Mindfulness as a self-assessment tool
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Classic mindfulness concentrates on giving participants instruction to focus on the present
moment, observe thoughts, emotions and body sensations in a non-attentive and non-
judgemental way. The participant is encouraged not to attach to the observations. This
technique has proven effective but it remains a challenge to engage participants outside the
clinical population that are goal orientated and value the cognitive processes highly.
To improve engagement and attendance specifically in this group the self-assessment screening
tool has been developed. The goal of this tool is to use observations from the mindfulness
meditation as feedback to inform the participant. Where for example in Mindfulness Based
Stress Reduction and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy participants are guided to let go of
the thoughts and emotions treating them as a mental process or body sensations. The tool
utilises a short five minutes breathing meditation setting to observe emotions, thoughts and
body sensations in order to become aware of present internal processes. After meditation
participant records the observations and analyses them together with the facilitator. Psycho-
education (i.e. Neuropsychology, theory of habits and work effectiveness) are used to empower
the participant to be able to treat observed emotions as a key to understanding the informative
content of emotions, body sensations and thought. This approach links Mindfulness with
Evolutionary Psychology which approaches emotions and thought as ways to communicate
with the environment.
The self-assessment screening tool was developed as a direct response to feedback gathered
during two years of mindfulness training of professionals working in a demanding corporate
environment. Certain mindfulness exercises were observed to trigger a powerful response and
improve engagement, attendance and self-awareness dramatically. These exercises form the
basis for the developed tool. This tool can inspire academic research bridging clinical theory
and evidence based practice.