

Addressing Burnout Before the Bedside: A Pilot Mindfulness Intervention for Pre-Licensure Nursing Students

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Research question:

Is a virtual mindfulness intervention feasible and acceptable to pre-licensure nursing students?

Introduction

- Psychological distress and burnout in pre-licensure nursing students is a growing concern and could impact the transition to professional practice.
- Mindfulness interventions can effectively improve mental health but have been limited by low adherence and retention rates by nursing students.

Method

- Pilot of a 6-week virtual mindfulness intervention, tailored for pre-licensure nursing students.
- Students ($N = 14$) enrolled in a 4-year undergraduate nursing program participated.
- The intervention included weekly 1-hour virtual group sessions and 10 minutes of daily guided mindfulness practice via smartphone app.
- We evaluated feasibility based on >80% retention and responses to the Feasibility of Intervention Measure.¹
- We evaluated acceptability using the Acceptability of Intervention Measure¹ and conducting focus groups at the end of the program.

Week	Topic	Activities
1	What is mindfulness?	Pre-intervention survey Introduction to app
2	Why mindfulness?	Breathing exercise Journaling activity
3	Present moment awareness	Past, present, future reflection Body scan
4	Cultivating self-awareness	Grounding techniques Self-compassion exercise
5	Mindful communication	Empathetic communication techniques Creation of personal mantra
6	Maintaining a mindfulness practice	Building a habit Post-intervention survey, focus group



Students found building a mindfulness practice increased feelings of presence and awareness, and improved exam-related stress management.

Results

- The program had 0% attrition and >75% of participants attended each session.
- Participants found the program to be feasible ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.45$), acceptable ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.46$), and appropriate ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.43$) on scales from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating greater feasibility, acceptability, and appropriateness.
- Participants valued the format flexibility, content, and guided practices.
- Key challenges included finding time for daily practice, scheduling conflicts, and stressors impacting focus.
- 92.3% ($n = 12$) of participants said they would complete the mindfulness program a second time and recommend the program to a friend.

Conclusion

Students found the intervention feasible and acceptable. They recommended the program for pre-licensure students across programmatic levels with a mix of in-person and virtual components.

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Reference

- Weiner, B. J., Lewis, C. C., Stanick, C., Powell, B. J., Dorsey, C. N., Clary, A. S., Boynton, M. H., & Halko, H. (2017). Psychometric assessment of three newly developed implementation outcome measures. *Implementation Science*, 12(1), 108. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-017-0635-3>