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The Independent mindfulness information website



Leaders who use mindfulness at work: Case study 3

**Joel Rubinstein MD; Associate Medical Director
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care**

Business background & job role

Harvard Pilgrim is a not-for-profit health plan that provides a variety of insurance plan options and self-funding arrangements to more than one million members in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Harvard Pilgrim currently has 1300 staff, and actively promotes a healthy balance of work and personal life. They were recently named as one of the Globes top 100 places to work.

In recent years, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care has been the highest-ranked health insurance plan for overall member satisfaction. In addition, for the seventh consecutive year, Harvard Pilgrim was named the number one private health plan in America according to an annual ranking of the nation's best health plans by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Despite the recession, Harvard Pilgrim is continuing to grow steadily.

Joel Rubinstein provides medical leadership for a myriad of efforts include credentialing, behavioural health (he is a psychiatrist by training), design and implementation of pay for performance programs.

How did he become interested in mindfulness?

Joel became interested in mindfulness a number of years ago when working with patients. His wife introduced him to mindfulness through the Omega program in Rhinebeck, where he met Jon Kabat-Zinn and his associates.

How does mindfulness help in a work context?

Joel practices mindfulness around three times a week of for 20 to 30 minutes. He says "I attempt to stay in the moment, limit multi tasking, relax my body, and use the concepts of mindfulness to approach my work."

How does mindfulness help Harvard Pilgrim?

Around 25% of staff have attended mindfulness training (MBSR) run in house by Tara Healey.

Joel says "A number of my staff have taken Tara's training and found it very helpful in the way I mentioned above. The acceptance of the importance of mindfulness in the organization sets a tone around what the organization values".

If a colleague asked you if it was worth finding out more about mindfulness, what would you tell them?

"I would definitely tell them to take the MBSR training which removes the spiritual part of the equation. Jon's books are very helpful if they are readers. I would also suggest trying to sit still for five minutes to get a sense of how challenging mindfulness practices can be in a paradoxical way".

Further Information

- Harvard Pilgrim: <https://www.harvardpilgrim.org>
- Harvard Pilgrim Mind the Moment training programme for staff: www.harvardpilgrim.org/mindfulness
- Omega Institute Mindfulness programmes: <http://eomega.org/omega/workshops/260fbee7ca1f47a33514186b7543151e/>
- Mindfulnet: Mindfulness in the workplace: <http://www.mindfulnet.org/page9.htm>