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**WORKPLACE MINDFULNESS TRAINING WITH STUDENTS
AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 2019: EVALUATION REPORT**

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With support from Memorial University’s Student Services Fee funding, a team led by Principal Investigator Janna Rosales, PhD (Visiting Assistant Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science), conducted two 10-week Workplace Mindfulness training programs in the Winter and Fall of 2019: “Workplace Mindfulness to Support Professional Development and Well-Being of Engineering Students and Other Work Placement Students.”

With the exception of one student, all of the participants were engineering students. Ten undergraduate and graduate students (mostly graduate, and mostly international) completed both pre and post evaluations at the beginning and end of the program. An additional four students completed only the post evaluation. Fifteen students received certificates of completion, having attended a minimum of seven out of ten sessions. The project team included Dr. Rosales; Vashti Campbell (PhD Candidate, Faculty of Medicine); Renato Rodrigues (MPhil Candidate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), and Andrew Safer (mindfulness instructor, trainer, and workshop facilitator).

Participants provided written consent, allowing their evaluation responses to be included anonymously in a report and for promotional purposes. Andrew Safer administered pre and post evaluations during the first and last sessions. The Memorial University research team conducted additional research using a separate set of measures.

Program

The Workplace Mindfulness program consists of nine 1.5-hour weekly sessions and a 2-hour final session, which include various mindfulness practices and Q&A, presentations, and discussion in pairs and in the group. The themes of the ten sessions included:

1. The Business Case for Mindfulness
2. Core Mindfulness Practices
3. Attention in the Age of Digital Distraction
4. The Power of Pausing
5. Seeing the Big Picture Beyond the Details
6. Responding Instead of Reacting
7. Building Respectful Relationships
8. Navigating Stress and Uncertainty

9. Joining Vision and Practicality
10. Tying It All Together

Quantitative Evaluation

Participants indicated their agreement / disagreement with 16 statements based on a scale ranging from (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. Megan Walsh, PhD (Assistant Professor, Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan) calculated the mean for each evaluation statement, pre and post, and the percentage change for each.

Ten participants completed the evaluations at both time-one and time-two. The average score change for all 16 of the evaluation statements, pre to post, was **25.86%**. The statement, “I have problems dealing with stressful situations,” saw a 65% change, indicating that dealing with stress had become significantly less problematic for the students. Regarding anxiety and worry, a 63.64% change in the following statement was notable: “When my thoughts overtake me and I feel worried, I don’t know how to pause or interrupt this pattern.” Responses to the following statement (52.94% change) suggest greater self-acceptance: “When I do something that doesn’t meet my expectations, I give myself a hard time.”

Considering that mindfulness practice provides a way to train one’s attention, it is noteworthy that at the end of the program, students, on average, showed a 38.1% positive change with regard the statement: “I am easily distracted.” Increased self-awareness is suggested by a 32% improvement in responses to the statement: “I am unaware of the ways that I am impulsive.” Awareness of not only oneself, but also the environment, is highlighted by the statement: “I am often preoccupied and miss what is going on around me” (30.43% change). In the post evaluation, students changed their view on “I am keen on multitasking as it allows me to accomplish a lot of tasks” (28.13% change). A key workplace competency—prioritizing tasks—scored higher in the post evaluation: “When I’m working on something, it’s difficult to differentiate between priorities and tasks that could be done later” (20.83% change).

Asked how mindfulness helps during the workday, the majority of students cited focusing, ranging from concentrating on studies to stopping and thinking about things with a new perspective. The next most frequently cited item was problem solving: leaving more room to think, and solving problems instead of worrying. One student wrote, “I am able to, through Mindfulness, get things done in better fashion, getting better results. My study experience has greatly improved, and my grades are, in fact, quite exciting.”

The students were asked to rate the workshop series for how helpful it has been, with 0=not helpful, and 10=extremely helpful. Fourteen responses were averaged with a result of **8.4**. In the mindfulness instruction and guidance, emphasis was placed on practicing at home. Thirteen out of 14 students indicated they had practiced at least three times per week. Asked if they felt their colleagues could benefit from learning about mindfulness, 13 said Yes and one said, “It depends on the person”.

