From: Langara | Applied Research Center
To: Jessie Smith
Cc: Applied Research; Mike Smith-Cairns
Subject: Thank you for submitting your ARC Fund Final Report-Jessie Smith
Date: Monday, June 2, 2025 3:54:15 PM

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Thank you for submitting

ARC Fund Final Report

Our team may reach out to you with follow-up requests for clarification regarding your submission.

Review your submission responses below:

Researcher First Name: Jessie

Researcher Last Name: Smith

Department: HLPS/IDS

Other Department: IDS

Department Head's Email: msmithcairns@langara.ca

Project Title: The Power and the Perils of Mindfulness for Brain Injury

Start semester: 3/18/2025

End Semester: 3/24/2025

Introduction - Please introduce yourself and include pertinent background information as it relates to your project's research area. In 2013 I was driving to the College when another driver ran a stop sign. Our collision on 49th Avenue left me with long-term brain injury symptoms, so I work half-time. I was told to take up

mindfulness and it helped, but it also hindered; some mindfulness practices were much too cognitive and others caused detrimental nervous system dysregulation. Over time, I learned how to modify mindfulness to take advantage of the power without falling prey to the perils. Ever the educator, I became a qualified mindfulness teacher (through the University of California) to support fellow brain injury survivors.

Please discuss your educational background and your work experience as it relates to this project. If possible, include a quote that helps define your interest in the project. My academic training has helped me with this project from a teaching perspective, but for the most part I am calling on the decade+ I have been learning about brain injury and mindfulness. I took Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Teaching training via the University of California San Diego to become a qualified Mindfulness teacher. I took David Treleaven's course on Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness. I have developed a daily modified mindfulness practice, and I have taken many mindfulness courses, been on many meditation retreats, visited to two monasteries, and have read more than 45 books on brain injury, mindfulness and trauma.

Please summarize your project in plain language that others not in your field could understand. In 2022, I was chosen to be one of a handful of people to be mentored by famous mindfulness teacher, Dr. David Treleaven. He encouraged me to write about my experience of modifying mindfulness to meet the unique needs of brain injury survivors. As part of my book-writing, I was thrilled when I was accepted to present my findings to the world's largest brain injury conference in Montreal in March, 2025. I am so grateful for the ARC funding to help cover the costs.

Identify the project goals and objectives. Explain how the results may be used to solve a problem or inform further research in the field. It was a thrill of a lifetime to go to Montreal in March to present the ideas I have been developing for more than a decade. I was happy to find that the researchers and brain injury specialists in attendance were very interested in my findings. I made some good contacts that will be helpful once my book is published. The ultimate goal is to publish my book so that other brain injury survivors can learn from my blood, sweat and tears. I want others to experience the power of mindfulness, without experiencing the fear, panic, dissociation and shame that I did when I was first learning mindfulness for brain injury care. I also hope that brain injury specialists will give a prescription for mindfulness, but with a warning label. I hope that my book, my website, and my teachings may serve survivors and the professionals who care for us far into the future.

Briefly explain the steps taken (methods used) to conduct the research, and describe the key findings. Write! Write! Write! Also, I'm increasing my social media presence as that is important for book promotion. Next week I am going to a smaller, Canadian brain injury conference in Victoria. I might even apply to present at the same conference as the one that was in Montreal - it will take place in Valencia, Spain in the Spring of 2027! Also, I still have to submit the last receipts for the hotel and the food but I need my PD money to help cover that so I am waiting until that is released....

Who was involved in this project (eg. faculty, students, community partners)? How did their involvement contribute to the project’s success? Were there any challenges to overcome? I teach a portion of a Canadian Studies course on Stress in Canadian Society. As most any Langaran knows, stress among our student is

rampant. They are so eager to learn healthy mechanisms to reduce their stress. I also teach mindful stress reduction to LEAP students every semester, and various other opportunities over time across the College. This whole project supports me to be a better teacher of mindfulness for stress reduction because writing about and researching a topic takes us very deep into the material.

Please share any personal stories that made this research experience memorable/valuable.
Through my experience at the conference I met so many people who will be good contacts for me as this book projects moves forward. For example, I met an American woman who runs a HUGE organization that teaches yoga (and some mindfulness) for brain injury throughout the USA. It was her own idea to say that she would be very happy to promote my book! I also learned a tremendous amount about brain injury at the conference. This information will find its way into both my book and my on-going teaching of mindfulness for brain injury. I do not do a lot of that now, but it is a dream for the future.

What are the next steps for this project and for you as a researcher?
The ARC funding was to go to the conference in Montreal as a stepping stone to support the larger book project. I am now on a year-long Education Leave (since May 1) from my teaching load. I work 1/2 time and 1/4 is teaching and the other 1/4 is the union work which continues. I am already making great progress having time to write every day! It is an honour and a thrill.

Please upload any images that will help to showcase your project.

By submitting, I consent to uploading my ARC Fund final report to the Langara Institutional Repository (The LaIR). True

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