

Impact of Certification in Mental Health Education Program on Doctor's Mental Health and Professional Well-being

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the impact of the Certification in Mental Health Education Program on doctors' mental health and professional well-being. With the increasing prevalence of stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion among healthcare workers, this structured program introduces ten core competencies aimed at addressing these issues. The research explores how this initiative can support doctors in managing their mental health within healthcare organizations. The program emphasizes practical skills such as mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which received positive feedback from all participants. This suggests its potential to enhance mental health awareness, reduce burnout and improve patient care. The findings indicate the program's value in promoting personal growth and professional resilience, highlighting its role as a transformative approach in medical education.

Keywords: Mental health competencies, Burnout prevention, Healthcare professionals, Medical education, Stress management

1. Introduction

Doctors and other healthcare workers increasingly face stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion in their roles¹. The concurrent mental health crisis among patients, alongside significant burnout among healthcare providers, underscores the urgent need to advance the medical education system to address these emerging concerns. This research project presents a structured certification program designed to provide doctors with mental health education encompassing ten core competencies.

It examines the implications of this innovative program and its potential to enhance doctors' management of mental health within healthcare organizations. The issue of mental health is more pressing than ever and has garnered significant social interest. Depression, anxiety and stress-related disorders are leading causes of disability, morbidity and mortality worldwide². At the same time, the medical profession is experiencing high levels of burnout, which adversely affects practice and patient care. Doctors' burnout is not only a personal issue; it negatively

impacts teamwork, patient interactions and contributes to employee turnover³. Addressing these challenges requires the development of innovative, research-based solutions. Henning, et al.⁴ have noted that, given the vital role doctors play in delivering mental health competencies, it is surprising that many healthcare practitioners receive little formal education in this area. This gap in training fails to equip doctors to manage their psychological well-being, interact effectively with colleagues and meet their patients' psychological needs⁴. The certification program discussed in this research aims to bridge this gap by introducing doctors to ten evidence-based, peer-reviewed skills: mindfulness, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) strategies, a trauma-informed approach and stress management. These competencies were primarily developed to prevent burnout among doctors and, secondarily, to improve patient outcomes and foster a positive work environment. This research marks a pioneering investigation into the benefits of formal training in mental health competencies specifically for physicians. A structured survey was administered to twelve physicians who completed the certification program to assess their perceptions of its efficacy. The insights gathered were then thoroughly analyzed to evaluate the program's effectiveness in addressing burnout and improving mental health and patient outcomes. The findings suggest significant future implications for ongoing innovation in training programs, policy development and the integration of mental health literacy into medical curricula. As a next-generation training program, this certification initiative aims to instigate substantial changes in how mental health issues affecting both doctors and patients are addressed. With rising stress and burnout within the profession, incorporating mental health education into mainstream medical training represents a significant shift towards a sustainable healthcare model. This program not only equips participants with employable skills and generates income for the organization, but it also shows potential as a transformative force in medical education and mental health advocacy. The central research question guiding this study is: What is the attitude of physicians towards the effectiveness of the structured mental health education certification program in addressing personal and professional challenges and how can the findings inform the design of improved training models for the future?

2. Methodology

This study employed a concurrent mixed-method design to assess the level of mental health promotion and competency among participants who completed the "Certification in Mental Health called Mighty Champions of Mental Health" program. Data collection was conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively, gathering feedback from participants and a series of assessments they provided. The focus of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a mental health education certification program for medical professionals, specifically

involving 12 doctors who completed the program. The program included training in 10 evidence-based skills competencies aimed at enhancing mental health. Upon completion, participants received a certificate and subsequently filled out a survey to provide feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the program. The primary aim was to assess how the mental health education certification could benefit doctors in their personal well-being, professional roles and patient care, with an emphasis on preventing burnout and supporting their colleagues. Data were collected through an online survey administered to the doctors after they completed the certification process. The survey included both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to gauge participants' attitudes, behaviors and the practical application of the skills they learned during the program. The survey was structured around several key areas: the program's impact, its practical application, the competencies taught, personal growth and burnout prevention. In the Program Impact section, participants were asked to evaluate how helpful the certification program was for improving their mental health and preventing burnout for themselves and their patients. The Practical Application section focused on how the doctors planned to apply the knowledge and skills acquired, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mindfulness and resiliency, in their professional practice. The Skills and Competencies section highlighted the 10 competencies taught during the program, which included essential skills for managing stress, increasing self-awareness and enhancing communication and listening skills. The Personal Growth section invited participants to reflect on how the program had affected their mental health, mood and self-awareness. Finally, the Burnout Prevention section explored the program's role in helping doctors manage burnout, emphasizing strategies such as meditation, self-care and work-life balance. Data analysis involved summarizing the responses using descriptive statistics, focusing on participants' self-rating scores for various program features. Open-ended responses were analyzed thematically to identify key themes, including the perceived transformational value of mindfulness and CBT, the importance of resiliency and stress management for both personal and professional development, awareness of burnout symptoms and the intended integration of the competencies into clinical practice, particularly in supporting patients and colleagues. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring that all surveys were completed anonymously. Implicit consent was obtained when the doctors filled out the surveys and the data collected were used solely for the purposes of this study, aimed at evaluating the impact of the mental health education certification program.

3. Results

The data summarized in the following (**Table 1**) offer a summary of participants' expectations and expectations of the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program.

Table 1: Summary of participants' expectations and expectations of the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program.

Do you think the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program will help improve mental health in your future patients?	Do you feel you learned something valuable during the program?	Did the program improve your own mental health or self-awareness?	Were the resources (books, sessions, guided meditations) easy to understand and implement?	Do you think the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program will help reduce burnout for medical professionals like yourself?	Did the program make you more aware of the signs of burnout in yourself and others?	How likely are you to use the mindfulness and stress-management techniques from the program to manage stress in your life?	Do you feel more equipped to maintain your mental health and well-being after completing the program?
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes

Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	Yes

All participants answered ‘Yes’ to the first question: ‘Do you think that the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program will help improve mental health in your future patients?’ This indicates a strong belief in the program’s effectiveness, evidenced by a high level of optimism. Such optimism is crucial for encouraging participation and recognizing the value of the program in the workplace. Second, responses to the question regarding knowledge gained from the program (“If yes, in which areas of the program?”) indicate that participants not only found the content relevant but also felt that the delivery enhanced their understanding. Similarly, when asked about the extent to which the program enhanced their personal mental health awareness, all participants responded affirmatively. This suggests that the program addresses both the professional aspects of working in healthcare and the interpersonal elements, which could be vital for fostering a positive mental health culture in the workplace. Participants reported that the books, sessions and guided meditations included in the program were easy to implement. This ease of use likely contributes to the program’s effectiveness, as many resources can be overly complex, hindering engagement and application. The program also prompted participants to consider its role in reducing burnout among professionals. From the responses, we can infer a strong need for the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program to be implemented in healthcare settings to address the issue of burnout, especially given the substantial pressure healthcare employees face. Additionally, participants reported increased confidence in identifying signs of burnout in themselves and others after completing the program (“Did the program make you more aware of the signs of burnout in yourself and others?”). This newfound awareness is beneficial for mental health workers. Another aspect of the program involved assessing the expected usage of its components (“To what extent are you likely to use the mindfulness and stress-management techniques from the program to manage stress in your life?”). Most responses rated the likelihood of using these techniques between 9 and 10 on a scale of 1 to 10, indicating strong interest in incorporating these techniques into practice and demonstrating the program’s practical applicability. Finally, questions regarding post-program preparedness (“How ready do you feel to sustain your mental health after the program’s completion?”) and feelings of being more equipped to maintain mental health (“Do you feel more equipped to maintain your mental health and well-being after the program?”) received ratings of 8, 9 or 10. This suggests a significant increase in perceived self-efficacy and confidence in managing mental health, which could lead to improvements in patient care. In conclusion, all the data indicate that the Mighty

Champions of Mental Health program is highly beneficial for staff development in mental health and for fostering personal stress-coping skills. The positive responses to every aspect of the program evaluation highlight its holistic approach and the participants’ willingness and ability to implement the lessons learned in their jobs and daily lives. This potentially enhances the mental health of future patients, underscoring the broader implications of the program within the healthcare sector.

3.1. Theme 1: Perceived impact on future patients

Participants widely agreed that the program would enhance their ability to support the mental health of their future patients. Respondent 3 emphasized, “It provided me with enough knowledge to help patients of all ages, both adults and children.” Similarly, Respondent 1 highlighted the importance of “encouraging patients to be mindful, sharing information about CBT and practicing these techniques during hectic days.” Respondent 9 reflected on a broader perspective, stating that the program “broadened my vision towards people, helped me be nonjudgmental and allowed me to show more positivity while dealing with patients.”

3.2. Theme 2: Valuable learning outcomes

Participants found the program highly valuable for both professional and personal growth. Mindfulness techniques and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) were recurring topics. Respondent 2 noted, “I learned many mindfulness techniques to apply during stressful social situations to keep myself calm and rethink my perspective about someone else during conflicts.” Respondent 12 provided a comprehensive summary, stating, “I learned techniques to prioritize mental well-being, including mindfulness, deep breathing, muscle relaxation, cognitive behavioral therapy, the PERMA theory and SWOT analysis.”

3.3. Theme 3: Application in personal and professional life

Many respondents indicated they could apply the learnings immediately. Respondent 7 stated, “I apply what I learned every day and it gets better with practice over time.” Similarly, Respondent 4 mentioned using the knowledge “every now and then,” while Respondent 11 shared, “I am applying what I learn in my daily activities.” Respondents also discussed integrating these skills into their practice. Respondent 3 noted, “It empowers me to screen for mental health-related issues such as depression and anxiety.” Respondent 12 emphasized a systemic approach, stating, “I plan to integrate the mental health competencies gained from the program to enhance early identification and intervention for patients with mental health conditions.”

3.4. Theme 4: Skills and techniques gained

Specific skills, such as active listening, mindfulness and resilience, were frequently mentioned. Respondent 1 pointed out that they learned “how to be an active listener.” Respondent 4 discussed “social awareness and responsible decision-making.” Mindfulness was particularly impactful, with Respondent 7 stating, “I help my patients every day, mentally and physically. By learning more from this program, I can be more helpful to my patients.”

3.5. Theme 5: Personal growth and self-awareness

The program’s focus on self-awareness and personal growth resonated strongly with participants. Respondent 6 highlighted the value of “trauma-informed care” and the “mind-body connection.” Respondent 5 shared a realization: “This program really gave me insight into how much mental illness has increased in modern times; so many diseases are associated with it.” Respondent 10 appreciated the importance of “taking time for ourselves” and emphasized the benefits of “meditation and mindfulness classes.”

3.6. Theme 6: Addressing burnout

The program was viewed as a tool for managing and preventing burnout. Respondent 8 stated it had helped them “in every aspect of my life.” Respondent 12 elaborated on specific strategies, highlighting the importance of “recognizing early signs of stress and promoting self-care strategies, open communication, seeking help, mindfulness and stress management techniques.” Respondent 3 provided practical advice: “First of all, I’d encourage them to slow down and breathe. Then, with a calm mind, looking at the problem while being grounded can significantly help reduce burnout.”

3.7. Theme 7: Most beneficial aspects

Participants highlighted mindfulness, resilience and self-care as the most beneficial aspects of the program. Respondent 7 expressed, “Honestly, I think finding people like us-foreign doctors that we can trust-was extremely beneficial.” Respondent 11 noted the importance of “enjoying small breaks and meditation.” Respondent 2 encapsulated the value of multiple competencies, stating, “The competencies on mindfulness, self-awareness and self-management were the most beneficial in promoting my personal growth.”

4. Discussion

The results of this study support the importance of the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program among Community Health Workers (CHWs) and other healthcare professionals, emphasizing the necessity of addressing mental health issues while enhancing their own resilience. The discussion analyzes the relevance of these findings, their applications in other fields and prospects for future research and practical applications. This research revealed that every doctor who participated in the study personally recognized the benefits of the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program in improving the mental health of future patients. Such consensus indicates that the program effectively translates knowledge into strategies that healthcare professionals can actively apply in their practice. Importantly, mental health remains a critical consideration in patient care.

In this context, it is essential to recognize that mental health

remains a vital consideration in patient management. Equipping those responsible for patient care with the appropriate tools is crucial⁵. Participants in the program expressed confidence in their ability to provide patient care, indicating that the program effectively bridges the gap between theory and practice. Every respondent reported gaining new insights from the program, emphasizing its educational benefits. This aligns with the program’s goal of delivering relevant and engaging content for participants. By providing practical and realistic solutions, the program equips participants with the knowledge they can apply after completing their training.

The study found that all participants experienced improvements in their mental health and self-awareness. This finding is particularly significant, as stress and burnout are common among healthcare professionals. Enhancing self-identity is crucial for identifying mental health disorders⁶. The program’s promotion of self-awareness suggests that participants had the opportunity to discuss their mental health openly. Self-aware professionals are less likely to experience burnout and can model positive behavior for colleagues and patients⁷.

All participants in the program endorsed the credibility of the resources, including books, sessions and guided meditations, stating that the information received was easily applicable in their practice. This strong consensus underscores the accessibility and effectiveness of the program. Healthcare jobs often involve long hours and heavy workloads, leaving little time for complex or time-intensive approaches⁸. Given that the resources are straightforward, participants can easily integrate these tools into their daily routines. This is especially important for scalability, as easily accessible resources are more likely to be adopted widely.

Burnout and stress in physicians are prevalent issues that affect all aspects of life and the quality of healthcare. All respondents indicated that the program would help reduce burnout, further validating the study’s significance. Symptoms of burnout, such as exhaustion, detachment and a diminished sense of accomplishment, negatively impact the quality of care⁹. The program helps participants understand how to prevent and reduce burnout and additionally contributes positively to overall healthcare provision. Moreover, the program has effectively raised awareness of burnout signs, not just among participants but also their colleagues. The findings suggest that the program trains participants to become mental health advocates within their organizations. By promoting preventative actions, the program’s impact extends beyond the individuals directly involved.

When asked about their likelihood of applying mindfulness and stress management techniques from the program to their everyday stress, nearly all respondents rated their intention as 8-10 out of 10. This strong support indicates that the techniques taught are highly applicable and significant for addressing participants’ needs. For clinicians in voluntary health sectors, learning to manage stress and practice mindfulness is essential. Implementing these techniques in daily practice may enhance both the physical and emotional aspects of their lives. The generalizable implications of this study not only highlight the benefits for participants but also show that healthcare providers who practice mindfulness are better equipped to make informed decisions during emergencies, leading to improved patient outcomes and a positive work environment. Additionally, the

adoption of these techniques can influence colleagues to do the same, extending the program's reach.

Finally, all participants felt better equipped to maintain their mental health after completing the program. This observation underscores the program's effectiveness in providing sustainable skills and knowledge for managing mental health. In professions where self-assessment and the management of mental health issues are critical, this sense of empowerment is invaluable. By fostering self-empowerment, the program helps dismantle barriers to seeking assistance and promotes healthy mental health practices.

This study carries broader implications for healthcare and mental health interventions. The program's success in reducing burnout and enhancing self-awareness suggests that similar interventions could be beneficial in other settings to alleviate burnout and improve overall well-being. This model is practical and scalable, thanks to the accessibility of resources and techniques. Additionally, the universally positive response highlights the need for and the importance of engaging healthcare professionals in the development and assessment of mental health solutions. This company ensures that the program content meets the needs and preferences of participants, reinforcing the learner-driven and high quality of the Mighty Champions of Mental Health program. This participatory process could serve as a reference model for future activity planning. Moreover, stress-relief methods, including those that incorporate spirituality, are considered effective for the mental well-being and sustainable productivity for today's working individuals. With more organizations placing a high value on their employees' physical, mental and emotional well-being, these programs can be invaluable in fostering a productive workforce.

Despite the positive outcomes of this study, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is response bias, as the study relies on self-reported data. Some respondents may have provided positive answers due to social pressure or the expectation of favorable feedback. Future empirical work could address this issue by including quantitative evaluative data on the program's effectiveness, such as self-administered measures of mental well-being and job efficiency collected before and after the program. Additionally, the sample size and characteristics of the participants may pose a potential threat to external validity. Since all participants showed approval, the study should be replicated with larger, more diverse populations in various settings. Future studies could also assess the program's long-term efficacy, examining how well it sustains the lessons learned months or years after completion. Finally, as this study involved HCPC-registered professionals, it would be interesting to explore the generalizability of the program to other VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) occupations. Understanding how to extend or reformulate the program's strategies might enhance its effectiveness across different organizations. The Mighty Champions of Mental Health program has shown remarkable effectiveness in managing mental health issues that affect healthcare workers. The identified benefits-including increased self-awareness, decreased turnover rates and effective stress-management techniques-make this program timely and valuable. Its accessible approach and available materials suggest that its strategies can be integrated into various settings, making it a promising model for expansion. Future research and program extensions could further strengthen its results and support a healthier, more stress-resilient workforce.

5. Conclusion

The Mighty Champions of Mental Health program is a highly impactful and necessary initiative for mental health training customized for doctors and other medical practitioners. The program has achieved a 100% approval rating, highlighting its effectiveness in addressing the mental health care competencies required for doctor training. This is especially important at a time when physicians are facing dual crises: the mental health of their patients and their own burnout. Serving both as an antidote to burnout and a means of enhancing healthcare providers' ability to manage their own well-being and that of their patients, the structured curriculum of the program includes ten foundational competencies. These encompass mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral approaches, trauma-informed care and resilience building. The emphasis on utilizing methods that can be applied in clinical practice-such as mindfulness techniques to reduce stress-has been particularly appreciated, as these can be directly implemented in clinical settings. The study's outcomes indicate a significant perceived increase in participants' abilities to recognize stress and burnout in themselves and other employees. This heightened awareness is crucial for the early detection of psychological issues in the medical field. The program's applicability of various mental health competencies to learners' actual practice is a major innovation in medical training that could help produce a more resilient healthcare workforce and ultimately enhance patient care. Additionally, feedback regarding program resources-ranging from books to guided meditations-suggests positive outcomes based on a straightforward and usable model. This is particularly crucial in the medical field, given its demanding schedule. Furthermore, this approach benefits participants not only because they realize that the techniques they learn can be applied in practice but also in their intention to incorporate mental health practices into their professional and personal lives. The implications of these findings extend beyond merely reminding medical educators of the limited attention mental health currently receives in formal training. The approach to organizing the learning and training process, as demonstrated in the program, offers valuable insights for the future.

The current study serves as a starting point, indicating that further research is required in several key areas. For example, it is crucial to adopt measurement methods that do not rely solely on self-reported data. This would be essential for demonstrating the effectiveness of the program, particularly in terms of positive health outcomes and improvements in employee performance. Additionally, increasing the diversity of the sample concerning age, gender, cultural backgrounds and professions could help identify the variability of results, showcasing the broader applicability of the program. The Mighty Champions of Mental Health program is an initiative that offers unique mental health education within the medical profession. By fostering a culture of mental health awareness, equipping professionals with essential skills and exploring opportunities for further development across various professions and settings, the study presents the WPMH as not merely a response to current challenges, but as a step toward a more mindful and mentally healthy healthcare system. Integrating the program into traditional medical training could represent a significant advancement in addressing mental health issues within the medical field, suggesting a future where both physicians and patients benefit from a more holistic approach to health.

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