Mindfulness, Behaviour Change and Engagement in Public Policy

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Mindfulness Behaviour Change and Engagement in Public Policy
An Evaluation

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How could mindfulness help to address climate change?

Connect us with each other
Connect us with nature
If we’re less stressed we might recycle more and buy less, live more simply

Climate change and human behaviour (habits, emotions, cognitive protection).
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change

1. Context for our work.

1. Design and Implementation of the MBCEPP programme.

1. Preliminary results of the MBCEPP.

1. Future Directions.
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change

1. Context for our work.
A new vision of the human

Homo Economicus
A new vision of the human

Homo Economicus

Homer Simpson
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change


1. Design and Implementation of the MBCEPP programme.
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<th>Mindfulness</th>
<th>Behaviour change</th>
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<td>Taster</td>
<td>Raisin practice, reflection, questions</td>
<td>Overview of behaviour change</td>
<td>Giving taster of practices and inquiry method as well as background</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to body scan and short breath practice, short stretch</td>
<td>Automatic mind Understanding habits</td>
<td>Noticing habits and experimenting with changing habits</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Repeat body scan/extend breath practice, short stretch</td>
<td>System 1 and 2 thinking, reflection versus fast response</td>
<td>Inviting a noticing of decisions/choices</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Extend breath practice and add sound and breathing space</td>
<td>Discussion of role of emotion in behavioural motivations</td>
<td>Inviting a noticing of nature of responses</td>
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Delivery

4 Programmes
Delivered to Staff from:
  Education
  Climate Change
  Natural Resources
  Planning

1 Programme
Delivered to majority of staff
  Shorter 4-week course

1 Programme
Autumn 2015

61 People
Evaluation

- 3 stage Quantitative Survey (Five Facets of Mindfulness and Behavioural Insights Indicators).

- Feedback Feed/Forward Workshops (with all available participants)

- In-Depth Qualitative Interviews (with selection of participants).
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change

1. Context for work.

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1. Preliminary results of the MBCEPP.
Mindfulness Traits

i. Measurable increase in mindfulness for each trait assessed (observing, describing, non-reacting, awareness, non-judging)

“... think that it’s really important having the capacity to learn and think rather than just going with the prevailing wind [...] if you do that you can start changing how you see, even how you look, at things. If you don’t give yourself space I think that you just get caught-up with the tide”.
— MBCEPP Participant I
ii. Participants experienced a significant increase in their understandings of the principles of behaviour change following the course.

(Cognitive biases; automatic mind process; social norms values; habits)
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change

iii. Mindfulness practice enhanced the ways in which participants understood human behaviour and the related principles of behaviour change.

“What I would say I’ve [...] taken directly from the course on a personal level is that they [academics and behaviour change experts] lack the experience of how difficult it is to change behaviour [...] I think that the mindfulness aspect of the course has perhaps given me more of an insight into behaviour change than the theoretical aspects of it”.

— MBCEPP Participant
iv. The deeper levels of personal awareness of self and others developed within the course appeared to lead participants to support behaviour change policies that were empowering and non-manipulative.

“...A lot of the behaviour change stuff, I might have dealt with it quite theoretically, and I might have looked at unconscious biases and gone, “oh yes I can see them out there and over there”, whereas I feel much more able to go, “oh, I can see them in here in this group of which I am a part of”, so it has shifted my perspective [...] so rather than thinking it’s them with the problem, I now know it is us with the challenge.

MBCEPP Participant
Mindfulness and the Civil Service

“[w]e get told that we should act in this way, we should strive for excellence, we should be efficient. You know all of those kinds of mantras come out in terms of a corporate sort of approach. And I just, I don’t think people connect with them at all [...] But I just think that as a way of connecting with the vision of an organization, I think there’s a lot more in the mindfulness theory that can help us to be better and more sensitive and listen more and be better connected to stakeholders [...]”

— MBCEPP Participant

Realigning Values
“[the MBCEPP course] raises your own awareness of [...] your own personal prejudices and reactions when dealing with others [...] but the thing with civil servants—this is a cliché—is that we’re not really supposed to have opinions. But of course we do. We have to have professional opinions, which might not necessarily align with our personal opinions. But I think that [the course] facilitates the ability to do that. Because you have to engage in a form of double think at times. And a course like this facilitates the ability to be able to think along a different line than the one you might be automatically inclined to fall into.”

— MBCEPP Participant
Mindfulness and Behaviour Change

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1. Future Directions.
Future Directions

The challenge of measurement.

Time is a crucial factor.

Public trials on specific behaviours (different perspective on behavioural empowerment).

Mindfulness as a *More-Than-Therapeutic* technique
“In terms of running the mindfulness with the behaviour change: one of the things that I think is advantageous about that is that you are looking at yourself, but you are looking at yourself within the system of other people, and so you are starting perhaps to get to a point to say this is actually not about therapy for the individual this is actually about the therapeutic need of the broken system [...]”

MBCEPP Participant