

Partnership Story: Building Presence and Compassion at Auckland's University of Technology

AUT and BlueSkyMinds have partnered together since 2018 to offer a range of mindfulness-based programmes to AUT Staff



AUT

UNIVERSITY

NEW ZEALAND

Industry: Tertiary Education
Locations: Auckland City, Manukau, North Cote
Size: 2500+

Background

In 2018, survey feedback from AUT staff indicated that mindfulness-based training to support professional development would be a highly valued addition to the range of training programmes offered by AUT's Talent and Culture team.

Given BlueSkyMinds adherence to research-based curriculum and highly trained facilitators, AUT chose to partner with them to create a programme that would suit the culture at AUT and align to the values and aspirations of AUT's people.

The Initiative

In 2018, AUT piloted an 8 week programme (2hrs per week) entitled "Being Present". This Curriculum is founded on research-based mindfulness training created by Oxford (MBCT) and UMass Universities (MBSR) and customised to align with AUT's culture and values.

Being Present was open to all staff. The initial pilot was well attended and pre and post self reported feedback indicated an increase in presence and focus, and resilience, as well as a decrease in self reported stress.

Based on these pilot results, this programme has now been extended to offer the following initiatives for AUT people:-

- Regular Eight Week (2 hours per week) "Being Present" Programmes offered throughout the year.
- A Four Week 'Level Two' advanced Being Present mindfulness programme.
- Refresher sessions for Being Present "graduates" to attend.
- Offering a "Leading with Presence" Eight week programme designed to strengthen resilience, wellbeing, self-awareness, focus and ability to respond positively to change for People Leaders.

"We have seen a significant reduction in self-reported stress, and increase in resilience, and personal productivity. Feedback from the participants has also been very positive, with many commenting on the transformational impact this course has had on their wellbeing, achievement and compassion to themselves and others"

- Kate Birch
Director, Talent & Culture
AUT

The Impact Snapshot

Increase in Ability to Optimise Productivity

33%

Increase in Resilience

24%

Reduction in Self-Perceived Stress

22%

Reduction in Mind Wandering

21%



"This was a really transformational programme for me.. The insights I've had and the skills I've developed over the past 8 weeks will change my life."

PARTICIPANT, BEING PRESENT PROGRAMME, AUT

The Impact

We measured the impact on stress, resilience, focus and productivity on 18 participants and found:

*Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983), global measure of perceived stress

*The Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, B.W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P. and Bernard, J) assesses the ability to bounce back

21.9% reduction in stress*

24.1% increase in resilience*

33.3% increase in ability to optimise productivity - 'I take time each day to optimise my personal productivity.'

21.1% decrease in mind wandering - 'I am able to respond with clarity, even under pressure.'



"Most people would benefit from this in their personal and working lives. If we all did the Being Present programme the working environment would subtly improve...It would be more peaceful, & people would be more considerate and understanding."

PARTICIPANT, BEING PRESENT PROGRAMME, AUT



"It has made me very grateful to work at AUT. It has connected me with other staff and the training has helped with my focus and outlook at work."

PARTICIPANT, BEING PRESENT PROGRAMME, AUT

BlueSkyMinds

Founded in 2016, BlueSkyMinds provides science-based mindfulness programmes that are proven to deliver sustainable change for individuals and organisations.

In a fast-paced world filled with distractions, deadlines and demands, the ability to manage our own minds is absolutely critical to effectively perform, lead, connect, inspire and deliver.

BlueSkyMinds.org



BlueSkyMinds
SCIENCE BASED MINDFULNESS