Presenters

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Rationale for Presentation
• Definitions – Mindfulness; Wellness
• GW’s Programmatic Initiatives – Mindfulness/Wellness
• How You Can Implement Initiatives on Your Campus
• Mindfulness Exercises
• Discussion/Questions
Learning Outcomes

• Goal #1: Learn definitions of mindfulness and wellness and the benefits for military and veteran students.
• Goal #2: Engage in sample mindfulness activities that can be adapted for military students.
• Goal #3: Learn about GW's curricular approach to mindfulness and wellness, which includes yoga, outdoor adventure/leadership, fitness, and meditation.
• Goal #4: Learn about cost effective ways to leverage campus and community resources.
• Goal #5: Share promising practices with each other.
Back Story

- NASPA 2019
  - Ideas and information exchange
  - Inspirational
- Challenge to have cost-effective programming...
Definitions and Examples

• Mindfulness
  
  – “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally.” Jon Kabat-Zinn

  – Receptivity, versus reactivity

  – Strengthens social-emotional regulation, cognitive outcomes, overall well-being.

Mindfulness can be practiced through exercises that engage any of the 8 senses.
Why Mindfulness for All Students, Student Veterans, Academia?

(Adapted from Sonn, Erin 2019)

- Noticeable change in overall GW culture to reflect and embody the principles and practice of mindfulness;
- Decreased levels of stress among GW military students, increased sense of well-being;
- Increased retention, persistence, and graduation rates of GW’s military students;
- Increased capacity for learning and preparedness to connect, create, and innovate, due to increased neuroplasticity, as well as accessibility and development of prefrontal cortex (brain);
- Increased social and emotional intelligence, sense of resilience and perseverance, and overall growth mindset;
- Greater sense of community and connectedness among students/faculty/staff, who receive mindfulness training (PD), and students/stakeholders;
- Higher perceived level of efficacy, and lower stress levels among students/faculty/staff.
Implementation at GW - Planning and Rationale

- Self-Study Findings & Strategic Planning Action Items:
  - CAS Standards for Veteran Offices
  - Promising Practices/Benchmarking
  - Self-Study Themes
  - Campus Experts
    - Self Study Team
    - Counseling
    - Nursing
    - Integrative Medicine
    - Naval ROTC
    - Public Health
Implementation at GW - Curriculum

- **Curriculum**
  - Holistic Wellness Model
    - Mindfulness
    - Fitness
    - Outdoor Activities
    - Meditation
    - Yoga
    - Facility Dog
  - Adapted to GW campus culture/climate
    - City Setting, High Intensity
  - Adapted to GW military student demographics
    - Graduate Students
    - Online Offerings
    - Multiple demands on time - family, school, work/internships, etc.
    - Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Sleep Issues.
Implementation at GW - Programs, Activities, & Initiatives
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How do you get *busy* students to be excited about these activities?

- Instagram/Social Media
- Videos (home-made)
- Advertising
Our newest Wellness/mindfulness effort GW Facility Dog Initiative: Our newest staff member: Laney; partner: Semper K9
Implementation at GW - Key Partnerships

• **Academic Partners**
  – School of Medicine
  – School of Public Health
  – Counseling Program

• **Campus Partners**
  – Health and Fitness Center
  – Student Counseling Center
  – TRAILS

• **VSO Partners**
  – Team Red, White, and Blue
  – Semper K9

• **Other Partners/Resources**
  – GW Naval ROTC
  – Dept of Veteran Affairs
  – Sierra Club
Implementation at GW - Funding

- Use Existing Resources - online;
- Engage Campus Experts;
- Partner with other Campus Offices;
- Work with Local, Regional, and National Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs);
- Research Community-Based Resources and Services;
- Grant-Writing; and
- Fund-Raising.
Implementation at GW - Next Steps

- Create more intentional learning outcomes;
- Perform pre- and post-surveys;
- Assess individual programs;
- Perform a needs analysis;
- Create a more robust communications campaign; and
- Hire a consultant/full time staff member.
Wellness on Your Campus

**Cost Effective Plan**

- Step One: Assess Your Students’ Needs - analyze demographics, talk with student veterans, SVA chapters, etc.
- Step Two: Inventory Current Resources, Activities, Initiatives
- Step Three: Identify Partners
  - Student Veteran “Champions”
  - On-campus: schools of medicine, public health, counseling programs, counseling center, etc.
  - Off-campus: VSOs, grants, etc.
- Step Four: Create a Curriculum for the Year/Semester
- Step Five: Start Slow and Gain Momentum
- Step Six: Use multimedia to promote events; have co-sponsors
- Step Seven: Build a Case Statement - Grants and Donations
- Step Eight: Continue to Build Partnerships
- Step Nine: Evaluate and Plan for Next Year
Mindfulness Demonstration

- Exercises
Wellness on Your Campus

• Other Cost Effective Ideas
  – Interview a counselor or mindfulness instructor right before finals for a webinar for campus-based and online students;
  – Advertise free or by donation community yoga courses;
  – Hike a local trail not requiring transportation;
  – Organize your own 5K or 10K - walk/run; and
  – Research local non-profits that offer wellness resource/services/activities/discounts for servicemembers.
    • Examples: [Semper K9](https://semperk9.org), [Project Healing Waters](https://www.projecthealingwaters.org), [Veterans Yoga Project](https://www.veteransyoga.org); [https://youtu.be/DZi5Zod-tXo](https://youtu.be/DZi5Zod-tXo)
Free Mindfulness Resources

• Meditation:
  – Mindful Magazine: https://www.mindful.org/audio-resources-for-mindfulness-meditation/
  – UCLA Health - Mindful Research Center: https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations
  – Muse: Free Mindful Resources: https://choosemuse.com/blog/ultimate-list-of-free-meditation-resources/

• Yoga:
  – https://www.thebalanceeveryday.com/free-yoga-videos-1356521
  – https://www.yogiapproved.com/yoga/youtube-channels-we-recommend-for-free-yoga-videos/
  – Veterans Yoga Project resources: https://www.veteransyogaproject.org/practice
Questions?

Should you have any questions, please reach out to:

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