



***CalmCircle* and Lake Ridge Academy Middle School Fall Semester 2017 Pilot Program**

The Pilot

CalmCircle and the Lake Ridge Academy Middle School partnered in a pilot program in the fall semester of 2017. Over a period of six (6) weeks, students engaged in a Calm session of approximately five (5) minutes in duration in Home Base class. Students engaged in the program as a class group twenty-six (26) times (four of the thirty planned pilot days were lost due to teacher meetings, field trips etc)

Students were not required to engage with the program at any time other than their Home Base period but were offered a free *CalmCircle* account which they could access at any time during the pilot period. Other types of sessions offered included the Pause (two minute teaching sessions on how to manage stress), Sleep (tips on how to sleep more productively as well as sleep sessions to assist with overcoming the busy mind to get to sleep and stay asleep), and Emergency (1-3 minute sessions designed for sudden or unexpected high stress situations).

Students were asked to complete a short survey on the first day of the pilot program. The same survey was completed at the end of the pilot. In addition, students were asked about their *CalmCircle* experience and whether they felt it would be valuable in the junior high education environment. Samples of these various survey responses are included in this report.

Pre-Pilot Survey

Students were surveyed prior to the pilot launch and asked:

How would you describe your relationship with stress?

Hard because when I am stressed I can't focus.

My relationship with stress is that I get a lot of stress and it affects my self-confidence and I get really overwhelmed.

Awful and one of the things to lead me to becoming severely depressed.

I do not know how to manage it as well as I would like to.

Very parasitic.

Rough, definitely making my life tougher.

I would say that it makes me extremely nervous.

Bad. LIKE Really BAD.

Terrible, When I have stress I can't to seem to control myself!

Hard

Stress happens a lot for me and I get emotional because of it a lot as well.

I get stressed a lot.

Its caused me to attempt suicide.

I would describe it as hard and a lot of it.

Student Engagement

Lake Ridge Academy students accessed:

3,390 *CalmCircle* Sessions

8,028 Minutes of Content

62 students (approximately 60% of student users) engaged with *CalmCircle* sessions beyond the 5 minute Calm sessions required during Home Base class.

PAUSE: **218** sessions

EMERGENCY: **124** sessions

SLEEP: **283** sessions

LIBRARY: **30** sessions (students re-accessing their favorites for repeat sessions)

NON-CALM SESSION TOTAL : 655 sessions

Post-Pilot Survey

Students were surveyed at the completion of the pilot and, once again, asked:

How would you describe your relationship with stress?

Homework and cello and acting are things that give me the most stress, but all of those things are really fun and it is easy to Calm My Circle when I do this stuff.

We are very good friends actually. Kidding. I have improved my stress management skills.

calmly circled .

I still get really stressed out but I have a way of dealing with it! It can still be insanely overwhelming, but it is better.

Whenever I get stress I calm myself down so I do not feel stress anymore.

Stress happens often but I know how to calm myself down and cope with it better

Improving

Better

Getting easier

Better then when I started Calm Circle

Under control

Students were also asked:

Please describe your overall experience using CalmCircle including whether you think it is valuable for junior high students.

My experience was great since it was useful for my stress calming.

It helps

I am calmer

Made me feel relaxed

It was very helpful.

It is valuable because it helps release all of the weight building on your shoulders

I'm calm now

It was a good experience and I think the breathing really helped

I think it's valuable to junior high students because it settles you down, and it helps you through your day sometimes.

I think calm circle is a great thing. It does really help to take time to forget about projects and relax in the morning.

I think calm circle is a valuable tool for students, it was helpful to do in the morning and being able to go back to the moment of calm was nice and helpful

It helped calm me down before tests, or before a stressful event.

I think that calm circle is very helpful to junior high students in the way that it helps one get ready for the day even if there is still stress.

Calm circle helps you focus during the school time

It was nice at making me sleep

Very good and valuable

I think it is a calming way to start the day.

Great!

It helped me have a little less stress and I think other people would like it too.

It was very good

Good, I believe it helps students balance their stress levels

Pre and Post Pilot Survey Comparisons

Pre: 83 out of 102 respondents said stress impacts them sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Post: 78 out of 98 respondents said stress impacts them sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Pre: 62 out of 102 respondents said they feel no control over their response to stress sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Post: 57 out of 98 respondents said they feel no control over their response to stress sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Pre: 58 out of 102 respondents said stress threatens their ability to succeed in school sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Post: 48 out of 98 respondents said stress threatens their ability to succeed in school sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Pre: 68 out of 102 respondents said they had trouble getting to sleep sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Post: 53 out of 98 respondents said they had trouble getting to sleep sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Pre: 74 out of 102 respondents said they judge themselves harshly when they believe they have failed sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Post: 64 out of 98 respondents said they judge themselves harshly when they believe they have failed sometimes, fairly often or very often.

Self-Compassion and Self-Esteem

Just as we see in the college population, Lake Ridge Academy students self-report a high percentage of negative and harsh self-judgment. As we believe that this behavior is a significant stress inducer, *CalmCircle* has built into its curriculum methods and techniques that teach students to value themselves more and enables them to practice self-compassion. This is a key component to building a healthy self-image as they navigate their academic experience throughout high school and college.

Summary and Conclusions

An appropriately significant number of students surveyed did not describe stress as a key factor in their lives but the sampling of pre-pilot survey answers provided in this report describing significant, and sometimes alarming, stress assessments establish the need for mental training to assist students in managing stress levels. This training provides valuable skills for students who self-describe low, medium or high levels of stress. As middle school students progress through high school and beyond, usually the stated goal of private school students, stress continues to be an ongoing challenge that can be significantly mitigated through *CalmCircle* training.

The most positive outcome of the pilot is the level of student engagement above and beyond the 5 minutes per day required in Home Base classrooms. Student engagement can be the strongest indicator of success, particularly in a case like this where there was no use requirement beyond the classroom sessions. Students accessed 655 *CalmCircle* sessions that were of a different variety than the anchor Calm sessions used in class. For example, sleep sessions were accessed 283 times.

Answers included above in the Post-Pilot Survey show benefits students described after using the program. It is fair to say that some students weren't sure if they had received benefits and others said they felt they had not, but that is to be expected.

It is also important to note that based on anecdotal teacher input as well as student response, it seems clear that students were frustrated at being asked to give up their Home Base period every day for six weeks. They missed having that class time to visit with their friends before academic classes started for the day. We may have even witnessed a somewhat orchestrated response by the students to insure that this would not become a permanent requirement. What we learned by this is that it may be better to consider taking five minutes for the Calm session two or three times a week in an academic class setting (such as English) so that students feel they are not being deprived of what they perceive to be social time. *CalmCircle* is curriculum based so these methods are being taught as a learned skill. Doing the sessions slightly less frequently means only that the techniques are learned over a slightly longer period of time. But, in our opinion, 2-3 times per week consistently over a school year is more effective than 5 times per week for 6 weeks.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity you afforded us to work with your students last semester. We look forward to discussing if and/or how we may be of further service to your academic community.