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## Improving Access to Meditation and Mindfulness for the Management of Anxiety, Stress, and other Chronic Diseases of Chronic

Jesse Naumann

Alex Cohen

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# Improving Access to Meditation and Mindfulness for the management of Anxiety, Stress, and other Chronic Diseases

Jesse Naumann MS3, and Alex Cohen MS3  
Berlin Family Medicine and Colchester Family Medicine  
Family Medicine June 2023  
Project Mentors: Dr. Arturo Guajardo and Dr. Anthony  
Williams



# Problem Identification and Description of Need

- There appears to be community interest among patients and their providers in using meditation and mindfulness to combat the negative effects of anxiety, depression, insomnia, and other chronic diseases.
- Despite this interest, one of the main barriers for patients practicing these methods is gaining access to free and readily accessible resources for patients to get started
- Additionally, providers themselves have limited education on counseling patients and limited resources to give out to them in order to support them in their mindfulness journey.



# Public Health Costs

- Approximately ¼ of employed US adults have had their job/productivity affected for health reasons
- Approximately half of those reported having a chronic health condition:
  - Depression
  - Asthma
  - Arthritis
  - HTN
- Approximately 2.5 billion days of work annually are lost or negatively affected due to chronic health conditions

Considerations specific for Vermont:

Rural areas that are abundant in Vermont are especially overwhelmed when it comes to mental health services due to limited providers and the high prevalence of mental illness (1 in 5 patients)



# Community Perspective - Dr. Kayla Corbett & Dr. Arturo Guajardo

- **What kind of barriers do you think are in place that prevent patients from utilizing meditation and mindfulness?**
  - “[Some of the resources] cost money, so I think that is a little bit of it.” “And then time, too. I think in general as a society, our go-to isn’t really to take time for ourselves.” -Dr. Kayla Corbett
  - “Unfortunately, because of the lack of resources for a patient to be taught to do appropriate meditating and which technique may be appropriate for them, I find that a lot of the time patients don’t get to experience what they would benefit from.” -Dr. Arturo Guajardo
  
- **What do you think is the most effective way to try to get patients to practice these methods?**
  - “It’s a great question. I think part of it is identifying the right patient to talk to about it. And then I’d like to play around a bit with trying mindfulness exercises with patients in the office. What I’ve seen before is that the provider will do a body scan with the patient so it would be interesting to try that.” Dr. Kayla Corbett



# Community Perspective - Dr. Kayla Corbett & Dr. Arturo Guajardo

- **Do you think a Smart-Phrase in the after-visit summary would be useful?**
  - “It would certainly be useful for me.” “I’m all about the smartphrases, they are super helpful both as a way to easily give information to patients, but also as a guide for me to refer to. Often I’ll put a smartphrase in the after-visit summary, and then talk through it with the patient as I’m looking at it and it provides a helpful template for counseling.” “I think it would be super helpful, as a provider and then as a patient they’re walking away with a reminder of what you talked about and some good resource suggestions.” -Dr. Kayla Corbett
- **Do you think meditation has utility in combating many of the diseases that your patient population has?**
  - I definitely think so, I think that if we all took the time to manage our stress regularly it would definitely help. I mean even breathing exercises help, so I definitely think it would. -Dr. Arturo Guajardo

# Intervention and Methodology

-Our goal was to provide an Epic Smart-Phrase to provide Physicians and the rest of the patient's care team with readily accessible resources in order to give them a tool to help counsel patients on meditation and mindfulness.

-This Smart-Phrase can be added to the after-visit summary and be provided to the patient as a physical print-out to take home with them, and can be used by the providers as a template for discussion while in the office.

-The intervention also included designing and recording a YouTube video that demonstrates a sample meditation session. The link and instructions to access this video are included in the Smart-Phrase





# Results/Response

- **Smartphrase to provide patients (.mindfulnessresources)**
  - Includes definition of what mindfulness is and what conditions it can be beneficial for
  - Provides a link to our 8 minute, pre-recorded, free guided mindfulness meditation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q10AkfY4No>)
  - Provides a written body scan for folks with limited internet access
  - Gives resources for mindfulness/meditation phone apps including:
    - Headspace
    - Insight Timer
    - Liberate
    - CBT-i Coach for insomnia
    - PTSD coach
    - Breathe2Relax
    - Smiling Mind
    - CBT Thought Diary
  - Other guided meditation videos:
    - Meditation for Beginners with Dan Harris and Sharon Salzberg
    - Zindel Segal's Three Minute Breathing space
    - Dan Siegel's Guided Mindfulness Meditation
    - Tara Brach's Ten-Minute Mindfulness Meditation
  - There are also book suggestions including:
    - “A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction” by Stahl and Goldstein,
    - “Treatments that Work-Mastery of Your Anxiety and Panic” by Barlow and Craske
    - “The Mindfulness and Acceptance Workbook for Anxiety” by Forsyth and Eifert



# Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

-The effectiveness of this project could be assessed by surveying providers and asking them the following questions:

-How many times in the past month have you used the mindfulness smart phrase to advise or guide patients?

-What do you think could make this Smart-Phrase more effective?

-What is your own history and practice with meditation, and has this Smart-Phrase increased your confidence in and ability to counsel others?

-It could also be assessed by asking patients the following questions:

-How often have you practiced mindfulness since you were last seen in the office?

-Do you think having the documentation and resources your physician provided you with helped your ability and interest in practicing meditation and mindfulness?

-Do you think mindfulness has helped your chronic health conditions? (anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain, etc?)

Limitations include lack of time for follow-up in order to assess intervention success



# Recommendations for Future Projects

- Create more free meditation videos on YouTube, specifically aimed toward creating a library of free meditations specific to certain diseases, age groups, or patient situations
- Create an educational session to be held once every other month or so in the office and invite patients and providers to come learn more about what meditation is and how to successfully implement it in their lives.
- Widening the use of the Epic Smart-Phrase to include offices other than Colchester and Berlin Family Medicine Clinics
- Widening the language of the Dot-Phrase in order to access non-English speaking patients



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# Interview Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library ScholarWorks website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this project. The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to this interview.

Consented     

*A*

Name: Dr. Kayla Corbett

Name: Dr. Arturo Guajardo