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# Mindful Matters in the South Wedge teaches clients how to deal with stress

By: Andrea Deckert | December 5, 2022



Laura Gavigan, founder of Mindful Matters, poses for a portrait. (Photo provided)

When Laura Gavigan continued to see the numerous stressors that COVID-19 created in people's lives, she acted.

A year into the pandemic, she founded Mindful Matters, a business that helps clients discover the skills they needed to ease stress and gain more life balance.

Gavigan uses a combination of teaching, counseling and coaching, integrating mindful meditation skills to help others understand and manage stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment.

"It's a way to settle our brains

and bodies in a stressful, chaotic world," Gavigan said.

When she began in May of 2021, Gavigan offered virtual sessions from her home part-time.

But demand grew and she turned the business venture into a full-time endeavor. Last summer, she opened a location on South Avenue in Rochester's South Wedge.

Gavigan — who has used mindfulness to help with her anxiety and chronic pain — had a nearly 30-year career in higher education when she decided she was ready for a professional change.

She earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology from SUNY Oswego, master's degrees in both higher education administration and school counseling from the University of Rochester and is a certified mindfulness teacher.

Gavigan is also an Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) practitioner. The technique, also called tapping, is an alternative treatment for physical pain and emotional distress.

What she did not have was first-hand knowledge of starting a business, so Gavigan turned to what she called a strong network of women who had found their own success as entrepreneurs for mentorship and support.

Through Mindful Matters, Gavigan offers a variety of options for clients from individual sessions to workshops and retreats for companies and organizations.

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clients of all ages.

This includes patients going through transitions, she said, such as new parents and empty nesters or those who are recently divorced or have changed careers.

Gavigan also works with people in the medical profession, many who have been on the front lines during the pandemic.

Mindfulness is a word that is often overused and misunderstood, Gavigan said.

"People assume they can't do it, or they think it's some big thing they need to carve out time for and sit on a mountain on a special pillow and levitate," she said. "My way of introducing mindfulness is informal, simple, practical and with a lot of humor."

Her focus is on helping people deal with personal and professional stressors by showing easy and practical mindful tools they can access anytime and anywhere.

The practice of mindfulness can be used in several situations, she said, from navigating a stressful family dinner over the holidays to interacting with a confrontational colleague at work.

"We can be hit with these unexpected triggers at any time," she said, adding that practicing mindfulness can help one respond, rather than react, to the situation.

Her goal is to grow into a Mindful Matters Wellness Center that reaches people worldwide and offers services such as counseling, massage, reiki, yoga, sound healing, meditation and more.

"It's so important to take care of ourselves," she said.

[adeckert@bridgetowermedia.com](mailto:adeckert@bridgetowermedia.com) / (585) 653-4021

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