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Creating a mindful university to boost mental health and performance

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University students are facing unprecedented academic and social pressures. Combined with the fact that most mental health disorders emerge in adolescence and young adulthood, research has found elevated levels of stress, anxiety and depression amongst tertiary students, often impacting academic performance. Mindfulness has been shown to increase resilience, improve mental health and boost cognitive study performance. It also increases self-awareness and interpersonal functioning. Monash University in Melbourne, Australia is piloting a novel university-wide mindfulness initiative, embedding mindfulness in the core curriculum for students, offering optional programs for staff and pioneering online delivery methods. As far as we know, we are the only university in the world attempting to deliver mindfulness on such a scale. Our research has found our programs and curricula are generally well received and lead to significant improvements in both mental health and work/study engagement. Our programs also contributed to Monash for winning the World Health Organisation's "World's Healthiest Workplace" award in 2017. This keynote presentation outlines the underling rationale, the innovative nature of our approach and the results of our formal evaluations.

Improving the quality of behavioral healthcare for children and adolescents

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Statement of the Problem: Despite major advances in understanding what works best in the treatment of a wide range of behavioral health problems in children and adolescents, a significant gap remains between research and practice. To address this gap, intermediary organizations have been developed to work with treatment developers and community based providers to implement best practice models of care and train practitioners to deliver high quality services with good outcomes. This presentation will provide an overview of this methodology and a case study of how behavioral health services were improved within a statewide system of care.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This presentation will provide an overview of the roles and functions of an intermediary organization working to improve behavioral health services in a statewide system, as well as the implementation framework used to train and disseminate an evidence-based practice, the modular approach for treatment of children with anxiety, depression, trauma and conduct (MATCH). A brief overview of the MATCH model will be presented followed by a discussion of implementation strategies and system wide outcomes resulting in improved quality of care.

Conclusion & Significance: As the need for effective services for children and adolescents grows, it is vital that we explore effective mechanisms to train providers in evidence-based models to improve the quality of care. This presentation will demonstrate an effective strategy that has been used to train behavioral health providers impacting thousands of families. This model can be replicated in other settings around the world