Studying the Effects of Mindfulness Meditations on Teens

Ibanez, Kailani (School: Henry Perrine Baldwin High School)

Mindfulness is a type of psychological exercise centered on focusing on the present moment instead of the past or future and is associated with stress and anxiety reduction. High school students might benefit from learning this particular coping strategy due to pressures from school work and stress, especially in an isolated learning environment due to COVID-19. The present study examined if students' stress levels could decrease while overall happiness and self-esteem grow after virtual Mindfulness practices. A group of student volunteers (N =32), ages 15-18, were randomly assigned either a four-week Mindfulness curriculum or self-concept prompted art response control. The Piers-Harris Test was used to measure student self-concept in six different categories and revealed that the Mindfulness group had higher average growth than the control group and had statistically significant growth in five out of six categories. The control group showed growth in four out of the six categories. T-test comparisons of both group's post-tests showed no statistical significance; however, it only compared the end averages, which were relatively the same in both groups, instead of average growth, which differed between the two groups. This study showed it is possible to improve participants' happiness, self-esteem, and stress reduction through a virtual four-week mindfulness course. Further examination of the long-term effects of this Mindfulness program will be conducted four months post-training.

Awards Won: