The Importance of Prioritizing Mental and Emotional Well-Being Among College Students

- 25% of Gen Zers say they don't do enough to manage their stress (APA)
- 73% of Gen Zers indicate they could have benefited from more emotional support in the last 12 months (APA)
- 91% of college students recently reported moderate to high stress levels (NYT article)
- 39% of college students reported moderate to severe anxiety (NYT article)
- 53% of college students percent reported moderate to severe depression (NYT article)
- 50% of people develop a mental health disorder at some point in their lives and 75% of these disorders develop by the age of 24 (NAMI)
- 80% of college students reported that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their mental health (Active Minds)

Benefits of Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and Self-Compassion Training for College Students

**Positive Psychology**
- Studies show that college students who report higher levels of optimism (Carver et al., 2009) and emotional well-being (Diener, 2000) enjoy college more and report higher levels of satisfaction with their college experience (Schreiner et al., 2009b).

**Mindfulness**
- College students with higher levels of mindfulness experience lower levels of anxiety in response to academic stressors and use less defensive, more effective coping strategies (Weinstein et al., 2009).
- College students who have experienced Mindfulness Training report that it “helps them ‘get more out of’ their academic work because they learn how to ‘bring the mind back’ when a professor is lecturing or other students are talking” (Grace, 2011, p. 241).
- Research on first-year college students indicates that mindfulness practice facilitates their adjustment to college (Ramlar et al., 2016).
Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion training has been found to reduce chronic academic stress among college students (Zhang et al., 2016).
- Undergraduate students with higher levels of self-compassion are:
  1. less likely to report feelings of homesickness during their first term in college (Terry et al., 2012)
  2. experience fewer social adjustment issues throughout their time in college (Kyeong, 2013)
  3. exhibit lower levels of procrastination (Sirois, 2014)
  4. demonstrate higher levels of resilience—namely, they are more likely to respond constructively to academic and personal setbacks (Neely et al., 2009), maintain self-motivation and sense of competency, and perceive mistakes as learning opportunities (Neff et al., 2005).
- Even brief self-compassion interventions have been helpful in reducing college students’ feelings of depression and increasing their feelings of optimism, happiness, and self-efficacy (Smeets & Neff, 2013).