



Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program

Introduction

The Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program aims to provide local doctors with quality professional development opportunities. As part of the CPD program, the Division offered physicians an adapted 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Workshop in Fall 2014. Approximately two-thirds of the program was funded through reverted CME funds from the participating Kootenay Boundary communities, and the remaining one-third of the cost was covered through registration fees paid by the participating physicians. A total of 23 doctors (GPs and specialists) registered for the course, which was led by a trained mindfulness instructor, Dr. Rahul Gupta, who is also a GP.

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation was designed to assess the outcomes of the MBSR program in relation to the stated goals and objectives of the CPD program, which include:

- Improve access for KB physicians to CPD programs targeted at rural practitioners
- Improve patient care and patient experience of the health care system
- Increase physician satisfaction, health and wellness

Evaluation Methods

Document and Administrative Data Review: Project planning documents and relevant literature on the MBSR program were reviewed.

Psychometric Scale Administration: The Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R), The Psychological Stress Scale (PSS), and The Jefferson Scale of Empathy-Physician Version (JSE), were administered before and after the program.

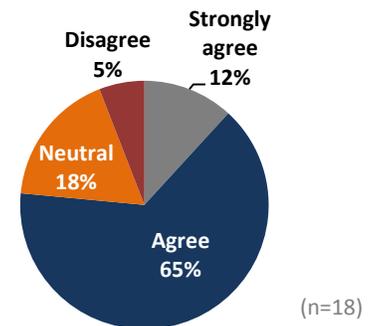
Participant Surveys: Collected at the mid-point and end of the program.

Key Informant Interview with the Instructor: To gain further insight into the development and delivery of the program, including changes that were made to support physicians in a rural setting.

Key Outcomes of the MBSR Program

- ✓ **Gained Knowledge.** Respondents felt the program was effective in transferring knowledge and met their learning needs.
- ✓ **Learned New Skills.** 89% felt they can better manage their own stress using formal and informal mindfulness techniques.
- ✓ **Improved Mindfulness.** There were statistically significant increases in mindfulness; the average participants’ CAMS-R scores increased by 2 points ($p < 0.01$).
- ✓ **Decreased Stress.** There was a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test PSS scores; the average participants’ PSS scores decreased by 4 points ($p < 0.01$).
- ✓ **Improved Empathy.** Although the increase in JSE scores was not statistically significant, 77% of survey respondents felt they were more empathetic providing patient care

Fig. 1 - I am more empathetic when providing patient care



- ✓ The relationship between empathy and mindfulness was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$); a 1 unit increase in CAMS-R scores was associated with a 0.9 unit increase in JSE scores.
- ✓ **High Participant Satisfaction.** 87.5% of respondents were highly satisfied with their overall experience.

“The more I practice, the more benefit I see.” - Participant

Fig. 2 - Mean scores of CAMS-R and PSS before and after the program

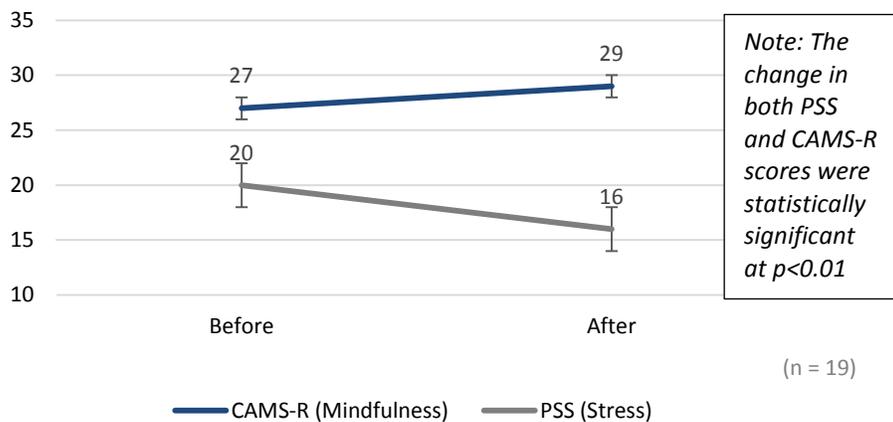
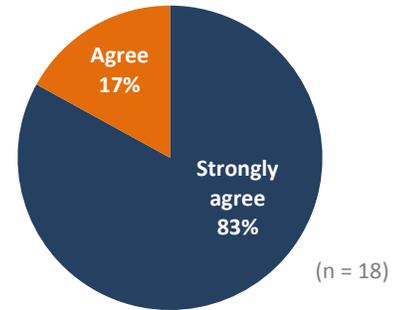


Fig. 3 - MBSR techniques have the ability to improve patient care



Strengths

Improved physician health. Physicians now feel they can better manage their stress (Fig. 4) and are likely to apply MBSR techniques in their daily life. They also exhibited lower levels of stress as a result of the program (Fig. 2).

Improved patient experience of care. 77% of physicians surveyed agreed they were more empathetic when providing patient care after participating in the MBSR program (Fig. 1) and all respondents feel MBSR techniques have the ability to improve patient care (Fig. 3).

Building a community of physicians. Engaging in the program as a group was effective, with many valuing the shared experience and doing the practices together. Physicians were able to develop relationships with each other and now see each other around the hospital and in town, which builds a sense of community among physicians and may lead to strengthened primary care.

The MBSR program met or exceeded expectations. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the program to other physicians. Furthermore, 22 of the 23 physicians completed the 8-week course, signifying a high level of commitment and engagement.

“Not to judge the wandering of my mind too negatively while meditating but to see it as a normal part of mindfulness when I then return with compassion to the present moment” - Participant

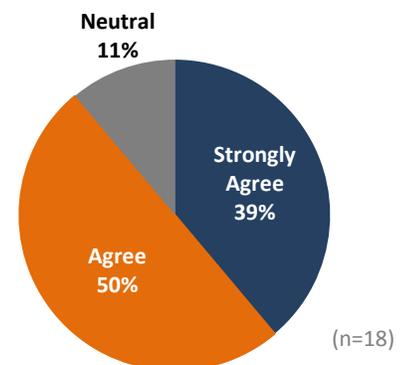
Recommendations

Be conscious of the challenges of the webinar format. Respondents preferred the in-person sessions over the webinar format, however it was noted that it would likely not have been feasible to participate in the program if they were required to travel every week for the sessions.

Increasing 1-on-1 interaction with the instructor. Participants shared that it would be helpful to have additional 1-on-1 time with the instructor near the mid-way point of the course.

Providing patient resources. Some respondents were interested in educational material and resources on mindfulness that they could distribute to their patients.

Fig. 4 - I feel I can better manage my stress



“Some new ways of being and thinking have occurred to me during the practices. Less worry, less judgment and less challenging stories by observing.” - Participant

“I think the course has more than exceeded my hopes. The webinar is ok; especially since we [are] all compressed for time and space during the work week.” - Participant

“In the emotional field, there was rich dialogue. There was a lot of honesty, emotion and vulnerability that people were willing to admit. This is what allows the program to work well.” – Program Instructor



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