

Breath and Movement for Stress Resilience:

Yoga-Based Therapy for Adolescents

Nakisa Kiai MD, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellow and Public Psychiatry Fellow | nakisa.kiai@gmail.com

Background:

Southeast Child-Family Therapy Center (SECFTC) serves ethnically diverse youth and families in southeast San Francisco; clinicians identified groups tailored towards girls as a need in the clinic.

Yoga and breathwork has been indicated for adolescents with anxiety and depression, emotion regulation¹. Use of Yoga as an alternative or complement to medication may reduce reliance of pharmaceuticals².

The southeast sector of San Francisco has limited access to green spaces or community/fitness centers.

Objective:

QI project to explore
1. the **feasibility & acceptability** of implementing a yoga-based therapy group
2. Impacts on clinical outcomes like **anxiety & depression** among adolescent girls at SECFTC.

Methods:



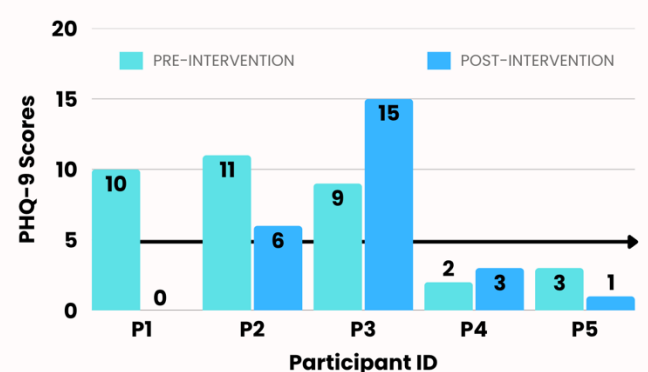
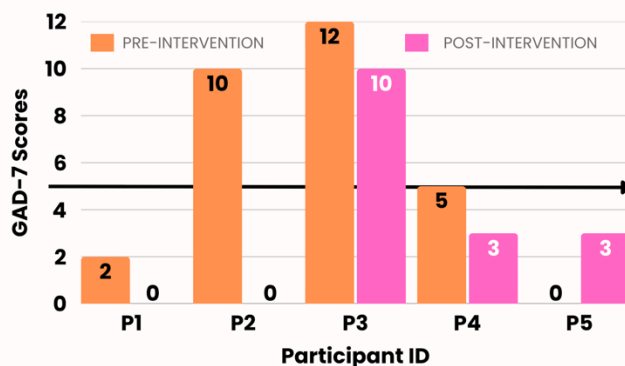
Staff Feedback:

Topic	Example
Cultural Familiarity	"Not in the culture my family is from, but somewhat in my personal culture."
Personal Experience	"I practice yoga to mentally and physically de-stress... a practice that includes self-love and self-care."
Suggestions for Modifications	"Make language more accessible. Simple instructions."
Potential Barriers	"Cultural barriers exist. A client of mine who practices faith-based religion found yoga 'too provocative.'"

Participant Feedback:

Topic	Example
Feasibility & Acceptability	"Never felt uneasy or unsure" at the group. "a quiet, safe space to relax."
Impact on Symptoms	"[The group] made anxiety a little better, and did not make it worse. Helped stop sadness and anger from getting worse."
Implementation of Skills	One said they used the skills "when you need a sense of relief" from academic and social stress and "managing stress and anger in relationships."
Suggestions for Improvement	Youth wanted "prizes every session, immediately," with "no surprises." "Most of us are coming from being inside all day" expressing desire for an outdoor option.

ID	Sessions Attended
P1	7/7
P2	6/7
P3	4/7
P4	4/7
P5	5/7



Next Steps & Recommendations:

- ⇒ Continued dissemination of curriculum to staff clinicians
- ⇒ Staff trainings at different clinic locations
- ⇒ Sustainability: group continuation over the summer + youth co-facilitator!

1. Velásquez, A. M., López, M. A., Quiñonez, N., & Paba, D. P. (2015). Yoga for the prevention of depression, anxiety, and aggression and the promotion of socio-emotional competencies in school-aged children. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 21(5-6), 407-421.
2. Stephens, I. (2019). Medical yoga therapy for adolescent health: A case report. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 8.