

Mobile-Based Compassion Intervention Data Collection Protocol

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Recruitment

1. Screening

- 1) Initial screening via recruitment platform
- 2) Confirm eligibility from the Qualtrics screening questions

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Age: at least 18 years old
- Current country of residence: United States
- Fluent language: English
- Device eligibility:
 - iPhone as primary mobile device
 - active data plan
 - Phone operating system: iOS 17 or iOS 18
- Prolific eligibility:
 - Number of previous submissions: 50-10000
 - Approval rate: 90-100

2. Enrollment

Verify App Account Set Up

Participants must create an account with their Prolific email address (@email.prolific.com) to fully enroll in the study. Verify each enrolled participant. If a participant's account with an exact match cannot be found, send a direct message via Prolific. Below are sample messages for different scenarios:

Minor error (missing character, typo) in account set up:

Please create an account using xxx@email.prolific.com. [provide precise email to use]
You used xxx@prolific.com instead. [pinpoint error if applicable]

Please log out from your current account and create a new participant account to enroll in our study. Thank you!

Multiple accounts created:

We noticed that two accounts have been created for our app with your Prolific ID:

1. xxx@email.prolific.com
2. mailto:xxx@email.prolific.com

Could you kindly confirm which account you would like to use for the study? We will deactivate the other account accordingly.

No matching account:

We were unable to find a participant account on our app that matches your Prolific email address:
xxx@email.prolific.com

If you used a personal email address to create your account, please log out and create a new participant account using your Prolific email to enroll in the study.

Data collection

1. Consent

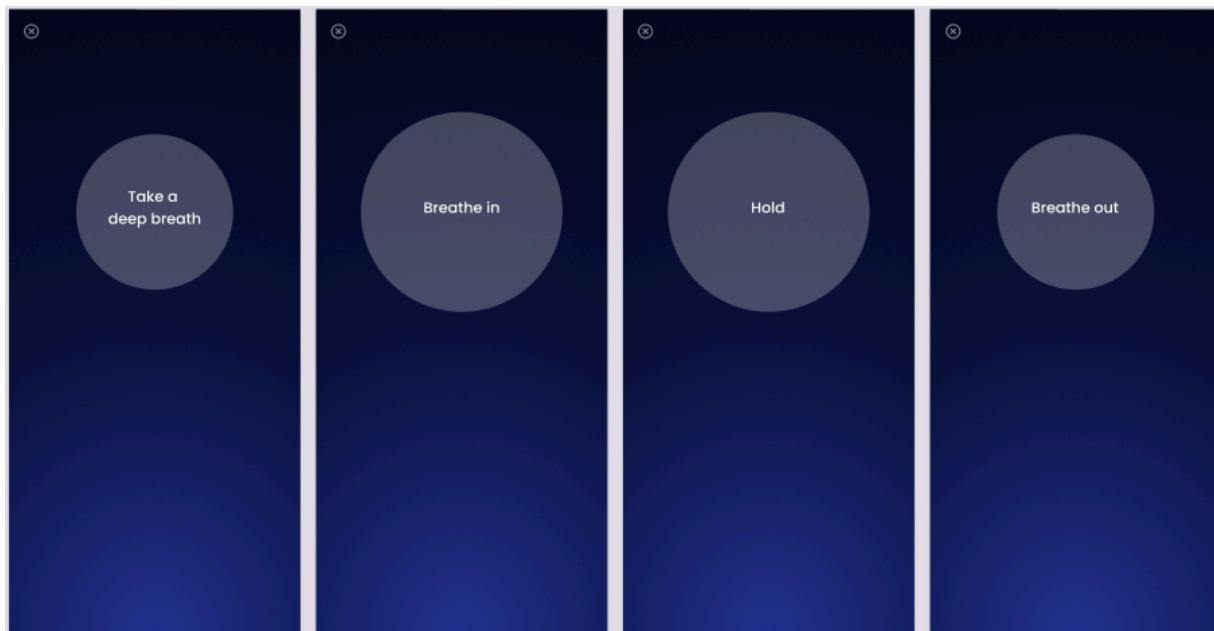
Consent form is provided in the first section of the Qualtrics survey. Participants indicate that they have read the entire consent form and believe they understand all important details about the research contained in the consent form prior to advancing to screening questions.

2. Baseline Survey

Participants advance through the baseline survey at their own pace.

3. Intervention

Interventions are delivered via a custom mobile compassion application. Each day, participants in the other-compassion, self-compassion, and active control conditions receive mobile notifications prompting them to complete an approximately 3-minute training session twice daily. Each training session, across conditions, begins with two short rounds of guided breathing using on-screen written instructions and a simple visual animation (an expanding and contracting circle) to pace their breath. This is followed by condition-specific training, with content varying by condition, but session length, structure, and timing carefully matched to ensure comparable exposure and engagement across conditions as much as possible.



Other-Compassion Condition

Other-compassion training involves participants uploading photographs of people from their close and distant social circles to be used during the session. During each training session, participants are guided to extend

well-wishes to others using standardized phrases such as “*May you be well*,” “*May you be safe from harm*,” and “*May you be peaceful*.” These wishes are directed sequentially toward three people from each participant’s own life while viewing uploaded photographs, then toward one stranger (another study participant), and finally toward progressively wider circles of communities. This final segment includes a visual animation of a rotating globe with lines spreading further outward to represent the extension of compassionate well-wishes in widening circles, from the participant’s local region to encompass all beings worldwide.



Self-Compassion Condition

Self-compassion training involves participants uploading photographs of their current and past selves from meaningful periods of their lives to be used during the session. During the training session, participants extend well-wishes toward themselves using phrases such as “*May I be well*,” “*May I be safe from harm*,” and “*May I be peaceful*.” These wishes are directed while participants view four photographs of themselves from earlier periods in their lives.



Active Control Condition

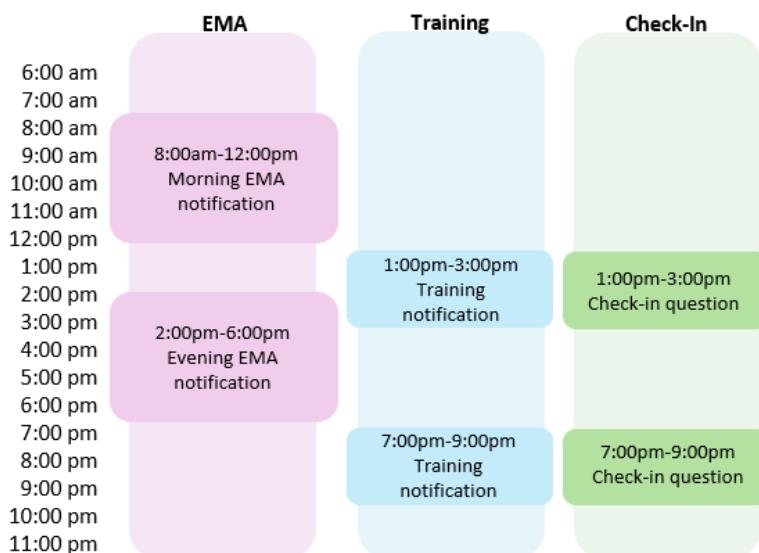
Active control activity is tightly matched to intervention conditions. Participants are presented with four images of everyday tasks, randomly chosen from a pool of 52 images from Adobe Stock images. Each image is accompanied by a description of the task, adapted from a previous study (Kang et al., 2018, *PNAS*), along with a corresponding wish phrase (e.g., “*Doing the laundry. May it be done well*,” “*Replacing batteries. May it be done safely*,” and “*Drying hair. May it be done peacefully*.”). Participants are guided through making well-wishes for these value-neutral everyday activities.

No-Intervention Condition

Participants in the no-intervention condition receive no training. For these participants, the custom mobile app home screen displays only basic interface elements (e.g., notification and settings icons) along with brief instructions about study participation.

4. Daily Schedule

All participants across conditions receive four push notifications per day on a semi-randomized schedule.



Two notifications prompt completion of brief condition-specific training sessions paired with post-intervention well-being assessment (delivered between 1–3 PM and 7–9 PM). Participants in the no-intervention condition receive a single-item well-being survey within matching time windows, closing at 6:30pm and 23:59pm respectively.

Two notifications prompt completion of EMAs (delivered between 8 AM–12 PM and 2–6 PM) using signal-contingent sampling. EMA survey buttons (displayed in pink on the home screen) appear upon notification and remain available until 1:30pm for morning surveys and 23:59pm for evening surveys.

Quiet hours for notifications were enforced from 11 PM to 6 AM local time.

5. End of intervention

Message all participants to remind them of the end of intervention and next steps.

Sample message: Today is the final day of the app portion of the study.
Your participant account will remain open today until midnight (local time).
A new Prolific study will open tomorrow, [date and time; include time zones].
Please complete the final survey (\$12 compensation) at your earliest convenience.
Thank you!

6. Endpoint survey

Participants are notified that the survey will close in a week.

Participants advance through the endpoint survey at their own pace.

7. Debriefing (in writing at end of Qualtrics Survey)

Debriefing is provided in writing at the end of Qualtrics Survey:

Thank you for participating in our study.

This study examined how daily meditation practice impacts well-being over time. While we do not provide personalized reports, you are welcome to contact the research team (cw-lab@rutgers.edu) with any questions or for more information about the study.

If you enjoyed using the app and would like to continue your compassion practice, you can create a new account for Daily Compassion. After you submit your survey, our research team will activate your new Daily Compassion account.

8. Participant Compensation

Study component	Pay	Frequency (amount)	Payment schedule
Baseline survey	\$12 (~1hr)	Once	End of enrollment
EMA	\$0.50 (~3 min)	Twice daily (42 times)	Daily in first week, weekly for rest of intervention period
Training	\$0.50 (~3 min)	Twice daily (42 times)	Daily in first week, weekly for rest of intervention period
Bonus	\$10 if participant completes at least 1 training for 20 days	Once	End of intervention period
Endpoint survey	\$12 (~1hr)	Once	End of study