

# Resilience and Self-Care:

## *A Class for Students Preparing for Healthcare Professions*

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### **Introduction**

In order to address growing stress levels among high school students, Dr. Laleh Shahidi, Dr. Ilene Serlin, and Dan Esbensen initiated a pilot program in a California high school to teach resiliency skills to help students buffer stress. The students in this class were chosen because of their interest in healthcare and they were among the highest achievers in this school. The stress level they experienced was extremely high, as students faced a heavy workload and family expectations for success in school, getting into the best universities, and having successful careers. The median income of this city is \$114,000, and parents push their children to succeed. According to a New York University study, students reported having over three hours of homework per night, and were preoccupied with grades, homework, and preparing for college. About 49 percent reported feeling stress, and 26 percent reported a clinical depression. Others described emotional exhaustion and substance abuse, combined with cultural taboos against seeking help. Another study found that ten percent of teens suffer an anxiety disorder. The five main sources of stress were found to be 1) school work

(78 percent), 2) parents (68 percent), 3) friends' problems (52 percent), 4) romantic relationships (48 percent), and 5) drugs (48 percent) (American Psychological Association, 2014; Osola, 2015).

Can students bounce back after stress or adversity? If so, what is this ability, and can it be taught? This ability is called resiliency and is a natural buffer against health challenges. Developing resiliency might help students prevent emotional and physical problems. From various sources, we compiled a list of possible problems facing students and their families, and another list of characteristics of resiliency:

### **Possible Problems**

- Depression and Anxiety
- Substance Abuse
- Stress
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Infectious Diseases
- Alzheimer's Disease

### **Domains and Dimensions of Resiliency**

- 1) Psychological
  - Cognitive skills: Focusing tech-

niques

- Clarity skills: Identifying negative and positive thought patterns
- Emotional skills: Self-soothe, modulate strong emotions, identify past patterns and current triggers
- Integration skills: Integrating opposites, holding opposing positions without splitting, tolerance of ambiguity
- Sense of self: Self-identity, self-acceptance, self-love, self-care
- Mindfulness skills: Bounce back, recovery, flow, attention control
- Awareness skills: Self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, impulse control, emotional regulation, optimism

2) Social

- Social skills: Planning and decision-making, interpersonal skills, sociocultural competence, resistance, peaceful conflict resolution
- Collaboration skills: Self-knowledge, connectedness, leading and following, transparency, acting and interacting appropriately, presence, flexibility, tolerance for difference, active listening, boundaries and expectations, empowerment and support, meaningful engagement, client focus

- Leadership skills: Willingness to make decisions, skillful actions, initiative behaviors, influencing, coaching, the courage to take risks, the ability to collaborate, access creativity, speak one's mind
- Civic participation and engagement skills: Social awareness, social cognition, collective decision-making, communication, critical thinking

### 3) Physical

- Physiological skills: Nutrition, lifestyle, sleep
- Energetic skills: Martial arts, tai chi, qigong
- Kinesthetic skills: Somatic awareness—waking up the lived body, awareness of self and others, boundaries, personal and interpersonal space
- Rhythmic intelligence skills: Interactive and collaboration skills, tuning into others, letting forms emerge, hearing the action stories as nonverbal narratives
- Physical vitality skills: Self-care, energy management, physical presence, breathing

### 4) Meaning-Purpose

- Develop trust: Trust in others and in life itself when we have done all that we can
- Act with integrity: Doing what we say we'll do, standing up for our beliefs
- Humility: Recognizing that ideas can come from other people; willingness to change our mind; admit mistakes when we make them; learn from the mistakes of others, rather than punishing them
- Creativity-engagement: Coherence, relaxation and flow; autonomy, mastery and purpose; engaging emotions (resonance), our mind guides us according to clear values (meaning), and we honor a goal (purpose); accepting fear; welcoming frustration
- Compassion: Integrating the needs of colleagues and clients (Joseph & Linley, 2006; Windle et al., 2011)

### Resiliency Training

Resiliency training shares a great deal with constructs of humanistic psychology. It helps to identify and build on strengths, it often uses creativity, and it has a focus on posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), growth through adversity (Joseph & Linley, 2006), hardiness (Maddi, 1999), positive psychology, and well-being. It is client-

centered, meaning that it encourages individuals to discover their own healing resources. It is creative and innovative, tailoring the choice of approach to meet that unique individual at that particular time. It is holistic, taking into account the context of family, society, and culture. It is trauma-informed, since it begins with safety.

A number of mind/body techniques build resiliency, including mindfulness, imagery, and movement (Serlin, 2007). These whole-person approaches have been taught to children and peer groups in the school system, to people suffering from trauma and life-threatening issues, and to ordinary people facing stressful situations (Kabat-Zinn, 2005).

We used a program called *Compassion Fatigue and Regeneration: Whole Person Psychology Tool Kits* (Serlin, 2012) to blend mindfulness, multi-modal imagery, and movement into an individualized, client-centered collaboration between students, their families, and their communities. In this way, by focusing on the student in the context of his or her community, we hoped to promote meaningful emotional and physical health for high school students.

Our pilot training program was offered to 22 students who were enrolled in a Biomed Program at this school. Some of the teachers and students were members of HOSA-Future Health Professionals (Health Occupation Students of America, the largest student organization preparing students to enter the health care field). HOSA's two-fold mission is to promote career opportunities in the healthcare industry and to enhance the delivery of quality healthcare to all people. HOSA is an international student organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Health Science Education (HSE) Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). The mission of HOSA is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality healthcare by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill, and leadership development of all health science technology education students. Many students in HOSA were interested in physical health but did not know about psychological or mental health. Both teachers and students were enthusiastic about inviting us to integrate a training program into their curriculum. Both groups signed consent forms for us to teach the class

and gather feedback. Students were especially interested, as they told us about their upcoming exams and stressors and were open to trying new helpful approaches. Parents and teachers worked with the school consent form to assure that potential risks were identified and that students could withdraw from the class at any time. Twenty-two students, from freshmen through seniors, signed up for the class. Most of the students were of Indian and Asian heritage and were interested in being healthcare professionals. All completed phases one and two; fifteen completed phase three.

### Training Program Components

The training program included the following components, described below:

- 1) On-site orientation
- 2) Research and literature review on the topic
- 3) On-site training session (meditation, imagery, guided imagery, and movement)
- 4) Journaling
- 5) Resilience challenge, extending to family and community

#### On-site Orientation

Dr. Shahidi, Dr. Serlin, and Dan Esbensen, as members of the Resilience Committee California Health – Medical Reserve Corps, made a Powerpoint presentation about the nature of stress and the importance of resiliency and self-care for health and well-being.

#### Research and Literature Review on the Topic

Each student chose one area of his or her special interest (for example, sleep). After completing a research study, the student would prepare an infographic brochure. The authors selected three infographics for sharing the summary of their learning with other community members (see Figure 1). Some students worked as individuals and others worked in dyads.

– Definition –

**SOMA:**

The body experienced from within.

The three brochures that were selected in a competition to be used as a vehicle for raising awareness among community members are shown in Figure 1.

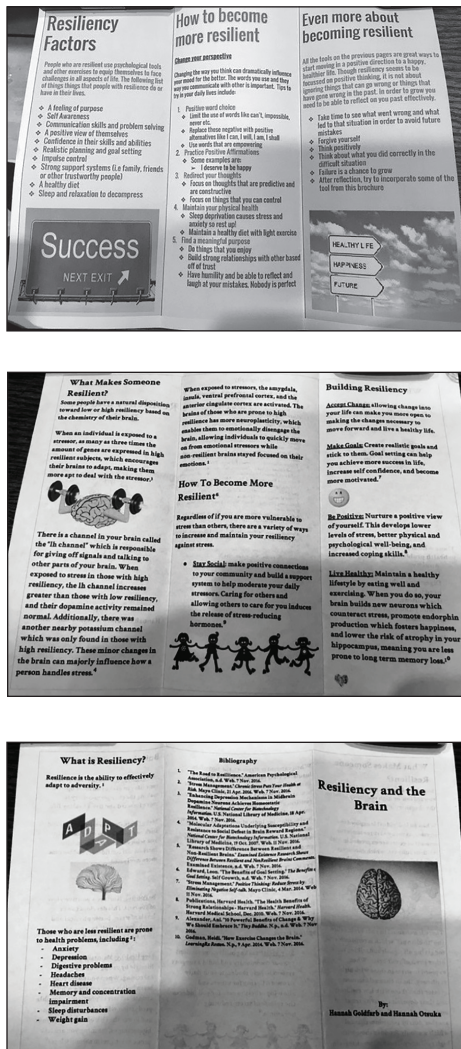


Figure 1. Brochures selected for raising awareness.

### On-site Training Session

Ilene Serlin introduced them to simple guided imagery, breath control, and movement techniques from the manual *Compassion Fatigue and Regeneration: Whole Person Psychology Tool Kits* (2012). We provided a copy of this tool kit to the teachers as a reference for practicing these methods.

The training consisted of three evidence-based experiential methods that develop resiliency. The first was meditation, the second imagery, and the third movement. Although most experienced clinicians use a flexible blend of these three, we separated them into discrete modules in order to understand each one's impact separately.

### Meditation

There are many traditions and methods of meditation, but most seem to focus on the understanding that meditation is a set of practices that train attention and awareness. It is based on the following assumptions:

- Our usual state is suboptimal.
- Higher states can be developed.
- Meditation can be used by health-care professionals to work with clients and for self-care.
- Benefits include enhanced immune functioning, decreases in anxiety and depression, and increases in positive qualities such as joy and compassion (Shapiro & Walsh, 2007).

The approach we used is a simple and very brief format which can be easily practiced outside the clinical office. What is most important is that individuals who practice this technique feel empowered by a direct change in their experience. With an experience of success, we acquire the courage to go further.

Physiologically, the main goal of meditation is to calm the mind and emotions. The clearest way to do this is through the breath and focus of attention. Bringing awareness into the body and away from the mind anchors projections of the mind in the reality of body weight and the present moment. Therefore, any meditation techniques that do this are most likely fine. However, here is the one that we used:

*Take a moment to get comfortable in your chair. Can you find a position where you are balanced but relaxed?*

*Notice where your feet are touching the floor. Notice where your weight is pressing into the seat, and maybe the back of the chair. Feel your hands on your knees.*

*Now begin to relax your weight into those spots—the floor, the seat under you, the back of the chair. Feel your weight dropping, your body relaxing. Release your thoughts, your feelings, down into the chair. Let it hold you and support you.*

*As you discover new areas to release tension, such as your face, your eyes, your jaw, your shoulders or back, let that tension flow into the chair, let your attention go to your breath.*

*Just notice how you are naturally breathing in and out right now. Just notice.*

*Then shift your awareness to the out-breath. The breath will come in by itself and doesn't need special attention. Also, tension comes in on the inbreath, and we want to*

*focus on release of tension; therefore we focus on the outbreath.*

*As we shift our awareness to the out-breath, notice how far out it travels. Pick a spot on the floor about 3 feet in front of you and focus on it as you imagine your breath traveling out to that spot. Try to finish each breath, letting out all the air. One breath at a time. Finish one thing at a time.*

*You might even slow this down. Imagine slowing down your outbreath, stretching it out like taffy. Feel how that slows down your heartbeat, your nervous system.*

*Feel your nervous system calm down. All through your body.*

*Now feel your spine deep down the center of your being. Strong and alive. Feel your muscles relax around your spine, secure in the architecture of your body that holds you upright, able to let your muscles relax.*

*Now we will take 5 minutes to practice this together in silence. I will watch the clock and let you know when it is time.*

(After 5 minutes)

*Now as we open our eyes to the rest of the room, it is important to notice the world outside us slowly. Let it come in slowly and don't leap out into the world. It is just there . . . while you keep your attention also on your weight in and still deep inside yourself. Try to keep this balance of inner and outer as you slowly transition back.*

We then gently ask how the experience felt. It is important to anchor these experiential reference points of new ways of being by describing and making them conscious. Follow-up questions include:

- *Where do you feel this shift in your body?*
- *How can you bring this new way of being into your workplace? Your home?*
- *Would you like to practice it every day for 5 minutes? Five minutes sounds short but feels like a long time as we get started. If it goes well, then we can increase the time bit by bit.*
- *Is there a quiet place in your home you can practice?*

Often the presence or absence of a quiet place or time in someone's life brings up important clinical issues of privacy and boundaries. The actual practice of meditation, while very important, is not as important as the healing that comes from the intentionality of setting time aside for self-care, preparing the space, and declaring this practice to have a sense of priority.

### Imagery and Guided Imagery

Imagery is a term used to describe a simultaneous information processing mode that underlies the holistic, synthetic, pattern thinking of the unconscious mind. As a mental thought process, imagery has sensory elements; guided imagery is something we see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or feel. Imagery has been shown to affect almost all physiologic control systems of the body including respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, metabolic rates in cells, gastrointestinal mobility and secretion, sexual function, cortisol levels, blood lipids, and even immunity responsiveness (Rossman, 2004).

The use of imagery can aid healthcare professionals and patients to access its power for healing. Since not all people see “movies in their minds,” or visual imagery in the usual sense of the phrase, other modalities such as guided imagery, kinesthetic imagery, and verbal imagery such as poetry can be as effective.

Imagery can be about events that have happened in the past or have yet to happen. Rich in symbols, imagery tells us how we see ourselves, how we see others, and how we plan for the future. Imagery is a window into one’s inner world—the world of dreams, daydreams, fantasies, and the creative imagination. Imagery is also a reflection of one’s outer world, the world of self-image.

A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of guided imagery for a variety of complaints, increasing feelings of well-being and self-efficacy. Guided imagery has been shown to be effective in reducing depression and anxiety (Baider, Peretz, Hadani, & Koch, 2000), reducing pain (Newshan & Balamuth, 1990-1991) and the need for pain medication (Syrjala et al., 1995), changing lifestyle habits, finding meaning in the experience of cancer (Rossman, 2004), and in cardiac rehabilitation programs.

Here is an example of guided imagery. To begin with a feeling of safety, the archetypal image of a tree is used in healing rituals around the world. The experience of a solid core and feet planted firmly on the ground helps people imagine and feel their inner strength. Our instruction was:

*As you breathe out, feel your feet on the floor. Imagine roots growing down from your arches into the earth. Your breath traveling inside, up and down your spine, makes your spine feel like a solid oak tree.*

*Imagine a storm brewing far away on the horizon. Notice it but your attention stays with your breath and your center.*

*Perhaps you notice that the wind picks up . . . you feel it swirling around you . . . but you keep your attention inside. It gets faster and faster, but you just concentrate more on staying inside yourself. Then the wind starts dying down, getting softer and softer, until it has gone and it is just you . . . breathing and feeling your center.*

It takes time for the image and experience to come to meaning, and that often requires the ability to sit with it. Images need time to dwell in the body, in echoes of associations, and gestate toward meaning.

### Kinesthetic Imagery – Movement

Movement images are those that are experienced in the body. They help individuals move from vague sensation to felt meaning and understanding of what their bodies are telling them. Through a form called KinAesthetic Imagining, individuals learn to tune into their body sensations, clarify the “fuzzy images” through amplification, intensification, and repetition, and discover the themes and meanings.

### Journaling

Students kept a daily log and reported their experience using one or more of the above “de-stressing techniques”: meditation, imagery and movement.

### Resilience Challenge: Extending to Family and Community

During weeks seven to 12, students participated in a resilience challenge to raise awareness in their communities. The challenge was to reach out to family members and convince them to learn about resiliency, use the techniques, and create a log to report on their activities and their impact. Students used the three brochures that won the competition to share their learning about resiliency. Then they used the *Tool Kits* book (Serlin, 2012) to teach their family member(s) how to use the techniques of meditation, imagery, and movement.

### Results and Discussion

Results from the journals regarding the guided imagery, meditation, and movement, as well as some general comments, are summarized below:

Each form of meditation affected participants in a different way based on

their life-styles and experiences. Regardless of which method worked for them, participants reported they found it easier to sleep and felt more confident, grounded, calmer, more relaxed and focused, as well as feeling increased energy and even happier after beginning the practice of meditation. Finding a way to express themselves improved their mental and physical health (Pennebaker, 1990). The exercises helped most participants to de-stress by being present in the moment to get through their daily lives; however, if they were very busy and experiencing high anxiety, the methods were not as effective. Some participants found it difficult to continue the activities for more than five minutes, but they gradually got used to, and benefited from, the process. Even though some found that finding the time to use these methods was a challenge, they all planned to continue doing the practices and spreading awareness of these simple yet effective techniques for building resiliency.

Student comments from their journals are summarized in Table 1 below.

### General Comments

“My brother who is in elementary school who is typically bored and emotionless said that communicating with his peers and family members helped him to ‘connect better with his close friends and was exciting.’ He felt healthier and more powerful.”

Guided Imagery
a) It helped me to feel calmer and more in touch with my inner self, but didn’t help me to improve my mental health significantly.
b) It helped me to figure out some of the stresses in my life.
c) I felt centered, calm and happy.
d) Through imagery, I was able to remember parts of my past that I had forgotten and became more productive afterwards towards my work.
e) It is distracting and harder for me to get in the zone. It also gets repetitive.
f) Music boosts me up to be just happy with what I have, my loving family, good friends, and still got that dream to succeed in becoming a nurse or have a health major. Dreams that will push me to have a better life.
g) Most useful for falling into a good sleep; not much good for daytime.

Meditation
a) I've been able to sleep much less disturbed and feel more energized during the day.
b) I've been able to keep myself calmer, even when I'm angry. I've been able to channel that energy to build my stamina. I've been able to exercise and do physical activity for longer period of time.
c) Improved my mood and focus overall and I felt relaxed.
d) It enables me to stop thinking about work and therefore not stressing about my issues.
e) I need this to get away from my thoughts and society and just enjoy what's in front of me. After meditation what came to my mind was more of a reminder or an acceptance of that feeling that I was meant to be alone; because of this acceptance, my heart doesn't feel empty. It feels more release as it comes to terms.
f) Breathing exercises made me realize I occasionally have shortness of breath. When there are a lot of things going on, it's hard to only meditate.
g) We were capable of working for longer periods of time.
h) My aunt's time management improved, and she is complaining much less about her wrist, neck and back pain.

Movement
a) It has become a way for me to escape and have some time to myself.
b) It's a time for me to reflect upon myself and the events of the day.
c) Walking with straight posture helped me feel confident. Helped me to shake out the stress and bring in a little happiness in my life.
d) I feel uncomfortable dancing, but I was definitely more energetic /awake afterwards. It was a fun exercise when my wife joined me.
e) My brother reported a difference in his mood. He is in elementary school and typically is bored and emotionless. He said after movement he felt happy and cool.
f) Feel stable and more powerful.
g) Something as simple as everyday posture can lead to higher self-confidence.
h) Movement made me feel restless.

Table 1. Journal entries regarding guided imagery, meditation, and movement.

“Overall, I think my dad really enjoyed the different forms of meditation he tried over the past few weeks. Since he's been doing meditation for a while now, he appreciated a different approach through the movement and guided imagery exercises, since he usually only does the deep breathing exercise. He found out that the movement exercises were more fun than the stuff he's used to, and he thinks he will keep doing it in the future. Deep breathing helps my dad feel less stressed throughout the day it focuses his thoughts and stops him from worrying about little things this experiment helped him learn a few new techniques that he plans to incorporate into his routine.”

One student commented: “Throughout the past few months, I have been able to experience new forms of meditation that have genuinely helped me and the people in my community to improve ourselves. Each form of meditation has affected each of us in a different way based on our past and present lives. Especially for the people in my family who have been through much in life have been able to use breath control and movements to stay healthy physically, mentally, and emotionally. For me, these practices have helped me learn how to keep myself grounded and more resilient towards the aspects of life that used to get to me before. I hope to continue to do these practices and spread them to people in the community. Although they seem silly or simple at first, they genuinely have a massive impact in the way we interact and deal with the situations in life. I hope to continue to spread awareness for these practices and the idea of resiliency with my community.”

This student's family also saw the benefit of these practices:

“We think these exercises performed separately and within combinations of each other help us to improve our health physically, mentally and emotionally in one way or the other. We have found that these exercises effected each of us in separate ways based upon what internal and external conflicts we were dealing with over the course of the past few weeks. Essentially, we believe that these exercises do help to improve and build up one's resiliency, and we hope to continue to do them and implement them in our daily lives.”

### Questionnaire on Results

After surveying available resiliency scales (Windle, Bennett & Noyes, 2011), we developed a simple questionnaire that we administered after the students completed their assignments. The questionnaire included questions like: “Are any of the techniques you have been practicing helping you? Which ones, if any, and how much help are they on a scale of 1-10, ten being the best?”

While most students found the techniques helpful, differences emerged about which techniques worked best for which students. The majority preferred meditation, with a score of 7.6 out of 10. Imagery had the second highest rating, with an average score of 6.1 out of 10. Only a few students used movement for stress release, and its score was 5.5 out of 10.

The second item on the questionnaire read, “What do you think your next steps should be? What area of resiliency that you have learned about still interest you or have value for you?”

Ten out of the 22 students reported that they would like to pursue learning more about the fundamentals, as well as the psychological and neurological aspects of resilience. They were all interested in teaching and raising awareness about resiliency among the people in their communities.

The final question on the questionnaire read, “Would you recommend this training to other students? What would you change if you would recommend it?”

All students reported that they would recommend the internship to others, as they found it beneficial for themselves.

Their comments are shown in Table 2.

A student who listed meditation as 8 and imagery as 7 on the help scale described the next steps by saying, “I think I should do more background research on the psychological aspect of resiliency and how it affects those who have suffered adversities.” In answer to the third question, this student said, “I would recommend this to students as I am conducting a science project strictly with the intent of discovering if resiliency could help mentally re-stabilize students from the stress of schoolwork. I would try finding a more efficient and less time consuming way to increase their resiliency as students are often running low on time throughout the day to complete tasks.”

Table 2. Student responses to questionnaire.

<p><b>Are any of the techniques you have been practicing helping you?</b> Which ones, if any, and how much help are they on a scale of 1-10, ten being the best?</p>	<p><b>What do you think your next steps should be?</b> What other areas of resiliency that you have learned about still interest you or have value for you?</p>	<p><b>Would you recommend this internship to other students?</b> What would you change if you would recommend it?</p>
<p>Student 1. Meditation, 8/10 Imagery, 7/10</p>	<p>I think I should do more background research on the psychological aspect of resiliency and how it affects those who have suffered adversities.</p>	<p>I would recommend this to students as I am conducting a science project strictly with the intent of discovering if resiliency could help mentally re-stabilize students from the stress of schoolwork. I would try finding a more efficient and less time consuming way to increase their resiliency as students are often running low on time throughout the day to complete tasks.</p>
<p>Student 2. Meditation/Breathing, 7/10 Imagery, 5/10 The exercises don't really help me when I am already stressed and need to de-stress, but they are relaxing when I don't have much to do.</p>	<p>My next step should be to figure out what technique of developing resiliency is actually effective for my life, and compare that to what others believe is helping them. Also, I want to research more about how our brains change after becoming more resilient.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students, as personally I have learned a lot about how being resilient is very important for living a happy life. Although, a lot of this internship is very self-based and researching yourself about what resiliency is, and it does take time, as it is a complex and intriguing topic.</p>
<p>Student 3. Imagery 7/10 Imagery is the most helpful out of all of the techniques because I'm able to really concentrate.</p>	<p>My next step is understanding the fundamental concepts of resiliency and being able to teach them to someone else who is in need of resiliency tactics.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students. An important part of being able to succeed in life is being able to bounce back to any challenges you may face. So learning how to be resilient is really important and it is something that should be taught more.</p>
<p>Student 4. Meditation 7/10 Imagery 4/10 Meditation helps me in the short term and initially makes me more relaxed. Imagery doesn't work very well for me and I get distracted easily by little details in my mind that aren't taken note of when I do imagery through audio.</p>	<p>My next step will be to figure out how to teach this to others/integrate it in my community and understand the advantages and processes of natural resiliency and how to increase resiliency in those who may not be so inclined.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students, because it is an extremely important and lifelong skill to use. However, I think there may be more guidance necessary in future years to make better the internship, but it still is very interesting topic.</p>
<p>Student 5. Meditation w/ Breathing: 7/10 This can go 100% at your own pace, but is quite difficult to manage when you just don't have the mindset or mood to do it then and there. Letting yourself control it also makes it harder for me to not drift my thoughts back onto stressful matters.</p>	<p>I have become very interested in the development of resiliency among young adults, such as people our age. In this hectic and awkward time period of trying to balance everything and find ourselves, it seems that the effects of resiliency can have significant and worthy impact for the future. For my science fair project, we are having the subjects meditate to search for improvement on intellectual abilities. Killing two birds with one stone, I will interview the subjects if meditation has helped them in any other ways that was an unexpected or expected bonus. I am also going to continue reading the given booklet, and see if my perspective and understanding about meditation has changed before and after practicing it.</p>	<p>I think this is a unique field of research usually not appealing to people my age, and therefore definitely worth exploring. I would definitely recommend this internship to people who are interested in this category of biology as I think this research contains a lot of potential. I do agree with the other interns that this is a very self-motivated and self-based project, and some people may like that. Others may prefer more guidance if possible to receive more opportunities to discuss and learn from the teachers or professionals. I think more detailed instructions would improve everybody's quality of work. Overall, I personally did enjoy this research and mini-experimentation very much.</p>
<p>Student 6. Imagery: 8/10 If you are feeling even slightly rushed, this is hard to get into as you have to sync with the audio immediately. However for me, it takes me out of my current world, which is extraordinary for how simple the practice is.</p>		

<p>Student 7. Imagery: 5/10 Meditation: 8/10 For me the main problem was that I had trouble focusing, especially when I was already stressed. Imagery took time for me to get used to and not get so fidgety and because of that it wasn't very helpful for me. Meditation on the other hand cleared my head and relaxed me so it was more helpful than imagery.</p>	<p>My next step is to explore exercises related to resiliency more and find something that really suits me and helps me. I would also like to pass on what I have learned to my friends and my family because they get stressed and they need some relaxation and these are great ways to achieve that.</p>	<p>I would definitely recommend this to other students because it taught me a lot about resiliency and about who I am. It showed me ways to clear my mind without it being forceful and I learned a lot on my own through the research I did so it was really interesting. One thing I would change is how time consuming the exercises were. Waking up in the morning every day to do the exercises and doing them at night every day was very time consuming and irregular. Some days I didn't wake up as early and some nights I didn't go to sleep till really late. Because of this, the days I did the exercises were not consistent.</p>
<p>Student 8. Breathing/Meditation: 7/10</p>	<p>I would like to figure out a technique that would be effective in times of extreme stress, not just when I am at home. For example, while taking a test, I would like to be able to use a technique to help calm and focus myself while taking the test.</p>	<p>I found this experiment very interesting and I would totally recommend using meditation to improve stress levels of my fellow students. It was hard to keep myself consistent, so if I were to continue to do this, I would want to figure out a system that would keep me committed to meditating every day. Other students may not take meditation seriously, so I would be hesitant to recommend it to all my peers. However, if I had a friend that I knew was frequently stressed out, I would definitely recommend meditation to deal with everyday stress.</p>
<p>Student 9. Meditation with Breathing: 9/10 Imagery: 7/10 Expressive and Dance/Movement: 6/10 The main trouble for me was that I had a difficulty staying focused during the exercises, and I felt sleepy often after I had finished the meditation and imagery exercises.</p>	<p>I think my next steps should be to continue these practices with imagery and breathing in my life, as they have been very beneficial for me. I would also like to spread awareness to the people in my community. I think these exercises are important to make a part of daily life for people of various ages. As far as I know, many people in my community are not aware of these exercises, so I would like to share my experience and give them ideas so they can implement these techniques in their day-to-day lives as well.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students because it was a way for me to become self-aware of my body. With the social and academic pressures of my everyday life, the exercises that I did definitely helped me stay grounded and calm during times of stress. The only aspect of this internship that I would change would be having a little more interaction with the doctors, so we could be checking in and seeing what to change or improve throughout the process.</p>
<p>Student 10. Breathing: 7/10 Imagery: 6/10 Movement: 5/10</p>	<p>I think that we should do more research into both the neurological and psychological aspect. We should also raise public awareness.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students because it gives you experience and is flexible to schedules. If I had to change something I would make the plan more specific so the interns know what to do next.</p>
<p>Student 11. Breathing: 7/10 Imagery: 5/10</p>	<p>I would like my next step to be focusing on how to make what skills and knowledge I have developed through this internship apply to my life in the long run. Also, since I am currently a student, and will be for more years to come, I would like to go deeper into relations with stress. The topic of the anatomy of the brain associated with resiliency also interests me.</p>	<p>I would recommend this internship to other students, as I feel like it was a beneficial experience.</p>

A student who listed meditation/breathing as 7 and imagery as 5 said, "The exercises don't really help me when I am already stressed and need to de-stress, but they are relaxing when I don't have much to do." In response to the second question, the student reported, "My next step should be to figure out what technique of developing resiliency is actually effective for my life, and compare that to what others believe is helping them. Also, I want to research more about how our brains change after

becoming more resilient." In response to the third question, the student said, "I would recommend this internship to other students, as personally I have learned a lot about how being resilient is very important for living a happy life. Although, a lot of this internship is very self-based and researching yourself about what resiliency is, and it does take time, as it is a complex and intriguing topic."

### Teachers' Reports

Both the students and family members

were happy with the results. Some of the reports were quite heartwarming. The teachers would like to repeat the training for the next group. Below is what they wrote to the training group:

"J and I want to thank you for reaching out to us about training a small group of students in resiliency. The program started with you two presenting to a broad group of students and then having the students interested in further study stepping forward to participate in a gentle introduction to resiliency. The

students did some background research, attended a 3-hour training with you, practiced some meditation techniques and kept journals of their findings. Next they used a brochure they had created about resiliency, and, a paper they had written about the importance of sleep to teach a family member the basics of resiliency and meditation while keeping a journal of the family member's progress ending with a written summary.

"This process was a good way to raise awareness in our community about the role and relevance of resiliency in a healthy population."

### Conclusion

This resiliency project began with a question about whether resiliency skills could be taught. The opportunity came to explore a pilot class in a high school in Northern California. Students at this school experience a high level of stress, and a group within the school who were interested in careers in healthcare signed up for the pilot class.

This article is a report from that pilot study, and some reflections on the future of resiliency training for self-care. Results from the study were introduced at the Cal-HOSA board meeting in September 2017, and presented at the state conference in January, 2018. Two students presented it at the HOSA regional leadership conference in October, 2017. Some students from another class also chose to do resiliency projects; 30 students have signed up for a new class, so interest is growing.

We understand at this point that cultural factors determine a great deal of our study and that future research needs more diversity. Our hope is that the resiliency training will help future healthcare professionals learn facts about resiliency and wellness and will teach accessible tools to promote resiliency for self-care in their work with their clients and patients. 🌱

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