

Mindfulness Training to Reduce Anxiety and Stress in Occupational Therapy Students

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An Evidence-Based Occupational Therapy Intervention
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SETTING & BACKGROUND

Setting

- University of Florida
- Entry-level OTD program
- Extra-curricular course
- Participants N=12

Background

- Faculty observations of increasing student anxiety and stress
- Noteworthy national upward trending for both conditions (American College Health Association, 2018)
- Reflected in many other healthcare students (McConville et al., 2017)

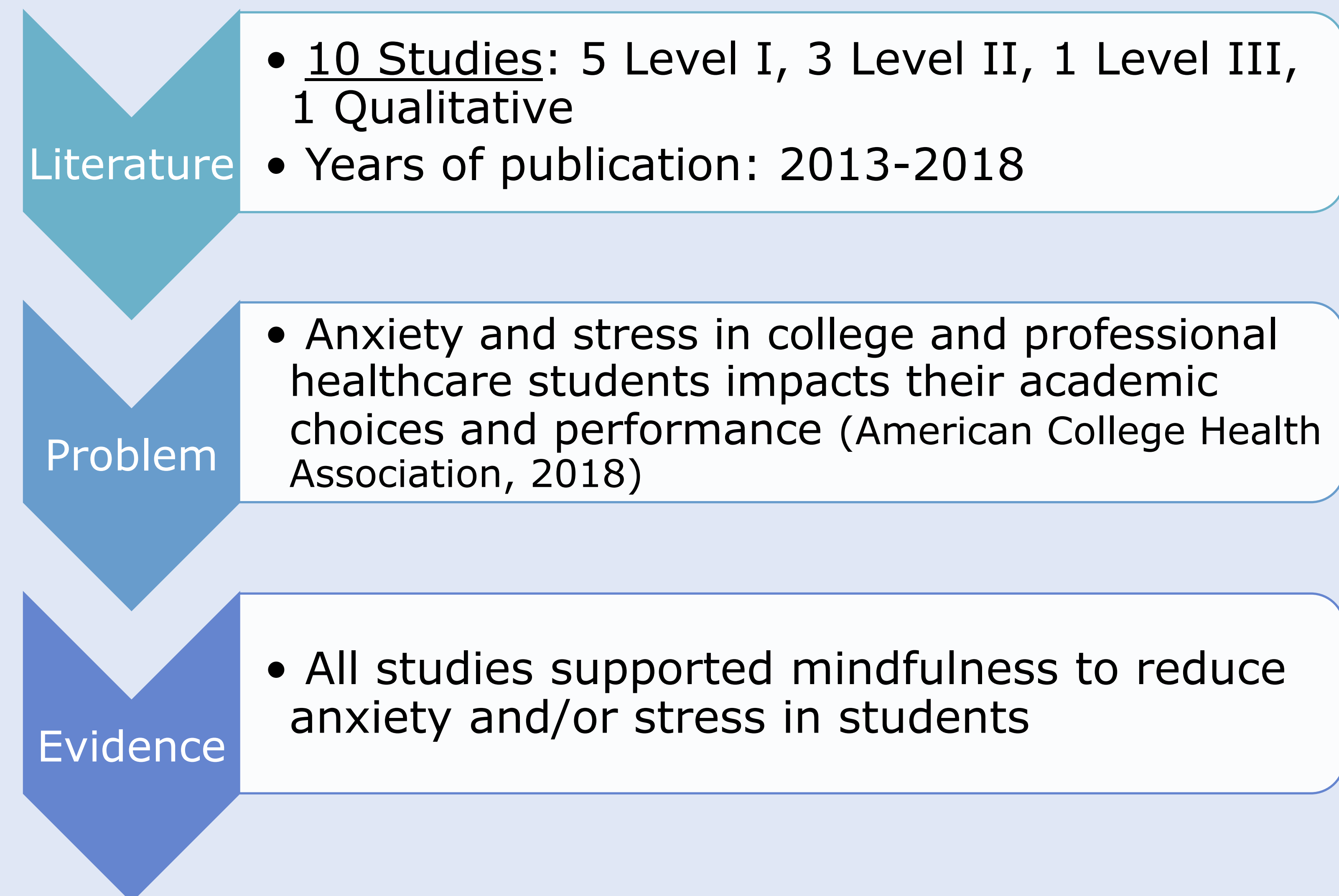
PIO QUESTION

Is mindfulness training useful in reducing perceived levels of anxiety and stress in entry-level occupational therapy students?

SIGNIFICANCE TO OT

- Aligns with AOTA *Vision 2025* (2017):
 - Supports student "...health, well-being, and quality of life...to facilitate participation..."
 - Promotes evidence-based practice
 - Illustrates client-centered intervention within a group format
- Aligns with AOTA *Framework* (2014):
 - Supports student success in the occupation of formal education
 - Promotes occupational justice
- Helps fill a gap in mindfulness literature related to OT students
 - Provides evidence to incorporate mindfulness-based practices into OT academic programs
 - Suggests inclusion of the Transtheoretical Model of Health Behavior Change (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997) to inform mindfulness training

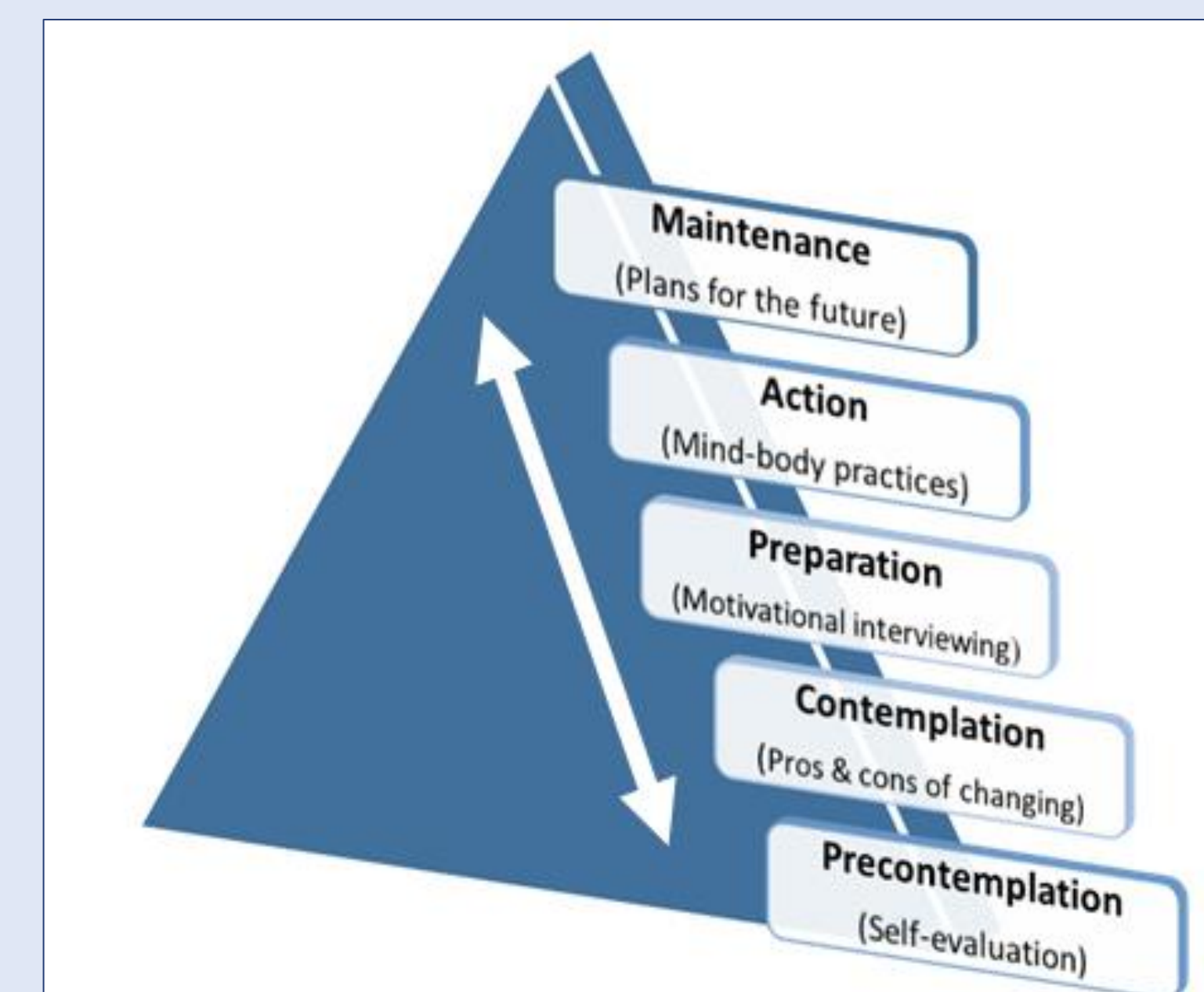
LITERATURE REVIEW



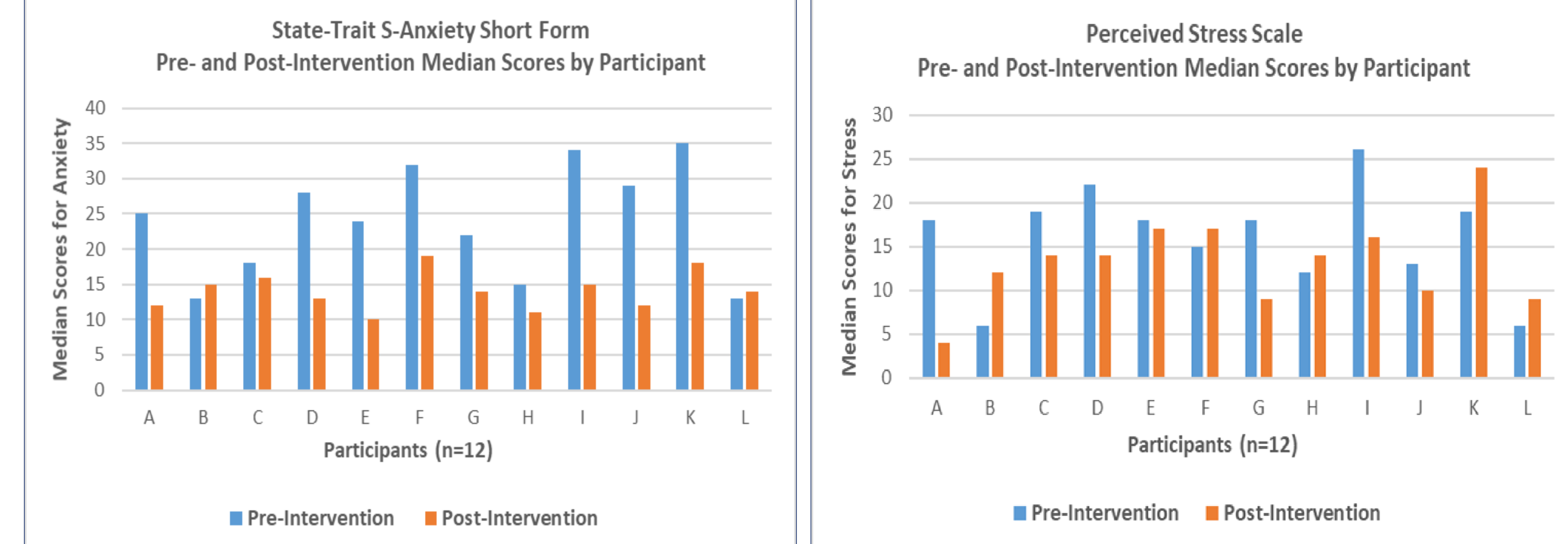
DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

- The Transtheoretical Model of Health Behavior Change informed design (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997)
- Evidence supported didactic presentations, focus on skills practice, group discussions with self-reflection (McConville et al., 2017; Stillwell et al., 2017; Wolf & Serpa, 2015)
- Evidence mixed for homework, which was made optional (Bamber & Morpeth, 2018; Greeson et al., 2014; Stillwell et al. (2017)
- Evidence for outcome assessments (Barnes et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2012)

- 6 Weekly sessions
- Check-in discussions
 - Mindfulness concepts
 - Skills practice
 - Self-reflection
- Pre-/post intervention tests
- Quantitative data
 - Qualitative data



OUTCOMES



Both measures depict median scores (midpoints of the ratings) for the items that make up each test. Lower scores indicate less anxiety or stress. Results: Significant decrease in anxiety ($p < 0.05$). Positive decrease in stress but not statistically significant.

Themes	Representative Quotations
Benefits of Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bettering my sleep patterns due to relieved stress level" • "It has helped me find a more positive outlook on life" • "I feel more grateful" • "The focus on improving my quality of life"
Supportive Community Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Something that surprised me that I was able to really enjoy from the program was the friendship made. I now have a community of other OT students who are actively trying to engage in mindfulness and encourage me to do the same." • "Doing it in a group setting where we can discuss how we felt."
Time Constraint Barriers to Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Allotting time each day to spend practicing mindfulness outside of our meeting" • "Other obligations get in the way of self-care/mindfulness" • "Feeling too busy to practice" • "Time, Time, Time"

SUMMARY

- Findings suggested that mindfulness training is effective in reducing anxiety and stress in OT students
- Students valued the supportive practice community
- Advocacy for mindfulness-based supports in OT academic programs is recommended
- Future evidence-based projects should include follow-up outcome measurements
- The Transtheoretical Model aligns well with mindfulness concepts and principles

