



Business background

In early 2011 the Care Quality Commission told Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) that if it did not take immediate steps to improve standards of its mental health services, enforcement action might follow. CPFT was failing to meet five essential standards covering care and welfare, staffing, safeguarding people, assessing and monitoring service provision and safety and suitability of premises. In addition the foundation trust regulator Monitor had put CPFT in serious breach of its authorisation.

Over a two year period under the leadership of Dr Attila Vegh (who joined CPFT in October 2011), the Trust undertook a major turnaround programme. The turnaround programme saw substantial changes to ward environments, care planning and patient care. In early 2013 CPFT was given a clean bill of health by the CQC and came out of breach with Monitor. CPFT, like most NHS Trusts, has been subject to extensive cost cutting initiatives.

How did CPFT become interested in mindfulness?

In February 2012 a representative from CPFT attended the Mindfulness at work conference. This led to a meeting between Juliet Adams and CPFT's Senior Chaplin; who was keen to promote well-being within the Trust. As a result of the meeting, CPFT arranged a one day conference on 'Brain science, well-being and mindfulness' which Juliet helped arrange and chair. Following on from a successful one day conference on in October 2012; a large percentage of participants indicated that they would like the opportunity to learn mindfulness. A letter was written to the Chief Executive, which led to a meeting with the CEO and Director of People and Business Development to discuss how mindfulness could be piloted in the Trust.

What was included on the initial programme, and how was it run?

Juliet worked closely with the Workforce Development Manager to develop a flyer and web content to publicise the development opportunity. The development opportunity was offered to staff as 'personal development' rather than therapy. Selection criteria for the course included screening for depression, anxiety and stress. This was because the courses on offer were unsuitable for staff with very high levels of depression, anxiety and stress.

It was agreed that the desired outcomes of the course would include helping staff to become more resilient to work pressures, and helping staff to learn to manage their mind better. As the outcomes desired were wider than 'stress relief', a teaching syllabus based on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) was chosen. Mark Williams MBCT based book 'Mindfulness a guide to finding peace in a frantic world' was provided to participants to reinforce learning.

Around 75 applications were received for the 34 places available. The pilot included two taught groups and one group learning online. Juliet worked with CPFT to select staff for the pilot. Consideration was given to group dynamics, ensuring that line managers were not attending with direct reports and visa versa. Attempts were also made to ensure a good mix of departments and job roles. Participants were asked to confirm that they could attend each of the 8 weekly sessions of the training. Applications were not accepted without the relevant Line Manager's signature to confirm that they could be released to attend all the sessions.

The eight week taught programme consisted of 8 x 2 hour training sessions. Adult learning theories were incorporated into the course materials and overall course design. The approach adopted was more didactic than the traditional mindfulness teaching methods, and more in line with western expectations of a business training course. Training sessions consisted of 60% of the time focussed on experiential learning and reflection, 40% on the theory and practice that underpins each aspect of mindfulness and all practices. PowerPoint slides were used



to illustrate key learning points, and use was made of discussion cards and flip charts. Participants were asked to practice a new mindfulness technique each week, and work on some aspects taught in the course such as habit releasers and appreciating the good. The online course was designed to be completed over a 4-6 week period, with CPFT staff taking between 7 and 12 weeks.

Key Outcomes

- Between 93% and 100% of participants reported that mindfulness had in some way helped them to improve their performance at work, with between 45% and 59% reporting a great or significant increase in performance:
 - 100% agreed that mindfulness training had helped them function better when under pressure
 - 100% agreed it helped them improve the way they manage strong emotions and difficulties
 - 93% agreed it helped them improve relationships with colleagues
 - 93% agreed it helped them focus on their work better
- An increase in positivity when answering staff survey questions.
- A decrease in depression, anxiety and stress, with some participants decreasing their levels of depression, anxiety and stress from severe to normal.
- An increase in self-compassion from moderate to high, and a slight increase in compassion for others.
- 83% of participants completed their courses with an average attendance rate on the training days of 84%. The online course had the lowest completion rate at 60%.
- 93% of participants plan to continue practicing mindfulness, with 93% agreeing it was a good use of their time.
- The average time participants spent practicing mindfulness each day was 15 minutes
- Data suggests that those people who attended only 4 or 5 of the 8 sessions still gained from the course, but their general results are less positive than the average for the group.
- Those who found least time (5 minutes a day) reported less of a positive impact on their work, and less of an increase in positivity about staff survey metrics than the group average.

Comments from participants

- “This has impacted on my whole life - helping me to become more present and in control of my responses to situations and thoughts.”
- “I have fewer migraines experienced over the 8 weeks, better working relationships, calmer at home/work. Feel like a different person!”
- “This course has helped me gain confidence in myself again. It helped me recognise why I doing and feeling what I was, within certain circumstances and as a daily habit, so given the time to Practise and Focus on ME gave me a greater ability to be more productive with a clearer and more positive mind. I feel that everyone, in some way or another could benefit from this course for the better. I have nothing negative to say about it. If this was implemented throughout a workforce it would be turn to a workforce in a million, pleasant, positive, understanding, co-operative, and productive. Marvellous.”

Next steps

CPFT are in the process of rolling out another Mindfulness course for staff. This will include training three staff as mindfulness champions / co-trainers. They are meeting to discuss a strategy for incorporating mindfulness further into the Trust.