How to use Mindfulness in the Workplace

Although mindfulness meditation can be powerful in decreasing our own personal stress as well as improving symptoms of anxiety and depression, this can also be beneficial at the workplace to improve focus, decrease stress and set a positive environment for the staff. And, it only takes a couple of minutes to start the process.

1. Determine who wants to be or might be involved in the mindfulness minute. This may include identifying who will prepare the mindfulness content or begin to call those together who want to be included. Remember, that just 2-3 people might be enough to get the idea started.
2. Identify the best time when staff gathers together
   A. Before the clinic or patient care begins
   B. At lunch break or around mid-day
   C. At the end of the day
   D. After a stressful procedure or patient experience
3. Ensure that before you begin, there are minimal distractions or obstacles and work around them.
4. Have a couple of examples that you can use depending upon the items in 1-3 above. Here are some examples:

<u>Before the clinic or patient care begins</u>

Staff member begins: "Let's take a minute before our first patient to quiet our minds and prepare ourselves to work well as a team, treat the patients and each other with respect and compassion and have the ability to ask for help if we need it throughout the day. Everyone begin with one breath through our nose, inhaling to the count of 4 and then exhale to the count greater than 4. As we exhale, breathe out any stress or fatigue that you may be feeling. As you inhale for a count of 4, breathe in energy and self awareness of your current state. As you exhale to a count greater than 4, breathe out any thoughts or judgements you may have that decrease your focus or create anxiety. Finally, take our third breath to the count of 4 thinking about the calmness you can share with your colleagues or patients. As you exhale, give yourself the permission to have the emotional and physical well-being to meet any challenges for today. OK, let's start our day"

<u>After a stressful patient or procedure or entire day</u>

Ask how everyone is doing? (Listen to what they are saying and provide some response such as:

- "Let make sure we all know how things are going throughout the day. Would a quick minute to breathe or be quiet help?"
- "Look at what we all just accomplished. What do we all need to (i.e. get ready for the next patient?; afternoon clinic?; finish up our documentation? Support each other?
- Before we begin with the patients/families/etc, let's try a few deep breaths to get us centered and focused. Breathe in to the count of 4, and then slowly breathe out for more than 4 counts. Again. As you exhale, let's remember we are here (this is where the leader identifies what might motivate the other team members) …..help get through the large number of patients who had to be rescheduled last week or be mindful of the family members and what they might be

feeling or wanting, or It may seem overwhelming but let's take it piece by piece and if we need a brief break, let me know and we will huddle again.

Then at the close of the day/shift/surgery, a check in is also a great idea.

As we close the day, let's pause before we walk out the door. Take this minute to be proud of what we accomplished both individually and as a team. Be aware of what is on our minds right now? Recognize the need to quiet your mind before driving home or catching your transportation home. And remember that identifying at least one thing for which you are grateful can be helpful in our overall mental well-being.

Remember that if you or someone you know needs to speak with someone about any personal issue, the EAP is available at 713-500-3327.