

Implementing Mindfulness into Wellness Plans: Assisting Individuals with Substance Abuse and Addiction

Authors : Michele M. Mahr

Abstract : The purpose of this study is to educate, inform, and facilitate scholarly conversation and discussion regarding the implementation of mindfulness techniques when working with individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) or addictive behaviors in mental health. Mindfulness can be recognized as the present moment, non-judgmental awareness, initiated by concentrated attention that is non-reactive and as openheartedly as possible. Individuals with SUD or addiction typically are challenged with triggers, environmental situations, cravings, or social pressures which may deter them from remaining abstinent from their drug of choice or addictive behavior. Also, mindfulness is recognized as one of the cognitive and behavioral treatment approaches and is both a physical and mental practice that encompasses individuals to become aware of internal situations and experiences with undivided attention. That said, mindfulness may be an effective strategy for individuals to employ during these experiences. This study will reveal how mental health practitioners and addiction counselors may find mindfulness to be an essential component of increasing wellness when working with individuals seeking mental health treatment. To this end, mindfulness is simply the ability individuals have to know what is actually happening as it is occurring and what they are experiencing at the moment. In the context of substance abuse and addiction, individuals may employ breathing techniques, meditation, and cognitive restructuring of the mind to become aware of present moment experiences. Furthermore, the notion of mindfulness has been directly connected to the development of neuropathways. The creation of the neural pathways then leads to creating thoughts which leads to developing new coping strategies and adaptive behaviors. Mindfulness strategies can assist individuals in connecting the mind with the body, allowing the individual to remain centered and focused. All of these mentioned above are vital components to recovery during substance abuse and addiction treatment. There are a variety of therapeutic modalities applying the key components of mindfulness, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for depression (MBCT). This study will provide an overview of both MBSR and MBCT in relation to treating individuals with substance abuse and addiction. The author will also provide strategies for readers to employ when working with clients. Lastly, the author will create and foster a safe space for discussion and engaging conversation among participants to ask questions, share perspectives, and be educated on the numerous benefits of mindfulness within wellness.

Keywords : mindfulness, wellness, substance abuse, mental health

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