**Author’s response to reviews**

**Title:** Experiences in applying skills learned in a Mental Health First Aid training course: a qualitative study of participants’ stories

**Authors:**

Anthony F Jorm (ajorm@unimelb.edu.au)  
Betty A Kitchener (bettyk@unimelb.edu.au)  
Stephen K Mugford (stephen.mugford@qgsr.com)

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**Author’s response to reviews:**

The following changes have been made in accordance with the reviewer’s recommendations:

Reviewer 1 (Jeffrey Fuller)
1. An additional paragraph has been added to the Introduction to explain the context of MHFA training and how it is related to other attempts to broaden responses to mental disorders by non-health professionals (final paragraph on p. 2 and first paragraph on p. 3).
2. We have given a more detailed explanation of how the participants who provided data relate to the numbers in the published RCT (page 4, paragraph 2).
3. It is difficult to know how to respond to this point. The material was not that complex and the process was fairly simple. Although it is logically possible to suggest that a different analyst would have drawn different conclusions, we are unsure how this could occur in practice, because the material is fairly self evident. What we have provided is more detail on how the qualitative analysis was carried out (p. 5, paragraph 2).
4. To simplify the paper, we decided not to present negative cross-tabulations.
5. The Results section has been shortened, principally by reducing the number of illustrative quotes. The specific changes suggested, involving summarizing the quotes rather than giving a long list of them, have been made (p. 8, second last paragraph, and p. 10, paragraph before final box). The quotation about living in a dream world is now removed.
6. The reservation has been added about respondents possibly not having insight into their over-confidence (p. 11, final paragraph).
7. The reference about Stephen Covey is now removed.
8. This is a reasonable suggestion, but a difficult one to implement, because we know so little about what leads to improved helping skills in laypersons as distinct from professional psychotherapeutic relationships. We have tried to nest our work within the general context of improving social support for people with mental disorders (p. 3, paragraph 2). However, there is no consensus in the literature about what are the effective elements of social support.
9. See point 6 above. We have not removed this conclusion, but rather added the reservation.

Reviewer 2 (Christoph Lauber)
1. A number of tables have been added to the paper giving the frequencies of quantitative responses (Table 1) and the first aid stories (Tables 2 and 3). The Results section has also been shortened considerably.
2. It is not possible to link the responses to the earlier data at an individual level. However, we have provided some comparison, in particular noting the higher level of education in the current respondents (p. 5, paragraph 3).
3. As noted in the response above, individual linkage was not possible. However, we have briefly reported that sociodemographic characteristics were not related to responses, apart from the method of choosing to respond (web vs post) (p. 6, paragraph 2).
4. Additional references have been added in the context of providing a rationale for MHFA training (see Introduction particularly).
5. The error in citing the year for completing the questionnaires has been corrected.