S.O.S (Students Overcoming Stress) Gaining Insight and Addressing Student Stress: An Exploratory Study Analyzing the Different Modalities of Stress and Mindfulness on Adolescents

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Stress has become an epidemic in modern day America, manifesting itself as crippling panic and anxiety most predominantly in younger generations. Stress severely impedes academic performance in students (Mallow, 2006) in addition to hindering overall focus and motivation. The present study focused on identifying the different sources of stress in both high school and college students while simultaneously gaining insight into the adolescent understanding of mindful practice. An anonymous, online, exploratory survey was created and distributed to hundreds of high schools, universities, colleges, and adolescent mindfulness groups across the United States to address the gap in previous research. These groups were contacted via phone or email to receive consent and the link to the questionnaire. The survey received nearly 425 responses over the course of about 2 months. Results from the online survey showed that age, gender, location, and family dynamic correlate with stress type. Moreover, there were significant positive correlations between schools who have mindfulness programs and students who manage stress effectively and regularly. In addition, later statistical analysis found that age correlates with desire to participate in, and prioritize mindfulness and safe, effective stress reduction techniques. A mindfulness based stress reducing program was created based on the survey results and implemented in a high school environment to teach students strategies to cope with stress. Further research is needed to assess commonalities from adolescents in other nations in order to determine if the results have similar positive trends in different cultural environments, or lead to other suggested stress behaviors, stressors, stress reduction methods or mindfulness involvement.

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