

Beyond the Traditional Health Classroom: Enhancing Student Ability to Manage Stress Through a Mindfulness-Based CBT Program

Bergen County Technical School-Teterboro

Montclair State University-
Clinic for Evidence Based Practices in Schools

Objectives

1. Review the rationale and need for the integration of stress management in the high school setting.
2. Identify and evaluate instruments to measure levels of stress in students.
3. Describe how to implement mindfulness based CBT stress management activities within the health and physical education classroom, including identifying the barriers to implementation and how to overcome them.

If a question comes to mind...

We have a Poll Everywhere page for questions. To enter a question:

From a cell phone:

Text DANIELOLIVO758 to 37607 to join the session. Once you are in, text your question.

From a computer:

Go to <https://pollev.com/danielolivo758> and enter your question in the designated space.

School Background



Bergen County Technical High School-Teterboro

- Public magnet high school
- Draws highly academically-motivated and talented students from across the county
- School receives over 1200 applications per year for 170 openings

Assessing Need

School Improvement Panel (ScIP) annually creates school goals. In the 16-17 school year they determined an area for concern based on the following data points:

- Number of times students checked their grades on PowerSchool
- Student's attendance records
- Number and types of referrals to Student Assistance Counselor
- Student responses to high school transition surveys

Data supported anecdotal evidence shared

Assessing Need

Key findings:

- Students felt overwhelmed frequently in the school setting
- Students had difficulties identifying the signs and triggers of their stress
- Students had few healthy coping strategies to manage their stress

Defining a Measurable Goal

Finalized SCIP Goal:

Integrate five new activities into the core 9th Grade Health curriculum in an effort to increase student capacity to identify the physical and emotional signs of stress.

Planning



High School-Local University Partnership:

Montclair Clinic for Evidence-Based Practices in Schools

Objectives:

1. Provide basic knowledge on both the biology and psychology of stress.
2. Instruct student on mindfulness practices based within a cognitive behavioral (CBT) framework.

Question Check-In



Implementation

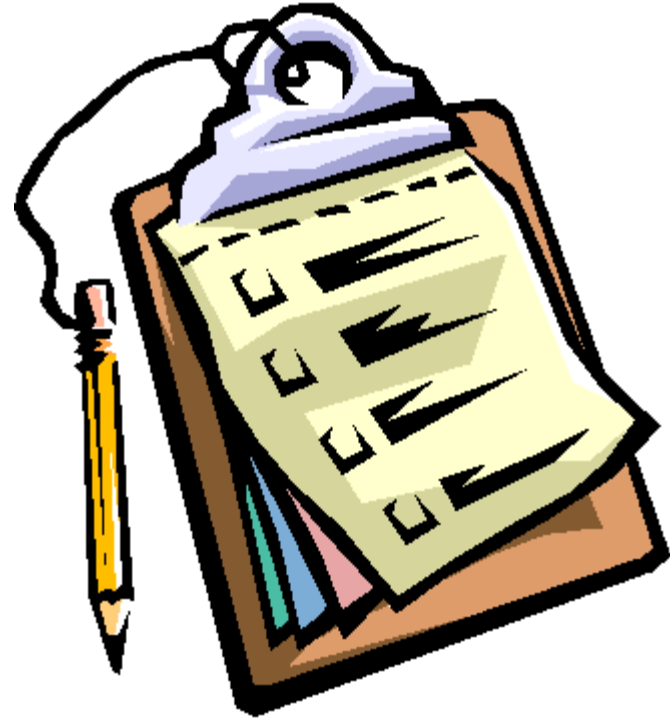
Full faculty training by Dr. Zaheer on the biological/psychological nature of stress and distinctions between eustress/distress

Five lessons delivered in collaboration with Montclair CEPS

All lessons were filmed and resources were adapted by each PE/health teacher involved in the initiative

Agenda for the Next Two Weeks

- Session 1: Overview of stress
- Session 2: Awareness
- Session 3: Mindfulness
- Session 4: Relaxation
- Session 5: Taking Action

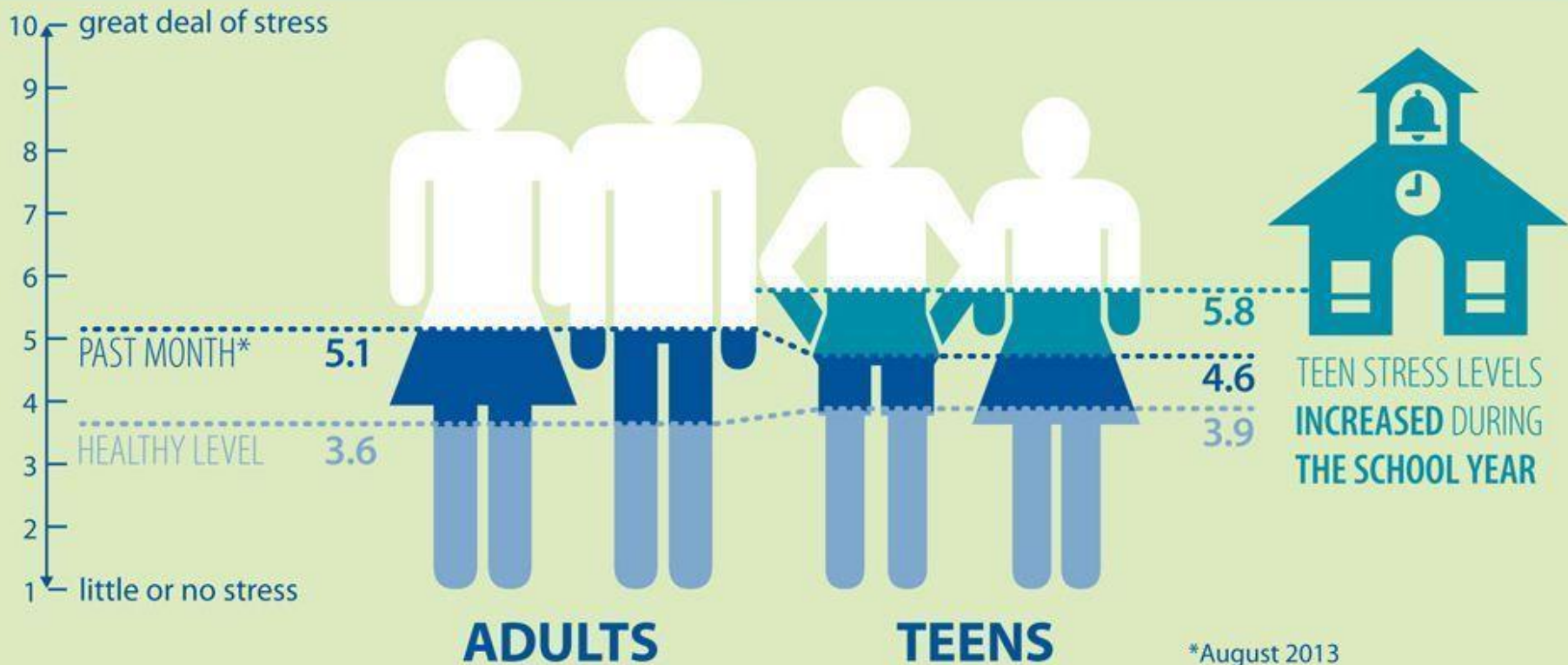


What is stress?

- **Stress** is simply a reaction to a demanding circumstance that disturbs our physical or mental equilibrium.
- A stressful event can trigger the “fight-or-flight” response, causing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol to surge through the body.

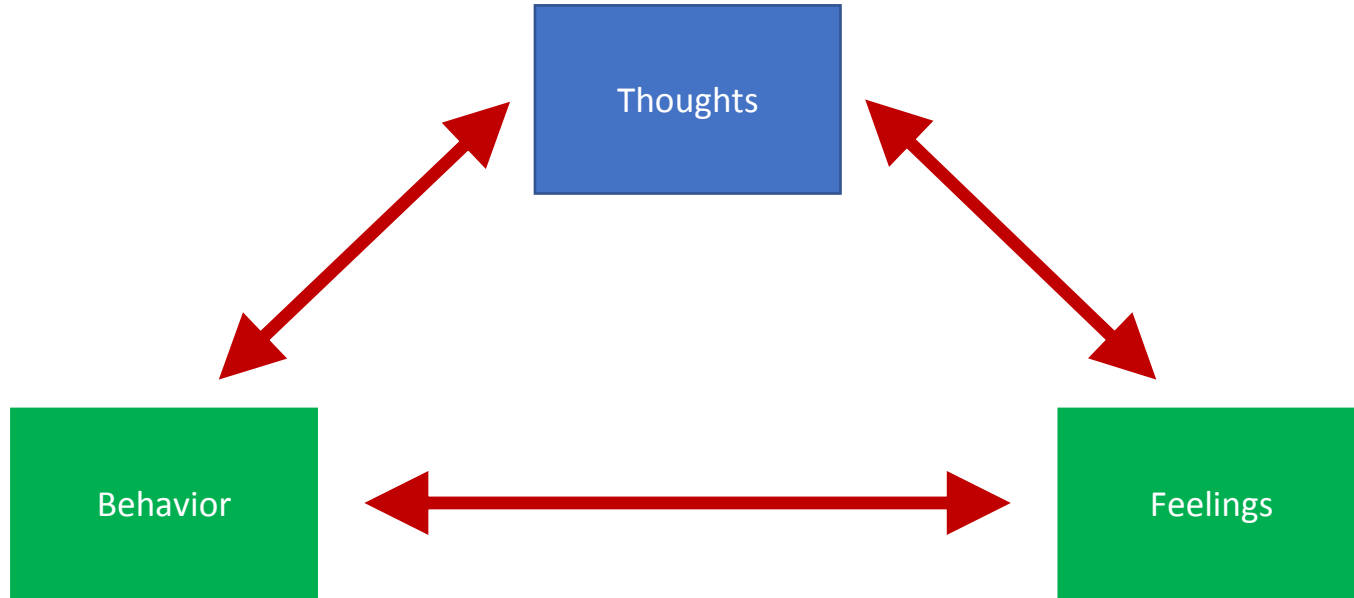


TEENS REPORT STRESS SIMILAR TO ADULTS, EXCEEDING LEVELS SEEN AS HEALTHY

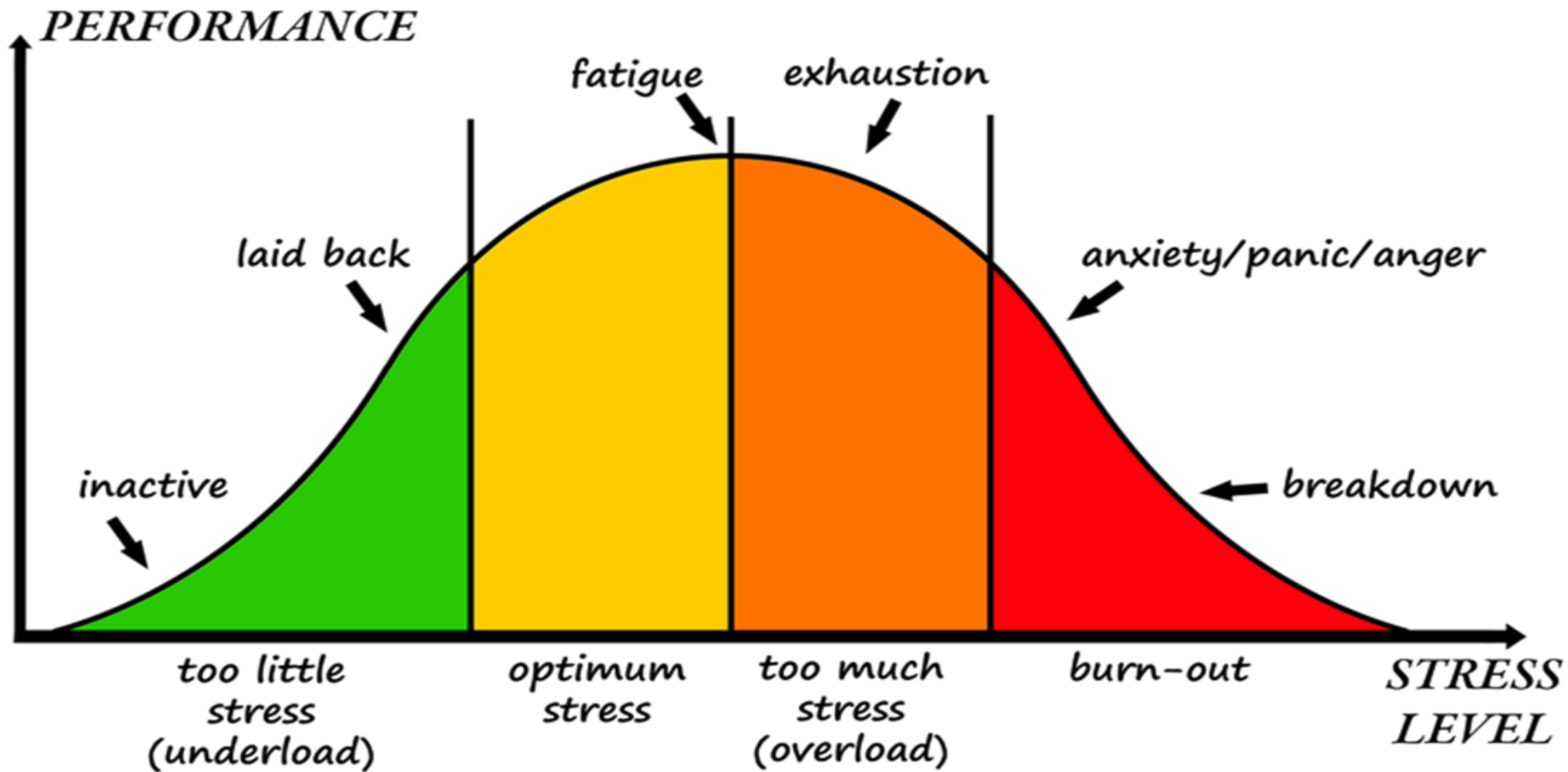


**Non-human
Animals**

Humans



STRESS CURVE



Implementation

Students are given opportunities to practice mindfulness in both health and physical education classes

Classes begin and or conclude with mindfulness exercises

Students are encouraged to keep a mindfulness log to record their practice and progress

Question Check-In



Data Collection

Data was measured using the following questionnaires modified into Google Forms:

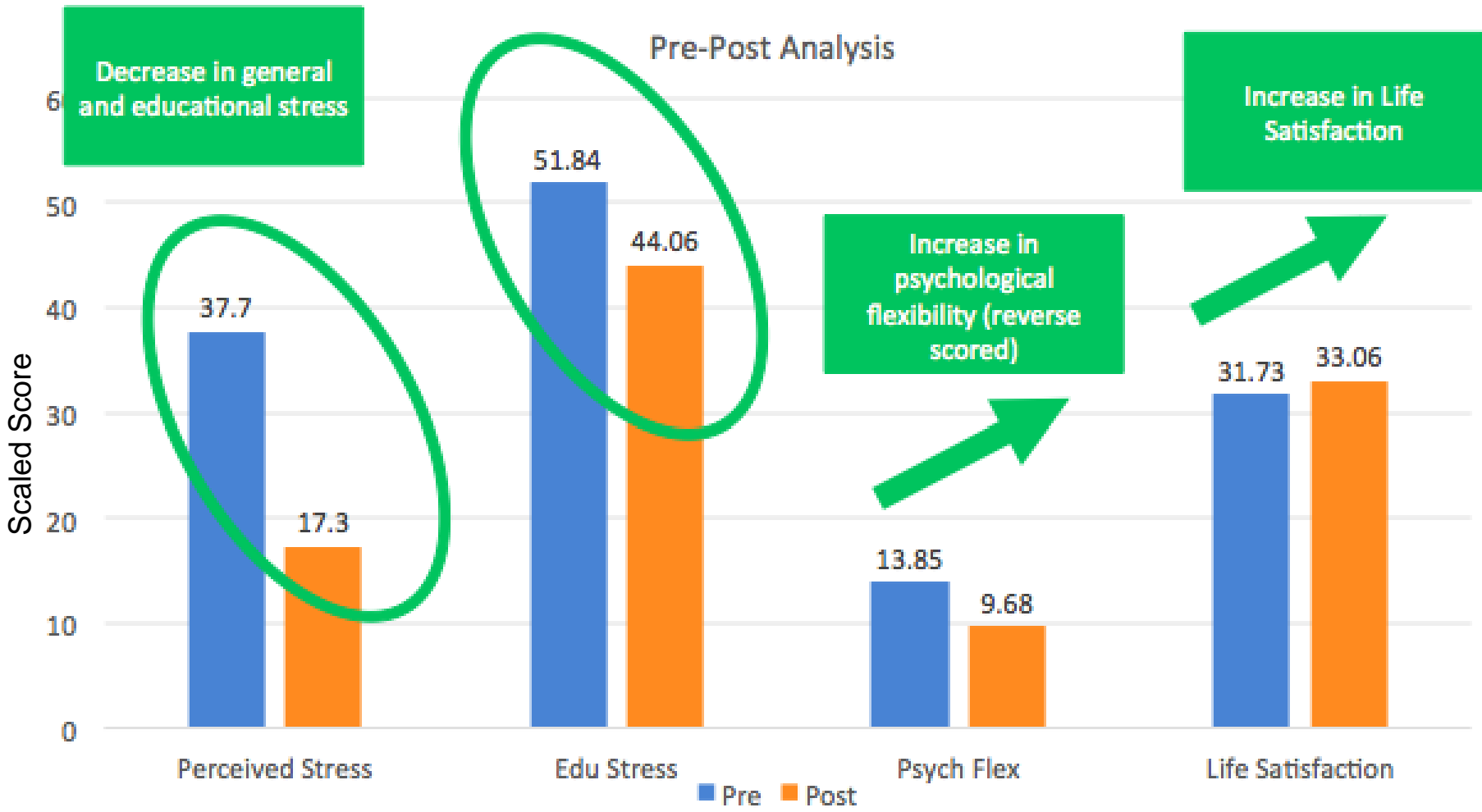
Self reported general stress (Perceived Stress Scale)

Educational Stress (Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents)

Emotional Regulation Abilities (Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II)

Life Satisfaction (Brief Multi-Dimensional Life Satisfaction Scale)

Pre-Post Analysis



Decrease in general and educational stress

Increase in Life Satisfaction

Increase in psychological flexibility (reverse scored)

Scaled Score

Perceived Stress

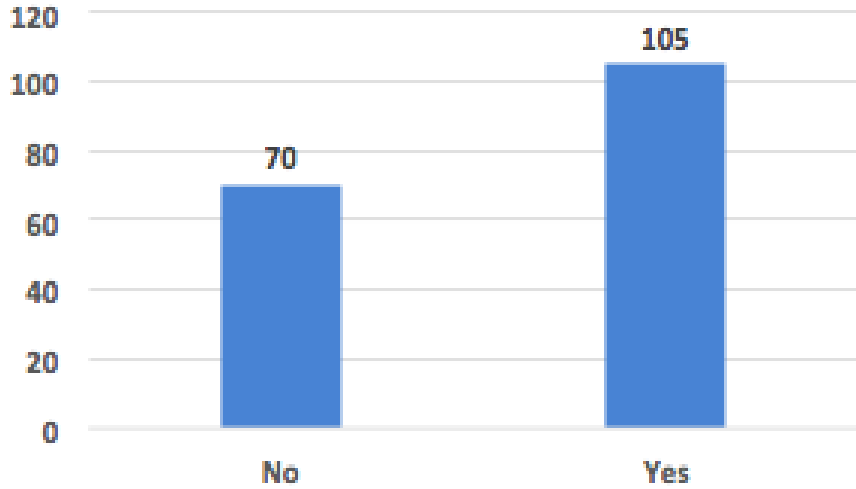
Edu Stress

Psych Flex

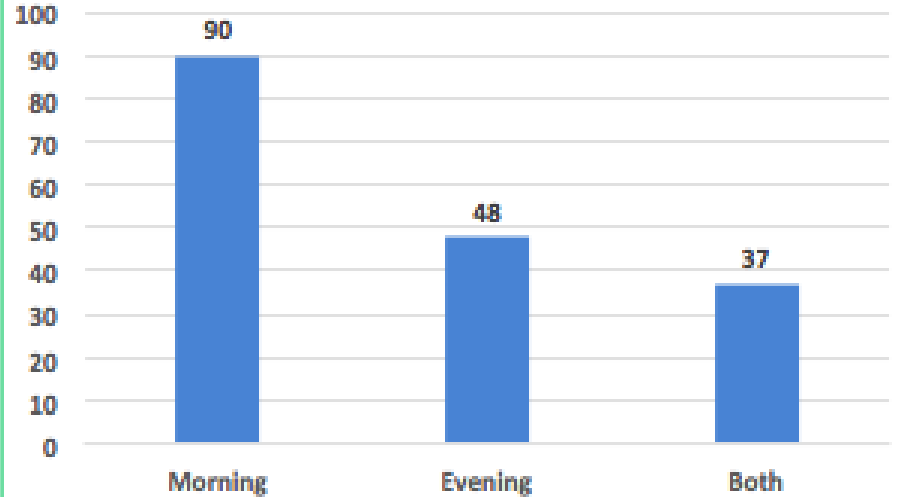
Life Satisfaction

Pre Post

Did you practice Mindfulness?



When did you practice?



Range from 30 seconds to 50 minutes of practice a day

Statistical Analysis

One-Sample T-Test for group comparisons

Indicate that for all four measures, there was a significant change

Perceived stress

Significantly decreased from pre to post
($p=.001$)

Educational stress

Significantly decreased from pre to post
($p=.001$)

Statistical Analysis

Psychological Flexibility

Score significantly decreased from pre to post ($p=.001$)- indicating increase in psychological flexibility

Quality of Life

Significantly decreased from pre to post ($p=.001$)

Next steps...

Continuing to assess stress levels in freshmen using questionnaires and Google Forms

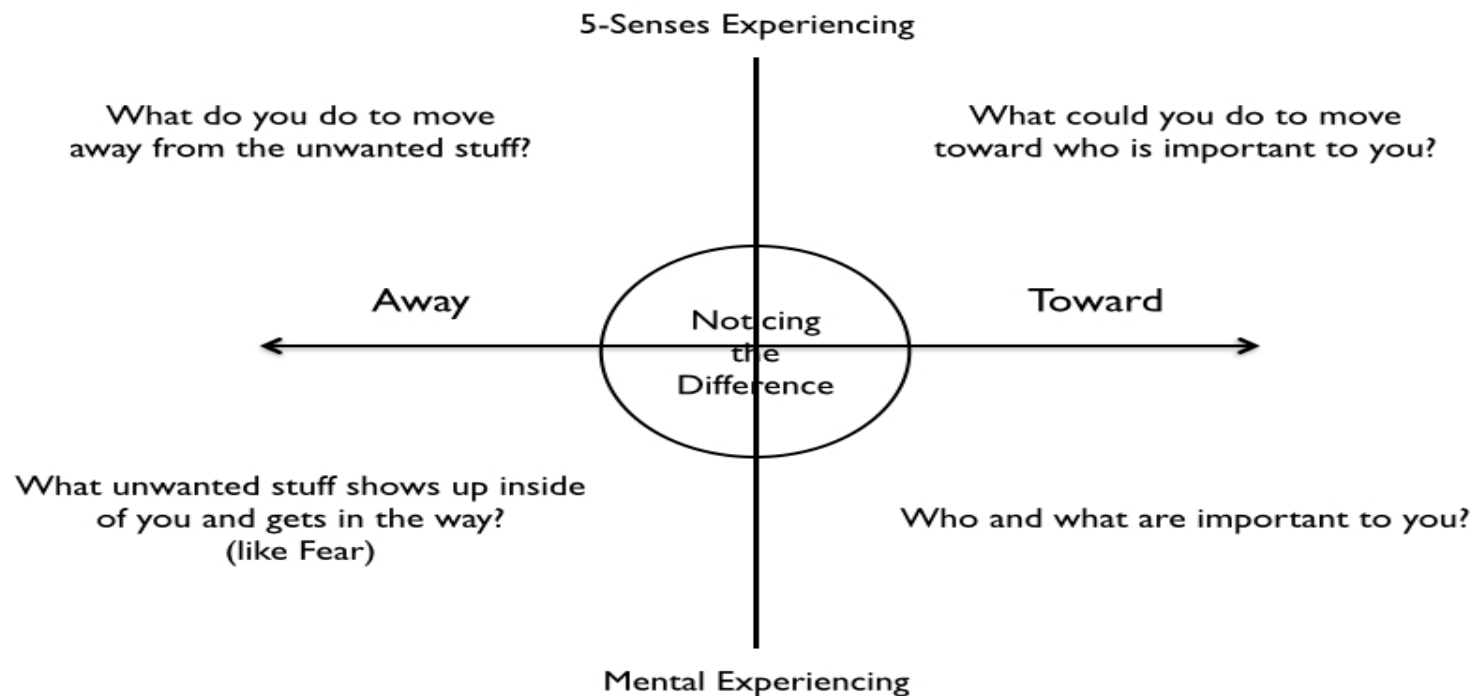
Integrating mindfulness activities into academic tasks (ex: students identify values, explain how those values apply in management of a long-term performance task, self assessment of performance)

Training guidance staff and student assistance counselors on psychological flexibility

Create a PLC of teachers to spread the practice of mindfulness to across multiple academic areas

The Psychological Flexibility Model Matrix

Kevin L. Polk, Ph.D.



Question Check-In



Implementation Barriers to Consider

How would a program like this manifest itself in your school?

Do you have the necessary support from mental health professionals to carry out this type of intervention?

Do you have the necessary support from all staff members to make this a viable component of your school culture?