

Centre for **MENTAL** **HEALTH PROMOTION**

Public implementation of evidence-based stress reduction initiatives

Centre for Mental Health Promotion (CMHP) leads the largest public implementation of stress reduction programs in Denmark. CMHP comprises a research unit at University of Copenhagen and an Implementation Unit working with three Danish municipalities and other collaborators. We collaborate scientifically with four major Danish universities and six Danish research units on implementing and developing our public programs and strategies for stress reduction. CMHP collaborates internationally with Norway (Oslo University) and the United States (Harvard).

The treatment paradigm Open and Calm

The central paradigm is termed Open and Calm or formally Relaxation-Response-based Mental Health Promotion (RR-MHP). RR-MHP has been developed in a collaboration between Copenhagen University Hospital and the Benson-Henry Institute of Mind-Body Medicine at Harvard University. The model has been developed into several formats. The main intervention is a 9-week bio-psychosocially structured program focusing week-by-week on either the body, the mind, or social relationships in a cyclic fashion. The program is manualized and thoroughly developed over an 8-year period. The program content is weekly 3-hour sessions in groups of 14 citizens and a certified instructor. In addition, each participant is offered 2 individual sessions with the instructor during the program. The practices include RR/mindfulness meditation, psychoeducation, standardized handouts, a course book (130p.), a cell-phone app, and a webpage.

Results from the first three years of implementation have shown consistent, large and significant effect sizes on perceived stress and symptoms of depression. Medium or large effect sizes have also been observed consistently for measures of sleep disturbances, mental health, attentiveness and cortisol secretion. Municipal evaluation reports have demonstrated 94-100% satisfaction among the course participants. New data from Aalborg municipality support beneficial effects on workability. All research papers and evaluations are downloadable at www.cfps.dk/forskningsprojekter.

International recommendations

Public implementation of mental health promotion initiatives is recommended internationally by e.g., the American Psychological Association, the European Psychiatric Association, and the WHO. Prevention of mental illnesses is among the most needed solutions to the increasing mental health problems related to stress. Cost-benefit research from our collaboration unit at Harvard University indicates that the RR-method behind *Open and Calm* results in large health economic savings.

Organization

The Implementation Unit is involved in all aspects of the implementation, such as education of municipal health workers, referral and assessment of citizens, certifying psychologists as instructors to run the actual programs, and in helping with establishing work flow and organizational structure.

Contact

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