An Outdoor Student Initiative for the Development of Enhanced Wellness

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Program Outcomes

- 100% of the students (n=12) who attended the Outdoor Wellness Retreat agreed with the statement “as a result of attending this program, I am more likely to incorporate meditation and mindfulness into my daily life”
- 93.57% (n=47) of student respondents who attended A Break at the Lake strongly agreed with the statement “I believe there should be more outdoor wellness programming offered at Georgia Southern.”
- 96.55% (n=49) of student respondents who attended A Break at the Lake agreed with the statement “as a result of attending this program, I am more likely to incorporate outdoor physical activity into my daily life”
- 79.31% (n=41) of student respondents who attended A Break at the Lake agreed with the statement “As a result of attending this program, I am more likely to incorporate meditation and mindfulness into my daily life”
- 100% (n=4) of student respondents who attended at least one guided meditation session agreed with the statement “As a result of attending outdoor guided meditation, I feel more relaxed and calm”
- 100% (n=4) of student respondents who attended at least one guided meditation session agreed with the statement “attended guided meditation sessions has improved my overall mental health”
- 93.57% (n=49) of student respondents who attended A Break at the Lake strongly agreed with the statement “I believe there should be more outdoor wellness programming offered at Georgia Southern.”
- 100% (n=4) of student respondents who attended Paddle for Prevention agreed with the statement “I see the value in outdoor wellness programming”

Thank you to our partners!

References


Public Health Implications

Incorporating outdoor and nature into wellness and mental health programming can help college students mitigate stress and develop calming strategies that can be incorporated into their daily lives.

Contact

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Student Outreach

- 12 Outdoor Wellness Retreat
- 51 A Break at the Lake
- 46 Guided Meditation
- 77 Paddle for Prevention
- 14 Campus Flow Yoga on the Go

Thank you to our partners!

OUTSIDE Programming

- Weekly Outdoor Guided Meditation Sessions
  - Fall 2023-Spring 2024
  - Facilitated by Office of Student Wellness or the Counseling Center
- Campus Flow (pop-up yoga on the go)
  - Weekly in Fall 2023
  - Located as bus stops and high traffic areas outdoors
- Annual Outdoor Wellness Retreats
  - Fall 2023-GS Botanic Gardens
  - Tea, Meditation, Mindful Yoga, Journaling, Lunch, Walking meditation, Stone Labyrinth, Gratitude Tree
- A Break at the Lake (partnership w/ Southern Adventures)
  - Fall 2023-Part of Mental Health Awareness Week
  - Paddleboarding on Lake Ruby
  - Meditation offered on bank
- Paddle for Prevention (partnership w/ Southern Adventures)
  - Spring 2024-Part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month
  - Kayaking on Lake Ruby
  - Meditation offered on bank

Background

- Among college students, anxiety and mental health concerns are a significant public health issue.
- Exposure to natural environments has been shown to effectively alleviate anxiety, enhance mental health and overall well-being.
- College students derive benefits from spending time in nature, particularly with the ready accessibility of natural environments and green spaces on campuses.

Theoretical Framework

- Attention Restoration Theory
  - Mental health benefits can occur from exposure to natural environments

Restorative Environments

- BEING AWAY - Physically removing self from usual environment and everyday stressors
- Fascination - Natural environments provide stimuli to capture attention easily
- Extent - Offer expansive environments for exploration and sense of escape
- Compatibility - The environment should be compatible with intrinsic motivations

Student Outreach

- Labyrinth, Gratitude Tree

Program Goals

1. To increase students’ intent to utilize mindfulness techniques, healthy coping skills, and stress-reduction strategies through outdoor wellness programming.
2. To promote environmental connection as a self-care practice among students at Georgia Southern University
3. To offer accessible, inclusive opportunities for all students to practice mindfulness, relaxation, connection, and self-care through outdoor wellness programming.

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Outreach

- This was amazing! I’m so glad that Georgia Southern would allow us to have this opportunity!
- Very nice people and I look forward to it every week!
- I loved it! I would love to see more variations of this activity on campus!
- This was amazing! I’m so glad that Georgia Southern would allow us to have this opportunity!
- I loved the outdoor meditation class!

About

The OUTSIDE initiative is a collaborative effort between the Office of Student Wellness & Health Promotion and the Counseling Center at Georgia Southern University, which consists of the planning, coordination, and evaluation of outdoor wellness programming aimed at promoting mindfulness, coping skills, and self-care strategies for students through connection with nature.