Mindful Madness: Program Evaluation of a Mindfulness-Based Event

MindYou at UCLA

ABSTRACT

MindYou at UCLA hosted Mindful Madness 2014, a nighttime event intended to introduce students to alternative weekend activities that promote positive mental health and mindful living. We surveyed 80 attendees to better understand the mental health needs of our UCLA student body and assess the successes and limitations of our event. Implications for future events are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Extensive literature on mindfulness provides evidence for the positive effects of mindful practices on quality of life and domains of mental health (Nyklicek & Kujipers, 2008; Keng et al., 2011). To offer these benefits to the UCLA student population, MindYou hosted "Mindful Madness" on Friday, April 25th, 2014 from 10:00pm to 2:00am in the John Wooden Center. The event was a celebration of mindfulness and health that incorporated meditation, yoga, tai chi, live music, and art into a night of creative relaxation.

Mindful art by Annie Gingold, 2014.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

We collaborated with the Mindful Awareness Research Center, who brought various experienced mindfulness and yoga instructors to give student workshops. These instructors were part of the mindfulness certification program run by MARC and participated in Mindful Madness as part of the certification program.

Student musicians and bands were recruited from UCLA's Ethnomusicology department. The music included a Middle Eastern Ensemble, a Reggae band, and a Jazz Ensemble.

We contacted visual artists at UCLA and held a small workshop that introduced mindfulness to student artists. Based on the workshop and their own experience of mental health, the artists created work that visually represented moments of mindfulness or mental illness. Artwork included paintings, photography, sculptures, and calligraphy.

To measure the success of the project, we administered surveys to all attendees, asking questions about their current mental health and their perceptions of the event.

RESULTS

- On a scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly dislike; 5 = strongly like), students rated their enjoyment of mindfulness activities *M* = 4.1.
- After the event, students rated their enjoyment of mindfulness activities *M* = 4.4.
- The majority of students (74%) reported hearing about the event from a friend.
- The majority of students (71%) reported experiencing no mental illness during the past school year.
- 80% of students felt more relaxed after the event.
- Favorite activity (live music, mindfulness, yoga, other) varied.
- The majority (89%) reported that their usual weekend activity did not include mindfulness-related activities.
- 87.5% reported that they would attend a similar event in the future.
- Common suggestions to change the event in 2015 included: earlier time, better marketing, and smaller venue.

How did you feel about activities such as mindfulness/yoga before this event? (Scale 1-5, 1 = strongly dislike; 5 = strongly like)	***M = 4.1***			
How did you feel about activities such as mindfulness/yoga after this event? (Scale 1-5, 1 = strongly dislike; 5 = strongly like)	***M = 4.4***			
How did you hear about this event?	From a friend – **74%**	Ads (flyers, etc.) – **10.8%**	Social media – **8.7%**	Other – **6.5%**
Have you experienced mental illness during this school year?	No – **71%**	Yes – **13%**	Not sure – **11%**	No answer – **5%**
Do you feel more relaxed after this event?	Yes – **80%**	No, feel the same – **20%**		No, less – **0%**
What was your favorite activity?	Live music – **28.9%**	Other – **26.7%**	Mindfulness – **22.2%**	Yoga – **22.2%**
How do you generally spend your Friday night?	Stay home – **31%**	Other – **31%**	Party, bar, etc. – **27%**	Mindfulness activities – **11%**
Would you attend a similar event in the future?	Yes – **87.5%**	Not sure – **10.4%**	No - **.02%**	
What would you change about mindful madness?	Common answers: **earlier time, smaller venue, better marketing**			

Chart 1. Mindful Madness survey 2014.

DISCUSSION

Successes:

- Although the majority of students stated that they did not usually partake in mindfulness-related weekend activities, most seemed enthusiastic about the event and stated that they would attend a similar event in the future.
- All the activities attracted roughly an equal amount of support.
- 80% of attendees felt more relaxed after the event.
- The event is worth replicating because it provided a fun and healthy space for students to heal from daily stress through mindfulness-based activities.

Limitations:

- Attendees' positive perception of mindfulness only increased slightly. Our event primarily attracted students who already had an interest in mindfulness.
- The event occurred late at night, and many students reported wishing the event had started earlier to accommodate their schedules.

- Adding a raffle to the event that may incentivize more of the general student population to attend the event
- Row walking the Greek houses and posting flyers in the commons areas at dormitories and campus buildings to introduce the event to a wider student population
- Establishing a greater social media presence through a Thunderclap campaign that incentivizes students to sign up for a scheduled post through multiple social media forums
- Our event will run earlier this year, falling between 7pm and 11pm, a much more convenient time for students.

MINDFUL MADNESS 2015

- Live performances:
  - -Kyodo Taiko
  - -Mindful Music
  - -ICARUS Contemporary Dance Company
  - -We the Folk
  - -Theater by Diana Eliabeth Taylor
  - -Theater by We Do Mind
- Workshops:
  - -Art therapy by Anna Cirronis
  - -Yoga by Yogaworks
  - -Mindfulness by MARC
- Art Display Inspired by the Mandala
- Free healthy food

Poster Template Designed by Genigraphics ©2012
1.800.790.4001 www.genigraphics.com