

APPG Mindfulness, Armed Forces, Policing and Emergency Services

Westminster, 25th October 2018 - Transcript of talks

Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP

The All Party Group was formed in 2014, with its focus on health, education, criminal justice and the workplace. I did my own mindfulness course, I think, in the autumn of 2016, it was at the insistence of my wife on the grounds that I could be present at a family meal, but completely absent and have no recollection whatsoever of anything that had taken place at that family meal. I had completely lost the ability to focus and to direct my attention properly. And I found the course very, very useful indeed, in regaining that ability to focus but also, I found it very good for my physical health as well.

We had a gathering earlier this year where parliamentarians from other Parliaments across Europe and elsewhere came to share their experiences and I will probably be highly criticized by my colleagues for saying this but I got the impression as the proceedings went on that it was acquiring the characteristics of an evangelical revival and if only we all adopted mindfulness the second coming would occur! I'm glad therefore that we brought the focus back to the workplace today particularly those workplaces involving high stress on the front line at the coalface. I think that's very important, to which end I'm very pleased that we have Gerald Jones, the Defence spokesman for the Labour Party, the Shadow Minister with us I think it's highly appropriate given the subject matter that we have today. I'm also very pleased that we've got Amishi Jha, the world-renowned associate professor to update us on mindfulness training that has been tested in the US Armed Forces. Unfortunately, General Piatt has not been able to join us but I hope that Amishi will be able to give us some insight into his thinking. We're also very pleased to have Chief Constable Bill Skelly who will address us next and also Tim Boughton, former Marine commando pilot, and also Ivor Twydell the former Assistant Chief Constable of another police force. So we've got a highly charged agenda as well as our other guests of people from those high stress professions. And this session has been long anticipated for that reason, and I'm very, very glad to see so many parliamentarians from both houses with us today. So if we can move straight on to Chief Constable Bill Skelly. When he was appointed, I understand in 2016, I understand he had two objectives. One was to make his force the most effective police force. But secondly and importantly, to that end, to invest in the well-being of all his staff to make it become the healthiest and happiest police force. So over to you Chief Constable.

Chief Constable Bill Skelly, Lincolnshire Police



Thank you very much. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and what an absolutely glorious morning it is too. I am Bill and I'll speak to you for about the next 10 minutes. If it feels longer than that it's because you're still in a mindful frame of mind living in the moment, and they are very much my personal reflections on what mindfulness means to me and what I feel it means to my organization. I am not a researcher or a teacher of mindfulness. That's what my wife does. And so I leave that to her. And once we're finished here today, we're going to go and enjoy the rest of our wedding anniversary as we go around London.

But I do consider myself to be a practitioner and advocate of mindfulness. I'm sure that over the course of the next couple of hours, we'll discuss and hear a considerable amount of what mindfulness can do in supporting those who suffer trauma or those who are dealing and managing pain. And that's not how I came to this. There's perhaps a theme in terms of our wives pointing us in a particular direction. But I did come to it for a couple of reasons. And one was in order to avoid being the subject of trauma and pressure; to actually build resilience in myself to be able to manage the pressures which I experience as a senior leader within the police service. And so I went into it with those intentions. What I did find in terms of a collateral benefit was what it meant for me in terms of my experience of the moment and bear with me for just a few seconds because it caused me to fundamentally kind of reassess what I experienced as I journey through something as obvious as time. I'm someone who very much looks at the future and perhaps that's a consequence of my role, I'm considering what's happening tomorrow, the day after next week, next month, five year business plans and indeed looking at issues for policing in society over the course of generations. And I'm sort of fixed in that world and when I ask people how they see time actually some describe it that they see it from sort of left to right that the past is over here present is in front of them, and the future is off to the right. That's not how I experience it. The future for me is in front of me, the present is in my peripheral vision and the past is very much behind. If you have to ask me about what happened yesterday or last month, I consciously have to look and make an effort to remember it. Not that I've bad memory, I've got very good memory. But my worldview is one where I'm focused on the future. And that does mean it has consequences. Some of them are good, some of them perhaps not so good. What does it mean? For example, if I'm managing meetings where people are discussing things, when someone says something, I'm thinking, what does that mean for next month? Or, or what's the implication for next year's budget, I'm no longer in the moment I'm no longer focused on what people are saying, what they mean, the interactions between people in the room, and actually I'm longer present. And now that's something that over the course of my involvement in mindfulness I've been able to hopefully address where I'm actually far more present when people are discussing issues.

And I'm considering them as much as I'm considering what they are saying and the implications it has. Now I realise that that might not apply to everyone here. But certainly

in terms of how it's affected, or how I go about my work and how I go about my life, because it's also meant I've realized that in my private life, I've also always been focused on the future. And even when it comes down to the simple things like my younger daughter playing the violin practice in the living room of an evening, I've been somewhere else even though I've been physically in the room I have not been emotionally or mentally, and that's affected my relationship with her, not on a bad scale, but certainly when I started to practice mindfulness and realized that actually being in the moment affected how she felt about me. Well, that had a big impact for all of us.

So I think there's some lessons that I have learned about how it affects me personally and how being involved in a practice which brings you into the present can have real implications for not only how you run your private life but how you can run large organizations, and I've carried it out across into policing certainly in Lincolnshire, as was said in the introduction. There are two things that I want to achieve for the police service there. One is around the quality of service, which we deliver to the people of Lincolnshire. And the second thing is about how people feel to be part of that organization. It's fairly simple for me; good people feeling good about themselves will do good work. And if I can help people to feel good about themselves, and that is a goal I think it's worth striving to achieve.

So how have I gone about that? Well, I suppose in some ways there's a very practical one, and that is that we as an organization, we run a mindfulness course for some of the people in the hardest areas of our business. We have a Public Protection Unit, as most forces do, they deal with some of the most difficult crimes and activities that we have to encounter as a protective service. The people who work in those units carry heavy workloads. They're also dealing with hugely traumatic incidents, and they're seeing them and dealing with them on a daily basis. And as highlighted in today's Home Affairs, select committee report the impact on the police officers who are there with people at some of the most difficult and traumatic times in their lives is huge. Successive surveys, those we've carried out in Lincolnshire those carried out across the country have shown that police officers and staff are under huge stress in the manner in which they carry their work. Some of that's around resources, but some of that's about the nature of the work which they're dealing with. So in Lincolnshire we ran a course for that Public Protection Unit, which was firmly based in the principles of mindfulness and when we evaluated it we found, perhaps no surprise to anyone in this room that everyone felt that it made their lives better. They said they felt kinder to themselves and to others, they felt that they enjoyed work more, they felt they could relax more and could be happier with their families. Overwhelming feedback that showed that by investing in this kind of work I as employer, could help my staff better cope with the work that I'm asking them to deliver on behalf of the public.

I've been working with the National Well Being service and government have put money from the Transformation Fund some seven and a half million pounds into that national work. And I hope that what we will see as a result of days like today is that we will have national investment in this kind of technique and this kind of approach to supporting people and doing really difficult traumatic work. I'd also like to kind of sew the seed in your mind that

it's not just about that. We have four approaches in terms of what we call wellness and wellbeing, within Lincolnshire, one is about your physical well-being and the other about your emotional, your psychological and we called spiritual well-being. And that's the connection that you have to the purpose of the organization as a non-denominational sense of spiritual well-being. And you put those four things together and you come up with a complete wellness of an individual.

What I'd like you to consider is that second one, emotional wellbeing. I believe people should feel happy at their work, they should enjoy it, even when it's difficult, even when it's areas of business where they are helping people in the most traumatic of situations that can be very fulfilling, people should have the opportunity to feel happy about their engagement with that work. We do a lot of focus on providing support to those who suffered trauma, you find that their work is anxious and difficult, frightening even. And then they feel pain in a way in which they deal with some of the issues that they're presented with. What I do very little about as an employer to my shame is trying to support them in feeling happy and good about their experience of being in Lincolnshire police of their experience of being at work. So one of the read-across from my involvement in mindfulness, because I believe that the same pathways in the mind which are locking in those traumatic experiences, and which we are trying to unlock through reflective practice to support and reduce the suffering, we can actually use those for the positive benefits. Why don't we lock in the good moments? Why don't we concentrate on enjoying in the moment the happiness of delivering a good service for someone or dealing well with a member of the public? Why don't we enjoy just being us for a little period of time and support ourselves and how we feel about our organization.

What I've tried to do in Lincolnshire is give people happy moments as much as I have tried to support them in their difficult moments. Things like family days, because we hadn't had for a number of years but we had one during the summer. It was sold out in the first half an hour in which I advertised across the force area where we were having it. Over 1400 staff members, out of an organization whose total employment is around 1800 signed up to attend. And what they enjoyed was the happiness of being together and celebrating being in the police. Locking in those happy moments, I think is something that we could consider as being a benefit to the organization as well as supporting people in the difficult times. So without being competitive, as I was going to use the word I challenge you, but let me just say let me encourage you as you go through today, to create for yourself one happy memory. We have a glorious day I said that when I began, enjoy one of the moments that you have and lock it in, and use that to build your personal resilience as you face the difficulties that your lives may present.

Clive Lewis MP

Morning everyone. My name is Clive Lewis. I was going to say welcome my fellow consumers of knowledge and mindfulness understanding. I came to mindfulness myself

quite late in life, maybe about three years ago, pretty much when I started here, and it's made a massive difference to my life. I've also been in the military, I suffered from mental health when I came back from Afghanistan. I wasn't aware of mindfulness back then, if I had, I think it would have made a massive difference to my life, as it so happens working here is in some ways more stressful than a battlefield, especially the last two or three years and mindfulness I must say, even though I am a practitioner, who sometimes lapses, it's something which stays with me on a daily basis. I often try to live in the moment it's something which I appreciate and it does make a real difference to how I can function as a member of parliament. But less about me more about our next guest, who's Tim Boughton, who served as a commando pilot for 19 years has also had a career in the city. And whilst Tim was in the armed forces, he served everywhere from Afghanistan, and I imagine Iraq and Afghanistan himself and the Falklands and everywhere in between there and he is also someone I think from his bio who has suffered a little bit from mental health issues and I guess you'll be talking to us about how mindfulness has helped him cope with that, so without any further ado, Tim Boughton. Thank you.

Tim Boughton, former Navy commando pilot and Oxford Mindfulness Centre trustee



Just one thing I will clarify, I did not serve in the Falklands, I'm not that old. But one thing I will say is mindfulness does not work okay. And I was not injured because I do not have any legs missing and I do not have any arms missing. I'll come on to both of those statements in a minute. I was in the military as an officer for 20 years. I'm somewhat unusual in that I was commissioned after Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, went into the army as an infantry officer, then transected over to the Royal Navy as a command a pilot.

I was trained by the RAF to fly, I served with the Marines on a marine Squadron and also supporting the SAS as well. So I've had quite a sort of unique background. I think most of the conflicts that I've been in have seen a lot of traumatic and soul-destroying incidents and for me when Chris rang me up yesterday and said can you fill a gap it was interesting as to what you wanted me to say. And it was just 'be yourself and tell people what you've seen and how mindfulness works'. So I can't quite follow the eloquence of Bill or the other distinguished speakers but here it is.

I was an A grade officer and I was promoted first shot every opportunity. I loved my job in the military for 20 years I was very lucky. But what you get in the military is that you do the job you're trained to do you don't have time to think about incidents that happened. You store them away and you forget about them and deal with them later. The first one for me really was in Bosnia in the 1990s where I was a young platoon commander and I discovered how terrible people could be to each other. As a young guy not prepared for it I was sent in to go and view the results of ethnic cleansing from the Bosnian Serbs and the Croats where I basically came across women and children who had been fused together through petrol and hand grenades in the cellars of houses. And my role and responsibility was to, was to really look into that and, and, and help clear that up. It was a tough time

being a leader and trying to lead. That, that was was an incredible experience one which I probably in hindsight failed at.

Again when I was flying in Bosnia in 1998 I was part of a unit which basically recovered injured personnel to go to hospital in a place called Sipovo. We were a Sea King helicopter we were part of the Royal Navy and we were called on regularly for call outs in all sorts of weathers and occasions. The one time that sticks in my mind which really if I think about it is the base of where my PTSD came from, was that I'd just come out of training a month has been commanded pilot and I was flying and we were launched and we were to pick up a Dutchman who had stepped on a mine. We launched in terrible weather and cutting the story short we basically came over from Split which if you don't know it's very sort of high cliff all along the coast, and we ran into effectively fog and mist and bad weather that took us down to the sea. The next thing we knew I was looking at my right hand side and I could see the sea level with me in the window. There were screams in the back as a crewman shouted Up, up up, I pulled told the lever, flamed out one of the engines and I'm existing on one engine and not many instruments. This is a guy who'd been out of training for four weeks. We got back to the bar and the commander at the time said go and have a whiskey we had more than one, and then the next day I was back on duty back up doing what I was doing and I thought nothing of it.

We then switch to Iraq. In Iraq, I supervised an air detachment where we lost two Pumas and a lot of good men, it was on an operation which questionably it shouldn't have happened. But I won't go into that. But the impact of briefing people five minutes beforehand, and then hearing on a radio that they crashed and that people have died. But then having to get on with your job to the recovery, get on with your job for sorting them out, was quite an incredible experience. And then I think the final one, which I'll go into was in 2003 in March where I was a staff officer on board HMS Ark Royal prior to the war starting out, I then deployed into the field and was one of the first helicopters across the border. But the day before we did that we had a briefing as was the daily process. I briefed seven members of the crew with the enemy positions with the intelligence that we had, and the way that the helicopters were going to swap over. 20 minutes later I was on the bridge wing with a captain a guy called Adrian Johns at the time, and there was a mighty flash, a big explosion and we both thought that it was a missile from Iraq. It was actually two Sea Kings colliding head on with each other the crew of which I just briefed. Seven friends were lost, one of them a US person. In Afghanistan it was IEDs. It's not so bad when you can see the person that you're shooting, you you have a mindset of how to deal with that. What you can't get to grips with is what you can't see, and the IED threat on British personnel was immense. All in all, I've lost 47 friends in my military service. I've been to far too many funerals than I would ever want to go to again. I don't understand death. I'm not afraid of death I don't understand it. But you store up this emotion. It's like a glass; you fill the glass up with Afghanistan, you fill it a bit more with Iraq, you fill it a bit more with Bosnia and in time it overflows, and then you break. That happened for me in 2008.

I then went into the city and I started at a bank in the city. I changed. I became withdrawn and angry, didn't enjoy social life or interaction. It was my wife that turned around and

said to me, 'You need to get help'. My daughter was hiding behind corners. My wife would not know whether I was going to come in and be angry or not. At that time, I was diagnosed with PTSD and I went to see the one, one surgeon commander in the Navy at that time that was dealing with mental health issues, a guy called John Sharply, who effectively saved my life.

So what has mindfulness taught me? Where does mindfulness come into this. At the time I would say mindfulness would not work, it's namby pamby it doesn't work. I'm a forces person I get on with it. I store it away I shut it away. I deal with it in my own way. I can get horrendously drunk and move on. I crack on. Times have changed and times are changing. The importance of peer to peer mentoring as a forces personnel, somebody who can sit with these people who have this issue, who have been through this issue and are able to empathize is so important. We need to get into the grass roots of where our service personnel are, be it Sandhurst, the Army Training regiments or, you know, wherever that may be, and I have to say that the military is making great gains in trying to do this. I sit on various boards, I sit on a board with ex First Sea Lords and Admirals and whenever I talk about mental health the the the the immediate thing is, 'yeah, don't worry about that. You just get on with it never happened in my day, whatever'. The generation before them was 'get against the wall and we'll shoot you'. Okay, times are changing and we have a real chance to influence the military leaders of today and the government in how we do our business. It is why I joined the IMC as a trustee. They do amazing work the research is amazing but we need the practitioners who have been to these incidents to help inform that research and get on the ground with the people that we see.

CBT didn't work for me. Interestingly, I want to say why it didn't work because the person that was trying to do my CBT didn't understand what I'd been through, couldn't understand what I've been through. And we had a role reversal, which was really interesting when I was counselling the CBT person, the therapist. How weird is that. Practice is vital. Your own meditation practice is vital. Start as early as you can make it precaution rather than, you know, rather than intervention, train your organization and work with them at an early stage. And I think the work that Jenny is doing and the police are doing with this study is phenomenal. It's just amazing the vision to do that I think will save lives and save trauma. We need it in the military too.

I would like to leave you with this thought. Mental health affects everyone from the generals, the chief constables, and equivalent down to the frontline troops from the princes to the most deprived areas of the world. You will never be alone and it's far better to admit that it might be an issue than to fight it. It may save your job, your relationship, your family, and you, you cannot change the past. You cannot influence the future. But as Bill rightly said, you can live in the present and you can make that work for you. So I think the key message for me is, is that I'm on a personal crusade within the military to try and make them aware that mindfulness really does work. So mindfulness doesn't work is rubbish, it does work and it's worked with me. It's brought me back from the brink of death. It's brought me back from suicide, attempted suicide, and I am where I am today speaking to you. So thank you very much for listening to a very humble ex forces guy. But

what mindfulness is doing with those guys that are leaving and what it can do in the future if the military engage with people like me and people like us to make a difference and make them aware is it can change lives and it can save lives. And if we get in there early enough, then it will be in the culture of the military when they go on operations and therefore it will not be such a shock when they transition, leave, or after they've been on operations.

Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP

Ladies and gentlemen, our next speaker, is Ivor Twydell, who for 25 years, was a policeman, seven years as Chief Super in Bedfordshire and four as an Assistant Chief Constable in Gloucestershire. In 2012, he became a mindfulness teacher and he now coaches senior leaders to focus and lead effectively.

Ivor Twydell, Former Assistant Chief Constable and Executive Coach



Thank you very much. So great to be here this morning. And I want to change the lens to look a little bit about mindfulness in relation to leadership, particularly within the blue light services and my experience of being in the police. So 25 years in the UK police service which included many, many years in senior roles. I was fast tracked through at an early stage found myself as the police commander for Luton at a very early stage in my career, and and it was while I was there on a particular weekend I was the on duty superintendent for the county and called to a terrible tragic incident. Three young children drowned at a family day out. Dealing with that over the weekend and on the Monday morning then going in to present my plans to restructure the Division and take 10% out of our budget. Two different challenging problems. And my experience with mindfulness was how was I equipped to be able to respond in that way? Did I have the tools to be able to manage myself so that I could lead my part of the service over that particular weekend and the days that followed. And so really my perspective is how do we look after our leaders and equip them to deal with the challenges that they face. And so my first point is, is that that was nearly 20 years ago, and the world has changed since then. The world is even more complex now than it was 20 years ago.

So what's changed? Well, it's increasingly complex. And some of you will be familiar with a euphemism VUCA. The world is volatile, uncertain, it's complex, it's ambiguous, and our leaders have to make sense of that new world in a way that they respond to it. But it's if you can't make sense of something it's very hard to choose the right way to respond. And these days, leaders face two types of challenges they face the technical challenges and adaptive challenges. What's a technical challenge? A technical challenge is something that might be complicated and difficult, but we have the existing solution. We have existing technology with the existing knowledge to be able to deal with it, to be able to bring about a solution. But the adaptive challenge is different; the adaptive challenge calls for

new ways of thinking new mental models, new beliefs and assumptions - our being challenged as to how we then see the world.

How do we then choose a different response? And so leaders these days are having to face adaptive challenges which are really, really difficult for them to be able to respond to with the ways in which we we learn and think. We have a tendency as human beings to have this automated pattern of the way that we respond to what we think is a problem. But that often doesn't fit some of the problems that we're dealing with. Just a brief example from this morning, a few moments before we started I was talking to Bill talking about Lincolnshire and the massive problems that every police force has in trying to deal with the financial pressures and maintaining the service. Another conversation this morning with Steve from the Royal Navy, telling me that the service is now running hot running hot as a matter of course, not just because there's a particular campaign that they're engaged in. So the pressures on leaders these days in the public services and particularly in the blue line, armed forces are very significant. So these complex challenges are really, really hard for us to be able to respond to. And the reason for that is is that we are bringing our old pattern of responses to try to deal with them. And as Robert Keegan a leading developmental psychologist says in his work he says we're in over our heads we're trying to apply the old models and the old maps of how we lead and that leaves us feeling stuck and stressed and stretched and frustrated. But also adaptive challenges in themselves are inherently stressful because they bring a challenge to structures, roles, responsibilities, hierarchies and of course that triggers the instinctive survival mechanisms that everyone including leaders have because they're facing the stress and the threat of that. Whilst that mobilizes energy of course at the same time if that's not managed effectively, then essentially that is experienced in a negative way. Negative affect impairs us cognitively, and leaders end up feeling disoriented, disconnected, faithful, frustrated, when in fact, they need to be calm and considered and patient and kind and be able to make wise decisions and to act in a thoughtful way, not a thoughtless way. So how do they manage themselves in that way? And what does that mean if they can't manage it themselves, well it means impaired health, it means there's diminishing performance, it that means that the relationships suffer and again, circle goes around because relationship management the ability to build relationships to be in relationship well, to be able to collaborate with people being partnership is one of the implicit ways in which we deal with adaptive new challenges because it requires us to be in dialogue with people to find new solutions for problems we're facing. And so it means the circle has gone round and we're back with leaders who've been suffering in the ways we've been hearing about this morning.

So how do we step out of our habitual responses to be able to lead in a new way? And that's what I think mindfulness now offers, a new set of tools to equip leaders to be able to deal with those, those challenges which have any become more frequent as the years go by, as the years become ever more complex. So the need to be able to adapt to that and learn the skills to adapt with that are really important. And that's the kind of work that I've been doing mainly at the moment with leaders in the business field because it's hard, to be frank, to get traction with the Bluelight services in terms of this kind of leadership

development and this approach to leadership. So are the police ready for it? I don't know. I know that 10 years ago when I was applying for an assistant chief constable job. One of the interviews I had in a force which will remain nameless, which had a major city which will remain nameless. I was being interviewed by them and they said, 'so you want to be an assistant chief constable with this. Well you realize it's a very stressful position to hold. It is very busy area'. I said yes. So they said 'well so tell me how do you deal with stress in your life?' Well one of the things that I've learned that's been a fantastic tool for me is meditation'. They said 'that's very interesting'. I didn't get the job. A part of the feedback I had was that the panel were concerned that if I had a terrorist bomb went off in the middle of the city you would need to go into a darkened room for 30 minutes before you can do anything.

Has the world moved on? Are the people that are actually selecting leaders for the services and putting them in senior positions are they actually then giving them the equipment and the tools they need to be able to deal with challenges or are we going to remain with people who are doing their very, very best, but are in over their eyes. You only have to talk to someone from the Superintendent's Association. And I'm not sure if anyone from the association is here today, you only have to talk to them to hear about significant pressures that superintendents who sit below people like Bill and below the role I was in, who lead particular functions within the service and the significant pressures they are under and the level of burnout that they are facing because they are trying to deal with very complex solutions and they don't have the tools to manage themselves to do so. So I'm going to draw to a close there with one minute remaining. Thank you very much.

Clive Lewis MP

We're now going to move on a little bit from those who are applying mindfulness into leadership roles into the kind of am I ok to call you Boffins? Into the science of mindfulness. Our next speaker is Amishi Jha - she's an associate professor of psychology at the University of Miami and a director of contemplative neuroscience for the mindfulness research and practice initiative. Her research focuses on the brain basis of attention working memory and mindfulness training. She's also worked in collaboration with the US Defence Department.

Dr Amishi Jha, Neuroscientist, Researcher, Associate Professor



Thank you very much. Can you hear me? Can you see me? Thank you for that introduction. And it's a real pleasure to be here. So I was supposed to have slides so I will do my best to paint a mental picture for you all. And let's just start with this kind of a picture. So 100 years ago, if somebody told you that people would willingly get on a bicycle that's had its back wheel removed to pedal as hard and fast as they can, for, let's say, 30 minutes at a time, we would have you would have been thought it was absolutely preposterous, right? But how many of us go to a spinning class every now and then. Or if you'd been running down the street, people would probably think you're being chased. And today the idea that physical exercise is tied to physical well-being is so commonplace, so pervasive, would you all agree. Absolutely. It's almost like why is she beginning her talk this way? This is obvious. Well, the reason I'm beginning my talk this way is because I wanted to make clear that we are able to have this view and our public health officials are able to provide us specific evidence based guidance on what to do to stay physically fit because an entire body of research over 300,000 articles have been published since 1980, that relate physical activity to physical health, and because of that we can have this common cultural worldwide understanding of its importance. And as a neuroscientist, my interest has been in the mind and really the question for me is, how can we train the mind daily in an evidence-based fashion so that we can have psychological well-being and mental fitness. And that's been a puzzle for neuroscientists, frankly, we haven't found the solution. And that's actually where mindfulness training entered the work in my laboratory as a cognitive neuroscientist in my laboratory at the University of Miami, and I'm welcoming all of you to come visit me, especially on cold England days to come see us by the beach.

What I do in my laboratory is I study the brain's attention system. And we all know that attention is very powerful. Hopefully you're paying some to me right now, right? We know that we need it to direct our focus. We know that we need it in order to regulate our mood, we get that sense that this is so critical and in my lab we use tools like functional MRI, brainwave recordings, behavioural methods to understand the nature of attention. Through this work over several, several years in fact, of research, we now understand that though the brain system is so incredibly powerful, it's actually quite vulnerable and fragile. And the top three things that actually are sort of like kryptonite, if that reference makes sense for attention, are stress, poor mood, and threat.

Now, if we could lead a life where we didn't experience those, that would be wonderful. But that's not the human condition. And after understanding this for several years, understanding that this is the vulnerability we have to our our attention system. Yet attention remains critical for everything I do. I became very curious about how we might train attention to protect against these vulnerabilities, how we might make it stronger through some type of daily exercise and that's where mindfulness entered my work. So what I'd like to do today is tell you a little bit about attention, what it is what its vulnerabilities are as we've discussed a little bit how it relates to psychological health, and

of course, how it relates in this conversation regarding military, psychological health and operational effectiveness, how it actually is critical for what we ask our service members and our police force members to do.

Then I'd like to tell you a little bit about mindfulness from from the broad sort of civilian literature, medical literature, as well as my own work working with active duty military over the last I'd say eight years or so now, and I think this was mentioned earlier, but I'm very disappointed, but wanted to just to convey his gratitude for this opportunity; General Piatt is unable to be here. He's been my strong collaborator and supportive of work within the US Army he unfortunately wasn't able unable to make it because of an event that happened at his military base.

Alright, so let's launch into what attention is. This is very strange to give a lecture without anything to point to especially as a college professor, but we'll do our best. So as I already mentioned, we know, attention is so incredibly powerful, right? Decision making, planning, listening, communicating. And in fact, another whole area in which attention is critically involved is emotion regulation that might be kind of new to you. So if you've done something quite taxing intentionally, you might suffer a little bit in your ability to regulate your emotions. So given how incredibly powerful it is, I think we have to understand that this complex brain system that actually doesn't fully develop to we're about 25 years old, it's probably helpful to see how scientists have been able to parse this complex system into three main subsystems that help us understand how we're able to use it for so many diverse reasons.

So one way we can think about attention is that we're able to use it for something called orienting. And I like to use metaphors in a way to paint these pictures for you. So we can think of the orienting system of attention, sort of, like a flashlight, I use the American version or a torch, right? So what happens with the torch, if you're in a darkened room, wherever it is that that torch is pointing is, you're gonna have better information coming in there. Same idea, with attention, attention actually developed in the course of evolution to allow the brain to solve a very big computational problem that it suffers from, which is that there's far more in the environment than they can fully process so if we select a subset, we might be able to glean more information about what's happening around us. So this torch view really allows us to direct wilfully to things in the environment, but also actually direct it internally. So if I asked you to think about what you had for breakfast, you actually just directed that torch internally to memory of what you might have had or memory, let's say from your childhood. What your first school looked like, now, you really directed it back in time. But it's a directed, wilful probing of some of from a broader set of information.

So unlike the brain's orienting system, or this torch, there's another system that actually does a very different type of function called the brain's alerting system. And the metaphor I like to use for that is sort of like a yellow flashing traffic light. So if you're driving down the road, and you see this, what does it typically mean caution, right, you don't know what's coming, but be ready, slow down a little bit. Be watchful, it could be children playing, it could be animals coming, you don't know what it is that you should be ready for.

But you should keep all of your computational resources at the ready. So the moment that they're needed, you can deploy them, right? Does that make sense? In that sense you're not selecting, so to speak, you're just making sure that you're broadly aware of what's going on so that if selection is required, you can engage that system very differently.

So we've got the torch, we've got this flashing yellow light, and then a third system of attention is something that I actually use the metaphor of the juggler to talk about and I'd say that's a little strange. But this is the brain's executive network. Now I use that term executive really, because it is like the executive of a company, what's an executive's job, it's not to do every individual task, but it's to ensure that your goals and your behavior align right. So for an executive of a company is to ensure that all the work that your team is doing aligns with the goals of the company, for example, and the juggler has that kind of capacity you have to make sure all the balls stay in the air, none of the balls drop. So I hope that this gives you a sense of how distinct attention can be and also how valuable it is for our ability to manoeuvre and successfully behave in the world.

Now, we've already mentioned through some of the conversations and some of that sort of testimony given of the value of our own psychological health and I want to connect the dots between psychological health and attention for a moment. Because I think that it might make sense of why mindfulness could become this very powerful tool to help. So when we think about psychological health, you might not automatically think that this in some sense may have to do with the brain's attention system. But in fact, it does. So let's think of a psychological disorder. Probably the most common one that we know in our public health trajectory will be of interest in a sort of need for a solution is depression.

So depression, actually, we think of as a disorder of this torch where it keeps getting pointed toward depressogenic content, negative content, and it's almost like you can't direct that torch wilfully toward anything else. It's just privileges that sort of content and in kind of a colloquial way, we can think of this as attentional rubbernecking I don't know if they have that here, you'll be driving I'm sure that it's a human thing, driving down the road. There may be an accident or an incident you kind of keep looking, right? You're straining your neck. It's sort of like that with negative content. But we don't see this as, as not related to attention. In fact, we see attention as being the reason that our, our neck may creep, crane in that direction.

So, but another disorder that's very common is anxiety, right? Or hyper vigilance, and even tied to PTSD. This we see not as a problem with the torch, so to speak, but really more as the brain seeing everything it experiences as a flashing yellow light. We need to stay on high alert, something is wrong, we need to be aware we need to deploy those resources which can be quite exhausting for the brain's attention system. Very different than depression, but still quite a big problem.

And then the third kind of mental illness or mental condition that we should consider is something like ADHD, attention deficit disorder. This, I would say, is an issue or challenge with the brain's executive system, an overly rambunctious juggler if you will, and in many

cases the balls are dropped the ability to hold what's relevant and what is actually happening in our behaviour don't get aligned; they're mismatched so that troubles happen. I hope that this kind of gives you a sense of what attention is how it can become disordered.

And now moving toward the medical, sorry, the military context, I wanted to connect the dots. So why would we care about these systems? Well, as you can imagine, we need them for everything that we do. And in particular, under these, as was already mentioned, volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous circumstances. In fact, we need it more than ever under those circumstances. So in those circumstances we need it to be able to focus in the midst of chaos, right? We need our orienting system to point appropriately to know what's relevant and to stay there we also need our alerting system to stay situationally aware so we know what's coming. To have a broad awareness we don't become tunnel visioned and we also need our executive system to stay mentally agile. We talked about this adaptive agility ability. But what you need is to know that if the goals change the behavior has to change and to have that kind of capacity for flexibility. So I would say that in the military and and first responder contexts, absolutely, we need all three systems. And we need it because of its ability to serve us under complexity. But we also need it for longer term strategic leadership and military and first responder leadership need to have this capacity to direct what happens with everything around them.

So how does this relate to mindfulness? Well, in my own research, what we learned is that when we look at people, military service members, first responders, actually even elite athletes and others who are in a high performance, high demand circumstance, their attention over some protracted period of time, let's say four to eight weeks of pre-deployment training, though the intention of pre deployment training may be to get them fully prepared and intentionally ready so that once they're deployed, they can do their job, it ends up that attention over these multiple weeks of preparation actually degrades, it's diminished they're disadvantaged when they're about to leave. Not optimally advantaged. So my thinking on this is if attention is actually degraded or depleted before they even go, is there something we can do about it? Is there some form of mental training that we can offer to buffer against this? And is there some tools we could get service members and first responders so they can practice exercises in the same way we do push ups or go for a run to stay physically fit that you can stay mentally fit cognitively fit. And I use the term cognitive resilience to mean this, this capacity to really maintain or regain capacities that are at risk or more vulnerable in high stress circumstances. Does that make sense?

So that's where mindfulness enters the scene. And you might have first asked why would this happen? What is it about high stress that depletes attention? And I want to connect the dots in that in that respect. Also, one thing is that we already know this because we did a little exercise on this already is that the brain the mind is fantastic at mental time travel, right? So I think the the Chief Constable was saying that he thinks of mental time travel, not so much as left and right but forward and back, whatever the metaphor is that you use, and I was using the metaphor of like an mp3 player where we've got rewind and fast forward, we're fantastic at mental time travel, we can easily rewind the mind right to

reflect on past events. Our attention isn't in the here and the now we can easily fast forward the mind to plan for the future. And when we productively use this wonderful human capacity to reflect or to plan that's great. But many times, these capacities are not used in the service of productive planning or reflection, they get stuck. So when we rewind the mind we're not reflecting we're actually ruminating or reliving or regretting events that have already happened, right? So the button's pressed on rewind without us even knowing it, we land back in some incident that's already happened over and over again stuck there or we're in fast forward right? We're not just productively planning but we're worrying or catastrophizing on events that not only haven't happened yet but frankly may never happen in all the what if scenarios. So the reason we think that attentional capacities may be getting depleted under stress is those propensities for rewind and fast forward are heightened under stress, we're more likely to be ruminating and worrying under those situations, right. And this is a technical term we call mind wandering. Now it's technical because it doesn't just mean letting your mind wander, which is a wonderful thing you could do. It actually means having off-task thoughts during an ongoing task or activity. You wanting to do something, you want to read that email you want to read that report, you want to have that conversation but your mind is somewhere else. It's wandered away from the present moment. So the whole reason mindfulness came to my labs research is because the opposite of a stressed and wandering mind is a mindful one and mindfulness really has to do with keeping that button right on play, not rewind or fast forward so that we are experiencing the moment to moment unfolding of our lives and we're attending to our present moment experience in a certain way or as Jon Kabat Zinn says a particular way that has to do with this kind of orientation of curiosity without having a story about it, not elaboration we're not trying to make something up about what's happening, we're really taking an observational receptive stance toward experience as it actually is. And this returns our attentional capacity back to us so to speak.

Now unfortunately the bad news about mind wandering is well, in our human experience we know that people have this happen about 50% of their waking moments, so I've been with you, I've been talking to you for 17 minutes. So, about half that time you haven't been here, your mind's been wandering, which is just part of the human experience in some sense, right? It's annoying. But we all experience this, imagine a soldier watch standing or a general listening to a military briefing, or, for that matter, a surgeon in the middle of surgery or lawyer hearing testimony, or parents listening to his or her daughter talk about their day; we don't want this we don't want to be mind wandering. We want to have a better and stronger capacity to have a sense of where our mind is, and we want to cultivate the capacity to be present to what's happening right now. So that's what I hope helps paint a picture of what we have been doing with regard to connecting the dots on attention, psychological health, operational effectiveness and protection against mind wandering.

Now let me tell you in just the last few minutes I have what we've been up to so what we've been doing over the last probably seven years or so is systematically taking a mindfulness-based training approach to pre-deployment military service members. Our kind of gold standard for the starting point was Jon Kabat Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress

Reduction Program, right. This is an eight-week program, about 40 plus hours of training in which an expert guides the participants to learn about mindfulness, learn about the core practices and learn about its relevance and engage in those practices over the course of time. And in my work, what we've done because we're dealing with time pressured environments, people don't have 40 plus hours, especially if I try to go to a commander who is in a pre-deployment phase. I mean, General Piatt who you know I've so much gratitude for, it took me a year with money in hand with \$2 million in hand to find a commander willing to take our project they just don't have the time. So what we've done, one of the main questions we've asked is how can we reduce the time demands and keep the effectiveness with regard to preservation of attention and working memory capacity. So we've systematically gone from 24 hours over eight weeks down to 16 and eight and found and actually gone down to four and found that about eight hours allows us to maintain the benefits without the costs. Four is too low with four hours over four to eight weeks, we don't get the benefits. So that's really a question around dosing the availability of time and and how we might be able to offer training.

The other question we've asked really is around content. Now if you cut this much time something's gotta give. So typically in mindfulness training programs like Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, there's a beautiful offering of the practices and discussion around practices. And then there's also content, didactic content, you might say about sort of the case for, for mindfulness, why we want to look at this what stress does to the brain, so very useful information. But because time was so pressured we actually did a study in which we took this kind of combined content and fractionated. One group got only the practice focused on version of eight hours the other group got just the kind of didactic version of eight hours, it's sort of like if you went to a gym and you hired a personal trainer? Do you want them to just do the workout with you or tell you about how great exercise is right, as you can imagine the version that works better is the one which was practice focused. So that really allowed us to get a sense of the content we want to really preserve.

And the third question we've been asking is around scalability. If we find that we can help people in a pre-deployment sense with as little as eight hours, you know, my, my problem became a big one fast, which is like, okay, great Amishi you trained 200 people and you can help them all now; 500,000, right. How am I going to do that? I had one expert trainer who knew a lot about the military and about mindfulness. So what we've done in the most recent series of studies is seeing if we're able to offer mindfulness training to people that are army sports psychologists, mental skills coaches, they know how to train service members. They might not know anything about mindfulness, we train them up in mindfulness just for themselves, we teach them to deliver the program. And then they offer it to service members to soldiers. And we compared those trainers to an MBSR certified trainer who knew nothing about the military context. And the results of that study showed that it was the army sports psychologist that had beneficial effects if service members and I'm sure this is true for first responders that cannot relate to the trainer they really don't uptake on the practices.

So I'm just going to wrap up by saying I hope to get a sense of kind of what our approach has been. We've made great strides and we now have a program called Mindfulness Based Attention Trainer, or MBATs and we have a delivery structure and and just to open it up to say that our interest is in making this broadly available. We're not we don't have a proprietary interest if we have a solution we don't think it should be restricted to the US military. We want to offer it to our colleagues in other militaries. And I'll just end by thanking you all for your attention.

Clive Lewis MP

Well, if I can't use the word boffin, our next expert, is Dr. Jutta Tobias Mortlock, who currently is on the faculty of the City of London University. Her research and teaching and public outreach is centred around workplace behaviour change initiatives geared at generating sustainable, wellbeing and performance. She's worked with Cranfield University and with the Institute of Employment and she's just recently completed some research for the defence science and technology laboratory that explored a shift in focus on mindfulness training towards team dynamics and strategic organizational outcomes.

Dr Jutta Tobias, City University London



Thank you so much. What a delight to be here and to see so many lovely faces in the room that I adore. And let me start my story of my journey. And it's not my own journey alone; Dr Alison Carter from the Institute of Employment Studies, has been my co-pilot and my co-director of the research that I'm presenting today here on behalf of Defence Science and Technology Lab. And but the story I'd like to tell is the story of a canary. So this is the canary that was yellow, and it lived before our time. It wasn't a pet. It was owned by a coal mine worker. And so the canary went to work with the coal mine worker and it went down the coal mines every day to help the coal mine workers understand whether the air quality was good and everything is fine. Or when the canaries stop singing, or twittering, all the coal mine workers would start to do something about it. Because the canary served as a bellwether, for the collective sense of the atmosphere, being toxic or healthy. And so my work that I'm going to be talking about is moving away from equipping the canaries as beautiful as they might be, to become stronger and more resilient, and maybe help them be well before or during, or after their own individual problems happen, but to shift our focus attention to perhaps an additional element where mindfulness can be useful and might be really strategically useful. And so therefore, my work, and I'm going to read because I have very little time left is to shift the attention in mindfulness interventions from equipping the individual to be well to the *context*, and to imbue that culture with mindfulness. And that can be done.

And so our intention with the research that we've done for the military academy in Sandhurst as well as the Military Academy in Dartmouth was to extend the good work done by gurus, like Amishi here and other mindfulness scholars and experts, focus on

individuals' mental health and well-being and move towards mental and operational resilience at whole system's level in high stakes environments, such as the ones you are so much more able to explain better than I.

And so in these environments, a strong culture of dedication and self-sacrifice may work against intervention approaches that are originally designed for clinical psychology settings. And if our goal is to prevent threats to individuals feeling and doing well in these high stakes environments rather than healing them after they start to break, then it might be appropriate to shift our focus to a bigger picture and away from individual agency and resilience and responsibility for well-being. And move on from the mindfulness trainer individual trainee interface towards generating collective agency and responsibility for mindful action. And so our initial findings suggested that mindfulness just like this strategic change readiness that our commissioners at the defence science or technology lab were looking for is actually a multi-level idea. It can apply within me, I can be mindful, but it can also be in the space between me and you. And it can imbue a culture and if mindfulness is applied at different levels it looks and feels very differently and the training that we are engaging in needs to be different.

And so we designed what we believe is the first intervention approach that translates this multi-level construct of mindfulness this juicy bean that we're trying to understand into a training program. And we effectively considered mindfulness as a as a team sport. Mindfulness training was supposed to be done in teams. And so I also let me explain why mindfulness is a team sport. Because one of the main goals of mindfulness practice is to develop self-awareness. But in moments of stress and challenge, this self-awareness is a very, very difficult commodity to have. And so in order to practice mindfulness, I have to have self-awareness in the first place to realize that I actually have to practice it. And if you add stress to the equation, snapping out of the autopilot, to actually take a mindful moment is very, very hard, requires an advanced level of mindfulness expertise to actually get into this. In contrast, spotting the need for mindfulness in other people, it's much easier, right? And so our hypothesis was that collective mindfulness could be trained to develop a team culture of trust, respect, being genuinely comfortable with the uncomfortable and that's not just about ambiguous problems and the VUCA world but actually we went and we trained our officer cadets in Sandhurst and in Dartmouth, specifically to become aware of the emotions in the soup between me and you and to move towards addressing rather than avoiding the rupture of connection that we might have with people. And this is what DSTL defence science and technology labs was excited about; a shift towards changing the culture of the military from command and control to speaking truth to power because that's what the leaders of the future need. We created this new type of multi-level mindfulness training and we targeted individual level mindfulness based on the work of geniuses sitting next to me and added on top of that, a training version of this idea of collective mindfulness. And we pilot tested this at Sandhurst with 23 potential offices at Sandhurst leadership development course. And then we conducted a controlled trial comparing the effectiveness of this new type of mindfulness to a more classic, individual level focused mindfulness meditation program based on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. And so we compared the performance of

this with 105 officer cadets at Dartmouth and measured individual as well as collective level of resilience and performance outcomes after eight two hour sessions.

And so what this collective mindfulness is about is effectively collective level mindfulness based stress reduction in order to anticipate and get ready for stress before it happens. And this is about how helping individuals co regulate their emotional response and me becoming responsible for helping you be regulated. And in this way, changing the team culture, to a subculture of psychological safety and resilience that makes reliable performance happen, rather than getting people's attention to shift to actually being irritated by the people that they're working with. Because that's what often what happens when people are in conflict and in difficulty, although our quantitative data did not show many statistically significant differences between those two types of training. Our interview data suggests that even basic mindful breathing exercises were not practiced by individuals in real life stressful situations unless they have also been in the *team* sport version of mindfulness training. And in contrast, those trained only in individual MBSR mindfulness techniques they applied not only the basic meditation techniques when they were under pressure in Dartmoor in the mud in the middle of the night, but they also proactively reduced tension in the team, based on what they had learned. And so let me leave you with some other recommendations please. We need to be wary of mandating mindfulness mindlessly. People focussed on a culture of dedication and self-sacrifice might be less likely to engage with meditation, partly because it has self-help connotations but the greater risk is that deep meditation practice may unearth latent trauma in unexpected ways. And if mindfulness trainers without formal mental health training are doing this they may do more harm than good, be careful not to rush into solution design until you genuinely understand the context and the culture of where you're going. And culture eats mindfulness strategy for breakfast if we don't understand it. We need more research definitely we need to do more research and I'd like to argue that this is a genuine opportunity to build on the good work of what I call first generation mindfulness awareness and education and training, and transform the 20th century culture of strong performance in the face of swallowing it down with an English stiff upper lip, into a culture that is fit for purpose for the 21st century, where leadership as well as responsibility and accountability is shared and where I am encouraged and rewarded for being my brother's keeper. And that's what the only US American president that I really respect has said about what we need to do; I need to become your keeper and you need to become my keeper. Thank you so much.

Clive Lewis MP

Our next two speakers a double act we can say gurus now, are DI Jenny McIntyre Smith and PC Ewan Sim. Both of them and they may say a little bit more themselves both of them are police officers who are teaching and training their colleagues in mindfulness with some success I believe.

DI Jenni McIntyre-Smith

So I'm Jenny McIntyre-Smith and I worked in a Public Protection Unit so what what I have to say touches on everybody that's spoken already. I came back from maternity leave to a new rank so my personal journey was I was suddenly inspecting a public protection unit and I was also a new parent and I found that when I was at home all I would think about was work and when I was at work all I could think about was home. And I didn't feel I was a very good mum and I didn't feel I was a very good leader and I was getting increasingly frustrated with myself. And my friend is a mindfulness teacher and I knew nothing about mindfulness but she said 'every Tuesday night eight weeks you can come to mindfulness and you can come out for a drink'. So I thought well that sounds good. I honestly knew nothing about it, embarked on the journey and my colleagues were saying you're different. You're more productive, you're calmer. And I didn't see that in myself until week six, and then I thought actually this has made a massive difference to me. I spoke to our exec team our Chief Constable at the time and I said this has worked for me some wonders, here's all the science, here's everything I've found out about it, please please please let me bring mindfulness to policing. I had this drive - I am bringing mindfulness to policing. And they laughed. They said nobody will have the appetite for it, nobody will do it. So I said ok - let me run some introductions, in our public protection unit, so just one unit and see what the uptake is. So myself and the person I trained with, we ran the introductions, and we had a 87% uptake, people wanting to do the 8 week course. So I went back to my exec and I said 'I've got all these people who want to do this course, please, please, please'. They said ok - here's some funding, you can go and train and be a mindfulness teacher. And that was really good because that touches what you said before because I had a co teacher who had no idea of policing or the language that needed to be used, and I had recently been introduced by Chris has had knowledge and training and we could combine them both. So that was really really good.

So we went on this journey and we trained 100 officers and staff, so we started in our Public Protection Unit and then word got out - there's this mindfulness thing happening and then other people asked please please please, so we ended up with 100 people that went through. And it was the 8 week, it was the MBSR but tweaked slightly. And we took them all through that and we had some really good success we had people say 'I'm more aware of others' emotions and better able to respond to them', 'I'm more able to focus on the victim's needs and meet their needs, I'm less blasé', 'I'm now able to spot triggers in myself step back and do'.

We have people that have PTSD that had been through occupational health and got the help, so mindfulness had to come at the right time for people that then found they were better able to deal with the after effects of PTSD for example. We had reported better sleep, people were sleeping, shift work is terrible for sleeping, and obviously lack of sleep has a negative impact. We had people say 'I feel calmer, I'm more resilient, I'm more productive'. We did a short study around this and organizational (?) behaviours increased and people were less burnt out as a result of coming on the course. We asked one question and really quite significant was, which was this course, what impact has it had on your life, from 1, no impact at all to 10 life changing, and it averaged out at 8. So we knew it

was having a massive impact on people. We had people say 'this should be integrated into policing culture - it's a valuable tool everybody should have' and 'more please - everybody should have this, we'll be better able to deal with victims of crime and we'll be more productive and our wellbeing will be good'.

Obviously, an eight-week training course for police officers is difficult, every week I wanted them to come out for two hours. So it was barriers to availability, shift patterns, incidents coming in, things like that. And so we tried to accommodate that. And because I was working in the organization, I was a DI I had a full-time job as well as this, I was able to do top up sessions people who'd missed it because an incident had come in. We were able to do that. Now where have we gone? We've trained a hundred people like myself. Job well done. Thanks for that. How are we going to upscale? Bedfordshire asked us to collaborate with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and we didn't really know how to actually do that. So they asked me to look into online versions of the course and apps such as headspace, and things like that. Luckily the College of Policing found out about what we'd done and they offered to give us money. They wanted to hone in on a bespoke eight-week mindfulness course for the police online for the reasons that I collaborated with Michael obviously he's got a wealth of knowledge and experience of mindfulness, but I was able to bring it to how you'd apply it to the realities of policing. Because people were like 'yeah, he says that but he doesn't know the realities of policing' and so we spent a lot of time talking about the language and examples and unconscious bias how it can play out in the policing world, and we've got this bespoke eight-week online course which has just started. It's a controlled trial that the college are leading on, so some people are doing the eight-week 'mind fit cop' because we've really sold this on fitness, and other people are doing Headspace and other people are part of the control group. So we'll see how that goes and ultimately if it's a success it'll be made available to all police officer and all police staff in the UK. But what I'd ultimately like to see, and obviously I'd need more funding, is to train people working in policing that are mindfulness teachers so that they can underpin the online course, because nobody really engages fully in online courses, but that will be down to budgets and different things like that.

In terms of the numbers we had five forces involved in this trial with the College, Devon and Somerset, South Wales, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. And our Eastern Region specialist team. We had 1710 applicants but we have to ensure we had some screening in there so people in talking therapy or significant life events just happened we screened them out because we didn't feel we had the resources to support them enough. So currently going through to this time of 1336 people and we're just waiting to see how things go and we're hoping the results of the trial will be out next year. I'm not the only person and we're not the only force doing mindfulness as we've just heard, but here's Ewan.

PC Ewan Sim

Good afternoon, my name's Ewan Sim. I'm currently a police officer in Lancashire Constabulary but before that, as you can see from the uniform, I'm a response copper, I

worked for 14 years in Salford in Greater Manchester which is quite an interesting area for any of you that know Manchester. I'm also a mindfulness teacher, I'm a hypnotherapist, I'm a trauma therapist, and I'm just about to start my MSc in trauma psychology on Sunday, so exciting times ahead.

I haven't got much time but I'm going to explain a bit about what I found about being a police officer and a mindfulness teacher. I speak quite fast at the best of times, erm. What I found about mindfulness is you can't wait for the bobbies to come to you, you can't wait for the staff to come to you. If you send an email saying 'If you're stressed or anxious come to this session' you'll have no-one turn up, because first thing they have to do is admit you're stressed and anxious. You have to drag them in through the door. I often describe my mindfulness sessions as being like a northern comic, with a really tough crowd. Sometimes you'll have a group of coppers who've been told to come up to this room at 2 o'clock 'to have some well-being done to you'. So they're sitting there with their arms folded, scowling at you, cynical, sceptical, and you have to work with the people in front of you. I found that by having a bit of evidence, a bit of experience, explain how mindfulness works, explain how their nervous system works, explain how they do some meditation, [inaudible] coppers like 'do'; they like to do stuff, they like to fix stuff, and if you have a practice where they're doing relaxation, tensing muscles, before you know it you've almost, like Trojan horsed them into meditation and mindfulness. It's quite sneaky but it's kind of the way it works. You have to really address their scepticism, their cynicism.

I did a session with a bunch of bobbies in Preston the other day. There was 25 of them, quite a big group to be leading to, I was quite nervous about it to be quite honest 'cause they'd all just come off the streets, in their body armour, all looking a bit roughy-toughy; some people don't want to take their body armour off 'cause they don't want to accept they might get a bit emotional there, a bit uncomfortable. I did my session, did all the talking, did the mindfulness, and one bobby he came up to me and said 'I thought this was gonna be rubbish (he didn't say that) but it was actually alright' and to me it's a bit of a bonus as far as I'm concerned [...] you have to kind of wrestle with them a bit, so they can really experience what mindfulness and what being calm, and what being at ease, and what comfortable is, and being a human being again, because you kind of go into robot mode when you've got that uniform on, and it's just discovering, having a bit of time for yourself. I did a session with a group of senior leaders in GMP, and an officer came to see me, he was quite high ranking, he said 'my wife's told me to come and see you. He said 'I've heard you do good things, but you'll find I'm a tough nut to crack'. So I thought ok, fair enough, northern comic, here we go again, and did the first session, calmed everyone down, sent everyone out of the room for a bit of a leg stretch, and he came up to me afterwards when everyone had left the room and he went 'do you know what it is?' 'What is it Sir?' 'it's taking time for yourself' I went 'that's exactly it'. And that's what we have to do with mindfulness in Bluelight services - just give them time to experience what it's like to be them again, and calm that nervous system down, just to experience what being a human being is like again.

I was going to briefly touch on trauma sensitive mindfulness, and what Jutta said before, because it's not a magic bullet, and one size doesn't fit all. Just because you've churned a load of coppers into an 8-week mindfulness course, it ain't gonna happen because they're suffering trauma, they've got personal histories, so you've gotta be careful and skilful about how you bring mindfulness into it, working with them at their own tolerance levels, different practices, you have to be really quite skilful in how you address all their issues and all their concerns. What I've found is, it really works, and once you get in there with them, and meet them where they're at, that's when it really works, and that's where I think the benefit of mindfulness is. As a copper it really helps because I'm in uniform. They understand who I am, I know what they're like, we meet on a very mutual basis, just to see what it's like to be human, it's just a process. So that's me done, so thank you very much.

Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP

So our final speaker... no, more. Our penultimate speaker is Douglas McPhail. Douglas is a freelance mindfulness consultant, with a background in hospital and the pharmaceutical industry, and in Primary Care. Dougie recently delivered a mindfulness training program for the Scottish Ambulance Service. Dougie.

Douglas McPhail

Thank you. Thank you for that introduction. Can people hear me at the back there?

[Missing section]

...psychopathology including burnout and post-traumatic stress and they concluded that the mental health and emotional well-being of ambulance personnel appeared to be compromised by accident and emergency work. One senior colleague in the service summarised experience as a paramedic as follows 'nothing can prepare you for the sights sounds and smells that a paramedic has to deal with. I have seen worse sights as a paramedic in the UK than I did in 4 months in Iraq where I served in a frontline bomb disposal unit'. When staff go off sick with stress there's also a knock-on effect on the organization itself. So for example in 2015 over 50,000 hours were lost in the Scottish ambulance service arising from stress related illnesses.

Why an MBSR program, we all know that MBSR is an effective way of improving resilience in individuals who have high stress occupations. And this occasion, it wasn't an eight-week program over two hours. It was a four-day program which I co developed with the National Health Service and one was called nurturing mindfulness and compassionate care. That was fine-tuned along with my colleague bill Patterson to meet the needs of the Scottish ambulance service and also taking on board some of the comments of the didactic versus an experiential balance which my good colleague here had published, which was useful. We had 13 emergency personnel and we had eight men and five women and that's unusual. The average age was 46 and the length of service was about 14 years.

So what did participants actually think of getting a place on this program? One participant said 'I was very sceptical you know. Another person said 'it's definitely had a huge impact on my life I still have stresses but I'm controlling them'. In terms of measurable parameters after six months there was a vast improvement in well-being I can give you the statistics but I won't bother, well-being improved, perceived stress decreased, sleep quality improved. Overall measures of mindfulness increased and so did self-compassion as well, which was measured in terms of usefulness and recommendation of the course. 92% of participants found the program very useful and everybody recommended it to colleagues, and since then there's been four further cohorts with 60 ambulance personnel through this particular program.

So finally, our senior managers' view of the program this is from a colleague of mine who unfortunately wasn't able to be here, Lewis Campbell is Regional Director of the Scottish Ambulance service. So this is from the organization itself: 'The Scottish ambulance service has long had arrangements in place to support staff suffering from the effects of stress with a general acceptance that stress was an inevitable occupational hazard of working in a front line emergency service. The offer of mindfulness training to staff was the first time something tangible, had arisen to equip staff with the skills to protect themselves from the adverse effects of operating in such a hugely demanding high pressure environment. Three years down the line from the first pilot course I am still in awe of the passion openly expressed by some long serving hard bitten paramedics, who attribute the course not only with helping them cope with the stresses of the job, but also to changing their day to day lives.' Thank you for listening.

Clive Lewis MP

Thank you very much, Dougie. And I must say you've sat here so patiently for two hours, these are our final speakers now, we move on to the question and answers section after that. You must all do practice mindfulness, I'm quite sure that, to be able to be so attentive for two hours.

Our final speakers are Joel and Michelle Levy, the founders of Wisdom at Work. I believe you've come all the way from the US, thank you so much. They have been in the field of mindfulness training everyone from the military through to people in higher education, the world of sports, since the 1970s. I really want to hear about this. They also led the Jedi Warrior Training program for the US Army Special Forces, a six-months, full time mindfulness based peak performance training program. So without further ado, Obi-Wan, and Leia...

Dr. Joel and Michelle Levey, founders of Wisdom at Work

Thank you for that brilliant introduction. Michelle and I decided that since there's just a short period of time, I'll take the main presentation here. And then during the Q and A we'll both be available for that. So um, so we were prepared to use slides. So we're going to rely on your imagination instead, ok?

Today is graduation day, you've successfully completed a six-month full-time deployment into Jedi warrior training. You went into this training on April 26 last spring. And since that time, full time, you've been immersed and saturated in a mindfulness conducive and encouraging environment, ok. This has involved nearly two months in the field doing mission simulations in treacherous environments where you perform at levels that no other special forces troops had ever realized. You've completed mission simulations that no other teams have ever successfully survived. You have taken the practice home to your families, and you've listened to your children and your wives and your significant others who as a data point have come to us with their letters and their tears thanking us for the impacts that we've had on you. You've been involved and super saturated in neurofeedback and biofeedback, training, learning how to control just about every wave form you can generate in your many dimensional physiologies. And you were involved in a month long, silent mindfulness, vipassana style meditation retreat silent for a month, the last 10 days of which involve basically morning meditation and breakfast, at which point you would then go get your 90 pound rucksack and we would spend from 10 to 12 hours of the day, hiking mindfully for an hour, sitting and meditating for a half hour to 45 minutes, hiking for another 45 minutes to an hour, sitting and meditating, hiking, sitting for 10 or 12 hours, in preparation for the gut check, which meant that the conclusion of the meditation retreat rather than the the encampment, excuse me, we don't use the word retreat. The encampment at the conclusion of the encampment, you were loaded in your Humvees taken to the local military airport, loaded onto a plane taken, God knows where, and told to jump out of the plane, in the middle of the night you've deployed your chute open just before you hit the treetops, found the rest of your team and proceed on a mission that no other special forces troops had ever safely completed, which involve getting the checkpoints at certain times to get your provisions and if you weren't there with your whole team, you were not fit and you didn't know how long the ordeal will go on for.

This program came about due to the heart brokenness of caring, compassionate leaders in the Pentagon whose hearts were broken by in those days it was saying two or three times more men and women were committing suicide when they came back from combat. Now, the statistics as I understand it are three to 20 times more people are dying of some form of suicides, when they come back than die in combat. These people care deeply about human life. The program is also motivated by a prevalence of research going on Stanford and Princeton, other universities research centres in the CIA on psyops and [inaudible], and mental hacking of systems from afar by dangerous forces. And this program was motivated by the the living myth of the First Earth Battalion and of a cult classic called evolutionary tactics. A manual for the first year that crafted by our colleague Colonel Jim Channon, who was the commander of the First Earth Battalion until his death last year, and would initiate many of the Majors in the army into the First Earth Battalion, as a peacekeeping and earth stewarding force to care for our beloved planet, and the people there-in.

We spent nearly \$30,000 processing the data from the retreat for us. The most significant data I think, was the reports from the families; the children who said that their parents

were actually much less abusive and more attentive and caring, the wives and significant others who really commented on just the presence and emotional vulnerability of their partners. We also got data like mission effectiveness increased overall by 49%, ability to remain alert and motionless by 70%, confidence in our own leadership abilities increased by 50%. We had an explicit charter to go into spiritual territory, and to address existential and deeply spiritual matters related to blending with different cultures.

At the end of the program, one of our teams was selected as the most outstanding team in the NATO game that games that year, the trainers diffused into many secret units, spreading the Jedi teachings far and wide. They worked with troops and trained special operations in many foreign countries. They demonstrated the profound value of such intensive integrative work in all of our years, you know, we have 100 years of mindfulness practice between us, we've worked with hundreds of organizations around the globe, we very seldom teach a mindfulness class or a course, our work is about building mindful cultures and a mindful milieu. So this work was in everything that we did.

Recommendations from the army: 'The military forces will need to stay on the lead edge of modern warriorship by continuing to develop soldiers who can think clearly who can act decisively who can optimize their physical efforts and manage personal energy by drawing upon substantial reserves of psychological and emotional strength.', 'Our military forces will stay on the leading edge of modern warriorship by continuing to develop soldiers who can do this.' 'With appropriate funding and support future programs will deliver performance results far beyond those realized in this initial test. And we'll provide fundamental training and elements essential for the success of this special operations community'.

When we interviewed the colonel who oversaw the program at the end of his career, and we said, 'Colonel Getty, what are you most proud of from all of your years in the service and from our work together?' he said, 'I'm most proud of the number of covert humanitarian operations that we were able to run that benefited thousands of people and nobody ever heard about.' Thank you very much for your attention.

[Please note that due to technical difficulties on the day the recording was unclear in parts. This transcript is as accurate as possible but is intended for participants' personal use only].