

# Report on Exeter University "Stoic week" 2014

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## Key findings

The participants who took part in Stoic Week 2014 exhibited on average

- Significant improvements in well-being as evaluated by changes in well-being using three validated scales used. A week's participation in Stoic Week resulted in a 16% average increase in Satisfaction with Life, a 10% increase in flourishing, a 11% increase in positive emotions and a 16% reduction in negative emotions.
- Significant increases in the presence of Stoic attitudes (12%) and behaviours (15%) for participants over the week.
- Measurements of the association between Stoic attitudes and behaviours and well-being confirmed, as in 2013, found a significant positive relationship between the two.
- The above three findings taken together give us reason for cautious confidence regarding a causal link between adopting Stoic attitudes and behaviours ("being more Stoic") and improvements in well-being.
- In addition the analysis of Stoic attitudes and beliefs enables us to discover which elements of Stoicism are most associated with well-being. The items with the highest associations with well-being were:-
  - When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent. (SABS item 19 "Upsetting thoughts just impressions")
  - I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions. (SABS Item 17 "Stoic Mindfulness")
  - I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare. (SABS Item 11 "Humanity connected")
  - It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing item (SABS item 2 "Virtue is sufficient")
  - I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life. (SABS Item 16 "Ideal Stoic adviser")

SABS Item 19 ("Upsetting thoughts just impressions") is most associated with positive emotion and satisfaction with life whereas SABS item 17 ("Stoic Mindfulness") is the element of Stoicism most associated with flourishing.

- There was almost double the percentage of people who completed Stoic week compared to last year (29% compared to 15% retention in 2013)

## Introduction

This report describes the results of “Stoic Week 2014”, organised by the Stoicism Today team led by Professor Christopher Gill of the University of Exeter. 1953 individuals, recruited via the internet, took the Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours Scale (SABS) at the start of the week in November 2014.. Most of these participants additionally took 3 scales relating to well-being, specifically life satisfaction, flourishing and positive and negative emotions. They were given free access to a website which included a handbook and audio recordings of guided meditations to download.

The handbook suggested various Stoic exercises to do each day and guided meditations recorded by Donald Robertson to download. Stoic Week 2014 was similar in many respects to Stoic Week 2013. (See

<http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/stoicismtoday/files/2014/02/Stoic-Week-Report-2013-Final.pdf> for the report on Stoic Week 2013). The manual was enhanced, for example there was a section about memorising Stoic maxims. There was a new audio recording (the Stoic Attitudes Meditation script) and there were daily summary emails. Active discussions took place in a Facebook group about the nature of Stoicism and about the activities participants were undertaking during Stoic Week,

At the end of Stoic Week participants were asked to retake the SABS scale and well-being questionnaires, to allow us to evaluate the impact of Stoic week on their well-being. In addition, a London event was held, in which speakers including Angie Hobbs were invited to talk and give workshops on various aspects of Stoicism.

This report is divided into three parts. Part 1 gives results of the associations found at the start of Stoic Week between Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours and well-being. Part 2 summarises the changes in well-being participants experienced comparing before and after Stoic week. The third part provides recommendations as to future directions based on the findings of this report. The appendices give information about all of the scales used, further detailed statistical information and a summary of the feedback from the Stoic Day event in London and of Stoic Week.

## SABS Correlational Analysis: Does Stoicism go with higher or lower Well-Being?

Whilst advocates of Stoicism may believe obvious that Stoicism is beneficial, its opponents and indeed many members of the general public might well think the opposite. It is an empirical question as to whether practising Stoicism tends to help people or not. A good way of investigating this question is to produce a questionnaire which measures how Stoic people are, to administer this along with validated questionnaires measuring well-being and then to find the association (“correlation”) between the two. This is the strategy that was adopted here. The SABS scale (described in Appendix B) was given to the 1500+ participants who also took the Flourishing, SPANE and SWL scales (described in Appendices C, D and E). By finding the correlation coefficients between individual SABS items and the participants total scores for Flourishing, Positive and Negative Emotions and Satisfaction with Life it is possible to answer the question: Does Stoicism help?

As the data described in this section shows, the tentative answer is – yes, Stoicism does help.

### Association of SABS items with Flourishing

SABS Item Theme	SABS ITEM WORDING	FLOURISH total
STOIC MINDFULNESS	17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	0.4
UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION	19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it’s just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.	0.36
HUMANITY CONNECTED	11. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	0.34
VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT	2. It doesn’t really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.	0.31
IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR	16. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.3

VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY	8. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom.	<b>0.23</b>
FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL	5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	<b>0.22</b>
NEGATIVE VISUALISATION	13. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.	<b>0.22</b>
ATTITUDE IS SUFFICIENT	1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner.	<b>0.21</b>
WHAT WE CAN CONTROL	7. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions.	<b>0.19</b>
VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING	10. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential.	<b>0.18</b>
VIEW FROM ABOVE	14. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	<b>0.16</b>
COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE	12. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing.	<b>0.15</b>
ANGER CAN BE GOOD*	3.* It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate.	-0.06
HEDONISM*	4.* It's more important to feel good than to do good.	<b>-0.11</b>
UPSET INEVITABLE*	6.* If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset.	-0.12
NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE	9. There's no overall plan to the universe.	-0.12
HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR*	15.* If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than what I believe to be the right thing.	<b>-0.28</b>
RUMINATION & WORRY*	18.* I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong in the past or worrying about the future.	<b>-0.39</b>

**Table 1: Association of SABS items with Flourishing**

Table 1 (above) gives the correlation between SABS items and flourishing. As described in Appendix D, the flourishing scale is “a brief 8-item summary measure of the respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism.. It provides a broader measure of well-being than either subjective well-being or positive and negative emotions. From a philosophical perspective, flourishing may be considered to be the most relevant of the well-being measures since it comes closest to concepts of “the good life” and objective notions of well-being.

The items most associated with flourishing are, in order

STOIC MINDFULNESS (most)  
UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION  
HUMANITY CONNECTED  
VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT  
IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR  
VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY

Conversely these items appear to have little association with flourishing

COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE (least)  
VIEW FROM ABOVE  
VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING  
WHAT WE CAN CONTROL

It should be noted however that the difference between the top score (Stoic Mindfulness=.4) and bottom score (Cosmos is living and wise=.15) is not as large as the variation found for other scales.

All of the reverse-scored items, which are non-Stoic attitudes and behaviours, were observed to have a negative association with flourishing as follows:-

RUMINATION & WORRY\* (most negative association)  
HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR\*  
NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE  
UPSET INEVITABLE\*  
HEDONISM\*  
ANGER CAN BE GOOD\*

Of particular note is the finding that short-term hedonistic behaviour is strongly associated with the absence of flourishing.

## Association of SABS items with Positive and Negative Emotions

SABS Item Theme	SABS ITEM WORDING	SPANE total
UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION	19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.	<b>0.36</b>
STOIC MINDFULNESS	17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	<b>0.25</b>
VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT	2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.	<b>0.25</b>
IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR	16. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.19
HUMANITY CONNECTED	11. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	0.18
VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING	10. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential.	<b>0.18</b>
ATTITUDE IS SUFFICIENT	1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner.	0.17
FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL	5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	0.15
VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY	8. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom.	0.14
NEGATIVE VISUALISATION	13. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.	0.11
WHAT WE CAN CONTROL	7. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions.	0.11

VIEW FROM ABOVE	14. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	0.1
COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE	12. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing.	0.07
HEDONISM*	4.* It's more important to feel good than to do good.	-0.04
NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE	9. There's no overall plan to the universe.	-0.07
ANGER CAN BE GOOD*	3.* It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate.	<b>-0.14</b>
UPSET INEVITABLE*	6.* If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset.	<b>-0.21</b>
HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR*	15.* If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than what I believe to be the right thing.	<b>-0.21</b>
RUMINATION & WORRY*	18.* I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong in the past or worrying about the future.	<b>-0.55</b>

**Table 2: Association of SABS items with Positive and Negative Emotions (SPANE)**

Table 2 (above) gives the correlation between SABS items and the balance of positive over negative emotions experienced. (see Appendix E for a description of the SPANE scale).

The items most associated with the balance of positive over negative emotions are, in order

UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION (most)  
 STOIC MINDFULNESS  
 VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT  
 IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR  
 HUMANITY CONNECTED  
 VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING

It should be noted that the top item (the abbreviated version of which is "upsetting thoughts are just impression") had the highest correlation by some distance (.6 compared to .25)

Conversely these items appear to have little association with the balance positive over negative emotions :-

COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE (least)  
 WHAT WE CAN CONTROL  
 VIEW FROM ABOVE  
 NEGATIVE VISUALISATION

It is perhaps surprising that the doing negative visualisations has relatively little impact on emotions, as one would expect it might reduce future negative emotions significantly.

All of the reverse-scored items, which are non-Stoic attitudes and behaviours, were observed to have a negative association with flourishing as follows:-

RUMINATION & WORRY\* (most negative association)

HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR\*

UPSET INEVITABLE\*

ANGER CAN BE GOOD\*

Again, and perhaps more paradoxically than with flourishing, hedonistic behaviour is strongly associated with a negative balance of emotions.

## Association of SABS items with Satisfaction with Life

SABS Item Theme	SABS ITEM WORDING	SWL total
UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION	19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.	<b>0.3</b>
STOIC MINDFULNESS	17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	<b>0.27</b>
VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT	2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.	<b>0.21</b>
ATTITUDE IS SUFFICIENT	1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner.	<b>0.2</b>
HUMANITY CONNECTED	11. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	0.19
IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR	16. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.18
FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL	5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	<b>0.18</b>
VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING	10. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential.	<b>0.18</b>
NEGATIVE VISUALISATION	13. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.	<b>0.15</b>
VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY	8. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom.	0.13
WHAT WE CAN CONTROL	7. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions.	0.13
VIEW FROM ABOVE	14. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	0.11

COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE	12. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing.	0.09
HEDONISM*	4.* It's more important to feel good than to do good.	-0.06
ANGER CAN BE GOOD*	3.* It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate.	-0.08
NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE	9. There's no overall plan to the universe.	-0.08
UPSET INEVITABLE*	6.* If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset.	-0.15
HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR*	15.* If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than what I believe to be the right thing.	<b>-0.21</b>
RUMINATION & WORRY*	18.* I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong in the past or worrying about the future.	<b>-0.43</b>

**Table 3: Association of SABS items with Satisfaction with Life**

Table 3 (above) gives the correlation between SABS items and Satisfaction with Life (see Appendix C).

The items most associated with Life Satisfaction are, in order

UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSION  
 STOIC MINDFULNESS  
 VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT  
 ATTITUDE IS SUFFICIENT  
 HUMANITY CONNECTED

Those SABS items with the lowest correlations with Life Satisfaction were:-

COSMOS IS LIVING & WISE (least association with SWL)  
 VIEW FROM ABOVE  
 WHAT WE CAN CONTROL  
 VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY

All of the reverse-scored items were observed to have a negative association with life satisfaction as follows:-

RUMINATION & WORRY\* (highest negative association)  
 HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR\*  
 UPSET INEVITABLE\*

## Discussion

It is striking that similar Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours feature in the above 3 lists, despite the fact that the three questionnaires measure different aspects of well-being. The attitudes and behaviours are “non-Stoic” are negatively correlated with well-being in every instance. This is hardly surprising with the “Rumination and Worry” item which it could fairly be objected is bound to contribute to low well-being; it is perhaps more interesting that short-term hedonist behaviour is the second most unhelpful behaviour.

Another salient finding is that some Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours do not appear to be very strongly correlated with any of the measures of well-being. The metaphysical aspects of Stoicism do not appear to be strongly associated in general, especially the idea that the cosmos is a wise and living thing. Less expected is the relatively low impact of taking a perspective similar to the “View from Above”.

The behaviours and attitudes most associated with well-being are those connected with ethics and those that are “therapeutic” i.e. similar to CBT and mindfulness. “Upsetting thoughts are just impressions” and “Stoic Mindfulness” consistently came out top, so there is ample reason to emphasise them in future iterations of Stoic Week or Stoic courses.

It should of course be remembered that correlation does not equal causation. It is possible these correlations are not caused by the Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours increasing welfare; it could be the other way round, or a third factor could be related to both of them.

## Association of SABS items specific items on Scales

The following table is indicative of which items are associated most with which items on the well-being scales. For example, item 1 “As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner“ is correlated by .2 or more with the flourishing and satisfaction with life totals and the optimism item. (The number .2 is chosen somewhat arbitrarily, but it does seem to help distinguish those items which are associated with improved well-being and those which are not).

This data can also be used to see indications as to which Stoic attitudes and beliefs are associated with which positive aspects of well-being.

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>Items where correlation &gt;= .2 Negative correlations &lt;-.2 are in italics Where no item qualifies, the highest association is indicated in brackets</b>	<b>Count</b>
1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner.	Flourishing, SWL, Optimistic	3
<b>2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.</b>	Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Flow, Altruism, Competence, Good Person, Optimism, Respected, Satisfied, Contented, SPANE+ <i>Feeling Negative, SPANE-</i>	13,2
3.* It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate.	<i>(Feeling Angry -.19)</i>	-1
4.* It's more important to feel good than to do good.	<i>(Purpose -.15)</i>	-1
5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	Flourishing, Good Person	2
6.* If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset.	SPANE , <i>Feeling Sad, SPANE-</i>	1,2
7. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions.	Competent	1
8. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom.	Flourishing, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic,	4
9. * There's no overall plan to the universe.	<i>(Purpose -.16)</i>	0
10. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential.	<i>(Flourishing, SPANE, SWL=.18)</i>	0
11. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	Purpose, Altruism, Competence, Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, SPANE+	7
12. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing.	<i>(Flourishing, SPANE=.15)</i>	0
13. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.	Flourishing, Competent	2
14. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	<i>(Flourishing=.16)</i>	0
15. *If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than what I believe to be the right thing.	<i>Flourishing, SWL, SPANE, Purpose, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Life is ideal,</i>	-9
16. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	Flourishing, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic, Feeling Positive, Feeling Good, Feeling Joyful, SPANE+	12
<b>17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.</b>	Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, Life is ideal, External Conditions, Needs Met, Satisfied ,Feeling Positive, Feeling Good, Feeling Joyful, Feeling Contented, SPANE+, <i>SPANE-</i>	21,1
18.* I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong in the past or worrying about the	<i>Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent,</i>	-23,-8

future.	<i>Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, Life is ideal, External Conditions, Needs Met, Satisfied ,Acceptance, Feeling Positive, Feeling Negative, Feeling Good, Feeling Bad, Pleasant Feelings, Unpleasant Feelings, Feeling Happy, Feeling Sad, Feeling Afraid, Feeling Joyful, Feeling Angry, Feeling Contented, SPANE+, SPANE-</i>	
<b>19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.</b>	<i>Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, Life is ideal, External Conditions, Needs Met, Satisfied ,Acceptance, Feeling Positive, Feeling Negative, Feeling Good, Feeling Bad, Pleasant Feelings, , Feeling Happy, Feeling Sad, Feeling Afraid, Feeling Joyful, Feeling Contented, SPANE+, SPANE-</i>	23, 5
20. I know quite a lot about Stoicism. [ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR RESEARCH]	(Purpose .16)	0
21. My way of looking at life is very Stoic. [ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR RESEARCH]	<i>Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, Life is ideal, External Conditions, Needs Met, Satisfied ,Acceptance, Feeling Positive, Feeling Negative, Feeling Good, Feeling Bad, Pleasant Feelings, Unpleasant Feelings , Feeling Happy, Feeling Sad, Feeling Afraid, Feeling Joyful, Feeling Contented, SPANE+, SPANE-</i>	23,6
22. I act like a good Stoic would most of the time. [ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR RESEARCH]	<i>Flourishing, SPANE, SWL, Purpose, Relationships, Flow, Altruism, Competent, Good Person, Optimistic, Respected, Life is ideal, External Conditions, Needs Met, Satisfied ,Acceptance, Feeling Positive, Feeling Negative, Feeling Good, Feeling Bad, Pleasant Feelings Unpleasant Feelings, , Feeling Happy, Feeling Sad, Feeling Afraid, Feeling Joyful, Feeling Contented, SPANE+, SPANE-</i>	23,6

**Table 4 High Correlations of aspects of well-being with SABS items**

The “count” column which items are associated with most aspects of well-being. The items with the highest counts are:-

19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent. (23) [UPSETTING THOUGHT JUST IMPRESSIONS]

17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions. (21) [STOIC MINDFULNESS]

2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.  
(13) [VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT]

A clear finding is that knowing a lot about Stoicism appears to be less associated with well-being than might be thought – indeed it does not correlate with any aspect of well-being very highly. It would seem that Stoic behaviours are more connected with well-being than Stoic attitudes which in turn are a lot more associated with well-being than Stoic knowledge.

See Appendix F SABS Items correlations :Complete Tables for full details of the association between all SABS items and all the items in the other scales.

## Impact on well-being

Participants took the three well-being tests before and after Stoic Weeks. This allows us to see whether Stoic Week resulted in increased well-being – it did – and also to see which aspects of well-being Stoicism appears to increase most. These findings need to be qualified by the observation that we cannot be sure it is *Stoicism* that leads to the improvements; it could be partly a placebo effect.

## Impact on Satisfaction with Life

Participants reported a 16% increase in life satisfaction overall (compared to 14% in 2013 and 11% in 2012).

Table 5 below shows which aspects of Satisfaction with Life increased most; there was not a very large variation, the theme of acceptance showed the biggest increase.

Percentage change by each question and theme	2014 % increase	Theme	2013 % increase
Q5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	17	Acceptance	17
Q4. I am satisfied with my life	15	Satisfaction	17
Q2. The conditions of my life are excellent	15	Externals met	11
Q1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal	15	Life is ideal	18
Q3. So far I have got the important things I want in life.	13	Needs met	11

**Table 5: Impact on Satisfaction with Life**

## Impact on Emotions

Positive Emotions	% change	2013 comparison
Overall positive	11	9
Contented	14	12
Joyful	13	12
Positive	13	8
Good	10	7
Pleasant	10	8
Happy	9	9

**Table 6: Impact on Positive Emotions**

<b>Negative Emotions</b>	<b>% 2014 Change</b>	<b>% 2013 change</b>
Overall negative	-16	-11
Unpleasant	-17	-8
Bad	-17	-11
Negative	-17	-12
Angry	-15	-13
Afraid	-14	-10
Sad	-14	-10

**Table 7: Impact on Negative Emotions**

Tables 6 and 7 show the changes in positive and negative emotions. The overall changes indicate a greater change in negative emotions (16% as opposed to 11%). The emotion that showed the biggest changes were “contented “(14%) whilst there was little difference amongst negative emotions – “unpleasant,” “bad” and “negative” all showing a 17% reduction.

## Impact on Flourishing

Participants reported on average a 10% overall increase in Flourishing ( compared to 9% increase in 2013).

Participating in Stoic week had most impact on the following components:-

<b>Flourishing Scale Item</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	14	10	Purpose and meaning
7. I am optimistic about my future.	11	18	Optimism
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.	11	10	Relationships
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	10	10	Engagement in activities
6. I am a good person and live a good life.	9	8	Ethically Good
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	8	8	Benevolent
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.	8	5	Competent
8. People respect me.	7	5	Respected

**Table 8: Impact on Flourishing**

These mirrored the items showing the most significant changes in 2013 and 2012. It appears then that Stoicism has a particularly large positive impact on purpose and meaning, optimism and social relationships.

## Impact on Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours (SABS)

As well as increased well-being, participants showed an increase in all positive items on the SABS scale and a decrease in all reverse-scored items in the SABS scale. This is reassuring, as it suggests (though does not prove) that the changes in well-being is as a result of changes in their levels of Stoicism.

Table 9 gives the changes in average scores between the beginning and end of Stoic Week for 2013 and 2014.

Changes in SABS (%)	2014	2013
All items	12	12
ATTITUDES overall	10	10
Behaviours overall	15	16
<i>Positively worded Stoic attitudes and behaviour</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2013</i>
19. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.	26	31
13. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.	17	17
10. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential.	14	12
1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner.	14	10
16. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	13	15
12. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing.	11	14
17. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	10	11
8. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom.	8	9
14. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	8	6
2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing.	7	9
7. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions.	6	7
11. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	6	5
5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	4	7
<i>Reverse-scored Non-Stoic attitudes and behaviour (negative percentage means more Stoic)</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2013</i>
18. I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong in the past or worrying about the future.	-23	-21
6. If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset.	-21	-18
3. It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate.	-16	-19
15. If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than what I believe to be the right thing.	-12	-7
4. It's more important to feel good than to do good.	-7	-4
9. There's no overall plan to the universe.	-3	-6
SABS ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS % change	2014	2013
20. I know quite a lot about Stoicism.	29	35
22. I act like a good Stoic would most of the time.	27	22
21. My way of looking at life is very Stoic.	22	21

**Table 9: Impact on Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours**

The results regarding the impact of Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours for 2013 and 2014 are remarkably similar. Key findings are:-

- Stoic behaviours changed more than Stoic attitudes but less than knowledge of Stoicism (as gauged by the last 3 items)
- By far the biggest change was in the item “When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it’s just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.” This is probably a good thing, since this is one of the items most associated with well-being.
- There is however only a 10% increase in the other apparently extremely active ingredient “Stoic mindfulness” (item 17) there is perhaps scope for aiming to increase this further.
- There was by contrast an 11% increase in belief about the cosmos being alive and wise, which appears to have very little association with well-being
- Stoic week led to a 23% reduction in worry and rumination, which is a very good thing since these are strongly associated with Generalised Anxiety Disorder and depression

## **Comparison of Stoic Week with Longer Course on Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours (SABS)**

Although these results are very positive, it should be noted that, perhaps not surprisingly, they are much less positive than those reported by Donald Robertson for the 4 week Stoic Mindfulness and Resilience Training (SMRT) ( See <http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/stoicismtoday/2014/10/01/report-on-stoic-mindfulness-and-resilience-elearning-course/>) As well as being longer, the SMRT course was more focussed, with modules relating to Stoic Virtues, Stoic Mindfulness and Stoic Resilience. Given the findings on the possible “active ingredients” of Stoicism it is likely that these topics were well selected.

	SABS 2014	SMRT 2014	SMRT % more impact
Length of Course	1 week	4 weeks	N/A
No of participants	1953	526	N/A
Completion Rate	29%	33%	(14%)
Increase in Flourishing	10%	17%	70%
Increase in Satisfaction with Life	16%	27%	69%
Increase in Positive Emotions	11%	16%	45%

Reduction in Negative Emotions	16%	23%	44%
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**Table 10: Comparison of key findings of Stoic Week 2014 with SMRT 2014**

As table 10 shows, SMRT participants improved by between 44% and 70% more than those on Stoic Week 2014 depending on the well-being measure. It is not known at present how much of this is due to the length of the course, the sharper focus or other factors (such as higher commitment of SMRT participants)

## Recommendations

### 1. Psychometric validation of the SABS scale

The results described above are suggestive of high associations between Stoicism and well-being. For this finding to be more weighty the SABS scale should be validated psychometrically. To achieve this the following “Psychometric validation of SABS scale” project is proposed. This would comprise:-

- a) Further consultation with experts on Stoicism, the output of which would be SABS v0.2. This may have more items than the current scale.
- b) Consultation with general public regarding comprehensibility of SABS v.02, ensuring it can be understood correctly by those without specialist knowledge and with a relatively low reading age. The output would be SABS v.03
- c) Testing of SABS v.03 and individual items with those who identify themselves as Stoics to determine validity and reliability
- d) Cross-testing SABS v.03 with other similar scales (e.g. mindfulness scales, dysfunctional attitudes scale) to determine validity. The subs-scales of attitudes and behaviours would need to be tested as well as individual items.
- e) Production of SABS 1.0, which would be a streamlined, understandable, reliable and valid.

This process would most likely require several iterations – for example, SABS v.03 may have to be revised depending on the findings of the cross-testing and then the output SABS v.04 re-validated

### 2) Further empirical testing of Stoicism

The work carried out so far in Stoic Weeks 2012, 2013 and 2014 and SMRT 2014 provide consistent, repeated evidence for the positive impact of Stoicism on well-being. The findings first made in Stoic Week 2012 have been strengthened by repeating the findings, by observing an increase in the effect (especially in the longer, more focussed SMRT but also to some extent between 2012 and 2014 in Stoic Weeks). The observation that Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours increase during Stoic week along with well-being makes it more

plausible that Stoicism is responsible for the improvements, as is the positive association of Stoic attitudes and behaviours with well-being before any Stoic interventions.

However there are a number of limitations in these studies, as has been observed in previous reports on Stoic Week. These include lack of a control group, self-selection of the participants and lack of follow-up. These should be addressed in future studies.

One possible way to address this deficiency would be the following “Stoic guided self-help dismantling study” project. This could involve

- Creating and publicising a web site or area of current web site offering free Stoic activities
- Asking participants to carry out a specific exercise each day for a week
- Randomly assigning participants one of 5 exercises. One should be a control, the other 4 should be exercises which we believe are likely to be helpful. This is the “dismantling” exercise, we are aiming to see which exercises are effective. Some of these exercises should be designed to increase the “active ingredients” identified by the SABS analysis.
- Participants would take questionnaires at the start of the week, at the end of the week and at a suitable follow-up (e.g. 3 months). These would include measures of happiness, flourishing, positive emotions as well as, it is proposed, the SABS scale and anxiety and depression scales.
- Participants would be given an incentive to complete all questionnaires (perhaps being entered in a draw for a £50 book token) which would be given to one person who completed all questionnaires. In addition participants should be e-mailed or texted reminders at regular intervals to increase compliance and alleviate the problem of high drop-outs.

For this study to be more representative of the general public, people who have already taken part in Stoic week should be excluded. Participants will be recruited via the internet e.g. on positive psychology or self-help lists. Those with serious mental health problems or with high risk of suicide or self-harm should be excluded.

Note that each participant would *only* be asked to carry out one intervention each day. They should *not* be taken as part of a “Stoic week” which includes other activities, as this makes it more difficult to tell which activities are having an effect.

The benefits of this research would include

- Controlled, randomised measure of effect of particular Stoic activities
- Provide evidence of benefits of Stoicism
- Allow for comparison of using one Stoic intervention with a Stoicism package as a whole
- Use of the most beneficial Stoic activities in further courses and self-help packages
- Facilitate higher take-up of Stoic interventions and exercises by NHS etc e.g. incorporation of our materials into courses on long-term conditions, dealing with adversity, staying strong, dealing with ageing or anger-management

As well as this “Stoic Guided self-help” project, other ideas could be equally attractive. One idea would be to ask participants to just read a Stoic book for a week and see what impact if any it had. Another idea would be to compare the same material presented over one week against two weeks. A third alternative would be to follow a similar design to this study which showed an increase in flourishing for mildly depressed participants who followed a guided self-help course for ACT – ( see <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25596344>). This resembles the SMRT 2014 study ; a difference being that there is follow-up and a control group.

Whilst repeating Stoic Week again, for example in 2015, would be beneficial from the perspective of out-reach and possibly obtaining SABS data were the SABS scale to be refined, unless such changes as those described above were made it would have little benefit in terms of demonstrating the effect of Stoicism on well-being. We have already shown that doing Stoic Week goes with an increase in well-being; what needs to be done now is to provide further evidence regarding the causal direction between Stoicism and well-being and to rule out placebo effects.

A different avenue of research would be to develop more qualitative evidence of the impact of Stoicism; more investigation is required to progress this idea.

### **3) Refining course material to take into account feedback and the SABS analysis**

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive (see Appendix G). However there were some suggestions for improvements including

- A Stoic App for IOS and/or Android to enhance learning. The App could include guided meditations, excerpts of quotes, short readings, reminders etc. The advantage of an App over web-based learning (such as in SMRT) is that it is more integrated into people’s lives, and they can do it at their own pace, set their own reminders etc more easily. The “Headspace” app which has been developed for mindfulness meditation provides a very good model (see <https://www.headspace.com/>)
- A longer course -the SMRT course already provides this, so developing SMRT is a very good idea
- More opportunity for interaction between participants. The Stoic Facebook forum (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Stoicism/> ) provides this, however perhaps there are other creative ways to enhance interaction.
- More explicit instructions on how to develop the virtues (wisdom, courage, self-control and justice).
- Not clashing with major holidays in the USA!

There is also a case for refining the Stoic Week workbook so it includes more emphasis on the apparent “active ingredients” and less on the “inactive ingredients”. In particular, there is a case for putting even more emphasis on Stoic Mindfulness and less on the View from Above. Similarly since Stoic behaviours have more impact than attitudes and much more than knowledge greater emphasis could be put on doing Stoic things in the week as opposed to merely reading about Stoicism or discussing Stoicism.

There could be materials aimed specifically at developing these elements of Stoicism :-

- When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent. ( SABS item 19 "Upsetting thoughts just impressions)
- I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions. (SABS Item 17 "Stoic Mindfulness)
- I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare. (SABS Item 11 "Humanity connected")
- It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing item (SABS item 2 "Virtue is sufficient")
- I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life. (SABS Item 16 "Ideal Stoic adviser")

#### **4) Extending the scope to cover other philosophical systems**

The scope could be extended to other philosophical schools such as Epicureanism , Aristotelianism and Existentialism. A "Philosophical Attitudes and Behaviours" scale could be developed and it would be possible to see which schools of philosophy were more associated with well-being. In addition exercises could be developed for each of these philosophical systems. These could serve as comparisons or controls for Stoicism and could also be investigated in their own right.

## Appendices

### Appendix A Demographics

	Total before stoic week	dropped out	Completed after stoic week	% completed	% dropped out
SWL	1747	1273	474	27	73
SPANE	1725	1252	473	27	73
Flourish	1779	1284	495	28	72
SABS	1953	1389	564	29	71

Table A1 No of questionnaires completed at the before and after Stoic Week

Table A1 gives the numbers of participants who filled in the various questions before and after Stoic week. Although over 70% may seem like a high number of people dropping out, this compares very favourably with the figures for 2013, where 85% of participants dropped out as indicated in table 2 below.

Tables A2 and A3 below give the gender and age spread of participants. In 2014 there were almost twice as many male as female participants compared to a much more even distribution in 2013.

#### Gender (%)

Gender	2014	2013
Male	65	52
Female	33	48
Did not disclose	2	

Table A2: Gender of Participants

Participants were younger than in 2013; the mode group being 21-30 compared to 41-60 in 2013. It was gratifying to see that one participant was as young as 12 years old; he gave positive feedback about the week.

#### Ages (%)

Age Range	2014	2013
20 years old or younger	6.9	3

21-30	27.6	17
31-40	22.8	18
41-50	18.9	19
51-60	15.0	26
61-70	6.5	14
71 years old or older	1.3	2
Unknown	1.0	

Table A3: Age range of Participants

## Appendix B The SABS Scale: Items and Scoring

*Below are a number of statements which describe certain attitudes or behaviours. Although this scale is called the “Stoic attitudes and behaviours scale” note that some of the attitudes and behaviours listed are Stoic, others are not. Please circle the answer closest to how you feel, on the scale 7 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Please answer all questions.*

### ATTITUDES

1. [ATTITUDE IS SUFFICIENT]

As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner

2. [VIRTUE IS SUFFICIENT]

It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing

3. \* [ANGER CAN BE GOOD]

It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate

4. \* [HEDONISM]

It's more important to feel good than to do good.

5. [FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL]

Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.

6. \* [UPSET INEVITABLE]

If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset

7. [WHAT WE CAN CONTROL]

The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions

8. [VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY]

Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom

9. \* [NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE]

There's no overall plan to the universe

10. [VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR FLOURISHING]

To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential

11 [HUMANITY CONNECTED]

I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.

12.[COSMOS IS WISE AND ALIVE]

The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing

## BEHAVIOURS

13. [NEGATIVE VISUALISATION]

I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them.

14.[VIEW FROM ABOVE]

I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.

15.\* [HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR]

If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than doing what I believe to be the right thing

16. [IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR]

I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life

17.[STOIC MINDFULNESS]

I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.

18. \* [RUMINATION AND WORRY]

I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future

19. [UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSIONS]

When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent.

## SCORING

This scale is currently being developed by the Exeter University Stoic Week team so your scores should be treated as merely indicative. There are two subscales - Stoic Attitudes and Stoic behaviours.

Add up your scores for questions 1,2,5,7,8 ,10,11 and 12 = A

Subtract your scores for questions 3, 4, 6 and 9 from 8 i.e. B= 32- (q3 +q4 +q6 +q9)

Your score for Stoic Attitude is A+ B. Your score will range from 12 (least Stoic) to 84 (most Stoic).

Add up your scores for questions 13,14,16,17 and 19 = C

Subtract your scores for questions 15 and 18 from 8 i.e. D= 16- (q15 +q18)

Your score is for Stoic Behaviours is C+D. Your score will range from 7 (least Stoic) to 49 (most Stoic)

To obtain your overall score, add up your two Stoic attitude and behaviours totals, which will range from 19 (least Stoic) to 133 (most Stoic) .

The following questions are not formally part of the SABS but are also asked for research purposes.

20. [KNOW STOICISM]

I know quite a lot about Stoicism

21. [ STOIC ATTITUDES]

My way of looking at life is very Stoic.

22. [ACT STOICALLY]

I act like a good Stoic would most of the time

## Appendix C The Satisfaction with Life scale

The SWLS is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. This scale is widely used as part of the measure of Subjective Well-being (also known as happiness).

Question	Theme
Q1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal	Life is ideal
Q2. The conditions of my life are excellent	Externals met
Q3. So far I have got the important things I want in life.	Needs met
Q4. I am satisfied with my life	Satisfaction
Q5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	Acceptance

Using a 1-7 scale, users score between 35 (extremely satisfied) and 5 (extremely dissatisfied)

The SWL scale was developed by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin as noted in the 1985 article in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. See

<http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html>

## Appendix D The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale is a brief 8-item summary measure of the respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. The scale provides a single psychological well-being score. This scale was developed by Ed Diener and associates to measure a broader conception of well-being than purely subjective life satisfaction and presence of positive and absence of negative emotions.

<b>Flourishing Scale Item</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	Purpose and meaning
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.	Relationships
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	Flow & interested
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	Benevolent
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.	Competent
6. I am a good person and live a good life.	Ethically Good
7. I am optimistic about my future.	Optimism
8. People respect me.	Respected

Reference: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research, 39*, 247-266. <http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/FS.html>

## Appendix E The Scale of Positive and Negative Emotions (SPANE)

The SPANE is a 12-item questionnaire includes six items to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings. For both the positive and negative items, three of the items are general (e.g., positive, negative) and three per subscale are more specific (e.g., joyful, sad). Along with the Life Satisfaction scale, presence of positive and absence of negative emotions forms the other part of Subjective Well-being. Users are asked to select a number between 1 (very rarely or never ) and 5 (very often or always) to indicate how often they have experienced the emotion in the last 4 weeks.

### Positive Emotions

Contented  
Joyful  
Positive  
Good  
Pleasant  
Happy

### Negative Emotions

Unpleasant  
Bad  
Negative  
Angry  
Afraid

Sad

Three scores are derived: SPANE-P – some of positive emotions SPANE-N – sum of negative emotions – SPANE –B Balance of positive and negative.

Reference: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research, 39*, 247-266. <http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SPANE.html>



## Appendix F SABS Items correlations :Complete Tables

These tables provide correlational data taken before Stoic Week of individual items in the SABS scale and individual items and total scores for the other scales. The short form of the SABS item is used (see Appendix B). For example, the SABS item "Attitude Sufficient" (Q1) has a correlation of .17 with the flourishing question about relationships (see appendix D)

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>ATTITUDE SUFFICIENT</b>	<b>VIRTUE SUFFICIENT</b>	<b>ANGER CAN BE GOOD</b>	<b>HEDONISM</b>	<b>FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL</b>
FLOURISHING total	0.21	0.31	-0.06	-0.11	0.22
SPANE total	0.17	0.25	-0.14	-0.04	0.15
SWL TOTAL	0.20	0.21	-0.08	-0.06	0.18
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	0.17	0.23	-0.05	-0.15	0.15
FL:RELATIONSHIPS	0.12	0.18	-0.05	-0.09	0.15
FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	0.15	0.21	-0.07	-0.10	0.18
FL:BENEVOLENT	0.12	0.23	-0.05	-0.11	0.17
FL:COMPETENT	0.18	0.26	-0.04	-0.07	0.17
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	0.18	0.26	-0.03	-0.06	0.21
FL:OPTIMISM	0.21	0.28	-0.03	-0.04	0.17
FL:RESPECTED	0.17	0.25	-0.04	-0.06	0.18
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	0.18	0.19	-0.08	-0.07	0.17
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	0.14	0.16	-0.04	-0.04	0.13
SWL: NEEDS MET	0.16	0.17	-0.09	-0.05	0.18
SWL:SATISFACTION	0.17	0.21	-0.07	-0.06	0.16
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	0.16	0.16	-0.06	-0.05	0.10
PE: Positive	0.12	0.19	-0.07	-0.04	0.10
NE: Negative	-0.12	-0.22	0.10	0.01	-0.10
PE: Good	0.15	0.19	-0.07	-0.07	0.13
NE: Bad	-0.11	-0.19	0.08	0.03	-0.14
PE: Pleasant	0.14	0.15	-0.10	-0.04	0.10
NE: Unpleasant	-0.06	-0.14	0.10	0.00	-0.08
PE: Happy	0.14	0.17	-0.07	-0.03	0.13
NE: Sad	-0.12	-0.16	0.07	0.02	-0.13
NE: Afraid	-0.08	-0.18	0.10	0.07	-0.04
PE: Joyful	0.14	0.19	-0.07	-0.03	0.12
NE: Angry	-0.07	-0.12	0.19	-0.04	-0.08
PE: Contented	0.16	0.20	-0.11	-0.06	0.14
SPANE_P	0.17	0.22	-0.10	-0.06	0.15
SPANE_N	-0.13	-0.23	0.14	0.02	-0.13

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>UPSET INEVITABLE</b>	<b>WHAT WE CAN CONTROL</b>	<b>VIRTUE IS RATIONALITY</b>	<b>NO PLAN TO UNIVERSE</b>	<b>VIRTUE SUFFICIENT FOR VIRTUE</b>
FLOURISHING total	-0.12	0.19	0.23	-0.12	0.18
SPANE total	-0.21	0.11	0.14	-0.07	0.18
SWL TOTAL	-0.15	0.13	0.13	-0.08	0.18
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	-0.14	0.13	0.20	-0.16	0.15
FL:RELATIONSHIPS FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	-0.05	0.08	0.09	-0.10	0.12
FL:BENEVOLENT	-0.08	0.14	0.19	-0.11	0.12
FL:COMPETENT	-0.07	0.13	0.14	-0.11	0.13
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	-0.08	0.21	0.24	-0.06	0.14
FL:OPTIMISM	-0.11	0.16	0.21	-0.06	0.15
FL:RESPECTED	-0.12	0.15	0.21	-0.09	0.15
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	-0.11	0.16	0.15	-0.07	0.14
SWL: LIFE IS IDEAL	-0.15	0.11	0.11	-0.06	0.16
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	-0.12	0.08	0.11	-0.02	0.11
SWL: NEEDS MET	-0.11	0.14	0.12	-0.07	0.14
SWL:SATISFACTION	-0.16	0.13	0.13	-0.06	0.16
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	-0.10	0.08	0.08	-0.11	0.15
PE: Positive	-0.14	0.11	0.08	-0.10	0.12
NE: Negative	0.16	-0.07	-0.09	0.04	-0.14
PE: Good	-0.15	0.11	0.13	-0.10	0.13
NE: Bad	0.18	-0.10	-0.13	0.01	-0.13
PE: Pleasant	-0.10	0.06	0.09	-0.08	0.11
NE: Unpleasant	0.11	-0.03	-0.05	0.02	-0.08
PE: Happy	-0.11	0.09	0.08	-0.11	0.10
NE: Sad	0.21	-0.09	-0.11	-0.02	-0.16
NE: Afraid	0.16	-0.09	-0.09	-0.05	-0.11
PE: Joyful	-0.11	0.07	0.12	-0.13	0.13
NE: Angry	0.13	-0.05	-0.07	-0.04	-0.09
PE: Contented	-0.18	0.11	0.11	-0.11	0.17
SPANE_P	-0.16	0.11	0.13	-0.13	0.16
SPANE_N	0.21	-0.10	-0.12	-0.01	-0.16

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>HUMANITY CONNECTED</b>	<b>COSMOS WISE &amp; ALIVE</b>	<b>NEGATIVE VISUALISATION</b>	<b>VIEW FROM ABOVE</b>	<b>HEDONIST BEHAVIOUR</b>
FLOURISHING total	0.34	0.15	0.22	0.16	-0.28
SPANE total	0.18	0.07	0.11	0.10	-0.21
SWL TOTAL	0.19	0.09	0.15	0.11	-0.21
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	0.32	0.14	0.19	0.14	-0.26
FL:RELATIONSHIPS FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	0.24	0.06	0.14	0.11	-0.15
FL:BENEVOLENT	0.24	0.11	0.18	0.14	-0.24
FL:COMPETENT	0.33	0.13	0.16	0.12	-0.25
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	0.24	0.09	0.22	0.15	-0.22
FL:OPTIMISM	0.26	0.14	0.16	0.13	-0.29
FL:RESPECTED	0.21	0.14	0.16	0.12	-0.16
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	0.23	0.11	0.15	0.10	-0.19
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	0.16	0.09	0.15	0.11	-0.20
SWL: NEEDS MET	0.11	0.02	0.10	0.12	-0.10
SWL:SATISFACTION	0.17	0.07	0.12	0.11	-0.18
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	0.18	0.09	0.12	0.09	-0.19
PE: Positive	0.16	0.10	0.12	0.05	-0.19
NE: Negative	0.17	0.12	0.13	0.11	-0.15
PE: Good	-0.13	-0.04	-0.07	-0.06	0.18
NE: Bad	0.19	0.10	0.14	0.11	-0.17
PE: Pleasant	-0.11	-0.03	-0.07	-0.07	0.18
NE: Unpleasant	0.16	0.10	0.09	0.10	-0.15
PE: Happy	-0.12	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	0.16
NE: Sad	0.18	0.12	0.10	0.08	-0.15
PE: Joyful	-0.09	0.01	-0.09	-0.01	0.10
NE: Afraid	-0.06	0.08	-0.04	-0.04	0.16
PE: Angry	0.19	0.15	0.10	0.08	-0.15
NE: Contented	-0.06	0.03	0.02	-0.06	0.09
SPANE_P	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.11	-0.15
SPANE_N	0.21	0.15	0.14	0.12	-0.19
	-0.12	0.01	-0.06	-0.06	0.19

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>IDEAL STOIC ADVISOR</b>	<b>STOIC MINDFULNESS</b>	<b>RUMINATION &amp; WORRY</b>	<b>UPSETTING THOUGHTS JUST IMPRESSIONS</b>
FLOURISHING total	0.30	0.40	-0.39	0.36
SPANE total	0.19	0.25	-0.55	0.36
SWL TOTAL	0.18	0.27	-0.43	0.30
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	0.25	0.32	-0.30	0.32
FL:RELATIONSHIPS FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	0.21	0.27	-0.24	0.22
FL:BENEVOLENT	0.27	0.34	-0.32	0.29
FL:COMPETENT	0.27	0.34	-0.28	0.28
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	0.25	0.32	-0.29	0.28
FL:OPTIMISM	0.22	0.34	-0.31	0.30
FL:RESPECTED	0.23	0.29	-0.34	0.26
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	0.18	0.28	-0.31	0.25
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	0.17	0.25	-0.38	0.27
SWL: NEEDS MET	0.16	0.23	-0.29	0.23
SWL:SATISFACTION	0.16	0.22	-0.33	0.24
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	0.15	0.25	-0.43	0.29
PE: Positive	0.10	0.17	-0.35	0.21
NE: Negative	0.21	0.24	-0.40	0.30
PE: Good	-0.13	-0.19	0.49	-0.31
NE: Bad	0.23	0.23	-0.35	0.28
PE: Pleasant	-0.10	-0.18	0.43	-0.27
NE: Unpleasant	0.17	0.16	-0.33	0.24
PE: Happy	-0.08	-0.12	0.37	-0.19
NE: Sad	0.19	0.19	-0.35	0.25
PE: Joyful	-0.10	-0.15	0.41	-0.26
NE: Afraid	-0.06	-0.10	0.41	-0.20
PE: Contented	0.21	0.22	-0.34	0.26
NE: Angry	-0.04	-0.16	0.26	-0.16
PE: Contented	0.16	0.20	-0.41	0.31
SPANE_P	0.24	0.25	-0.45	0.34
SPANE_N	-0.11	-0.20	0.53	-0.31

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>KNOW STOICISM</b>	<b>STOIC ATTITUDE</b>	<b>ACT STOICALLY</b>	<b>SABS ATTITUDE</b>	<b>SABS BEHAVIOURS</b>
FLOURISHING total	0.14	0.38	0.47	0.39	0.53
SPANE total	0.11	0.32	0.38	0.29	0.47
SWL TOTAL	0.15	0.32	0.38	0.30	0.43
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	0.16	0.32	0.41	0.35	0.44
FL:RELATIONSHIPS FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	0.06	0.21	0.28	0.24	0.33
FL:BENEVOLENT	0.12	0.27	0.35	0.30	0.44
FL:COMPETENT	0.09	0.29	0.37	0.30	0.42
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	0.12	0.30	0.35	0.32	0.42
FL:OPTIMISM	0.10	0.36	0.44	0.31	0.44
FL:RESPECTED	0.08	0.29	0.33	0.31	0.39
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	0.12	0.30	0.36	0.29	0.36
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	0.15	0.30	0.38	0.27	0.39
SWL: NEEDS MET	0.10	0.23	0.26	0.20	0.32
SWL:SATISFACTION	0.11	0.26	0.32	0.25	0.35
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	0.13	0.30	0.38	0.27	0.40
PE: Positive	0.13	0.22	0.26	0.23	0.31
NE: Negative	0.07	0.25	0.29	0.25	0.40
PE: Good	-0.10	-0.24	-0.30	-0.20	-0.39
NE: Bad	0.09	0.24	0.30	0.27	0.38
PE: Pleasant	-0.07	-0.24	-0.28	-0.20	-0.35
NE: Unpleasant	0.05	0.22	0.25	0.22	
PE: Happy	-0.05	-0.21	-0.22	-0.13	-0.27
NE: Sad	0.04	0.23	0.27	0.23	0.34
NE: Afraid	-0.10	-0.24	-0.26	-0.18	-0.30
PE: Joyful	-0.09	-0.20	-0.23	-0.13	-0.28
NE: Angry	0.06	0.22	0.29	0.26	0.36
PE: Contented	-0.05	-0.16	-0.19	-0.12	-0.22
SPANE_P	0.12	0.27	0.31	0.28	0.38
SPANE_N	0.09	0.30	0.35	0.31	0.45
	-0.10	-0.29	-0.33	-0.21	-0.40

The above table includes items that are not officially part of the SABS but were included for research purposes – items about the user’s beliefs about how much Stoicism they knew, how Stoic they were, and how Stoic their beliefs were. (see appendix B).

<b>SABS ITEM</b>	<b>SABS POSITIVE</b>	<b>SABS NEGATIVE</b>	<b>SABS TOTAL</b>
FLOURISHING total	0.44	-0.33	0.50
SPANNE total	0.31	-0.38	0.41
SWL TOTAL	0.32	-0.31	0.39
FL:PURPOSE & MEANING	0.37	-0.32	0.43
FL:RELATIONSHIPS	0.27	-0.21	0.31
FL:FLOW & INTERESTED	0.35	-0.28	0.40
FL:BENEVOLENT	0.35	-0.27	0.39
FL:COMPETENT	0.37	-0.23	0.40
FL:ETHICALLY GOOD	0.37	-0.26	0.41
FL:OPTIMISM	0.35	-0.24	0.38
FL:RESPECTED	0.32	-0.24	0.36
SWL:LIFE IS IDEAL	0.29	-0.29	0.35
SWL: EXTERNALS MET	0.24	-0.18	0.27
SWL: NEEDS MET	0.27	-0.26	0.32
SWL:SATISFACTION	0.29	-0.30	0.36
SWL:ACCEPTANCE	0.23	-0.27	0.30
PE: Positive	0.28	-0.28	0.34
NE: Negative	-0.22	0.31	-0.31
PE: Good	0.29	-0.28	0.35
NE: Bad	-0.22	0.28	-0.29
PE: Pleasant	0.27	0.32	0.33
NE: Unpleasant	-0.13	0.24	-0.21
PE: Happy	0.25	-0.26	0.31
NE: Sad	-0.19	0.25	-0.26
NE: Afraid	-0.13	0.26	-0.21
PE: Joyful	0.28	-0.26	0.33
NE: Angry	-0.12	0.19	-0.17
PE: Contented	0.28	-0.32	0.36
SPANNE_P	0.33	-0.34	0.41
SPANNE_N	-0.23	0.34	-0.32

## Appendix G Feedback on the whole of Stoic week (332 respondents)

Overall scores:

Do you agree with the following statements (1 don't agree– 5 fully agree)

Clarity: The course material was clearly-worded and easy to understand. 4.6/5 (average)

Impact: This course material seems helpful as a way of developing Stoic attitudes and behaviours. 4.5/5

Feasibility: The course material worked on my computer and I was able to access it properly. 4.6/5

The qualitative feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Below is a representative sample of comments:-

For me the main strengths were the daily meditations and exercises. Each day for me was a new way of thinking about life and realizing how much I've missed out by letting my feelings get in the way.

Excellent course overall. Easily accessible. In the future I would like to see more forms of interacting with fellow students other than the forums. Perhaps the curriculum could ask students to form group video chats (Skype, FaceTime) and discuss events, reflections, etc.

I found the morning and evening meditations very helpful.

I am very happy I took this course. I am very happy it was available to me, and that I got to know about it just before it started. I am also very grateful that you took the time to put it (carefully) together. Thank you so much! I was somewhat emotionally stoic already, but would like to be more stoic in my actions. The course made me even more emotionally stoic and provided very good exercises, which I will use in the future. However, I still think I could use some more focus on taking action from a stoic starting point. Best wishes to you!

Strengths: very numerous! Daily exercises effectively package Stoic ethics/therapy so as to communicate both theory and the emotional life-world of the Stoic.

Weakness: only one that occurs to me is that the forum setup is rather rigid. It works \*extremely\* well, don't get me wrong. But perhaps it would be even better if users could create their own threads?

Strengths

A lot of helpful information that maintains interest. The coupling with CBT techniques was especially good and relevant for me. It's interesting to learn where these methods originated. Straight to the point

and great support from the audio material.

#### Weaknesses

None related to the course material. Personally it was hard to remain on track on a couple of occasions but, suspect noticing these occasions is the whole point and the way to succeed in the future.

The course material could easily grow and have each technique/idea last a week instead of a day. I may even try it myself and have a six day topic, with something light but stoic related on the Sunday!

I think that one of the main strengths of this course is the use of actual Stoic quotes and writings as opposed to contemporary variants or other Self-help/New Age material.

I do not see any weaknesses in this course. It was clear, concise, and honest.

The main strengths lie in its clearly-laid out practicability. It actually gives things to practice in a clear way.

Its main weakness is that it's a little short. Another weakness is that there its format does not strongly encourage discussion and interaction amongst the participants.

The course made me do all the exercises rather than only read about them. I'm quite confident now how to proceed with Stoic life style in the future.

Lunchtime exercises were really great, that made me think about my reactions and responses. I have a much better understanding of Stoic ideas.

I can't really think of any weaknesses. Perhaps selection of forum comments that are most useful would help those of us who just don't have time to go through loads of chaff.

It was a great experience, thanks!

Thank you for a job well done and needed. It is uplifting to study this material and I think it does help me be a better person. And if there were more 'better persons' we can make even more people happier and healthier.

The material was helpful, but there was too much material for a newbie. I think you could cut down on some themes and aspects so that one would get a better grip on the main points.

Clear, focused exercises, all of them doable if you put in the required time and effort. I appreciated getting the e-mails every morning summarising the day's exercises. One suggestion: it would be great if you could develop an app!

Strengths: well put together course by knowledgeable people, thanks.

Weakness: might come across as too heavy for an enthusiastic amateur.

I enjoyed receiving the emails and learning about the teachings. I liked the structure of morning email etc but didn't always manage to read stuff at the right time. I enjoyed taking an idea into my day and reflecting on it/using it to support my actions. I'm going through a difficult time right now and I found the teachings very supportive. I didn't find weaknesses though would perhaps have enjoyed the chance to practise stoicism over a longer period of time, a month say. I would do it again.

I am a 12 year old and I enjoyed the course. I hope that sometime in the future there would be more youth outreach about Stoicism. Before I found out about the course I had never heard of Stoicism. I think it would be a good idea to inform children about this because our young minds are easy to convince and make an impression on. I am very grateful for what the course has taught me especially about accepting that you don't have control over other people's actions.

## **Appendix H**

### **Report on feedback questionnaires on ‘Stoicism Today’, Queen Mary University of London Nov 29 2014.**

**(Christopher Gill, Patrick Ussher)**

Numbers attending event: about 300; questionnaires completed and returned 140.

#### **How did you hear about today?**

Internet/Stoicism today blog: 35

London Philosophy Club/on-line meet-up: 32

Via a friend: 18

Jules Evans’ blog: 16

Stoicism Today Twitter/tweet/facebook: 12

Email lists (various): 7

Via partner/relative: 5

Reddit: 4

Tim LeBon’s blog: 3

Evening standard article on philosophy clubs: 2

Derren Brown’s blog: 1

#### **Overall rating:**

Excellent: 70

Very good: 55

Good: 15

Satisfactory: 2

**What did you like best about the event?**

Range of perspectives and applications of Stoicism (23)

Workshops (17)

Meeting like-minded people (11)

Academic lectures in a modern context – morning talks (11)

Theory and practice – good balance between these (12)

Enthusiasm and knowledge of expert speakers (9)

Gaining better understanding of Stoicism (9)

Everything (8)

Plenary discussions (7)

Well-organised and well-structured event (7)

Criticisms of Stoicism (6) – esp. Angie Hobbs's contribution (6)

Good atmosphere (6)

Group plenary presentations and good Q&A (6)

Excellent presentations (6)

Concluding plenary (6)

Donald Robertson's workshop (4)

Tim LeBon's workshop (3)

Jules Evans' workshop (3)

John Sellars' talk on Emotions (3)

Accessibility of presentations (3)

Nikki Cameron (2) and Gill Garratt

Christopher Gill (2)

Panel on work, prison, army (2)

Patrick Ussher

Chance to buy book ('Stoicism Today')

Practical wisdom without pressure

Friendly, interesting and informative event

Connecting classical ethics with self-help, modern life and global ethics

Personal accounts of how Stoicism helped people

Questions and sincere answers

Confirmed long-standing Stoic attitudes

Inspiring experience of an unfamiliar philosophy

Good gender balance

Interactivity during event

Helpful with life issues

Conversational tone of workshop sessions

Access to leading scholarly opinion

Freedom to think and relate to people

Getting a sense of the almost religious aspect of Stoicism

Good selection of material

High level of engagement

Thought-provoking event

### **What would have improved it?**

Better lunch and coffee logistics e.g. having two stations for tea/coffee – esp. avoiding long queues (27)

Better sandwiches and better options, labelling food for those with dietary restrictions (14)

More workshops (12)

Nothing (9)

Biscuits and tea (7)

More focus on Stoicism rather than CBT (7)

Talk on metaphysics and Stoicism and religion (5)

More academic talks (4)

Workshop room too small (4)

Room ventilation (4)

Better way of choosing workshops (3)

More time for Q&A (3)

Focus not practical enough (2)

Less criticism of Stoicism (2)

Smaller workshops (2)

Discussion points made available beforehand for workshops and presentations (2)

Compulsory meditation session for all (2)

Include handouts (2)

More reference to original texts in relation to daily life (2)

Better communication and more information before event

Shorter workshops

Longer workshops

Chance to catch up on workshop content via handouts, videos

Having latecomers enter the hall from the back

More chance to meet others

More powerpoints and visual powerpoints

Water available later in the day

Keynote visiting lecture

More real life stories

A handbook for the event

More of Angie Hobbs

Roundtable discussion as in 2013

Optional social in pub at end

Fancier Venue

**Which afternoon sessions did you attend?**

Jules Evans: Lives transformed: 35

Gill Garratt: Stoicism and work: 21

Christopher Gill: Stoicism, nature and environment: 22

Tim LeBon: Guided Stoic meditation: 50

Donald Robertson: Stoicism and love: 68

John Sellars: Value-judgements and how to avoid them: 48

Patrick Ussher/Gabriele Galluzzo: Cultivating a wise relationship with IT: 30

**Suggestions for a follow-up:**

Annual or bi-annual public event like this one (7)

Monthly meetings via skype (2)

More local Stoic activities

Volunteers to set up sub-events

More philosophical debate

Invite William Irvine and Ronald Pies

More books on sale

Find more central venue in London

Carry out randomised control test to assess Stoicism

Conference on Greek ethics in general

### **Any other comments?**

Follow-up leaflet with background info: Stoic Week, how to keep in touch, courses etc (13)

Residential weekend or two days (11)

More debates with Angie Hobbs (3)

More Q&A

Better sound during panel discussion

Crowd-funding

Include map for lecture theatre

More interaction through eventbrite prior to event

Handouts from workshops not attended

There were also 3 offers to help future work of 'Stoicism Today'

### **Ideas for sessions in a future event:**

Stoicism and politics (2)

More on contemporary Stoics (2)

Stoicism and Buddhism (2)

Marcus Aurelius workshop

Seneca workshop

Stoicism in response to disaster/tragedy

Atheism and Stoicism

Science and modern Stoicism

"Pick n Mix" Stoicism

Focus on individual philosophers

Using Stoicism to change an unjust World

Stoicism and Aristotelianism

Lacanian philosophy and Stoicism

Stoicism and Christianity

Stoicism and other ancient schools of philosophy

Stoicism and Education (2) - health

History of Stoicism

Stoic examples from history

Examples of applying Stoic virtues

More explanation of Stoic terminology/virtues

Stoicism and Medical Ethics