



Evolution of a Mindfulness Based Stress Relief Program for the Community College Campus

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Introduction to Mindfulness in Higher Education

Mindfulness has taken off as an option for alleviating stress and improving mood. Indeed, psychologists and meditation teachers have confirmed the efficacy of mindfulness practices in clinical settings (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). As educators recognize the value of mindfulness practices, activities like meditation and yoga are making their way onto our campuses, including academic library spaces and community college classrooms (Funaro, Rojiani and Norton, 2019; Martin, 2018). While meditation exercises are the focus of academic mindfulness curricula and are routinely shown to enhance behavior, learning outcomes, and community engagement, educators are finding additional mindfulness practices, such as the simple act of coloring, lead to student success as well (Leland, 2015; Stallman, Ohan, and Chiera, 2017; Flett et al., 2017). These active mindfulness options are sometimes more affordable and accessible to students who find meditation challenging (Burrows, 2016).

Lakeland Community College Library has considered a variety of mindfulness options, and while we teach meditation to interested participants, we have landed on a more comprehensive stress relief program of consistent and experimental activities. Our program is designed to assist our students in their academic studies, promote a supportive community, and showcase the wellness talents of our staff. In designing our program, we are committed to being mindful of the diverse needs of our students on campus.

Background

- Description of library patrons/campus
 - ❖ Commuter community college campus
 - ❖ Predominantly non-traditional students in health and college credit plus programs:
 - Challenging majors
 - Demanding jobs
 - Various family responsibilities
- Indications of greater mental health needs on campus
 - ❖ Economic issues
 - ❖ Personal circumstances
 - ❖ Active shooter situation
 - ❖ Pandemic

Goals

- To create a program of intentional mindfulness-based activities to help address student stress levels and mental health needs on campus.
- Make the library a hub for collaboration and community support on campus.

Methods – Consistent

Simple stress-relief activities offered consistently twice each semester to bring the campus together.

- Focused therapy dog program
 - ❖ Community-owned dogs from local students & faculty
- Meditation in the library
 - ❖ Provided by library staff
 - ❖ [Meditation resource guide](#)
- Community connection activity
 - ❖ Community color
 - ❖ Sticker mosaic



Methods - Experimental

Stress relief activities that change frequently to make offerings more accessible to a larger audience with diverse needs.

- Passive
 - ❖ Relaxation room with music, aromatherapy, kinetic sand; Laptop stations with animal videos
- Active
 - ❖ Guitars; hoola-hoops; putt-putt; hacky-sacks
- Virtual
 - ❖ [Pandemic stress relief newsletter](#)
 - ❖ Guided meditation sessions online

Lakeland Library Newsletter: April 2020

Find all of your latest Library news here!

[September 2020](#)[Welcome to Fall 2020](#)[June 2020](#)[May 2020](#)[April 2020](#)[Online Resources \(March 2020\)](#)

Welcome!

Welcome to the **Lakeland Library Newsletter!** Each month, we will showcase classes, events, and other fun and interesting facts about the Library and our staff. We will also keep you informed of new resources and services that are designed to assist you in your course work, and personal and professional lives.

Meditate

Find your "happy place" with guided meditation



Relax with Librarian Megan
Mamolen durino finals stress relief

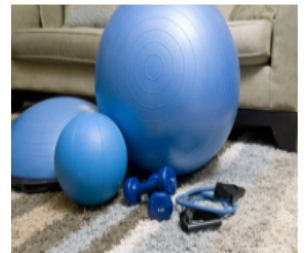
It's time for stress relief!

Take some time to relax, exercise and have fun!



Exercise

Burn off some stress!

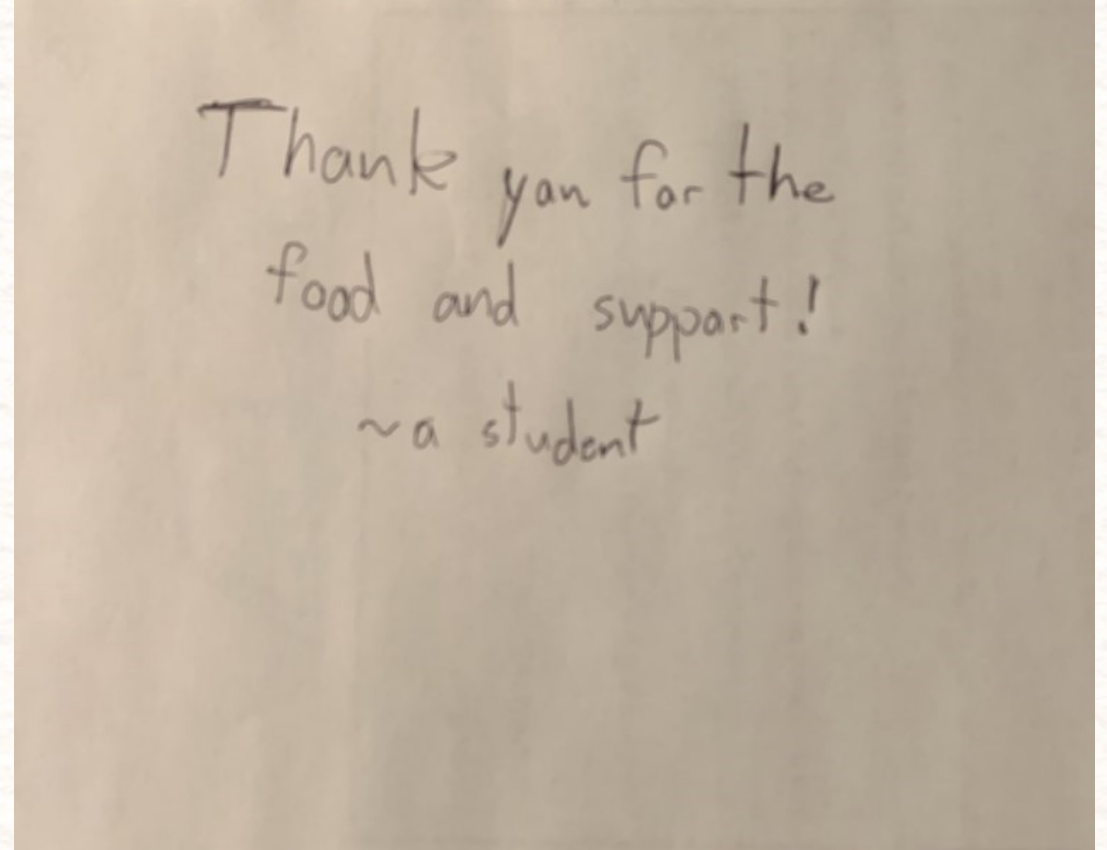


Movement is essential for physical and mental health. Keep moving with these free exercise resources that you can access from home today:

Takeaways - Feedback

Circumstances have shown these activities are needed year-round, and they are desired more frequently, but it is challenging to achieve consistent participation.

- Qualitative feedback:
 - ❖ Conversations at service desks
 - ❖ Requests from Lakeland Student Government and campus faculty for their own consistent meditation groups
 - ❖ Requests from library student group to partner with Teaching and Learning Center for dog-child reading program



Takeaways - Opportunities

- Provides library with opportunities to expand program outside of its doors, including online.
 - ❖ Librarian was keynote speaker at employee wellness week event
 - ❖ Circulation Coordinator joined college wellness committee
 - ❖ Librarian joined college Mental Health Task Force
 - ❖ Library staff and programs showcased during Balance Matters student wellness fair
 - ❖ Librarian teaching meditation to psychology classes each semester
 - ❖ Library stress relief newsletter sent to entire campus



Future Directions

- Need for assessment (how are we affecting/influencing student behavior?)
 - ❖ Survey of user feedback
 - How did the activities influence your stress levels, and will you continue these self-care activities?
 - How are you using these activities outside of the library/campus?
 - ❖ Survey for mindfulness activities at other library events - opportunity to get repeat participants
 - ❖ Incorporation into online feedback form
- More virtual and accessible options
- More frequent offerings
- Student-designed events
- Additional marketing – newsletters, email listserv
- Approach wellness committees and mental health task force about including mindfulness activities in curriculum

References

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Music: Tender Steps by Martijn de Boer (NiGiD). Copyright 2017 Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial (3.0) license. <http://dig.ccmixer.org/files/NiGiD/56286> Ft: Javolenus