

# Practising Mindfulness in the Workplace: Idiographic Perspectives of Mindful Line Managers

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## Research Purpose

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To explore line managers' lived experiences:

**What are the features of commercial organisations' that either encourage or discourage managers from practising mindfulness at work?**



# Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Methodology

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## Idiographic - small homogenous sample (n=7)

- Line managers
- Working in commercial organisation
- Experience of mindfulness (*Baer 2003*)
- High dispositional mindfulness (SF-Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire) (*Bohlmeijer et al 2011*)

## Semi-Structured 1-2-1 Interviews

- Recorded, transcribed, redacted, pseudonyms
- Descriptive, language-use and Interrogative interpretations
- Emergent themes
- Recurrent themes – inductive and deductive
- Superordinate themes



Superordinate Theme:

## Organisational Perspectives – factors which **encourage** the practise of mindfulness

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Theme(s)	Description
Emotional control	Mindfulness enables individuals to 'show up' better at work
Performance	Mindfulness improves personal and team performance
Interactions	Mindfulness humanises work-based relationships with subordinates and peers

Superordinate Theme:

## Organisational Perspectives – factors which **discourage** the practise of mindfulness

Theme(s)	Description
Physical Space (P)	Finding appropriate physical space in the office in which to practise mindfulness
Perceptions (C)	If mindfulness is viewed as a bit 'out there,' how will my team perceive me?
Career Risk (E)	Being associated with mindfulness at work could be career limiting

# Conclusions

Commercial workplaces require emotional control, performance-orientation and inhibition of human, relational characteristics.

Mindfulness enables line managers to cope and function effectively in this context.

**Barriers to mindfulness practise in commercial workplaces include:**

- **P**ractical – e.g. physical space
- **C**ultural – e.g. perceptions about how those in authority – *particularly men* - ought to behave
- **E**thical – e.g. overt and hidden messages about the types of behaviours and attitudes which get rewarded/promoted



## ***Supports:***

Shonin and Van Gordon (2015): mindfulness training enhances managers' job performance (including supervision)

Purser and Milillo (2015): commercial settings present challenges to the enactment of mindfulness-based behaviours

# Implications

Suggests that MBIs ought to:

## Practical

- Provide spatial and timetabling consideration to implementation *and* continuing practise

## Cultural

- Focus on business-related benefits
- Provide clear senior, male role models and champions

## Ethical

- Continue to be offered on a voluntary basis
- Continue to be offered at an individual level
- Be offered in conjunction with established EAP or similar support programmes



### *Opportunities for Further Research:*

Closer investigation of relationships between individual mindfulness and (a) organisational mindfulness (Choi and Tobias 2015), and (b) compassion in the workplace (Kanov et al 2004).

Comparative exploration of publically quoted and triple bottom line entities

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