**Would you like to become more focused as you approach your end of year exams?**

**Do you want to learn how to manage stress and anxiety?**

**Would you like to learn how to flourish and become more resilient?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then please read on to find out about mindfulness and how to sign up for **free mindfulness workshops** being offered to first year TU Dublin students this semester 🙂

TU Dublin has received funding from the Higher Education Authority of Ireland to conduct a large research study aimed at helping students to improve key skills linked with success at college and employability. As part of this study, we are interested in measuring the impact that mindfulness can have for third level students. My name is Aiden Carthy. I direct a research centre at TU Dublin (the Research Centre For Psychology, Education And Emotional Intelligence [www.peei.ie](http://www.peei.ie)) and I am managing this study.

A free five week mindfulness programme will be offered to students by The Sanctuary, who are based in Dublin city and are experts at delivering mindfulness workshops.

If this is something that you would like to avail of, I do hope you will come along to the workshops.

On the next page, I have provided some further information that should address any questions you have. However, if you do have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any stage at aiden.carthy@tudublin.ie

**What is mindfulness?:**

Mindfulness involves developing simple techniques that help us to develop acceptance and compassion and help us to live in the moment. Mindfulness has been demonstrated to help people to reduced stress and anxiety, to become more focused and to find peace and acceptance.

**Mindfulness workshops:**

Workshops will take place on line (via Teams) once per week for five weeks. Workshops will be offered at five different times. However, we would ask that you sign up to take your workshops at the same time every week i.e. we would ask that you do not change the times that you attend workshops from week to week but choose one time that suits you for all five weeks of the programme. The five timeslots for workshops are as follows:

**Monday 10-11am**

**Monday 12.30-1.30pm**

**Tuesday 7.30-8.30pm**

**Wednesday 1-2pm**

**Thursday 1-2pm**

**There is space for just 25 students in the workshops and places will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.**

The workshops will include some relaxation exercises and will also give you practical advice and simple exercises that you can use to help you become more mindful.

**STLR:** The mindfulness workshops are STLR tagged. If you attend at least four of the five workshops, you will receive a certificate of completion and will also receive STLR credit at the level of ‘exposure’.

**Ethical concerns:**

It is very important to all staff at TU Dublin, that any research we conduct adheres to very strict ethical guidelines.  Ethical approval was sought and granted for this study. Participation in these workshops is completely voluntary and if you take part, you are free to leave at any time and you do not have to give any reason for doing so.

**Are there any risks involved?:**

A majority of individuals who attend mindfulness workshops claim to find them very helpful.  However, it is important that you know that this cannot be guaranteed.  Mindfulness is not therapy, however it is complementary to therapies such as counselling or psychotherapy.

Therefore, if you are taking part in the mindfulness workshops, we recommend that you inform your counsellor or therapist so that they are aware of this and can help you to gain as much as possible from taking these workshops. As with any supports that we can offer to students, there is the possibility that you will attend these workshops and may not notice any positive change or improvement in your life or your study.  The college counselling service will also be made aware that these workshops are taking place and should any topic that is discussed cause you to experience sadness or upset, you can make an appointment to speak with one of the college counsellors free of charge and in complete confidence.

**What information will be collected and how will it be used?:**

As per above, these workshops are being conducted as part of a large research study that TU Dublin have received funding for, the Transform-EDU project.  This project involves providing supports for students throughout their study and measuring the impact that this will have on their study and on their employability.  Therefore, if you do come to the mindfulness workshops, we would like to collect some basic information from you to help us to assess what impact the workshops have had.  Before you attend your first workshop you will be sent an email with links in it for you to complete a very brief demographic form and two brief measures of stress and resilience. After the final workshop we would like to collect some very basic feedback from you and will also ask you to take the stress and resilience measures again to see if there is any difference in your scores. These tests are very quick to take. We would also like to track your GPA to see if taking part in the workshops will help you to achieve higher marks in your exams.  You should know that all of this information will be kept in the strictest confidence.  Your personal details or exam marks will not be released to anyone and your name, personal details or exam marks will not be listed in any publications related to this study.  The only scores that will be published will be average scores for those that took part in the study, so there is no way that anybody could know who took part in the study from anything that we will publish related to it.  Your questionnaires will be entered into a database that will be stored on a computer that is password protected and encrypted i.e. even if the computer was stolen the file would be unreadable

**What should I do next?:**

Please contact me at **aiden.carthy@tudublin.ie** if you have any questions about the workshops and I will be happy to answer them for you.

Otherwise, if you would like to confirm your interest and take part, please complete the consent form attached (or have a parent/guardian complete a form if you are under the age of 18) and email it back to me.

Once I receive your signed consent form, I will register you for your workshops on Teams and send you the link for the short questionnaires you need to complete and then the facilitator of the mindfulness sessions will contact you directly from there.

I wish you a very productive and happy semester and I hope you will benefit from taking these mindfulness sessions.

Best wishes,

Aiden.