Helping Penelope, Sasha, Louise, and Grace:
Teaching mindfulness and self-regulation to decrease anxiety and shift goal-setting

Author:
Katelyn McGuinty

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION
in
Educational Leadership

Vancouver Island University
NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA
May, 2015

Supervisor:
Dr. Scott Priestman
Acknowledgements

The community at Vancouver Island University is one that promotes educational exploration, demands excellence, and supports students. Without this community, the following project would not have been possible. Special thanks to Dr. Judy Halbert, Dr. Linda Kaser, Dr. Paige Fisher, Dr. Neil Smith, Deidre Bjornson, and my supervisor, Dr. Scott Priestman, for their patience, feedback, and encouragement. Thank you to my fellow CIEL classmates without whom I would not have laughed as often or been so challenged to improve my dance moves. Thanks to the Brown family for their hospitality and late-night conversations during my time in picturesque Nanaimo. Thank you to my parents for believing I could set, reach, and exceed my own goals. Finally, thank you to Gordon for not agreeing with any of the reasons I gave for being unable to embark on this journey, and for your constant support throughout, thank you.
Dedication

To any student who has no way to manage how she feels and has no one who will listen,

*that you find your voice, quiet your mind and embrace your best self.*
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... ii  
Dedication............................................................................................................................. iii  
Table of Contents......................................................................................................................... iv  

Penelope ........................................................................................................................................ 1  
Chapter 1: Introduction ............................................................................................................... 2  
  Background ............................................................................................................................... 2  
  Statement of problem ............................................................................................................... 3  
  Project justification .................................................................................................................... 4  
  Project intent ............................................................................................................................. 4  
  Definition of Terms .................................................................................................................. 6  
  Summary ................................................................................................................................... 7  

Sasha ................................................................................................................................................ 8  
Chapter 2: Literature Review ..................................................................................................... 9  
  Anxiety, self-regulation, and mindfulness ................................................................................. 9  
  Goal-setting, motivation, and self-regulation .......................................................................... 11  
  Role of gender ............................................................................................................................ 14  
  Summary ................................................................................................................................... 17  

Grace ............................................................................................................................................. 18  
Chapter 3: The Bridge ............................................................................................................... 19  
  Project rationale ....................................................................................................................... 19  
  Project scope ............................................................................................................................... 20  
  Project outline ............................................................................................................................. 21  

Louise ........................................................................................................................................... 24  
Chapter 4: Wellness Series ....................................................................................................... 25  
  Teaching guide........................................................................................................................... 25  
    Lesson 1: Who am I? ............................................................................................................... 26  
    Lesson 2: What do they want from me? ............................................................................... 29  
    Lesson 3: I can! ....................................................................................................................... 31  
    Lesson 4: Stopping the wheel ............................................................................................... 35  
    Lesson 5: Just do it! ............................................................................................................... 38
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 6: Introducing...!</th>
<th>42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student handouts</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1: Who am I?</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2: What do they want from me?</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3: I can!</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4: Stopping the wheel</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5: Just do it!</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6: Introducing...!</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: Considerations</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project summary</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future considerations</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project limitations</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project implementation</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PENELOPE

She disappears often. Not just into the background, but literally. Teachers cannot find her and when they do, she runs. She is small and she is quick. Sometimes, she doesn’t have the time to run. Stress overcomes her so rapidly that she reacts in the middle of the classroom, with everyone watching. She smashes her head on the science lab bench, over and over again. When restrained, she uses her fists, her knees, the wall – anything to distract the pain she feels inside her mind. It eventually ends. When it’s over, she’s exhausted. She’s embarrassed. She’s sorry. But she knows it will happen again. If her work isn’t perfect, it’ll happen again. What she doesn’t know is how to stop it.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Bell Canada Entertainment Inc., Canada’s largest communications company, is talking about anxiety. Each January, Bell encourages social media users to tweet, text, or email with the tag #letstalk in an attempt to bring awareness to mental health issues across Canada. The awareness campaign aims to decrease the negative stigma around mental health problems and raise money to fund resource centres and non-profit groups who support those suffering from mental health challenges. On January 28, 2015, Bell reported that over 120,000,000 social media posts were made with the tag, #letstalk, and to date over $6 million has been raised for the organizations.

The Bell “Let’s Talk” campaign day brings commendable awareness to the issues surrounding mental health. However, for people who suffer from a mental illness, or have challenges managing life stressors, the battle lasts beyond this one day. To live with panic attacks due to an anxiety disorder, or to be unable to attend work or school due to depression, are daily realities for many Canadians. Managing a mental health disorder requires intervention from physicians, counsellors, and other health care professionals, in addition to first admitting the need for help.

Mental health disorders are one part of the conversation. Today’s youth are faced with a number of external stressors as our world shifts at a rapid rate. Influences from technology and a more global workforce mean that universities are looking for stronger candidates and today’s employers are demanding different skills from their new hires (Miller, 2013). Though these pressures will not necessarily lead to a mental health disorder, they are influencing youth in negative ways (Miller, 2013): teen anxiety rates are on the rise (Sunderland & Findlay, 2013); suicide is the third leading cause of youth death (Centre for Disease Control, 2010); and females are more likely to experience feelings of anxiety or depression than males (Bender et. al, 2012; Sunderland & Findlay, 2013). According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
(2010), a plan for mental well-being should be integrated into all workplaces, in order to support employees with feelings of depression, stress, and anxiety.

It is important to note that feelings of stress and worry are vital to human survival and triggers should not be eliminated (Huberty, 2012, p. 29). Instead, appropriate supports must be in place when children, young people, and adults alike feel overwhelmed by these emotions. Rather than remove stressors, the response – according to the CMHA (2010) – should be one of support and strategizing in order to learn coping mechanisms for future.

This *Wellness Series* is developed as a response to the need for students to develop positive, self-regulating coping mechanisms, stay motivated despite personal setbacks, and set and reach appropriate goals.

**Statement of problem**

Brookswood Fulton Academy¹ (BFA) is an all-girls, independent high school on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Students are of varied ethnic and socioeconomic background. In general, families are from an upper-middle class status, and most parents have completed post-secondary education. Upon graduation from BFA, over 96% of students attend a four-year university. Despite being a private school, students are not omitted based on the family’s inability to pay tuition, as bursary and scholarship programs are available. However, in order to attend BFA in grade 8, students must write an entrance exam which tests numeracy and literacy skills. Based upon the overall score on that test, the grade 7 report card, and other factors, a student may be offered admission for grade 8 at BFA. Students entering BFA have typically come from an elementary school wherein which they were a “top” student in the class. Some, however, are not, but have other talents and abilities which make them a valuable member of the BFA community.

Both profiles of student can struggle upon the entrance into high school. Often, those high achieving students find the demands of BFA to be overwhelming when compared to the

¹name and location changed to protect confidentiality
elementary school experience. At BFA, where most students are high achieving, reaching the “top” is not an easy task, but still drives achievement goals and subsequent anxiety of many students. Students who are not as academically-inclined often decide that the tasks at hand are too difficult and deem themselves “not smart enough” to reach the level being asked of them.

**Project Justification**

The topics of anxiety and motivation are ones which remain a priority at BFA. There are students who set high performance goals, pressured in part by their peers, parents, and teachers. Others remove themselves from the learning environment, either physically or mentally. In the past two years as counsellor, I have worked with students who cheat in order to score well on a test or assignment, pay others to complete their homework, or take a leave of absence from school to deal with their anxiety issues. Students worry about maintaining high grades in addition to accumulating valuable experiences for a broad-based university application, all while dealing with the pressures of growing up.

I have seen a number of students who are unable to cope with perceived or real pressures from teachers, parents, peers, and self. Student reaction to this pressure is varied. Some students avoid and procrastinate, creating a product that reflects learning below their actual level of ability. Some students, filled with doubt about their capability to reach an acceptable level of understanding (and subsequent mark), cheat, as a high score is of value. Some students go beyond the scope of the assignment or test, causing them to spend unnecessary amounts of time working. It is my belief that these behaviours are related, in part to students’ anxious reactions about their learning and their inability to self-regulate those reactions.

**Project Intent**

At BFA, where time permits, I have the opportunity to teach specific classes, under the BC Ministry of Education Planning 10 curriculum (2007). In the past, I have offered three brief lessons on motivation, problem-solving, and procrastination, but done so without formal
structure. The lessons were haphazard and lacked a valuable connection to current research about student issues as they relate to learning. The insights I receive from counselling students, however, drive me to create a resource that is a) contextually appropriate, b) scaffolded in its implementation, and c) rooted in research.

This project will involve creating a manual for teachers to use in order to teach students how to manage anxious feelings and stay motivated, through employment of mindfulness techniques and appropriate goal-setting.

The Wellness Series is a six-lesson unit which focuses on developing a strong sense of self to prepare to identify personal values. In lesson one, students will articulate their strengths and weaknesses both in the educational and social settings. By writing a personal narrative, students are challenged to articulate and accept their human emotions and behaviours. Lesson two supports students through the process of value-identification. In this lesson, students are asked to recognize their personal values and determine whether or not their peer, parent, or teachers’ values impede or strengthen their own. This value-setting lesson is intended to prepare students for appropriate goal-setting. In lesson three, students are challenged to employ mindfulness strategies to manage stress or anxiety and remain focused on personal goals and values. Strategies for mindfulness practice in all settings will be taught, so that students are able to use mindful reflection in a range of stressful situations. Building from the lessons learned in mindfulness practice, lesson four challenges students to reframe stress as a beneficial human reaction, rather than an overwhelming source of worry. Here, students will be educated on the physiological reasons for stress, as well as the benefits and challenges. Students will learn strategies to manage stress reactions and shift negative thoughts to positive. In lesson five, students are asked to reflect upon their previously named values and set personal goals. These goals are part of their vision for the future; strategies to reach goals and manage associated stressors are important factors that students will consider when setting further objectives. Finally, lesson six prompts students to reflect upon what they have learned in the
**Wellness Series**, while offering students an opportunity to work with web resources. These resources are intended to help students stay focused on their personal vision, reach appropriate goals, employ mindfulness strategies, and manage stress such that it positively empowers them to continue working towards their goals.

The intention of the six lessons within the **Wellness Series** is that students complete the unit equipped with the knowledge and skills to stay motivated through times of stress or worry, rather than turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, take shortcuts, or avoid challenges altogether.

**Definition of Terms**

There are a number of terms, seen throughout the review of current literature, that must be defined in the context of the school setting.

**Anxiety** can be categorized into two main forms: trait anxiety or state anxiety. The former refers to generalized anxiety, pervasive across domains; the latter is typically a result of a specific trigger. While anxiety is a diagnosable mental disorder, the reference here will be related to sociocultural and environmental anxiety, often considered “extreme stress” (Huberty, 2010).

**Worry** is directly related to anxiety; in the school setting it is a “conscious cognitive concern ... such as negative expectations and fear of the consequences of failure” (Williams, 1996, p. 159).

**Self-regulation** in the academic context refers to a student’s ability to engage with tasks using both study strategies and volitional skills, despite feelings of worry (Butler, 1995).

**Mindfulness** is the practice of being fully present in the current moment and aware of what is taking place in a person’s immediate surroundings (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). It
relates to an individual’s ability to positively remain in the moment, maintain attention, and regulate emotion during stressful events.

**Mastery-approach goal orientation** is a manner of setting goals that focuses on learning as much as possible, overcoming obstacles and/or increasing one’s ability in a domain or topic area (Wolters, 2004).

**Mastery-avoidance goal orientation** refers to students who set and reach goals to avoid a lack of mastery or from fear of missing information. They do not want to miss important knowledge associated with that domain or topic area (Wolters, 2004).

**Performance-approach goal orientation** refers to students who achieve and set goals to demonstrate understanding in comparison to others or in the pursuit of external praise (Wolters, 2004).

**Performance-avoidance goal orientation** refers to students who set goals due to a fear of looking incapable or less capable than others if they were to fail or achieve poor results (Wolters, 2004).

**Summary**

Many students seem to be lacking the ability to self-regulate when faced with challenging tasks in school. Often, students react according to the anxiety circle – a trigger causes negative thoughts which promote uncomfortable feelings, causing physiological reactions, which perpetuate maladaptive behaviours leading to fulfilment of negative thoughts (Lebowitz & Omer, 2013). The adopted behaviours appear to vary from student to student. It has been my personal observation that some avoid work and procrastinate, while others do not complete the work at all; some miss the purpose of the task due to the distraction of an anxious reaction and others over-achieve and go beyond the scope of the assignment. As recommended by Turner and Husman (2008), students need to enter the workplace or post-secondary institutions with the ability to self-regulate and cope with perceived failure and associated shame, using feedback
as a resource. The following project attempts to teach students skills to deal with anxiety, employ mindfulness techniques, set appropriate goals, and stay intrinsically motivated.
SASHA

She hasn’t been to school in over three weeks. The headaches are so bad. Not only does her head hurt, but sometimes she feels her vision blur and her heart race. Each night, she lies awake until the early morning, convincing herself that tomorrow she will go to school. Then morning comes... headache.

Her parents are worried. She has seen so many doctors and has appointments to see more. They have poked and prodded, taken scans, drawn blood, and asked a lot of questions. They can’t figure out what is wrong. Everything was fine last year. Grade 9 was so easy. But grade 10 started out really hard. She was getting bad grades. She was worried her parents would be mad. She feared her friends finding out. She is certain her teachers were disappointed.

Now, these headaches... What is happening to her?

~~~~~~~~
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Many students struggle with managing internal and external expectations during their high school years. In some cases, the inability to manage emotions and feelings from stress can lead to a heightened anxious state. Students are rendered unable to set goals, employ strategies, or reflect positively on their skill sets. Females, in particular, are more prone to stress and associated depression from continued anxiety.

Anxiety, Self-regulation, and Mindfulness

Many experts will agree that anxiety is a basic reaction to unknown events and triggers, and ultimately propelled the human race to success (eg. Huberty, 2012, p. 29). As humans progress from infant to adult, there are a number of milestone anxious reactions which are necessary for development. These are typically reached and surpassed with age. It is when anxiety, or long-term stressful reactions, become debilitating, limiting, or beyond the developmentally appropriate age, that some intervention may be required (Huberty, 2012, p. 30).

Vasey, Crnic, and Carter characterize anxiety as being overcome with worry; worry is further defined as a repetitive cognitive process focusing on possible and unknown outcomes and subsequent consequences (as cited in Huberty, 2010). Worry is often due to a perceived loss of control, and is exacerbated when the outcome is deemed important. Worry in children and young adults is a topic of interest to parents, educators, counsellors and medical professionals. As suggested by Huberty (2010), most every person experiences an anxious reaction to a trigger at some point in his or her lifetime. In the high school setting, stress and worry may manifest from a future class presentation, a pending assessment, or a social predicament. The outcome of the stressful event is often perceived to be out of the student’s control, may be subjectively scored, and is anticipatory (Huberty, 2012, p. 29).
High school is a highly evaluative setting, with academic and social triggers causing great difficulty for students with all levels of anxiety (Huberty, 2012, p. 45). Students typically react by avoiding the trigger, as doing so means a temporary relief from the symptoms of anxiety. These symptoms, physically manifested as headaches, flushing of the skin, and a racing heart, are uncomfortable and unavoidable once the body begins reacting to a stressor (Lebowitz & Omer, 2013, p. 99). Over time, however, avoidance of the trigger will ultimately result in increased anxiety; the student has failed to manage the stress and the positive reinforcement felt by evading the task will lead to continued avoidance. This promotes a maladaptive behaviour, such as procrastination (Lebowitz & Omer, 2013, p. 101). In turn, parents will typically feel compelled to protect children from these feelings, especially those which manifest physical symptoms. This can lead to unhealthy habits and patterns of avoidance – a useful short term solution, but detrimental to the student’s future.

Rather than avoid triggers and perpetuate anxiety, students can learn to recognize and subsequently regulate their emotions (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). Mindfulness is one strategy that students can employ in order to decrease anxious reactions and subsequently increase performance.

Shao and Skarlicki (2009) define a mindful individual as one who has “concentrated attention and high-quality awareness of their moment-to-moment experience” (p. 195). Note that this definition does not indicate a removal of anxious feelings, but rather an awareness of feelings, regardless of their state. Students who are experiencing anxiety are taught to reflect upon, accept, and work to move away from anxious feeling despite circumstances. This is in direct conflict with typical patterns of avoidance and removal of triggers, but works far better to promote performance on academic tasks (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). Anxiety, unmanaged, can distract from the task at hand, even if unrelated to that task. Instead, by practicing mindfulness, students can focus on their work, test, or presentation, rather than be preoccupied by memories of the past or worries about the future. Additionally, Shao and Skarlicki (2009) found that
mindfulness demanded that the brain be activated in both right and left hemispheres. This implication suggested two persuasive ideas; firstly, enhanced brain activation allows for greater access to declarative knowledge; and secondly, females see a greater increase in performance due to mindfulness practice than do males (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). The compelling role of gender will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Goal-setting, Motivation, and Self-regulation**

There are a number of links between self-regulation of stress, types of goal-setting models, and the motivation to begin a task or procrastinate. Procrastination can be linked to avoidance which may be a behavioural result of anxious feelings or worry associated with the task at hand (eg. Huberty, 2004; Leboweitz & Omer, 2012).

Wolters (2003) researched motivation and procrastination, as they relate to self-regulation. He found that students who frequently procrastinate also typically fail to self-regulate. Wolters (2003) reported that self-regulated learners are meta-cognitively skilled and able to access those skills within the context of their learning. They are able to recognize their potential ability and devise suitable goals to reach an appropriate level of mastery of a particular subject. Together, Wolters (2003) suggests that this “constellation of beliefs, knowledge, and skills allows self-regulated learners to be independent students who actively manage their own learning across a variety of academic contexts” (p.180).

Through this work, Wolters (2003) reports that models of self-regulated learning can be used to help students feel motivated. Wolters (2003) argues that current intervention does not accurately address procrastination behaviours within the constructs of cognition and motivation. It is not enough to be able to complete the work, or feel motivated by external rewards. Rather, the research recognizes that students who more readily employ mindfulness, meta-cognitive awareness, and self-regulating behaviours within their learning context are less likely to procrastinate (Wolters, 2003). He suggests that “interventions designed to decrease
students' procrastination might be more successful if they focus on ... efforts to increase students' ability to plan or regulate their study behaviors” (Wolters, 2003, p. 186). He posits that a change in goal structure may reduce their procrastination if the goals set are ones that students believe they can reach, and recognize to be of value to their learning. He recommends that meta-cognitive awareness and employable self-regulatory skills are the forefront of the goal-setting model (Wolters, 2003).

In other research, Wolters (2004) addresses joint and separate effects of student perception of environmental goals and student’s own personal goal structure (mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance) on anxiety, motivation, cognition, and achievement. Wolters (2004) findings are corroborated by Fletcher and Neumeister (2012) who examined goal structure and perfectionism tendencies.

Students will often strive to reach goals, or, in some cases, attempt to achieve perfection, based on personal standards, parental expectation or criticism, or concern about mistakes (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Wolters, 2004). Students who set mastery-approach goals will learn content in order to feel confident in their knowledge (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012). They are more intrinsically motivated to begin and complete work, and are more likely to set their own standard for reaching a specific goal (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012). Students who take a performance approach to goal-setting are more likely to learn material in order to receive praise or accolades from parents, teachers, or peers. They are more likely to set goals with the belief that others want them to reach those goals, rather than setting goals which are of personal value (Wolters, 2004). Both groups are inclined to strive for perfection, which can be anxiety-inducing. However, over time it has been shown that excessive pressure or coercion (more typical in performance approach goal-setting) will likely worsen an adolescent’s anxiety even if intended as motivation (Huberty, 2009, p.2; Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012).

Wolters (2004) recognizes that different goal structures have various effects on student motivation to learn. Not surprisingly, he identifies that those students with a mastery-approach
to academic tasks are more likely to use cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies. They were less likely to “put off starting their math work, put forth effort to complete their math tasks, [and persist] under adverse conditions” than their performance-focused peers (Wolters, 2004, p. 243). Not only are students who adopt a mastery-approach to goal-setting more likely to improve, but they were less likely to procrastinate. Additionally, they were more likely to welcome feedback as a part of learning, rather than ultimate assessment of their skill (Wolters, 2004). This suggests that students who set mastery-approach goals are more likely to see feedback as constructive, rather than worry about the consequences of assessment. Here, we see that these students enjoy the process of learning as much as the attainment of knowledge.

Similarly, Turner and Husman (2008) researched the processes that students use to maintain, increase, or decrease their academic self-motivation and self-regulation following experiences of academic shame. The research was conducted to determine which students continued to set and reach goals, despite a failure to do so previously. Students who experience academic shame are an appropriate target group to consider; the failure they experience can often lead to worry, fear of future academic failure, and, ultimately, anxious thoughts (Turner & Husman, 2008). The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in self-regulation strategies between students who feel shame and those who do not, despite experiencing similar academic outcomes. The researchers aimed to answer the following questions: a) What do students do once they perceive that they have failed and feel shame? b) Do the processes students use to overcome feelings of shame differ from typical academic self-regulation processes? Results show that students who successfully raised their grades following academic shame were self-regulating (Turner & Husman, 2008). Students identified that the academic goals they had set for themselves were directly linked to their course grade and capability. Students who did not have self-regulating skills did not focus on goals (coincidentally, their goals were arbitrary), but instead focused on their ability to do the work, in general; some claimed “I just don’t know what else I could do” (Turner & Husman, 2008, p. 155). This shows
the value of goal-setting and meta-cognitive reflection, in addition to self-regulating behaviour when overcoming worry and fear of failure.

This research suggests that students who set mastery goals and learn in order to increase their knowledge rather than perform are less likely to procrastinate (Wolters, 2004) – an avoidance behaviour (Lebowitz & Omer, 2012). They are more likely to use a meta-cognitive and mindful approach to learning, which can improve performance and manage anxious or stressful feelings (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Wolters, 2004). In addition, students who can self-regulate, upon reviewing assessment, are more likely to receive feedback as constructive and are less likely to worry about the task (Turner & Husman, 2008; Wolters, 2004).

**Role of Gender on Anxiety, Mindfulness Practice, and Goal Setting**

Baron-Cohen (2005), summarized some of the vast amount of research on the differences between male and female brains, in the field of neuroscience. In both men and women, the left hemisphere is typically used when answering math problems or performing spatial recognition tasks. The right hemisphere shows most activity when recognizing faces, processing non-verbal cues, or reacting to emotion. Though these hemispheres tend to work with similar purpose, men and women have physiological differences causing gender-based variation within and between those hemispheres (Baron-Cohen, 2005). Female brains have a stronger corpus callosum (the link between hemispheres of the brain) which permits information to transfer between the two hemispheres more smoothly and with greater speed (Baron-Cohen, 2005). This is cited as one reason that women are more efficient at multi-tasking than men (eg. Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). In contrast, males typically rely on their left hemisphere (which is larger than a female’s) to complete cognitive tasks, such as test writing or academic work (Baron-Cohen, 2005). It has been found that the two hemispheres compete for activation when not closely linked. Males are therefore more likely to deactivate one hemisphere, depending on the task (for example, cognitive); this would cause a pause in focus
on the cognitive task, as attention is shifted to an emotional stimulus (as cited in Shao & Skarlicki, 2009).

The differences in the male and female brain can have an effect on things beyond multi-tasking and performing cognitive jobs. Bender et. al (2012) review the differences in male and female ability to regulate emotion and manage feelings of worry. Their research suggests that males are more likely to feel anxiety based on a refusal to recognize negative emotional responses. This may be due to environmental factors, such as the effect of societal pressure to conform to stereotyped gender roles; however, a review of cognitive neural processes have shown that men are more likely to automatically regulate emotions than females, using a separate part of the brain (Ochsner et. al, as cited in Bender et. al, 2012). Females, on the other hand, are more likely to be anxious if there is an inability to regulate the emotional responses they are experiencing. Researchers speculate that the female’s ability to give greater attention and awareness to emotions may highlight difficulty in regulating those feelings, when compared to males (eg. Bender et. al, 2012). Not only this, but Bender et. al (2012) found that females had a more difficult time engaging in their “goal-oriented behaviour when experiencing distress than male adolescents” (p. 284). Interestingly, this differs from research cited by Shao and Skarlicki (2009), who suggest that females do not experience competition between hemispheres as strongly as males, when completing tasks; this may be explained by the auto-regulation of emotion in males (Bender et. al, 2012)

Females have been found to have greater worry and emotionality than males, with links being made not only to brain function, but to goal-setting structure. Williams (1996) studied high achieving high school students to determine if there was a relationship between anxiety and academic performance among this demographic of students. Williams (1996) also attempted to determine what gender differences exist in “perceived worry and emotionality” (p. 159). He found that females experienced a higher level of anxiety, based on higher worry than their male counterparts. Williams’ (1996) research also indicated that test anxiety may be
aroused when students set performance based goals, rather than mastery. He recognized that females are more likely to set such performance-approach goals, whereas males are more likely to set mastery-approach goals (Williams, 1996). His research corroborates other work, which suggests that there exists a positive relationship between anxiety and performance goals (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2009; Williams, 1996). Therefore, the females in this study, most of whom set performance goals, may experience anxiety as a result of their goal model, rather than gender; Williams (1996) concludes that the “gender-related differences in reported worry and ... the anxiety-to-performance relationships uncovered here may differ with heterogeneously grouped students” (p. 162). However, it has been shown that anxiety, regardless of goal-setting model, can decrease feelings of control and increase feelings of depression, especially in girls (Huberty, 2012, p. 2). Pursuing a shift in goal structure could decrease worry and subsequent anxiety in females.

In addition to shifting goal structure, Shao and Skarlicki (2009) suggest that females benefit from mindfulness practice in a number of ways; specifically, mindfulness practice causes a decrease in anxiety and increase in performance, by encouraging participants to engage in the present moment, rather than be overcome with worry and fear. Shao and Skarlicki (2009) found that females who practiced mindfulness strategies while performing cognitive tasks were more likely than males to improve performance. This is attributed to the fact that females do not have similar competition challenges as males when using the different hemispheres of the brain. As previously stated, the left hemisphere is found to work through cognitive tasks, whereas the right hemisphere supports perception of emotional and non-verbal information (Baron-Cohen, 2005). In mindfulness practice, both hemispheres are active. Being that females are better able to transition between the two hemispheres, without competition and inhibition, Shao and Skarlicki (2009) reported that performance on a task was positively related to mindfulness for females, but not for males. This finding is of value, as it shows that the mindfulness practice may be beneficial to females during highly cognitive tasks, such as
studying or writing tests, not only in decreasing anxiety, but increasing performance, by way of enhancing performance (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009).

**Summary**

It is clear from research that worry and anxiety can have a negative effect on overall mental health, performance on cognitive tasks, and other behaviours. In shifting goal-setting approach from performance to mastery, we see that students are more likely to take ownership of their learning and are less likely to adopt maladaptive behaviours. By promoting self-regulation, we note that students are better equipped to manage the inevitable doubts of ability and fears of the unknown as they prepare for assessment. Through practicing mindfulness, students are encouraged to recognize their current needs and focus on the moment, even if that means embracing difficult emotions. Females, in particular, experience an increase in performance when being mindful during a cognitive task. It appears that interventions which shift goal structure from performance to mastery, promote mindful awareness, and engage students in their learning can help decrease anxiety. A resource that teaches each of these skills, while empowering personal decision-making, could help students learn to manage stress and succeed in the academic setting.
GRACE

She has every intention of completing her homework. She is a chronic list-maker and has a perfectly organized room. Her desk is neat and clean, and she has a brand-new laptop on which to do her work. She writes out a study schedule each day during last block, and packs her back accordingly. Her parents notice and they are proud. The only problem is that she’s not smart. Her classmates are way smarter and don’t seem to work as hard as she does. She’s learned that her own work isn’t good enough, so she’s planned for that too. She has different “friends” who complete her homework for her. She knows exactly where to sit during tests so that she can peek at the best answers. Her back-up notes wait in the bathroom, in case she’s really in a bind. So far, so good.
Chapter 3: The Bridge

Project Rationale

As stated previously, students react in varied ways to school-related stress, either “checking out” or over-reacting to the issue. This overwhelming pressure causes them to lose sight of the importance of the learning process and takes the enjoyment out of their high school experience. I feel that a well-researched manual of lessons, called the Wellness Series, would better teach all students about managing stress and anxious reactions, and subsequently empower them to engage with their learning through a growth mindset. My hope would be that the manual could be used for teens in similar contexts after implementation and revision.

The school setting is one which initially creates the triggers, causing an anxious reaction and subsequent negative behaviours. Uniquely, schools are an ideal place to help students learn about, manage, and prevent anxiety (Huberty, 2012, p. 323). I believe that it is important for students to first know the physiological consequences of anxiety, and then apply targeted strategies to manage that reaction. In time, the stressful reaction can potentially be prevented by recognizing the upcoming trigger, and employing mindfulness and self-regulation techniques. Huberty (2012) suggests that interventions should “promote social–emotional development, prevent mental health and psychosocial problems, and enhance resiliency and protective buffers” (p. 323). Based on the literature, it is clear that students with self-regulatory abilities are better able to manage tasks (both academic and emotional) (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). Additionally, Bender et al. (2012) state that “given the strong link between anxiety and emotion dysregulation, therapeutic interventions may benefit from a more focused approach, i.e., specifically targeting youths’ emotion regulation abilities” (p. 287). This supports my theory that students who have learned skills to better self-regulate and manage anxious reactions will learn more, experience less test-related anxiety, and cope better upon receiving feedback from teachers. Some studies (Turner & Husman, 2008) indicate that students should, but do not appear to, graduate from high school with appropriate volitional strategies and skills for deeper
thinking and processing; attaining these skills would ultimately be contributing to a repertoire for success during higher education or in the workplace. The Wellness Series attempts to build that skill set, manage anxiety, and embrace mindfulness practice.

Bender et al. (2012) discovered that girls experience more anxiety than boys. As previously stated, the research argues that an inability to regulate emotion and subsequent lack of emotional clarity are predictive of anxiety. This research furthers my desire to design a program that will help girls not only identify their negative emotions, but develop emotional regulation strategies that they personally find effective. In addition to developing a set of appropriate self-regulatory skills, this project will also address different types of goal-setting. As research shows, females are more likely to set performance-approach or performance-avoidance goals (Wolters, 2004). Additionally, the lessons will include mindfulness practice, as Shao and Skarlicki’s research shows that doing so results in a marked increase in performance, especially in females (2009). The project will employ mindfulness practice to manage anxiety, and focus on setting mastery-approach goals, in order to help students redefine academic success within their own learning terms, rather than those expectations set out by extrinsic motivators.

**Project Scope**

Research into anxiety intervention and self-regulation suggests that a school-wide approach is helpful to encourage implementation (Huberty, 2012, p. 334). For that reason, the scope should be extended beyond intervention with students.

To educate parents, an informational evening is recommended. During the two hour session, parents should be introduced to definitions associated with anxiety, informed of the physiological and emotional reactions to stress, learn some at-home strategies for promoting self-regulation, and recognize how to relate the effects of stress to motivation and goal-setting. This can promote discussion between families about their experiences and help build community. In addition, it is recommended that parents stay informed through a series of
newsletters. Each one should follow a similar pattern to the lessons, offering educational background, community resources, and home strategies.

To educate teachers, one or two ten-minute informational sessions at a Staff Meeting are ideal. At these meetings, the purpose and goals of the Wellness Series would be explained. This meeting would provide teachers with information on typical warning signs that are usually exhibited by students with anxiety. It is recommended that these sessions discuss avoidance, cheating, and low-performance as they relate to anxiety and motivation. Teachers may be interested in different components of the Wellness Series based on their current knowledge-base, classroom practice, or personal experience. It is anticipated that faculty members at Brookswood Fulton Academy (BFA) will be most interested in the different reasons for setting and achieving goals. The goal is to give teachers tangible strategies to begin shifting their language and assessment practice in order to encourage more mastery goal-setting in their classrooms.

Project Outline

The target audience for this project is grade 10 students. The BC Ministry of Education (2007) requires that all students complete the course Planning 10 to graduate. The Planning 10 curriculum focuses on a range of life-skills, from financial planning to recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationship traits. For this reason, it seems that the Planning 10 course lends itself to the six-lesson Wellness Series. The goal for the Wellness Series is three-fold: students will a) develop self-regulatory skills to manage anxious reactions to stressful triggers, b) develop mastery goals, and c) increase intrinsic motivation.

It is recommended that the six lessons in the Wellness Series are offered over a three month period. Doing so keeps the content relevant to teens, but gives time to practice strategies, build habits, and reach goals.
Each lesson is designed to build the students’ awareness of mental wellness and offer strategies for personal growth; this is the unifying feature between all six lessons.

To begin, students are introduced to the Wellness Series by reflecting on self. In order to embrace mindfulness practice, manage stress, and set goals for personal satisfaction, students must be able to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and personal challenges. This lesson, entitled, “Who am I? Why am I here? What am I learning? Where am I going? Reflecting on self”, prompts students to take note of their current educational and mental journey.

Following this, lesson two, “What do they want from me? Deconstructing perceived extrinsic expectations and shifting to mastery goal-setting by defining personal values” recognizes that students will not set goals completely independent of peer, parent, teacher and other community member influences. Addressing the effects that those perceived pressures can have is a major piece of this second lesson. This is important, as BFA students, in particular, will often cite parent, peer, or teacher pressure as a reason to set and reach academic goals; failure to do so can result in a stressful reaction.

Next, lesson three introduces students to mindfulness practice. This lesson, “I can: Embracing mindfulness practice to reach goals” helps students learn to take pause when setting goals, reaching milestones, or experiencing setbacks. Through a physically demanding activity, students learn that mindfulness can be applied when taxing body muscles. This visceral task helps them to then identify the role mindfulness plays on a tired or stressed mind.

In lesson four, the mechanics of anxiety and brain functioning is taught. “Stopping the wheel. Using stress to succeed not worry” is meant to help students to recognize that the anxious reaction is, in part, out of their control. According to Huberty (2012), students should learn the brain science of an anxious reaction. Knowing this will help them to embrace the anxiety to propel forward, rather than let it overwhelm and halt progress. Students will also be challenged to use the mindfulness practices learned in lesson three.
Lesson five attempts to combine strategies taught in lessons one through four to help students reach their goals. During “Just do it! Putting strategies into action to achieve goals”, students will articulate their goal, identify why they have set such a goal, name some incidents which may cause stress or anxiety while working toward the goal, and identify some strategies to work through the worry. The goal will be measurable; the mindfulness and stress management strategies will be clear and practical.

Finally, in lesson six, students are encouraged to create a map of strategies for setting and reaching goals in the future. During this lesson, entitled “Introducing...! Where I am now and where I am headed next”, students will not necessarily set goals or make promises to practice certain strategies. Instead, they will reflect on what they have learned during the Wellness Series and identify how they will change their goal-setting and -achieving practices in the future. This will serve as a skeleton for students as they set future goals, find themselves worrying, or experience setbacks. Web resources such as AnxietyBC, Mindshift, Stop! Breathe! Think!, Headspace, and other goal-setting and mindfulness applications will be introduced and reviewed.

The research reviewed in Chapter 2 serves as the primary source for most ideas in these lessons; however a number of current teen workbooks and mindfulness models were also considered and included. The sources can be found in the reference list at the end of this paper.
LOUISE

“It’s not worth doing, if it’s not 100%”... it’s her dad’s favourite saying. Her mom says that he means her effort should be her very best, but she knows that’s not true. He wants to know what questions she got wrong on the test. He asks who in the class scored higher than she did. He reminds her that universities require high marks. He tells her he knows she can do it; most of the time she does. But sometimes, she just doesn’t want to. She’s terrified of failing, of disappointing him. She’s also tired of worrying. She’s exhausted by the spinning wheel inside her head. She wonders if he’d still be proud of her, love her, or even want her as a daughter, if she stopped caring so much. She doesn’t want to find out.
Chapter 4: Wellness Series

Teaching Guide

Lessons below include:

1. Teacher script (all italicized lettering is considered teacher script)
2. Link to a Prezi (for all six lessons)
3. Notes for consideration
Lesson 1 (60 minutes)


Students begin by creating a googledoc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial (5 minutes)

a. Will use this to record their responses throughout the lesson
b. Will share it with mcguintyk@myBFAbc.ca for future reference; remind of confidentiality (harm, not showing to parents, administrators, or others unless harm perceived)
c. Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 1” and copy text, pasting it into their google document
d. Teacher will use Prezi document to teach all lessons; notes coincide with Prezi slides

1. Prezi 2 – why are we doing this? (5 minutes)
   - Teacher to describe the purpose of wellness lessons: The purpose of these lessons is to help you manage any stressors you may encounter at home, work, school, or socially. We will be sharing our stories, discussing our feelings, and reflecting on past experience. It is important for you to respect your peers when we discuss. Please keep our conversations confidential and do not share stories about our class discussion with other friends. Additionally, it is important that you know my limitations of confidentiality. I will respect your privacy and will not share the stories or insights you write about with your peers, teachers, or parents unless the following conditions exist: if you are harming yourself, are at risk to harm others, or are being harmed by someone else, I may have to tell another adult who can help you receive the assistance you need to stay safe.

   “inspire girls to accept that they may not have the answer, but give them permission to figure it out”
   - to do so, you will actively participate in the program, not just listen
   - to do so, you will discuss thoughts, feelings, values, and attitudes
   - you will learn important skills that will help with self-esteem, goal-setting, motivation, and stress management

2. Prezi 3 – students to watch Tavi Gevinson video and engage in discussion (10 minutes)
   a. Orally debrief video using THINK/PAIR/SHARE
      i. What stood out for you about Tavi’s message?
      ii. What is more difficult, discussing flaws or discussing strengths?
      iii. Do you think you “live” Tavi’s message, currently? If yes, how? If no, why not?

3. Prezi 4 – Students to use google doc to respond to the following questions (20 minutes)
   a. Embracing who I am:
      i. Do I have flaws? What are they?
      ii. What about my flaws make me human?
      iii. Do I have strengths? What are they?
iv. What about my strengths make me human?

v. Throughout my education, what has helped me recognize my strengths?

vi. How do my strengths contribute to the person I am becoming? How will my education continue to promote the development of ME?

4. **Prezi 5**

“although i am only fourteen, i know quite well what i want,...
i have my own ideas and principles, and although it may sound pretty mad from an adolescent, i feel more of a person than a child, i feel quite independent”

Anne Frank

5. **Prezi 6** – Students listen to story read by teacher (10 minutes)

Hi,

I’m Jess.

It all started last year. Or maybe I should say it all ended. My former best friend, Sally, was madly in love with Josh, but Josh didn’t like her – he liked me. One night, we were at a party and Sally came in and saw Josh and me talking. She was so mad that she texted me, swearing and saying how dare I steal him – he was hers. But he wasn’t hers. She had never even gone on a date with him! And, like I said, he liked me.

The next day, Sally spread rumours at school that I’d made out with ... and more... with Josh. Now the whole world thinks they know all about me. As for Josh, he won’t even look at me. Even though he knows it’s just a rumour – he KNOWS we didn’t do those things – it’s like it’s all my fault.

In one crazy moment, I lost my best friend, a boy I liked, and my reputation. Oh, man, my life is over.

I guess I should tell you about some other stuff too. I’m fifteen. My two brothers and I live with our mom. Our house isn’t the best, but it’s okay. I have my own room. If you walked into it, you would probably laugh. The walls and ceiling are almost completely plastered with pictures and posters of musicians, bands, and my favourite TV shows, along with tickets from shows I’ve been too, and some weird things like my broken iPod, which I stuck to the wall too. And then there are my drawings – I’m okay at art, I guess.

My room is like a collection representing me and who I am. Mom says she’ll have to strip the room when I leave home. She once took photos to show to her friends, and then she put a sign on the door, saying, “Caution: Under Demolition”. I think she thought it would make me clean my room, but I didn’t and the sign is still there. For some weird reason, I like it that way. We now have a deal – I keep the door shut, and she stays off my case about cleaning my room.

So... now it’s summer and I’m never going back to that school. I cannot face my classmates... My life is pretty much just me, alone, in my room.

b. **Orally debrief story using THINK/PAIR/SHARE**
   i. *How would you sum up Jess’s situations?*
   ii. *What do you think is happening for Jess? Give a few things that are really obvious.*
   iii. *Can you sum up how you think she feels in just a few words?*

6. **Prezi 7** - Students to use google doc to respond to the following questions (10 minutes)
   a. **My story:**
      i. *What’s my story?*
      ii. *What can I observe about what’s going on in my life right now?*
      iii. *Sum up both the positives, and the battles...*

7. **Prezi 8** – Serenity Prayer (2 minutes)
   - Teacher to summarize day’s lesson: *At this time in your life, you are most likely figuring out your identity, while trying to be the person your friends and family want you to be. This is really stressful. The more you learn about who you are, who you want to be, and what is most important to you, the better equipped you will be to cope with the stress that comes from trying to meet other’s expectations of you. You can begin to learn more by reading your story, naming your flaws and strengths, and meeting your battles head-on.*
Lesson 2 (75 minutes)

What do they want from me? Deconstructing perceived extrinsic expectations and shifting to mastery goal-setting by defining personal values.

Students begin by opening googledoc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial
a. Review teacher feedback comments and respond/revise (5 minutes)
b. Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 2” and copy text, pasting it into their google document

1. Prezi 9 – Students to re-read “my story” response from last lesson
   a. Orally debrief story using THINK/PAIR/SHARE (5 minutes)
      i. How did re-reading your story make you feel? Why do you think you felt this way?
      ii. What does reading this story, about something that was SO important a few weeks ago, make you feel about those things that are happening right now?
      iii. Was your story centred completely around you? How often did you mention what OTHERS think, want, or expect from you?
   b. Students to use google doc to respond to the following questions (5 minutes)
      • Where am I going?
         i. Is my purpose mostly about one area of my life? Or does it include multiple influences, goals, activities, and relationships? Name these.
         ii. Is there a part of my life I would like to change? Why?
         iii. Can I change this? Or is this something that is out of my control? Can I accept that? Why or why not?

2. Prezi 10 –
   “this above all; to thine own self be true,
   and it must follow, as the night the day,
   thou canst not then be false to any man”
   • Shakespeare

3. Prezi 11 - game time! (15 minutes)
   a. Students to choose any series of numbers from 1 – 6 and list them in order.
      They can pick the same number multiple times, and don’t have to use all numbers (eg. 4-5-3-2-4-3)
   b. Teacher to hand out “board game” (see game sheet attached in Appendix)
   c. Students to follow the board, using their 6 numbers, and writing down what “values” they landed on, as they go, then answering the following questions using the google doc:
      i. How was that?
      ii. Did you end up rich? Or in ruins?
      iii. Did you find love? Or did you become a hermit?
      iv. Would you have preferred to have choice?

d. Students play the game again, this time choosing their own six choices and recording
   i. **Orally debrief choice vs. chance using THINK/PAIR/SHARE** (10 minutes)
      - Is life all about choice? Or chance?
      - Can you make **ALL** of your choices now?
      - Who influences your choices? Whose input matters to you?

4. **Prezi 12** – Students to respond to “living your values” question via google doc (5 minutes)
   i. What would you do if you had more money than you could possibly spend?

5. **Prezi 13** – Students to respond to “using the evidence and finding the values” questions via google doc (10 minutes)
   i. Re-read your “dream life”.
   ii. What values are shown by the choices you would make with all the money in the world?
   iii. Do they line up with the values you feel you currently live out? Are there any missing values? Do any surprise you?
   iv. Could you live out these values in ABSENCE of money? How?

6. **Prezi 14/15** – Students to watch and respond to “daring to dream” video via google doc (20 minutes)
   i. Did Natalie have clear values?
   ii. Who influenced those values? What role did SHE play?
   iii. How did she live out her values in absence of money, with input from others, and in accordance with her beliefs?
Lesson 3 (60 minutes)

I can! Embracing mindfulness practice to reach goals.

Students begin by opening googledoc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial

a. Review teacher feedback comments and respond/revise (5 minutes)
b. Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 3” and copy text, pasting it into their google document

1. Prezi 16 – I can! (5 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: When we see the words I CAN! We think we are about to hear another lesson on positive thinking and knowing you can do it, so then you can. We resist the urge to roll our eyes and think... this DOES NOT WORK! Mindfulness is NOT about thinking positively. Sometimes, it's all about embracing discomfort, identifying what's going wrong, and working through it with purpose...

2. Prezi 17 – Mindfulness (5 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: Have you ever walked from one classroom to another and not realized how you got there? This is an example of being asleep in your day (though it was likely because your mind was buzzing with a full “to-do” list; not asleep at all!), and not fully present in the moment. Mindfulness practice works to bring awareness to everything you do in life. It is in the present that you live, and you may be missing something if you’re not participating. Additionally, by not living in the present, days, weeks, months and years can go by wherein which you don’t reach those goals you set for yourself. Instead, being mindful allows you to pay attention and view struggles and milestones with purpose and further curiosity.

   a. Orally debrief this paragraph using THINK/PAIR/SHARE
      i. What do you think mindfulness is?
      ii. What are your hesitations about it? What excites you about it?

3. Prezi 18 – Why? (10 minutes)
   a. Students to watch 60 minutes video (pause at 1m40s to clarify “mindfulness” definition)
   b. Orally debrief this video using THINK/PAIR/SHARE
      i. What do you think the wave analogy means?
      ii. Are you skeptical? Why?
      iii. What do you think might be a benefit of mindfulness?

4. Prezi 19 - How can you be mindful? (2 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: It’s not easy! Just like most things, it takes practice and can seem hard at times. What’s best is to remember to be BOLD:
     B – breathe and recognize the 5 senses
     O – observe the feelings you are having
     L – listen to your values
     D – decide and do

- Teacher to explain: *We will be practicing mindful breathing and observing later in this lesson. Once we have worked on that, you will listen to your values, make decisions, and set action plans. Why are we doing this? Because when things feel that they are “too much” we often avoid, shift blame to others, or decrease/change our goals. Instead, by practicing these skills regularly, you can stay motivated even when you start to feel stressed or anxious about an upcoming goal assessment.*

5. **Prezi 20** – Karlie’s story (25 minutes)
  - Teacher to read story: *Karlie wanted nothing more than to make the Senior Soccer team at her new high school. She had played community soccer since she was five years old and really felt that she could be a contributing member to the team. She trained on her own each morning for 30 minutes before school and got feedback three times per week from her community coaches. Karlie felt confident and prepared for the tryouts. She knew that she had worked as hard as possible, leaving nothing to chance. However, the night before, Karlie couldn’t sleep. She was too cold in her bed, then too hot. She imagined the tryouts over and over again. She pictured herself missing the net, tripping as she ran down the field, making bad passes. The next morning, Karlie started to wonder if she should even try out for the team. It was finally time to be assessed on her skill and she wasn’t sure she wanted to know the outcome.*
    a. Students to use google doc to respond to the following questions:
      i. What was Karlie thinking as she lay awake at night?
      ii. How do you think that made her feel?
      iii. Why should Karlie be BOLD in this situation?
      iv. How can Karlie be BOLD in this situation?
      v. What might her thought pattern look like?

6. **Prezi 21** – Mindful Breathing (5 minutes)
  a. Teacher to take students through guided meditation (use long pauses between phrases):
     - Close your eyes now. Put your hands on your knees. Put your feet flat on the floor. Feel your back up against the chair. Don’t respond aloud to these questions, but think of the answers. Your mind should focus on ONLY the questions at hand, rather than letting your mind tell a story/narrative or relapsing to think about worries of the day.
     - Listen to your own breathing. Is it fast? Slow? Patterned?
     - Do you feel the pressure of the chair against your back? Describe the sensation.
     - Do you feel your fingertips on your knees, and your toes pressed against the edges of your shoes? Describe this sensation.
     - Listen now. What can you hear? Name three things you can hear and describe each one. Does it have a purpose?
- Open your eyes now. Look around the room. Name three things that you can see. What colours are they?
- Listen to your breathing now. Has it changed? Is it fast? Slow? Patterned?
- This was an example of practicing mindfulness.

7. **Prezi 22** - Students to respond in google doc to following questions:
   i. What was difficult about that activity?
   ii. Were you able to keep your mind focused on the questions? Or did you start to think about other things? Were there times in that session that were easier than others?
   iii. How often do you remain present? Does your mind wander and take you out of the moment? How can you return to the present?

   - Teacher to explain: *It’s one thing to stop EVERYTHING you are doing and breathe slowly when you’re not under any stress... Not very realistic in the middle of a test or soccer tryout!* Instead, using a smaller version of this activity during a difficult situation can really help you reach a goal. Reminding yourself to be BOLD during an exam, or while studying, can shift your focus back to the present moment, rather than distracting you with “the mark I’ll get” or “how hard the test will be tomorrow”.

8. **Prezi 23** - Mindful Application
   a. Teacher to take students through guided activity:
      - *We are going to do a difficult standing exercise.*
      - **Stand up.** Feet hip width apart (use fists to determine distance). Arms straight ahead with hands facing the ground. Bend your knees as though you are sitting in a chair. **Stay this way until I say stop** (timer set for 1 minute).
   b. Students to respond using chart in google doc:
      - Teacher to explain: *now, write down the thoughts you were having at the start, middle, and end; write down how you were feeling during the start, middle, or end*

9. **Prezi 24** – owwwwwwww!!!!
   a. Students to respond using chart in google doc:
      - Teacher to explain: *now, write down the thoughts you were having at the start, middle, and end; write down how you were feeling during the start, middle, or end*

10. **Prezi 25** – BOLD attempt
    a. Teacher to take students through activity again: *We are going to do this again. This time, I want you to use BOLD thinking. I want you to recognize that you will be uncomfortable by the end. I want you to always be thinking about your breathing and try to send your BREATH to those places that you OBSERVE to be hurting. I want you to LISTEN to your goal to stay low and I want you to DECIDE to do so with even breath. Start now* (timer set for 1 minute 30 seconds).

11. **Prezi 26** – BOLD changes everything
    a. Students to respond using chart and questions in google doc:
       i. Now, write down how you felt during this second round in the chart. Did your level of discomfort change? Were you surprised to find out that you lasted longer the second round? Did your mindful practice help?
b. Teacher to explain: This exercise shows that it is not enough to just “get down to business” or “do what you have to” or “be positive and believe in yourself”. Instead, you must observe when times are uncomfortable, recognize how you can make small changes, and rejoice in the reward of using BOLD skills.
Lesson 4 (60 minutes)

Stopping the Wheel: Using stress to succeed, not worry

Students begin by opening google doc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial
a. Review teacher feedback comments and respond/revise (5 minutes)
b. Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 4” and copy text, pasting it into their google document

1. Prezi 30 – Chase meaning, rather than avoiding discomfort (20 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: Last class, we talked about mindfulness and how the introduction of mindfulness practice could help us embrace discomfort in order to reach our goals, which are based on our values. We recognized that it is important to be BOLD when setting and reaching goals, so that we don’t succumb to the dreadful feelings of stress. However, what we lightly touched upon was the idea of EMBRACING anxious feelings. It sounded strange then, and it still does now, as we often think that stress is something to be avoided. Let’s listen now to a health psychologist who recently started telling people to view stress as a positive, not a negative, in order to reach goals and live longer.
   • Student to watch: Kelly McGonigal – How to make stress your friend

2. Prezi 31 – Stress as the enemy (10 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: Kelly tells us that we have been taught to view stress as the enemy; that it increases our chance of death; that it is a sign that we are not coping well.
   • Students to respond in google doc:
     a. Have you ever thought of stress as the enemy?
     b. What was happening in your life that was stressful?
        i. Tell a story here; describe your physical and emotional feelings
     c. How do you usually react?
        i. Share the outcome.

3. Prezi 32 – Stress as a friend (5 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: Kelly tells us that we should be viewing stress as preparing us for action. She suggests that HOW we view stress is what matters, not whether we are exposed to stress. She claims that stress gives us the biology for courage.
   • Students to respond in google doc:
     a. Reframe your story now
        i. Don’t change what happened to make you feel stressed, and don’t “delete” the fact that you felt physical and/or emotional stress
        ii. Instead, rewrite the story from a new reaction – a positive one
        iii. Does the outcome change in this story?

4. Prezi 33 – Easier said than done (5 minutes)
   • Teacher to explain: Reflecting back on a past experience, it is easy to see where we let stress get the best of us; we reacted in a way that was not helpful, but we know now how we might react to be better prepared to progress; how many people think they could have done this in the moment? I am the first to agree that it’s much easier said afterwards than
accomplished at the time! Having a set list of how to do so, with some really helpful strategies, makes things a little clearer in that fuzzy, anxious moment.

- Teacher to read scenario: Imagine you are asleep in bed and you hear a creak. It’s not particularly loud or strange, so you rest your head back down, ready to fall asleep again. Then another creak... This one is louder than before and somewhat unfamiliar. What kinds of thoughts go through your head? Share with a partner now.

- **Orally debrief using THINK/PAIR/SHARE:**
  - i. What types of thoughts did you have when hearing the creaking?
  - ii. Were some thoughts positive and optimistic? Were others more rooted in fear?
  - iii. What physical feelings would you have from these thoughts?

5. **Prezi 34 – Red thoughts (5 minutes)**

- Teacher to explain: All of these ideas and reflections on how you would have reacted are excellent! It’s interesting to hear how different we all are in our reactions. These can be based on past experience, personality, and many other factors. What unites us, is that we all feel a slight amount of stress from that scenario. Let’s try another one and brainstorm more of what we call “red” thoughts.

- Teacher to describe red thoughts: Red thoughts are often the first thoughts we have when faced with a stressful scenario. They are negative in context, and typically convince us that we CAN’T face the problem or that the outcomes will be catastrophic. Sometimes our actions can perpetuate these red thoughts, as we might opt to procrastinate, or even watch videos of these red thoughts “coming true”.

- Teacher to read: Imagine you are a member of the track and field team at school. You have done track before, but mostly just for training purposes, rather than competition. You don’t really like the idea of everyone watching you on the track and you especially hate the “gun” that goes off to start the race. You get a call from your coach, the night before a major event. He tells you that your friend, Bella, broke her foot horseback riding that evening. She is supposed to run in the 400m race tomorrow (a distance you train for) and he needs you to do it. You tell him you will think about it and you hang up the phone.

- Students to answer following questions in google doc:
  1. What are some red thoughts you might have?
  2. What are some actions you might take to make those red thoughts worse?
  3. How are these harmful to progress?

- **Orally debrief above questions**

6. **Prezi 35 – Green thoughts (5 minutes)**

- Teacher to explain: Green thoughts are meant to frame the exact same situation positively. They attempt to make you recognize the good about the upcoming situation, rather than the bad. Green thoughts address the fact that you are experiencing discomfort, but they prepare you for it, rather than letting you be paralyzed by your fears. It can be really difficult to have green thoughts, especially when we are worried about something. When we first think of green thoughts, they are like a placeholder; the red thoughts will inevitably creep in. Instead practice reframing red thoughts often in order to shift your mind to arrive at green thoughts first!
7. **Prezi 36 – ready, set, go!**

- Using “Track and field dilemma” story; ask students to list green thoughts in google doc response:
  1. What are some green thoughts you might have?
  2. What are some actions you might take to move those green thoughts from “placeholders” to “mindshifters”?
  3. How are these helpful to progress?

- **Orally debrief above questions**

8. **Prezi 37 - Try the real thing (10 minutes)**

- Teacher to explain activity: *In groups of three, you will be handed a script, telling a story. One person will play the “red thoughts” and one person will play the “green thoughts” once the narrator is done the story. For every one “red” there should be one “green”; at the end, the narrator will decide if she had more effective “red” or “green” thoughts. You will keep track in the chart on your google doc. Use the chart to write key words from each “red” or “green” thought; then answer the questions about the winning thoughts. We will use your notes at the end for a class discussion.*
  
  - **Partner 1** will determine who’s thoughts she will choose; which are stronger; be prepared to say “why” when discussing with the class
  - **Partner 2** will play the “red” thoughts; will have to come up with a red thought for every green thought
  - **Partner 3** will play the “green” thoughts; will have to come up with a green thought for every red thought

- **Partner 1, script (print-out found in Appendix):**
  
  “I look up from my desk as I hear my teacher call my name. She is looking right at me. She is announcing to the class that my poem, which I wrote from the bottom of my heart and which is really personal, has been selected to be read at the Independent School Professional Development Opening Address. Teachers and students will be in attendance. I will have to read the poem and then field question about the poem; what it means to me; how I came to write it; what I hope people hear from my writing. I have the option to say “no thanks”… but here’s the thing… I need my teacher to write me a reference letter (a good one!) for the AP program next year. One of the criteria is ability to discuss literature and poetry in groups and share your work… I’m right on the cusp of getting in and declining this would not be in my best interest. What am I going to do?!”

- **Students to respond to red/green challenge using chart in google doc.**

- **Teacher to mediate discussion of how the activity turned out;**
  
  - Suggested questions: *were more “red” thoughts chosen? “green”? why or why not?*
Lesson 5 (75 minutes)

*Just do it!* Putting strategies into action to achieve goals

Students begin by opening googledoc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial

**c.** Review teacher feedback comments and respond/revise (5 minutes)

**d.** Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 5” and copy text, pasting it into their google document

1. **Prezi 38 – Just Do It (5 minutes)**
   - Teacher to explain: Last time we met, we talked about facing stress head-on and embracing it as a way of preparing for an upcoming event. Sometimes that event is a grizzly bear in your path (the typical flight or fight example), sometimes it's a difficult conversation with a friend, and sometimes it's a test that you really want to do well on. Either way, we need to see our stressful reaction as something that shows us we a) care about the outcome of the event, b) have the ability to prepare for the event, and c) can control how we think about the event. So we've spent a lot of time discussing stress, worry, and mindfulness. We have practiced having green thoughts instead of red thoughts; we have even redefined our goals to line up with our personal values, not solely resting on the opinions of others. Unfortunately, the hard work is far from over. Now we have to “just do it”.
   - Teacher to show Nike ad “Just Do It”

2. **Prezi 39 – Just do it… in 30 days (3 minutes)**
   - Teacher to explain: Matt Cutts offers his take here on the oft-cited theory that it takes “X” number of days to create a habit. I think he highlights some other interesting insights into why and how you might embrace the 30 day challenges.
     - **Prezi 40 - Orally debrief using THINK/PAIR/SHARE (5 minutes)**
       - i. What did Matt say about things being memorable?
       - ii. What did Matt suggest for ensuring that goals were sustainable?
       - iii. Do you think the first goal on Matt's list was to hike Mount Kilimanjaro? Why or why not?

3. **Prezi 41 – Vision vs. goals vs. strategies (30 minutes)**
   - Teacher to explain: When we think back on Matt climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, we can all guess that he probably did that as a culminating goal, after a series of strategies which he achieved each day. Likely, Matt’s first 30 days began with taking a picture of something. In doing this, each day was memorable, and he was mindful in those small moments. He started a series of accomplishments by setting a goal that was manageable, forced him to be mindful, and was sustainable. Positively reinforced and armed with “green” thoughts about his capabilities to reach goals, he started setting more challenging ones. This likely led to the goal of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. He probably had a training goal that challenged him for 30 (or more) days leading up to the climb. Interestingly, what sometimes starts out as a goal, becomes a strategy for our future goals. Let's try an example together.

4. **Prezi 42 – Start big go small**
• Teacher to explain: Look back on your values and your goals from Lesson 2. Your values and long term goals together build a vision for your future. For example, if you value education and you have a goal to work internationally, perhaps your vision for the future would include working in a global non-profit organization. This is a big goal which will take time, planning, and persistence. Rather than be overwhelmed by those things, let’s start much smaller, guided by this big vision.

• Students to respond to questions on google doc:
  a. List your values from Lesson 2

5. **Prezi 43** – Break it down

• Students to respond to questions on google doc:
  a. Write out your vision for the future (no more than 5 years ahead). Underline the value(s) and the goal(s) in your statement.
  b. Determine if there are different categories that your goals fit into. Are some personal? Some related to education? Others related to finances? Split these up now.

• **Prezi 44** – Example
  o I want to be on the executive team of a non-profit organization that focuses on educating youth about the environment.
    * Education:
      * Business
      * Environment and sustainability
    * Personal:
      * Commitment to local environment
    * Financial:
      * Pay for university education
      * Travel abroad to gain experience

6. **Prezi 45** – Write it down

• Students to respond to questions on google doc:
  a. Rewrite your statements in the present tense. Doing so encourages you that these things WILL happen.

• **Prezi 46** – Example
  o I will attend university and complete a Bachelor of Commerce. I will major in Human Resources and minor in Environmental Science.
  o I will volunteer with the Lynn Valley Ecological Centre.
  o I will be a co-leader of the Environment Club at school.
  o I will spend one term studying in Iceland.

7. **Prezi 47** – Set some strategies

• Teacher to explain: We can all agree that you likely won’t wake up one day as a leader of a non-profit organization. You can definitely achieve that vision, but it will take some hard work! Strategies act as guidelines to follow throughout the days, weeks, months, or years in order to reach your goal. Though your vision may not (or may!) shift, your strategies will likely change throughout the years as you change.

• Students to respond to questions on google doc:
a. Strategies are a really important part of reaching your goals. Fill out the chart with some strategies that are helpful to each goal that leads to your vision.
b. Have the strategies become more specific (and short term) as you go along the chart

- **Prezi 48** – Example
  - Goal: I will attend university and complete a Bachelor of Commerce. I will major in Human Resources and minor in Environmental Science.
  - Strategies:
    - I will get into university.
    - I will do well in Pre-calculus 11.
    - I will work with a tutor.
    - I will study math more often, regardless of homework assignments.

8. **Prezi 49** – make them measurable

- Students to respond to questions on google doc:
  - a. Set some guidelines to measure each of your goals.
    - Be specific
    - Set dates where possible
  - **Prezi 50** – Example
    - Goal: I will attend university and complete a Bachelor of Commerce. I will major in Human Resources and minor in Environmental Science.
    - Strategy 2: I will do well in Pre-calculus 11.
      - Measurement: I will hand in all assignments.
      - Date: Review on October 30, 2015.

9. **Prezi 51** – Mindfulness to reach goals (10 minutes)

- Teacher to explain: *In order to reach goals, we must set strategies that will help us to get there. Mindfulness is one such strategy. Being mindful of the goal you have helps you to live with that goal at the forefront, rather than being easily tempted or distracted by outside factors. Being mindful of your goal allows you to recognize that your vision is valuable; that is has purpose and is meaningful. This helps to you avoid the “auto-pilot” life we talked about in Lesson 3. Being mindful of your vision also helps you when tempted by others’ visions for you, or negative influences on your vision. Think of mindfulness practice as one strategy that you can apply to all of your goals.*

- Student notes: You can bring mindfulness to anything you do, including your strategies. If you find yourself stressed out, worried, or distracted, when you should be focused on your goals, try some of these mindfulness tips, similar to those we worked on in Lesson 3:
  - Put your hands in your lap.
  - Sit with your feet planted on the ground.
  - Take deep, slow breaths in... and out...
    - Picture the worry you are experiencing as you breathe in
    - As you breathe out, picture letting go of that worry
    - Picture yourself acting out a strategy as you breathe in
    - As you breathe out, imagine how it feels to accomplish that strategy
(adapted from Gina Biegel, *Doing schoolwork mindfully*)

10. **Prezi 52 – Green thoughts to reach goals (10 minutes)**

- Teacher to explain: *Inevitably, you will face roadblocks as you try to reach your goals in pursuit of your vision. You may find that things don’t always work out as you had hoped. You may start to feel like giving up on your goals or feel that familiar sense of panic arise when you think about your goal. That panic can lead to negative thinking and “red” conclusions. Be mindful of this tendency. Continue to practice green thoughts.*

- Student notes: Green thoughts are not always the FIRST thoughts we have when we are feeling stressed out, so it is good to have a few in our “bank” of thoughts; ones that are easy to turn to when we start to think more negatively. Looking back on Lesson 4, see if you can identify some green thoughts to help you reach the goals you’ve written down today. List them in the chart below.
Lesson 6 (60 minutes)

Introducing...! Where I am now, and where I am headed next

Students begin by opening googledoc titled: Wellness Series – LastnameFirstinitial
e. Review teacher feedback comments and respond/revise (5 minutes)
f. Students download Word Document, “Wellness Series – Lesson 6” and copy text, pasting it into their google document

1. Prezi 53 – the importance of failure
   • Teacher to explain: In the past lessons, we have spent time reflecting on our story through identification of our strengths and weakness. We have identified our values and set goals to help us reach a vision we have for our futures. We have recognized that there are many people in our lives who help us become our best selves, but that there is a need for us to identify goals and strategies that are personal. We know now that we should be motivated to reach our vision because we care deeply about it, not solely because our friends, teachers, or parents place value on it. Finally, we can confirm that we will face some roadblocks along the way. Some will be in our control and others will be out of our control. Managing these roadblocks through regulation of our emotions is important. We cannot ignore how we feel, but instead we must listen to our minds and determine the source of our stress or worry. Rather than remove it or avoid it, we must ask: “Why is this bothering me?” “Why am I reacting this way?” We must accept that physiological body reaction and mindfully manage it. Finally, we have learned how to be kind to ourselves and reframe our worries as positive occurrences. Today, we are going to summarize all of the things we have learned, and then explore some resources and tools that can further support us as we continue to reach our vision for the future.
   • Students to watch J.K. Rowling: The importance of failure (stop at 15 minutes)

2. Prezi 54 - External demands: Students to respond on google doc (10 minutes):
a. What external demands were made of J. K. Rowling? Why do you think her parents wanted these things? Do you think they were wrong or right to want these things?
b. What external pressures do you feel from your parents? Do you agree with their ideas about your future? Why or why not?

3. Prezi 55 - Fear of failure: Students to respond on google doc (10 minutes):
a. Look back on your vision for the future and your associated goals before answering the following questions. Rewrite your vision below: ____________________________.
   • What did failure teach J. K. Rowling?
   • Have you ever failed? What has it taught you?
   • Do you fear failure? Why or why not?
   • Do you think you might face roadblocks throughout your quest to reach your vision? What might they be?

4. Prezi 56 - Help as you continue forward (15 minutes):
   • Teacher to explain: As you heard from J. K. Rowling, she described the value of having people and resources to help you when you are in need of support. Now, we are going to
review some of those resources that you can use, in addition to those you have learned while participating in these lessons.

- Links to websites and apps; descriptions and activities are listed below for each, but it is important to let students explore these sites on their own, in order to best determine which will work for them.
  a. AnxietyBC: http://youth.anxietybc.com/healthy-thinking
  b. Mindshift: http://www.anxietybc.com/mobile-app
  c. Mindcheck: http://mindcheck.ca/
  d. Headspace: https://www.headspace.com/how-it-works
  e. Stop! Breathe! Think! http://stopbreathethink.org/

- Students to fill out chart to guide website navigation.

5. **Prezi 57 – Your story (15 minutes)**

- Teacher to explain: At the beginning of these lessons, you wrote your story. Now, write your story again. You can look back at your last story, but if things have changed for you, change your story. Additionally, this time, you can add a few things to your story. Talk about who supports you. Talk about how you will live your vision every day. Talk about how you manage stress and if you view things more positively, despite feeling out of control.

- Students to respond on google doc:
  - What’s my story?
  - What can I observe about what's going on in my life right now?
  - Sum up both the positives, and the battles...
  - List your strategies for success
  - State how you are more mindful when things become difficult
**Student Handouts**

Student handouts are designed for students to “copy” and “paste” text into a google document for personal response, or for direct answer via computer on any word processing software.

If preferred, teachers may choose to create a traditional worksheet from the text below, inserting space or lines for student hand-written work.
Lesson 1: Who am I? Why am I here? What am I learning? Where am I going?

Reflecting on Self

**inspire girls to accept that they may not have the answer, but give them permission to figure it out**

- to do so, you will actively participate in the program, not just listen
- to do so, you will discuss thoughts, feelings, values, and attitudes
- you will learn important skills that will help with self-esteem, goal-setting, motivation, and stress management

1. **Embracing who I am:**

   - Do I have flaws? What are they?
   - What about my flaws make me human?
   - Do I have strengths? What are they?
   - What about my strengths make me human?
   - Throughout my education, what has helped me recognize my strengths?
   - How do my strengths contribute to the person I am becoming? How will my education continue to promote the development of ME?

   *although i am only fourteen, i know quite well what i want,... i have my own ideas and principles, and although it may sound pretty mad from an adolescent, i feel more of a person than a child, i feel quite independent*  
   
   "Anne Frank"

2. **My story:**

   - What’s my story?
   - What can I observe about what’s going on in my life right now?
   - Sum up both the positives, and the battles...
Lesson 2: *What do they want from me?*

1. **Where am I going?**
   - Is my purpose mostly about one area of my life? Or does it include multiple influences, goals, activities, and relationships? Name these.
   - Is there a part of my life I would like to change? Why?
   - Can I change this? Or is this something that is out of my control? Can I accept that? Why or why not?

   *this above all; to thine own self be true,*
   *and it must follow, as the night the day,*
   *thou canst not then be false to any man*

   *Shakespeare*

2. **The game of Life:**
   Choose any series of numbers from 1 – 6 and list them in order. You can pick the same number multiple times, and you don’t have to use all numbers (eg. 4-5-3-2-4-3)

   a. As you follow the board game, write down the 6 values upon which you land, then, answer the following questions below:

   - How was that?
   - Did you end up rich? Or in ruins?
   - Did you find love? Or did you become a hermit?
   - Would you have preferred to have choice?

   b. Play the game again, this time choosing your own six choices. Record these choices below:

     _______________________
     _______________________
     _______________________

3. **Living your values:**
   - What would you do if you had more money than you could possibly spend?

4. **Using the evidence and finding the values:**
   a. Re-read your “dream life”.

   - What values are shown by the choices you would make with all the money in the world?
   - Do they line up with the values you feel you currently live out? Are there any missing values? Do any surprise you?
Could you live out these values in ABSENCE of money? How?

5. **Daring to dream:**

- Did Natalie have clear values?
- Who influenced those values? What role did SHE play?
- How did she live out her values in absence of money, with input from others, and in accordance with her beliefs?
Lesson 3: *I can!* Embracing mindfulness to reach goals

*Mindfulness* – it’s not about being positive, it’s about recognizing what’s happening NOW

**B** – breathe and recognize the 5 senses  
**O** – observe the feelings you are having  
**L** – listen to your values  
**D** – decide and do

1. **Karlie’s Story:**

- What was Karlie thinking as she lay awake at night?  
- How do you think that made her feel?  
- Why should Karlie be BOLD in this situation?  
- How can Karlie be BOLD in this situation?  
- What might her thought pattern look like?

Karlie needs to be *willing* to take this risk. It won’t be easy, but she needs to embrace the discomfort of the tryout, and potential outcome, in order to do her best.

2. **Mindful Breathing:**

- What was difficult about that activity?  
- Were you able to keep your mind focused on the questions? Or did you start to think about other things? Were there times in that session that were easier than others? 
- How often do you remain present? Does your mind wander and take you out of the moment? How can you return to the present?

3. **Mindful Practice:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Fill in the chart for rounds 1 and 2

- Answer the following questions
  - Did your level of discomfort change?
  - Were you surprised to find out that you lasted longer the second round?
  - Did your mindful practice help?

*This exercise shows that it is not enough to just “get down to business” or “do what you have to” or “be positive and believe in yourself”. Instead, you must observe when times are uncomfortable, recognize how you can make small changes, and rejoice in the reward of using BOLD skills.*
Lesson 4: *Stopping the Wheel: Using stress to succeed, not worry*

*chase meaning rather than avoiding discomfort*

1. Stress as the **ENEMY**
   - Have you ever thought of stress as the enemy?
   - What was happening in your life that was stressful?
     - Tell a story here; describe your physical and emotional feelings
   - How do you usually react?
     - Share the outcome.

2. Stress as the **FRIEND**
   - Reframe your story now
     - Don’t change what happened to make you feel stressed, and don’t “delete” the fact that you felt physical and/or emotional stress
     - Instead, rewrite the story from a new reaction – a positive one
     - Does the outcome change in this story?

3. Track star
   - After listening to this story, what are some red thoughts you might have?
   - What are some actions you might take to make those red thoughts **worse**?
   - How are these harmful to your progress?

4. Track star
   - What are some green thoughts you might have?
   - What are some actions you might take to move those green thoughts from “placeholders” to “mindshifters”?
   - How are these helpful to your progress?

5. Role play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Narrator/judge</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Who “won”? Why?
- Which role seemed easier to play? Why?
Lesson 5: Just do it! Putting strategies into action to achieve goals

1. My values:

- List your values from Lesson 3

2. Break it down:

- Write out your vision for the future (no more than 5 years ahead). Underline the value(s) and the goal(s) in your statement.
- Determine if there are different categories that your goals fit into. Are some personal? Some related to education? Others related to finances? Split these up now.

3. Write it down:

- Rewrite your statements in the present tense. Doing so encourages you that these things WILL happen.

4. Set some strategies:

- Strategies are a really important part of reaching your goals. Fill out the chart with some strategies that are helpful to each goal that leads to your vision.
- Have the strategies become more specific (and short term) as you go along the chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategy 1</th>
<th>Strategy 2</th>
<th>Strategy 3</th>
<th>Strategy 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Make them measurable:

- Set some guidelines to measure each of your goals.
  - Be specific
  - Set dates where possible

Goal 1: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Mindfulness Practice:

- You can bring mindfulness to anything you do, including your strategies. If you find yourself stressed out, worried, or distracted, when you should be focused on your goals, try some of these mindfulness tips, similar to those we worked on in Lesson 4:
  - Put your hands in your lap.
  - Sit with your feet planted on the ground.
  - Take deep, slow breaths in... and out...
    - Picture the worry you are experiencing as you breathe in
    - As you breathe out, picture letting go of that worry
    - Picture yourself acting out a strategy as you breathe in
    - As you breathe out, imagine how it feels to accomplish that strategy

7. Think GREEN:

- Green thoughts are not always the FIRST thoughts we have when we are feeling stressed out, so it is good to have a few in our “bank” of thoughts; ones that are easy to turn to when we start to think more negatively. Looking back on Lesson 4, see if you can identify some green thoughts to help you reach the goals you’ve written down today.
- List them in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Green thought</th>
<th>Green thought</th>
<th>Green thought</th>
<th>Green thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 6: *Introducing...! Where I am now and where I am headed next*

*The mind is not a book, to be opened at will and examined at leisure. Thoughts are not etched on the inside of skulls, to be perused by an invader. The mind is a complex and many-layered thing.*

Severus Snape

1. **External demands:**

   - What external demands were made of J. K. Rowling?
   - Why do you think her parents wanted these things?
   - Do you think they were wrong or right to want these things?
   - What external pressures do you feel from your parents?
   - Do you agree with their ideas about your future? Why or why not?

2. **Fear of failure:**

   *Look back on your vision for the future and your associated goals before answering the following questions. Rewrite your vision below:*

   ________________________________________________________________

   - What did failure teach J. K. Rowling?
   - Have you ever failed? What has it taught you?
   - Do you fear failure? Why or why not?
   - Do you think you might face roadblocks throughout your quest to reach your vision? What might they be?

   *You sort of start thinking anything’s possible if you’ve got enough nerve.*

   Ginny Weasley

3. **Help as you continue forward :**

   d. Headspace: [https://www.headspace.com/how-it-works](https://www.headspace.com/how-it-works)
   e. Stop! Breathe! Think! [http://stopbreathethink.org/](http://stopbreathethink.org/)
- Students to fill out chart to guide website navigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website/App</th>
<th>Three sections to explore (can copy and paste links)</th>
<th>Is there a built in reminder to encourage use?</th>
<th>Three tips suggested for managing stress</th>
<th>Would you use this site/app? Why or why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AnxietyBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindshift</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindcheck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headspace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop! Breathe! Think!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The consequences of our actions are so complicated, so diverse, that predicting the future is a very difficult business indeed.*

Albus Dumbledore

4. My story:

- What’s my story?
- What can I observe about what’s going on in my life right now?
- Sum up both the positives, and the battles...
- List your strategies for success
- State how you are more mindful when things become difficult
Chapter 5: Considerations

Project Summary

The Wellness Series was designed in response to the growing number of stressed and anxious teens at Brookswood Fulton Academy (BFA). As previously stated, students at BFA are typically high-achieving girls who set performance goals in pursuit of high marks and accolades, rather than mastery of skills. There is perceived pressure from family members, teachers, and peers; this pressure to succeed can sometimes be viewed as positive, but may also unknowingly contribute to student anxiety. Anxiety can negatively affect motivation and goal-setting strategies, if the stress reaction cannot be managed appropriately. Research suggests that anxiety is a necessary part of the human response to input which is deemed out of the target’s locus of control (Huberty, 2008). However, these feelings of worry and stress become problematic when they work to prevent typical functioning or stop a person from reaching goals.

The goal of this project is not to decrease student stress. Rather, it is to help students manage those reactions to stress which eventually impede progress and may lead to further mental health challenges. Rather than try to eliminate stress from the school environment, the Wellness Series intends to help students reflect on their situation, identify their goals, and recognize limitations and supports before proceeding with action. Ideally, the project will be used in grade 10 classrooms to prepare students to make decisions about their futures, set and reach short- and long-term goals, and manage the stress that comes with both setbacks and success. Students can benefit from goal-setting practice, employment mindfulness, and other strategies taught by the Wellness Series at almost any age. Grade 10 students are chosen, as they are seen to be at a critical age. Likely, they have experienced a set-back which has caused them to lose sight of goals or redefine their values. Additionally, they are at an age wherein which they are starting to set concrete goals for the future; the lessons which teach appropriate goal-setting measures and finding specific strategies to meet goals may have more relevance.
As summarized in the literature, teaching students about mindfulness practice is one way to increase meta-cognition and improve self-regulation skills. Mindfulness practice is a major focus of the Wellness Series as it promotes the development of the cognitive mind. Ultimately, schools should be preparing students with the skills to make good decisions, set appropriate goals, and pursue their passions (Turner & Husman, 2008). Developing purposeful internal dialogue can promote these invaluable skills. The Wellness Series helps students to recognize that they cannot control each minute, but they can be aware of each moment. As Shao and Skarlicki (2009) suggest, mindfulness practice is not intended to remove anxious triggers, but shift a student’s perception and reaction to those triggers. Being able to recognize a stressful event in advance and manage associated emotions is a skill that has been shown to serve students well, both during and beyond their high school years (Turner & Husman, 2008).

Finally, by offering students a template for goal-setting that encourages learners to follow their vision and master associated skills, the Wellness Series intends to equip students with skills necessary for long-term goal-setting. Setting mastery goals in order to increase knowledge, rather than performance, is more likely when a student values the content at hand (Wolters, 2004). Through the identification of values and subsequent vision-building, students are able to articulate their internal motivation and harness that when reaching challenging goals.

**Future Considerations**

In the highly evaluative high school setting, many tasks, such as tests and assignments, have associated assessments which are important to students. The outcome of that assessment is deemed out of the student’s control, and without self-regulatory skills, she may experience an unmanageable anxious reaction. Students can be taught self-regulatory and mindfulness techniques which allow the student to evaluate her stress levels and apply necessary interventions. However, while researching effects on student motivation, learning, and stress,
there appeared to be a correlation between classroom assessment practice and student motivation style. Therefore, it is recommended that the Wellness Series expand to include more teacher involvement through formalized professional development. As Wolters (2004) suggests, a classroom which promotes self-assessment and offers time for self-regulation is in turn more likely to promote mastery goal setting. If a student is preparing for a test or assignment and knows in advance that she will be able to assess her work, review her errors using a clear rubric, and make adjustments, she will feel more in control of her learning. The time she is offered permits her to critique her own work, reflect upon her efforts, and regulate her reaction. To shift the school culture from a highly evaluative environment to one that sets high standards and promotes learning requires education of staff, parents, and students alike. This is no easy feat. Beginning the discussion with the Wellness Series is an excellent first step, but it is recommended that teacher involvement be a priority in order to increase impact. My hope is that doing so may eventually facilitate a shift in classroom assessment to further promote mastery of tasks, rather than performance.

The BC Ministry of Education (2013) continues to make changes to the kindergarten through grade 9 curriculum, while promising a shift in the grade 10 to 12 learning outcomes and educational requirements. At the junior grade levels there has been an emphasis on personalized learning and project-based instruction (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). This style of teaching in turn promotes a shift in assessment practices; rote memorization, standardized tests, and prescribed content are no longer highly valued. To appropriately prepare for the shift in curriculum, the Wellness Series may expand to include student-led lessons with a focus on finding passions and pursuing personal educational avenues, in addition to promoting student-created criteria. Including this in the Wellness Series might give students the tools to build their own educational pathway using mindfulness, goal-setting, and self-regulation skills already learned.
While the Wellness Series does not focus on improving academic performance directly, through goal-setting lessons and internal reflection, the series does help students identify academic success as a personal value. What is does not address is the concept of self-worth. Zell and Krizan (2014) analyzed a wide range of studies to bridge the gap among findings about the relationship between ability to evaluate self-worth with regards to a task and actual performance on that task. The main results of the study indicate that there is a consistent, yet moderate, relationship between self-worth, self-evaluation, and measures of actual skill across disciplines. Additionally, researchers found that there is little difference in self-evaluating prior to or after the external test, as those with inflated sense of self will still report perceived higher achievement and those with low sense of self will report perceived low skill (Zell & Krizan, 2014). I do believe that this study further advances research in self-evaluation and self-perception as it clearly states the implications for future studies such as: a) researching self-evaluation and skill; b) determining whether or not people with high/low self-evaluation are consistent across disciplines; and c) identifying if personality factors (narcissism, self-consciousness, etc.) contribute to self-awareness. Self-evaluation can greatly impact a student’s ability to set appropriate goals. If a student has an inflated sense of self, she may set goals that are too high for her capabilities, or that she cannot reach within the context of her current work habits. Additionally, a student with deflated self-perception may not set goals that are appropriate to her capabilities, never being pushed to a higher level of learning.

**Project Limitations**

The Wellness Series is created to build self-regulation skills, teach students how to set and reach mastery goals, introduce mindfulness practice, and help students articulate their vision for the future. These learning outcomes are taught, practiced, and reflected upon in six short lessons. This brief timeline implies that inadequate time is spent on each concept, perhaps leaving the students without the necessary background to master skills taught. At BFA, there
are a number of scheduling challenges that limit an outside teacher or counsellor from using teaching blocks to deliver non-curricular content. Were the Wellness Series to become a formalized part of the Planning 10 curriculum, it may be better expanded to ten or more lessons. Most notably, research suggests that effective mindfulness practice can take months to acquire (Shao & Skarlicki, 2009). The research reviewed for the purposes of this project suggested that mindfulness be taught and practiced over the course of four to six lessons. The aforementioned timetable limitations prevented such lessons from being included in the Wellness Series. Instead, the facilitator may choose to work with specific students on mindfulness practice, or invite other teachers to introduce mindfulness in their classroom setting.

As previously stated, teacher involvement would be a valuable addition to the Wellness Series. Though teachers are informed about the intention and plan for the Wellness Series, they are not considered important stakeholders in the lessons. Research recognizes the effect of assessment on student motivation, anxiety, and mastery approach goal-setting (Zell & Krizan, 2014). If teachers are not able to recognize the language students use as a result of the Wellness Series (i.e. “self-regulation”, “mindfulness”, “mastery approach”), the effect of the lessons may not be as great. If the teachers approach the Wellness Series as a part of their moral purpose, they may be more likely to feel connected to the material. The tools and strategies taught within the Wellness Series are not facts or processes that can be memorized; rather they must be embraced and internalized. Having teachers on board would be an invaluable asset to the program.

Additionally, the importance of parent involvement on student cannot be understated. Perceived or real pressure from parents to reach academic goals and receive accolades can be stress-inducing for many students. Informing parents of the benefits of mastery goal-setting and mindfulness practice poses challenges similar to, but perhaps more daunting than, those of educating teachers. While it does include a message to parents, the Wellness Series does not adequately address the issue of educating parents on this new approach to managing stress and
setting goals. Adding more parent evenings and increasing parent communication through newsletters or the school website may be considerations to improve the effectiveness of the Wellness Series.

**Project Implementation**

Natural steps to implementing the six lesson Wellness Series involve all stakeholders. First, parents and teachers should be informed of the purpose and goals of the Wellness Series; all concerns or comments should be considered before implementation. The Wellness Series appears to best fit within the Planning 10 curriculum and learning outcomes. If deemed appropriate, the Health and Career Education 8/9 learning outcomes are conducive to the content; depending on group maturity, this may be another course to consider.

Ideally, the lessons would be offered over the course of two months. As each lesson builds upon the other, more than two weeks between lessons may decrease effectiveness. Alternatively, the lessons challenge students to employ the skills over extended time periods, so consecutive lessons are not recommended. Allowing students approximately one week to employ the strategies taught and compare past and present outcomes is ideal. After this time, the next lesson will prompt further reflection; if the lessons are close enough, students are more likely to recall honest situations and outcomes. Ultimately, the time for delivery of the Wellness Series can vary, depending on classroom culture and student responsiveness, but two months is recommended.

Finally, the teacher or counsellor presenting the lessons should be aware of specific mental health concerns in the classroom. If students are receiving outside intervention from medical professionals, some of the strategies surrounding mindfulness or self-regulation may differ from their usual practice. Ensuring that all students are able to participate in the lessons and are not pushed beyond their comfort is important before implementation begins.
In that same spirit, assessment of assignments should be limited to more informal anecdotal feedback. To attach a mark for content of topics so personal may deter students from exploring their true values and goals. Instead, if a mark is necessary, it is recommended that students are given the opportunity to self-evaluate, or a completion mark is assigned by the facilitator.

**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that mental health awareness is increasing across the country. Delivery of mental health content at the high school level offers a unique opportunity; students can learn to manage their own stress, respond to those around them positively, and reach goals to become productive and satisfied adults. Removing life’s stressors is not the answer. Instead, a response that teaches youth to manage their stress, self-regulate during highly emotional times, and continue to push forward is best. Employing mindfulness practice to manage emotions and shifting negative thinking to positive outcomes are both ways that youth can manage worry when they recognize triggers. Research shows that females, in particular, should be offered support in this way. Females are more likely to suffer from anxiety and associated depression than males; they are also more likely to benefit academically and emotionally from mindfulness.

Having support at the school level is vital. Teachers, administrators, and counsellors should be aware of the strategies that students are using and encourage this as part of the school culture. Helping students set mastery goals will help them to better enjoy learning and see the value that challenges bring to the process. At home, parents should be educated about the triggers, the responses, and the helpful strategies their teens are using to manage expectations and stress.

The *Wellness Series* offers a set of strategies that will help students manage stress and enjoy the process of reaching their goals. Learning to self-regulate through mindfulness
practice, recognizing the importance of personal values in goal-setting, and practicing strategies to shift thinking are all valuable ways to promote student resilience and shift culture.


References


Appendix A

Teacher Resource Files

i. Lesson 2: Board game

ii. Lesson 4: “Red vs. Green” Partner 1, Script
Lesson 2: Board game

Lesson 4: “Red vs. Green” Partner 1, Script

I look up from my desk as I hear my teacher call my name. She is looking right at me.

She is announcing to the class that my poem, which I wrote from the bottom of my heart and which is really personal, has been selected to be read at the Independent School Professional Development Opening Address. Teachers and students will be in attendance.

I will have to read the poem and then field question about the poem; what it means to me; how I came to write it; what I hope people hear from my writing.

Sure, I have the option to say “no thanks” … but here’s the thing… I need my teacher to write me a reference letter (a good one!) for the AP program next year.

One of the criteria is ability to discuss literature and poetry in groups and share your work… I’m right on the cusp of getting in and declining this would not be in my best interest.

What am I going to do?!