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Promoting Mindfulness at Metro State

Your body is present, but is your mind? As students, we are part of a high-stress world that is full of expectations, appointments, evaluations, and deadlines. It often feels as though the world is rushing past us, and if we stop to take a minute for ourselves, we may not be able to catch back up. This is where mindfulness comes into play.

Metropolitan State University’s Social Work Student Association (SWSA) invited Kathleen Sprole to speak about mindfulness on Nov. 21. Sprole, MSW, LICSW, has been working in the mental health field since 2005 and created One Moment Center, LLC. According to Sprole, “The mission of One Moment Center is to provide individuals opportunities for self-growth and well-being through a mindfulness based approach.” She believes that knowing and understanding our authentic selves will allow us to change our outlook and reality, and, in turn, develop a healthier outlook on our personal and professional journey.

**What is mindfulness?**

According to Sprole (who is quoting Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction), mindfulness is “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” It finds its origins in Buddhism, although it is not considered a religion. Many people are already practicing mindfulness through activities such as meditation and yoga.

**Why practice mindfulness?**

Practicing mindfulness helps promote self-control, well-being, and focus, while enhancing tools that prevent stress and burnout. Knowing our internal selves will allow us to understand the behaviors that we are predisposed to, as well as how to slow down and take our mental health boundaries into consideration. More recently, research has found that practicing mindfulness has positive outcomes for those with depression and low self-esteem, as well as promoting social and emotional competence.

**How do you practice mindfulness?**

There are numerous ways to practice mindfulness, as it is simply intentionally living in the moment and focusing inwards. Sprole led a self-compassion meditation as a sample exercise, but explained that there are hundreds of examples of mindfulness exercises online. However, she suggested that those new to practicing mindfulness start with something short (about five minutes) and simple, and gradually increase in difficulty.

For those interested in learning more about mindfulness, check out Sprole’s One Moment Center, LLC website at <http://onemomentcenter.com/>

For more information about the SWSA, check out the organization’s Orgsync page at <https://orgsync.com/45858/chapter>