



“Mindfulness in the workplace: scientific evidence and open questions”

Day: Friday 13th July 2018 Time: 9:00 – 10:15 am Track: Mindfulness in Society

The first presenter is Silke Rupprecht. The presentation will focus on two questions: 1) How might workplace mindfulness training improve workplace outcomes? 2) What is needed to advance the field of workplace mindfulness research?

The second presenter, Esther de Bruin, will talk about the effects of a newly developed program, Mindful2Work, in which outdoor physical exercises, and yoga practices are combined with mindfulness meditations.

The third presenter is Wendy Kersemaekers. She will talk about a study that examined the feasibility and effectiveness of a Workplace Mindfulness Training (WMT) in terms of burnout, psychological well-being and organizational and team climate and performance.

The final presenter is Linda Kantor. She will talk about her study that explored how individuals trained in mindfulness apply and understand this capacity in their work-lives.

Symposium overview

Presenter 1 **Silke Rupprecht** - Mindfulness in the workplace: What do we really know and how can we advance the field?

Presenter 2 **Esther de Bruin** - Mindful2Work the next steps: Addition of a wait-list control measurement and qualitative interviews

Presenter 3 **Wendy Kersemaekers** - A Workplace Mindfulness Intervention May Be Associated with Improved Psychological Well-Being and Productivity. A Preliminary Field Study in a Company Setting.

Presenter 4 **Linda Kantor** - On productivity, power and multiple perspectives: what do participants say about mindfulness training for organisations?

Chair: **Wibo Koole**



Mindfulness in the workplace: What do we really know and how can we advance the field?

Silke Rupprecht^{1,4}, Willem Kuyken¹, Ruth Baer², Michael West³, Sharon Hadley¹

¹*Oxford Mindfulness Centre, Oxford, United Kingdom*

²*University of Kentucky, Lexington, United States*

³*Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster, United Kingdom*

⁴*Research Consultant, London, United Kingdom*

Organizations are turning to mindfulness with the intention to enable human capital to work in 21st century work contexts effectively, sustainably and in ways that support the well-being of employees and the success of organizations. Mindfulness is viewed as having the potential to help employees and organisations with a broad array of issues and challenges from coping with stress to improving workplace outcomes such as creativity, productivity and collaboration. This is a comparatively young field of research and the excitement about mindfulness in the workplace has outstripped the research evidence. Overgeneralisations of its effectiveness, lacking best practice guidelines for teachers and trainings and methodological issues may lead organisations and employees to be misinformed, disappointed and even harmed. Moreover, the complexities of organizations and the impact of organisational structures and team practices on individual and team performance have been largely ignored leading to an overly simplistic view of the impact of an individual on organisational practice.

Responding to such issues, the presentation's objective is to review what we currently know about mindfulness and workplace-outcomes on individual, team and organisational level. Drawing on that we highlight the gaps and methodological issues and delineate a prospective research agenda for the field of mindfulness research in workplace settings.



Mindful2Work the next steps: Addition of a wait-list control measurement and qualitative interviews

Esther de Bruin¹, Jeanine Baartmans², Simon Valentin³, Anne Formsma², Susan Bogels^{1,2}

¹*University of Amsterdam, Research Institute of Child Development and Education (RICDE), Research Priority Area Yield, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

²*UvA minds You, academic training center of the University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

³*University of Freiburg, Department of Psychology, Freiburg, Germany*

Background. Work-related stress and associated illnesses and burn-out are rising in Western society, with over 2/3rd of the general population suffering from stress symptoms such as chronic fatigue, irritability, sleeping problems, anxiety, and CANS/RSI. Over 40% of employees experience high work pressure, and 76% of psychological work-related illnesses concerns burn-outs of employees. Annual costs of (work-related) stress are gigantic; 660 billion dollar in the US, and 920 billion euro in Europe. Physical exercise, yoga, and mindfulness meditation have all shown beneficial effects for work-related stress and illnesses. In this study the effects of a newly developed program, Mindful2Work, in which outdoor physical exercises, and yoga practices are combined with mindfulness meditations, are assessed.

Methods. Participants (n = 60), mainly referred by company doctors, suffering from at least medium levels of stress and burn-out complaints, completed measurements at waitlist, pre-test, post-test, 6-weeks follow-up and 6-months follow-up. Effects on personal goals, measures of well-being, and measures of work-engagement were examined, as well as underlying mechanisms of change. Quantitative analyses in this study were further strengthened by adding qualitative analyses of coded interviews that were held with a sub set of the participants (n = 9).

Results. In this presentation top-down results (from the quantitative analyses, currently ongoing) are integrated with bottom-up results (from the qualitative analyses, currently ongoing).



A Workplace Mindfulness Intervention May Be Associated with Improved Psychological Well-Being and Productivity. A Preliminary Field Study in a Company Setting.

Wendy Kersemaekers¹, Silke Rupprecht¹, Marc Wittmann², Chris Tamdjidi³, Pia Falke³, Rogier Donders⁴, et al.

¹*Radboudumc Center for Mindfulness, Radboud university medical center, Nijmegen, Netherlands*

²*Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health, Freiburg, Germany*

³*Kalapa Leadership Academy, Cologne, Germany*

⁴*Department for Health Evidence, Radboud university medical center, Nijmegen, Netherlands*

⁵*Division of Integrative Health Promotion, University of Applied Science and Arts, Coburg, Germany*

Background and objectives: Mindfulness trainings are increasingly offered in workplace environments in order to improve health and productivity. Whilst promising, there is limited research on the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in workplace settings. In this paper, we have examined the feasibility and effectiveness of a Workplace Mindfulness Training (WMT) in terms of burnout, psychological well-being and organizational and team climate and performance.

Methods: This is a preliminary field study in four companies. Self-report questionnaires were administered up to a month before, at start of, and right at the end of the WMT, resulting in a pre-intervention and an intervention period. A total of 425 participants completed the surveys on the different time points. Linear mixed model analyses were used to analyze the data.

Results: When comparing the intervention period with the pre-intervention period, significantly greater improvements were found in measures of burnout (mean difference=0.3, p Effect sizes were large for mindfulness ($d>0.8$), moderate for well-being, burnout and perceived stress ($d=0.5 - 0.8$), and ranged from low to moderate for organizational and team climate and personal performance ($d=0.2 - 0.8$).

Discussion and conclusion: These preliminary data suggest that compared to the pre-intervention period, the intervention period was associated with greater reductions in burnout and perceived stress, improvements in mindfulness, well-being, and increases in team and organisational climate and personal performance. Further studies, preferably using randomized controlled designs with longer follow up periods are needed to evaluate whether the associations found can be attributed to the WMT and whether these sustain after the training.



On productivity, power and multiple perspectives: what do participants say about mindfulness training for organisations?

Linda Kantor

Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, RSA, 8001, Cape Town, South Africa

Background and Objectives: While researchers are interested in the ways in which participants are using mindfulness to improve their work lives, critics question whether this will lead to a dilution and misappropriation of the practice. The concern is “McMindfulness” could be deployed to make employees more passive and accepting, failing to address deeper issues in the workplace. I explore whether mindfulness has the potential to transform workplace experience. Kabat-Zinn’s approach to Mindfulness-Based Interventions underpins and informs this research.

Methods: Using a phenomenological approach and semi-structured interviews from 53 participants working in a variety of organizational contexts, this study explored how individuals trained in mindfulness apply and understand this capacity in their work-lives. Participants had trained in one of three different MBIs.

Results: Through thematic analysis, I highlight the following themes:

1. Mindfulness practice enhanced the capacity to work with difficult emotions, particularly to fear, anxiety and anger.
2. Mindfulness allowed for a different relationship to productivity and power dynamics.
3. Changes in relationality in the direction of empathy and better conflict management.

I present the results in the form of an inductive model of mindfulness in the workplace. I distinguish some key meta-capacities (awareness of the wandering mind, embodiment, equanimity and kindness) and capacities (resilience, sense-of-self, multiple perspectives and possibility) that might provide a deeper understanding of the potential of mindfulness training to be a modality for transformation in the workplace.

Discussion and Conclusion: This research might provide some hopeful data to the conversation offering the potential that workplace mindfulness trainings can indeed be in the service of wisdom and compassion.

The model developed in this study contributes to Positive Organisational Scholarship literature and provides a map of how mindfulness might be of value in the workplace. The voices of participants highlight potential and paradoxes.