

The World We Make

-2020-

Center for
healthyminds
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Well at Work: Strategies from Research to the Real World

October 8, 2020

Presenters: Cortland Dahl, Stephanie Wagner, Richard J. Davidson, Tamar Jacobsohn, Jenny Jones, Ana Salcido, Sylla Zarov

>>Richard J. Davidson: Good evening everyone from Madison, WI. For some of you I know it's not evening. We have people joining us from all over the world. In the chatbox please let us know where you are joining us from. It is really a pleasure to have you with us for the 3rd evening of our weeklong The World We Make 2020 event, which is a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Center for Healthy Minds. We began 10 years ago in 2010 when His Holiness the Dalai Lama came to Madison, WI to help us inaugurate the Center. The mission of our Center is to cultivate well-being and relieve suffering through a scientific understanding of the mind. A few years ago, four years ago, we began recognizing that science was necessary but not sufficient to tackle the problems we are facing in the world. We started a non-profit organization associated with our Center: Healthy Minds Innovations. And I will say a little bit more about that in just a few moments. But before we begin this evening, before we dive in, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals and organizations who are providing support for this week-long event. There are a number of organizations: The Madison Gas & Electric Foundation, Chris and Sara Fortune, Jim and Judy Hirsch, the Outrider Foundation, the QTI Group, Atomic Object and Delta Properties all have made important contributions that is enabling us to put this week-long series of events together. Each night at 7 p.m. central time in the U.S. we have different events. The slide now shows the various events that we have had, which are up online now. You can, if you weren't able to tune in on Monday and Tuesday, you can go back and look at them. And tonight we're going to be focusing on "Well At Work." Tomorrow will be a focus on "Resilient Minds and a Resilient Planet." And finally on Friday, there will be a dialogue that I had very recently a few weeks ago with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of our center. We will be showing you a series of short clips from that dialogue. So please feel free to join us. Please feel free to share the links with your friends, your family. We are delighted to have as many of you as possible to join us. So the topic this evening is "Well At Work," and it features the work that we're doing in our nonprofit Healthy Minds Innovations, and I'm really super excited about this. This is an effort to – and the mission, I should say, of Healthy Minds Innovations is to translate science into tools that can be used to measure and cultivate well-being. And that is what we're doing. We have a number of offerings from Healthy Minds Innovations, including an app, the Healthy Minds Program. We have an initiative called Healthy Minds @Work where we are working with different organizations to promote well-being in the workplace. We also have a MasterClass, which will begin on October 20th, which I'm sure we will mention again a little later. So tonight is going to be divided into three short segments. In the first segment, Cortland Dahl (who I will introduce in a moment) will be sharing with us some of the background for the Healthy Minds Program and various initiatives connected to it. We will next hear from a partner, a really important partner, that we are closely working with, and that is the Madison Metropolitan School District. For those of you who are not from the Madison area, this is our public school district. These folks are under tremendous amounts of stress and strain with the necessity of dramatically altering their teaching materials to conform to the public health recommendations during the COVID pandemic. Many of these people have young children who themselves are at

home because of the COVID pandemic, and this creates a lot of adversity. And we have been working with them to try to promote well-being during this particularly challenging time. And finally, in the last segment, Stephanie Wagner who is a coach, a well-being coach, and an important member of our content team at Healthy Minds Innovations, will be delving a little bit more deeply into our practices and our offerings. So I want to introduce Cortland Dahl. Cort is the chief contemplative officer for Healthy Minds Innovations. Cort is also a scientist at the Center for Healthy Minds. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. He spent quite a bit of time, about 10 years, living within the Himalayan region in India and Nepal, deeply discovering traditions from that part of the world, and he is the chief architect of the Healthy Minds Program. It is really a delight and truly an honor for me to introduce and have you here this evening. Welcome, Cort.

>>Cortland Dahl: Thank you so much, Richie. It's a very generous introduction and great to be here with all of you. It sounds like people are tuning in from all over the world, so it's really exciting to share an hour with you all. I think we're going to have a really interesting discussion today. And it's especially exciting if for those of you who might have tuned in to some of what we have covered in previous nights, what we're going to talk about tonight is really, as Richie mentioned earlier, our efforts to translate the science of well-being into practical tools that we can apply in everyday life. So the work that we do at Healthy Minds Innovations, which is the partner for the Center for Healthy Minds, is really all based on a new scientific model of well-being that we have developed over the past few years and which is based really on decades of research and centuries of wisdom from the world's contemplative traditions, which is really again oriented towards this very simple idea that well-being is a skill. It's something that we can train. It's something we can get better at. So this has always been important. Well-being has always been a really important consideration for us. In this current era, and particularly in the middle of this pandemic right now, it's really... you can almost say an urgent public health crisis. So we have been asking the question from a scientific perspective, "Really, what are the underpinnings of well-being?" When it comes to well-being, how can we actually cultivate it? What does it actually mean to cultivate well-being? So as you saw a moment ago, the basic framework for this is focused on four main pillars of well-being, which are awareness, connection, insight, and purpose. So here you can see it up on the screen again.



So what the science shows and what centuries of wisdom from all of our world's contemplative traditions are telling us is that we can actually train our minds and even begin to rewire our brains so that we are more aware and focused so that we can feel more connected with the people in our lives, that we can have a greater insight into our mind and how it works, and so that we can really feel a deep sense of meaning and purpose in life. So all the work that we're doing both scientifically and in Healthy Minds Innovations is really to help bring these insights into the world so we actually can help strengthen well-being. Now, why are we focused on the workplace?



There's many places we could have started. And there's a few important examples – or reasons – for this. The first is a very simple one, which is that for most adults, those of us who have full-time jobs, we will spend more time at work than just about anything else we do. It's really perhaps only sleep that is in the same level in terms of the amount of time that we devote to

particular areas of our lives. So it's the place where we just spend a great deal of time. It's also an area where we experience deficits of well-being most acutely of this pandemic, this has really reached almost epidemic proportions with the levels of uncertainty that we face, all of the upheavals that we're facing, even for organizations that are surviving this global pandemic, there is so much change. There is so much uncertainty that it really creates a tremendous amount of stress. So it's not only where we spend a lot of our time. It's where our well-being shows up in our lives. It's where we experience the benefits of being resilient. It's where we can really feel it when we thrive, when we flourish, and it's where we really suffer when things are perhaps not going so well. So I wanted to introduce now my colleague, Stephanie Wagner, who Richie introduced a few moments ago. So Stephanie is a really amazing person. She has two master's degrees, including one master's degree in integrative health and well-being coaching. She's our wellness guru at Healthy Minds Innovations. She also has decades of experience in the corporate world. She was an executive at Aveda, and for decades was on the executive team focused on corporate education and leadership development. She knows what it's like. She's actually been there trying to bring these practices into the world and into the corporate environment, so she -- I'm sorry, I'm actually -- SIRI is talking to me on my computer right now. Just a moment. It was a very weird experience. Siri was talking to me. Sorry about that. That was a very weird moment. Anyhow, back to the regularly scheduled program. So anyway, Stephanie, to pick up our conversation, we did a really interesting survey a while back where we partnered with YouGov and looked at really what is stressful these days for people working full-time.



One of the things we found which I mentioned a few moments ago was that there was just a tremendous amount of uncertainty, and all of that uncertainty is one of the biggest pieces of stress so you're out there on the front lines. You're talking to people and companies. You're having the conversations about what people are actually experiencing. I wonder if you can share a little bit of what you're hearing and what you have learned.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah. Thank you so much, Cort. I have the great pleasure of working directly with our Healthy Minds @Work customers and engaging with them and training. What I'm hearing right now from our customers is that people are stressed out, and of course they are. They are stressed out, they are burnt out. They are looking for tools to help them deal with things like stress and anxiety. So let me tell you just a little bit about some of the common themes that I've been hearing from your customers.



So the first thing, which is probably not a surprise to all of you, is that you know, with people who have children, navigating the very complicated world of remote school situations, hybrid school situations, puts a tremendous amount of stress on parents. So not only are parents who are working from home trying to do their own work, but they are also trying to then simultaneously, you know, manage the child and their child's engagement at school as well as their, you know, their use of the Internet, which is I've heard a lot from working parents. Another theme that I have heard is really the blurry lines that exist now between personal life and work life for people, again, that are working remotely. When you have your work in your home space, it's really hard to shut things down at the end of the day so you might find yourself working these really extended hours because those boundaries are indeed so blurry. So overall, people are navigating a lot of challenges and people are digging really deep in their well-being toolbox to help them find some ease. So some of the questions that I've been getting very commonly in trainings are questions like, "You know, how do I stay focused? I have a lot going on in my environment. How do I stop working so much?" Again, those boundaries between work and home are really, really blurry. "How can I be less stressed and anxious and overwhelmed? I feel so bad and overwhelming. And how can I find time for self-care?" Things like exercise and meditation are falling by the wayside. So if any of these themes are resonating with you out there, please just know that you are not alone. We are dealing with unprecedented times right now, and I think the thing that's uniting us all is stress. So just to summarize I would say that the three main areas that employee populations are dealing with at least that we hear in terms of their well-being are dealing with feelings of anxiety and overwhelm, balancing the demands of

work and home life, and staying focused. And I could just say from my own experience, I don't have children, but what I am navigating is being at home with my husband, both of us working at the same time, you know, all the time, and so there isn't a lot of space, and so I'm trying to lead guided meditations on my dining room table, lead webinars. He's upstairs. He's a therapist. He's seeing clients on his computer and we're just in each other's space all the time. So sort of regardless of what everyone's individual challenges are, we all are going through our own way and finding our own way here. So with that, Cort, I will turn it back over to you.

>>Cortland Dahl: Yeah, thank you. Hopefully Siri will not give me a commentary here. So this is so true, what you just said, I am experiencing this. As you can see, I'm at home. I've got a 15-year-old in the other room here. This is what we're all experiencing. This was not in the script. None of us planned for even remotely, you know, close to what we're experiencing right now. And we thought rather than just simply telling you about what we're doing that we could actually have a conversation with some of the people who we work closely with to kind of see how the work that we do at the Center and at Healthy Minds Innovations actually shows up in people's lives and in the lives of these organizations. And there's probably, I mean, almost every form of work has been thrown into disarray through this pandemic but education and schools has got to be one of the most, you know, the most uncertainty and the most change that's happened. I can just say again, I mentioned having a teenager at home, it's just a completely different ball game. Here in Madison all the school – all education is happening online. So teachers are in a matter of months are having to completely change how they teach kids. It's incredibly challenging, right? So why don't we zero in on that? We are going to have a dialogue with four really remarkable educators from here in Madison. But maybe, Stephanie, you can just tell us a little bit about the background here before we dive in and start the conversation.

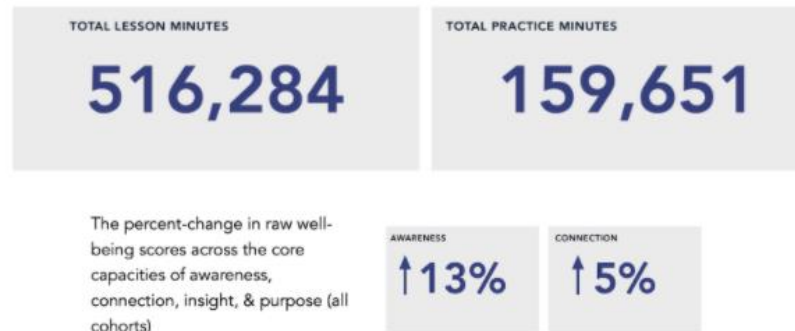


>>Stephanie: Sure. Sure. So one of the reasons why Healthy Minds Innovations first partnered with the Madison Metropolitan School District is because of sort of the inherent and always present stress that educators experience on a daily basis, even prior to the pandemic. So we

thought, you know, if we could support these employees, we can support anyone. So MMSD completed a very successful pilot of the Healthy Minds Program in 2018 and the results were very promising.



MMSD Healthy Minds @Work Pilot Results



"It's a great practice and I have noticed that my attention and focus have increased since I began the program"

"I have come to rely on the program for a solid start to some difficult days. Thanks".

"I've downloaded the Healthy Minds Program app from the UW center for healthy minds and it's been a huge help. I was really having trouble focusing."

As you can see from the initial result, individuals dove into the program and their well-being scores improved greatly across all dimensions of well-being following their participation in this five-week pilot. Given the state of the world today and the new educators like virtually teaching, we thought they would be the perfect people to talk to about the initial pilot, how their well-being has been impacted in the midst of the pandemic, and what tools and practices they are using now to support them during this very challenging time. So for the benefit of everyone watching, even those that are not teachers, I think we can all learn something from this group to support our workplace well-being during our panel conversation today. After the panel, I'm going to introduce you to a couple of the dimensions of the Healthy Minds model of well-being. We will do a couple of guided practices. You will leave with tips to practice well-being at work, so we've got some good things in store for you as we continue along our time together today.

>>Cortland Dahl: We can introduce our wonderful panel of speakers right now. We've got a really remarkable group of educators with us. I will introduce them briefly and we can dive in and have a hopefully an interesting conversation. So first Tamar Jacobsohn is an early childhood program teacher with 30 years of experience teaching, but especially has worked with kids with special needs, in particular kids with autism, so thank you very much for joining us, Tamar. We have got Jenny Jones also joining us. She is a physical therapist and has always been working in particular with kids with special needs and has spent 10 years working with kids in this way. We have Ana Salcido, who is a bilingual teacher leader and has been working for actually more than 25 years and in particular in supporting bilingual multilingual learners throughout the Madison School District and the area where we all live. Finally we have Sylla Zarov. Welcome so much, Sylla is the Principal at Franklin Elementary. Also she has been teaching and working with kids for more than 25 years. So I did a very complex mathematical calculation and ascertained this group of women has almost 100 years of accumulated experience teaching

kids and working with kids. That's pretty amazing. That's a pretty tremendous amount of accumulated wisdom we have here so thank you all of you for joining us. We are all thrilled not only to be talking to you tonight, but I can just say it's been so, so meaningful for us at the Center of Healthy Minds and Healthy Minds Innovations to be working with you all, not only to support you and all the people you work with but through that to support our kids and the children in our community. And never really has there been such an important time where this is needed. So why don't we start with a little bit of history. Because we have been working with you all for quite some time. But Tamar, you've been a core member of the mindfulness team shepherding this collaboration and partnership we have now had for years and you have been very involved all along the way. Maybe you can just say a little bit about how this all got started on your end, what led you and your colleagues in the schools that you work in to reach out and to begin this collaboration?

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: Yeah, absolutely. So MMSD has had a relationship with the Center for Healthy Minds for about 15 years as far as the research program. We entered into a formal partnership in 2014. And then when HMI became an arm for the research application, we were connected from the start and then we were very, very honored and excited to be invited for our staff to explore the Healthy Minds Program and app. We will talk more about that as well. But I am really happy to report that the benefits to our school district and to the team and to our workplace have extended way beyond the initial partnership intended outcomes.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Great. Those of you who participated in the initial pilot, I think Ana, you did, how did the program help you? What were some small or big things that took place over the pilot?

(No sound)

>>Cortland: Ana, we're not able to hear you. If somebody else wants to jump in while Ana is getting her audio started up. Sylla or Jenny, any of you have thoughts on that?

>>Sylla: Sure. This is Sylla. Yeah, I wasn't a part of the initial pilot. But it is something that I've used over the last year and a half. And I've really found as a person newer to practicing mindfulness that it's given me great support in carving out the time to do a sitting practice and also there are kind of the learning pieces, so I've really come to find that as a complete source of, a resource that I go to and also have referred our staff to that as well.

>>Cortland Dahl: Thank you very much. Ana, did you get your audio sorted out or are you still muted? Oh, I'm sorry, Ana, you're still muted. So sorry. So why don't – hopefully we will be able to hear from you. It's still muted, Ana. Let me just ask kind of a follow-up question. I think everybody, even if you don't have kids, you know that right now the whole world of education is upside down and there's been so little time to adapt and to change things and on top of that, you know, as if that weren't hard enough, we've got the global pandemic, we've got an intense election playing out... all of this stress going on. If we go back to March when all of this first hit, and the months after that, I'm just kind of curious how that played out for you individually at work. How did you experience that and I would love to hear all of your thoughts on this but maybe Jenny we can start with you just to say a little bit about how this recent challenge we are experiencing now has happened over these past few months.

>>Jenny Jones: Sure. Can you hear me?

>>Cortland Dahl: Yeah.

>>Jenny: Okay. Thank you. I remember very clearly the last day we were open, it was Friday, the 13th of all things, and I was at the elementary school that I work in in a gym class, and you could just feel the energy was different in the school, which Sylla could probably speak to too. The kids were talking about the coronavirus without really understanding it. I think that the teachers were just trying to stay focused, and I was in this gym class and the kids were done and lining up to go back and somebody was coming along with the – they were all over each other like six-year-olds, and somebody was coming along with a hand sanitizer and the gym teacher was asking me if I knew of any secret stashes of hand sanitizers, and I just looked out into the gym at all the hula hoops and jump ropes and balls and that they had just had their hands all over and I was thinking, this is crazy. We should not be here. So I also have a public health background. But anyway, when that evening, I think they announced the closure, and in some respect it was a relief for me, but it also was just, it knocked the feet out from under me as well. We had a couple weeks of spring break, and then we were right back, and the spring break was the lamest spring break ever, but we were back in it and in meetings and it just felt like a brand-new job that I wasn't qualified for. And nobody – everybody was in this new job and there were so many questions and I just didn't know if my skills would be applicable. I didn't know if I would have any value. So that was really hard. And then the whole working from home craziness and my son got sick at the end of March, so that was stressful, and he's okay. Also, we were moving, so my workplace was a mess and we were about to put our house on the market. So just little stressors that I know everybody has. The thing that I think as teachers or people in schools, we always are so acutely aware that no matter how stressed we are, there are families that just have so many more challenges and that really weighs heavy on teachers normally and during this time, it was just magnified. And, I don't know, I kind of felt helpless. I didn't know if I could help.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Wow. Wow.

>>Jenny Jones: So I turned to Healthy Minds. I did, actually. I had used it a couple times, but I knew it was very obvious that I needed to put my own oxygen mask on before helping others. So I started the practice and I love the flexibility and that you can do it for 10 minutes, 20 minutes. I love that I could do it while I was packing or cleaning. And the science behind it. But I also then started to try to promote it to my friends and my family and I actually bribed my kids to do it and – because I had suggested it and they didn't take the suggestion. But I put some money on the table and I just said, if they practiced for five minutes five days a week, I would give them \$5 and I would double it if I didn't practice five days a week. So that's how I got into the routine with a little incentive.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Wow. I just want to say, I just hear the incredible amount of stress that you have been dealing with. I can even just feel it in my body as you're talking, so first of all, thank you so much for sharing your experience. And I'm just curious, what are some of the things that you learned in the Healthy Minds Program that you have been able to tap into as tools to help you get through this difficult time? This is open to any of you. Ana: Can you hear me now? (Applause)

>>Ana Salcido: I started the year in a classroom during the hiring freeze. They asked me to step in for a teacher who went on maternity leave. This has been quite an experience, boy, oh, boy. And how the app and participating in the pilot has helped during this time has been helpful because I have no time. I have really no time. I'm perpetually working around the clock and very tired and doing everything for this one classroom, but keeping in mind like I can still be mindful. I can still use those practices that I learned about like, you know, when I'm putting on my makeup I listen to the app. When I'm showering, I can focus and be mindful. So those have been really, really helpful at the time right now, especially like right now where I really just don't have any time, and that just is how it is right now. I'm sure it will get better but right now I have no time.

>>Sylla Zarov: Yeah, and I can kind of piggyback on that Stephanie just as a building leader. Can you all hear me? Just kind of as Jenny said, everything about our ways of working as teachers, really we are in a state of upheaval last March as many across our world. As educators we pivoted to fully virtual instruction during a pandemic in less than three weeks. Our work as teachers and our identities as face-to-face seeing our little humans, that all has shifted during that time. So for me as a school leader, I knew I needed to practice my own self-care, kind of what Jenny said about putting my oxygen mask on first and model that and be really intentional about offering that space for our teachers to do it well. I mean, they are beyond stressed. So I really depended on – kind of as I said before – on Healthy Minds, that app helped me through some of my guided practice and I set aside a morning time, and I really found that doing that allowed me just some space for myself so that over the course of the rest of the day, I could really be that container and offer some of that space for our teachers because I think caring for our educators at our school in order for them to do their best work was at the forefront of my mind as a leader. As you said, we have over 100 years of experience together, and that idea of striving to be our best as virtual teachers when we have never done this before, our veteran teachers, our superb teachers who are put in this really hard position and depleted of energy and often felt defeated. So offering opportunities for self-care, an accountability partner to make sure we were taking care of each other just became so crucial. And I think what you said, Stephanie, about that blurring of like the lines between our work life and our home life really just all came kind of crashing down. So for myself and our staff, we really talked about what some small shifts could be that we made throughout our days to support well-being. One of those that we tried was just what were those rituals that signified the beginning and ending of our work day. For me it's pouring myself a big glass of water and opening the shades. What are those little pieces that help us find our work. And I think the Healthy Minds app in addition to help me with my sitting practice and sometimes some coaching when I couldn't sleep, I also really found the active practice, a brief 10-minute walk between my lots of Zooms really sometimes acted like a coach for me or a pep talk and then allowing for our teachers to create that space was just so crucial. So yeah.

>>Cortland Dahl: That's so heart-warming to hear. I'm just curious, you know, we did some work very recently with young college students, you know, 19, 20, 21 years old who are doing something similar to the way you are all doing it. One thing that really struck me that was interesting is if you kind of zoom out that model of well-being that I mentioned earlier and these four dimensionless of awareness, connection, insight, and purpose, it was clear that there was no one size fits all. There were some who really, really gravitated to purpose and talking about clarifying and abiding values just really brought them to life and others really talked about attention and being distracted and the awareness practices were helpful. Some loved connection. Some loved insight. I'm just kind of curious which of these, if any, kind of felt like it

spoke to you or felt like it was most helpful given all the kinds of things you are facing. And this could be for any of you who wants to jump in.

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: I would have to say that the awareness component is often the furthest thing for me to be reaching for but also the most critical, and so between the app and having reminders, I really find it to be very grounding to have reminders like of just a moment and even though it doesn't stop anything else going on in the world, it's been incredibly supportive. So I would pick awareness.

>>Sylla: That's mine, too. Tamar, heh look at us. I would say I agree, I think just really basic going back to my breath and just tuning out and listening, going through some of the senses meditations that they go through in Healthy Minds, just allowing me to live in the moment. I tend to catastrophize on the what ifs when we are living in this world of uncertainty. So I think just that awareness and bringing myself back to what is in my control has been a really – that's where I find myself going the most on the app.

>>Cortland Dahl: That's great. Ana or Jenny, either of you? Not that you have to pick.

>>Jenny Jones: I would say the connection pillar spoke to me the most initially just because of the pandemic, we were all kind of experiencing the same thing in many ways, and it just was a good reminder that we all want the same things and what's really important, and especially with the divisiveness that is out there as well.

>>Ana Salcido: I don't know if one spoke particularly to me. However, during this time right now, I think the awareness one is really helping me. Again, just kind of remembering and reminding myself to focus on what I'm doing now, whatever it is and being here with whether it has to do with work, that's what it is. So taking a minute, even though it's not a minute to myself, I'm still doing something. It's still taking a minute to myself when I'm mindful and being aware of what I'm doing.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Thank you. I actually have a curiosity... so you have a mindfulness core group, you've got going within your team. I worked for a lot of organizations that aspire to get a group like that going, so I'm curious, can you tell me a little bit about sort of what your group is like, like how frequently do you meet? What do you do? How long? That kind of thing. Would you mind just sharing a little bit about that because I think there are some workplace folks that would be really interested in hearing about your experience.

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: Yeah. Well, I'm just so honored to be a part of it. It came together kind of I'd say congruently with when the research program was starting and we were having people coming into our schools to work on research with the mindfulness and the schools, and it really spoke to and gained a lot of interest among staff. And so the mindfulness core team has evolved over time, but we all have a main gig. And then the mindful work we either do outside of hours or only find time within that. But really our team, our whole focus, is to support the well-being of staff in our district. And so that has evolved in a lot of ways. We have had many different kinds of offerings as we continue to – that are free through our professional development department. It can be a one-day introduction. It can be a ten-hour class. We have journaling, and just a wide variety. And then I'm really proud to say that in the past few years the human resources department has included what staff well-being and mindfulness is part of the staff well-being so it's great to have that support as well. And what we do with each other when

we meet -- so we have got different iterations over time, but we meet about every month-ish. And we spend part of the time learning in our community and trying to make the most out of the practices we already know as well as adding to our toolbox, I would say of practices that we lead. And then we kind of also offer feedback to each other about practice. And then in addition to the mindful core team supporting overall well-being for staff, we've really evolved to linking that with the restorative justice practices and anti-racist work in our district. So we are kind of all over the place I think in a lot of great ways. And, yeah, any staff can access us. There's some schools that have kind of a whole school approach. A lot of individuals have their own practice. And then we're just always open to really being reflective about how we can best support staff.

>>Cortland Dahl: I'd like to dig a little deeper on that. One of the things you just mentioned there, which was the work around diversity, equity, and inclusion, which you just brought up. So for those of you who are outside of Madison, and I'm sure that's most of you who are watching right now, what you might not know is that we are very, very close to kind of the epicenter of where a lot of the issues around systemic racism in the U.S. have been coming up so, for example, just an hour away here in Wisconsin, Minneapolis is only four hours away, five hours away. So we are really, you know, very much in the middle of this and in our own community here in Madison, these are very much issues that we encounter all the time and very much are kind of front and center with our kids and our communities. So maybe we could just ask you to say a little bit more about what's going on with all the work that you do. And if there are any connections you see with the cultivation of well-being and some of the skills and practices you learn and especially how we can hopefully create a world for our kids where these problems start to hopefully disappear and aren't there at all. So again, for anybody who wants to jump in here.

>>Sylla Zarov: I can start. I think for me as a leader, as a school principal, I think we have to be aware of our thoughts in order to address our behaviors, right? So as much as self-reflection can be painful and sometimes it causes shame, et cetera, it also is really necessary when grappling with racially charged events in our country and in our city, Madison. So in order to be actively anti-racist, I believe that the work starts with me and my own self work as a white woman looking inside and without judgment as much as possible but also really pushing on where I am unknowingly adopted racist perceptions and things of that nature. So I think mindfulness and the space that it provides really allows us to think differently about our words and practices and then also then we can't just stay in the contemplative, right, we have to practice into our actions. And so as a leader in a school, we are really doing some of that work and then seeing how it equates to being actively anti-racist educators and raising social justice minded kids.

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: Yeah. And I would add that the practices themselves really can give us the gift of having a stronger base for responding rather than reacting, so whether it's compassion for ourselves or compassion for others or the mindful attitude of being nonjudgmental as well as just pausing. I think it's -- understandably we get very emotional and very wrapped up in everything that's going on and inevitably there is going to be challenging conversations amongst teens or schools or staff or your neighbor or whomever it is and so embodying those qualities as far as taking a moment and then responding or checking in with myself as far as where I am is very supportive. As far as districtwide, we have with the restorative justice practices a lot of work as far as like sharing space with others, whether it's students or staff in the circle, and so mindfulness blends with that perfectly as well as supporting those who are in any kind of process that's going on in the moment.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Great. Thank you very much. Anybody else have anything around the topic? I just want to make sure there's space for whoever else wants to share.

>>Jenny Jones: When Sylla was speaking, I thought of the insight pillar, and just some of the practices where you think of the maps in your minds or the constructs and where they came from and how automatic they are and some of our biases and just tapping into those practices of self-reflection and insight were really valuable. Are really valuable.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Great. Thank you.

>>Ana Salcido: So supporting this anti-racist initiative in our district really means that we have to allow courageous conversation, and so for me, using mindfulness to kind of, you know, think about how I'm going to – you know, before I enter into a conversation because if I'm not coming from a positive or healthy place, I guess I would say, I'm probably not moving to work forward myself, so that's been really helpful for me.

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: If I could add one more thing when you were talking Ana and somebody else mentioned it, really having that ability to reflect on our own implicit biases is greatly lifted up by mindful practices, again, with any of the pausing, breathing, grounding. And then obviously like the awareness pillar, just being aware even, you know, of what maybe we don't know.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah, great. Thank you so much. So based on your experience of navigating the stress of the pandemic, there have been a lot of tips and things that have bubbled up here. What would each of you say is like your biggest piece of advice for people in the workplace, whether they are teachers or otherwise? What's the biggest piece of advice that you have to, you know, care for your well-being? How can you use these practices to support you during these stressful times? Is there one nugget that you would like to share?

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: I missed the beginning part of the question, sorry. All of a sudden my screen went blank. Are you saying is there something I want to share about supporting others?

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah, like based on your experience what would be one tip you could give people in the workforce to just deal with stress kind of based on your own experience? And you can take that in any direction you want.

>>Sylla Zarov: Yeah, and I think I touched on this a little bit already. I think finding a partner to check in on with one another. I think in this virtual world those authentic checks on our humanity just aren't there as much when we aren't in person, so, you know, doing, taking a mindful walk together on a cell phone with, you know, those kinds of things I think are big and then I also just think creating those rituals to start and end the day and providing yourself with just quick opportunities for a walk or some breathing, and again, I think others have touched on it be with the app has all different like times, so you can really choose a five-minute like little practice in the middle of your day. So those are a couple for me.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah. I love, I just wanted to pull out a couple of things that you said because these things are so key. So finding well-being accountability partner, so this could be somebody that supports you in your habit formation, that you can check in with, that you can talk to about your challenges. The other thing that you mentioned that I have talked to some of my coaching clients about is this idea of creating some kind of like ritual at the end of your day that signifies that the work day is done. So whether you are walking around the block to pretend like you're commuting, you know, away from your home and then back in your home again or

something like that that really allows you to disconnect with some kind of formality from your work day. And then the other thing that you mentioned, which I just think is great, is that, you know, we can really have this idea in our mind that when we are going to do something that's good for our well-being, that has to be like this long thing, and the truth is that it can just be, it can be three deep breaths with, you know, mindful awareness. It can be a five-minute practice in the Healthy Minds Program app. I think the fact that we have got active practices in the app have come up so, you know, it doesn't mean that you just have to sit down. Like you can walk around the block. You can clean your house. It can just take five minutes.

>>Sylla Zarov: I have found the cadence of throwing the ball for my dog is just a really nice, I mean, just really listening and watching, it's pretty amazing, actually. And that was never a part of my awareness prior to some of this learning, that this could be an opportunity for my mind to take a break from work, even for a moment.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Great. Anyone else have anything to add?

>>Jenny Jones: I would just say making, deliberately, making it a part of your routine, because it's so easy for it to fall by the wayside when we have more and more things on our plate, which is what I found when we came back to school. But yeah, and give yourself grace and give others grace.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Self-compassion is really helpful in these moments.

>>Tamar Jacobsohn: That's what I was going to say, self-compassion and yeah, the, you know, mindfulness isn't, at least from our perspective, it's not something to add to the list, you know, that now we've got to, you know, do all of these things, oh, I've got to save for whatever it is your preferred practice. Just compassion for yourself. Go easy on yourself if you can't get to things. But I do love the aspect of being able to embed into our everyday life. The ground is always under us so we can feel the feet on the ground and it's like, that's it. Doesn't have to be this whole thing.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah. It's easy to hold ourselves against a standard of like pre-pandemic expectations and then we are here in this completely different situation and we beat ourselves up because we are not upholding our pre-pandemic expectations, so I think that's where self-compassion really comes into play and, you know, flexibility and adaptability. I'm sorry, I interrupted you.

>>Ana Salcido: It's ok. So practicing mind set is not going to make my workload less. It's not going to take anything off my workload, but the mind shift of what I have how to deal with it makes a lot of difference. It's healthier so I can do this. Yeah, think of those minutes when you can be still, feel the ground, take a breath or close your eyes or listen to something... that's one of my favorite practices is focusing on sounds. Before I open the Zoom to start my class, you know, just that – the time you can take, use that so that I'm moving forward in a healthy way.

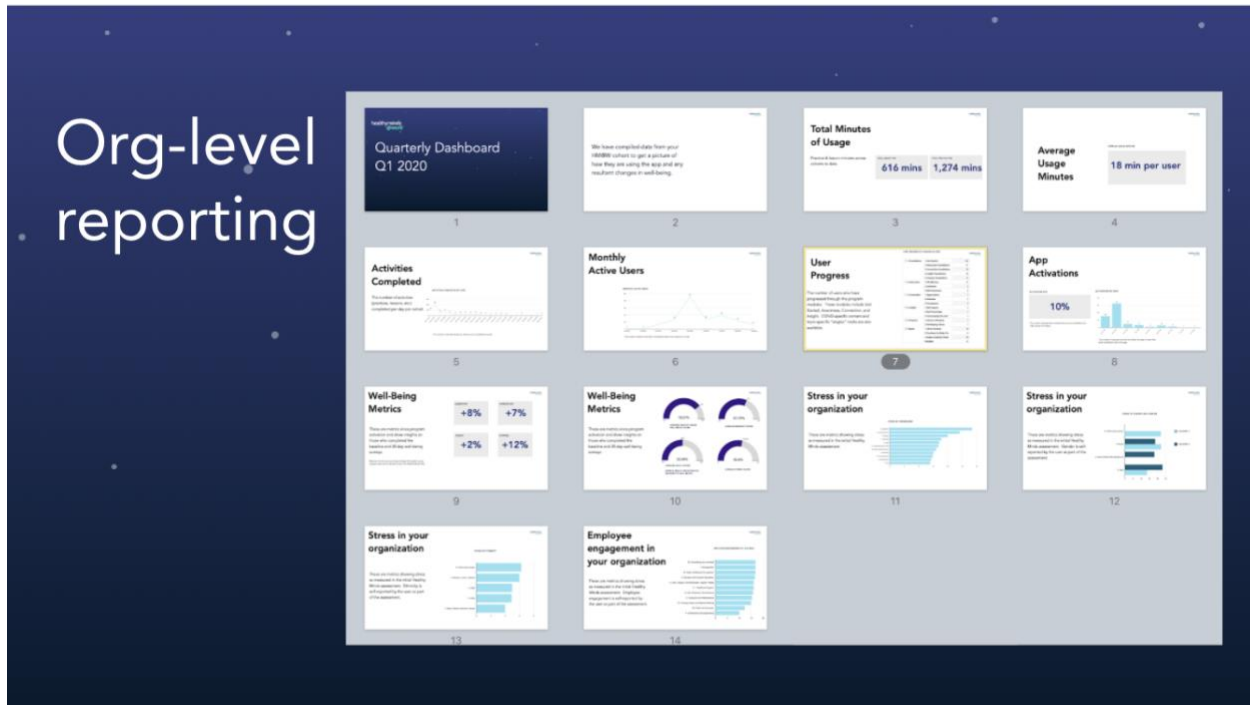
>>Sylla: And just piggybacking on that quickly, I will say one of the things I tried to shift was thinking about Zoom, like having gratitude for this as a way of connecting with our kids, so kind of reframing how I think about this. Like I get to see you all tonight. And without Zoom, which I spend a lot of my days on, you know, we could get into this kind of spiral of why it's so terrible.

But even just trying to find the gratitude and the good even in something like this helped me kind of reframe my thinking to start a long work day, virtually.

>>Cortland Dahl: Well, thank you so much. Speaking of kind of mind shift, these days with the election, with everything happening in the world, it's so easy to get consumed by the negative and to get overly focused on the negative. But there is wonderful things happening, right? There's people figuring things out, finding ways to connect, even when there's, you know, the odds are kind of not in our favor. So just deeply appreciative not only for the four of you for taking time tonight but really for the work that you are doing to support our kids and communities. I mean, it's such an incredibly challenging time and the fact that you and so many people like you are able to show up and really be there for our kids at a time when they all really, really need you, I'm just so incredibly grateful. So thank you so much for joining us tonight.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah. Thank you. We so appreciate you sharing our wisdom. I saw lots of comments in the chat. People are really appreciating your sharing. So thank you.

>>Cortland Dahl: Thank you so much. So we thought we could turn our attention now to a little bit back to what some of what we do with the Healthy Minds @Work program. First of all, we can actually say a little bit about the assessments, the scientific measures that we incorporate, that we really kind of are in many ways very central to, not only the research that we do, but actually to what we do in working with individuals, working with people like you, working with organizations, schools, companies. And there's a very simple reason for this, which is that what we measure helps clarify for us what we need to focus on. So if you use an analogy like physical health, if we didn't have these little hooks for our attention that help us understand what's going on with our physical health, it would be really difficult to know what to do to boost our immune system, to be healthy, and so forth. So it might be something simple like blood pressure or cholesterol or these days with COVID, blood oxygen levels, like you can get these little monitors. These are just little ways that we can just see, are we doing okay? How are things going?

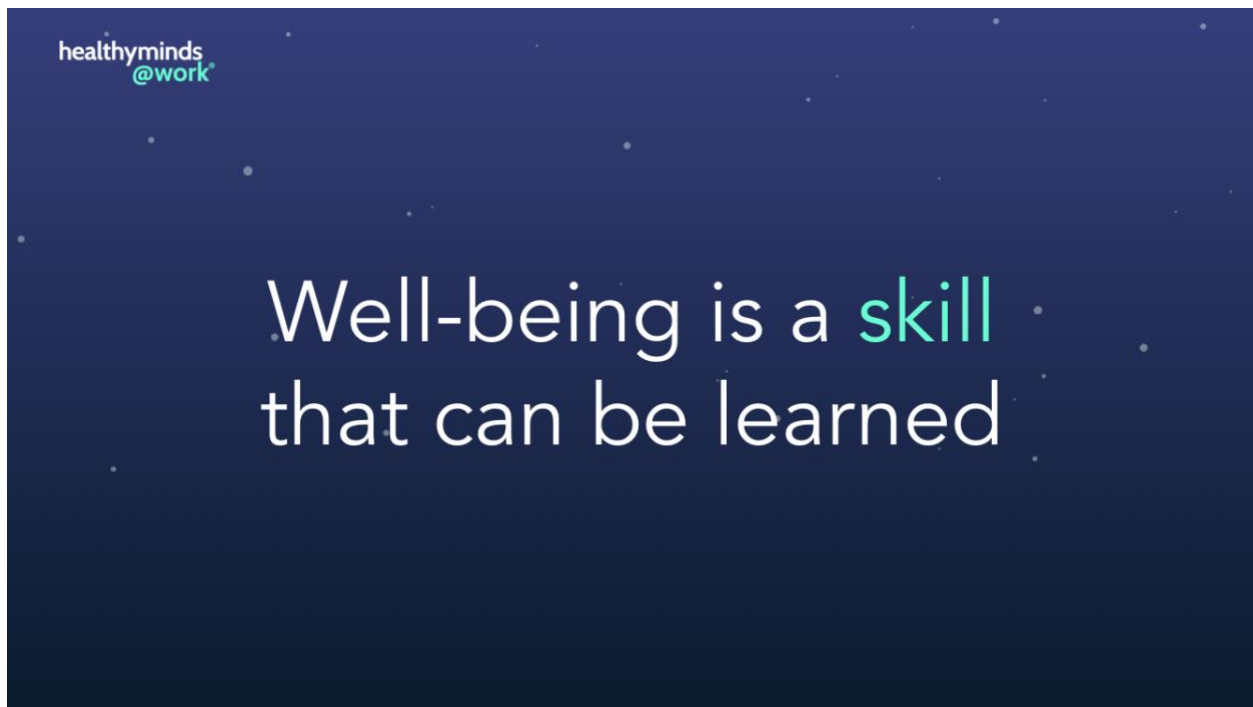


So we have taken a lot of the measurements that we use in the lab and translated them into tools that we can use out there in the world that really help us gain self-knowledge. These are really ways to help us to better understand our own well-being, to understand what constitutes a truly healthy mind so that we can actually make the most of the capacities that we already have. So by virtue of the fact that you are here listening to this right now means that you probably did the well-being assessment that we normally only do in the context of engagements like we have done with the Madison School District here locally. So you got a taste of this. Just to give you a little snapshot of some of the things we learned, one of the things that came up, I was just looking through the data earlier tonight, and one of the things, one of the interesting statistics was the number of you who when asked how much over the past month or two, how much you felt stress or anxiety.

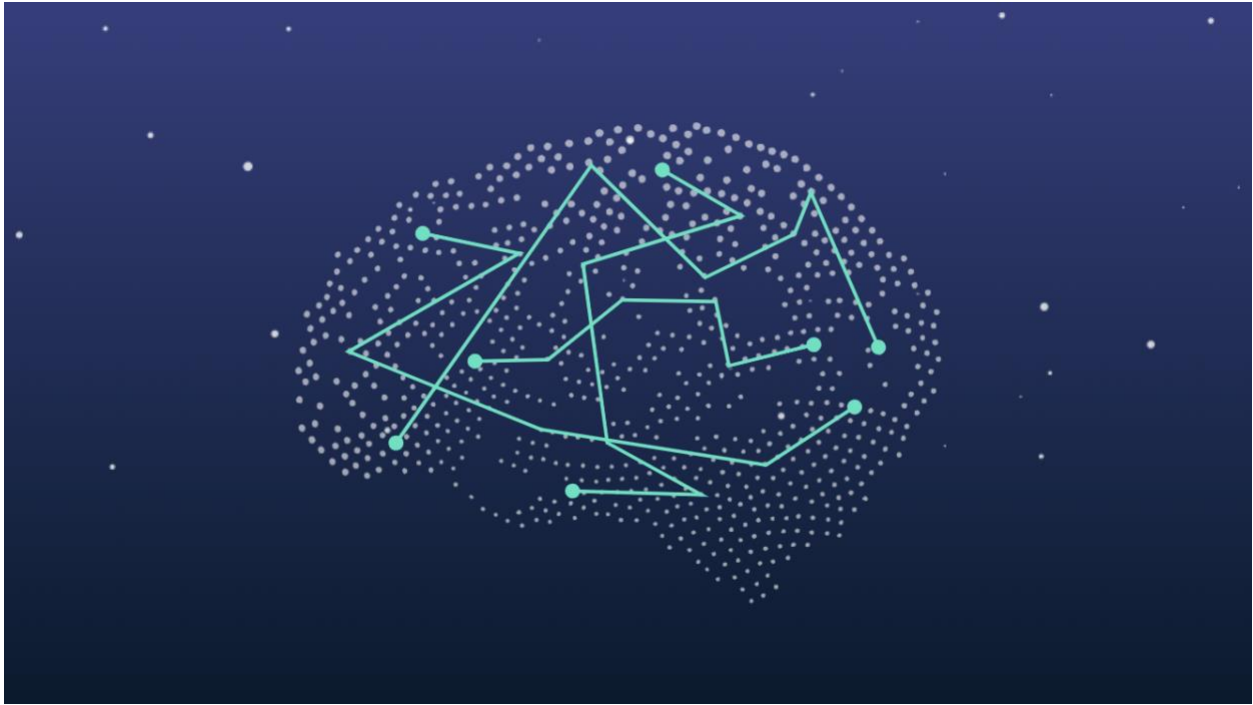
It was I think almost 40% that said very often or somewhat often. And there was another almost half or maybe like 43% I think that said sometimes. So very, very few people are not experiencing at least some stress. And 40%, even in this group, and my guess is that all of you are coping much better than like the typical population. So everybody is really feeling the stress and the burden of the pandemic, the economic fall, and all of that. So these assessments that we're doing really help us not only as people but as individuals and organizations to really understand this better what's going on so that we actually can address it. So maybe I will turn it over to you, Stephanie, to say a little bit more about how we can bring this into the work that we do.

>>Stephanie Wagner: Yeah. So as part of bringing in the Healthy Minds @Work program into the workplace what happens is that employees within the organization take the well-being assessment and they get their personal results. This is really powerful information because it helps employees to gain insight into their own well-being and to understand areas that would benefit from training. So then what happens is that the results are rolled up into an organization

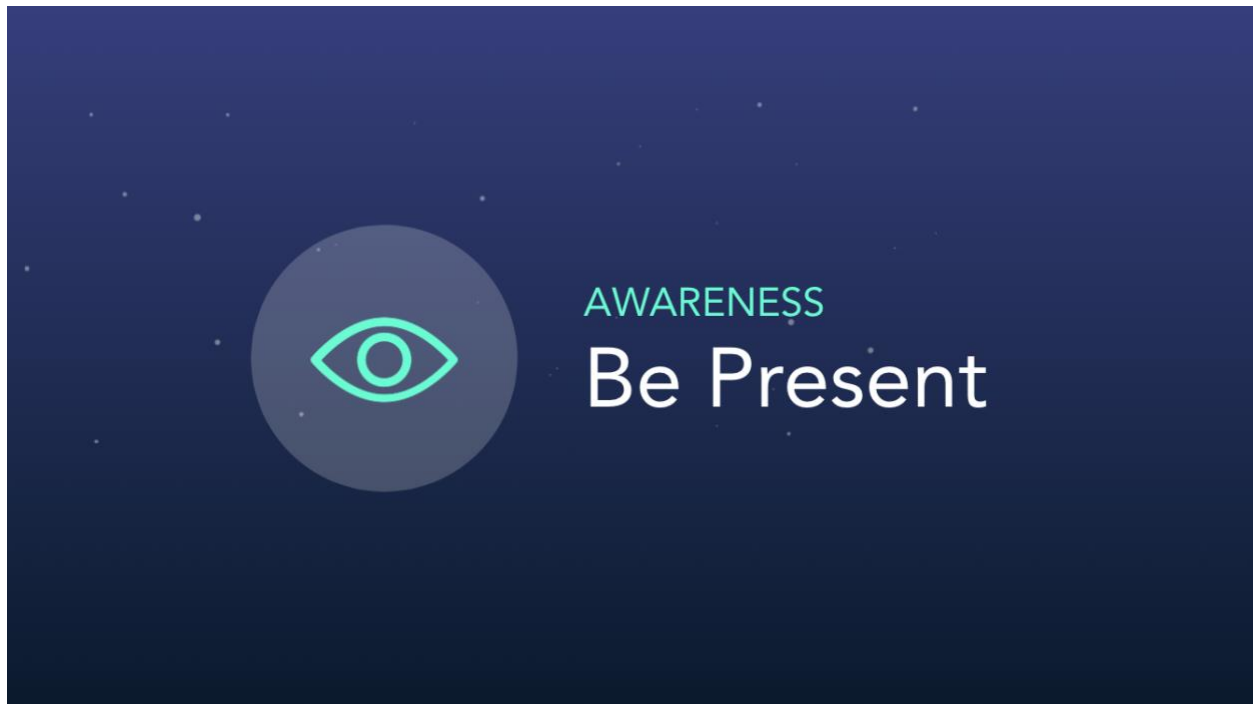
use, that organizational leaders actually receive an anonymized view of the well-being of the employee population. So again this helps the organization understand the well-being of their employees in addition to seeing the impact of the program. Now, this is powerful because we can actually see the impact of the effort that have been put into training the mind by the employees, and so we would expect to see some movement in well-being scores after people engage in the Healthy Minds Program because, in fact, well-being is a skill that can be learned.



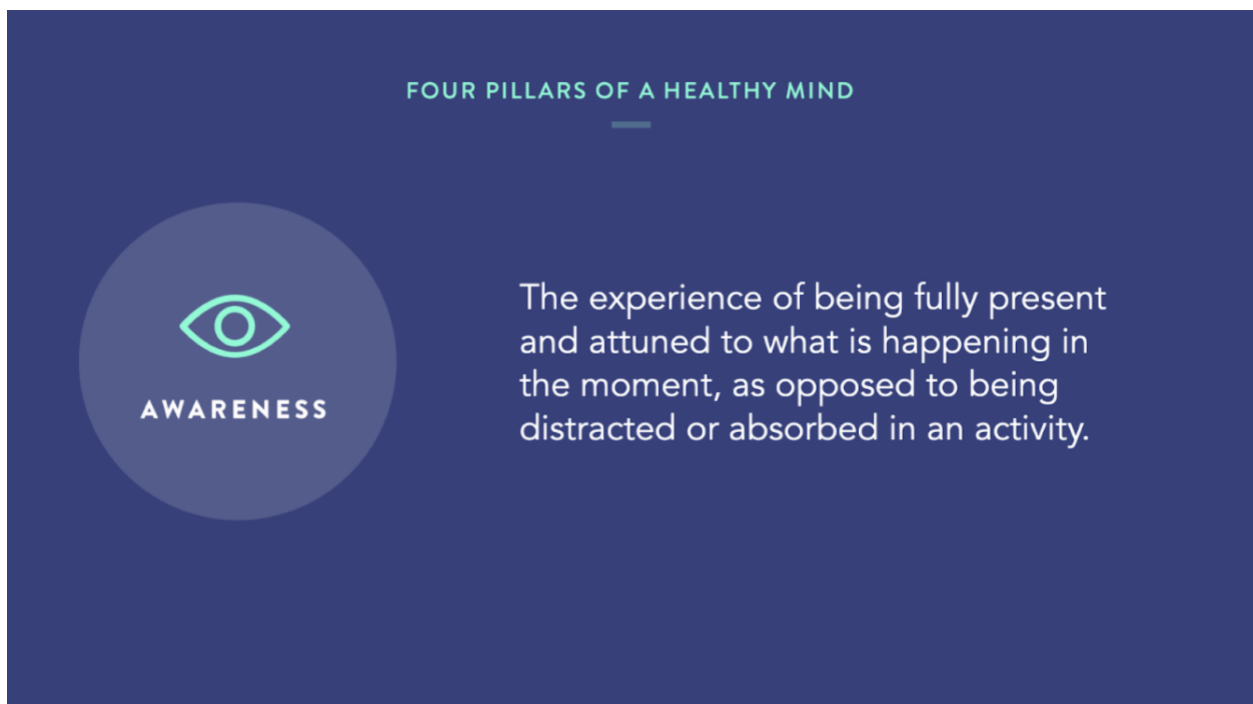
So this is something that Richie and Cort both talked about at the beginning of the presentation. So the science of training the mind is all based on this idea. Change is possible because our brains have the capacity to change. Now, I'm sure many of you in this group are familiar with the term neuroplasticity, and essentially it means it's the capacity for our brains to change. Now, the truth of it is that the brain is constantly changing in response to experience, but usually it's the forces around us that are driving that change and the change isn't always positive.



But when we train our minds with intention, we are harnessing that capacity for our brains to change so that we can actually begin to rewire our brains to work in healthier ways. So rather than experiencing well-being in those fleeting moments in our lives, we can begin to experience well-being as more of a baseline. So ultimately what neuroplasticity is claiming to is the fact that change is possible. So what I wanted to do with our last little bit of time together today is to give you a brief introduction to two of the four dimensions of well-being starting with awareness, which are capacity to be present.



So in the Healthy Minds Program we define awareness as the experience of being fully present and attuned to what's happening in the moment as opposed to being distracted or absorbed in an activity.



Now, we often equate awareness with mindfulness. Just for the sake of level setting our definitions so we define mindfulness as sort of that heightened state of awareness of what's going on in one's body, one's mind, one's surroundings. But, in fact, here within simply the

dimension of awareness, we are training three different skills. We are working on mindfulness, which I just mentioned, but we are also working on attention and self-awareness.



Now, these skills are important because they support us in doing things like noticing distractions. The more quickly we notice we are distracted, the more quickly we are able to actually come back to the task at hand. We can work smarter. This benefits, of course, both the employee as well as the organization. These skills also help us with self-regulation. So we can actually notice those moments when we might be emotionally triggered in a meeting or we're triggered from having a challenging conversation with a co-worker and rather than getting all caught up and reactive, we can see the thoughts and emotions as they are happening and there's space to us to respond from a place of our values as well as a place of us being our best selves.

So what I would like to do is I would like to give you an experiential taste of working with awareness with a couple of the skills now with just a very brief guided practice. So I will invite you to go ahead and get yourself in a comfortable seat here. And this means you want to have your body a bit relaxed, even if it's 5% relaxed, and to have a posture that feels alert and awake, and you can close your eyes if that feels comfortable to you. So we're just going to begin to notice the sensations in different parts of our body. So simply notice sensations in your face, in your jaw. And what do you notice there? It might be tension. Might be a little sensation. No need to change those sensations. You're just simply noticing them. And now bring attention to the palms of your hands. These feelings of coolness or warmth. Perhaps you might even find some tingling. And now bring your attention to the soles of your feet and see what sensations you're noticing at the bottoms of your feet. Again, you might feel some tingling or the support of the floor. Notice whatever sensations are present. And now let's begin to notice the breath. You can just become aware of the breath wherever you are noticing it the most strongly in the body

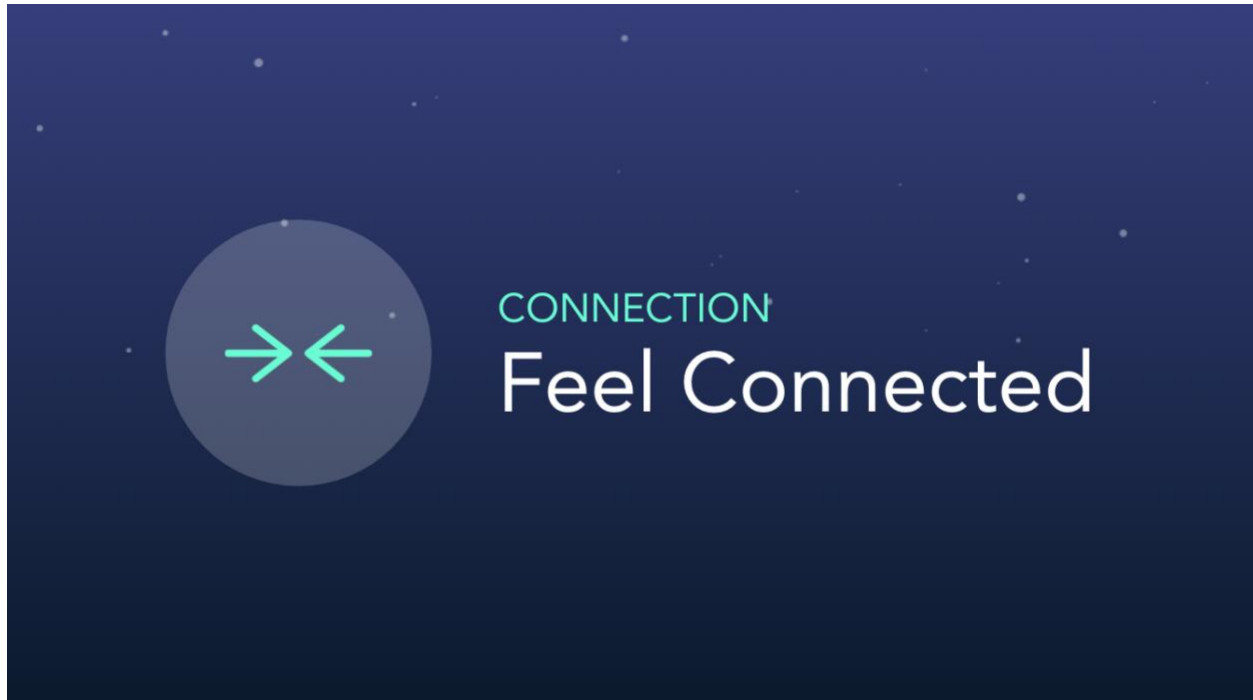
and see if you can simply be with the breath. And as you're aware of the breath notice those moments when your mind has wandered, lost in thought, maybe even judging your experience.

Gently bring your attention back to being with the breath each time your mind has wandered. Okay, and you can let go of the practice. Open your eyes if they have been closed. I wanted to find out from you if you could please share a word in the chat box about how that practice was for you. And as you're doing that, I'm going to be waiting to see what you have to say. I'm going to share with you the two skills that we just practiced. So the first skill that we practiced was working with training our attention. Now, normally our attention is directed towards something but normally we are not choosing what we are paying attention to. It's usually a result of habit or impulse. So here you practiced the skill of paying attention on purpose. Now, the other skill that you practiced is noticing when you got distracted. That's mindfulness. You noticed that your mind was no longer with the breath and you brought your attention back then each moment that you noticed your mind wandered off. So let's just see what some of you said here. Many of you said relaxing. Anybody else find it challenging? I have to say sometimes this practice can be challenging. So I also just want to normalize that up and downs of experience in practice can be really normal. So that just gives you a taste of a couple of the skills that we train within the dimension of awareness. So I wanted to offer you a quick tip of practicing awareness at work. Now, when we talk about training our mind, you know, part of what we do is we do it formally in sort of a seated or active practice like we just did, but you can also actually practice in daily life and the workplace provides many opportunities to be able to do that.

Practicing Awareness @Work

Take 3 intentional, deep breaths prior to attending meetings, answering calls or interacting with others.

So one simple way of cultivating short moments of awareness is to choose a work topic that you do regularly throughout the day like for example logging on to a Zoom meeting or answering phone calls, interacting with others, and simply take three intentional breaths with awareness, so this allows you a moment to pause, gives you that moment of transition from moving from one activity to the next. And it really allows us to cultivate short moments of awareness throughout the day.



So let's move on to our next dimension of well-being, which is connection. We are just doing a light taste of these two. So connection is extending this present moment awareness into your relationships, helping us to develop healthy, connected relationships not only with people that we care for and like but also with people that we don't know and even people that we don't like. So here, we are defining connection as a subjective sense of care and kinship toward other people.

FOUR PILLARS OF A HEALTHY MIND



A subjective sense of care and kinship toward other people. This caring stance promotes supportive relationships and caring interactions.

So this caring stance supporting relationships and caring interactions. So when you think about it, it's easy to feel a sense of warmth and connection with people that we like. However, the workplace is filled with complex relationships that require us to show up and work on teams and collaborate with people sometimes that we don't know so as well and oftentimes that we don't like. So when we are training our mind.... in connection, what we're beginning to do is widening the circle of those healthy, connected relationships in our lives beyond those people we like.

FOUR PILLARS OF A HEALTHY MIND



Appreciation

Kindness

Compassion

And it's extremely beneficial to do this. Of course, the quality of these relationships impact the quality of our work and our overall happiness given the amount of time that we spend at work.

So there are three different skills that we are training in the realm of connection. They are appreciation, kindness, and compassion. So once again, let's do a short experiential exercise in the realm of appreciation. So go ahead and take your seat once again. Allowing your spine to be straight and your body to be relaxed. Gently close your eyes, if that feels good for you. And take a couple of slow, deep breaths. And now bring to mind someone, perhaps at work or in your personal life, that you have a warm caring relationship with, and bring them to mind and sort of imagine them being in your presence. And as you are bringing them to mind, begin to reflect with a sense of appreciation on qualities or skills that you appreciate about them. Might be generosity or compassion. Humor. Simply take a moment to reflect on those qualities. And as you're doing this, imagine what you might say or do to express appreciation to this person. You might even just imagine yourself saying something to them. Take a moment to do that. Alright. And you can simply drop the reflection, take a moment to notice how you feel. You can open your eyes. And as you're doing that, I want to hear from you again. Share with me the quality that you appreciated about the person during your reflection. And as you're doing this, I'm going to tell you again about the skill that we just practiced. So the skill of appreciation here is the skill of noticing the positive.

So we have for biological and evolutionary reasons an intentional bias that skews toward the negative. We are hardwired to detect threats, to notice things that are out of the norm and to focus on what is different or changing in our environment. This is the very stuff that's helped us survive. This is not a bad thing. But in the modern world, we're mainly not facing mortal threats here. So the challenge is our body cannot distinguish between an existential threat to our survival and an emotional threat. And as a result of this, we tend to get hyper-focused on the negative, kicking up the stress response in the body. So here, we are simply noticing something positive. Imagine if you treated it like a skill. In those moments when you are in perhaps a stressful business meeting that instead of focusing on what's wrong, you took a moment to actually appreciate something positive about what was happening in that moment. It might be appreciating a quality or a skill that someone else in the meeting is exuding in that moment. The thing about appreciation is that not only does it feel good to us, you know, we feel that burst of positive emotion, but it also feels really good to be on the receiving end of that as well. So lead interactions with this attitude of tuning into the positive rather than just focusing on the negative could completely shift your experience of something at work. It could completely shift your interaction with someone. So let's look at a couple of tips of how to practice appreciation at work.

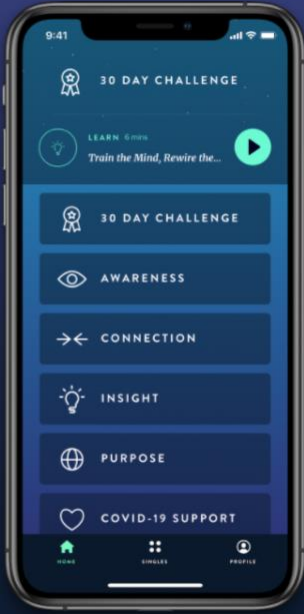
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Practicing Appreciation @Work






- Calendar appreciation
- Notice when things are going smoothly
- Express appreciation with a co-worker or your team

So one of my favorite tips comes from Richie [Davidson], which is “calendar appreciation.” He actually looks at his calendar at the beginning of each day and looks at the meeting that he’s got scheduled with people, and he brings to mind something that he appreciates about each of those people he’s meeting for the day. Next, tune into those moments when things are going smoothly, when relationships seem easy, when things are going well, when you have space to work on an important project. Again, take a moment to orient yourself towards that. And then lastly, express appreciation! It feels so good! This is actually one of my favorite things to do is to just be in the middle of a business meeting and just call out to someone, “You know what I really appreciate about you?” and then you tell them in front of people what you appreciate about them, and it really is a way of acknowledging people’s talents. It goes a long way to enhance the relationship, and it ultimately just feels really good. So at this point, you might be interested in learning more about the program and the skills. We didn’t go over insight and purpose today, so again, there’s an opportunity for you to learn more there. So as can you see from this slide, the Healthy Minds @Work program offers quite a few options that can be tailored for different organizations. Please check out the website at hminnovations.org/work. And now I will hand it over to Richie to close off the event. Thank you so much, everybody



healthyminds @work | hminnovations.org/work

The program is delivered via Healthy Minds Program mobile app, which includes activities to measure your well-being and track your progress on the path to a healthy mind.

-  Mobile app with hundreds of hours of meditations and podcasts
-  Live webinars and trainings with Healthy Minds experts and scientists
-  Online portal with resources to support the success of the program
-  30 Day Challenge to kick off the program and build engagement
-  Well-being reports and quarterly analytics of program progress



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>>Richard J. Davidson: Thank you so much, Stephanie. That was just beautiful. And thank you, Cort, and also thank you to our Madison Metropolitan School District partners, to Sylla, Tamar, Jenny, and Ana, we really appreciate all of your contributions and the partnership that has been going on now for quite a number of years and continues to get stronger. We are really grateful.

This evening, I think you all had a chance to see how we're beginning to translate the science and actually bringing it out into the real world in real-world context. The MasterClass, which is up on the screen now, is our first MasterClass for the general public. We have been offering this in workplace settings, but this is offered to anyone. It begins on October 20th. So please let your friends and colleagues know about it. And Stephanie and Cort are both contributors to this MasterClass, and I think you got a taste of what extraordinary teachers they are. We would like to remind you that tomorrow and Friday will also be events part of our The World We Make celebration. Tomorrow night is focused on "Resilient Minds and Resilient Planet," and will feature work of Dekila Chungyalpa, who is head of the Loka Initiative at our Center. And finally on Friday, we have the capstone event being a dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We really appreciate all of your involvement and engagement. In order for the world to change in the ways I think we all aspire, it requires each of us to contribute in whatever way we can in our own local context and with the commitment from each of us in that way, I have the fervent aspiration and the conviction that we really can change the world to make this a healthier place where humans can genuinely flourish. Thank you all so much for joining us and we look forward to seeing you again this evening and tomorrow evening.