

Mind Over Matter: Educating Nursing Students on the Art and Skill of Mindfulness

Michelle Allen, EdD, MSN, RN, CCRN, CNE, CHSE
Aurora University and Dominican University
Miriam Ojaghi, EdD
Aurora University

Purpose

The purpose of the quality improvement project was to examine whether incorporating mindfulness training within a nursing foundations curriculum to be beneficial or not.

Research Question

- Is there a statistically significant difference between self-perceived stress levels in undergraduate junior nursing students before and after participating in mindfulness education?

Theoretical Framework

- Dorothea Orem’s Self-Care Deficit

Background on Mindfulness in Healthcare

- Mindfulness is increasingly being used in healthcare settings to alleviate pain, decrease stress, and enhance quality of life for patients (Hardison & Roll, 2016)
- Mindfulness training has not been fully integrated in the health and wellness education of healthcare providers, despite being the recommended coping tool for nurses (Hunger, 2016)
- Nurses experience high stress, leading to burnout and have difficulty coping (Adriaenssens, De Guch & Mae, 2015)
- Approximately 20% of new graduate RNs leave the profession within the first year as a result of not caring for their own “self-care deficit (Blair, 2014)”

Results

- Response rate: 80.3%
- Participants appeared to have less stress after completing the mindfulness training exercises
- Most common feedback:
 - “I feel less stressed.”
 - “I like it; it helped me out of a stressful state.”
 - “It taught me how to focus on what I can control in my life.”
 - “I will focus on my breathing more in times of stress.”
 - “Learned I need to be present in the now.”

| Number of Participants | Pre-Score (SD) | Post-Score (SD) | Difference in Score | Matched Pair’s T-Test |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 86 | 6.02 (SD=2.21) | 3.92 (SD=2.10) | 36.4% Decrease by 2.10 points (95% CI, 1.80 to 2.41) | t(85)=3.72, p=0.000, d=0.98 |

Narrative of the Project

- 107 undergraduate nursing students trained by a Koru mindfulness expert on the principles of mindfulness
- Koru mindfulness is specifically mindfulness geared toward college-aged students (The center for Koru Mindfulness, 2017)
- Students filled out a questionnaire, using a Likert scale to describe their stress; stress was ranked in similar fashion to the 0-10 pains cale
- Students were taught foundational principles of mindfulness and meditation
- Students practiced three mindfulness techniques: “whole body scan,” “labeling,” and “leaves in river.”

Implications

- Stress can negatively impact nursing students’ academic performance, risk patient safety (Mills, Carter, Rudd, Claxton & O’Brien, 2016)
- Nursing students need strategies for self-care during times of high stress.
- Mindfulness serves as an easy way to care for mind, body, and spirit
- Mindfulness has a place in preparation of future nurses

Limitations

- One nursing class in one university in suburban Chicago utilized mindfulness training, thus limiting generalizability; further testing on tool is needed and will be conducted

Full References Upon Request