

Self-Care & Mindfulness in the School

Sara Goodyear, MSED, LPC, NCC

STAR Clinic & A.W. Beattie Career Center

1

Introduction & Background

Sara Goodyear is a dedicated PA Licensed Professional Counselor, Nationally Certified Counselor and PA Certified School Counselor for grades K-12. Sara joined the STAR Clinic in January 2017 as a clinician specializing in providing CBT/DBT therapy to adolescents and college-aged patients with depression, anxiety and suicidality. In 2019, she moved to a School Counselor position at A.W. Beattie Career Center serving grades 10-12 in northern Allegheny County. She still maintains a clinical role at STAR.

Prior to STAR, she worked as an individual, group and family therapist in the school, home, and community settings. She has worked with diverse clientele, including at-risk/high need populations, for over 15 years. Her previous experience includes work as a School-Based Therapist working through an agency partnered with several Pittsburgh Public Schools' Emotional Support classrooms for grades K-8 clientele with mood and behavioral disorders. In addition, she has worked extensively in both schools and wraparound settings, specializing in children with Autism and behavioral disorders, to implement positive behavioral supports and interventions.

2

Disclosure

- There is no financial interest or gain in providing this presentation.
- There is no conflict of interest in providing this presentation.

3

Goals of Presentation

1. Identify practical coping strategies and mindfulness techniques that can be applied with secondary students.
2. Identify ways to present coping strategies and mindfulness on an individual and classroom basis in a meaningful manner.
3. Explore options for normalizing mental health awareness on a systemic, school-wide level.

4

Why self-care & mindfulness in the school?

- More than 1 in 3 students (36.7%) and nearly half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019.
- Nearly 1 in 5 students (18.8%) seriously considered suicide in 2019.
 - Male – 13.3%; Female – 24.1%
 - White - 19.1%; Black - 16.9%; Hispanic - 17.2%
 - Heterosexual – 14.5%; Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual – 46.8%; Not Sure – 30.4%
- In 2019, 15.7% of students had made a suicide plan.
 - Male – 11.3%; Female – 19.9%
 - White – 15.7%; Black – 15.0%; Hispanic – 14.7%
 - Heterosexual – 12.1%; Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual – 40.2%; Not Sure – 23.9%

(CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report 2009-2019.)

5

Why self-care & mindfulness in the school?

- In 2019, 8.9% of students had attempted suicide within the past year
 - Male – 6.6%; Female – 11.0%
 - White – 7.9%; Black – 11.8%; Hispanic – 8.9%
 - Heterosexual – 6.4%; Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual – 23.4%; Not Sure – 16.1%
- In 2019, 2.5% of students were injured in a suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse.
 - Male – 1.7%; Female – 3.3%
 - White – 2.1%; Black – 3.3%; Hispanic – 3%
 - Heterosexual – 1.7%; Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual – 6.3%; Not Sure – 5.2%

(CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report 2009-2019.)

6

Why self-care & mindfulness in the school?

○ From this data, To put it in perspective:

- In 2019, out of 800 students:
 - About 150 students had seriously considered suicide within the past year
 - About 125 students had made a plan within the past year
 - About 71 students had attempted suicide within the past year

(CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report 2009-2019.)

7

Why self-care & mindfulness in the school?

- Prior to the pandemic, our students have been struggling. This is obviously been magnified greatly due to the pandemic.
- Normalizing the discussion of mental health and self-care for all
 - Teaching all students that they have mental health and that their mental health is valid and important. Not only when they are struggling, but also when they are doing well.

8

Pros of self-care & mindfulness in the school

- Antidotal reports of effectiveness from students
- High satisfaction ratings of students involved in mindfulness training
 - In a meta-analysis review of 24 different mindfulness interventions
 - 89% of students would recommend the trainings to others
 - 81% of students rated the program sessions as extremely useful & 83% as satisfying
 - ¾ of students would like to continue and thought the programs could have lasted longer or were just the right length
 - (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014)

9

Pros of self-care & mindfulness in the school

- Significant research to support use Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Suicidal Patients
 - (Stanley et al., 2009)
- Research to support use of mindfulness skills effective in therapy
 - In an analysis of 209 different studies, it was found that Mindfulness Based Therapy is an effective treatment for a variety of psychological problems, especially effective for reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.
 - (Khoury et al., 2013)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy & Dialectic Behavioral Therapy are both effective treatments, especially in combination, for suicidal adolescents.
 - (Brent, Poling, & Goldstein, 2011)

10

Pros of self-care & mindfulness in the school

- When resiliency and self-care behaviors were taught in health professional schools, the research found that:
 - "The development of resilience can contribute to providers' well-being, workforce sustainability, and quality of care on individual, team and organization levels"
 - "Vulnerability can be reduced by developing resilience through personal experience and growth, for which resilient mentors are critical."
 - "Helping students to develop resilience has helped them improve their ability to deal with stressors and challenges..."
 - (Lin, Chan, Hendrickson, & Zuñiga, 2020)

11

Cons of self-care & mindfulness in the school

- Cons of implementing mindfulness in the schools:
 - Wide variety of programs with little control studies done to support evidence
 - Currently, limited research to demonstrate effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions at a secondary school level. Most research is at a collegiate level.
 - Limited research of teaching self-care skills in the schools as most research focuses on college age to adult interventions
 - (Semple, Droutman, & Reid, 2016)

12

Why Mindfulness for All Students?

"Mindfulness skills teach youth how to focus their attention, pay attention to one thing at a time, increase their awareness of the present rather than being distracted by thoughts about past and future...help students notice and label their emotions, thoughts and urges...increases self-awareness while reducing potential impulse control problems.

With greater awareness, student will have more choices and can make more effective decisions. Mindfulness skills can help students enhance their identify, develop future goals, and identify their values."

(Mazza, Dexter-Mazza, Miller, Rathus, & Murphy, 2016, p.14)

13

Why present at a classroom level?

- Normalize the discussion about caring for their mental health for all students
 - All students are struggling in some way during high school. The pandemic only magnifies that.
 - Teaching students to balance emotions and increase self-awareness teaches them to handle career-ready situations
 - It is incredibly hard to find enough time to teach students the basic skills they need on an individual basis.
 - Helps to increase awareness of students who are struggling as well as allows them opportunities to start the conversation regarding seeking individual help afterwards

14

Self-care skills in the classroom

Classroom lesson based on skills of CBT & DBT based on the hypothesis/assumption that these skills are beneficial to all people, especially adolescents.

Classroom lessons occurred in the following programs:

- Advertising Design
- Automotive Technology
- Cosmetology
- Dental Careers/Introduction to Pharmacy
- Early Childhood Education
- Health & Nursing
- Surgical Sciences
- Veterinary Sciences
- To be presented on in:
 - Emergency Response Technology
 - Sports Medicine-Rehab Technology

15

Classroom Presentation

16

What is self-care?

17

Do you think self-care is important?

Why or why not?

18

Classroom Presentation: Self-Care

- Self-Care is **NOT JUST** taking bubble baths and polishing toe nails
- Self-Care is prioritizing your own needs when you are overwhelmed.
- Self-Care can be:
 - Going out with friends after a stressful week OR staying in and watching a movie to recover
 - Prioritizing tasks and putting off low priority items
 - (ex. Getting the big project done now vs in two weeks when you will have three papers at once)
 - Getting enough sleep!!!

19

What tells me that I may need support?

Witnessing a traumatic event	Poor concentration	
Big changes in behavior	Low motivation	**Thoughts of not wanting to be alive
Irritability/anger	Changes in motor movements (slower or faster)	** Self-harm
"Snapping" out more	Changes in energy - decreased or increased	**Thoughts of suicide
Negative self talk	Changes in socializing patterns	
Depressed/low mood	Trouble relaxing	**Please talk to a trusted adult as soon as possible if experiencing these!!!
Anhedonia (loss of enjoyment at things you once enjoyed)	Trouble concentrating	
Significant weight gain/loss	Anticipating the worst	
Impaired sleep	Headaches/Stomachaches	
Worrying often	"Mind going blank" a lot	We are here to help!!!
Feelings of dread/apprehension	Feelings of guilt/worthlessness	
Fatigue/Tiredness	Hopelessness	
Appetite changes		

20

What tells me that I may need support?

- The more of those listed that you have, the more stressed you may be and may be in need of support
- Who are supports?
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Counselors
 - BAT or School-Based Therapy
 - Therapists
 - Resolve – 1-888-796-8226 (7.YOU CAN)
 - National Suicide Prevention Hotline - 1-800-273-8255
 - Crisis text line – Text "PA" to 741741 to begin a conversation

21

Basic Coping Strategies

- Grounding
 - 5 senses
 - Cognitive grounding – Asking yourself easy questions (name, street, family members, date)
 - Sensory awareness
- Emotional Release - Letting yourself be angry/yell, cry
- Distraction – Reading, coloring, Netflix, crafting/hobby, etc.
- Thought Challenging – Writing down negative thoughts/worries and looking at evidence that supports vs negates
- Avoiding alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and any mood-altering substances
- Drinking enough water!!! – Stress hormones are water soluble

22

Basic Coping Strategies

○ TIPP

- Temperature
- Intense Exercise
- Paced Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

23

Sleep Hygiene

- How much sleep do teenagers need vs how much sleep do you get?
- When you break your sleep cycle (ex. stay up really late on the weekends), how long does it take a teenager to recover?
- Sleep is INCREDIBLY important in:
 - Maintaining good physical health
 - Maintaining good mental health
 - Balancing your emotions
 - Decision making skills
 - Ability to focus
 - Ability to complete schoolwork/work
 - Ability to process stress

24

Sleep Hygiene

- Develop a consistent sleep schedule and stick with it (even on weekends)!
- Avoid caffeine (tobacco, vaping, & other substances) and exercise late in the day
- Do NOT use your bed for anything other than sleep
 - Do schoolwork or watch tv in a chair, on the couch, on the floor next to your bed, etc
- Avoiding naps (or keeping them to about 20 minutes)
- Turn off lights, keep a cool room
- Avoid screens in the hour before bed (the blue light emitted keeps you awake)
 - Use 'Night Shift' mode on your phone if you can!
- If you MUST have background noise, try white noise or something very boring
 - Do not watch your favorite tv show!!

25

Sleep Hygiene

- If you wake up in the middle of the night and can't sleep
 - Don't watch the clock
 - Don't catastrophize – tell yourself that you will fall asleep
 - Use TIPP skills
 - Cold water or an ice pack to the back of the night for a few minutes then try deep breathing to calm any stress
 - If you can't sleep, get out of bed. Don't toss and turn. Go to a calm spot and do something boring until you feel your eyelids drop and then go back to bed!

26

Mindfulness

27

What is mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is a practice that focuses on:
 - Purposely paying attention to the present moment
 - Actually being in the moment
 - Increasing self-awareness
 - Strengthening empathy & understanding
 - Building techniques that calm and focus the mind
 - Observing thoughts and feelings **without** judgement about them
 - It's a practice in not judging thoughts/feelings as right or wrong, just acknowledging that they exist

28

What is mindfulness?

- When you're mindful, you pay attention to what is going on **inside of you**, noticing:
 - Thoughts
 - Feelings
 - Sensations
 - Impulses
- And to what's going on **outside of you**, noticing what you:
 - See
 - Hear
 - Smell
 - Feel

29

What is mindfulness?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psychological benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ decreased anxiety ○ decreased depression ○ increased coping skills ○ decreased irritability and moodiness ○ improved learning ability and memory ○ increased happiness ○ increased emotional stability ○ increase ability to effectively manage problems ○ improved self-esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ improved breathing ○ lower heart rate ○ improved circulation ○ improved immune function ○ reduced physical stress responses ○ better sleep ○ better management of physical symptoms (e.g. pain) |
|---|--|

30

What is mindfulness?

- Any activity can be done mindfully. You can mindfully:
 - Complete a puzzle
 - Look out the window
 - Listen to music
 - Blowing bubbles
 - Drawing
 - Writing a letter
 - Working on your car
 - Eat a dessert
- Mindfulness is **not** "just zoning out". It is awareness of being in the present moment.
- Mindfulness can be meditation or prayer but is **not** limited to these activities!
- Mindfulness can be more active with movements or calming with remaining still

31

Mindfulness

- Self Soothe with the 5 Senses
- Blue Sky Mind
- 4-4-8 Breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Taking a mini mental vacation for a few minutes
 - Try keeping an album of meaningful pictures on your phone

32

Free Apps to Utilize

- **Headspace** is an app that offers different activities to help reframe and cope with stress as well as provide relaxation and meditation resources.
- **Calm in the Storm** is an app that is also free (with options to pay to upgrade) that provides strategies and activities including breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation and more.
- **Calm** is an app where you can make a free account to utilize resources similar to those above.
- **Clear Fear** is a free app that helps people work through anxiety and provides concrete and in-the-moment strategies to help with coping with stress.

33

Additional separate mindfulness trainings in classrooms

- Stress Reduction & Mindfulness
 - Distress Tolerance Skills (Self-soothing with 5 senses, TIPP, Radical Acceptance)
 - Additional mindfulness resources
 - Youtube – "All it takes is 10 mindful minutes | Andy Puddicombe"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzR62JJCMBQ>
 - Mini minute meditations – YouTube – Headspace's channel
- DBT Skills in Schools – Skills training for Emotional Problem Solving for Adolescents (DBT STEPS-A) by James J. Mazza (Author), Elizabeth T. Dexter-Mazza (Author), Alec L. Miller (Author), Jill H. Rathus (Author), Heather E. Murphy (Author)

34

Exit Ticket

- Keep it simple and direct
- Provide reinforcement of learning
 - 3 Quick things learned
- Ratings for data collection
- Advice for future planning

Lesson Presented: _____ Date: _____
 Counselor Presenting: _____

1. What are 3 new things that you learned from the lesson today?

2. On a 1-5 scale, how helpful do you feel this lesson was:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A little bit helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Mostly helpful	Very helpful

3. What lessons would you want to see in the future from your Counseling Department?

35

Exit Ticket Results

- On a 0-5 scale, how helpful do you feel this lesson was:

0 – Not at All	1 – A little bit helpful	2 – Somewhat helpful	3 – Helpful	4 – Mostly helpful	5 – Very Helpful
1	2	9	17	8	18

- Limitations with this data:
 - Exit ticket implemented later - data not taken in 2019-2020 lessons
 - Data not always taken consistently – Missed programs this year
 - As a result, cannot be accurate representation across time or consistent implementation

36

Exit Ticket Results

Requesting future lessons in:

- Sleep
- Time management
- Relaxation
- Active meditation
- Self-love/self-esteem
- Self-care
- Mental health and how to address it
- Dealing with social anxiety
- Stress management
- Healthy choices
- Applying for jobs

37

School-wide Initiatives

38

School-Wide Initiatives – Normalizing the Conversation

- SAP (BAT) – Openly discuss the Student Assistance Program with staff and students
 - Created a fun name for the team for students
 - Matching shirts for staff to wear on assigned days
- Video tapes PSA
 - Suicide awareness month – Have counselors make a short video offering awareness, support and crisis numbers
- Making yourself available – Scheduling time to visit classrooms and introduce yourself just to say “hi”. Explain role in helping students with their academic, college/career & social/emotional aspects.

39

School-Wide Initiatives - Clubs

- BAT Student Voice
 - Volunteer students who advocate for mental health
 - Preform various activities to lift the spirits of students at arrival
 - Blowing bubbles, passing out positive stickers, Selfie with an Elfie
 - Organize volunteer activities in the community
 - Very limited this year due to COVID



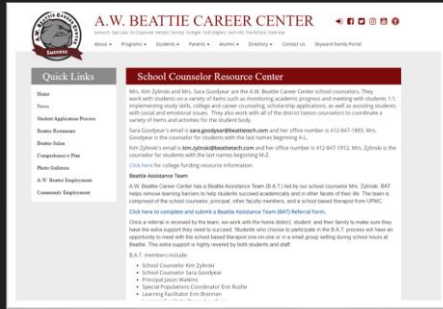
40

School-Wide Initiatives – Social Media

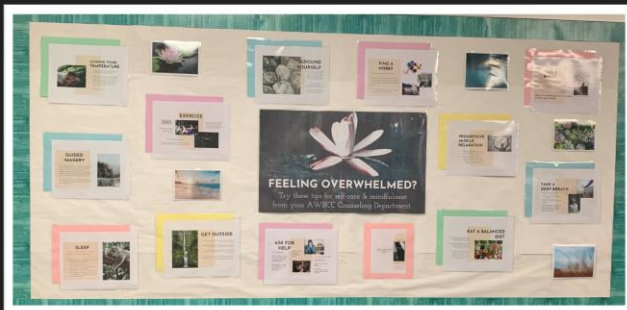
- Use the public forum to showcase the work you do to advocate for mental health



Social Media posts to remind students and parents that counselors are available as well as provide crisis lines.



School-Wide Initiatives – Bulletin Boards



If showing skills or tips, encourage students to take pictures on their phone!



Introduce your SAP team & supports to the school.

School-Wide Initiatives – Staff Trainings

- Act 71 requires Act 71 was passed in 2014 as House Bill 1559. The law requires every school district in Pennsylvania to:
 1. Adopt a set of policies and procedures for suicide prevention in their district and post this policy on the school website. Act 71 outlines what is required within this policy.
 2. Train all educators in grades 6-12 in suicide prevention for a period of 4 hours every 5 years.
- Additionally, the law requires that student education be included in the school's suicide prevention policy.
 - (<https://www.preventsuicidepa.org/act71/>)

43

School-Wide Initiatives – Staff Trainings

- Work with administration to consider bringing in outside providers in addition to the required trainings
 - Highmark's The Caring Place provides trainings, at no cost, related to grief and loss with students
 - <https://www.highmarkcaringplace.com/>
 - Team with School-Based Therapy providers to provide trainings in recognizing mental health signs and review school's procedure for identifying and addressing concerns
- Consider In-House Staff trainings and teaming up qualified teachers
 - For Fall 2021, AWBCC's plan is for School Counselor to team with the Sports Medicine-Rehab Therapy Instructor to provide self-care, mindfulness and physical therapy trainings

44

School-Wide Initiatives – Other ideas

- North Hills School District
 - Offering twice weekly Mindfulness groups via Zoom
 - Offering Parent Information Nights about Mental Health Opportunities
- Pittsburgh Public Schools, Mt. Lebanon, Seneca Valley and North Allegheny working to incorporate mindfulness into curriculum
- Working with School-Based Therapy providers to develop additional options
 - Allegheny Valley Health's "CHILL Project"
- Bathroom Door newsletters

45

Revisiting Goals of Presentation

- Do you feel that you are able to:
 - Identify practical coping strategies and mindfulness techniques that can be applied with secondary students.
 - Identify ways to present coping strategies and mindfulness on an individual and classroom basis in a meaningful manner.
 - Explore options for normalizing mental health awareness on a systemic, school-wide level.

46

Question & Answer

47

Thank you!

Sara Goodyear, MEd, LPC, NCC

CTE School Career and Resource Counselor
Students with the Last Names A-L
sara.goodyear@beattietech.com
Office: 412-847-1893

STAR Clinician/Behavioral Health Therapist II (Casual)
goodyearsi@upmc.edu
Main Office: 412-246-5619

48

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49

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50