

Study: Long-term benefits of mindfulness intervention to reduce stress, burnout

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A new study is one of the first to show sustained benefits more than a year after completing a voluntary eight-week [Mindfulness in Motion \(MIM\)](#) intervention program offered by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center to reduce stress and build resilience among employees.

Study findings are published online in *Explore: The Journal of Science & Healing*.

MIM offers small-group sessions teaching [healthcare providers](#) and other interested employees specific techniques in mindfulness and resiliency for the high-stress environment healthcare can create.

Successful completion of this program has been shown to significantly decrease perceived stress and inflammation, as well as increase sleep quality and work engagement.

"However, you could argue these results mean nothing for the organization if a month after the program ends, usual stress and burnout levels return to base levels," said Maryanna Klatt, the study lead author and creator of the Mindfulness in Motion intervention, which is the core offering of the Gabbe Health and Wellness Initiative at Ohio State Wexner Medical Center.

"Demonstrating sustainability of the results of an intervention is nearly as important as demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention, yet this is rarely done. Organizations need to be assured the return on their investment to reduce burnout and build resilience produces results that are maintained long after the intervention ends," said Klatt, who is a professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Klatt collaborated with researchers with the Gabbe Health and Wellness Initiative and the Division of Health Behavior and Health Promotion at the Ohio State College of Public Health.

Klatt said she embarked on this research to learn if this intervention is worth their time for the individual participants, and worth the money and return on investment for the organization to invest in this program.

"After analyzing data from 66 participants, we found that three of the four outcomes (burnout, perceived stress, resilience) remained significantly improved beyond a year after completing the intervention. Work engagement remained improved, but was not significantly different than baseline levels," said Klatt, who is now sending former participants "mindful moment" emails on a weekly basis and offering monthly virtual "booster" sessions to continue to reinforce the mindfulness techniques.

"As a healthcare organization focused on improving health for patients and communities, we also recognize the importance of prioritizing health and well-being for our faculty and staff. Interventions to address current levels of burnout among healthcare professionals must demonstrate long-term success to help our employees thrive," said Dr. Hal Paz, executive vice president and chancellor for health affairs at The Ohio State University and chief executive officer at Ohio State Wexner Medical Center. "More than 580 employees have participated in the Mindfulness in Motion program since 2017, and we are proud that this program is strong and growing, despite the COVID-19 pandemic."

The Ohio Hospital Association asked Klatt if the Mindfulness in Motion intervention could be shared outside of Ohio State; now three [health](#) systems across Ohio and the Mercy Health System in Michigan are offering the program to their employees.

The Ohio Hospital Association also partnered with Gabbe Health and Wellness Initiative to share free mindfulness resources and videos that Klatt developed to address provider resilience, especially as the pandemic continues to burden our healthcare teams.

"We also plan to repeat the sustainability study every other year to see if the positive results may even be sustained longer than the 14+ months we found in this study," Klatt said.

More information: Maryanna Klatt et al. Sustained resiliency building and burnout reduction for healthcare professionals via organizational sponsored mindfulness programming, *EXPLORE* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.explore.2021.04.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2021.04.004)

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