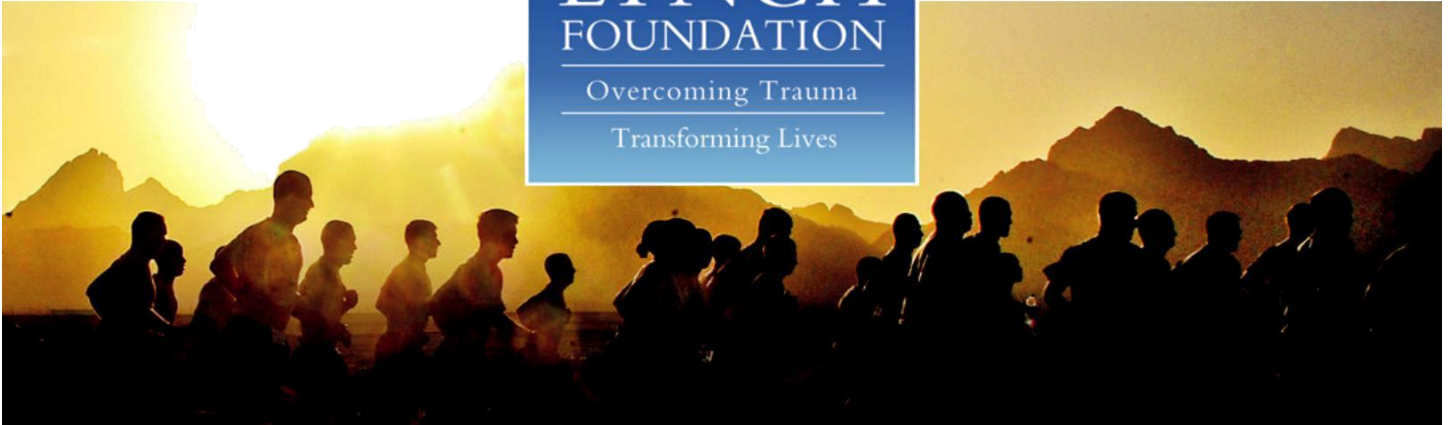


DAVID LYNCH FOUNDATION

Overcoming Trauma

Transforming Lives



Core Programs | Research Review | *Chicago Tribune*

ABOUT THE DAVID LYNCH FOUNDATION

The David Lynch Foundation (DLF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, founded in 2005, with a mission to reduce the epidemic of trauma and toxic stress among at-risk populations through the implementation of the evidence-based Transcendental Meditation technique. DLF has served more than 500,000 children and adults worldwide, with a focus on underserved middle and high school students, veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress and their families, and women and children dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault. DLF also works with the homeless, prison populations, people living with HIV/AIDS, and others.

WHAT IS TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION?

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a simple, easily-learned, evidence-based technique, practiced for 20 minutes twice a day, sitting comfortably in a chair. During TM, the body gains a profound state of rest and relaxation while the mind is deeply settled yet wide awake and the brain functions with increased coherence. More than 350 peer-reviewed studies verify the physiological and psychological benefits of Transcendental Meditation for reducing stress and stress-related disorders, including hypertension, anxiety, depression, and insomnia, while increasing creativity, energy, intelligence, and focus.

CORE PROGRAMS



Cadets at Norwich University

OPERATION WARRIOR WELLNESS

Post-traumatic stress among veterans has reached epidemic proportions, with serious consequences.

Veterans commit suicide at the rate of 21 per day. Many returning veterans are unable to hold jobs, support their families, and maintain positive relationships. Transcendental Meditation has proven to be an effective tool with significant results. We provide scholarships so veterans and active duty personnel can learn TM for free at TM centers and veteran service organizations nationwide. In addition to serving veterans, we instruct active duty service members as part of a DOD-funded project at the Eisenhower Army

Medical Center Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Clinic at Fort Gordon, and at Norwich University. In a clinical trial at Fort Gordon's TBI Clinic, 83.7% of those instructed in TM stabilized, reduced, or stopped using psychotropic medication within one month of regular TM practice.

Results from a recent partnership with Wounded Warrior Project showed that:

On average individuals experienced:

- 51% reduction in trauma symptoms
- 42% reduction in depression symptoms
- 25% improvement in sleep quality

*For details see accompanying trauma research document.

"Nobody should be angry before Cheerios in the morning! TM is making me a better man, father and husband. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to [DLF]."
—Michael, Marine Corp Veteran with deployments in Iraq



QUIET TIME

For schools in low-income, often crime-ridden neighborhoods, traumatic stress is a daily reality for millions of children growing up in an oppressive climate of poverty, violence, and fear. This stress impedes learning and undermines physical and mental health.

- 25% of teenagers suffer from anxiety disorders.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers.

DLF's *Quiet Time* program serves thousands of students in underserved communities, fostering and sustaining positive learning environments. Built into each school's curriculum and taught to the entire school community – students, teachers, administrators, and principals – *Quiet Time* has been shown to increase learning readiness,

positively impact grades and graduation rates, and decrease student truancy and teacher burnout. *Quiet Time* is in schools in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

A sample of *Quiet Time* results include:

- 70% experienced reduced stress.
- 87% reduced number of suspensions over first 3 years.
- 63% felt meditation increased their focus.

"Quiet Time is the most powerful and effective program I've come across in my 40 years as a public school educator for addressing the problem of stress in education, particularly in our inner city schools." —James Dierke, Visitacion Valley Middle School Principal (San Francisco, CA)



WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

The David Lynch Foundation launched the *Women's Health Initiative* in 2012 to combat toxic stress and trauma among survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse from within the military, college campuses, and at home. The program offers Transcendental Meditation as an evidence-based therapy to help heal and empower victims of abuse. The initiative partners with a variety of organizations including New York City's Family Justice Centers.

The *Women's Health Initiative* empowers victims of domestic abuse by building a sense of resiliency, confidence, and self-respect, improving resistance to

stress to help victims heal from within.

Key findings from the *Women's Health Initiative* include:

- Average of 35% reduction in anger, anxiety, depression and fatigue
- Average of 51% improvement in quality of sleep

"I am a better person to myself. I love TM and this will be a lifelong practice. Before, I felt aggression walking down the street. Now I feel calm and at peace. I no longer need antidepressants and feel so happy and I quit taking sleeping pills."

—Domestic violence survivor, age 45

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH-FUNDED RESEARCH ON TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has granted more than \$26 million over the past 20 years to study the effects of the Transcendental Meditation program on cardiovascular disease and its risk factors. The following is a summary of findings from published research.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND RISK FACTORS

1) Decreased Risk of Heart Attack, Stroke and Death

Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes, 2012; 5, 750-758 (American Heart Association journal)

Two hundred and one African American men and women with coronary heart disease were randomly assigned to Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) and followed up over an average of 5.4 years. Results indicated that the TM group showed a 48% decrease in heart attack, stroke, or all-cause mortality (primary endpoint) compared to HE. A 24% decrease in the secondary composite endpoint of cardiovascular mortality, revascularizations, and cardiovascular hospitalizations was also found in TM participants compared to HE controls. The degree of regularity of practice of the TM program was positively associated with survival. Other findings indicated a reduction of 4.9 mm Hg in systolic blood pressure and a significant decrease in anger expression in the TM group compared to HE.

Research Field Site: Medical College of Wisconsin

National Institutes of Health - National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Grant RO1HL48107

2) Reduced Carotid Atherosclerosis in Hypertensive Patients

Stroke, 2000, 31, 568-573 (American Heart Association journal)

Sixty hypertensive subjects were randomly assigned to Transcendental Meditation or health education (HE) control groups and completed posttesting after 6 to 9 months. The TM group showed a significant decrease of 0.098 mm in intima-media-thickness (IMT), as measured by B-mode ultrasound, compared with an increase of 0.054 mm in the control group. This reduction was similar to that achieved by lipid-lowering drugs and extensive lifestyle changes.

Research Field Site: Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, CA

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Grants HL-51519, HL-51519-S2

3) Reduced Carotid Atherosclerosis in Older Adults

American Journal of Cardiology, 2002, 89, 952-958

Fifty-seven older adults (mean age of 74 years) were randomly assigned to either a traditional medicine multi-modality program that included Transcendental Meditation, a standard health education program, or usual care, with a twelve-month intervention period. The primary outcome was intima-media-thickness (IMT), measured by B-mode ultrasound. Results showed significantly decreased IMT in the traditional medicine group compared to the other combined groups. Reductions were most pronounced in the subgroup of participants with multiple coronary heart disease risk factors.

Research Field Site: Saint Joseph Hospital, Chicago, IL

National Institutes of Health - National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Specialized Center of Research Grant P50-AT00082-01 and National Institute of Aging AG05735-3

4) Improved Functional Capacity in Heart Failure Patients

Ethnicity & Disease, 2007, 17, 72-77

Twenty-three African American patients hospitalized with congestive heart failure were randomly assigned to Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) control groups. For the primary outcome of functional capacity, the TM group significantly improved on the six-minute walk test from baseline to six months compared to the HE group. The TM group also showed improvements in mental health, depression, and disease-specific quality of life. The TM group had fewer re-hospitalizations during the six months of follow-up.

Research Field Site: Department of Medicine University of Pennsylvania

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant P50-AT00082-05

5) Reduced Metabolic Syndrome

Archives of Internal Medicine, 2006, 166, 1218-1224 (American Medical Association journal)

One hundred and three coronary heart disease patients were randomly assigned to Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) control group. Over a four-month intervention period, the TM group showed a significant improvement in blood pressure and insulin resistance components of the metabolic syndrome as well as cardiac autonomic nervous system tone compared to HE. These results suggest that TM may modulate the physiological response to stress and improve coronary heart disease risk factors.

Research Field Site: Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine and other National Institutes of Health Grants R01 AT00226, 1-P50-AA0082-02, 1-R15-HL660242- 01, R01-HL51519-08

6) Decreased Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Patients

Hypertension, 1995, 26(5), 820-827 (American Heart Association journal)

One hundred and twenty-seven hypertensive African Americans were randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM), Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) or education control (EC) groups and completed three-month posttesting. Results showed reductions of 10.7 mm Hg in systolic blood pressure (SBP) and 6.4 mm Hg in diastolic blood pressure (DBP) in the TM group; these reductions in BP were significantly different from changes found in the other treatment groups. The BP reductions in the TM group compare favorably to the effects found with antihypertensive medication.

Research Field Site: West Oakland Health Center, CA

Supported in part by National Institutes of Health Research Grant 5R01HL-48107

7) Reductions in Blood Pressure and Use of Hypertensive Medication

American Journal of Hypertension, 2005, 18, 88–98

One hundred and fifty hypertensive African Americans randomly were randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM), Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) or health education (HE) groups and completed twelve-month posttesting. Results indicated a decrease of 5.7 mm Hg in diastolic blood pressure (DBP) in the TM group, which was significantly different from changes found in the other treatment groups. A non-significant decrease of 3.1 mm Hg in systolic blood pressure (SBP) was observed. Women TM participants exhibited a significant decrease in both DBP and SBP compared to the other treatment groups. Use of hypertensive medication was also found to significantly decrease in the TM group in comparison to the other groups.

Research Field Site: West Oakland Health Center, CA

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute Grant 1R01HL48107 and National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant 1P50AT00082

8) Lower Mortality in Hypertensive Older Adults

American Journal of Cardiology, 2005, 95, 1060-1064

Patient data were pooled from two published randomized controlled trials on high blood pressure that compared TM to other behavioral interventions (mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, mental relaxation procedures, health education) and usual care. A total of 202 older adults with pre-hypertension or hypertension were followed-up for vital status and cause of death over an average of 7.6 years. Compared with combined controls, the TM group showed a 23% decrease in all-cause mortality, the study's primary outcome. Secondary analyses showed a 30% decrease in the rate of cardiovascular mortality and a 51% decrease in the rate of mortality due to cancer in the TM group compared with combined controls.

Research Field Sites: The two published studies were originally conducted at the West Oakland Health Center, CA and Harvard University, MA.

Supported in part by National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant 1P50AT00082

REACTIVITY TO PAIN

9) Lower Brain Reactivity to Pain

Neuroreport. 2006 August 21; 17(12): 1359–1363

Long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation technique showed lower reactivity to thermally induced pain, as measured by functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), compared to healthy matched controls. After the controls learned the technique and practiced it for 5 months, their response decreased by 40–50% in the total brain, thalamus, and prefrontal cortex, and to lesser extent in the anterior cingulate cortex. The results suggest that the Transcendental Meditation technique reduces the affective/ motivational dimension of the brain's response to pain.

Research Field Site: University of California at Irvine

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant P50-AT00082-05

BREAST CANCER

10) Improved Quality of Life in Breast Cancer Patients *Integrative Cancer Therapies*, 2009, 8(3) 228–234

One hundred and thirty women were randomly assigned to either the Transcendental Meditation (TM) or education control (EC) group. Measures were administered every six months over an average 18-month intervention period. Significant improvements were found in the Transcendental Meditation group compared with controls in overall quality of life, especially emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing, and mental health.

Research Field Site: St Joseph’s Hospital, Chicago

Supported in part by National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant 1K01AT004415-01

GENE EXPRESSION

11) Increased Telomerase Gene Expression *PLOS/ONE* 10(11): e0142689. doi:10.1371

Forty-eight African American men and women with stage I hypertension, who participated in a larger parent randomized controlled trial, volunteered for this sub-study. These subjects participated in Transcendental Meditation plus a basic health education or an extensive health education program. Both groups exhibited significant improvement in telomerase gene expression (hTERT and hTR) over a 16-week period. Reductions in blood pressure were also observed. These findings have implications for improving longevity and may provide a mechanism by which stress reduction and lifestyle modification reduce BP.

Research Field Site: Howard University Medical Center, Washington, DC

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute Grant HL083944

COLLEGE STUDENTS

12) Decreased Blood Pressure and Mood Disturbance and Improved Coping Ability *American Journal of Hypertension*, 2009, 22 (12): 1326-1331

Two hundred and ninety- eight college students were randomly assigned to either the Transcendental Meditation (TM) program or wait-list control, with a three-month intervention period. Results showed significant improvements in total mood disturbance, positive coping, and anxiety, depression, anger/hostility. Significant reductions in both resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure were also observed in the high-risk hypertension subgroup.

Research Field Site: American University

Supported in part by National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Grant 1P50AT00082

13) Reduced Ambulatory Blood Pressure *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 1997, 89, 15-28

Twenty-six mostly normotensive subjects randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) groups, who completed baseline and posttesting on ambulatory blood pressure (ABP), were included in final analyses. Results indicated significant reductions in diastolic blood pressure in the high compliance TM group compared to controls over a four-month intervention period. No significant change was observed in cardiovascular reactivity assessment.

Research Field Site: University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

Supported in part by National Institutes of Health Grants 1R15HL40495 01A1, RR59

SCHOOL STUDENTS

14) Reduced Negative School Behaviors *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 2003, 1:10

Forty-five African American adolescents were randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) control groups, with a four-month intervention period. Results showed significant reductions in absenteeism, rule infractions, and suspensions in the TM group compared to controls.

Research Field Site: Medical College of Georgia

Supported in part by National Institutes of Health Grant HL62976

15) Improved Cardiovascular Functioning at Rest and in Reaction to Stressors in Adolescents At-Risk for Hypertension *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 2001, 51, 597-605

Thirty-five adolescents with resting blood pressure between the 85th and 95th percentile for their age and gender were randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) control groups, with a two-month intervention period. The TM group exhibited a significant decrease in resting systolic blood pressure (SBP) compared to controls. Greater decreases in blood pressure, heart rate, and cardiac output reactivity to stressors were further observed.

Research Field Site: Georgia Health Sciences University

Supported in part by National Institutes of Grant HL62976

16) Reduced Left-Ventricular Mass Index and Maintained Body-Mass Index *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2012, doi:10.1155/2012/923153

Sixty-two African American adolescents with high normal systolic blood pressure were randomly assigned to either Transcendental Meditation (TM) or health education (HE) groups. The study included a 4-month intervention period plus 4-month follow-up. Results showed a significant decrease in left-ventricular mass index (LVMI) after four months, which was maintained at 4-month follow-up. TM adolescents also exhibited less of an increase in body mass index (BMI) compared to controls at 4-month follow-up.

Research Field Site: Georgia Health Sciences University

Supported in part by National Heart Lung and Blood Institute Grant HL62976, HL05662

APPENDIX

1) American Heart Association Scientific Statement on Blood Pressure Reduction

Based on the above NIH-funded research on Transcendental Meditation and blood reduction as well as other published studies, the American Heart Association, in its systematic review entitled “Beyond medications and diet: Alternative approaches to lower blood pressure: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association” conferred a “Class IIB Level of Evidence B recommendation in regard to BP-lowering efficacy. TM may be considered in clinical practice to lower BP. Because of many negative studies or mixed results and a paucity of available trials, all other meditation techniques (including MBSR) received a *Class III, no benefit, Level of Evidence C* recommendation.” (*Hypertension*, 2013, 61, 1- 24, doi 10.1161/ HYP.0b013e318293645f)

2) Department of Defense-funded Comparative Effectiveness Trial Comparing Transcendental Meditation to Prolonged Exposure and Health Education (in progress)

This is a randomized controlled trial with 203 veterans with documented posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) randomly assigned to Transcendental Meditation (TM), Cognitive Behavior Therapy-Prolonged Exposure (PE) or health education (HE) control groups, with a three-month intervention period. Outcomes include trauma severity as measured by Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS), PTSD Checklist—Military Version (PCL-M), and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)-9 depression scale. Study hypotheses include: 1) non-inferiority: relative to PE the effects of TM will be comparable to PE on the primary CAPS outcome and secondary psychological outcomes; and 2) standard comparison: TM and PE both will show significant improvement on the primary and secondary psychological outcomes of the study compared to HE. The project is currently in its final phase of data analysis and write-up. **(Study protocol is published in *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 2014, 1-7, doi.org/10/1016/j.cct2014.07.00)**

Research Field Site: San Diego VA

Department of Defense Grants W81XWH-12-1-0576, W81XWH-12-1-0577

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ON THE EFFECTS OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION ON TRAUMA AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

Impact of Transcendental Meditation on Psychotropic Medication Use Among Active Duty Military Service Members With Anxiety and PTSD¹

This study included 74 active-duty service members with PTSD or anxiety disorder. Half the service members voluntarily practiced Transcendental Meditation regularly in addition to other therapies; half did not. In just one month after learning the TM technique, there was a significant reduction in psychotropic medication usage among the TM group:

- TM meditators: 83.7% stabilized, reduced or stopped using medication. 10.9% increased.
 - Non-meditators: 59.4% stabilized, reduced or stopped using medication. 40.5% increased.
-

Meditation Programs for Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Aggregate Findings From a Multi-Site Evaluation²

This meta-analysis looked at several sites, one of which, the Michigan VA Hospital, implemented a randomized controlled trial of TM. All participants in the study were receiving mental health services. A total of 19 veterans learned TM with 24 treatment-as-usual controls. Trauma symptom severity significantly decreased in the TM group compared to controls. The TM group had a 36% reduction in PTSD assessment scores compared to an 18% reduction for the control group who received the standard VA therapy.

Reduced Trauma Symptoms and Perceived Stress in Male Prison Inmates through the Transcendental Meditation Program: A Randomized Controlled Trial³

This randomized controlled trial of 181 male prison inmates in Oregon found significant reductions in total trauma symptoms, anxiety, depression, dissociation, and sleep disturbance subscales, and perceived stress in the TM group compared with controls. The TM group had a 47% reduction in PTSD assessment scores compared to a 12% reduction for the control group.

Transcendental Meditation and Reduced Trauma Symptoms in Female Inmates: A Randomized Controlled Study⁴

This randomized controlled trial of 22 female prison inmates in Oregon found a significant effect of TM on total trauma symptoms with significant effects on intrusions and hyperarousal subscales. The TM group had a 45% reduction in PTSD assessment scores compared to a 22% reduction for the control group.

DLF Internal Evaluation of Veteran Outcomes⁵

In 2016, the David Lynch Foundation received pre-surveys from 233 veterans or active duty military personnel instructed in TM. Of those individuals, 77% completed at least one post-instruction survey (at 1, 3, or 6 months). Individuals experienced a 51% reduction in trauma symptoms, a 42% reduction in depression, and 25% improvement in sleep quality.

- Trauma: Before learning TM, 65% of individuals had PCL scores consistent with a provisional PTSD diagnosis. Of those who completed the 1-month post-test, approximately 70% were no longer in that range.
 - Depression: Before learning TM, 88% of individuals had CES-D scores that put them at risk of clinical depression. Of those who completed the 1-month post-test, approximately 40% no longer scored at risk.
-

Department of Defense \$2.4 million PTSD Study at the San Diego VA

In this randomized controlled trial of 203 veterans with documented PTSD, participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups:

1. Transcendental Meditation
2. Prolonged Exposure (PE) (the gold standard treatment for PTSD)
3. Health education control group

The treatment phase of this study has been completed. One of the researchers is planning to present the results at a scientific conference soon. We are optimistic about the results.

¹ Mil Med. 2016 Jan;181(1):56-63. doi: 10.7205/MILMED-D-14-00333.

² Psychol Trauma. 2016 May;8(3):365-74. doi: 10.1037/tra0000106. Epub 2016 Jan 11. This was measured by the Clinically Administered PTSD Scale, the gold standard for PTSD diagnosis. The scale ranges from 0-80. The TM group averaged a score of 73.5 before instruction (margin of error = 6.22.) The control group averaged 74.1 (margin of error = 4.92)

³ Perm J. 2016 Fall;20(4):43-47. doi: 10.7812/TPP/16-007. Epub 2016 Oct 7. This was measured by the Trauma Symptoms Checklist, which evaluates symptomatology in adults associated with childhood or adult traumatic experiences. In the prison studies, we used a modified version for the prison population which ranges from 0 to 90 in total score. The TM group averaged a score of 23.68 before instruction (margin of error = 13.11.) The control group averaged 30.12 (margin of error = 16.1.)

⁴ Perm J. 2017;21. doi: 10.7812/TPP/16-008. Epub 2017 Jan 17. This was measured by the civilian version of the PCL, an assessment used by the VA to screen for PTSD. PCL-C scores range from 17-85. The TM group averaged a score of 53 before instruction (margin of error 17.35.) The control group averaged 52.4 (margin of error 13.05.)

⁵ Trauma was measured using the PCL-5, which has a score that can range from 0-80 with a cut-point of 33. The group averaged a score of 39.3 before instruction. Depression was measured using the CES-D, which has a score that can range from 0-60 with a cut-point of 16. The group averaged a score of 26.8 before instruction. Sleep quality was measured using MOS Sleep Scale, which has a score that can range from 10-60. The group averaged a score of 34.2 before instruction.

Can in-school meditation help curb youth violence?

By Patrick M. O'Connell

Chicago Tribune

Students shuffle into the classroom, backpacks slung over shoulders and earbuds dangling out of sweatshirts. Jokes among friends fly as the students plop into desks arranged neatly in rows.

The instructor in the green shirt jingles a small silver bell. The room grows still. Murmurs fade.

The polished wooden floorboards creak amid the pressure of shuffling feet.



(Zbigniew Bzdak / Chicago Tribune)

Students at Gage Park High in Chicago participate in Quiet Time last month. The meditation program is run by the David Lynch Foundation.

A portable fan whirs. Then the room turns quiet.

For the next 20 minutes, there is no lesson, no talking, no laughing, none of the bustling sounds of a high school classroom on a weekday morning.

The boys and girls close their eyes and allow their bodies to relax. Some rest their heads on the palms of their hands. Most close their eyes.

These Gage Park High School students are participating in Quiet Time, a transcendental meditation program that

aims to help them with the stress and pressures of life inside and outside the brick walls of the Southwest Side school.

This happens twice a day. Every school day.

The program is run by the David Lynch Foundation, a nonprofit organization co-founded by the movie director, and is being studied for its effectiveness by the University of Chicago Crime Lab.

Researchers are examining whether the meditation program offers tangible benefits for teens at a school where 98.3

percent of students are considered low income. The program in Chicago Public Schools because of its goal to address the effects of toxic stress on young people. Quiet Time also has been implemented in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City.

The Crime Lab believed the program showed success because of its demonstrated success in the other cities, executive director Roseanna Ander said, and it was helpful that it was cost-effective to launch and had the ability to be rigorously evaluated.

"It helps you to slow your mind," said James, 17, a senior at Gage Park. The Tribune agreed not to publish students' last names at the school's request. "It helps you to slow down and focus."

Before taking part in the Quiet Time program, James said he was quick to anger and often was arguing and fighting. Now, James said, he is calmer and thinks about how to react when someone says something objectionable or he finds himself in a stressful interaction.

"I feel it can help people in school and out of school and with everything you do in life," James said after a restful meditation session.

Initially, James thought the program was going to be an opportunity to nap, but after learning how it worked, he gave it a try and was surprised at what he found. James has even had friends who do not attend Gage Park ask him about meditation, and he's trumpeted its benefits.

In addition to Gage Park, Quiet Time has been rolled out at Daniel Hale Williams Preparatory School and Bowen High School. The meditation program is voluntary. In order to study its effects, students at the beginning of the school

year were randomly selected for the program, while others participate in a general quiet period that serves as a control group. At Gage Park, the entire school goes quiet at the same time twice daily, even though only about half the students are meditating.

Staffers with the foundation teach the students the basics of transcendental meditation at the start of the semester, learning how to focus on a phrase or mantra that allows them to rest their minds. While students meditate, there is no music or background sound, and no chanting, singing or specific instruction. Students attempt to clear their minds and let stress fade away. The meditation, the foundation says, does not involve any religious or philosophical component and is taught to students by certified instructors.

Bob Roth, chief executive officer of the foundation, said transcendental meditation is a state of "restful alertness." It helps kids relax and aids in learning readiness, he said.

"You just can't keep jamming more facts and figures into a kid's brain," Roth said. "The message to the child is 'quiet is important.' ... Quiet Time gives the child a tool, a technique that's very simple," Roth said. "The stakes are very high. We're in danger of losing an entire generation of kids because of the stress."

U. of C. researchers are studying the effects of the meditation program by observing in the classroom and analyzing data from CPS and the Chicago Police Department. Researchers will collect grades, test scores, attendance records and disciplinary records, including in-school infractions and out-of-school arrests, or whether students were victims of crimes.

The program began in pilot form in the fall of 2015 and will continue next school year.

It was funded by two anonymous donors and the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation is funding the evaluation. The Crime Lab is working on future funding.

The Crime Lab and foundation selected schools in areas of the city with high homicide rates and with particularly disadvantaged students. A gathering of data

will demonstrate the program's overall effect.

The plan is for the program to be expanded and studied in an additional two or three CPS schools, and U. of C. researchers are going to study the program in New York. One of the goals, Ander



(Zbigniew Bzdak / Chicago Tribune)

Quiet Time—20 minutes twice daily—starts with ringing of a small bell. In Chicago Public Schools the program is in use at Gage Park, Williams and Bowen high schools.

said, "is to learn which programs work the best in what context and for which students."

Gage Park Principal Brian Metcalf said the Quiet Time program has yielded immediate results for students and staff. Suspensions are down, Metcalf said, and a recent round of SAT prep scores showed improvement. Teachers, he said, see improvement in students' behavior and ability to concentrate in class.

Morales, the Gage Park teacher, said, "As a teacher, I've seen a transformation of how we, how I, handle conflict in the classroom."

Morales, 57, initially was skeptical of the meditation program, doubting that such a practice would make much difference at a school such as Gage Park. Morales said he thought program and school officials were "naive" to believe the program would resonate with students, and he said he expressed his reservations.

But slowly, Morales began to see the upside with students, and himself.

Morales said the practice has helped him in the work setting and during the slog of his commute. Stuck in traffic, he no longer curses at other drivers or stresses about congestion, trying to bring his mind to a calm place.

For students, the program helps teens

learn to manage stress, cope with anger issues and navigate the perils of everyday life, teachers and staff said.

"I was a real belligerent person and a hothead before, and it's really calming and releases stress," said Rakiha, a Gage Park sophomore. "It relaxes me, and it

opens my mind up."

Another participant, Breana, didn't know what to think of the program initially but then blossomed during the sessions.

"When I first heard about it, I said, 'What is this? What are we doing?'" Breana said. "When you really get into it, I really got some stress off my mind. I really think before I do certain things."

The students are not the only ones participating. Inside the third-floor classroom, Morales and biology teacher Shameka Jones sat by the windows, eyes closed, faces softening.

Jones said she has battled anxiety and depression, and the Quiet Time program has been a welcome addition to her school day.

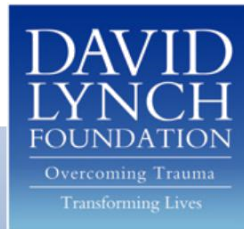
"The first time I did it, I felt so relaxed," said Jones, 36. "I felt ready to work more than I ever had. I feel like I can handle any obstacle. I don't have to feel the weight or stressfulness. I can feel OK, and I can approach situations and deal with them. ... It was like a vortex in my brain opened up and allowed positive energy in."

poconnell@chicagotribune.com

Twitter @pmocwriter

Copyright 2017, Chicago Tribune

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION



Washington, D.C.

Center for Health and
Wellness 120 3rd Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 202-547-0425

•

New York

228 East 45th Street, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212-644-9880

•

Chicago

5300 South Shore Drive, Suite 88
Chicago, IL 60615
Tel: 800-326-0867

•

Los Angeles

621 South Highland Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: 323-852-3004

•

Information

DavidLynchFoundation.org
info@DavidLynchFoundation.org