

# Cultivating Compassion and Self Care for Nursing Students



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# About us



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# Introduction

Mental health issues among nursing students on the rise <sup>4,7</sup>

- ↑ dropout rates
- Poor sleep quality
- Negative effects to learning & performance
- ↑ risk for suicide





# Background & Problem

2-year COVID-19 impact study (N=12,694 nurses) found that younger nurses are especially impacted by the pandemic <sup>3</sup>

- 66% are anxious
- 43% are depressed
- 2 out of 3 reported burnout
- 63% considered leaving the profession

Unmanaged stress & anxiety in nurses leads to <sup>4,5,7</sup>

- ↑ medication errors
- Adverse patient outcomes
- Risk for substance abuse
- Increased RN turnover
- Suicide

# Rationale

Mindfulness education <sup>6,8,9</sup>

- Mitigates burnout & compassion fatigue
- Decrease stress and anxiety levels
- Promote coping skills and optimize mental health & wellbeing
- Not consistently integrated into nursing programs



# Compassion: Caring Science

Scientific evidence that caring improves patient outcomes, patient safety, provider well-being, employee engagement, and organizational performance <sup>10</sup>



# National Recognition

2020: The American Association of Colleges in Nursing (AACN) issues a call to action for leaders in nursing academia to address the mental health crisis in nursing <sup>2</sup>

2021 AACN Core competencies for professional nursing revised to require integration of wellness and resiliency into nursing curricula <sup>1</sup>

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## Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

**Descriptor:** Participation in activities and self-reflection that foster personal health, resilience, and well-being; contribute to lifelong learning; and support the acquisition of nursing expertise and the assertion of leadership.

**Contextual Statement:** Competency in personal, professional, and leadership development encompasses three areas: 1) **development of the nurse as an individual who is resilient**, agile, and capable of adapting to ambiguity and change; 2) development of the nurse as a professional responsible for lifelong learning and **ongoing self-reflection**; and 3) development of the nurse as a leader proficient in asserting control, influence, and power in professional and personal contexts, which includes advocacy for patients and the nursing profession as leaders within the healthcare arena. Development of these dimensions requires a commitment to personal growth, sustained expansion of professional knowledge and expertise, and determined leadership practice in a variety of contexts.

Graduates must develop attributes and skills critical to the viability of the profession and practice environments. The aim is to promote diversity and retention in the profession, self-awareness, **avoidance of stress-induced emotional and mental exhaustion**, and re-direction of **energy from negative perceptions to positive influence through leadership opportunities**.

Entry-Level Professional Nursing Education	Advanced-Level Nursing Education
<b>10.1 Demonstrate a commitment to personal health and well-being.</b>	
10.1a <b>Demonstrate healthy, self-care</b> behaviors that promote wellness and resiliency.	10.1c <b>Contribute to an environment that promotes self-care, personal health, and well-being.</b>
10.1b Manage conflict between personal and professional responsibilities.	10.1d Evaluate the workplace environment to determine level <b>of health and well-being.</b>

# Clinical Question

What impact does a hands-on, experiential course to optimize nursing student mental health and wellbeing have on nursing student perceived stress and resiliency?





# Intervention

**Title:** Compassionate Care for Nurses

**Credits:** 2 credit elective

**Course Description:** This course examines the impact stress has on disease processes, mental health, well-being, and professional burnout. Students will explore the science behind evidenced-based stress management strategies and learn easily applied practices that promote provider and patient wellness. Students explored how stress affects mental health and well-being.

Students participated in a variety of evidence-based, integrative strategies that included meditation, mindfulness, yoga, tai chi, forest bathing, culinary medicine, and more.

# Course Enrollment AY 2022-2023

Fall 2022	Spring 2023
18 students <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 17 seniors</li><li>• 1 Sophomore</li></ul>	22 students <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20 Juniors</li><li>• 2 First years</li></ul>



# Methods & Measures

Electronic questionnaires sent out at the beginning and end of each semester via REDCap:

- Demographics
- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)
- Brief Resiliency Scale (BRS-6)
- Custom qualitative questionnaire

IRB determination of “not research” via exemption category 2 – “exempt from IRB review”

Survey Completion Voluntary

Data Anonymous and kept confidential



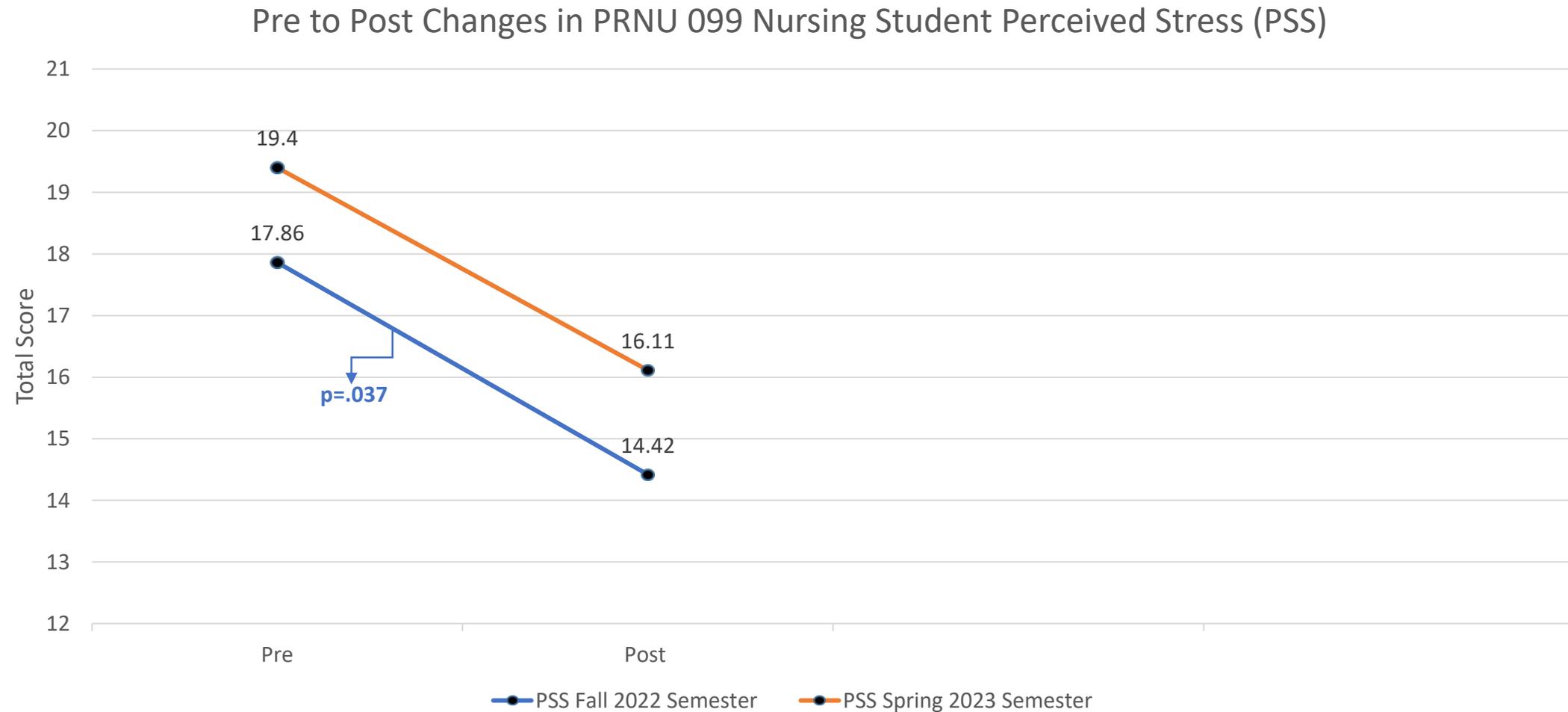
# Results

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of PRNU Students*

Demographics	Fall 2022		Spring 2023	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Female	13	92	19	90
Male	1	7	2	9
Nonbinary	0	-	1	4
Ethnicity				
Non-Hispanic or Latino	13	92	19	90
Hispanic or Latino	1	7	2	9
Race				
White	13	92	20	95
Hispanic or Latino	0	-	1	4
Preferred not to answer	1	7	1	4
Age				
21-25 years old	13	92	13	61
20 years or younger	1	7	8	38

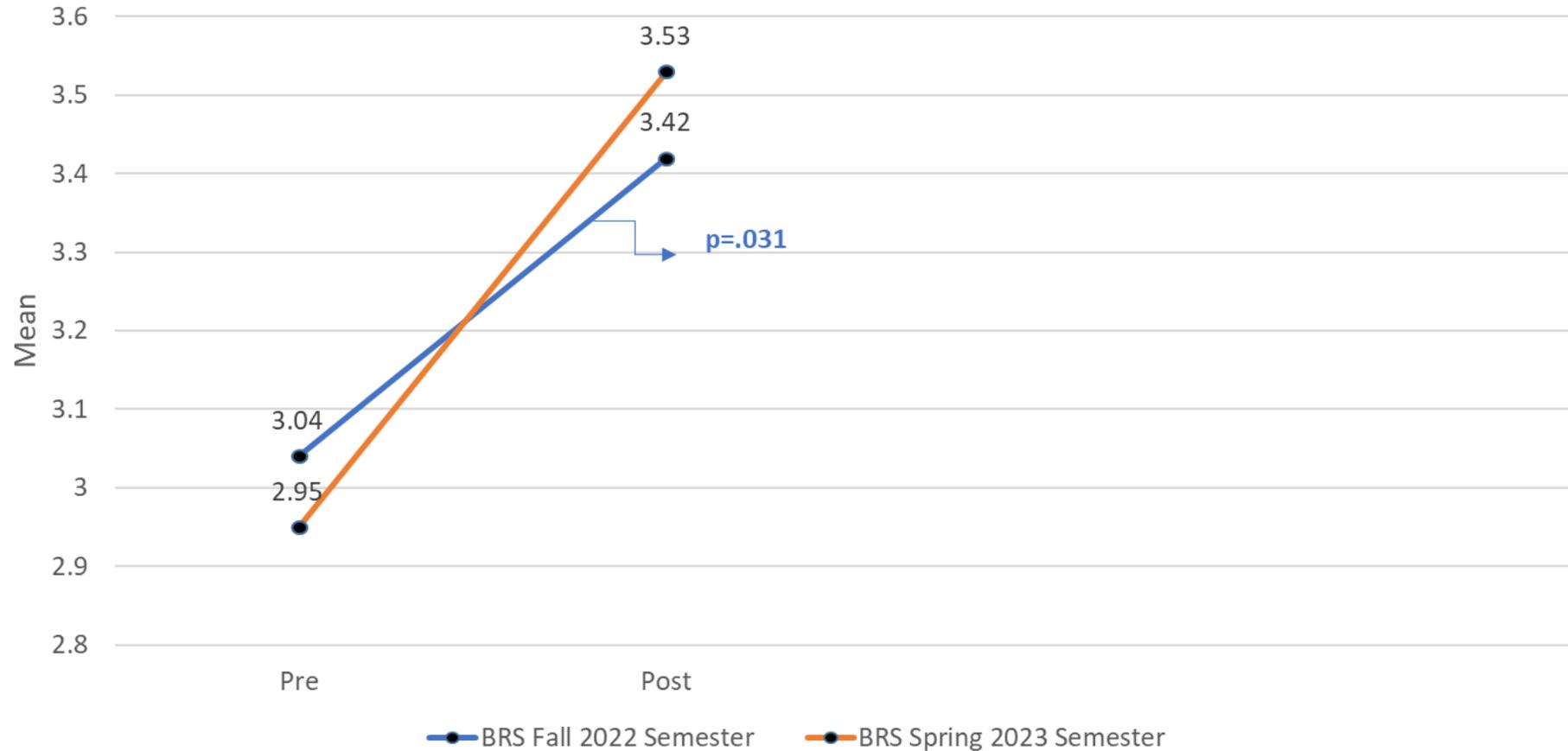
# Perceived Stress



\*Paired t- tests were used for analysis with one or two-tail significance levels ( $p < .05$ ) reported.

# Resiliency

Pre to Post Changes in PRNU 099 Nursing Student Resiliency (BRS)



\*Paired t- tests were used for analysis with one or two-tail significance levels ( $p < .05$ ) reported.

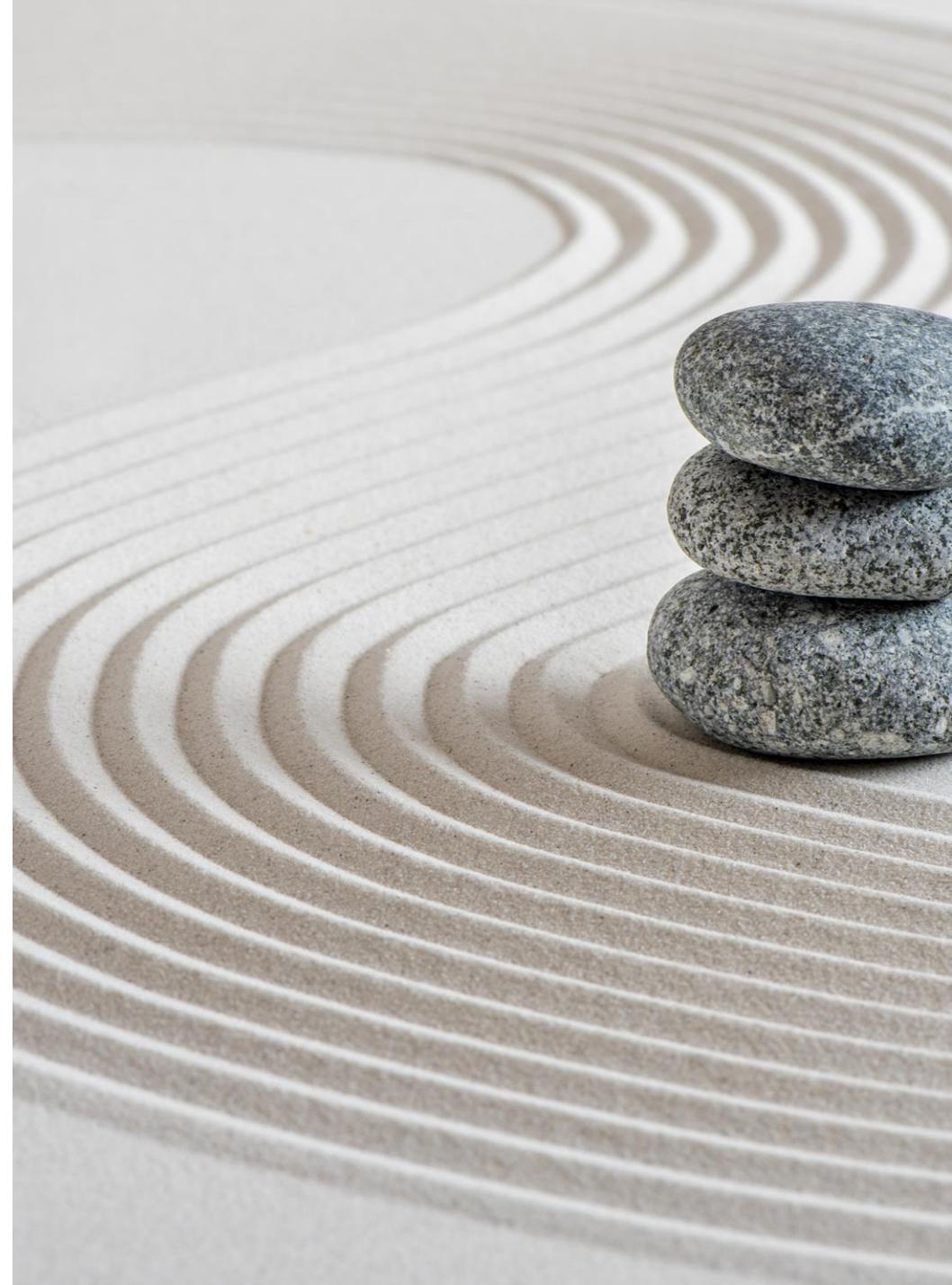
# Qualitative

*"I feel that I am now able to much better control my stress. I didn't even realize until right now that it likely is correlated with me taking this class. I used to have extreme stress and anxiety, though I feel I am able to manage it much more effectively now."*

*"I feel significantly less stressed than I did at the beginning of the semester"*

*"This class gives you the tools you need to be successful in a world and a career that is inherently stressful. I think it empowered me to have ownership over my own mental health and realize that it is not out of my control - I can do things that will positively impact how I am doing, and it's not hard. Self-care made approachable."*

*"I think it is super important especially for nursing students considering the stress of schooling and being a nurse later on. It can be easy to disregard self-care so having a class that makes it mandatory worked for me in terms of making time for self-care."*



# Limitations

- Small sample size
- Low survey response rate
- Survey respondents predominantly white female



# Next Steps

- Integrated concepts in planetary health into the next iterations of the course
- Online version of the course to run in summer 2025 for graduate nursing students
- Travel version of the course: The intersection of mindfulness, compassion, and planetary health for nurses to run over spring break 2024
- Course Proposal submitted to make *Compassionate Care for Nurses* a required course in the nursing curriculum effective AY 2024-2025

# References

American Nurses Foundation. (2022, March 1). Pulse on the nation's nurses survey series: COVID-19 two-year impact assessment. ANA Enterprise. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disasterpreparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/covid-19-impact-assessment-survey---the-second-year/>

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