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Mindfulness based resiliency training “Train before the Trauma”

Jon Carson

York Regional Police, Canada

Const. Jon Carson is bringing mindful meditation to the York Regional Police force. After spending four years in therapies after being diagnosed with PTSD in 2009, Carson was handed a magazine about mindfulness. On the cover? An officer, much like himself, speaking about meditation. The magazine marked a turning point in Carson's life, and he began practising mindfulness and meditation, first individually, before bringing it to the police organization. Today, Carson is a training and academic instructor, and he works with various officers in the force, teaching them how to incorporate mindfulness into their everyday lives and policing. “If you're able to ground yourself with breathing exercises, you come to respond more in difficult situations as opposed to reacting,” he says. He adds that instilling the values of meditation into the force is also about starting a dialogue in the policing community. “I think it has the ability to create a lasting impact to change policing, and change humanity for that matter.

Mindfulness Based Resiliency Training (MBRT): Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. York regional police are in the early stages of implementing, Utilizing Mindfulness Techniques. The essence of their program is creating cross-cultural conversations, where people of all backgrounds can explore and build a repertoire of skills for enhancing their social and emotional awareness, their decision-making process and their overall health and well-being.

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Enhancing flexibility and values coherence in groups with the ACT matrix - Acceptance and commitment therapy matrix as a tool to promote flexibility and personal values coherence in groups

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The acceptance and commitment therapy matrix groups for people diagnosed with BPD are a treatment tested in a public mental health institution in Mexico City. These groups were designed to enhance psychological flexibility through discomfort acceptance and personal values awareness and they are organized through the use of a simple tool called the ACT Matrix. This workshop trains the use of the ACT Matrix, a visual diagram that teaches two basic discriminations represented by two axes: The difference between the sensory and inner experience, and the difference between moving toward who and what is important in your life as and opposition to moving away from undesired experiences like anger or guilt. The cross for this axes form four quadrants, “who and what is important”, “how can I move closer to that”, “inner obstacles” and “way to move away from those”. Attendees will learn to use the ACT Matrix as a visual metaphor that organizes analysis of personal and group experiences, guides decision making and problem solving, and enhancing people capacity to choose to do what is important for them in the face in difficult situations and feelings. Finally, attendees will learn the use of the ACT Matrix as a tool to promote group cohesion, self-validation, empathy and collaborative problem solving. The workshop focus in experiential and deliberate practice as methods to learn the use of the ACT Matrix in working with groups of people with severe difficulties for recognizing experiences and define goals in difficult life situations.

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