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Helping Students Understand and Manage
Anxiety through a School Counseling Program
Using Mindfulness Techniques

by
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August 2018

Master's Project
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In partial fulfillment of the
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Abstract

Research shows that anxiety is prevalent among adolescent students. Research has also revealed the powerful impact mindfulness programs can have on student anxiety levels. School counselors are uniquely positioned to educate students on skills that can help them manage their emotions and improve their well-being. Therefore, this project offers school counselors a ready-to-use collaborative three-tiered plan that introduces ninth grade students to mindfulness skills, as a way to manage anxious feelings. Included is a collaboration plan that guides school counselors through all the steps that should lead to a successful collaboration. The Tier 1 plan includes a classroom lesson plan that is intended to target all ninth-grade students. The Tier 2 plan includes five small group outlines that are intended to reach 6-10 students. Finally, the Tier 3 plan offers a sample individual intervention plan that is intended to target only a few students. Additionally, this project includes an advocacy presentation which school counselors can add outcomes from their interventions to both showcase their work and advocate for school-wide training for all faculty members in mindfulness.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

Anxiety is prevalent in schools among adolescents, who struggle to identify what they're experiencing and lack emotional regulation skills; thus, it is the role of the school counselor to help them develop these important skills (Bender, Reinholdt-Dunne, Esbjørn, & Pons, 2012). In an ideal situation, all adolescents would receive an education involving emotional regulation as part of a comprehensive school counseling program. With this education, adolescents might better understand anxiety and develop the skills necessary to manage their anxiety.

Unfortunately, not all students receive this fundamental emotional literacy in school or from their support systems. Further, the vast majority of students in need do not have adequate support for their mental health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). Therefore, many adolescents continue to struggle with anxiety and lack the capacity to regulate their emotions and manage their anxiety. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding about the prevalence, importance, empathy, and recognition of anxiety. Thus, a stigma about anxiety prevails and barriers exist preventing adolescents from truly being able to support their peers.

Importance and Rationale of the Project

Mental health and anxiety, in particular, has recently become a topic of discussion in society, as it has become apparent that more people struggle with anxiety than previously known. The perceived stigma attached to mental illness and fears of discrimination are some of the many reasons people have chosen not to be

vocal about their struggles, causing them to feel isolated and suffer further if they do not seek out and receive the support they need (Carmack, Nelson, Hocke-Mirzashvili, & Fife, 2018). Additionally, because of this stigma, many adults lack the skills to help them reduce their anxiety, which ultimately prevents them from being able to help their children effectively regulate their emotions and manage anxiety as well (Ackerson, 2003).

The long-term consequences of unmanaged anxiety are troubling. Research shows that adolescents with anxiety symptoms are likely to experience the same or worse anxiety diagnoses as well as other types of anxiety disorders into adulthood (Allan et al., 2014). Anxiety has been shown to increase the risk for substance abuse and reduce the amount of social interaction among peers (Washington et al., 2017). Further, social anxiety in adolescence can lead to social detachment, poor attendance due to a refusal to attend school, and low motivation regarding academic performance (Rheingold, Herbert, & Franklin, 2003). Long-term effects of social anxiety include poor socio-cognitive skills and difficulties in navigating the social world (Haller, Raeder, Scerif, Kadosh, & Lau, 2016). This can lead to avoidance of social situations and isolation as adults.

Moreover, due to symptoms such as isolation, anxiety is often reported to occur in conjunction with depression. Early symptoms of both have been associated with poor academic functioning as well as future mental disorders into adulthood (Washington et al., 2017). Not only has anxiety been linked to depression, but also depression has been associated with suicide attempts, which are always of primary

importance to schools and families (Washington et al., 2017). Given the weight of these potential consequences, it is clear to see that schools are in a unique position to help children learn about and develop skills to help them manage and overcome anxiety so they do not have to suffer in the future.

Background of the Project

The term anxiety originated in the 17th century to describe feelings of worry that were accompanied by physiological symptoms of tightness or general discomfort. At that time, anxiety was not merely a general state of uneasiness that was rooted in the mind, but instead was seen to be brought on by imbalances within the body (Bound, 2004). However, in the 19th century, anxiety became known as an irrational mental state, which became reinforced through the work of Sigmund Freud. Today, anxiety is seen as a mental illness that could be brought on by a host of different factors both within and outside the individual (Bound, 2004). Anxiety affects the young and old and is a particularly common disorder among adolescents (Kessler, Stang, Wittchen, Stein, & Walters, 1999).

The prevalence of anxiety among adolescents in today's society is very high. Research has shown that 10% of adolescents endure emotional disorders such as anxiety. This statistic represents adolescents who are debilitated by their anxiety, in such a way that their personal, social, and family relationships suffer (Washington et al., 2017). Further, epidemiological research has estimated that the prevalence specifically of anxiety disorders in early adolescence ranges from 10 to 20 % (Allan et al., 2014).

There are several factors that have been shown to trigger or contribute to anxiety in children and adolescents. Social experiences, both with peers and family, mold the behavioral and psychological development of children (Murray & Greenberg, 2000). “Family is regarded as the primary socialization agent during childhood and provides an important social context within which constant interactions shape developmental adjustment and functioning among children and adolescents” (Washington et al., 2017, p. 139). Additionally, parental over control, rejection, and anxious rearing behaviors are linked to elevated levels of anxiety in adolescents (Mousavi, Low, & Hashim, 2016; Verhoeven, Bögels, & Van der Bruggen, 2012).

Adolescents also place a tremendous amount of worth and value in peer relationships, thus they are very attentive to social cues and often experience heightened self-consciousness (Kessler et al., 1999; Wittchen, Stein, & Kessler, 1999). Social anxiety can be triggered by a misinterpretation of social cues among adolescents, as “the decoding of ambiguity is central to the computational challenges of social inference making” (Haller et al., 2016, p. 250). Thus, a faulty process of decoding these cues can result in a fear of social interactions and negative evaluations by their peers (Clark & Wells, 1995; Foa, Franklin, Perry, & Herbert, 1996). Social anxiety can be debilitating for adolescents who are not taught healthy coping mechanisms; they may choose to avoid social situations or approach them with destructive social behavior, thus worsening their anxiety (Clark & Wells, 1995; Rapee & Heimberg, 1997).

Additionally, when an individual's basic needs are not fulfilled or are at risk, their psychological well-being suffers. Ethnic minority groups such as African American adolescents are particularly at risk for anxiety due to their exposure to poverty, discrimination, adverse life events, and violence in their communities (Washington et al., 2017). When faced with poverty, basic physiological needs are at risk such as food, clean water, clothing, shelter, and sleep, which lowers any humans' sense of security and overall health. Anxiety is just one piece of an adolescents' overall health that suffers when their basic needs are unfulfilled.

Finally, some adolescents' anxiety is triggered and worsened due to their belief that anxiety-related sensations will lead to negative outcomes on their physical and cognitive health and in their social spheres. When adolescents experience anxiety sensitivity (AS), they are at higher risk of developing anxiety disorders due to their maladaptive responses to AS. They may respond by fearing or avoiding any situation that could cause anxious arousal, regardless of how common those sensations may be amongst their peers (Allan et al., 2014). Published evidence through a meta-analysis supports the theory that children and adolescents who endure high levels of AS are at a much greater risk for meeting clinical diagnoses of anxiety disorders (Noël & Francis, 2011).

However, a variety of mindfulness practices have shown to be effective in helping children manage and diminish their anxiety. In particular, two categories of mindfulness interventions have been explored in both clinical and non-clinical school settings with positive results: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Children (MBCT-C). Aspects of each therapy could be integrated into a school counseling program to help target anxiety in adolescents.

Mindfulness has received a lot of attention in the media recently, thus it is not surprising that such interventions have also been the topic of study by many researchers in the field. For example, Semple, Lee, Rosa, and Miller (2010) made significant contributions in the field. They created the MBCT-C manualized intervention, which showed marked improvements in children's anxiety. Their work and the works of others will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this project.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a mindfulness program that is intended to help students understand and manage anxiety. This program consists of classroom lesson plans, small group outlines, a sample student intervention plan, and collaboration ideas that are intended to help high school counselors educate students on ways to effectively help them understand and manage anxiety. It is anchored in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) design in order to reach all students and to ensure those in most need of assistance will receive the additional support they need. It incorporates various mindfulness techniques that have shown to be effective in reducing children's anxiety. Finally, this program provides a PowerPoint presentation that school counselors can use to advocate for school-wide training on mindfulness so the practice of mindfulness can be consistently reinforced in the most effective manner. The ultimate goal is to help school counselors provide students with the tools

to empower them to free themselves of otherwise debilitating levels of anxiety so they can become happy and healthy contributing members of society in the future.

Objectives of the Project

The objective of this project is to develop classroom lesson plans, small group outlines, and a sample student intervention plan that could be used in an individual counseling setting. All of these plans will build off of one another such that the classroom lesson plan is expected to inform all students (Tier 1) about anxiety and demonstrate general MBSR techniques students can apply in their everyday lives. The small group lesson plan (Tier 2) is designed to be used for 6-10 students who participated in the Tier 1 intervention but need additional support in managing their anxiety. This group is expected to allow students the opportunity to share scenarios where they experience heightened anxiety, listen to the advice and feedback from their peers, and learn new MBSR and MBCT-C techniques they can use at home, in school, and beyond. The individual intervention plan (Tier 3) is intended to be used with students who do not excel in the Tier 2 small group intervention or do not fit the criteria for inclusion in small group settings. This project includes a written example of an individual intervention plan using an exemplar about a student losing the battle with anxiety.

This project also outlines collaboration ideas to allow for seamless integration of the school counseling core curriculum into health education classrooms. This project is expected to help facilitate positive counselor-teacher relationships and complement current curriculum to prevent classroom disruption. The final objective

of this project is to provide an advocacy plan for school counselors, which they can present to administrators for school-wide mindfulness training for all faculty members. Thus, a sample power-point presentation will be included in the appendix.

Ultimately, the hope is that implementing this project in a school setting would accomplish three things. First, it would educate students about anxiety in order to encourage a more open and empathetic school climate. Second, it would empower students to take control of their mental health by arming them with mindfulness strategies that will help them manage anxiety. Finally, it would result in a school-wide initiative where mindfulness practices would be reinforced daily in classroom curriculum.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been identified and defined through a thorough search of published literature. They are referred to throughout the remainder of this project.

Anxiety – Feelings of tension and worry that are often accompanied by physiological changes such as heightened blood pressure (Anxiety, n.d.).

Body scan – A mindfulness practice that refers to a gradual sweeping of awareness on different parts of the body, moving from the head to the toes in a non-judgmental manner. The individual is instructed to focus on any sensations they're experiencing within their body while also remaining aware of their breath (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009).

Hatha Yoga – A mindfulness practice that focuses on helping the body relax and grow stronger through stretches, a variety of positions, and mindful breathing exercises (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009).

Mindfulness – The practice of focusing one's attention on the present-moment in a nonjudgmental and accepting way (Kabat-Zinn, 1991).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) – A program that walks people through mindfulness techniques which focus on present-moment awareness, openness, curiosity, and acceptance of thoughts and experiences in order to help individuals reflect and choose their actions instead of acting on impulse (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Sibinga et al., 2013). MBSR incorporates techniques such as body scan, sitting meditation, mindful movement, and hatha yoga (Kallapiran, Koo, Kirubakaran, & Hancock, 2015).

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for children (MBCT-C) – An age-appropriate adaptation on traditional MBCT, which helps children (ages 9 and older) manage attention, enhance emotional self-regulation, and develop resiliency skills, through a 12-week manualized group therapy mindfulness intervention (Semple, Lee, Rosa, & Miller, 2010). Traditional mindfulness skills are practiced during these sessions and are anchored by homework assignments. Counselors model the mindfulness skills and help the individuals develop an awareness and acceptance of sensations, thoughts, and emotions. In doing so, they help children choose positive behavioral responses to challenging life scenarios (Cotton et al., 2016).

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) – A three-tiered framework that addresses the needs of all students in a school system (Hawken, Vincent, & Schumann, 2008).

Sitting Meditation – A mindfulness practice that guides the individual through mindful attention to breath and awareness as well as acceptance of thoughts and distractions that enter the mind at any one point in time (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009).

Scope of the Project

Using a MTSS design, this project is intended to reach all students. However, in this project, ‘all students’ refers to first year high school students. Thus, all first-year students will receive Tier 1 classroom curriculum. If the project were to continue, it would reach all students moving through the high school. Additionally, mindfulness strategies could easily be expanded to help students manage other mental health struggles such as stress; however, this project only focuses on anxiety. Narrowing the focus to first year students and the topic to anxiety will make implementation of the Tier 1 piece of this project much more feasible and convenient. It will also allow for the Tier 2 group counseling sessions to be more relevant for all students participating.

This project provides collaboration ideas to school counselors to help them reach out to health educators and integrate mindfulness into their curriculum that focuses on mental health and specifically anxiety. It also includes a classroom lesson plan, several small group counseling plans, and a sample intervention plan that infuses mindfulness skills in various ways to help students understand and manage

anxious feelings. Pre- and Post-test surveys are also provided to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and identify potential Tier 2 and 3 participants. The project also includes a sample presentation that a school counselor could deliver to administrators and the school board in order to advocate for school-wide mindfulness training.

This project does not provide mindfulness training to school counselors; they will need to obtain proper training before implementing this program. Finally, using this program, school counselors will not be diagnosing anxiety, as they are not adequately trained to do so. Instead, they will be delivering the Tier 1 curriculum in a proactive manner and providing Tier 2 group and Tier 3 individual services on a voluntary basis; these students will report on the post-test surveys if would like additional support in managing their anxious feelings.

Allowing students to volunteer for group counseling mindfulness services could pose significant obstacles during implementation. The number of volunteers could be minimal, limiting the potential benefit of a 'group' environment. Additionally, many students may thoroughly enjoy the mindfulness exercises practiced in the Tier 1 intervention and post-tests may produce high numbers of volunteers for group participation. In both instances, alternate plans could be made to increase or reduce enrollment. If the goal is to increase group participation, school counselors can invite first year students they had previously met with who have mentioned or demonstrated anxious feelings. On the other hand, to reduce enrollment, school counselors can have the interested students complete mental health

questionnaires to get a sense of their level of need. Those with the greatest need would be invited to participate pending appropriate screening to help ensure that they would benefit from a small group experience.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter includes a review of the literature that focuses on the impacts of mindfulness interventions on adolescent anxiety in order to successfully address the problem outlined in Chapter One to create sound materials for this project. The remainder of this chapter provides four additional sections. First, the Theory/Rationale section includes a frame of understanding that grounds this project. Next, the Research/Evaluation section offers a thorough examination of the literature focusing on three overarching topics that inform this project: (1) mindfulness techniques for anxiety, (2) outcomes of mindfulness in schools, and (3) implementation of mindfulness programs. The Summary section highlights the main research findings. The final section includes a conclusion that explains how key findings from the research are incorporated into this project.

Theory/Rationale

Mindfulness is rooted in ancient Buddhist religious traditions but stands on its own as a practice that challenges people to pay attention to the present-moment experience with acceptance (Nanda, 2009). However, in looking at theoretical models that ground mindfulness practices, existentialism is one model that shares many commonalities. This theory, however, has some distinctions from mindfulness, which are acknowledged below. First, existentialism recognizes that freedom is reached when permanence and the inability to alter it is recognized, unlike mindfulness where the mind can be cleared to view things as they are in the moment, impermanent and

able to be viewed differently. Secondly, while mindfulness centers around a silent, calm mind, existentialism believes spoken discussion helps people derive meaning in their lives. Third, where mindfulness focuses exclusively on the present moment, existentialism focuses equally on the past, present, and future to derive meaning. Finally, distinct from mindfulness practice, existentialism is not concerned about unconditional self-acceptance (Nanda, 2009).

However, there are significant parallels between existentialism and mindfulness, which provide evidence of their strong relationship. First, both mindfulness and existentialism share a relational component of inseparability. Mindfulness views the body and mind as inseparable, when one uses their breathing techniques to tap into their thoughts, the body and mind come together within one's stream of consciousness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Existentialism views self, other, and the world as inseparable as they are individual and collective pieces that share aspects from the community, society, families, environment, and so on (Nhat Hanh, 2006). Though mindfulness and existentialism frame inseparability differently, from intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives, respectively, each share the notion that humans' inseparable relational stance impacts their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The implementation of mindfulness interventions in group and classroom settings within schools allows the relational stance of both mindfulness and existentialism to intersect in such a way that individuals can both learn from themselves and others in their experiences.

Additionally, mindfulness and existentialism share the fundamental aspect of awareness. Mindfulness trains individuals to become aware by 'noting' present-moment thoughts and experiences, without analyzing them, and then letting those thoughts go (Thera, 1996). Similarly, existentialism encourages one to describe what is occurring without providing explanations (Spinelli, 2005). This notion of awareness is consistently supported through the various mindfulness techniques examined in this review.

Further, each practice believes human suffering is an inevitable aspect of human life. Mindfulness recognizes that human beings suffer with things like anxiety due to the uncertainty and impermanence of life itself, and instead encourages living in the present moment and letting go of what is beyond our control (Nanda, 2009). Equally, existentialism views anxiety as an unavoidable piece of human existence that is either endured or wrestled with (Spinelli, 2007). This notion of existential anxiety provides another lens for which to view this project's problem. It also provides support for the expansive significance that anxiety plays not only in the lives of adolescents but also humankind.

Finally, authenticity is a primary component shared between each model. In mindfulness, one learns to not only acknowledge present-moment thoughts and experiences, but also to be open to and accepting of whatever thought or experience may arise (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Likewise, existential thought encourages taking an authentic stance on human thoughts, experiences, and existence (Spinelli, 2005). This authentic openness and acceptance drives the success of mindfulness interventions.

All the techniques discussed in this review embody authenticity and implementation would only be successful if the instructor models and explains this concept with accuracy. Having an understanding of these four key components of existentialism provides a framework for this literature review to explore mindfulness techniques for anxiety, outcomes of mindfulness in schools, and implementation of mindfulness programs.

Research/Evaluation

The following review analyzes research that falls under the overarching topic of mindfulness in schools. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, it is organized under three subsections. The first section, mindfulness techniques for anxiety, demonstrates how the literature supports mindfulness as a useful strategy for confronting youth anxiety. The second section, outcomes of mindfulness in schools, gives a broader look on the impact of mindfulness in school settings. Section three, implementation of mindfulness programs, offers professional insights on best practices for program implementation. The information detailed within each subsection provided support for and guided the creation of the programming presented in Chapter Three and the Appendix sections of this project.

Mindfulness Techniques for Anxiety

There are various mindfulness programs, which incorporate a vast array of techniques used to help individuals manage anxiety and improve overall well-being. Some researchers chose to study individual strategies, whereas others examined the impacts of systematic mindfulness programs on adolescent anxiety. Regarding stand-

alone techniques, Tadlock-Marlo (2011) researched two common mindfulness techniques currently in use: (1) reoccurring experiential descriptions and (2) breathing techniques. Reoccurring experiential descriptions entail the counselor asking students to describe their emotions, thoughts, and physical reactions from an event. The aim of this technique is to help students slow down their thoughts and feelings to help them increase self-awareness and control. Breathing techniques are also frequently used in practice, as breathing is a powerful connector of the mind and body. When one recognizes anxious feelings and focuses energy on a neutral breath, any negative emotions and thoughts resulting from the source weaken allowing the individual to regain control and respond in a more productive manner (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). The majority of techniques and programs discussed in this section of the literature review incorporate deep breathing exercises in their activities. These mindful breathing exercises have been correlated with significant reductions in children's anxiety levels indicating the importance of such a technique in the practice of mindfulness (Britton et al., 2014; Malboeuf-Hurtubise, Lacourse, Taylor, Joussemet, & Ben Amor, 2017; Noggle, Steiner, Minami, & Khalsa, 2012).

A widely studied systematic mindfulness program is called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). MBSR is a program that consists of various mindfulness techniques that center on present-moment awareness, curiosity, and acceptance of thoughts and experiences. The goal of MBSR is to help people pause, reflect, and then choose their responsive behaviors, without acting on impulse (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Sibinga et al., 2013). Sibinga et al. (2013) examined the impact of

MBSR on the psychological functioning of urban middle school males. Over the course of 12 weeks, students either received one 50-minute MBSR session or a health education program. Results showed the students who received the MBSR training showed a significant reduction in anxiety compared to the control group. Some of the techniques used in MBSR include body scan, mindfulness meditation, mindful movement, and hatha yoga (Kallapiran et al., 2015).

Body scan involves a gradual sweeping of awareness on different parts of the body, in a non-judgmental manner. One learns to focus on their bodily sensations while also remaining aware of their breath, (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al. (2017) investigated the impact of an eight-week mindfulness-based intervention program on the behaviors and well-being of elementary school children with learning disabilities (LD). This study used 14 participants from a LD special education classroom; they met once a week for 60-minute sessions and incorporated mindfulness techniques such as body scan as well as breathing meditation. Results of this intervention indicated significant improvements in anxiety for this population of children.

Mindfulness meditation focuses on attention to breath and acceptance of thoughts and distractions that arise in the mind (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). Liehr and Diaz (2010) researched the impact of mindfulness meditation on male minority children's anxiety and depression levels. Children from a summer camp program were randomly assigned to ten 15-minute mindfulness meditation or health education sessions. This study supported the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation, as

students receiving the mindfulness intervention showed greater reductions in anxiety over time than the control.

Additionally, Britton et al. (2014) examined how teacher-run mindfulness meditation sessions impacted the mental health of middle school students. Participants included a cluster sample of 101 sixth grade students from four different classes that were randomized into two groups, one receiving an Asian History class with mindfulness meditation integrated in each class and the other receiving an education in African history. The interventions lasted six weeks in duration and the groups switched each semester over the course of two years. Participants completed questionnaires before and after each intervention; results showed that students who received the six-week mindfulness meditation intervention were more favorable toward meditation, but both groups reported reduced levels of anxiety.

Hatha yoga is a mindfulness technique that aims to help the body relax and grow stronger through a variety of stretches, positions, and mindful breathing exercises (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). Noggle et al. (2012) sought to determine the impact yoga has on adolescent anxiety and overall well-being. Participants included 11th and 12th grade students who were randomly cluster assigned by class to receive either ten weeks of yoga or standard physical education curriculum. Students who received yoga reported significant improvements in negative affect, tension-anxiety, and total mood disturbance.

Another systematic mindfulness program, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is an intervention that helps people improve their emotional

regulation and is commonly used in clinical settings to treat depression and anxiety in adults. More recently, this therapy was modified to create an age appropriate, group therapy intervention for children: Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Children (MBCT- C). This therapy is used with children and adolescents ages nine and older. It is a 12-week manualized group intervention that aims to improve one's ability to manage attention, enhance emotional self-regulation, and develop resiliency skills (Semple, Lee, Rosa, & Miller, 2010). The practical skills taught in the MBCT-C curriculum include traditional MBSR practices, which are combined with principles from cognitive behavioral therapy and anchored by daily homework assignments where the children can practice their new skills in their home environments. Those leading the group therapy sessions model the mindfulness skills and help the individuals develop an awareness and acceptance of sensations, thoughts, and emotions. In doing so, they help children choose positive behavioral responses to challenging life scenarios (Cotton et al., 2016).

Semple, Lee, Rosa, and Miller (2010) investigated the effects of MBCT-C on children's anxiety, attention, and behavior. They used 25 participants between the ages of 9 and 13 years old who were already enrolled in a reading-tutoring program with anxiety. The experimental group received 12 weekly 90-minute MBCT-C sessions in a group setting. Results of this study revealed significant reductions of anxiety among those with clinically elevated anxiety levels.

Outcomes of Mindfulness in Schools

While mindfulness is currently a popular topic in the media, it is still relatively new in schools, considering its roots in ancient Eastern religion. Mindfulness-based interventions formally worked their way into American practices after Jon Kabat-Zinn studied the topic at University of Massachusetts Medical School. From there, clinicians began implementing these interventions in adult medical settings to help them cope with chronic pain and illness. In the 1990s and 2000s, psychologists began applying these concepts in their work, which led to the eventual development of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and mindfulness-based relapse prevention. Finally, in the early 2000s, researchers began testing these concepts on children both in clinical and academic settings. Findings suggested these interventions led to improvements in attention, social skills, and test anxiety (Renshaw & Cook, 2017).

Some of the major developments in bringing mindfulness interventions into schools have been the development of trademarked curriculum, such as MindUp and Learning to Breathe, as well as organizations that provide training and consultation to teachers and administrators like Mindful Schools and Mindfulness in Schools Project. Despite fears of mindfulness remaining merely a fad with minor benefits for youth, many researchers have examined and quantified results of many empirical studies on the topic to determine its effect on youth (Renshaw & Cook, 2017). One such meta analysis, conducted by Klingbeil et al. (2017) analyzed data from 76 studies and determined these interventions were just as effective in schools as they are in clinical

settings. Additionally, a small therapeutic effect was found for several domains including academic achievement, school functioning, externalizing and internalizing problems, positive emotion & self-appraisal, physical health, social competence, and prosocial behavior (Klingbeil et al., 2017). Thus, comprehensive research analyses offer evidence supporting the benefits of incorporating mindfulness in schools.

Implementation of Mindfulness Programs

Due to the largely successful breadth of research conducted, mindfulness-based interventions continue to be integrated in schools in a variety of ways. Currently, some schools choose to utilize trademarked mindfulness training curricula or hire consultant companies to help them effectively deliver mindfulness training to students, such as the organizations previously noted (Renshaw & Cook, 2017). However, due to tight budgets, mindfulness programs often need to be established by trained faculty and staff within school systems.

The mindset and behavior standards from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) serve to guide the foundation and effectiveness of school counselors. They “describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness and social/emotional development” (ASCA, 2014). Mindfulness programs could help students achieve many of these standards; thus, school counselors are uniquely positioned to begin the process of infusing mindfulness in schools and advocating for school-wide training. Research not only indicates mindfulness programs can be successful, but they offer best practices for implementation.

Mindfulness is an empowering vehicle that school counselors can use to help students embrace self-awareness and personal responsibility while simultaneously externalizing experiences beyond their control. This sense of empowerment allows students to be in control of their thoughts and emotions instead of falling victim to them. As a result, students could be better positioned to make wiser choices, reach their academic and social potential, and improve their quality of life (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). The role of the school counselor should be to incorporate mindfulness into individual and group counseling sessions as well as their classroom curriculum, and to advocate for teachers to do the same in order to increase consistency and repetition which is expected to lead to superior outcomes. Counselors should present, model and facilitate breathing exercises with students. In individual counseling, the shared goal should be to search for understanding of the underlying problem and for the student to accept oneself. Through this recognition, school counselors can promote positive change and personal growth (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011).

One important factor to consider in implementing mindfulness interventions is time. In their study of teacher-implemented mindfulness meditation sessions, Britton et al. (2014) found that the integration of mindfulness meditation into classrooms was easy and effective. However, they criticized that six-weeks of five- to ten-minute sessions was too short to be as effective. On the other hand, Costello and Lawler (2014) subjected 63 elementary school students to a five-week mindfulness program. It consisted of daily sessions, which began in 3-minute periods and stretched to 12-

minute sessions toward the final week; results showed significant improvements in well-being.

Costello and Lawler (2014) felt shorter interventions were appropriate due to difficulty of focusing on breath and body awareness and were able to extend sessions as students became more experienced with the practice. Further, Wisner and Norton (2013) explored the effects of integrating mindfulness meditation into group counseling. Students between the ages of 15 to 19 years underwent an eight-week group counseling mindfulness intervention. Sessions were conducted twice a week for a maximum length of 30 minutes, including a four- to ten-minute meditation session. Results showed a significant rise in students' measured behavioral and emotional strengths, once again indicating the time periods for this intervention were effective.

Another factor to consider for implementation is logistics. Dariotis et al. (2017) investigated logistical barriers to implementation and effectiveness of their mindfulness program. They noted that per the design of their study they pulled students out of resource classes to attend the mindfulness sessions. Despite enjoying their mindfulness program, students felt conflicted about attending because they didn't always want to miss out on their activity classes, which they also enjoyed (Dariotis et al., 2017). One possible solution to this problem could be to rotate through different class periods when pulling students for mindfulness activities in order to prevent students from missing too much content of any one class.

Another theme explored in the literature focused on successful arrangement of program content. The content within Costello and Lawler's (2014) program was extremely effectiveness in improving students' well being. The program focused in belly breathing; awareness of one's body, sounds, thoughts and feelings; isolated body awareness and relaxation; observing and letting go of thoughts without judgment; exploring the five senses; remaining calm and confident; and visualization (Costello & Lawler, 2014). The techniques in this program progressed from basic skills to more advanced, which is a logical progression for students to maximize the potential benefits.

Further, Viafora, Mathiesen, and Unsworth (2015) experienced a great deal of success when delivering their mindfulness program to traditional middle school students as well as homeless youth in school classrooms. They organized their program using a consistent framework, which had slight deviations each week. Every session began with a mindful listening activity, followed by a mindful eating exercise, a several-minute guided breathing exercise, a weekly mindfulness topic, and a discussion led by the instructor exploring students' experiences, personal applications, and any other questions. The majority of students expressed positive sentiments regarding the overall course and disclosed they incorporate mindfulness in their lives outside the classroom (Viafora et al., 2015). Similarly, in group settings, Wisner and Norton (2013) found it useful to lead students through meditation sessions in posture and mindfulness practice and to follow it up with a group question and answer session.

However, the design of content delivery suggested for individual counseling sessions was much more unique. Tadlock-Marlo (2011) suggested empowering students to alter their relationship with the problem. Instead of trying to change the issue, students can be encouraged to recognize what is within their control—their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. School counselors can help them learn how to pay attention to their thoughts and emotions, breathe through them, accept them, and mindfully respond in a proactive manner rather than react. When students feel comfortable using this process in their everyday lives, they will have the foundation for personal freedom and empowerment (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011).

Other researchers pointed out environmental concerns for implementation. Dariotis et al. (2017) noted that participants were satisfied with the content of the program, which focused on present moment awareness, yoga, mindful breathing, and reflection. However, students were more critical about the physical environment. They noted several distractions such as students walking by the classroom, loud noises, and uncomfortable room temperatures. Some students suggested holding some sessions outdoors to facilitate breathing in fresh air and reduce peer distractions (Dariotis et al., 2017).

Further, many researchers explored the components of effective reinforcement methods and evaluation programs. Britton et al. (2014) advised practitioners to also instruct students to practice mindfulness meditation outside the classroom to improve effects. Costello and Lawler (2014) had students reflect on their experiences in journals following each session. They also conducted pre- and post-test interviews

with the children and teachers. Wisner and Norton (2013) gathered data a teacher-completed pre- and post-test Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scales for each student, which yielded a “strength index” for every student.

Additionally, Lawlor (2014) published considerations for successful implementation of school-based mindfulness programs for adolescents. One of the key factors cited in the article was the importance of ongoing evaluation of the program’s effectiveness. More specifically, implementers should consistently assess the strength, resources, and capacity of programming to ensure continued improvements and success.

Other researchers explained the importance of clear and consistent communication with faculty members. Dariotis et al. (2017) noted that teachers criticized implementers for poor communication. They would have preferred if implementers clearly articulated the program goals, student roster, calendar dates, and provided more frequent communication to check in with teachers about their students (Dariotis et al., 2017).

Some additional considerations Lawlor (2014) noted were the needs of the teacher and continual professional development as well as high quality delivery. It is critical for the classroom environment and relationships between the students and teacher to be positive in order to yield positive social emotional outcomes for the students. Lawlor (2014) advised learning the needs of teachers as well, if they too are in need of receiving mindfulness training to improve their well-being, this can be done simultaneously with student training using integrative programs such as

SMART and CARE. Additionally, when teachers receive more training, teach more lessons, and do so with professional-level delivery, student outcomes improve (Lawlor, 2014).

Additionally, Tadlock-Marlo (2011) recommended school counselors not only receive continual training on mindfulness, but to also practice mindfulness in their personal lives on a consistent basis. Also, the success of implementation is influenced by the student and parents' willingness to attempt mindfulness practices. Thus, Tadlock-Marlo (2011) advised educating students and parents on the benefits of mindfulness and providing a safe space for them to practice.

Finally, Dariotis et al. (2017) interviewed teachers who acknowledged the importance of consistent reinforcement of mindfulness practices to improve outcomes for students. They expressed a willingness to attend mindfulness trainings in order to incorporate techniques in their daily curriculum to help their students thrive. They recommended trainings occur during faculty meetings once a month or on professional development trainings (Dariotis et al., 2017). This is something a school counselor can consider for their advocacy plan for school-wide mindfulness trainings.

Summary

While mindfulness is rooted in Buddhist religious traditions, it shares four key principles with existentialism: (1) inseparability of relationships, (2) pure awareness, (3) existential anxiety, and (4) authenticity of thoughts and experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Nanda, 2009; Nhat Hanh, 2006; Spinelli, 2005; Thera, 1996). Each principle demonstrates the link between mindfulness and existentialism and provides additional

reasoning and support for the success that mindfulness programs have had on youth anxiety.

This review provides evidenced-based research, which outlines the positive benefits mindfulness techniques have had on youth anxiety. Reoccurring experiential descriptions has been found to reduce youth anxiety by allowing students to slow their thoughts and improve awareness and control (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). Mindful breathing exercises are the foundation for further mindfulness techniques and have been correlated with significant reductions in children's anxiety (Britton et al., 2014; Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2017; Noggle et al., 2012).

MBSR is a program that consists of various mindfulness techniques such as body scan, mindfulness meditation, mindful movement, and hatha yoga (Kallapiran et al., 2015). MBSR was found to significantly reduce anxiety levels of urban middle school males when students received the program over a 12 weeks time span (Sibinga et al., 2013). Students who received MBSR programs that featured breathing meditation, body scan, mindfulness meditation, or hatha yoga all experienced improvements in anxiety (Britton et al., 2014; Liehr & Diaz, 2010; Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2017; Noggle et al., 2012).

MBCT-C includes traditional MBSR practices, principles from cognitive behavioral therapy, and daily homework assignments for youth to practice in their home environments (Cotton et al., 2016). Semple et al. (2010) investigated the effects of a 12-week MBCTC-C group counseling intervention on children's anxiety.

Findings showed MBCT-C helped students reduce anxiety levels, particularly for those with clinically elevated levels (Semple et al., 2010).

In order to quantify the results of the breadth of research that has been conducted on mindfulness interventions, some researchers conducted meta analysis studies. One study analyzed data from 76 studies and determined mindfulness interventions were just as effective in schools as they are in clinical settings. Additionally, a small therapeutic effect was found for academic achievement, school functioning, externalizing and internalizing problems, positive emotion and self-appraisal, physical health, social competence, and prosocial behavior (Klingbeil et al, 2017). Thus, comprehensive research analyses also support mindfulness interventions in schools.

Many researchers have conducted studies exploring the strengths and weaknesses of various school-based mindfulness interventions. While there exists some conflicting information on the length of time for each session, program durations remained fairly consistent, spanning anywhere from five- to eight-weeks with students meeting once weekly (Britton et al., 2014; Costello & Lawler, 2014; Wisner & Norton, 2013). From a logistical standpoint, implementers should be wary of pulling students from the same elective each week and should instead consider rotating through different class periods to prevent students missing too much content in any one class (Dariotis et al., 2017). When creating the content of the mindfulness program, research suggests progressing the skills from basic to more complex as the program advances and creating a routine in which certain skills are reinforced, others

are introduced, and student experiences are discussed (Costello & Lawler, 2014; Viafora et al., 2015).

Some additional considerations include locating the sessions in a space that is free from distractions, having students practice mindfulness at home, consistently evaluating the program's effectiveness, and clearly articulating program goals, student roster, calendar dates, and student progress with teachers (Britton et al., 2014; Dariotis et al., 2017; Lawlor, 2014). Finally, it is imperative for all implementers to feel confident in their delivery, receive continual mindfulness training, create a positive environment for students to thrive, practice mindfulness in their personal lives, and consistently reinforce mindfulness to improve student outcomes (Dariotis et al., 2017; Lawlor, 2014; Tadlock-Marlo, 2011).

Conclusion

Existential theorists believe all humans are bound to face anxiety at some point in their human experience (Spinelli, 2007). However, mental health has failed to receive the attention it deserves and thus many suffer in silence, lacking the skills they need to truly understand and manage their anxious feelings. Additionally, there is a void in the educational system, which mindfulness programs can fill to ultimately provide adolescents with training on how to thrive with their anxiety. This literature review has exemplified the positive benefits mindfulness programs and techniques have had on youth anxiety. It has also defeated the notion that mindfulness is just a fad and has instead shown comprehensive data supporting the improvements mindfulness interventions have had on youth well-being. Finally, this review has

examined research on best practices for implementation in order to help in the creation of well-planned curriculum for this project that should yield optimal outcomes for students. The project and materials included and described in the following chapter are grounded in existential theory and are supported by the findings discussed in this review.

Chapter Three: Project Description

Introduction

Today's adolescents who struggle to identify and manage anxious feelings lack an education focused on emotional regulation (Bender et al., 2012). Thus, the goal of this project is to provide a series of mindfulness lesson and intervention plans that a school counselor could utilize to educate students on identifying, understanding, accepting, and thriving in the face of anxious feelings. Additionally, in order to help students improve their overall self-regulation, this project provides a ready-to-use PowerPoint presentation that advocates for school-wide mindfulness training, which would consistently reinforce students' mindfulness skills. Using this project, a school counselor can provide students with the tools to manage anxious feelings and ultimately live life more freely.

This chapter first offers a description of the components of the project, including the rationale, design, and descriptions of all curricula and accompanying documents shown in the appendix. Next, the project evaluation methods are explained and a criterion for success is defined. Then, the project conclusions are explored, referencing key findings pulled from the published research. Finally, plans for implementation are described, offering suggestions about the arrangement of program delivery, special considerations, and appropriate way to communicate the effectiveness of implementation of this project.

Project Components

Though the practice of mindfulness is still a relatively new phenomenon taught in schools, it has been widely studied in the published research and findings have shown significant improvements for adolescent anxiety levels and overall well-being (Britton et al., 2014; Klingbeil et al, 2017; Liehr & Diaz, 2010; Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2017; Noggle et al., 2012; Semple et al., 2010; Sibinga et al., 2013). This project provides school counselors with a ready-to-use three-tiered program, which will teach students various mindfulness skills all aimed at helping adolescents better understand and manage anxious feelings. It also provides a ready-to-use advocacy presentation in which school counselors can add findings from their program to showcase their work and advocate for school-wide mindfulness training to improve the reach and impact of mindfulness for students as well as staff. Due to the high percentage of students impacted by anxiety and the positive outcomes mindfulness has shown on adolescent anxiety levels, this project is relevant and has merit for use in all high schools across the country.

The first piece included in this project is a figure displaying the MTSS model (Appendix A) with key descriptive components of this project shown in all three tiers of the pyramid. It explains how the program targets all students and shifts the focus first from reaching all students in the classroom to reinforcing it with some students through group sessions and finally to working with a few students in individual settings. The bottom of the figure also provides a reminder for school counselors to receive training on mindfulness before implementing this program, as proper training

is essential to effective program delivery. The second component of this project is the collaboration plan (Appendix B), which offers information about who the school counselor should collaborate with, what the details of the collaboration looks like, when the collaboration meetings should occur, where modes of communication should take place, and why collaborating is important for this program.

The next three documents all pertain to the Tier 1 classroom lessons of the program. The third document included in the appendix is the form used to provide informed consent for the Tier 1 classroom sessions (Appendix C). This form is a letter that is intended to be sent home to the student and their parents or guardians that explains the purpose and general content of the sessions. It asks for students and/or parents or guardians to acknowledge whether or not they give consent to their adolescents' participation in the program by checking a box and providing their signatures.

The next piece of curriculum is the classroom lesson plan (Appendix D) which provides information on which ASCA Mindset and Behavior Standards this plan addresses, the objectives the plan intends to meet, the materials needed, details on the procedure as well as prompts the school counselor should read, ways to gather process, perception, and outcome data, and suggestions for follow-up ideas (ASCA, 2014). The next set of forms included are the pre- and post-test evaluation forms (Appendix E) which are slightly different as the post-test also includes boxes students can check if they're interested in participating in the group counseling sessions.

The following five appendix documents all relate to the Tier 2 group counseling sessions. The first piece is the group counseling organizational information sheet (Appendix F). This document lays out all the details of the group sessions including the number, length, topics, and location of sessions; information relating to the target population of students; a plan for pulling them from their regularly scheduled classes; and debriefing procedures.

The next item is the class release slip (Appendix G) that the school counselor should distribute to the teachers of the class that will be missed, the morning of the group session. The teachers will hand the slip to the student to be excused from class and head toward the location of the counseling session. The third item in this section is the informed consent form (Appendix H) to be signed by the student and their parent/guardian to consent to the students' participation in the group. The pre- and post-test (Appendix I) for the group sessions is included to assess students' understanding of mindfulness, their beliefs about their support systems, and their confidence in using mindfulness skills. This is intended to be distributed to students during their first and last sessions to quantify changes as a result of the sessions.

The next series of documents are the five outlines (Appendix J) for the group counseling sessions. The topics of each session include mindful breathing; sitting meditation and body scan; mindful observations, acceptance, and letting go; hatha yoga; and mindful walking. The session outlines include ASCA Mindset and Behavior Standards addressed, learning objectives for the students, materials, details

about the procedure, ways to collect process and perception data, and any additional worksheets created to support the activities (ASCA, 2014).

The last two items provided in the appendix offer resources to school counselors to use when working individually with students (Tier 3) and sharing information about the results of the intervention. First, a sample intervention plan (Appendix K) is provided to give school counselors ideas on how to integrate mindfulness strategies into an individual counseling plan. It offers a template of a plan that lists short-term and long-term goals as well as methods for goal achievement that the school counselor and student should agree upon together. Finally, the last piece included in this project is the advocacy presentation (Appendix L) that should be presented to administrators and the school board, to share outcomes of the school counselor's intervention and to advocate for school-wide mindfulness training. The presentation includes three blank slides where school counselors can insert statistics and figures demonstrating the effectiveness of their Tier 1-3 interventions. The following section describes the ways school counselors can evaluate the success of their intervention.

Project Evaluation

According to the published literature, a fundamental pillar of program success is constant evaluation of the program's overall effectiveness (Lawlor, 2014). Thus, this project includes a variety of methods for gathering process, perception, and outcome data to measure the program's effectiveness. First, the classroom and group counseling plans ask the school counselor to gather process data by recording the

number and names of students in attendance as well as the date and class period the session took place. Next, the processing questions included in the lesson plans will provide the perception data. Finally, pre- and post-tests will provide the school counselor with outcome as they will assess the program's impact on adolescent learning and overall well-being.

Success for this project will be determined by finding average ratings for each of the questions from the classroom and group pre- and post-test surveys, respectively. The school counselor should bundle the questions into various themes and check for improvements. The themes could include, but are not limited to (1) students' understanding of anxiety and anxious feelings, (2) students' understanding of the concept of mindfulness, (3) students' belief about their ability to use mindfulness, (4) students' motivation to continue using mindfulness in their lives, and (5) the presence of supportive peer relationships in students' lives (this theme is unique to the group setting). Before and after ratings for each theme can be included in slides 9-10 of the advocacy presentation to show the outcomes of the school counseling program's mindfulness intervention. To assess the outcomes of the Tier 3 intervention(s), school counselors can measure the students' progress toward their agreed-upon short and long-term goals. These outcomes can also be added to the advocacy presentation in slide 11 to show the effectiveness in utilizing mindfulness strategies to help individuals manage anxious feelings. All of the data gathered to measure the success of this program should also be analyzed, annually, in order to improve programming and delivery for students in the future.

Project Conclusions

Anxiety is not a new concept for adolescents and even adults; however, because the stigma surrounding mental health is currently being challenged, we are discovering more are impacted by anxiety than what was once thought (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). Additionally, because anxiety is closely linked to depression and suicide, it is imperative to fill the educational void and implement programming to support students who struggle to manage anxious feelings.

There is an abundance of research to support the implementation of mindfulness programs in schools. The research suggests that effective delivery of mindfulness interventions for adolescents can lead to significant improvements in student anxiety levels (Kallapiran et al., 2015). Research has also demonstrated mindfulness programs can yield added benefits on academic achievement, school functioning, internalizing & externalizing problems, negative emotions, distress, positive emotion, self-appraisal, physical health, social competence, and prosocial behavior (Klingbeil et al., 2017). Teaching mindfulness skills to students can empower adolescents to feel in control of their emotions. Further, these skills can enable students to choose responses that will allow them to thrive in challenging environments and live more liberated lives.

Despite the wealth of research on the topic, some questions remain unanswered. First, not much is known about the impact of one mindfulness session on anxiety levels and overall well-being for adolescent students. The initial step of this program is to implement a Tier 1 classroom mindfulness lesson, which will run

students through a mindful breathing and body scan exercise. The purpose of this component is to reach all students so they at least have one introduction to using mindfulness skills for anxiety and to identify students who are interested in learning more skills to help them manage anxious feelings. The outcomes of this aspect of the program can vary drastically based on student buy-in, which will likely be harder to garner in merely one session.

Further, this project does not ask school counselors to diagnose anxiety levels for their students; thus, the true impact on student anxiety will not be evaluated. Instead, this project seeks to determine whether or not students feel they have skills to help them manage anxious feelings. Finally, this project does not offer an evaluation tool to determine the success of the individual intervention, as this piece will need to be altered around the individual student's needs. However, the school counselor can monitor the student's progress based on their movement toward the agreed-upon short-term and long-term goals. If the student does not show any progress or is worsening, the school counselor will then need to make a referral for more intensive outside professional services. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the school counselor's delivery of this program is essential to its success, which is why all school counselors implementing this program should receive professional training for teaching mindfulness in advance.

Plans for Implementation

This program should be delivered to all ninth grade students in order to help them understand and manage anxiety using mindfulness techniques. School

counselors should request attending mindfulness trainings far in advance to ensure they are comfortable using mindfulness skills in their own lives and confident in their abilities to effectively deliver this program to adolescent students. Once training has been conducted, school counselors should then initiate contact with health educators to pitch the collaboration idea and begin the planning and scheduling process. Once all students return their informed consent forms, the school counselor can begin implementing this program by delivering the Tier 1 lesson in conjunction with the health educator's lesson on anxiety.

Next, the school counselor should refer to the classroom session post-tests to assemble a group of 6-10 students for the five group counseling sessions on mindfulness skills. Then the school counselors should meet with the students individually to screen them to ensure they are willing and able to make positive contributions to the group and then should hand out informed consent forms to those qualified students. Any students who do not qualify for the group sessions should receive counseling on an individual basis.

After the school counselor receives all of the signed informed consent forms, the group sessions can begin. School counselors will notify teachers one week before the students miss their class, to inform them of the program goals and date student will be pulled from class. They should also give the class release slips to the teachers the morning of each session so the student has a reminder to attend the group session and a pass to get to the counseling space. The class period students will miss will vary each week to prevent the student from missing too much content from any one class.

At the beginning and conclusion of the group counseling sessions, students will be asked to complete pre- and post-tests to assess their understanding and confidence in using mindfulness skills to manage anxious feelings. If, based on the school counselors' perceptions and analysis of pre- and post-tests, one or more students show they are still struggling, they will be asked to attend individual counseling sessions.

When working with students individually, school counselors can refer to the sample individual intervention plan to help them create a plan that incorporates mindfulness strategies and is customized to the students' needs. After all these plans have been implemented, school counselors should take some time to fully evaluate the effectiveness of their program and generate statistical facts and figures to display the findings. School counselors can then add their findings to slides 9-11 of the pre-made advocacy presentation, which should be presented to administrators and the school board for school-wide mindfulness training for all faculty members. This presentation should be delivered a few weeks following the intervention and before the end of the school year to allow time for administrators to collaborate with school counselors on the logistical planning of school-wide training. While the goal of this project is to help students understand anxiety and develop mindfulness skills to help them manage anxious feelings, the overarching goal is to help students consistently build mindfulness skills to help them regulate all emotions and improve their overall well-being in the long-run; the advocacy presentation included in this project is the final piece toward accomplishing this goal.

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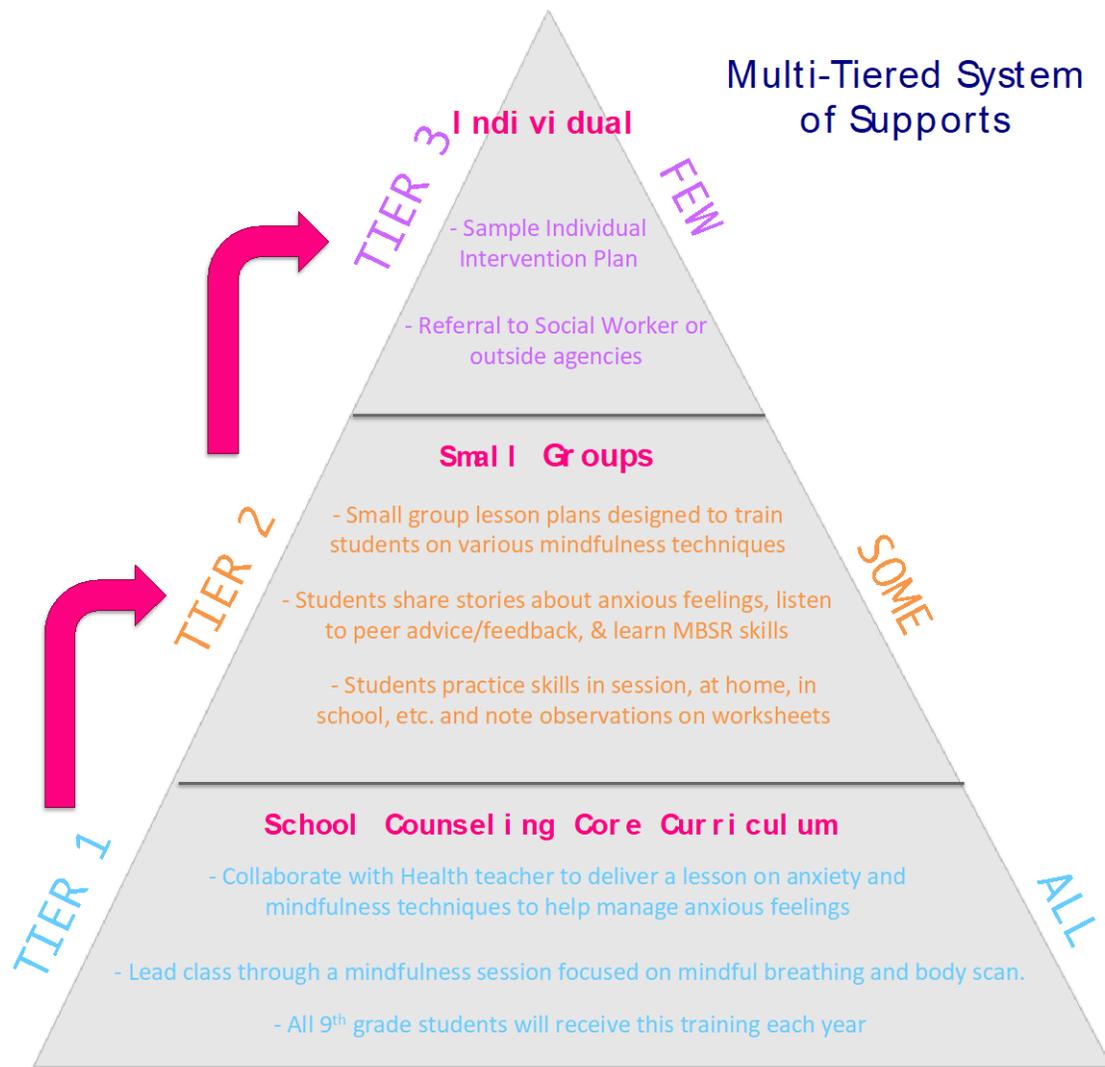
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Appendix A

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Supports



****School Counselors must be trained in mindfulness before implementation****

Appendix B
Collaboration Plan

Collaboration Plan

1. **Who:** School Counselor will collaborate with the 9th grade health educator(s) who will be teaching students about anxiety.
2. **What:** School counselor must meet with the health educator(s) in order to pitch the collaboration idea, determine a date for the lesson, and schedule a follow-up meeting with details on the lesson. The pitch should be well thought out and should include the following:
 - Goals of the collaboration:
 - To help students understand anxiety and anxious feelings as well as the prevalence of anxiety among adolescents.
 - To supply students with mindfulness techniques that will help them manage anxiety and/or anxious feelings.
 - Explain what mindfulness is:
 - The practice of focusing one's attention on the present moment in a nonjudgmental and accepting way (Kabat-Zinn, 1991).
 - There are a number of strategies used to achieve present moment awareness: mindful breathing, body scan, yoga, mindful movement, acceptance and letting go of thoughts, etc.
 - Scientific justification for mindfulness with anxiety:
 - Each of the techniques mentioned have been studied in the published research and have been shown to reduce anxiety levels significantly among adolescents in school-based interventions.
3. **When:** School Counselor should initiate contact with health educator(s) at the start of the school year to determine scheduling and start planning. The school counselor should plan to meet twice. The first meeting should be at the start of the year to discuss ideas and goals of the collaboration. The second meeting should occur during the term when the health educator(s) is planning to deliver the lesson on anxiety in order to go over the details of the lesson and to provide informed consent forms for the educator(s) to hand out to students.
4. **Where:** Initial contact can be made via email but all meetings should be done face-to-face in either the classroom or counseling room.
5. **Why:** Collaborations are a powerful way to combine various staff members' expertise to deliver an effective product. In this case, the health educator(s) will provide students with a full understanding on anxiety, its prevalence, and how it may manifest itself, while the school counselor provides an applied learning experience on mindfulness strategies to manage anxiety and anxious feelings.

Appendix C

Classroom Informed Consent Form

CLASSROOM INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(School Name) High School School Counseling Program

Dear Parents/Guardian/Student,

Our district's Comprehensive School Counseling Program provides the opportunity for students to participate in classroom core curriculum counseling experiences. We are currently collaborating with the health educator to deliver a classroom lesson on anxiety and strategies to help students manage anxiety using mindfulness techniques. The classroom session will consist of a standard lesson on anxiety combined with an introduction to mindfulness concepts as well as a body scan activity that students will participate in. Students will be asked to mindfully pay attention to their breath and bodily sensations while the school counselor instructs them to focus on different parts of their body to encourage present-moment awareness. The lesson will briefly touch on recognition and acceptance of thoughts without judgment to help students manage anxious thoughts and minimize the anxious feelings that would otherwise arise.

While all students are encouraged to participate in this experience, we understand not all families will want their child participating. In this case, special accommodations can be made. Please sign the form below to express whether you do or do not consent to your adolescent's involvement in the mindfulness piece of the classroom lesson. Complete and return the signed portion to the health educator no later than *(date)*. Feel free to contact me with questions at *(phone number)* or *(email address)*.

----- cut here and return lower portion -----

Consent for Participation in: Mindfulness Lesson

Please return to the School Counseling office by: (date)

Student Name, Signature, Date (Students 18+ do not need a parent/guardian signature).

- I give my consent for my son or daughter to participate in the Mindfulness Lesson.
 I do not give my consent for my son or daughter to participate in the Mindfulness Lesson.

Parent/Guardian (please print) _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D
Tier 1 Lesson Plan



Tier 1 Intervention Lesson Plan: Mindfulness for Anxiety

School Counselor:

Date:

Activity: Mindfulness for Anxiety

Grade(s): 9th grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1 & 6

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 6, 7, & 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 2 & 4

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will understand anxiety and how it manifests itself.
2. Students will learn mindfulness strategies to help them manage their anxiety.
3. Students will learn strategies for interpreting their thoughts with acceptance and kindness.

Materials: Pre- & Post-Tests

Procedure: The session will merge into the Health teacher’s instruction on anxiety, which will help students gain an understanding of anxiety. Afterwards, introduce yourself and hand out pre-tests for students to complete before any content is discussed. Collect pre-tests. Introduce the concept of mindfulness as a strategy for managing anxious feelings. Explain how simple mindfulness can be- as simple as paying attention to your mind, body, and the world around you. Things like noticing what we see, smell, hear, taste, and feel. Let’s all take a moment to practice noticing our surroundings:

Have students sit comfortably in their seats with their eyes closed. Have them breathe in and out, normally. Challenge them to pay attention to what it feels like to have air moving in and out of their bodies. Then move onto feeling- ask students to pay attention to any physical feelings they’re experiencing, for example their bodies pushing against their chair, their feet planted firmly on the floor, their fingers, toes, hands arms in

whatever position they may be in, what does that feel like? Move on next to sound- what sounds do they hear in the quiet classroom... white noise of fans, the sound of their breath or that of their peers, the tapping of any feet, the ticking of a clock... Then any taste or smells they may be experiencing.

Ask students to open their eyes and express how that exercise felt. Afterwards, explain that one of the primary goals of mindfulness is being able to stay in the present moment, noticing any thoughts that are bouncing around in your mind about the past or future and trying to not focus on them, instead focus on how you're feeling NOW. Practicing deep breathing to help you calm you body and mind and developing this present-moment awareness through mindfulness are extremely beneficial in helping manage anxious feelings. Explain how when thoughts come into your mind, it is important to slow them down and approach them one at a time without judgment or emotion, but merely by noticing them with kindness, curiosity, and acceptance. Give an example:

“Let’s say a peer may have said something about their college admission letter and it made you incredibly anxious because you haven’t heard back from any schools yet. You may be feeling anxiety but could also be trying to attach a bunch of meaning to the situation, for example you may think your peer said this to make you feel less valued and accomplished. In this case, your feelings will be intensified with anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, impatience, etc. However, when you approach the thought with kindness, curiosity, and acceptance, you may think to yourself- “okay I’m feeling a little anxious right now about school, and hmm... I wonder why I am feeling a little anxious.” You are noticing this thought without judgment and accepting it, whether or not it’s good or bad or helpful or hurtful- it’s irrelevant in this moment, just allow yourself to feel your feeling and move on.”

With that mindset, you can also calmly decide how you want to respond to that thought in your actions, allowing you to act in a more peaceful, composed manner. This mindfulness skillset is one that can help you accept your anxious thoughts and instead of attaching meaning to those thoughts, you will be able to manage your anxiety by experiencing it with far less intensity and moving on from it much sooner than you have in the past. Students will be asked to practice their mindful bodies, present moment awareness, and acceptance in other classrooms and at home. Hand out post-tests; collect them before students leave.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance. Record the date and class period you meet for each session and any notes about counselor observations of student experiences and responses.

Perception Data: After the mindful body exercise, ask students how it felt for them to pay attention to the physical sensations occurring within their bodies. Ask if anyone had a hard time focusing solely on each body part as we moved through the exercise. Explain how this is normal for most people, but that with practice, it gets easier to focus without distractions on your body and thoughts and to eventually be able to experience your thoughts and emotions with complete acceptance.

Outcome Data: The pre- and post-test data will serve to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum presented and overall delivery of the content. The post-test survey differs from the pre-test in that it asks students if they are interested in receiving additional support managing anxious feelings using mindfulness in a group session.

Follow Up: At the end of the health class marking period, the counselor could return to the classrooms and run the group through this mindfulness exercise again. The counselor can ask them how it felt to practice mindfulness once again as a class and how difficult it was to remain focused without any distractions and how this therapeutic exercise helps them with any anxiety they may be experiencing. This would begin a class conversation on student progress, and challenges they experienced. The counselor can ask students to speak to the various settings where they have applied mindfulness practices and what changes they've experienced as a result. Finally, the counselor could offer suggestions about how to continue using mindfulness to help them manage their anxiety in the future.

Appendix E

Core Curriculum Pre- and Post-Test

Core Curriculum Pre-Test Mindfulness for Anxiety Intervention

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Please circle the number on the scale that best describes your level of agreement:

	Not Applicable N/A	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
2.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
3.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
4.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
5.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
6.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
7.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
8.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
9.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
10.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1
11.						N/A 5 4 3 2 1

Core Curriculum Post-Test Mindfulness for Anxiety Intervention

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Please circle the number on the scale that best describes your level of agreement:

- | | Not
Applicable
N/A | Strongly
Agree
5 | Agree
4 | Neither Agree
or Disagree
3 | Disagree
2 | Strongly
Disagree
1 |
|---|---|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | I can tell when I am feeling anxious. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 2. | It is very uncommon to have anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 3. | I can tell when a friend is experiencing anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 4. | I know how to manage my anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 5. | My anxious feelings often take over and I feel helpless. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 6. | I understand the concept of mindfulness. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 7. | Mindfulness can help me manage my anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 8. | I know how to focus on my physical sensations & thoughts. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 9. | Breathing deeply helps me relax and regain control. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 10. | I have a variety of strategies I can use when I am feeling anxious. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
| 11. | I plan to use those strategies in my everyday life. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 1 |
|
 | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive additional support in managing anxious feelings using mindfulness. | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am comfortable receiving that support in a group setting. | | | | | | |

Appendix F
Group Information Sheet

Group Sessions: Organizational Information

1. Number of sessions: 5
2. Length of sessions: 30-40 minutes (or length of one class period at the school)
3. Class release information:
 - a. Students will meet once a week over the course of 5 weeks
 - b. Teachers will receive release class release slips on a rotating basis:
 - i. Week 1- 2nd period
 - ii. Week 2- 3rd period
 - iii. Week 3- 4th period
 - iv. Week 4- 5th period
 - v. Week 5- 6th period (see attached)
4. Communication:
 - a. Email teachers advising them of their student's participation one week prior to missing class.
 - i. Clearly explain program goals.
 - ii. Note the date they will be pulled from class.
5. Group membership selection process:
 - a. Students will note on their Classroom Lesson Post-Tests if they're interested in participating in this group.
 - b. Target population: students struggling with anxious feelings
 - c. Students should be screened for ability to excel in group settings
 - i. Meet with students individually to screen them and distribute informed consent forms (see attached).
 - d. If low volunteer numbers, students will be invited by school counselor
6. Grade level(s) for group: 9th grade students
7. Number of members: 6-10 students
8. Location: quiet, private indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions
9. Pre/Post Assessment instrument: see attached
10. Group Counseling Outlines (see attached)
 - a. Session 1: Introduction & Mindful Breathing
 - b. Session 2: Sitting Meditation/Body Scan
 - c. Session 3: Mindful Observations, Acceptance, and Letting Go
 - d. Session 4: Hatha Yoga
 - e. Session 5: Mindful Walking & Wrap-Up
11. Debriefing procedures
 - a. Results of this comprehensive intervention will be shared with administrators and the school board at the end of the year to show outcomes of the intervention on student anxiety and to advocate for staff training on mindfulness, for school-wide implementation
 - b. Data will be collected from the following assessment tools:
 - i. Results from the Pre and Post Tests

Appendix G
Class Release Slip

CLASS RELEASE SLIP

**You have an appointment with your
School Counselor!**

Name: _____

Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Where: _____



Appendix H
Group Informed Consent Form

GROUP INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(School Name) High School School Counseling Program

Dear Parents/Guardian/Student,

Our district's Comprehensive School Counseling Program provides the opportunity for students to participate in small group counseling experiences. We are currently planning a group on mindfulness techniques to help students manage anxious feelings. Each group will meet once a week for 30-40 minutes over five weeks. We will rotate the times we meet to minimize disruption of your adolescent's academic progress. Please note: all students are responsible to make up any missed work.

Each student will be able to contribute and gain knowledge and skills from this interaction with their peers. The topics we will address are (1) *Mindful Breathing*, (2) *Sitting Meditation/ Body Scan*, (3) *Mindful Thoughts/Acceptance/Letting Go*, (4) *Hatha Yoga*, and (5) *Mindful Walking*.

Participation in this group is voluntary and confidentiality will be addressed and respected during each session. There are times that justify a breach of confidentiality: if a student reveals information about being hurt or hurting himself/herself or another person, confidentiality will be broken to ensure the child's safety.

Please sign the form below to express whether you do or do not consent to your adolescent's involvement. Complete and return the signed portion to the School Counseling office no later than (*date*). Feel free to contact me with questions at (*phone number*) or (*email address*).

----- *cut here and return lower portion* -----

Please return to the School Counseling office by: (date)

Student Name, Signature, Date (Students 18+ do not need a parent/guardian signature)

- I give my consent for my son or daughter to participate in the Mindfulness Group.
 I do not give my consent for my son or daughter to participate in the Mindfulness Group.

Parent/Guardian (please print) _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix I

Group Counseling Pre/Post Assessment

GROUP COUNSELING PRE/POST ASSESSMENT

Mindfulness for Anxiety Intervention

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle One: PRE or POST

Please circle the number on the scale that best describes your level of agreement:

- | | Not
Applicable
N/A | Strongly
Agree
5 | Agree
4 | Neither Agree
or Disagree
3 | Disagree
2 | Strongly
Disagree
1 |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1. I understand the purpose of mindfulness. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Mindfulness skills can help me manage anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I have a support group of peers who also have anxious feelings. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I can talk to these friends when I am feeling anxious. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I have a variety of mindfulness techniques at my disposal. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I can breathe mindfully to help me relax in anxious environments. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I can complete a body scan exercise to keep me grounded. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I know how to focus on my thoughts, accept them, & let them go. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. I can complete Hatha Yoga to help me unwind after a tough day. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. I can mindfully attend to my breath, body, & nature while walking. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. I am empowered to use my mindfulness skills in my everyday life. | N/A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Appendix J
Group Outlines



Group Counseling Outline: Session 1

School Counselor: _____

Date: _____.

Activity: Introduction & Mindful Breathing

Grade(s): 9^h grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1, 3

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 6, 7, 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will understand the rules and confidentiality guidelines for group participation.
2. Students will begin to build rapport with their peers.
3. Students will recognize environmental triggers of anxious feelings among members.
4. Students will understand the purpose of the group and discover remaining session topics.

Materials: Quiet indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions, chairs, writing utensils, name cards, lined paper for notes, ‘Who am I’ worksheets, group rules contract, copies of pre-tests, & Mindfulness Logs.

Procedure:

1. Welcome students to the group and thank them for their interest & participation.
2. Begin with introductions between the school counselor and all members.
3. Ask students to write their names on cards, these will be collected & displayed every session.
4. Hand out pre/post-tests for students to complete before any content is discussed. Ask students to circle “PRE” before turning in forms.
5. Explain the purpose of the group and goals that students will be able to use mindfulness to help them manage their anxious feelings and thrive in high anxiety scenarios.
6. Share with students the topics for the remaining four group sessions.
7. Go over the rules of the group, importance of and limits of confidentiality. Have each student agree to the rules and sign a group contract holding them accountable.

8. Have students complete 'Who am I' worksheets and share information about themselves to break the ice.
9. Ask students 'in what situations and environments do you often experience anxious feelings?'
10. Allow students to share their experiences.
11. Ask students what strategies they have tried to manage those feelings?
12. Ask students to visualize themselves in those high anxiety scenarios and to follow your cues instructing them to slowly breath in and out, several times. Instruct them to focus on their breath and what each breath feels like. Take a couple minutes to complete this exercise.
13. Ask students how it felt to experience those moments that normally trigger your anxious feelings, but instead focusing on their mindful breathing. Did that alter the effects of their anxious feelings?
14. Explain how mindful breathing is the foundation of all mindfulness practices. It helps you to slow down their thoughts and lessen the negative physiological effects of those thoughts so you can make rational decisions on how you want to respond in those scenarios.
15. Wrap up the session by explaining how the group will help them process their anxious feelings and become comfortable with basic mindfulness practices that will help them manage those feelings moving forward.
16. Hand out 'Mindfulness Logs' and ask students to practice mindful breathing when they experience anxious feelings at home, in school, etc. and record how long they were able to practice it and any observations that came from the experience.
17. Have students answer processing questions before they leave.
18. Ask students to bring back their 'Mindfulness Logs' for the next session.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance for this session. Record the date and class period you meet for this session.

Perception Data: Have students answer processing questions in the last five minutes of class and collect them before students leave:

Processing Questions:

1. What information are you allowed to share from these sessions?
2. Provide a scenario when the counselor may need to break confidentiality.
3. What are you most excited to gain from participating in this group?

Who Am I?

My Favorite
Food Is:

My Favorite
Hobby Is:

My Favorite
Superhero Is:

I Am

Years Old.

My Favorite Season Of The Year Is:

GROUP RULES:

1. What happens in group *STAYS* in group.
2. Always be *RESPECTFUL* of group members.
3. Try your best and *PARTICIPATE*.

Contract:

I agree to the rules of this group contract. I'm aware that if I should break one or more of these rules, I may be asked to leave the group.

Figure 1. Sample contract for a small group counseling session. Rex, M. (n.d.). Additional Documents. In *Elementary School Counseling*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <http://www.elementaryschoolcounseling.org/small-group-counseling-documents.html>

Mindfulness Log

Living life more mindfully will allow you to live a life with more freedom. You will be able to manage strong emotions and anxious feelings with poise and experience fewer barriers to fully living. Working toward this takes intentionality and lots of practice. Thus, use this log to remind you to practice your mindful exercises, to view your progress, and journal your experiences.

Date	Mindful Practice	Duration	Observations
Oct. 9	Mindful Breathing	3 min.	It was hard to focus on my breath the whole time. I was patient with myself and just tried bringing my attention back to my breath.
Oct. 10	Body Scan	4 min.	I paid attention to my breath, feet planted on the floor, and back against the chair during this exercise. It was calming.



Group Counseling Outline: Session 2

School Counselor: _____

Date: _____

Activity: Sitting Meditation/Body Scan

Grade(s): 9^h grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1, 3

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 2, 6, 7, 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will learn to be patient with themselves in developing mindfulness skills.
2. Students will continue to develop supportive relationships with their peers.
3. Students will learn sitting meditation and body scan mindfulness techniques.
4. Students will discover appropriate times to utilize these new skills.

Materials: Quiet indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions, chairs, writing utensils, name cards, lined paper for notes, signed group rules contract, & Body Scan Observation Sheet.

Procedure:

1. Welcome students to the group, hand out name cards, and remind them of the group rules.
2. Lead students through a 5-minute mindful breathing exercise. Instruct them to slowly breath in and out while their eyes remain shut. Tell them to focus on their breath and what each breath feels like. Remind them it's okay if they notice they're not focusing on their breath but to try to shift the attention back on their breath.
3. Debrief on the mindfulness activity as well as the mindfulness log homework assignments they were to complete for this week. Have students share their observations, struggles, triumphs, etc. Remind students how difficult these skills are to master, encourage them and advise them to be patient with themselves.

4. Ask students if they've practiced their mindfulness exercises when they entered environments that triggered anxious feelings. Have those students share their experiences.
5. Welcome any positive peer feedback, recommendations, and/or encouragement.
6. Educate students about the two mindfulness techniques they will learn today that they can use to help them manage their anxious feelings. Body scan is a technique that allows one to gradually shift their attention from different body parts, head to toes. The goal is to focus on body sensations without judgment while also remaining aware of one's breath. Sitting meditation is another technique that challenges one to focus on their breath while accepting thoughts and any distractions they may have during the experience. Advise them they will practice a combination of these techniques as a group now.
7. Have students close their eyes and sit comfortably in their chairs. Remind them breathe in and out, normally throughout this experience. Instruct them to focus on what it feels like to have air moving in and out of their lungs for a couple of minutes. Then ask them to pay attention to any sounds, tastes, or smells they're experiencing through their breath work and the environment. Remind them to breathe. Then instruct them to move on to physical touch sensations. Have them shift their attention to their backs, asking them to pay attention to what it feels like to have their back pushed against the seat. Remind them to breathe. Next, move to their arms and hands- do they feel any pressure from their hands planted firmly on their laps, or they resting their hands gently on their laps? If so, what does that feel like in this present moment? Remind them to breathe. Then instruct them to focus on the sensations of their hamstrings resting on the chair. Remind them to breathe. Then work down toward their feet, instructing them to pay attention to the feeling of their feet planted firmly on the floor. Have students open their eyes, breathe and pay attention to their hands resting on their laps. What do their hands look like, what details make their hands unique from other hands? Focus on the texture of the skin, the length of the fingers and nails, any scars or battle wounds that remain. Let students make these observations for a couple of minutes and remind them to accept the thoughts that may arise from these observations.
8. Thank students for their hard work. Hand out Body Scan Observation Sheets and ask them to quietly work on them.
9. Go through each sense one at a time and ask students to contribute to the conversation with their observations. Ask them how challenging or easy the exercise was for them. Ask if they are noticing progress in the mindful breathing aspect. Ask if they felt a change in overall mood from the beginning of the exercise to the end. Ask students when they can apply body scan or sitting meditation techniques in their day to help them manage anxious feelings.

10. Collect students name cards and remind students to continue to practice mindfulness and update their 'Mindfulness Logs' each day this week.

11. Have students answer processing questions before they leave.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance for this session. Record the date and class period you meet for this session.

Perception Data: Have students answer processing questions in the last five minutes of class and collect them before students leave:

Processing Questions:

1. Besides breathing, what else can you do to manage anxiety?
2. What are some ways to improve your mindfulness capabilities?
3. What mindfulness exercises do you plan to practice most this week?
4. In what scenarios might it be appropriate to practice the sitting meditation and body scan techniques?

Body Scan Observations



Describe things you smell:



Describe things you taste:



Describe things you see:



Describe things you feel:



Describe things you hear:

Figure 2. All images above were taken from a collage of photos portraying the five senses. Pogue, N. D. (Photographer). (2009). *Five Senses*. [Image of photograph]. Flickr. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thenickster/3667839998>



Group Counseling Outline: Session 3

School Counselor: _____

Date: _____

Activity: Mindful Observations, Acceptance, and Letting Go

Grade(s): 9^h grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1, 3

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 2, 3, 6, 7, 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will learn how to pay attention to their thoughts, mindfully.
2. Students will continue to develop supportive relationships with their peers.
3. Students will learn how to accept their thoughts, let go, and move forward.
4. Students will identify appropriate times to make mindful observations of thoughts.

Materials: Quiet indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions, chairs, writing utensils, name cards, lined paper for notes, signed group rules contract, & Let It Go worksheet.

Procedure:

1. Welcome students to the group, hand out name cards, and remind them of the group rules.
2. Lead students through a 5-minute mindful breathing exercise. Instruct them to slowly breath in and out while their eyes remain shut. Tell them to focus on their breath and what each breath feels like. Remind them it's okay if they notice they're not focusing on their breath but to try to shift the attention back on their breath.
3. Debrief on the mindful breathing exercise and the mindfulness log homework. Have students share their observations, struggles, triumphs, etc. Commend students on any progress they've shown this week and remind to remain patient as them mastering the new skills is challenging.
4. Ask students if they've practiced their mindfulness exercises when they entered environments that triggered anxious feelings. Have those students share their experiences.
5. Welcome any positive peer feedback, recommendations, and/or encouragement.

6. Educate students about making mindful observations of thoughts, accepting those thoughts, and letting them go: Making mindful observations of thoughts entails breathing deeply while developing an awareness of your thoughts and feelings, accepting those thoughts without judgment, and letting them go. When you're paying attention to your thoughts, it's important to remember there's no right or wrong way to think or feel in a given moment. Attaching that kind of meaning to your thoughts leads to judgment and further strong feelings to generally bring yourself down. That's why mindfulness teaches you to accept your thoughts and feelings. Purely acknowledging your thoughts without judgment allows you to move onto the next step, letting go. Letting go of your thoughts and feelings is what truly opens the door to thriving in the face of anxiety and living life more freely. After you accept the thoughts and feelings you're experiencing, you should take some deep mindful breaths, let go of those thoughts, and move on. The ultimate goal of mindfully observing your thoughts is to let them go so you can feel a weight is lifted, achieve goals with less resistance, and live in the present moment. Ask students if they have any questions.

7. Hand out the 'Let it Go' worksheet and lead students through the mindfulness exercise: Let students complete the first two steps on their own. Once all eyes are closed, read the following prompt to the students:

1. Now that your eyes are closed, imagine you're sitting in front of the flower.
2. You can open your eyes to briefly look at each flower petal, one at a time. Think about each isolated thought written on each flower petal, again one at a time. Become aware of the thought and accept the thought.
3. Breathe deeply and then imagine you then pluck that petal and let it fly away in the wind. Let the flower petal (aka the anxious thought) go.
4. Continue this process until all the flower petals have been plucked.
5. Take a deep breath and open your eyes.

8. Ask the students how they now feel. Have their worries floated away with their flower petals. Do they now feel any weight has been lifted? How has their mood changed over the course of the exercise?

9. Ask them how challenging or easy the exercise was for them. Is this something they think they can integrate into their daily lives to help them manage their anxious feelings? Any examples?

10. Thank students for their participation. Collect students name cards and remind them to continue practicing mindfulness and updating their 'Mindfulness Logs'.

11. Have students answer processing questions before they leave.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance for this session. Record the date and class period you meet for this session.

Perception Data: Have students answer processing questions in the last five minutes of class and collect them before students leave:

Processing Questions:

1. What is the procedure for making mindful observations?
2. Why is it important to accept your anxious thoughts?
3. How does letting go help you overcome anxious thoughts?
4. In what situations can you apply this technique?

Let It Go

1. Write some things that make you feel anxious, one event in each flower petal.
2. Close your eyes and listen for the prompts of the school counselor.



Figure 3. A Cartoon Flower. This image is intended to be used with the Let It Go exercise. M, P. (Artist). *Flower*. [Image of painting]. Open Clip Art Library. Retrieved from http://www.publicdomainfiles.com/show_file.php?id=13528020013206



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

Group Counseling Outline: Session 4

School Counselor: _____

Date: _____.

Activity: Hatha Yoga

Grade(s): 9^h grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1, 3

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 2, 6, 7, 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will learn about the goal and practice of Hatha Yoga.
2. Students will continue to develop supportive relationships with their peers.
3. Students will learn how to complete a basic Hatha Yoga sequence.
4. Students will identify ideal opportunities and time periods to practice Hatha Yoga.

Materials: Quiet indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions, chairs, writing utensils, name cards, lined paper for notes, signed group rules contract, yoga mats, Hatha Yoga handout and instructional guide.

Procedure:

1. Welcome students to the group, hand out name cards, and remind them of the group rules.
2. Lead students through a 5-minute mindful breathing exercise. Instruct them to slowly breath in and out while their eyes remain shut. Tell them to focus on their breath and what each breath feels like. Remind them it's okay if they mind wanders a little but to try to shift the attention back on their breath.
3. Debrief on the mindful breathing exercise and the mindfulness log homework. Have students share their observations, struggles, triumphs, etc. Celebrate any progress and remind them to stay patient as they practice new skills.
4. Ask students to share their experiences in applying their mindfulness skills when they confronted anxious feelings. What was the outcome?

5. Welcome any positive peer feedback, recommendations, and/or encouragement.
6. Educate students about Hatha Yoga: Another popular mindfulness technique is called Hatha Yoga. This is a form of yoga that infuses mindfulness principles and skills into the series of stretches, such as mindful breathing and present moment awareness. The goal is to help the body and mind relax and grow stronger. Breath work paired with stretches and movements is a powerful tool for relaxation and relief from anxiety. I will now lead you through a short Hatha Yoga session, I will go through the movements alongside you and will help you remember to focus on breath work as well as any bodily sensations you're experiencing throughout each stretch. [Pass out yoga mats and begin routine by reading the instructional guide and modeling each movement].
7. Hand out the Hatha Yoga handout and instructional guide to students so they have a reference to practice the exercise at home.
8. Ask the students how they now feel. Are they more relaxed or more tense after the routine? How has their mood changed? How do the outcomes of this exercise compare to those they've experienced using other mindfulness techniques?
9. Ask them how challenging or easy the exercise was for them. Is this something they think they can integrate into their daily lives to help them manage their anxious feelings? Any examples?
10. Thank the students for their participation. Collect students name cards and remind them to continue practicing their mindfulness skills and updating their 'Mindfulness Logs'.
11. Have students answer processing questions before they leave.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance for this session. Record the date and class period you meet for this session.

Perception Data: Have students answer processing questions in the last five minutes of class and collect them before students leave:

Processing Questions:

1. How does Hatha Yoga incorporate mindfulness?
2. How does Hatha Yoga help you manage anxious feelings?
3. When can you practice Hatha Yoga?

Hatha Yoga

Complete this sequence of yoga stretches holding each pose for 30-60 seconds. Continue to focus attention on either your mindful breath work or the sensations occurring within your body during each stretch. When your attention wanders, acknowledge it and try to re-direct your attention back to your breath or body. Remember to be patient with yourself.

1. Child's Pose



Figure 4. Woman demonstrating child's pose yoga position. Asana Childs Pose Yoga. (n.d.). In *Max Pixel*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <https://www.maxpixel.net/Asana-Childs-Pose-Yoga-2959214>

2. Corpse Pose



Figure 5. Man demonstrating the corpse pose yoga position. Renger, J. (Photographer). (2007). *File:Shavasana.jpg*. [Image of photograph]. Retrieved from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shavasana.jpg>

3. Cat Pose



Figure 6. Woman demonstrating the cat pose yoga position. Cat Pose - Cat Stretch - Marjaryasana (2015, December 18). In *Even More About Yoga*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <http://evenmoreaboutyoga.com/cat-pose-cat-stretch-marjaryasana/>

4. Forward Bend



Figure 7. Woman demonstrating the forward bend yoga position. Yoga Poses to Increase Brain Power. (n.d.). In *New Health Guide*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <http://www.newhealthguide.org/yoga-for-brain.html>

5. Downward Dog



Figure 8. Woman demonstrating the downward dog yoga position. Downward Dog Yoga Health. (n.d.). In *Max Pixel*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <https://www.maxpixel.net/Downward-Dog-Yoga-Health-2959213>

6. Cat Pose



Figure 9. Woman demonstrating the cat pose yoga position. Cat Pose - Cat Stretch - Marjaryasana (2015, December 18). In *Even More About Yoga*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <http://evenmoreaboutyoga.com/cat-pose-cat-stretch-marjaryasana/>

7. Child's Pose



Figure 10. Woman demonstrating child's pose yoga position. Asana Childs Pose Yoga. (n.d.). In *Max Pixel*. Retrieved July 17, 2018, from <https://www.maxpixel.net/Asana-Childs-Pose-Yoga-2959214>

8. Corpse Pose



Figure 11. Man demonstrating the corpse pose yoga position. Renger, J. (Photographer). (2007). *File:Shavasana.jpg*. [Image of photograph]. Retrieved from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shavasana.jpg>

Hatha Yoga

Instructional Guide

1. Child's Pose:

1. Kneel on the floor with your feet tucked beneath you.
2. Stretch both arms out in front of you and bend forward.
3. Breathe deeply and relax into the stretch.
4. Try to touch your chest to your thighs & lower yourself towards the ground.
5. Try to hold your attention on your breath work and/or on the sensations you're experiencing throughout your body. If your mind wanders, that's okay, just try to bring it back.

2. Corpse Pose:

1. Slowly roll your back upright, breathing through the motion.
2. Lower your back all the way to the floor so you're lying flat on your back.
3. Extend your arms and legs out to a 45-degree angle and allow your hands to face palms up and feet to relax to the sides.
4. Gently roll your head from side to side to relax your spine, breathing through each motion and straighten your back to ensure proper alignment.
5. Once you feel aligned, just breathe deeply and relax into the pose. Focus on the feeling of air moving in and out of your body. Scan your body for any sensations of tension or muscle release and relaxation.

3. Forward Bend:

1. Slowly roll upright so you're feeling your vertebrae lift off the floor one vertebrae at a time.
2. Sit on the floor with your feet together and your legs extended.
3. Press the backs of your thighs, calves, and heels into the ground. Pay attention to what this feels like.
4. Reach through your heels and point your toes toward your head. Press your hands into the ground beside your hips and lift your chest. Lengthen your torso out over your legs, keeping the lower back from rounding.
5. Feel the breath move within the body. Notice any burning sensations you're experiencing from the stretch. Surrender into the posture. Hold the pose for 30 seconds to 1 minute.
6. Breathe deeply and fold your back upright so you're sitting tall. Bend your right knee and bring the sole of your right foot close to your left thigh.
7. Exhale and bend at the hips, lowering your torso to your left knee. Reach for your left foot and hold. Breathe through the stretch and focus on the air moving in and out as well as any tension or release throughout the body. Let go and surrender.
8. Hold the pose for 30 seconds to 1 minute and then switch sides and repeat.

4. Cat Pose:

1. Gently roll onto your belly and place your hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips. Breathe throughout each movement.
2. Rest on your hands and knees, with your belly facing the floor.
3. Inhale deeply. Focus on the feeling of air moving into your lungs.
4. Exhale and pull in your abdominal muscles, tailbone, and butt. Focus on the shifting movement of your body and any tightening that may occur in the muscles. Your face should now be pointed up toward the ceiling.
5. Inhale deeply. Press your hands down into the floor and your back toward the ceiling so your spine rounds.
6. Repeat these movement patterns several times in conjunction with the timing of your breath.
7. Your attention should be moving from your breath to the sensations of your body movements. For example, focus on what it feel like to have your hands pushing against the floor and floor pushing back against your hands?

5. Downward Dog:

1. Maintain a flat back as your hands remain under your shoulders and knees under your hips and tuck your toes under you. Inhale deeply
2. As you exhale, press the palms of your hands into the floor, lock your elbows and push your hips up toward the ceiling. Reach your heels toward the ground and straighten your legs. Your position should mirror an upside-down “V”.
3. Continue your breath work as you activate your arms like you are trying to push the floor away from you.
4. Remain in the pose for anywhere from 8 to 15 breaths; staying alert to sensations and the way the experience continuously changes.
5. Explore the pose by bringing the heels to the floor one at a time. Coordinate the movement with the breath and notice if your mind wanders.
6. Bring the mind back to the breath or body sensations.

6. Cat Pose:

1. Repeat Above

7. Child’s Pose:

1. Repeat Above

8. Corpse Pose:

1. Repeat Above



Group Counseling Outline: Session 5

School Counselor: _____

Date: _____.

Activity: Mindful Walking, Wrap-Up

Grade(s): 9^h grade

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

ASCA Mindset Standard: 1, 3

ASCA Behavior – Self-Management Skills: 2, 6, 7, 10

ASCA Behavior - Social Skills: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with Competency):

1. Students will learn about the goal of Mindful Walking.
2. Students will continue to develop supportive relationships with their peers.
3. Students will learn how Mindful Walking can help them manage anxious feelings.
4. Students will feel empowered to use their mindfulness skills in their lives.

Materials: Quiet indoor AND outdoor space with minimal distractions, chairs, writing utensils, name cards, lined paper for notes, signed group rules contract, and pre/post tests.

Procedure:

1. Welcome students to the group, hand out name cards, and remind them of the group rules.
2. Lead students through a 5-minute mindful breathing exercise. Instruct them to shut their eyes and slowly breathe in and out. Tell them to focus on their breath and what each breath feels like. Remind them to acknowledge and accept their thoughts if they mind wanders, but to try to divert the attention back on their breath.
3. Debrief on the mindful breathing exercise and the mindfulness log homework. Have students share their observations, struggles, triumphs, etc. Celebrate any progress and remind them to stay patient as they practice new skills.
4. Ask students to share their experiences in applying their mindfulness skills when they confronted anxious feelings. What was the outcome? Any breakthroughs?

5. Welcome any positive peer feedback, recommendations, and/or encouragement.
6. Educate students about Mindful Walking: Mindful walking is a mindfulness exercises that challenges you to increase your awareness to nature and your body while actively moving through the environment. The goal is to improve your focus, make you more aware of yourself and surroundings, and bring you into the present moment. Walking mindfully can help you improve your general well-being by helping you relax and decompress despite any stressors that may arise throughout the day.
7. Have the students follow you outside in a quiet outdoor space. Lead students through a brief mindful walking exercise:
 - a. Begin by walking at a natural pace.** Place your hands wherever comfortable: on your belly, behind your back, or at your sides. Breathe deeply throughout this exercise.
 - With each step, pay attention to the lifting and falling of your feet. Notice sensations in their legs and the rest of your body from the movement. Notice any shifting of the body from side to side.
 - Bring your attention back to the sensation of walking when your mind wanders. It's natural for the mind to wander, so do not become frustrated.
 - b. Expand your attention to sounds.** Pay attention to sounds without labeling or naming them, or deciding whether you find them pleasant or unpleasant. Notice the sounds as just that-- sound. Breathe.
 - c. Move your attention to your sense of smell.** Just take notice of the sense of smell from the outdoors, not how you feel. Breathe.
 - d. Shift your awareness to vision:** What colors and objects do you see? Patiently refocus each time something else grabs your attention. Breathe
 - e. Remain openly aware of everything around you.** At this moment, you do not have any tasks to complete, objects or issues to fix. Remain fully aware. Walk & breathe.
 - f. Return your awareness to the physical sensations** of walking. Notice your feet again touching the ground. Notice again the movements in your body with every step. Breathe through the movement.
8. Lead students back into the indoor space. Ask the students how they now feel. How has their mood changed? What types of things did they notice during the exercise that they usually don't pay attention to on everyday walks?
9. Ask students how might this exercise help them manage their anxious feelings? When can they find time to incorporate mindful walking in their lives?

10. Thank the students for their participation throughout the last five weeks. Commend them on their tremendous progress and empower them to utilize their skills to help them thrive in the face of anxiety. They cannot control the world around them, but they can control the way they handle their thoughts and respond to the world around them. They are limitless and can overcome anything, with the power and strength of their minds.

11. Hand out pre/post-tests for students to complete and return before they leave. Ask them to circle "POST" on the form. Remind them your door is always open.

Process Data: Record the number & names of students in attendance for this session. Record the date and class period you meet for this session.

Outcome Data: Have students complete their pose-tests in the last five minutes of class and collect them before students leave.

Appendix K

Sample Individual Intervention Plan

Sample Individual Intervention Plan

Presenting problem: Student struggles with anxious feelings in social environments. This prevented the student from participating in the mindfulness group counseling sessions. Thus, the student needs individual attention to process through the situations that trigger the overwhelming anxious feelings experienced.

A. Long term goals for counseling:

1. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students.
2. Improve emotional regulation using mindfulness techniques.
3. Utilize mindfulness skills to slow down, accept, and let go of anxious feelings in social environments.
4. Demonstrate enhanced self-awareness and sense of control.

B. Short term goals for counseling

1. Practice mindfulness skills to help calm anxious feelings.
2. Demonstrate ability to initiate conversations with new peers.
3. Apply newly learned mindfulness techniques toward social situations.
4. Recognize that one's thoughts, emotions, and behavioral responses are within their control.
5. Recognize when anxious feelings arise.

C. Methods used to achieve goals:

1. Process through the social experiences that trigger anxious feelings and learn what it is about those environments that drive the students' fear.
2. Use the reoccurring experiential descriptions mindfulness technique to discover student emotions, thoughts, and physical reactions from social events and to help students slow down their thoughts and feelings to increase their self-awareness and control.
3. Introduce student to mindfulness techniques: mindful breathing, body scan, recognition and acceptance of mindful thoughts and letting go.
4. Assign student homework to practice each mindfulness technique as it's introduced and to note those experiences in the mindfulness log.
5. Celebrate student progress and remind student to remain patient in the development of these skills.

This plan is negotiable. Goals reviewed and agreed to on: _____ (date)

Signed (student): _____

Signed (parent/guardian if under 18): _____

Counselor's Signature: _____

Appendix L
Advocacy Presentation

Advocacy Presentation

Advocating for Mindfulness in Schools: A Healthy Option to Cope with Anxiety and Improve overall Well-Being



(NAME)
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Purpose



- **The purpose of this presentation is:**
 - To explain how mindfulness practices can help adolescents effectively manage their anxiety.
 - To describe the ways the school counselor has implemented these practices and the outcomes of the initiative.
 - To advocate for faculty training on mindfulness for consistent, school-wide implementation.

Youth falling victim to ANXIETY

- Anxiety - Feelings of tension and worry that are often accompanied by physiological changes such as heightened blood pressure (Anxiety, n.d.).
- Prevalence - anxiety disorders in early adolescence are estimated to range from 10-20 % (Allan et al., 2014).
 - We expect the percentage to be underestimated due to the stigma attached to mental illness (Carmack, Nelson, Hocke-Mirzashvili, & Fife, 2018).

Long-Term Consequences

- Unmanaged anxiety can have troubling outcomes:
 - Higher risk for substance abuse (Washington et al., 2017).
 - Social detachment (Rheingold, Herbert, & Franklin, 2003).
 - Low school attendance (Rheingold, Herbert, & Franklin, 2003).
 - Low motivation for academic achievement (Rheingold, Herbert, & Franklin, 2003).
 - Poor socio-cognitive skills (Haller, Raeder, Scerif, Kadosh, & Lau, 2016).
 - Difficulties in navigating the social world (Haller, Raeder, Scerif, Kadosh, & Lau, 2016).
 - Heightened risk of depression and suicide (Washington et al., 2017).

Solution: Utilize Mindfulness in Schools

- **What is Mindfulness?**
 - The practice of focusing one's attention on the present-moment in a nonjudgmental and accepting way (Kabat-Zinn, 1991).
- **Common mindfulness techniques:** (Kallapiran, Koo, Kirubakaran, & Hancock, 2015).
 - Body scan
 - Sitting meditation
 - Mindful movement
 - Hatha yoga
 - Reoccurring experiential descriptions (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011)
 - ✦ The counselor asks students to describe their emotions, thoughts, and physical reactions from an event.
 - ✦ The aim is to help students slow down their thoughts and feelings to help them increase self-awareness and control.
 - Deep breathing techniques (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011)

History of Mindfulness Practices

- Rooted in ancient Eastern religious traditions
- Formally transitioned into American practices after Jon Kabat-Zinn studied the topic at University of Massachusetts Medical School.
- Used by clinicians in adult medical settings for chronic pain and illness.
- 1990s and 2000s- psychologists began using it
 - Led to development of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and mindfulness-based relapse prevention.
- Early 2000s- researchers began testing these concepts on children both in clinical and academic settings. (Renshaw & Cook, 2017)

How Can Mindfulness help students?

- Research shows mindfulness-based interventions in school settings have the following positive benefits for students:
 - Significant improvements in general anxiety levels (Kallapiran, Koo, Kirubakaran, & Hancock, 2015).
 - Have a small therapeutic effect on: (Klingbeil et al., 2017)
 - ✦ Academic achievement & school functioning
 - ✦ Externalizing and internalizing problems
 - ✦ Negative emotion & subjective distress
 - ✦ Positive emotion & self-appraisal
 - ✦ Physical health
 - ✦ Social competence & prosocial behavior
- All of these benefits work to either help prevent, manage, or weaken the negative manifestations of **ANXIETY**

Mindfulness for Anxiety through the School Counseling Program

- The school counseling program implemented mindfulness curriculum at 3 levels to help students manage anxiety or anxious feelings:
 - Classroom Curriculum
 - Group Sessions:
 - ✦ Session 1: Introduction & Mindful Breathing
 - ✦ Session 2: Sitting Meditation/Body Scan
 - ✦ Session 3: Mindful Observations, Acceptance, and Letting Go
 - ✦ Session 4: Hatha Yoga
 - ✦ Session 5: Mindful Walking & Wrap-Up
 - Individual Intervention Plan

Outcomes of Classroom Curriculum

- (Add graphs or statistical information here)

Outcomes of Group Sessions

- (Add graphs or statistical information here)

Outcomes of Individual Intervention

- (Add graphs or statistical information here)

Outcomes can improve not only for students but also for faculty and staff through a consistent, school-wide practice of mindfulness.

Why School Counselors SHOULD Advocate

- The mission of every school counselor should be to help set students up for success in their current and future lives. Helping students manage their anxiety using mindfulness will help them overcome barriers to their current academic success and their future academic, career, social, and emotional experiences & endeavors they encounter.
- Advocating for school-wide mindfulness training is the beginning step to consistently sharing these skills that can make tremendous difference in the lives of all young students (not just those struggling with anxiety)

Why school-wide training?

- **Research suggests consistent reinforcement of mindfulness practices in order to strengthen student skills and outcomes for their health.**
 - Dariotis et al. (2017) interviewed teachers who acknowledged the importance of consistent reinforcement of mindfulness practices to improve outcomes for students.
 - They expressed a willingness to attend mindfulness trainings in order to incorporate techniques in their daily curriculum to help their students thrive (Dariotis et al., 2017).

How and When to Train

We should invest in professional mindfulness curriculum & training so every teacher is prepared to lead their classes through daily or weekly mindfulness exercises.

- MindUP
- Learning to BREATHE
- Mindful Schools
- Mindfulness in Schools Project

Convenient opportunities to hold trainings:

- During faculty meetings once a month
- On professional development trainings

Conclusion

- Mindfulness is a healthy way to address the feelings and emotions related to anxiety in order to help students cope and improve their overall well-being.
- School Counselors, faculty and staff should work together to implement and reinforce mindfulness practices in order to help optimize outcomes for students.
- The School Counseling program will continue to:
 - Incorporate mindfulness in their core curriculum
 - Use mindfulness practices in group counseling sessions
 - Apply mindfulness techniques in individual intervention plans
- The school can support school-wide implementation by:
 - Hiring professional mindfulness organizations to train staff on effective ways to model mindfulness in schools

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GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 693 Data Form

NAME: Danielle Barnes

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult & Higher Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Differentiation | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Content Specialization | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Level Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Student Affairs Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Level Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Developmental Delay | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TESOL | | |

TITLE: Helping Students Understand and Manage Anxiety through a School Counseling Program Using Mindfulness Techniques

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)

SEM/YR COMPLETED: Sp/Su 2018

- Project
 Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL _____

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. School Counseling | 6. High School |
| 2. Anxiety | 7. High School Students |
| 3. Mental Health | 8. Awareness |
| 4. Resilience (Psychology) | 9. Therapy |
| 5. Adolescents | |