

Mindfulness: living with intent and purpose

AT A GLANCE

Employees of Women, Infant and Children (WIC) at Idaho Public Health were equipped with mindfulness techniques to apply personally and in the workplace.

The Situation

Many American adults encounter high levels of stress in their professional and personal lives. This can contribute to physical, mental, and emotional health issues, as well as relational challenges. Mindfulness involves being present in the moment. Current research examines neurological patterns that are altered in a positive manner with the practice of mindfulness. Many benefits of mindfulness have been documented, including stress reduction and increased empathy toward clients on a professional level.

Our Response

The University of Idaho Extension family and consumer sciences facilitator for Bonneville County initiated an employee wellness presentation for counselors employed by the WIC nutrition program sponsored by Idaho Public Health (Health District 7). As the jobs of these nutrition counselors are often emotionally demanding, mindfulness was the selected topic. The session included a definition of mindfulness and how to apply mindfulness techniques to real-life situations. Areas of discussion included mindful eating, exercising for body and mind, and mindfulness in the workplace. Employees also participated in relaxation breathing techniques.



Diagram showing mindfulness as the center with awareness, acceptance and present moment as the outer circles.

Program Outcomes

Each of the 21 participants completed a post-presentation survey. 67 percent of those surveyed indicated something new that they had learned in relation to mindfulness. 81 percent listed one or more mindful practices they intend to incorporate into their lives.

Mindfulness techniques can positively affect those that practice them, as well as those in their sphere of influence. Making mindfulness training available to the community can bring physical, mental, emotional and social benefits.

The Future

Expansion of mindfulness awareness in our community programming will be an on-going effort. Several

impact University of Idaho Extension

local employers have expressed interest in this topic as part of their employee wellness program. Mindfulness presentations will continue to be offered to community groups and in public venues.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

A special thanks to Jennifer Werlin, University of Idaho Extension educator in Teton County, for her original creation of this mindfulness presentation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Leslee Blanch, RD, LD, Family and Consumer Sciences Facilitator • University of Idaho Extension, Bonneville County • 208-529-1390 • lblanch@uidaho.edu

42-18-lblanch-mindfulness • 11/18