

Graduate School Counseling Candidates, Mindfulness, and Developing Self-Care Plans

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Topic

Pre-Service School Counseling candidates are prepared as scholar/practitioners for a stressful career advocating for the academic development, career development and social-emotional development of PreK-12th grade students in public schools. School counselors and teachers, in equal measure, have left the education profession when the stress they experienced pre- and post-Covid had grown to unmanageable levels. This study explored the use of mindfulness activities by graduate candidates to determine which activities were preferable as stress and anxiety relievers and which were to be included in the development of personal self-care plans.

Problem Statement

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Objectives

- Identify which mindfulness strategies were most beneficial
- Assess frequency or infrequency of current mindful experiences
- Identify which mindfulness strategies candidates would practice long-term and include on their self-care plan

Benefits

The benefits of participation in this research project includes self-awareness of mindfulness practices, the impact upon candidate's level of stress or anxiety, and identifying which mindfulness strategies will be incorporated in candidate's self-care plan.

Sample

Sample: Participants completed a 22-item Pre-Assessment Survey and a 16-item Post-Assessment Survey.

Methods

The research project was conducted in the Fall of 2022. Fifteen Pre-Service School Counseling candidates participated in this study.



Mindfulness Techniques

- **Chair Yoga** – Our bodies store anxiety in our muscles. The yoga stretches help to exhaust these sensations freeing us to be ready for the next challenge.
- **Mindful Breathing** – Through conscious effort to regulate breathing we subconsciously help ourselves to be present in the moment, observe our challenges in a manageable way, and regulate our thoughts.
- **Focus on Affirmations** – Affirmations are a grounding exercise that reminds us of our strengths and serve to reinforce our intuitive process in times of uncertainty.

References

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