An On-Site Mindfulness-Based Intervention to Promote Wellness in the Workplace

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PURPOSE/AIMS

Purpose: To assess the outcome of an on-site mindfulness-based intervention to reduce stress and burnout among outpatient mental health workers.

AIMS:

1. To assess feasibility – in regards to participation, adherence, and completion of the self-reported questionnaires.
2. To investigate changes in employee stress, burnout, and job satisfaction over three time periods.

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

Health care professional are among the most stressed of any profession, and it is estimated that 21% to 67% of mental health workers experience high levels of stress and burnout.1,14,19

The issue of stress is linked to high absenteeism, high job turnover rates, and low morale, which results in issues of safety and poor quality patient care.6,15

In 2013, the American Institute of Stress estimated the annual overall cost of job stress at work to be over $300 billion.9

METHODS

Population & Setting

A psychiatric outpatient setting was chosen as the site for implementation of this project, and all healthcare workers (≥18 years old) at the site were encouraged to attend guided mindfulness meditation practices. Participation was voluntary – those who were interested in being part of the study signed informed consent.

Instruments, Data Collection/Analysis

Instruments: Maslach Burnout Inventory15 & Job Satisfaction? Data Collection: weekly attendance logs; pre-, post-, and 1-mos f/u self-assessment surveys.

Data Analysis:

- Non-parametric test equivalent to one-way repeated-measures ANOVA (i.e. Friedman test) – to determine if there is a significance difference between all three time periods.13
- Level of statistical significance; p value < .05

Intervention

- A modified version of an 8-weeks outline Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course offered at La Palouse Mindfulness Course (www.lapalousemindfulness.com)16
- Course is offered for free
- Course is modeled on the MBSR program founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder for the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center12
- Course included weekly readings and guided meditation practices that ranged between 30 to 37 min per meditation session

Note: The Arizona State University Institution Review Board approved protocol from 9/21/15 to 9/11/2016 inclusive. Participants were assigned ID code for privacy and confidentiality purposes.

RESULTS

- Twenty-four individual staff gave their consent to participate in the study. Eleven of twenty-four (46%) completed all three surveys (pre-, post-, and 1- month f/u).
- Intervention was found to be feasible in an outpatient psychiatric setting.

Findings revealed that there was no significance between pre-, post-, and 1-month follow up when comparing the average total scores of means for Emotional Exhaustion (p = .148), Depersonalization (p = .223), Personal Achievement (p = .764) and job satisfaction (p = .422).

Participants voiced positive outcomes from attending mindfulness meditation practices with regards to how practicing mindfulness has helped them improve their work productivity and self-control during crisis situations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The positive outcomes cited by participant support the thesis that the on-site mindfulness-based intervention is better than no intervention though the effect was not statistically significant. These findings call for additional research engaging a larger sample size, providing more didactic methods, and using measures that address the effects of mindfulness practice in predictions of change in stress levels and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Practicing mindfulness meditation in the workplace appears to be a feasible, safe, and beneficial self-help method health care workers can use to combat occupational stress and burnout, be more positive, and content in their work life.