

Assessing Stress, Coping, and Mindfulness among Home Visiting Staff in the Florida Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

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Background

- The Florida Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program serves pregnant women and families with young children living in 22 high-risk communities. In this program, health professionals (home visitors, supervisors, and administrators) experience stress related to their roles.
- Working in stressful environments has been shown to significantly impact the physical and mental health of healthcare and social work providers, resulting in burnout, compassion fatigue, high staff turnover, and a negative workplace culture.
- This Florida MIECHV initiative strives to equip staff with mindfulness-based stress management skills to enhance their practice, and decrease work-related stress and burnout through an 8 week online program with half-day in-person retreats at the beginning and end of the series, developed by the University of Florida Health Integrative Medicine Program (<https://ufhealth.org/integrative-medicine/>).



Objectives

- The purpose of this study was to assess perceptions of staff stress and coping prior to introducing a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program for MIECHV home visitors, administrators, and supervisors.

Methods

- To accurately measure current perceptions of stress, coping, and mindfulness, a multiple-baseline survey consisting of psychometrically-validated measures was completed by staff prior to implementation, including:
 - Perceived Stress Scale
 - Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQol)
 - Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) Scale
 - Toronto Mindfulness Scale
- During fall 2016, online surveys were sent to the home visitors, administrators, and supervisors representing 14 MIECHV sites.
- Qualtrics software was used to collect surveys and to generate descriptive statistics.

Multiple Baseline MBSR Surveys → Project Initiation → Post Survey



Figure 1. Timeline of comprehensive Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Project

Survey Participant Demographics

Table 1. Participant characteristics for MBSR surveys

	Respondents (N=39)	Respondents (N=58)	Respondents (N=45)
Characteristics	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
MEAN AGE (yrs.)	44	44	42
GENDER			
Male	1(2.6)	-	-
Female	38(97.4)	57(100.0)	44(100.0)
RACE			
White	29(74.4)	38(65.5)	31(70.4)
Black/African American	4(10.3)	15(25.9)	9(20.4)
Asian	2(5.1)	-	-
Other	4(10.3)	5(8.6)	4(9.1)
ETHNICITY			
Hispanic	8(21.0)	14(24.6)	10(23.8)
Non-Hispanic	30(79.0)	43(75.4)	32(76.2)
EDUCATION			
High School Graduate	1(2.6)	-	-
Some College	1(2.6)	5(8.6)	1(2.3)
Associate Degree	6(15.4)	8(13.8)	8(18.2)
Bachelor's Degree	21(53.8)	32(55.2)	23(52.3)
Masters/Doctoral/Profess.	10(25.6)	13(22.4)	12(27.3)
ROLE IN ORGANIZATION			
Administrator/Director	6(15.4)	9(15.8)	5(11.1)
Supervisor	5(12.8)	6(10.5)	5(11.1)
Home Visitor	24(61.5)	38(66.7)	29(64.4)
Other	4(10.3)	4(7.0)	6(13.3)

*N values may change if participants elected to skip certain questions.

Results

- Just over half of the survey participants had heard about MBSR prior to the survey.

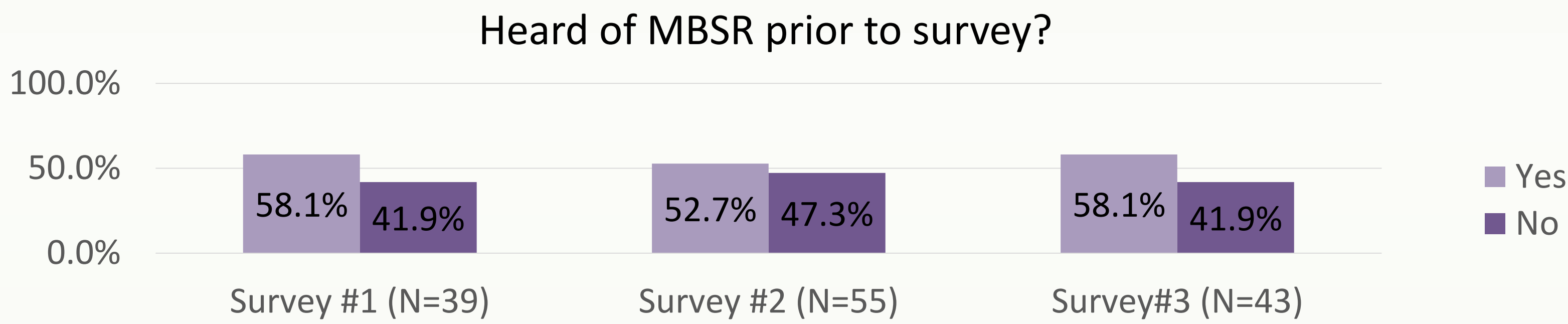


Figure 2. Participant responses of knowledge of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction prior to survey

Items Measuring Stress and Coping Practices

- The majority of participants used three coping strategies most often: talking to a loved one/friend, deep breathing, and talking to a coworker/supervisor.
- Respondents to Surveys #1 and #3 also reported using distraction, thought stopping, and procrastination as stress management techniques; Survey #2 respondents were more likely to report napping instead of procrastination (38% vs 25%). Substance use, smoking and prescription medication were the least reported methods to manage stress.

Items Measuring Mindfulness

- Total sums across surveys for the Toronto Mindfulness Scale averaged 24, on a range of 0 to 48, indicating "average level" of mindfulness at the time of each survey completion.

Items Measuring Perceived Stress

- On all three surveys, most respondents answered that they felt stressed "fairly often" within the last month. However, the majority of respondents (34%, 42%, 49%) indicated that they "almost never" felt unable to cope with their stressors.

In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?

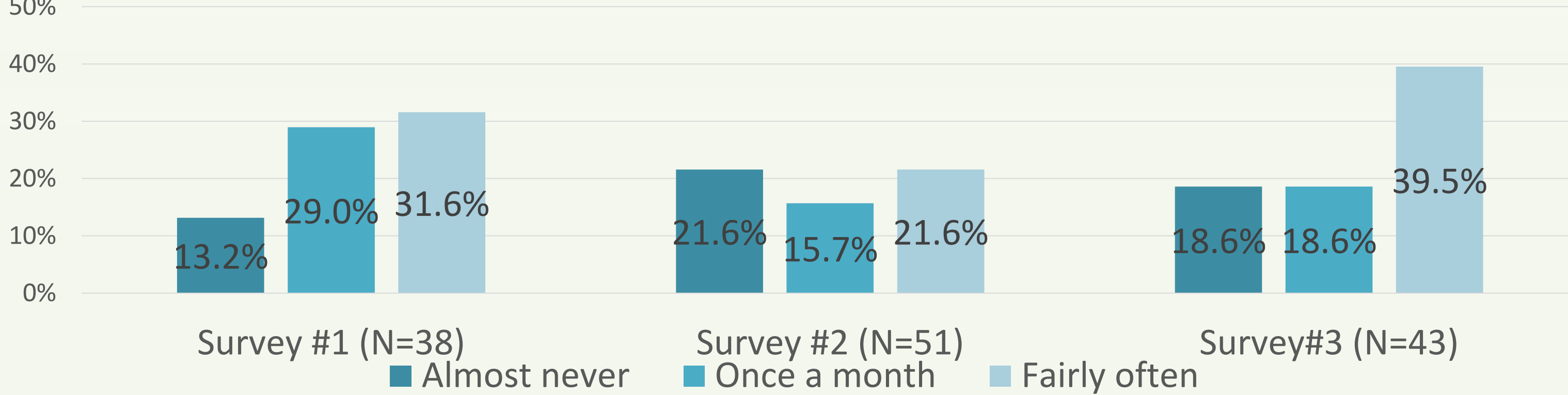


Figure 3. Participant Perceived Stress

Table 2. Perceived Stress Scores (PSS10) across three MBSR Surveys

Perceived Stress Scores (PSS 10)	Survey1 (N=38)	Survey 2 (N=51)	Survey 3 (N=43)
PSS Total Sum	11.5	11	11
PSS Score Mean (Range 0-4)	1.15	1.1	1.1

*PSS scores between 0-13 indicate low stress. Scores ranging from 14-26 are considered moderate, and 27-40 indicate high perceived stress. PSS score means range from 0-4 for "never" to "very often" experiencing certain stress measures.

Table 3. Professional Quality of Life Scores of Survey #1

Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)	Participant Majority Score	Scoring Level
Compassion Satisfaction Score	41	Average
Burnout Score	19	Low
Secondary Traumatic Stress Score	21	Low

*ProQol scores below 22 indicate low levels. Average levels are between 23-41. Scores 42 or more demonstrate high levels of each particular measure.

Table 4. Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale Scores Survey #1

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale	Participant Majority Score	Scale Scoring Range
Inversion Score	6	Little to no evidence
Avoidance Score	8	Little to no evidence
Arousal Score	7	Little to no evidence
Total	21	Criteria NOT met for STS

*Sub-scores below 28 indicate little to no evidence of STS. Scores between 28-37 show mild levels, 38-43 are moderate, 44-48 show high levels, and scores 49 and above indicate severe STS. Total STS scores under 38 do not meet the criteria for STS.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Most participants reported experiencing no or few Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), and 25% of the respondents reported experiencing at least one of the ten ACEs; 25-34% reported "Yes" to items including childhood abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, and 45% reported having a parent with an alcohol or substance abuse problem.

Conclusions

- While further analysis is underway, preliminary results indicate that that FL MIECHV staff do experience stress often, and are interested in learning mindfulness-based strategies to manage stress.
- The home visitors, administrators, and supervisors who participated in the study will participate in the intervention in the spring of 2017.
- After the implementation of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program in the Spring 2017, post-intervention surveys will be completed by program participants and those who do not choose to participate in the program.
- Further qualitative data will also be collected to determine whether the MBSR program impacted supports and services delivered to families by participating staff.

Supported By:



Florida
Maternal Infant & Early Childhood
Home Visiting Initiative



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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number D89MC28265, Affordable Care Act, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsement be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.

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