CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Guided meditations in the treatment of trauma-related sleep disorders in adjudicated adolescents in New Mexico

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Jackson Williams

Children Youth and Families Department of New Mexico, Juvenile Justice Services, United States

The purpose of this study is to determine the efficacy of providing guided meditations to reduce insomnia and other sleep disorders in a juvenile justice-involved population. Studies have shown that early childhood trauma, identified as Adverse Childhood Experiences, has a detrimental effect on the overall emotional and physical well-being of the trauma sufferer, often resulting in sleep disruption. Consequently, adolescents develop ineffective behaviors such as aggression, violence, social functioning deficits, and self-harm, often requiring directed means of moderating and resolving those behaviors. Research supports the use of evidence-based mindfulness modalities in the treatment of adolescent sleep disorders. The use of guided meditations was implemented at a New Mexico juvenile justice facility, with a population of incarcerated youth ranging in age from 15 to 20 years old. Guided meditations were broadcast over an FM frequency during sleeping hours over a four-week period, with pre- and post-intervention assessments using the Insomnia Severity Index and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index. Data analysis of the pre-and post-assessment scores of the study population (n=27) showed a strong relationship to the use of guided meditations in the decrease of insomnia symptoms and an increase in the quality of sleep. Paired sample t-tests for both the ISI and PSQI showed statistical significance within this study. Of the starting population (n=42), approximately 69% of the study group meet the criteria for inclusion in the final data analysis.

Keywords: insomnia; sleep; adolescent; youth; juvenile justice; incarcerated; trauma