

New research finds positive health technique for stressed nurses

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Within the health care industry and beyond, daily exposure to stress can lead to negative consequences for employees both on and off the job – from apathy and burnout to physical illness or mental impairments. New Open Access research published in Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health suggests the implementation of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program can reduce employee stress and burnout.

"MBSR was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979 in an effort to teach patients with [chronic medical conditions](#) how to lead fuller and healthier lives," wrote the researchers. "Mindfulness is defined as a self-directed practice for relaxing the body and calming the mind through focusing on present-moment awareness."

In the study, a sample of 41 female nurses from a large healthcare company participated in an 8 week scheduled course of guided instruction in [mindfulness meditation](#) practices, facilitated group discussion, stretching and yoga, work and home assignments, and individually tailored instruction and support. Overall health and well-being of the nurses was surveyed at three points: 2 weeks prior to research, immediately following the program, and 4 months following the program. Results showed statistical improvement in both overall health and wellness of the nurses at each point of intervention.

The researchers do acknowledge the limitation of a non-random sample and inclusion of only one profession; however the results are indicative

that a MBSR approach can aid in reducing overall stress sustained at work across professions.

"This is a universal practice and can be utilized by a variety of clinical and non-clinical populations as well as by a variety of professions," according to lead researcher Dawn Bazarko, Senior Vice President of the Center for Nursing Advancement at UnitedHealth Group. "Health care workers present as a primary target audience due to the nature of their work and the impact that mindfulness can have on [patient care](#) and the creation of safer, higher-quality care environments. However, the practice is ideal for anyone from front line call center agents to busy executives."

Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health

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More information: The Impact of an Innovative Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program on the Health and Well-Being of Nurses Employed in a Corporate Setting, Dawn Bazarko, Rebecca A. Cate, Francisca Azocar, and Mary Jo Kreitzer, *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health* Volume 28, Issue 2, 2013 [DOI: 10.1080/15555240.2013.779518](#)

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