

MINDFULNESS

The ECOHE's mindfulness program is a series of free presentations designed to teach people from minority and marginalized populations about the purpose and benefits of mindfulness as well as some basic mindfulness activities that they can use for their own practice or share with others. The program is offered both as a formal training with a slide presentation and as an informal one in community engagement settings, such as during tabling at health fairs. In 2023, the mindfulness program was revised to incorporate Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) concepts learned by ECOHE staff in an MBSR training from UB School of Nursing and Brown University.



“This was awesome, thank you! I’m going to be mindful.”

-Mindfulness Workshop Participant

Some of the possible benefits of mindfulness may include increased focus and emotional regulation, reduced anxiety and depression, and improved pain management and sleep. Mindfulness, a form of self-care, can help address social and community context as a SDOH. The ECOHE's mindfulness program is designed for minority, marginalized, and disadvantaged populations in Erie County. The mindfulness program relates to two functions of the ECOHE under the Erie County Health Equity Act of 2021: to pilot models and programs to improve health disparities and to promote public awareness and coordinate educational opportunities with the goal of supporting healthy lifestyles among disadvantaged and marginalized people.

In 2023, the ECOHE reached approximately 650 residents of Erie County through formal mindfulness workshops and informal mindfulness education provided at six community events and one festival. Approximately 570 of the 650 participants were Erie County residents from minority and marginalized populations, including people from racially and ethnically minoritized communities, older adults, and residents of low-income households. 80 participants were staff members from the Erie County Department of Social Services, who completed this training for their own self-care to help reduce burnout and increase their capacity to work effectively with clients. Feedback on the mindfulness program has been positive. One participant shared that at the end of the guided meditation included in the training, she felt relaxed. Another attendee shared that during the workshop, she realized that she is always “doing a lot of things at once” and resolved to do this less. Another participant related the content of the trainings to the following quote or prayer: “Accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” At the end of a workshop, another participant stated, “This was awesome, thank you! I’m going to be mindful.”

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Next steps for the mindfulness program include modifying the workshop for delivery to children in schools and day camps or potentially creating a “train the trainer” version to train school teachers and day camp staff how to teach mindfulness to the children in their care. Additionally, content from the mindfulness program may be integrated into future versions of the ECOHE’s Let’s Talk About Mental Health newsletter.

Examples of Mindfulness Training Handouts



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MINDFULNESS
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