MINDFULNESS OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AT UC DAVIS

OVERVIEW

Two different methodologies of mindfulness-based programming were introduced to faculty, staff and students: Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPs) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). MAPs is a six-class series that was held weekly on the UC Davis campus and covered the fundamental ideals of mindfulness. There were 29 participants and evaluation data indicated increased mindfulness and decreased burnout. MBSR was offered on the UC Davis Health campus over the course of 8 weeks. There were 28 participants and the course was associated with increased mindfulness and increased satisfaction with life.

PROJECT DETAILS

The MAPs course consisted of six weekly 2-hour classes that were comprised of a combination of lecture, practice, and group feedback and discussion. Concepts include an overview of mindfulness, mindfulness of the body, obstacles to mindfulness, mindfulness to help with physical pain, working with difficult emotions, cultivating positive emotions, and working with difficult thoughts and mindful interactions.

The MBSR program was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1970s to treat patients struggling with life’s difficulties and physical and/or mental illness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Practices include: breath, body scan, focused attention meditation, open awareness, mindful eating, walking meditation, and mindful yoga. The program consisted of eight weekly 2.5-hour classes and a 1-day meditation retreat. Indicators that were analyzed include burnout, mindfulness, compassion, and life satisfaction.
29 participants attended MAPs on the UC Davis campus. The course was associated with increased mindfulness and decreased burnout. However, participants did not experience changes in compassion or satisfaction with life.

28 employees attended MBSR at the UC Davis Health campus. MBSR participants experienced increased mindfulness and increased satisfaction with life, however, participants did not experience changes in compassion or burnout.

There were no significant differences between MAPs vs. MBSR on burnout, mindfulness, compassion or satisfaction with life.

An ideal space conducive to mindfulness training is relatively quiet with natural surroundings and has enough space for walking and movement practices. If possible, a dedicated space to not only host the mindfulness classes, but where class materials and equipment can also be stored for the duration of the class (and beyond) would be ideal.

Research on the effectiveness of mindfulness for employees and return on investment (ROI) on these programs suggests that a dedicated space is a tiny investment for a significant benefit to the university.

Plan, if necessary, for sustainable infrastructural support, including administrative support, funding, staff, etc.

It is important for classes to be led by teachers who have credible training to teach mindfulness.

Mindfulness has scientific support as an effective tool for stress management and beyond, and the need for these services is growing. Mindfulness is a skill that employees are interested in investing time and energy to develop.

It is important to have a group size that allows time for experiential exercises, Q&A and discussion.

In person, live classes build a sense of community amongst attendees and are conducive to the gathering of attention and the development of mindfulness.

The class and program duration should be long enough to allow for sequential experiential learning.