



Center for Thriving
Communities

*A YEAR OF—
ACTION*

Mindful Matters

According to the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- » In 2021, more than 4 in 10 (42%) students felt persistently sad or hopeless and nearly one-third (29%) experienced poor mental health
- » In 2021, more than 1 in 5 (22%) students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1 in 10 (10%) attempted suicide
- » Nearly half (45%) of LGBTQ+ students in 2021 seriously considered attempting suicide—far more than heterosexual students
- » Black students were more likely to attempt suicide than students of other races and ethnicities

» About

Mindful Matters is a youth-driven mental well-being experience created in partnership with Dr. Selena Webster-Bass, founder and CEO of the Voices Institute. The training objective of the program is to promote health and healing for 12 – 18-year-olds (middle and high school students). Through interactive activities involving artistic expression, nature, and movement; youth were given gracious space to feel, **to be real, and to deal.**

- » **Permission to Feel** – Building vocabulary to name emotions (speaking one's truth)
- » **Permission to Be Real** – Gracious space to discuss strengths and struggles (storytelling element)
- » **Permission to Deal** – Coping skills, resilience skills and self-care (skill-building)

Youth imagineers co-facilitated sessions to ensure cultural responsiveness and relevance to youth-lived experiences. Brief pre- and post-surveys were conducted with youth participants for process and impact measures. Youth participants received a Mindful Matters grab bag with various items to support well-being.

Together, “Dr. Selena”, as the youth warmly called her, along with her daughter Micah, created warm and inviting spaces where the youth felt encouraged to:

- » Discuss their strengths and stressors while prioritizing mental well-being
- » Identify self-care strategies
- » Apply mental health coping mechanisms and resilience skills
- » List community resources to support youth mental health and well-being



**Taking care of you,
is the best thing to do**

» Training Results

- » From July – August 2024, 138 Florida youth participated in a Mindful Matters training session
- » 117 youth completed a pre-training survey, and 88 youth completed a post-training survey
- » Of those who completed a post-training survey, 88% were satisfied with the training
- » 77% of youth reported that the Mindful Matters Session provided them with information that helps them deal with everyday challenges
- » 88% of youth said they were satisfied with the training
- » 96% of youth recounted a mental health resource they learned about in the session
- » 25% of youth learned about 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline after Mindful Matters

Participants stated they learned about the following resources: 988 suicide prevention and crisis lifeline, it's ok to ask for help, art, positive affirmations and thoughts, breathing, self-care, walking, dancing, play, self-love, outdoors activities, gardening, prayer and spirituality, aromatherapy, and virtual supports.

» Participant Demographics

- » Participants were 71.8% female, 24.8% male, and 3.5% transgender or non-binary / third gender
- » Almost one in four participants (23.1%) identified as Hispanic / Latino, and 59.8% identified as Black or African American

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