

The Chill Spot: Creating a Safe Space in a Philadelphia High School through a Mindfulness Drop-In Room

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Background

- Gun injuries are the leading cause of death for **1-19** year olds in the US (CDC, 2022).
- Increasing rates of gun violence, and environmental stressors are impacting the lives and mental health of youth and young adults in Philadelphia.
- Research supports the use of mindfulness practices for the reduction of stress, anxiety, and to improve focus and positive decision-making.
- This project aims to assess the effectiveness of a mindfulness peace room drop-in model, on students at a local Philadelphia area high school at risk for experiencing gun violence.

Objectives

- Q1** What are the characteristics of students that attend The Chill Spot?
- Q2** What types of activities do students engage in The Chill Spot?

Methodology

• Participants

147 high school students
485 student visits

• Data collection

A sign in sheet with name, grade, new/old and period was filled out by a facilitator each session and reported by form weekly. Qualitative data was collected through observation. Data was collected over 2 months.



Results

- 78% Retention Rate (n=381)
- The most unique visits occurred during 5th period (n=46). The most return visits (n=128) occurred during 2nd period
- Most new upper level (11th and 12th grade) student engagement occurred during the 5th period (n=17).
- There was a significant relationship between student visitors and period attended. (New, period: df:9, f:6.5, p value: 0.03. Duplicate, period: df:9, f: 20.8, p value: 0.001)

Q2

Key Themes

• Self worth/Identity

"We don't know our own worth"
"You become something you never wanted to see yourself as."

• Family Roles/Relationships

"Houses don't be homes"

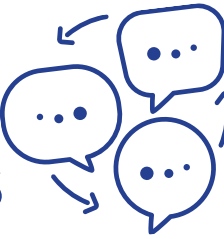
• Awareness/Violence

"You have to be self-aware, people be killing them"

"It's like people just dropping"

Results

Activities



- Supported peer discussions
- Conflict resolution
- Sound meditation, breathing, journaling, drawing, movement

Conclusion

- The Peace room was beneficial for 9th grade engagement
- Future research is needed to increase retention in upper-level students
- **Next Steps:** Bridging the gap between mindfulness practices, concepts and lived experiences

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