

Combating Anxiety— Adaptive Movement for College of Nursing Students

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic has decreased activity levels among college students while it has increased stress and anxiety (Son et al., 2020). BSN students have reported high stress and anxiety (Aslan & Pekince, 2020).

Activity and movement are consistently shown to reduce stress and anxiety (Sharma & Madaan, 2006).

The purpose of this work is to describe the impact of an adaptive movement intervention on stress and anxiety in BSN students.

Methods

Sample: 7 non-BSN and 17 BSN students participated in this work.

Measures, BSN cohort only:

- Stress: **Perceived Stress Scale**, 13 items, rated 1-5: 1 being low stress, 5 being high stress.
- Health Beliefs: **Healthy Lifestyle Beliefs Scale**, 13 items, rated 1-5: 1 being low control, 5 being high control of health behaviors.

Procedure:

- **Phase 1, Non-BSN cohort:** completed an initial survey (open ended question, free-text) describing their current life stressors, participated in a guided movement intervention, were asked to independently practice 5-10 times over 3 weeks, and were offered a recording of the movement training. After the 3-week period, completed a final survey describing current life stressors. Results from phase 1 were used to improve the intervention for phase 2.
- **Phase 2, BSN cohort:** completed the Stress and Health Belief survey and interested students attended the guided movement intervention. Participants were asked to independently practice 5-10 times over 3 weeks, and were offered a recording of the movement training. After the 3-week period, completed stress and health belief measures again.

Movement-Based Intervention

ADAPTIVE MOVEMENT: An individualized practice that focuses primarily on body awareness, breath, and mobility. The concept of an adaptive movement intervention and the intervention itself were developed with input from Professor Mindy Myers, who has expertise in dance studies

Breath		Space		Move		Observe		Ground		
sit	message	stand	walk	jump	twist	dance	spin	breathe	message	sit
focus	connect	prepare	leave	energize	unwind	play	release	control	connect	return

Results

Phase 1, Non-BSN cohort: pre-intervention, participants described their life stressors as “overwhelmed”, “having limited time”, and “holding tension”. Post-intervention, participants reported that the movement intervention helped them relax, reset, and loosen expectations.

Phase 1, BSN cohort:

This sample was entirely female, age 20-22 (n=17, 100%), n=8 were either working or actively looking for work (41%).

	Time 1 (n=17)	Time 2 (n=6)
Stress Score (mean)	Mean=2.63	Mean=2.57
1-5, low-high stress	Range 2.40-2.90	Range 2.40-2.80
Health Behavior Score (mean)	Mean=4.08	Mean=4.38
1-5, low-high control	3.77-4.69	Range 4.08-4.77

At time 2, of the 6 people that responded to the survey, 2 attended the movement session, 3 did not attend, 1 response was missing.

Of the 2 people that attended the movement intervention, both reported being able to practice 1-2 times/week and found the intervention effective in reducing stress.

Of the 3 people who could not attend, all reported time constraints

Discussion

- The BSN cohort reported moderate stress at time 1. At time 2, after the intervention, stress did appear to decrease, and healthy lifestyle beliefs increased.
- However, few participants were able to attend the movement intervention session and completed the time 2 survey, so results are descriptive only.
- Potential barriers to attending the movement intervention session were time constraints. In addition to being students, many were working or looking for work, which may have competed with this intervention for the participants' time.
- Of the people who attended the movement session and completed the time 2 survey, all reported enjoying the movement intervention and were able to practice on their own.

Conclusion

- While participant recruitment was difficult, of the students that attended the movement intervention, all reported stress reduction.
- Nursing students may benefit from having this type of intervention available to them, but barriers must be addressed.
- Future studies may benefit from offering an entirely virtual, asynchronous option or conducting the intervention during a common meeting time in the College of Nursing.

References



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