

Atención Plena and Pláticas: A Latino Cultural Wealth Approach Youth Mental Wellness

Integral Community Solutions Institute



LOCATION

Fresno County, CA



GROUPS SERVED

- Latinx children, youth and families
- Our community-defined approach is the last hope for our student population at Ripperdan Continuation School in Madera
- For our young Latinx population this continuation school, to often the penultimate stop on the school-to-prison pipeline
- Past experience: high absenteeism, defiant behavior, fighting, drug use, gang involvement

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ATENCIÓN PLENA: MINDFULNESS WITH A LATINO TWIST

The students attend a Hip Hop Therapy program in which "Atención Plena" or mindfulness is introduced and practiced through "Pláticas". The program introduces mindfulness practices and the students acquire knowledge about their mental health issues (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, etc.) and find the means through literacy, poetry, music, storytelling to seek their meaning, intrinsic self-worth, and self-esteem and efficacy. The combination of poetry, lyrics and sound beats, the students kids convey their emotions and feelings via hip hop.



Students in Mr. Pedraza's English class at Sunnyside High School in Fresno, California practice *Atención Plena* outside the classroom on a beautiful morning at the request of students.



Mindfulness Club President, leads workshop participants in a mindfulness body scan exercise at an annual Latino conference in Visalia, California.



Mindfulness Club practices mindfulness meditation at Shaver Lake, California during their professional development day during the month of May.



Practicing mindfulness while on the river, which most youth do not have access to -- except through this program.



MEMES – ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Students create their own memes, which are basically pictures with captions borrowed from sayings in English and Spanish which have a moral or ethical foundation. Through these memes, the youth learn that they already have a foundation of protective factors for positive behavior within "Atención Plena" they can access and put into practice through "Pláticas" and translate into successful behaviors that are consistent with prevention and early intervention.



PLÁTICAS (MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATION)

Student Storytelling Quotes

"Feeling bad every time that I see my mom cry I can see it in her eyes when she keeps the pain inside looking up at the sky, thinking asking God why, should I kill myself today or should I try to make it right"
-Student from Ripperdan Community Day School

"She started to withdraw in middle school, because the bullying would never stop all of the words got to her and started clouding up her thoughts she didn't want to rely on smoking, and she didn't want to hurt herself she opened up and she started to get some help"
-Student from Mt. Vista Continuation High School

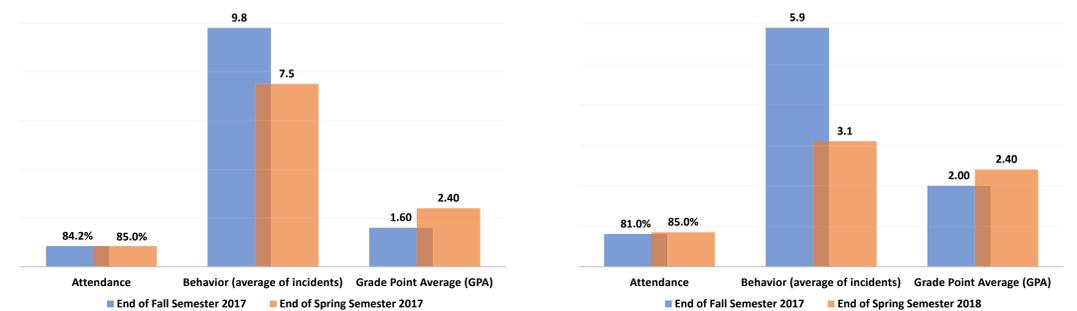
"But today I'm truly proud of myself, for keeping it real, and workin' on my mental health so I'm feeling less stressed, its not easy I must confess I'm stayin' away from the streets, and focusing on better things"
-Student from Ripperdan Community Day School

"I've got a racing mind that I want to slow down, good and bad thoughts they always come around, feels like I'm screaming yet I don't hear a sound, sometimes I feel good like I'm never coming down I want to confess my pain, why my trust ain't the same, I want to confess all these thoughts in my brain but once I share that, it'll never be the same"
-Student from Ripperdan Community Day School



OUTCOMES

Atención Plena and *Pláticas* can be seen as academic model that emphasize environmental factors including context and classroom culture where social learning, mentorship, and scaffolding opportunities exist and enhance youths' academic engagement and achievement. Data from 4 time points (19, 64, 53, and 69 students) reflect positive changes in youths' behavior and academics.



MEDIA OUTREACH: RADIO AND LOCAL NEWS



Through regular Internet Galaxy radio programs, the team shares mental health advice and engagement with the community.

KVPR (NPR) article on the Mindfulness Club: <https://www.kvpr.org/post/fresno-area-high-school-students-embrace-mindfulness-movement-new-club>

Fresno Bee article on the Mindfulness Club's gift of the Peace Pole to Sunnyside High School: <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/education/article78536657.html>

The Latino Conference presentation: <https://www.thelatinocommission.org/workshops-2019>

