Background

- MHFA is an evidence-based program aimed to teach individuals skills and knowledge to adequately respond and identify mental illness signs, crisis, and substance use disorders.
- Nearly one in five adults in the U.S are living with a mental illness, and these numbers are steadily rising.
- MHFA is especially beneficial in the field of pharmacy as pharmacists are a significant public health resource.
- Pharmacists need to recognize crisis symptoms, be able to engage the patient and direct them to appropriate help.
- Past research has suggested that while pharmacists are confident in pharmacotherapy for mental illness, they are often hesitant to intervene or identify signs of mental illness.

Objective

- To assess the benefits and areas of growth of MHFA training for pharmacy students by evaluating:
  1. Retention of knowledge
  2. Utilization of skills
  3. Interest in future topics at the 6 and 12 month mark from training date.

Methods

Study Design

- The study was two anonymous, online surveys and was approved by SIUE IRB.
- The surveys were developed by Qualtrics and distributed through email lists.
- Two surveys were distributed at the 6 and 12 month mark from the students’ MHFA training date.
- Surveys assessed the students’ retention and utilization of skills, demographic of those they demonstrated skills on, interests in future topics and personal experience.

Study Sample

- The inclusion criteria were SIUE SOP students from the class of 2023 who took MHFA training their P1 year.

Results

Confidence Utilizing the ALGEE skills since MHFA

![Confidence Utilizing the ALGEE skills since MHFA](chart)

- The mean confidence level on a scale of 1-5 for the likelihood of helping a friend, family member or stranger experiencing a mental health crisis slightly increased from 3.89 at 6 months to 3.91 at 12 months.

Utilization of skills taught in MHFA

- 35 (52.2%) students had reported utilizing skills taught in MHFA at 6 months.
- 44 (65.6%) students had reported utilizing skills taught in MHFA at 12 months.

Personal Experience

- 38 (56.7%) of students had reported having experienced a mental health problem in which MHFA would have helped at 6 months.
- 42 (65.6%) of students had reported having experienced a mental health problem in which MHFA would have helped at 6 months.

Conclusion

- While majority of ALGEE skills were retained, reviewing skills to assess suicide risk would be beneficial especially in today’s society.
- There is need to improve continuing education on depression and anxiety due to high prevalence.
- The increase in utilization of skills and consistent confidence levels reported by students demonstrates the benefit and need of MHFA training for all people.
- Awareness and resources for mental health should be emphasized periodically for the student body, faculty and staff.