

Improving academic performance and mental health through a stress management intervention: outcomes

Friday, 28 July 2006

Researchers from the Department of Psychology, University of Bath, UK, conducted a study with 209 pupils to see if a stress management training program could improve their academic performance, yielding very strong results.. Researchers from the Department of Psychology, University of Bath, UK, conducted a study with 209 pupils to see if a stress management training program could improve their academic performance. The students were randomly assigned to either a cognitive behaviorally based stress management intervention (SMI) group, or a non-intervention control group.

Mood and motivation measures were administered pre and post intervention. Standardized examinations were taken 8-10 weeks later. As hypothesized, results indicated that an increase in the functionality of pupils' cognitions served as the mechanism by which mental health improved in the SMI group. In contrast, the control group demonstrated no such improvements.

Also, as predicted, an increase in motivation accounted for the SMI group's significantly better performance on the standardized, academic assessments that comprise the United Kingdom's General Certificate of Secondary Education. Indeed, the magnitude of this enhanced performance was, on average, a full letter grade higher.

Citation: Keogh E, Bond FW, Flaxman PE. Improving academic performance and mental health through a stress management intervention: outcomes and mediators of change. Behavioral Research and Therapy. 2006 Mar; 44 (3): pages 339-57. e.m.keogh@bath.ac.uk