

Full Student Findings

What Did Students Learn?

What did students learn as a result of their participation in the Managing Stress Project?
We offer both quantitative and qualitative data to share.

Quantitative Data - Pre and Post Surveys

To assess what students learned in the project, we administered a pre and post survey to students in all classes. Though we did not capture 100% of the students due to absences, we did gather enough data to make a significant assessment of the project's value. We asked the following questions and asked students to rate their answers using the following: Nothing, A little, Some, A lot

Student Survey Questions

Before taking this class

1. How much do you know about stress and how it affects your body?
2. How much do you know about stress and how it affects your brain, learning, and memory?
3. How much do you know about ways to control your stress?
4. How much do you know about community resources such as clinics and other supports that can help you with stress?

After taking this class

1. How much do you know about stress and how it affects your body?
2. How much do you know about stress and how it affects your brain, learning, and memory?
3. How much do you know about ways to control your stress?
4. How much do you know about community resources such as clinics and other supports that can help you with stress?

We also asked students the following questions:

1. What things can you do to help manage stress? Please think of three things.
2. What stress reduction activities did you like best?

Time and resources did not allow us to differentiate among ESOL, ABE, GED, or college transition classes.

Bilingual support was given to students in low level ESOL classes where students shared the same first language. In the case of multi-language classes, the teacher made a language lesson out of the survey before it was administered.

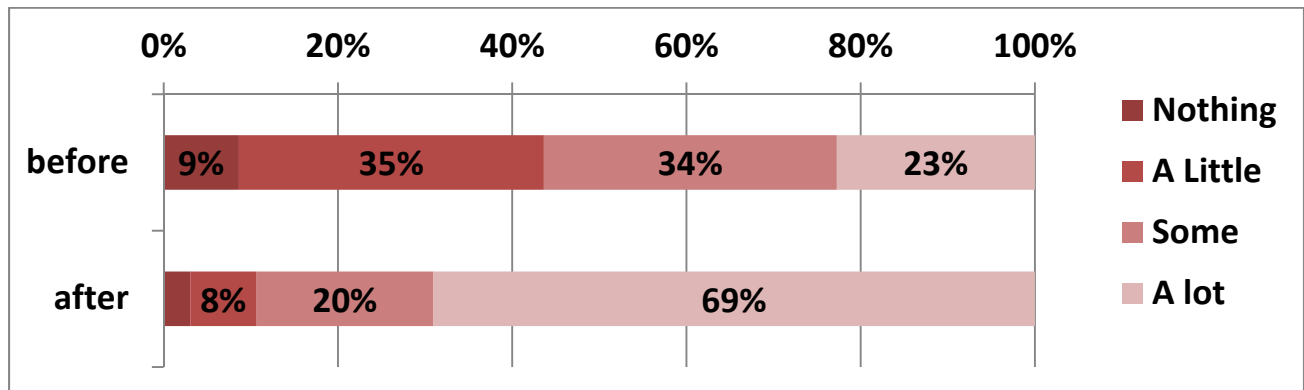
Summary:

All categories in the post surveys displayed a significant increase in student awareness about stress. Please review the bar graphs below to see the analysis of student responses.

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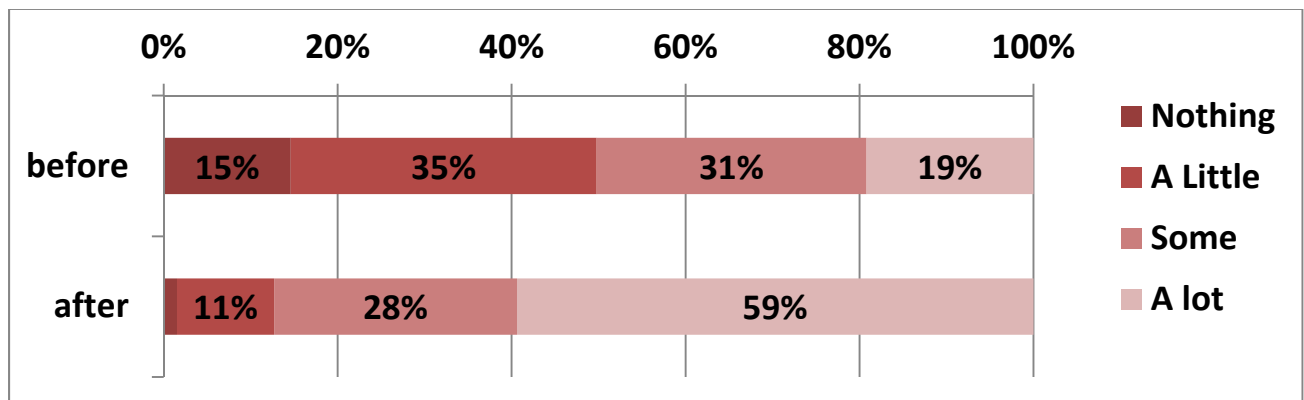
How much do you know about stress and how it affects your body?

	before	after
Nothing	19	6
A Little	77	15
Some	74	40
A Lot	50	136



How much do you know about stress and how it affects your brain, learning, and memory?

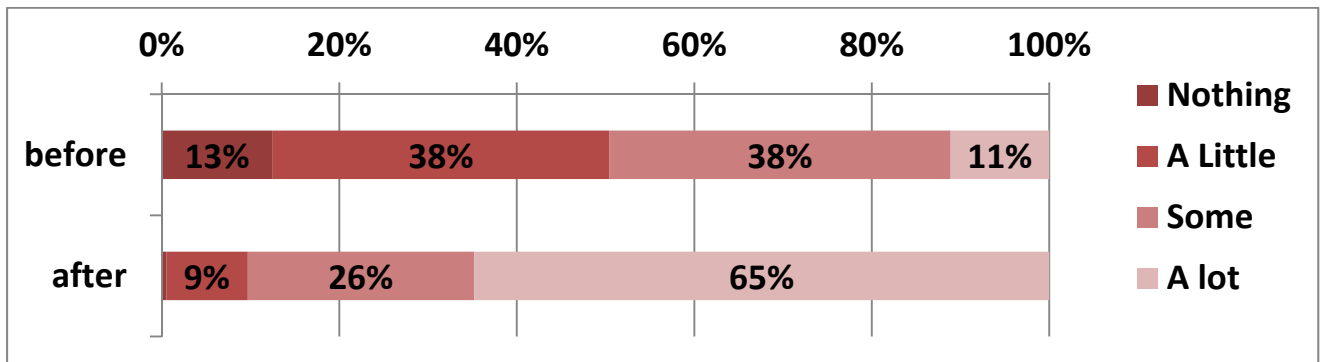
	before	after
Nothing	32	3
A Little	77	22
Some	68	55
A Lot	42	117



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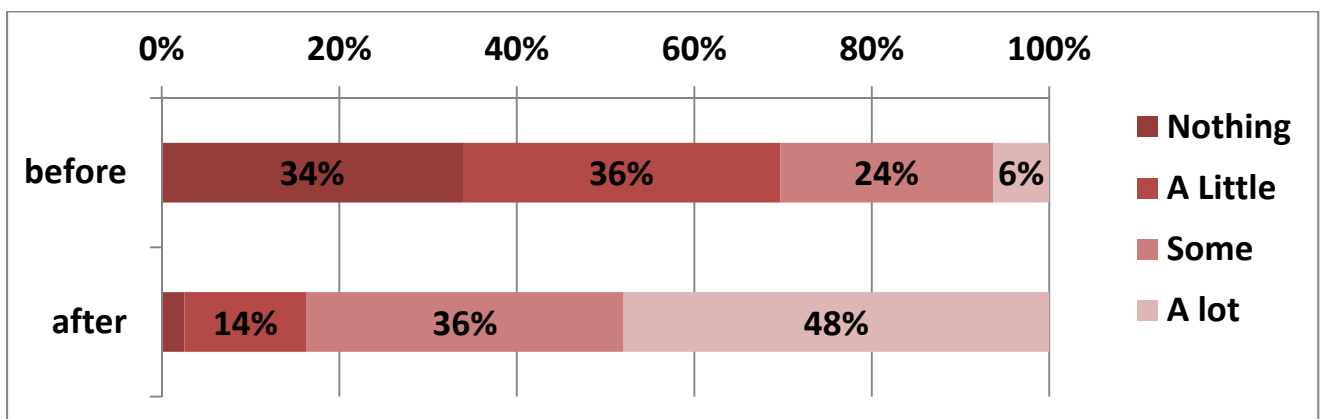
How much do you know about ways to control your stress?

	before	after
Nothing	27	1
A Little	82	18
Some	83	50
A Lot	24	127



How much do you know about community resources such as clinics and other supports that can help you with stress?

	before	after
Nothing	75	5
A Little	79	27
Some	53	70
A Lot	14	94



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Student comments

Before summarizing some of the student responses to the open-ended questions, it is worth noting that during our discussions in the project, teachers said that for many of the students, particularly women, the idea of taking time for one's self for stress reduction and self-care was a foreign idea. Working two jobs, caring for children, taking classes, and struggling to get by made many students feel there was no way or time to de-stress. Many had no role models in their earlier lives for dealing with stress reduction in a healthy way. Immigrant and refugee women discussed the expectations of women in their cultures and how that affected their stress loads. Participation in the project opened discussions among students about the need for self-care and finding ways to fit healthy coping strategies into their lives to benefit themselves and their families. It also allowed them to practice strategies and to select the ones that fit best into their lives.

Students in the project identified learning about the following areas for managing stress:

Walking, deep breathing, yoga stretches, taking “time outs” prioritizing time and tasks, “don’t take too much in,” write, draw, take a bath, meditation, time alone, talking out problems, exercise, journaling, breathing deeply, writing down worries and marking the ones you can do something about, listening to music, using the letting go bowl, planning ahead, close my eyes, sit back, say NO, brain gym exercises, sleeping well, drinking water, stretching, pray, come to class—it makes me feel much better; dance, breathe from belly, dance, write in journal, coloring mandalas, creative art, art classes, drawing.

Je chant, je boire de l' eau, Je palé avec me amie; je suis chanter, faire l'exercise; priere

Students identified the following as their favorite stress reduction strategies learned in the project:

Overall, many students mentioned PACE (Brain Gym activity), coloring and making mandalas, expressive arts, and the “Altered Shoes” project as their favorite strategies; others named the letting go bowl, deep breathing, and stretching. Read a sample of comments below

- We began our class with our ritual PACE exercises. These exercises do seem to help wake you up to get you going and be even more ready to learn. I think it is really helping a lot of the students to feel more focused and energized. I have to say, I felt a little self-conscious the first day we did these exercises, but am now much more relaxed. I can feel the difference when applying a couple particular exercises.
- We started out the day with our P.A.C.E exercises. I have found (PACE) exercises helpful in waking me up and giving me enough energy to get through the next ninety minutes of class.... I think all the classes would go better if we had to do more physical activity instead of just sitting and listening.
- The breathing exercises... had a great effect on me. I softened my face, put my tongue on the top of my mouth, and closed my eyes to focus on my breathing. This really helped me to relax! I am definitely going to use this outside of class. It's so easy, doesn't take long, and no one has to know you're doing it. This is a great tool!"
- I find myself much more relaxed, grounded, and focused after doing (PACE) exercises, which is great.
- I have stress balls now and I use them.
- I liked folding my hands and arms, closing my eyes and leaning against the wall, listening to my breathing.

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- Doing the stress tree. The whole family got involved, and we each made our own tree. I also liked doing brain gym. It helped with my concentration.
- I liked doing the guided journey. It is so relaxing to clear our mind.
- Body scanning and the stress tree.
- PACE routine works well. Just being out in public has made a huge difference (coming to class)/
- Writing helps me to think before I react. Breathing is also helpful.
- Now I make a schedule for my household to keep up so we all know what's going on with each other
- I liked the letting go ritual.