

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

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POSITION: Psychologist

ORGANISATION: Greater Western Area Health Service

SUBMISSION1: The coal-face of health psychology research into prevention and wellbeing, indicates an association between stress, coping and a wide range of unhealthy behaviours and poor health outcomes.

In relation to diabetes and obesity, we know that if someone is experiencing an elevated stress response the impact of chronic exposure to stress hormones can result in metabolic changes. For example, glucose is metabolised differently in the presence of elevated stress hormones, and this impacts on weight, diabetes, mood and subsequently behaviour. This highlights the mind/body connection and provides a window of opportunity for prevention programmes.

Research into mindfulness (operationalised as attentional focus) indicates the importance of including mind processes in health related programmes targeting prevention and wellbeing.

We have had initial success running a programme in the Diabetes Unit at Dubbo Base Hospital called Managing Stress Mindfully which combines mindfulness and cognitive behaviour therapy. These programmes have been running successfully all over the world and target prevention and wellbeing.

If we can include programmes in schools and in the community that help children and adults moderate the stress response by being aware of the impact of internal events (eg cognitions) on behaviours, we are likely to have more chance of success.

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit