Abstract 2406 – Embedding Koru Mindfulness into Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Preparatory Coursework: Supporting the Quadruple Aim

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Introduction - Rationale

U.S. Academic institutions are called to:

- Support students’ development of professional identity and strategies to manage everyday work demands.
  - Occupational therapy student preparation for Level II Fieldwork and entry-level practice
- Instill values and ethos of client-centered care, while supporting the quadruple aim.

Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand how a standardized mindfulness program, embedded in coursework, moves emerging adults in student or entry-level practice roles to support the quadruple aim.

- Recognize the steps for teacher certification in Koru, a developmentally-designed mindfulness curriculum, and process of measuring student participant outcomes, over time.
Background

- Target population: Emerging adults in occupational therapy academic programs.

- Societal rise in mental health referrals & services utilized.

- Concern about burnout in students before they enter field and identify with profession- putting practitioner skills, clients’ safety & health outcomes at risk.

- Call to teach self-care strategies, through mindfulness, for balanced, professional quality of life.

Mindfulness & Self-care

- “Systematically paying attention to the present moment, non-judgmentally, with curiosity” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)
- Mindfulness programs shown to reduce stress & anxiety, increase compassion and attention in diverse, clinical & non-clinical populations
- A potential gateway to support present-moment, compassionate care

Mindfulness helps to create space and replace impulsive reactions with thoughtful responses.
Methods

I  Basic mindfulness lessons taught in small, diverse groups x 4 sessions

II Requires commitment to attendance & practice (10 minutes daily; weekly log, book readings) (Rogers, 2016)

III Kept focused and brief

IV Self-calming skills, breathing

V Active teaching with language that resonates with emerging adults

1. Faculty trained in Koru, through Duke University
   - Follows protocol for certification
   - Supported by course management portal

2. Implement Koru in preparatory coursework with 2nd year students before Fieldwork

3. Data collection over time:
   - Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994)
   - Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
   - Self Compassion Scale (Neff, 2016)

Results – Practice Implications

- Completion of Koru Teacher Certification requirements (1-2 year process)
  - Eligibility: established personal practice and experience with silent retreat
  - Core training
  - Practice teaching (3 workshops @ 4 sessions)
  - Mentored video consultations of practice teaching (4 sessions)

- Feasibility: on-site logistics, practice teaching evaluations and feedback from participants

- (Anticipate) preliminary results will indicate changes in students' levels of:
  - Perceived Stress
  - Mindfulness
  - Self-compassion

  pre- to post-intervention, prior to fieldwork entry.
Conclusion

Mindful, self-care protocols:

- Vital to *defibrillate burnout & mitigate stress* in students and practitioners
- Will support compassionate client care, *improving client experience*
- Balance professional quality of life, *enhancing provider experience*
- Expand opportunities for *cost-effective clinical decision-making* for better health outcomes

*“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”* Viktor Frankl