



CCC's Proposal to Organisations

Mindfulness Course: to address employee stress

2 x Half Day Workshops (2.5 hours) and e-mails over 3 weeks

Designed for:

All employees whose role involves careful time management to complete a variety of tasks or balance different areas of responsibility, leading to high levels of stress. The workshops are most effective if all delegates attend the sessions willingly and are fully engaged with the concept that they are learning a new way of managing their own stress levels on an ongoing basis. This course had been specifically designed for professionals with limited availability to provide the extensive benefits usually offered by an 8 week MBSR course by condensing the principles into two longer sessions interspersed with personal practice.

Aims: To enable delegates to manage their personal stress levels, dramatically increase their focus and performance and to derive new levels of enjoyment from day to day tasks.

Our Mindfulness Associate: The course will be delivered by a qualified mindfulness practitioner with 20 years of experience of delivering mindfulness training to high-level professionals and 25 years of personal practice. Feedback from some larger organisations, including Sheffield University and BUPA has included 100% satisfaction reports and has resulted in a reputation for excellence within the field. The fee for this course would usually be £4000, but because of CCC's charitable status, our associate is able to offer the concessionary rate to CCC clients. All CCC profits are used to provide general counselling for those in our local community in need of support but who do not have access to therapy owing to a lack of funds. Therefore, any additional contributions are also gratefully received.

Overview:

The first half-day workshop is designed to enable participants to:

- Gain an understanding of the benefits and basic principles of mindfulness, the different ways of engaging, how to reduce distraction and how increased levels of enjoyment can be derived from mundane activities
- Understand and identify stress, personal triggers and opportunities to employ mindfulness techniques
- Discuss personal experience of stressful situations and positive coping strategies they have employed
- Devise a personal plan of practice according to their needs and timescales to allow delegates to recognise how and where mindfulness could help them personally

The delegates are then asked to practice their personal plan of practice for a three week period to allow the reprogramming of the neural pathways and entrench new thought patterns and behaviours prior to the next session. During this time, they will receive a daily e-mail reminder and useful tips and information to enhance their success. Feedback is also encouraged where a delegate is struggling to incorporate the techniques successfully into their routine.

The second half-day workshop is designed to support delegates' proficiency of the techniques and deepen their understanding of the practice. They will:

- Develop proficiency at the practice learned so far and explore additional techniques to improve focus and relaxation
- Investigate different approaches to meditation and breathing awareness
- Study methods to increase appreciation and enjoyment
- Develop a daily routine which reprograms the brain to respond to stress triggers in a more positive and focussed way on an ongoing basis

Participants will derive most benefit from the workshop by being willing to exchange experiences openly and embrace new ways of thinking.

Because this workshop is an interactive training experience, the exact content may vary from group to group but the principles and main content remain the same.

Group Size: Minimum 6 and maximum 15 delegates

Resources:

Venue: The client will provide a quiet and suitable room for the number of delegates to sit comfortably in a semi-circle. If this is not possible, CCC can arrange a suitable venue, but additional room hire charges will apply.

Facilities: The trainer will require use of a flipchart and overhead projector which can be connected to a laptop.

Costs:

Course Fee: £2400 including the two 2.5 hour sessions and the daily e-mails and correspondence. Discounts may apply for consecutive sessions taking place on the same day.

Venue: Depending on location, additional travel charges may apply (25 per hour travel time and 42 pence per mile fuel charge)

Should you wish to book these sessions, please contact me with details of the number of delegates and proposed dates. We will endeavour to fulfil all requests but cannot guarantee availability on all dates requested, and will seek to reach a mutually convenient arrangement.

*This group session may not be suitable for delegates who have previously or are currently experiencing depression, severe anxiety, bi-polar disorder or similar mental health conditions.

One-to-one Mindfulness Coaching

We are also able to offer one to one mindfulness coaching with a qualified practitioner. These sessions would take place at the practitioner's premises (usually Cambridge) at a mutually convenient time, which could be during or outside of work hours or at the client's premises if a minimum of 2 and a maximum 3 sessions are booked in a day.

Over a 4 week period of 1.5 hour-long sessions, the individual would explore:

- The benefits and basic principles of mindfulness, the different ways of engaging, how to reduce distraction and how increased levels of enjoyment can be derived from mundane activities
- An overview of personal stress patterns and ways to change them
- Personal stress triggers and opportunities to employ mindfulness techniques
- Practical experience of breathing techniques and meditation
- Development of a daily routine which reprograms the brain to respond to stress triggers in a more positive and focussed way on an ongoing basis
- Adaptation of relaxation techniques according to learning styles

This arrangement is ideal for those unable or unwilling to attend the group session and feel they would benefit more from a private consultation

Costs: £150 per 1.5 hour session invoiced monthly in arrears. A CCC agreement must be signed before the first session takes place.

We will endeavour to fulfil all requests but cannot guarantee availability on all dates requested, and will seek to reach a mutually convenient arrangement.

Heather Knapp

Business Development Manager

bdm@cambridgeshirecounselling.org.uk

The Benefits of Mindfulness

How Mindfulness Will Turbocharge Your Career

Dec 27, 2015

Mindfulness is an increasingly popular notion in the workplace, with companies such as Apple, Yahoo, Starbucks, and Google using it to their benefit. Google, for example, offers employees a 19-hour course on the subject, which is so popular that thousands of Googlers take it each year.

So what exactly is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a simple yet effective form of meditation that enables you to gain control of unruly thoughts and behaviors. People who practice mindfulness are more focused, even when they are not meditating. Mindfulness is an excellent technique to reduce stress because it stops you from feeling out of control, stops you from jumping from one thought to the next, and stops you from ruminating on negative thoughts. Overall, it's a great way to make it through your busy day in a calm and productive manner.

Ellen Langer, a Harvard University psychologist who studies mindfulness, described it this way: "Mindfulness is the process of actively noticing new things. When you do that, it puts you in the present. It makes you more sensitive to context and perspective. It's the essence of engagement. And it's energy-begetting, not energy consuming. The mistake most people make is to assume it's stressful and exhausting—all this thinking. But what's stressful is all the mindless negative evaluations we make and the worry that we'll find problems and not be able to solve them."

And why is mindfulness becoming so popular in the workplace?

While the benefits of mindfulness are many, perhaps the most important reason that companies such as Google are sold on it is its ability to directly improve performance. Langer has conducted a host of studies that show that practicing mindfulness improves your performance on all types of tasks.

Still, the mindfulness movement isn't all about performance; there are a number of other important reasons why companies are making mindfulness a priority. Five of these reasons follow, all great illustrations of why we should all be using mindfulness to our benefit.

Mindfulness is the ultimate stress-reliever. Stress is more than a performance killer; it's a people killer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly two-thirds of all hospital visits are for stress-related problems, and 75% of health-care expenses are stress related. Stress can cause high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases, cancer, heart disease, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and more. Mindfulness is a great stress reliever because it takes you out of fight-or-flight mode and brings you into a relaxed state of mental clarity and calm.

Mindfulness improves your ability to focus. Mindfulness improves your ability to focus on *one* thing at a time. This focus carries over into everything you do. Mindfulness teaches you to avoid distractions and bring a heightened level of concentration to your work. While you may have fallen prey to multi-tasking in the past, mindfulness will help you to kick this nasty, productivity-killing habit. A focused mind is a productive mind.

Mindfulness boosts your creativity. Creativity hinges on your mental state. Mindfulness helps you to get into a creative frame of mind by defeating the negative thoughts that stifle creative thinking and self-expression. The fact that mindfulness focuses on "the now" helps you to think freely and creatively.

Mindfulness improves your emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the “something” in each of us that is a bit intangible. It affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results. EQ is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others and to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships.

Decades of research now point to EQ as the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack. It’s a powerful way to focus your energy in one direction with tremendous results. TalentSmart tested EQ alongside 33 other important workplace skills and found that EQ is the strongest predictor of performance, explaining a full 58% of success in all types of jobs. Of all the people we’ve studied at work, we’ve found that 90% of top performers are also high in EQ.

The heightened awareness that exists in a mindful state allows you to more clearly feel, label, and understand your emotions. This turbocharges your emotional intelligence because it greatly increases your self-awareness, which is the foundation of a high EQ.

Mindfulness makes you a better person. A Harvard study found strong connections between mindfulness and prosocial behavior. Subjects who meditated showed compassion and kindness to others 50% more often than those who didn’t. There’s something about feeling present and calm that brings out the best in people.

Bringing It All Together

Mindfulness can improve your performance now as well as your capacity to perform in the future. Give it a try, and you’ll be surprised where it takes you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the #1 bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, and the cofounder of TalentSmart, the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. Dr. Bradberry has written for, or been covered by, *Newsweek*, *TIME*, *BusinessWeek*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company, Inc.*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Harvard Business Review*.

Mindfulness At Work

A number of well-known companies have implemented mindfulness programs including:

- Apple
- Google
- McKinsey & Company
- Deutsche Bank
- Procter & Gamble
- Astra Zeneca
- General Mills
- Aetna

An August Financial Times article describes the growth in mindfulness in the West and cites General Mills as one company that is making it an integral part of its company culture.

[General Mills] has even begun research into its efficacy, and the early results are striking. After one of Marturano's seven-week courses, 83 per cent of participants said they were "taking time each day to optimise my personal productivity" – up from 23 per cent before the course. Eighty-two per cent said they now make time to eliminate tasks with limited productivity value – up from 32 per cent before the course. And among senior executives who took the course, 80 per cent reported a positive change in their ability to make better decisions, while 89 per cent said they became better listeners.

Mindfulness In Silicon Valley

One chapter in *Contemplative Practices in Action* is devoted to the impact of meditation in the lives of Silicon Valley leaders. In a seminar called Spirituality for Organizational Leadership at Santa Clara University, participants discuss how meditation practices can assist them in leading their organization. Those who complete the seminar tend to integrate what they learned into their busy lives in the following way:

1. Anchor your day with a contemplative morning practice (e.g., Breath, Zen, Kabbala, etc.)
2. Before entering the workplace, remind yourself of your organization's purpose and recommit to your vocation as a leader
3. Throughout the day, pause to be fully present in the moment before undertaking the next critical task
4. Review the day's events at the close of the day to prevent work stresses from spilling into your home life
5. Before going to bed, engage in some spiritual reading

Mindfulness at Google

Google deserves special mention. Led by Chade-Meng Tan, its Jolly Good Fellow, Google introduced a program to increase emotional intelligence using mindfulness – and backed by scientific research. It's called Search Inside Yourself and it is now offered to all Google employees with a waiting list of 6 months after those who followed the course reported increases in productivity of up to 80%.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/drewhansen/2012/10/31/a-guide-to-mindfulness-at-work/#7a8bde6d6870>

Chade-Meng Tan – Google's Jolly Good Fellow

Chade-Meng Tan's job description would never get past most companies' human resources departments. As the head of mindfulness training at Google, his role is to enlighten minds, open hearts and create world peace.

But he hopes that one day, his role will become commonplace. A growing awareness of the importance of our emotional fitness, he says, is mirroring the same journey of acceptance that physical exercise took in the last century. And he believes that scientific evidence of the benefits of the Buddhist practice of mindfulness will be instrumental into catapulting it into the very heart of the business world.

Tan, who is officially known as the search engine giant's Jolly Good Fellow, likes to live up to his image of joking around and points out that mindfulness is moving away from its association with mysticism – or with people from San Francisco.

"If you are a company leader who says employees should be encouraged to exercise, nobody looks at you funny," Tan says. "The same thing is happening to meditation and mindfulness, because now that it's become scientific, it has been demystified. It's going to be seen as fitness for the mind."

A Fitbit for the mind

Through the development of apps and other software, tech companies such as Google will have a major part to play in mainstreaming mindfulness, he predicts. In the same way that the pedometer has influenced exercise, these apps could similarly popularise mindfulness, Tan says.

He speaks, for example, of devices that will be able to show how meditation impacts brain waves, potentially creating a whole industry of professional trainers. "Just imagine setting a goal like 'a year from now, I want to be able to calm my mind in 40% of the time it takes me now' and my personal trainer is accountable to that target," he says.

But what has all this got to do with the cutthroat world of business?

Tan says that mindfulness opens the doorway to loving kindness, which is at the heart of business success.

"In many situations, goodness is good for business," he says. "If you, as the boss, are nice to your employees, they are happy, they treat their customers well, the customers are happy to spend more money, so everybody wins.

"Also if you treat everybody with kindness, they'll like you even if they don't really know why. And if they like you, they want to help you succeed. So it's good for your soul and it's good for your career."

But if that is so obvious, why is it so difficult for companies to practice altruism? Tan points to the fixation with the short-term which rewards those managers who drive profits at any cost, even if it eventually leads to a loss of talent and productivity.

He suggests the other main reason is that employees often fall into the psychological trap of engaging in destructive behaviour by acting out their unconscious judgments.

"If you don't have the foundation of peace, joy and kindness it is very hard, day to day, to always do the right thing," he says. "If somebody says something negative, your first thought is 'that guy is an *****' and you want to defeat that guy. So it takes a certain amount of practice to say 'Wait a minute, that guy's just doing his job. He's a good person and so I have to work with him by understanding why he's doing that, and then help him succeed.'"

Fighting instinct

Tan says it takes some effort to fight the instinct to just do something destructive and get to that win-win mentality.

"Anger is fuelled by fear, and in Buddhism there is a difference between anger and indignation," he says. "Anger is destructive; indignation is a state where you do feel the pain yourself, but you're out there to change the world because it's the right thing to do. The difference between the two is power. Anger arises from powerlessness; indignation arises from power. So it's about how we help people reduce fear and increase positive power?"

For those who worry that mindfulness takes years to have any impact, Tan insists that it can create a measurable change in 100 minutes. For those who want a more fundamental impact that can change their lives, this can be achieved in 52 hours, although Tan says there are innumerable depths that mindfulness can help you to uncover.

He jokes that he would like to think mindfulness has made him "less of an ***** than I used to be". But on a more serious note, he says that mindfulness has helped him develop "an ability to calm my mind on demand, and that by itself is huge. With calmness comes inner joy that is independent of your senses' pleasure or the ego's pleasure."

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/google-meditation-mindfulness-technology>

Mindfulness practice can reduce absence from work

Mindfulness improves physical health

If greater well-being isn't enough of an incentive, scientists have discovered the benefits of mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways. Mindfulness can:

- help relieve stress
- treat heart disease
- lower blood pressure
- reduce chronic pain
- improve sleep
- alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties

Mindfulness improves mental health

In recent years, psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of problems, including:

- depression
- substance abuse
- eating disorders
- couples' conflicts
- anxiety disorders
- obsessive-compulsive disorder

Some experts believe that mindfulness works, in part, by helping people to accept their experiences—including painful emotions—rather than react to them with aversion and avoidance.

It's become increasingly common for mindfulness meditation to be combined with psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy. This development makes good sense, since both meditation and cognitive behavioral therapy share the common goal of helping people gain perspective on irrational, maladaptive, and self-defeating thoughts.

<http://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>