

Cultivating Undergraduate Nursing Students' Well-being and Resilience: Answering the Call to Action

Keri Cochran, MSN, RN, Elizabeth Morse, DNP, MPH, FNP-BC, David Phillippi, PhD, MS, BS

Belmont University Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

PROBLEM

- Demonstration of healthy self-care behavior is a competency requirement for all graduates of accredited BSN programs. ¹
- Mindfulness is a self-care strategy that cultivates well-being and resilience by enhancing internal factors such as self-compassion, perseverance, self-awareness, and self-efficacy. It also supports a more adaptive stress response and improves focus and performance. ²
- Gaps in the existing BSN curriculum limit students' healthy habit formation and competency development in domains that highlight self-care practice and leadership.

PROJECT DESIGN

- A phased- quality improvement design was used to facilitate the integration of evidence-based mindfulness strategies into a BSN curriculum.
- A socio-ecological framework was used to layer interventions designed to create a supportive infrastructure for students to cultivate resilience.
- Ongoing mixed-method evaluation assessed faculty and student experience of the curricular innovation, guiding improvement efforts, spread, and sustainability.

PROJECT AIM

This curricular innovation takes a proactive approach to integrating self-care strategies into undergraduate nursing curricula. By intentionally sequencing mindfulness practices using Headspace, the project seeks to support and sustain nurse well-being by equipping students with accessible and portable tools for stress management and self-care.

FRAMEWORK

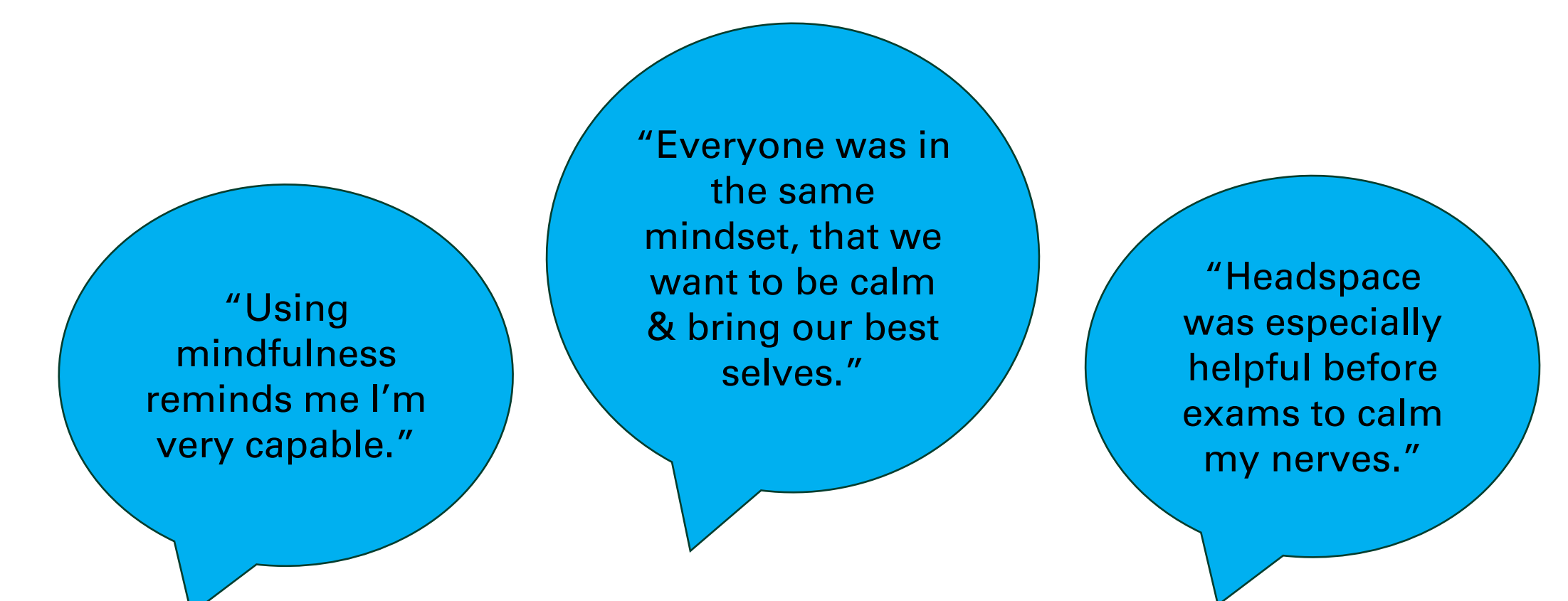
Phase	Activities	Outputs
Phase 1 Research Synthesis Fall 2023	-Synthesize research evidence	-Mindfulness is a feasible evidence-based strategy targeting the problem
Phase 2 Needs Assessment Spring 2024	-Needs Assessment -Evaluate student perspective -Map academic stressors -Assess faculty readiness	-12% of courses map to self-care -Students report stacked stressors -Mapping validates stacked stressors -Faculty report readiness
Phase 3 Faculty Development Summer 2024	-Purchased Headspace licenses -Faculty development -Sequenced support -Staggered academic stressors	-687 licenses purchased (students, faculty, & staff) -15 level 1 & 2 faculty trained -Planned 55 Headspace practices via Dose Map -5/6 level 1 courses staggered academic stressors
Phase 4 Curriculum Integration Pilot Fall 2024	-Pilot Headspace implementation -Monitor enrollment & utilization of Headspace -Real-time process improvements to increase utilization & address barriers -Evaluation of experience	-Surveyed 8 faculty & 80 students
Phase 5 Scale Spring 2025	-Develop plan to scale	-Scaled to include an additional 100 level 2 students and 6 faculty

OUTCOMES

Curricular	Faculty	Students
100% of level 1 & 2 courses integrated mindfulness, in classrooms, labs, and clinical spaces; approximately 40 practices were sequenced across the semester	Faculty found mindfulness practices feasible and valuable; 7/8 plan to continue regularly incorporating Headspace in their teaching spaces.	60% tried Headspace a few times independently; 21% use Headspace regularly; 43% are very likely to use Headspace in the future.

KEY FINDINGS

- Headspace utilization analytics indicated independent use of the app by students and faculty for sleep and mindful eating.
- Qualitative data collected from faculty highlighted the feasibility and value of incorporating mindfulness practices using Headspace.
- Students found mindfulness practices improved focus and composure, reduced stress and anxiety, and improved confidence and self-efficacy.



PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

- Mindfulness is a feasible, practical, and portable evidence-based practice that can be integrated into any learning space.
- The use of Headspace supports more standardized integration of a variety of practices and enables facilitation by faculty with minimal training.
- Messaging and modeling by faculty are essential to influence and sustain change.
- Integrating multi-level strategies throughout the curriculum contributes to a broader culture that promotes wellness, resilience, and professional sustainability in nursing education.

References:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2021). The Essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education. Accessible online at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Essentials-2021.pdf>

McConville J, McAleer R, Hahne A (2017). Mindfulness training for health profession students: The effect of mindfulness training on psychological well-being, learning and clinical performance of health professional students: a systematic review of randomized and non-randomized controlled trials. *Explore*, 13(1):26-45.