



**Program Evaluation
Koru Mindfulness Fundamentals for CoVAC Sponsored Cohorts
Summer 2022**

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The CoVAC Initiative is a project of the American College Health Association,
funded by a cooperative agreement with the
U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Executive Summary

A robust campus public health infrastructure depends on knowledgeable, experienced personnel. Unfortunately, the fields of higher education and healthcare are experiencing a crisis in staff turnover and burnout. In an effort to boost morale, self-care and employee retention among campus personnel on the front lines of student support and well-being, CoVAC partnered with the Center for Koru Mindfulness to offer free registration in the Koru Mindfulness Fundamentals 5-week online course to 6 cohorts of up to 15 students each throughout the summer of 2022. Based on the program evaluation survey, most participants responded in the affirmative that the program met its goals and improved their outcomes in several areas of personal well-being and professional preparation. This collaborative program provided an individual-level intervention to boost morale and retention for 90 campus personnel. With further support and resources, these personnel may be able to advocate for social-cultural level interventions on their respective campuses.

Introduction

The Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation (CoVAC) Initiative is a project of the [American College Health Association](#), funded by a cooperative agreement with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). A goal of CoVAC is to reduce COVID-19 infection on college campuses and in their surrounding communities by supporting Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) with vaccination strategies and layered mitigation approaches. A robust campus-based public health infrastructure depends on knowledgeable, experienced personnel. At many institutions, student health and counseling services, including health promotion personnel, serve as the primary public health entity. Unfortunately, the fields of higher education and healthcare are experiencing a crisis in staff turnover and burnout. In an effort to boost morale, self-care and employee retention among campus personnel on the front lines of student support and well-being, CoVAC partnered with the [Center for Koru Mindfulness](#) to offer free registration in the Koru Mindfulness Fundamentals 5-week course to 6 cohorts of up to 15 students each throughout the summer of 2022. Koru Fundamentals is a unique, evidence-based course, tailored for higher education populations. The online course, 1 time per week for 90-minutes for 5 weeks, assists campus personnel in developing personal mindfulness as well as how to apply mindfulness principles when working with young adult populations in higher education. Following the completion of the course, there will be two follow-up discussion opportunities for participants in September with a focus on how they want to move forward with personal and/or campus-wide mindfulness practices.

Recruitment

CoVAC secured partnership with The Center for Koru Mindfulness and promoted the free course opportunities through three waves of marketing and applications over four weeks in May-June. The per-person cost of the Koru Fundamentals course is

\$295. The opportunity was promoted through ACHA channels as well as through partner organizations, to reach an interdisciplinary cross-section of campus personnel. Over 100 participants were selected and 90 of them ultimately registered for one of the sponsored courses. Application criteria included:

- The Pandemic Vulnerability Index score of the county in which your IHE is located.
- Whether the IHE is a community college, or a minority serving institution.
- Whether the applicant is a solo practitioner. (Are you the only medical, counseling or health promotion provider on your campus?)
- Brief narrative responses to open-ended items about campus climate and personal commitment.

Method

The Center for Koru Mindfulness personnel managed registration and recruited trainers for all cohorts. In the final session of each of the 6 courses, participants completed an online evaluation form. CoVAC personnel were able to add items to the standard Koru instrument to assess program goals and outcomes. Seventy-four of the 90 registrants (82%) completed a final course evaluation.

Findings

Responses to the program evaluation are included below as infographics as well as a list of items and corresponding tables reporting the participant responses.

REPORTED BENEFITS OF

KORU MINDFULNESS FUNDAMENTALS

among 74 respondents to Summer 2022
course evaluations

54%

are
sleeping
better

69%

feel less
stressed

85%

are more
mindful

84%

have more
self-
compassion

70%

focus
better

73%

better
regulate their
emotions



REPORTED BENEFITS OF
**KORU MINDFULNESS
FUNDAMENTALS**

among 74 respondents to Summer 2022
course evaluations



97%

will keep
practicing
mindfulness

92%

better able to
advocate for
mindfulness
on campus

92%

more likely to
apply
mindfulness
in their work

80%

more resilient
amidst work-
related stress


68%

better able to
manage
symptoms of
burnout



84%

feel more
connected to
a community
of practice



Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Compared to before, after taking this class:

I am sleeping better. (54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	1.3
2	4.1
3	41.0
4	47.3
5 – strongly agree	6.8

I feel less stressed. (69% of respondents agreed with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	1.3
2	1.3
3	28.4
4	52.7
5 – strongly agree	16.2

I am more mindful. (85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	0
3	2.7
4	28.4
5 – strongly agree	56.8

I have more self-compassion. (84% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	0
3	16.2
4	51.4
5 – strongly agree	32.4

I am able to focus better. (70% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	1.3
2	1.3
3	27.0
4	51.4
5 – strongly agree	19.0

I am better able to regulate my emotions. (73% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	1.3
2	0
3	25.7
4	55.4
5 – strongly agree	18.0

As a result of taking this course:

I am likely to keep learning about and practicing mindfulness. (97% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	0
3	2.7
4	27.0
5 – strongly agree	70.3

I am better prepared to advocate for mindfulness opportunities for students and personnel on my campus. (92% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	1.3
3	6.8
4	28.4
5 – strongly agree	64.0

I am more likely to apply mindfulness skills in my work on campus. (92% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	1.3
3	6.8
4	28.4
5 – strongly agree	64.0

I am more resilient amidst work-related stress. (80% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	1.3
2	0
3	19.0
4	56.8
5 – strongly agree	23.0

I am better able to manage symptoms of burnout. (68% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	4.1
3	28.4
4	50.0
5 – strongly agree	17.6

I feel more connected to a community of practice of higher education personnel promoting health and wellness on campus. (84% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement.)

Response	Percentage of Respondents
1 – totally disagree	0
2	2.7
3	13.5
4	40.5
5 – strongly agree	43.3

What information could ACHA and/or the Center for Koru Mindfulness provide to help you advocate for institutional professional development funds to pursue further mindfulness training (if applicable)?

Themes from these open-ended comments fell into 4 main categories:

1. Research summaries about the positive impact of meditation on student success outcomes and retention including return on investment (ROI)
 - *At my institution, I think there is a belief that mindfulness and meditation is only for a certain group of students and isn't used or relevant to other groups. I'd love to challenge that belief with materials, testimonies, research, feedback on how KORU mindfulness can be accessible and developmentally appropriate for all of our students.*
 - *Research on the benefits of mindfulness for college students (e.g., how it relates to resilience, persistence, and attendance); testimonials from students and instructors on the benefits they experienced as a result of the training*
2. Funding to pay for the full teacher training certification (\$1895 plus travel per person), the Koru app (\$3.99).
 - *Funding for further training and certification.*
 - *Scholarships*
 - *ACHA discounts*
3. Talking points for campus leaders on the benefits of offering mindfulness education on campus
 - *Evidence-based research about why this works for college students specifically and especially for students from minoritized backgrounds.*
 - *Maybe a fact sheet that I could provide to my supervisors that includes data points so they can see that this program does positively impact those that go through it.*
 - *Perhaps a template proposal including the evidence-based research that supports this specific program*
 - *Assistance in developing talking points for leadership to support bringing Koru to campus*
4. Support, such as a letter of completion, for participants to use in advocating for further professional development
 - *Maybe send a completion letter that could be share to our supervisors and what the next steps can be and how to support their employee, etc.*
 - *Anything that shows the benefits to students of that expenditure-- many schools are still recuperating from loss of income due to the pandemic, so justifying costs and budgets, without passing that burden along to students and their families, is all the more important. If stakeholders and budget folk can be shown the benefits trained Koru professionals provide to students, it would go a very long way to making a case for more professional development dollars.*

Recommendations

CoVAC personnel will partner with colleagues at the Center for Koru Mindfulness to produce:

- a. A personalized letter for each participant with more information about the experience, the benefits of mindfulness and further opportunities for professional development and ROI
- b. Guidance on making the case to campus leadership to increase opportunities for mindfulness skills training on campus
- c. Research summaries on the benefits of mindfulness for student populations.

Conclusion

This collaborative program provided an individual-level intervention to boost morale and retention for 90 campus personnel at high-risk for burnout. With further support and resources, these personnel may be able to advocate for social-cultural level interventions on their respective campuses. Combined, this program is formative to a dual benefit of building skills among personnel and the students and colleagues with whom they work.