TAKE A WALK IN THE WOODS: SHINRIN-YOKU (FOREST BATHING)

Issue

- 45% of high school students in 2018 survey feel stressed “all the time.”
- High levels of chronic stress impedes academic success, compromises mental health functioning, and fosters risk behavior.
- Chronic stress can lead to mental health issues in emerging adult if not addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often are you stressed?</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>16,191</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>15,144</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>4,370</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2,287</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What stresses you out the most?</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>8,494</td>
<td>27.25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8,562</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7,354</td>
<td>21.08%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>4,646</td>
<td>13.65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>3,202</td>
<td>9.47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1,470</td>
<td>4.21%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

More Nature, Less Stress

- Connect with nature by:
  - Slowing down
  - Breathing deeply
  - Touching trees and plants
  - Pay attention to details
  - “Not to think, but to feel the sun, hear the wind in the trees, feel the breeze.”

Forest Bathing

- Forest bathing involves finding the right place, where you can visit often, and connect with the wonders of nature
- Natural aromatherapy for relaxing
- Recognized as a stress management activity
- Phytoncides increase immune system function

Mental Strength

- Regulating our thoughts
  - Ignoring self-doubt
  - Replacing self-criticism with self-compassion
- Managing our emotions
  - Acknowledging/embracing all emotions (even the uncomfortable ones)
  - Understanding how our feelings influence the way we think and behave
- Behaving productively
  - Choosing to take action that will improve our lives
  - Motivation
  - Delayed gratification

Objectives

- The purpose of this project is reducing overall stress of the Barlow community in order to maintain overall health, as it can improve mood, boost immune function, promote longevity and allow participants to be more productive.
- Our goal is to develop a guided forest bathing training and activities at multiple onsite locations for the Barlow High School Community.

Benefits

- Slow heart rate
- Lower blood pressure
- Improve mood
- Increase mental strength

Next Steps

- Training project team, Mental Health student advocates, and Redding Garden Club members on how to execute a forest bathing experience
- Develop sites and interactive map using Track Kit GPS & Google Maps
- Develop guided forest bathing guidelines
- Develop QR codes for guided practice to be placed at sites
- Establish awareness of the practice and benefits
- Monitor and collect data

References

5. What’s the Difference Between Mental Strength and Emotional Intelligence? The Inc. Lite, By Amy Morin Author, “13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do” @AmyMorinLCSW. Published on: Apr 10, 2017.