wisdom did the moment reveal to you? What do you know about yourself that you feel is really true, really real? Feel free to press pause here if you need more time.

Slide 8

For home practice this week, I invite you to write these truths on an index card for your keeping. Read these truths to yourself every day as a reminder. You might also consider visiting a thin space for you, if that is possible. Please go ahead and consider making a commitment to do this on Qualtrics.

Thanks so much for joining me. See you next week.

APPENDIX H. ONLINE 3 – BOUNDLESSNESS

*Qualtrics home practice questions: Were you able to write your truths on an index card? How often were you able to read these to yourself? Describe your experience. Were you able to physically visit a thin space? Describe your experience. Please rate your **understanding** of ultimacy (0-10) in this moment. Please rate your **experience** of ultimacy (0-10) in this moment. Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

Slide 1

Welcome to our third online session. Again, I'm going to invite you to ease yourself into the present moment. Just take a minute to bring your whole self here – do whatever you need to do. Feel free to dim the light to how you like it, get into a comfortable position, close the door, and tuck away what's distracting you. Do whatever you need to do to focus on the here and now. Just ease yourself into this moment. I'll wait. Press pause if you need to take longer. [Pause]

Okay, now let's check in with our minds. Maybe a part of you is revisiting something that happened today, something that happened years ago, or whatever happened just a second ago. See if your mind can let go of what's behind you, just for now. You can always choose to visit the past later.

Maybe your mind is zooming ahead with concerns about the future. See if you can let go of all the things that you have to do next. Let go of what's to come, just for the moment. Let's take three breaths together on a four count to center ourselves. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. Last one in...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. I hope you're feeling more present with me now. Welcome.

Slide 2

Today we will explore the experience of boundlessness. Remember that we are providing our definition of this word, and that you may have your own. There is room for multiple meanings. As we see it, boundlessness captures what exists beyond time and space. It's about what is infinite, everlasting, and unforgettable.

Boundlessness is a common theme in many religious traditions. In the Bible, God is eternal, with no beginning and no end. In Islam, God is described as *God the One, God the Eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten*. Hinduism is called The Eternal Religion because it is the oldest living and continuous religion. Our souls are described as eternally cycling through living and dying. Buddhism is a little different in that there is no concept of the soul. However, the endless knot is an important Tibetan Buddhist symbol that represents a number of things, including the continuous movement from birth, death, and rebirth.

While our physical selves are finite, sometimes an experience can become an essential part of who we are in this life. We remember these experiences because they are, in a way,

imprinted. These experiences become a lifemark. This is one of the ways we come to experience boundlessness.

Consider the following account from a son whose mother had dementia.

Slide 3

[Voiceover] Near the end, she forgot how to talk. My brother stopped visiting because it was too hard for him to see her like that. I got in a fight with him about that—how it’s important to visit even if she doesn’t know we’re there. Mom would visit us if we were that way.

It was hard. I couldn’t get her to respond to anything, and most of the time, I ended up talking to myself. You get used to it. So you can imagine how shocked I was when she called me by my name. She was totally lucid that morning when she looked me in the eye. I stopped right at the door. She said, “Thank you for visiting, Lee.”

I had to hold back my tears. I just hugged her and told her I would always come see her. Now I visit her grave. I make sure there are flowers there. I’ll always remember her. And I’ll always think of her saying those words to me. It’s what keeps me coming back.

Slide 4

Take a moment now to write a word or phrase in Qualtrics that describes your reaction to Lee’s experience. [Pause.]

Slide 5

Legacy Exercise Part I

We’re going to start off with something different today.

I’d like you to think about someone in your life who you look up to. This is someone who you know personally and who you have looked to for support. Maybe this person is a mentor or a coach, maybe someone older or wiser. Pick someone who you trust deeply.

In the survey, go ahead and reflect upon the following. What will you always remember about them? What mark have they left in your life? Most importantly, what about this person will live on in you after their death?

Take your time to enter your thoughts. Come back to the video when you’re ready.

Slide 6

Let’s listen to Alicia’s story now:

[Voiceover] “My cousin has Down's syndrome. She doesn’t process things as quickly as everybody else. We’re only two years apart and we’re pretty close. When she started school, I

saw kids staring at her and whispering. I worry a lot about her getting bullied. But I want her to grow up knowing that mom, dad, and me – we love her. It doesn't matter how you look like or how smart you are—you still deserve to be loved. I want her to feel that forever so I make sure she gets lots of hugs and high fives. I look out for her at school. And she's starting to give high fives to people, too. She lights up the room, if you give her a chance. She's got so much to give. I don't want her to forget that she's loved. I've got her back."

Slide 7

Legacy Exercise Part II

We just heard from Alicia on her gift of love that she's passing onto her cousin. Now reflect upon the legacy that *you* want to leave behind for someone in your life. It might help to think of a person first – someone alive who looks up to you. Maybe you are older than them and they come to you for support. Take your time to think of someone.

Go ahead and complete the part of the survey that asks about the person you selected. Feel free to press pause here.

Next, think of what you would like to impart upon them – whether it be a feeling, an idea, or a life lesson. It could be something as simple as the feeling of safety. A timeless moment of joy or celebration. A skill that you helped them develop. How will your legacy live on in this person's life?

Go ahead and write your thoughts following the prompts in the survey. Feel free to press pause here.

Slide 8

Over the next seven days, I'd like to you reflect on the following.

What are five timeless gifts that have been passed onto you by someone? And, what are five timeless gifts that you would like to pass onto a loved one? Feel free to choose the same or a different person each time. In the survey, there is a worksheet that you can download to help with your thinking. I hope you'll take stock of your legacy and whose legacies live on in you today.

Thanks so much for joining me. We're more than halfway through the program now and I hope you have been enjoying it so far. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or comments. See you next week.

APPENDIX I. ONLINE 4 – SPIRITUAL EMOTIONS

*Qualtrics home practice questions: To what extent were you able to reflect on your own legacy? Describe your experience. Please rate your **understanding** of boundlessness (0-10) in this moment. Please rate your **experience** of boundlessness (0-10) in this moment. Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

Slide 1

Welcome to our fourth online session. As always, I'm going to invite you to ease yourself into the present moment. Just take a minute to bring your whole self here – do whatever you need to do. That might mean dimming the light to how you like it, getting into a comfortable position, closing the door, and tucking away what's distracting you. Do whatever you need to do to focus on the now. Just ease yourself into this moment. I'll wait. Press pause if you need to take longer. [Pause]

Okay, now let's check in with our minds. Maybe a part of you is revisiting something that happened today, something that happened years ago, or whatever happened just a second ago. See if your mind can let go of what's behind you, just for now. You can always choose to visit the past later.

Maybe your mind is zooming ahead with concerns about the future. See if you can let go of all the things that you have to do next. Let go of what's to come, just for the moment. Let's take three breaths together on a four count to center ourselves. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. Last one in...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. I hope you're feeling more present with me now. Welcome.

Today we will explore the experience of spiritual emotions, and we'll focus on one emotion in particular: gratitude.

Slide 2

Perhaps you're familiar with gratitude already. What's the big deal about saying thanks? Well, there's a lot of good science in support of gratitude. When practiced daily for as little as five minutes, gratitude can lead to improvements in happiness, life satisfaction, and depressive symptoms (Dickens, 2017).

Psychologist Robert Emmons wrote,

[Voiceover] “We all begin life dependent on others, and most of us end life dependent on others. If we are lucky, in between we have roughly 60 years or so of unacknowledged dependency. The human condition is such that throughout life, not just at the beginning and end, we are profoundly dependent on other people...

Gratitude is the truest approach to life. We did not create or fashion ourselves. We did not birth ourselves. Life is about giving, receiving, and repaying. We are receptive beings, dependent on the help of others, on their gifts and their kindness.”

Slide 3

Gratitude is also an important part of many religious and spiritual traditions. You can find countless examples in the Bible of people expressing thanks to the Lord. There is a Jewish morning prayer that begins with, “I thank you, living and enduring God, for you have restored my life to me.” In Islam, daily prayers are offered to show gratitude towards Allah. Cultivating gratitude is central to Buddhism.

Slide 4

Gratitude Reflection

Sometimes, feeling gratitude can be a sign that you’re experiencing something sacred. It may serve as a cue for you that something deeper is happening in this moment. Here is a reflection that you may find helpful. Just sit back for a moment and consider the following:

Can you think back to a time when you were offered an act of kindness? A time when your shortcomings were forgiven? Perhaps you made a mistake and were met with compassion. Perhaps someone surprised you by how well they responded.

Just pick one moment where you were given a break ... and think back to how you felt before it happened. Maybe back to when you first realized you fell short. Maybe it worried you every time you thought about it, and the gravity of the error pulled at you. Perhaps you were fearful of being criticized, rejected, or even abandoned. Feel yourself sit in those heavy thoughts and feelings for a moment, the weight of it in your chest or stomach...

And now, consider the feeling that flooded you when you were met with kindness. When you were spared rather than shamed. When your heavy load was lifted, for a moment. Now see if you can direct these feelings of gratitude towards something larger than yourself – perhaps this is God for you, a higher power, or the universe itself. Allow yourself to send that feeling outward. What was it like to feel that? What were you thinking? How did it feel in your body? What did it make you want to do?

Go ahead and write about your experience on Qualtrics. Feel free to pause here.

Slide 5

Let’s listen to this reflection:

We had just finished finals and I met up with some friends for drinks. I ended up staying out pretty late. It was around 1:00am when I decided to head home. It was pretty dark out. A

little bit of rain. I was sleep deprived from the night before, so I'm nodding off at the wheel. And then I'm asleep.

All of a sudden, I am bouncing off the seat because I hit a massive pothole on the side of the road. I hit the brakes hard and stop. When I catch my breath, I look back at the road and I freak because there's an accident thirty feet ahead. There's a semi and then another car that's totaled. I have no idea what happened to it. But I'm sitting in my car thinking that could have been me.

It was nothing short of a miracle that I woke up fine. That my car veered into a pothole. I was drinking and driving. I fell asleep at the wheel. I could have died that night and I didn't. Something bigger than myself was looking out for me. I swore out loud that I would never drink and drive again. And I thanked whoever or whatever is out there for keeping me safe.

Slide 6

This week, I invite you to be intentional about your gratitude. Please write five specific things every day that you feel grateful for, beginning with today. This will help you reflect on the daily gifts that we receive, big and small. Sometimes, like the Jewish prayer, we can simply be grateful for waking up another day.

The second part of this challenge is also important. See if you can express your thanks out loud to God, a loving force, or to the universe. Think of it as a daily communication with someone or something greater than yourself. If you are willing to try, and I hope you are, go ahead and make your commitment on Qualtrics now.

Thanks so much for joining me. See you next week for our final session.

APPENDIX J. ONLINE 5 — TRANSCENDENCE

*Qualtrics home practice questions: How many times were you able to write five specific things that you felt grateful for each day? How many times were you able to express your thanks out loud? To whom or what did you address your thanks? Describe your experience. Please rate your **understanding** of gratitude (0-10) in this moment. Please rate your **experience** of gratitude (0-10) in this moment. Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

Slide 1

Welcome to our fifth and final online session. As always, I'm going to invite you to ease yourself into the present moment. Just take a minute to bring your whole self here – do whatever you need to do. That might mean dimming the light to how you like it, getting into a comfortable position, closing the door, and tucking away what's distracting you. Do whatever you need to do to focus on the now. Just ease yourself into this moment. I'll wait. Press pause if you need to take longer. [Pause]

Okay, now let's check in with our minds. Maybe a part of you is revisiting something that happened today, something that happened years ago, or whatever happened just a second ago. See if your mind can let go of what's behind you, just for now. You can always choose to visit the past later.

Maybe your mind is zooming ahead with concerns about the future. See if you can let go of all the things that you have to do next. Let go of what's to come, just for the moment. Let's take three breaths together on a four count to center ourselves. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. In...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. Last one in...2...3...4. Out...2...3...4. I hope you're feeling more present with me now. Welcome.

Today we will explore the experience of transcendence. You may have heard this term used to describe a number of things. Again, there is room for multiple interpretations of the word, but here we will present ours as it relates to sacred moments.

Slide 2

Transcendence is about seeing what is extraordinary, or what is set apart from everyday life. Moments of transcendence can be heaven-like, if you believe in Heaven, or simply immersive in an ultimate reality. Listen to one professional musician's experience here:

[Voiceover] Right before the soft note, there was a tiny pulse. That pulse, the moment of silence right before the climax was the moment when I experienced the sacred moment. It felt as if I were transcended into a different world, a world that was celestial. For that moment alone, it was worth living for. (Wong & Pargament, 2018)

Slide 3

Or consider Ann Druyan's remarks on the transcendent quality of her relationship with her late husband, Carl Sagan:

[Voiceover] "That we could find each other, as Carl wrote so beautifully in *Cosmos*...in the vastness of space and the immensity of time. That we could be together for twenty years. The way he treated me and the way I treated him, the way we took care of each other and our family, while he lived ... I don't think I'll ever see Carl again. But I saw him. We saw each other. We found each other in the cosmos, and that was wonderful."

Slide 4

Transcendent moments are often our most prized treasures. They are special to us like no other. See if you are able to consider your life's most incredible moments in this next meditation.

Slide 5

Hidden Compartment Meditation

Breathe. Settle into your chair, with your hands resting comfortably and your feet touching the floor. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Otherwise, settle your gaze on a space that's close to you.

Allow your attention to begin to turn inward. You can always return to your breath when you feel lost or when your mind wanders. Let your breath be your anchor. In. Out. Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing this exercise. Breathe.

Picture your treasure chest from the first session. See if you can envision this sealed chest that contains your most treasured memories. Recall the size of it...its weight... Perhaps your chest is made out of wood, wicker, or lined with fabric. Notice its colors and the finish.

Now imagine opening your treasure chest. Inside this box, of course, are your memories. Here are your life's treasured moments, collected in one place—as snapshots or moving pictures. You begin sifting through your chest of memories.

This time you do something different. You look deeper into your treasure chest, peering into a hidden compartment. This compartment contains your most cherished memories, where you hold the most precious of memories, the ones set apart from the rest. Carefully, gently, you approach the hidden compartment and retrieve one of the memories.

This is a moment of special significance. Maybe you sensed something immensely greater than yourself. See if you can place yourself there again. Imagine the essence of this moment wash over you and into you. Warmly enveloping you into this sacred memory. Drawing you deeper in. Perhaps you are wholly absorbed into this scene.

Notice where you are in your moment, what you see ahead of you, behind you, around you. Recall the sounds of this moment. The temperature around you. Any tastes, smells, or

movements that you made. Breathe in this moment and draw what you need from it. Whether it be comfort, gratefulness, or love from this moment. Take in all that you need. Continue to be in this transcendent space for the next couple of minutes.

Now that you have been filled by this moment, allow yourself to let go of it until next time. It will always be there for you. You can return to your hidden compartment at any time. Now gently turn your attention outward, into the room, into the present, and all through your body. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Slide 6

Take a few minutes to write about your hidden compartment in Qualtrics. What set this moment apart from everything else? How was it extraordinary?

Slide 7

For the next week, I encourage you to engage in the hidden compartment meditation, revisiting your compartment each day for ten minutes. Practicing can help us to access these moments, particularly in times when we need them most. If you noticed that your hidden compartment has room, you can sift through your treasure chest to find moments that you'd like to place there.

We've designed a spiritual planning form on Qualtrics to help with your home practice. [The Qualtrics form resembled an action plan, with dates, planned practice times, and areas to brainstorm how to set reminders and address potential barriers.]

Slide 8

We've spent the past six weeks exploring sacred moments and their qualities. Let's take a moment now to review what they are and how we have approached them.

In week one, you attended a sacred moments workshop. You were introduced to the treasure chest meditation and reflected on the common elements that make up a sacred memory. You shared your sacred moment with someone and reflected on that experience.

In week two, we explored Deep interconnectedness. You practiced the breathing together meditation where you visualized someone you care about, taking in their yearning and suffering, and breathing out compassion.

The third week was dedicated to Ultimacy. You were introduced to the thin spaces meditation, where you revisited a physical place that provided you with some sense of truth and meaning. Ultimacy is about knowing something to be true to the core of your being.

The fourth week's theme was Boundlessness. This was about experiences that go beyond time and space boundaries. One way to experience boundlessness is to think about the legacy that we leave behind after we are physically gone. What is it that we yearn to be known for?

What mark are we called to make in the universe? We focused on building a legacy for home practice.

For week five, we focused on one particular spiritual emotion and that was gratitude. We practiced a two-part challenge involving making five grateful statements daily and expressing gratitude out loud, projecting our thanks outward.

And finally, in week six, this week, we looked at Transcendence. Transcendence is about something that is extraordinary or set apart. You engaged in a Hidden Compartment meditation, returning to your treasure chest of memories, and this week you'll practice revisiting that compartment.

Of course, all of these qualities are connected to each other – transcendence, boundlessness, ultimacy, spiritual emotions, and deep interconnectedness. I hope you come away with both an understanding and experience of sacred moments. That we cultivated the soil for future sacred moments in your life.

You'll see a post-treatment survey from me next week. After completing that, you won't hear from us again for about four weeks. At that point, you'll have a final follow-up survey. In between this time, feel free to download meditations from our website or review materials from the videos if you liked it. Thanks so much for joining me. Take care.

*Qualtrics home practice questions: How many times were you able to engage with your hidden compartment? Describe your experience. Please rate your **understanding** of transcendence (0-10) in this moment. Please rate your **experience** of transcendence (0-10) in this moment. Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

APPENDIX K. DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1 What is your gender?

Male

Female

Trans Male/Trans Man

Trans Female/Trans Woman

Genderqueer/Gender NonConforming

Different Identity

Q2 What is your age?

Q3 What is your current relationship status?

Married or stable union

Widowed

Divorced or separated

Single, never married

Other (please specify)

Q4 What is your average annual household income?

Under \$10,000

\$10,000-\$29,999

\$30,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$69,999

\$70,000-\$89,999

\$90,000 & above

Q5 How many years of education have you completed? (e.g., 12 years = high school / GED; 16 years = bachelor's degree; 18 years = master's degree, etc.

Q6 What best describes your race/ethnicity?

Euro-American/ Caucasian/ White

Hispanic/ Latino

Native American/ Alaskan Native

Pacific Islander

African-American/ Black

Asian/ Asian-American

Middle Eastern

Multi-racial/ Multi-ethnic (describe)

Other (describe)

Q7 What best describes your current religious affiliation?

Christian (Protestant, Orthodox, Non-denominational, or Other)

Roman Catholic (Christian)

Jewish
Muslim
Hindu
Buddhist
Atheist
Agnostic
Other (please specify)

Q8 Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?

More than once a week
Once a week
Once or twice a month
A few times a year
Seldom
Never

Q9 Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray?

Several times a day
Once a day
A few times a week
Once a week
A few times a month
Seldom
Never

Q10 To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person? Are you...

Very religious
Moderately religious
Slightly religious
Not at all religious

Q11 To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person? Are you...

Very spiritual
Moderately spiritual
Slightly spiritual
Not at all spiritual

APPENDIX L. TREATMENT CREDIBILITY/EXPECTANCY QUESTIONNAIRE (CEQ)

We would like you to indicate below how much you believe, right now, that the program you are receiving will help improve your wellbeing. Belief usually has two aspects to it: (1) what one thinks will happen and (2) what one feels will happen. Sometimes these are similar; sometimes they are different. Please answer the questions below. In the first set of questions below, answer in terms of what you think. In the second set answer in terms of what you really and truly feel.

1 At this point, how logical does the program offered to you seem?

- 1 (not at all logical)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (somewhat logical)
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 (very logical)

2 At this point, how successful do you think this program will be in improving your wellbeing?

- 1 (not at all useful)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (somewhat useful)
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 (very useful)

3 How confident would you be in recommending this program to a friend?

- 1 (not at all confident)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (somewhat confident)
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 (very confident)

4 By the end of the program, how much improvement in your wellbeing do you think will occur?

Percentage ()	
---------------	--

5 For this second set, close your eyes for a few moments, and try to identify what you really feel about the program and its likely success. Then answer the following questions.

6 At this point, how much do you really *feel* that this program will help you to improve your wellbeing?

1 (not at all)

2

3

4

5 (somewhat

6

7

8

9 (very much)

7 By the end of the program, how much improvement in your wellbeing do you really *feel* will occur?

Percentage ()	
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APPENDIX M. SACRED MOMENT QUALITIES (SMQ)

To what degree would you say that the following statements are true about experiences you had in the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**?

Not at all true (1), Slightly true (2), Somewhat true (3), Moderately true (4), Very true (5)

1. I had extraordinary moments.
2. I had moments that felt set apart from everyday life.
3. I felt that I was in the presence of something larger than myself.
4. I felt connected to something ultimately true.
5. I felt unsettled.
6. I felt that I was part of something that was really real.
7. I felt that time had stopped.
8. All distractions seemed to melt away.
9. I felt overwhelmed.
10. I felt a deep sense of connection with humanity.
11. I sensed that humanity was deeply connected with me.
12. I felt deep gratitude.
13. I lost track of ordinary time.
14. I felt a sense of awe.
15. I felt a sense of uplift.
16. I felt a deep sense of peace and serenity.
17. I felt humbled.
18. I felt intensely curious.
19. I felt a deep sense of mystery.
20. I felt blessed.
21. I felt a sense of dread.
22. I felt that I was a part of something infinite.

APPENDIX N. PROGRAM SATISFACTION SURVEY

Q1 How helpful was the program to you?

Not at all helpful
Not very helpful
Neutral
A little helpful
Very helpful

Q2 How likely are you to continue using the resources you learned from the program?

Not at all likely
Not very likely
Neutral
A little likely
Very likely

Q3 How informative was the program to you?

Not at all informative
Not very informative
Neutral
A little informative
Very informative

Q4 What did you like most about the program?

Q5 What did you like least about the program?

Q6 How did the program impact your personal and/or spiritual life, if at all?

Q7 How did you feel about the program facilitator(s)?

Q8 What can we do to improve the program?

Q9 How do you think we can cultivate more sacred moments in our lives or benefit from them?

Q10 Please share any additional thoughts or comments you may have about the program.

APPENDIX O. MEANING IN LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE (MLQ)

Thinking of the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**, please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can. These are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Absolutely untrue (1)	Mostly untrue (2)	Somewhat untrue (3)	Can't say true or false (4)	Somewhat true (5)	Mostly true (6)	Absolutely true (7)
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1. I understand my life's meaning
2. I am looking for something that makes my life meaningful
3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose
4. My life has a clear sense of purpose
5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful
6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose
7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant
8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life
9. My life has no clear purpose
10. I am searching for meaning in my life

APPENDIX P. DAILY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES SCALE (DSES)

Please think of the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**. The list that follows includes items you may or may not experience. Please consider how often you directly have this experience, and try to disregard whether you feel you should or should not have these experiences. A number of items use the word 'God.' If this word is not a comfortable one for you, please substitute another word that calls to mind the divine or holy for you." If you do not believe in God, please feel free to select "Never or almost never" as necessary.

Never or almost never (1)	Once in a while (2)	Some days (3)	Most days (4)	Every day (5)	Many times a day (6)
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1. I feel God's presence.
2. I find strength and comfort in my religion or spirituality.
3. I feel God's love for me directly or through others.
4. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.
5. I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine.
6. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.

APPENDIX Q. SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS)

Please think of the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**. Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please be open and honest in your responding.

Strongly Agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
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1. In most ways my life is close to ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

APPENDIX R. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION SCALE (STS)

Please compare the PAST FOUR WEEKS with how you are TODAY. Whether you are or are not spiritual or religious, please indicate the extent to which these statements are true for you.

	1 (Not at all true for me)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (True for me a great deal)
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1. Spirituality has become more important to me.
2. My way of looking at life has changed to be more spiritual.
3. I experience life around me as more spiritual.
4. I feel a stronger spiritual connection to other people.
5. I have a stronger sense of the Sacred (God, Higher Power, Allah, Adonai, etc.) directing my life now.
6. I have grown spiritually.
7. I am more spiritually present in the moment.
8. My spirituality is now more deeply imbedded in my whole being.

APPENDIX S. POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH INVENTORY-SHORT FORM (PTGI-SF)

Please select the degree of change you have experienced over the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**.

To a very small degree (1)	To a small degree (2)	To a moderate degree (3)	To a great degree (4)	To a very great degree (5)
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1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life.
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.
3. I am able to do better things with my life.
4. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.
5. I have a greater sense of closeness with others.
6. I established a new path for my life.
7. I know better that I can handle difficulties.
8. I have a stronger religious faith.
9. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.
10. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.

APPENDIX T. PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE (PSS)

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**.

Never (1)	Almost Never (2)	Sometimes (3)	Fairly Often (4)	Very Often (5)
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1. How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
2. How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
3. How often have you felt that things were going your way?
4. How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

APPENDIX U. PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE-4 (PHQ-4)

Over the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

Not at all (1)	Several days (2)	More than half the days (3)	Nearly every day (4)
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1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying
3. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
4. Little interest or pleasure in doing things