



2021 - 2022

SAN MATEO COUNTY
**PROBATION
DEPARTMENT**

MIND BODY AWARENESS PROJECT
ANNUAL EVALUATION



ASR
*Helping People
Build Better Communities*

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a nonprofit social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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Program Description

Mind Body Awareness (MBA) staff offer once-a-week 90-minute classes at the Youth Services Center - Juvenile Hall (YSC-JH). The MBA program covers a 10-module curriculum that emphasizes mindfulness, basic goodness, impulse regulation, emotional intelligence, self-compassion, trauma and core beliefs, forgiveness, empathy, belonging, and rites of passage. The program is delivered in ten-week cycles, and the topics are driven by the curriculum as well as the needs of each group. One or two highly skilled instructors and interns with clinical supervision teach MBA classes each week. Youths are assigned approximately 30 minutes per week to complete individual work outside of class to bolster their mindfulness education through meditation, self-awareness activities, and practicing mindfulness exercises.

Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2021-22

Shelter in Place (SIP) continued to present challenges for the MBA program. The continuity of services was interrupted at four different time periods (a total of 17 weeks) due to COVID-19 lockdowns in the facility.

Additionally, the mask mandate made it difficult to read and interpret facial expressions. MBA relies on this somatic and nonverbal cue in order to deepen the extent of connection and work with the class participants.

Finally, MBA operates as a 10-week curriculum consisting of a “closed” group of participants that begin and end the sessions together. Due to SIP service interruptions and unpredictable population changes, it was difficult to maintain the participants for the entire time which interfered with the continuity of content delivery.

Evaluation Methods

MBA programs are funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation’s (Probation) Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG). MBA reports client, service, and outcome data to Probation and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data include:

- ***Participants and Services:*** Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual participants. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.
- ***Outcomes:*** MBA also collected three program-specific outcome measures to track progress toward the goal of improving each youth’s outcomes:
 - percentage of youths who report improved emotional regulation, self-control, and stress reduction
 - percentage of staff who report improved general behavior in the hall
 - percentage of youths who report greater self-esteem, self-compassion, and empathy
- ***Evidence-Based Practices:*** YOBG-funded programs are encouraged to follow evidence-based practices. To augment Probation’s knowledge of which programs are implemented by funded partners, each funded program provided a catalog of its practices. After receiving this information, ASR runs the cataloged practices reported through several clearinghouses to determine whether the practices were:
 - evidence-based theory or premise
 - evidence-based model, shown by multiple experimental or quasi-experimental studies to be effective
 - evidence-based practice or modality shown to promote positive outcomes
 - evidence-based tool or instrument that has been validated (concurrent and predictive)

Evaluation Findings

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- MBA served 18 youths this fiscal year, with an average of 3.8 months in the program and 14.3 hours spent per youth.
- MBA met its target for the fiscal year on two out of the three performance measures.

PROFILE OF YOUTHS SERVED

During FY 2021-22, MBA served 18 youths, who spent 3.8 months in the program and had 14.3 hours of service on average (Exhibit 1), more youths served than the prior fiscal year. Two-thirds (67%) of youths served identified as Hispanic/Latino, 22% identified as Black/African American, 6% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% identified as another ethnicity (Other). One hundred percent (100%) of youths self-identified as male and the average age of youths was 16.5 years old.

Exhibit 1. Youth Services

| YOUTH SERVICES | FY 20-21 | FY 21-22 |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Youths Served | 11 | 18 |
| Average Hours Served | 17.7 | 14.3 |
| Average Time in Program (Months) | 3.8 | 3.8 |

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

MBA exceeded its target for FY 2021-22 on two out of three performance measures (Exhibit 2). One hundred percent (100%) of youths reported improved emotional regulation, self-control, and stress reduction. In addition, 100% of youths reported greater self-esteem, self-compassion, and empathy. Three out of four staff (75%) reported improved general behavior in the YSC-JH which is short of the 80% targeted goal, yet an improvement from last year.

Exhibit 2. Program-Specific Outcomes

| PERFORMANCE MEASURES | FY 20-21 RESULTS | FY 21-22 TARGET | FY 21-22 RESULTS |
|--|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Percent of youths who reported improved emotional regulation, self-control, and stress reduction | 90% | 80% | 100% |
| Percent of staff who report improved general behavior in the hall | 60% | 80% | 75% |
| Percent of youths who report greater self-esteem, self-compassion, and empathy | 85% | 80% | 100% |

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

In FY 2021-22, YOBG programs were asked to provide the practices and curricula employed in their programs. ASR then evaluated the cataloged programs to determine whether they were evidence-based or promising practices by running them through several evidence-based practice clearinghouses. Exhibit 3 details the practices and curricula that MBA used in its programs.

Exhibit 3. Evidence-Based Practices

| PRACTICE | IMPLEMENTATION | RATING |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Communication Skills | Learn the use of non-violent communication and mindful communication. | Although not recognized as an evidence-based or promising practice on its own, many promising programs for anger reduction feature increasing communication skills. ¹ |
| Emotional Intelligence | Learn how to be aware of and engage difficult emotions like anger and grief. | Although not recognized as an evidence-based or promising practice on its own, many promising programs for adolescents feature increasing emotional intelligence. ² |
| Empathy-Building Exercises | Build a sense of community and belonging with participants and compassion for self and others. | Emerging practice not yet rated for evidence-base. |
| Mindfulness-Based Interventions | Learn basic stress reduction techniques through meditation and help address impulsivity and self-awareness. | Evidence-based model according to empirical evidence. ³ |
| Trauma-Informed Practice | Therapists are trained in understanding the impact of complex trauma on youths and effective ways to address this as an integral part of the therapy. MBA programming holds a trauma-informed approach. | The Trauma-Informed approach is evidence-based practice according to SAMHSA. ⁴ |

CLIENT STORY

Each year, staff at YOBG funded programs provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client story provided by MBA for FY 2021-22.

¹ Reilly, P.M., & Shopshire, M.S. (2019). Anger Management for Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Clients: A Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy Manual. SAMHSA Publication No. PEP19-02-01-001. https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/anger_management_manual_508_compliant.pdf

² California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. (2019, November). *keepin' it REAL (kiR)*. [https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/keepin-it-real-kiR/#:~:text=keepin%20it%20REAL%20\(kiR\)%20Middle%20School%20Program%20is%20a,such%20as%20drug%20refusal%20efficacy](https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/keepin-it-real-kiR/#:~:text=keepin%20it%20REAL%20(kiR)%20Middle%20School%20Program%20is%20a,such%20as%20drug%20refusal%20efficacy)

³ Hofmann, S. G., & Gómez, A. F. (2017). Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Anxiety and Depression. *The Psychiatric clinics of North America*, 40(4), 739–749. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2017.08.008>

⁴ SAMHSA. (2014). SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, p10. Pub ID#: SMA14-4884. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Concept-of-Trauma-and-Guidance-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Approach/SMA14-4884>

Exhibit 4. Client Success Story

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of client | Anthony |
| Age and gender | 18 years old, male |
| Reason for referral | Anthony first attended MBA classes at a different facility and self-initiated to re-join the class at YSC. He joined in order to "explore the class, get to know and work on himself." |
| Client’s behavior, affect, and appearance when they first started in the program | Initially, Anthony was guarded, displayed minimal eye contact, and his check-ins consisted of only a few words. He participated with moderate prompts from the facilitators. |
| Activity engagement and consistency | During class, Anthony consistently participated in group discussions. Towards the end of the year, Anthony demonstrated an increase in initiating and posing relevant questions and topics, which enhanced the quality of group discussions. |
| Client’s behavior, affect, and appearance toward the end of the program | Anthony has been exhibiting leadership qualities, empathy, and insight into his own past and the cost of the choices he's made. He shares in depth and openly about struggles and successes in the group setting. He makes eye contact, smiles, and volunteers to assist the facilitator in class duties. |
| What the client learned as a result of the program | <p>"I learned everything from (MBA class)- self-awareness, empathy, and forgiveness." - Anthony</p> <p>Anthony is able to participate in extended meditation sitting practice during class. He is using the weekly sitting practice to assist him in developing awareness of his emotions. He is continuing to learn about emotional regulation and how it shows up in his body, mind, and actions.</p> |
| What the client is doing differently in their life now as a result of the program | <p>Anthony reported improved emotional awareness, self-control, and empathy towards others. He is using Mindfulness Based Interventions including a daily mindfulness meditation sitting practice and obtaining self-inventories for emotional regulation which assists him controlling his actions in and out of the unit.</p> <p>During class, Anthony initiates sharing on his own and poses great questions for the group to reflect on. He is a leader in the group and demonstrates compassion by helping other group members stay aware of their windows of tolerance. Group members have reported that discussions with Anthony during the week help them stay regulated.</p> <p>"I used to believe in the saying 'I can't forgive others-only God does' and now (with the help of the program) I can consider forgiveness. I am trying to become a better human being. Meditation has become a habit that helps me focus on the present." - Anthony</p> |
| The value of the program in the client’s words | <p>"This class is where I come to learn about myself. It has helped me control myself in different environments. I appreciate MBA staff for coming every week". "It's hard to sum up the importance of the class in words, but this quote summarizes it best: 'One cannot know the world if you don't know yourself'". - Anthony</p> |