

14<sup>th</sup> World Congress on  
**PSYCHIATRIC & MENTAL HEALTH NURSING**  
&  
5<sup>th</sup> World Congress on  
**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**  
July 25-26, 2018 | Vancouver, Canada



***Iwona Sienko***

*University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus, Canada*

**Smart UBC-Embedding mindfulness into undergraduate BSN curriculum**

Stress is a natural part of our lives and healthy levels help us with creativity, reaching our goals and maintaining overall drive. Increased stress levels erode our health, productivity and overall happiness. Chronic stress is becoming an epidemic of the twenty-first century. To combat this state of affairs many began exploring the benefits of mindfulness as an antidote to chronic stress. Thirty years of research looking at the effects of mindfulness, as well as the neuroscience of mindfulness, offer compelling evidence to support the use of mindfulness practices. Some benefits of practicing mindfulness are stronger focus, better memory, staying calmer under stress, enhanced concentration and executive functioning, improved overall mental and physical health. In 2015, the School of Nursing at UBC Okanagan began offering a smartUBC to all first-year students in a mandatory Relational Practice course. The rationale was two-fold: to provide undergraduate students with mindfulness skills and capacities to help them navigate and succeed in their first year of university as well as stress management and resiliency techniques for their nursing practice. These students are currently part of a 6-year longitudinal study looking at the efficacy of smartUBC. First-year findings provide preliminary evidence that the smartUBC course offers coping techniques to nursing students to assist them with the demands of school. We offered smartUBC to our faculty and staff and have expanded the program into the community. Program evaluation into these sessions reports that the curriculum has a positive impact on both work and personal lives. The vast majority of participants would recommend the course to others and faculty members believe there is a benefit to offering smartUBC in the academic environment. The smartUBC (stress management and resiliency techniques) curriculum has its foundation in MBSR (mindfulness-based stress reduction) with added components of emotional theory and forgiveness and compassion training.

**Biography**

Iwona Sienko has over 30 years of nursing and leadership experience in working in various healthcare systems and own business. Throughout her career, she developed a deep trust in a human capacity that became even more prevalent after spending time healing from chronic stress. During that time she explored the latest discoveries in neuroscience, epigenetics, and neuroplasticity. She has learned how to build resiliency in the body and mind. In a way, she bio hacked her life to overcome the adversities of her experiences. She witnessed first-hand how the body and mind can heal from chronic stress when given proper support in the right environment. She is an Adjunct Professor with the School of Nursing at UBCO; in her practice, she utilizes the power of mindfulness and its influence on our relationship with stress. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Masters in Business Administration and is a certified smartUBC facilitator.

[iwona@healthytransitions.net](mailto:iwona@healthytransitions.net)

**Notes:**