

Introduction to Mindfulness



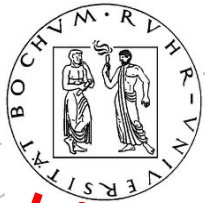
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Dr. Bennert's Professional Trajectory



1996-1999, B.S.
Physics-Astronomy,
Minors: Biology



Hoher List Observatory
(Germany)



1999-2005
M.A., Ph.D.,
Astronomy

Calar Alto (Spain)



Centro Astronómico Hispano en Andalucía



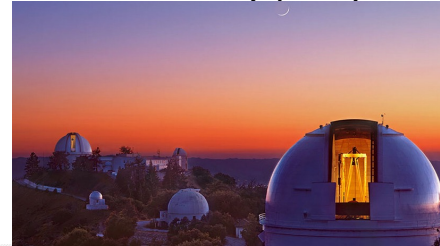
La Silla &
El Paranal
(Chile)



2005-2008
Postdoc

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
UCRIVERSIDE

Lick Observatory (California)



Keck Observatory
(Hawaii)



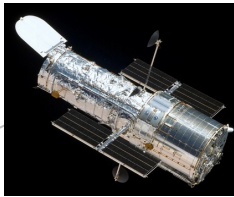
2008-2011
Postdoc

UCSB
ASTROPHYSICS

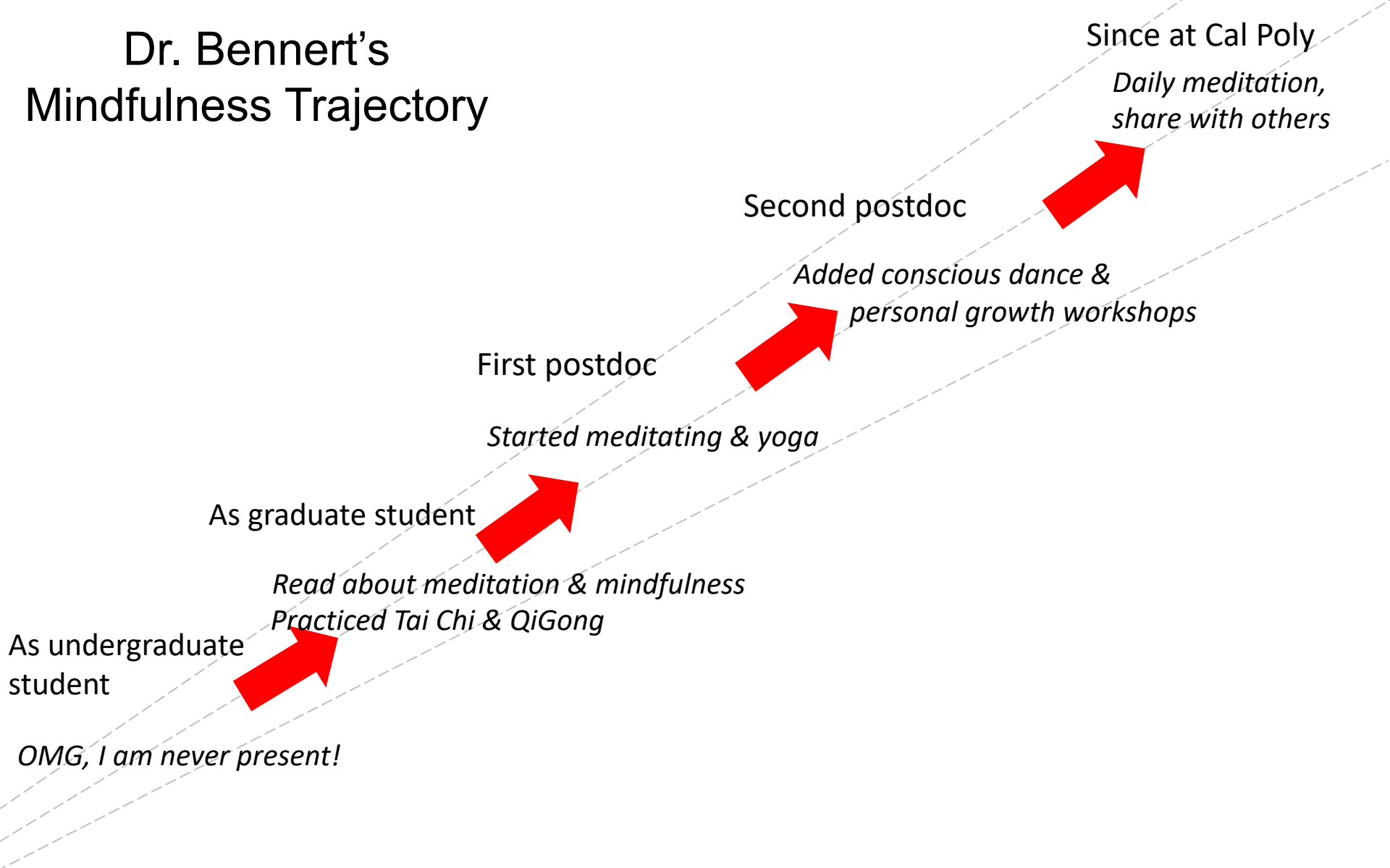


Since 2011:

CAL POLY



Dr. Bennert's Mindfulness Trajectory

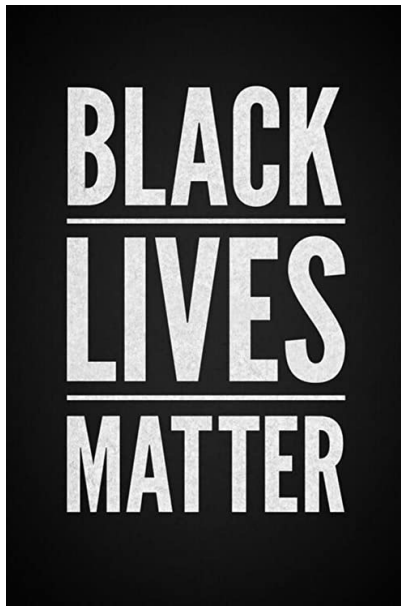
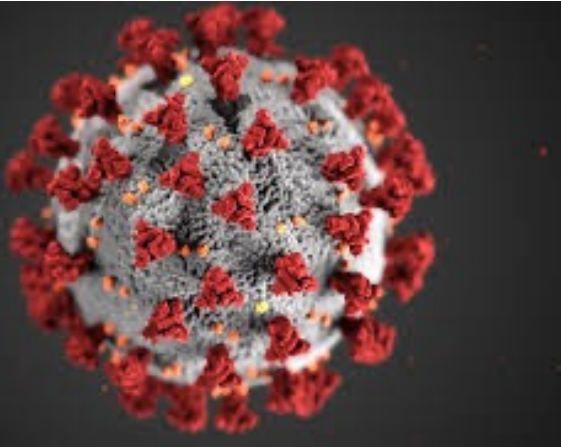


Mindfulness & Meditation...

- A. Is completely new to me
- B. I have heard about it, but have not tried it myself
- C. I have tried it a few times
- D. I practice mindfulness on a daily basis
- E. I am basically a Buddhist monk

A lot is happening...

COVID-19, Climate Crisis, Social Injustice & Systemic Racism,
Wars in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Yemen...



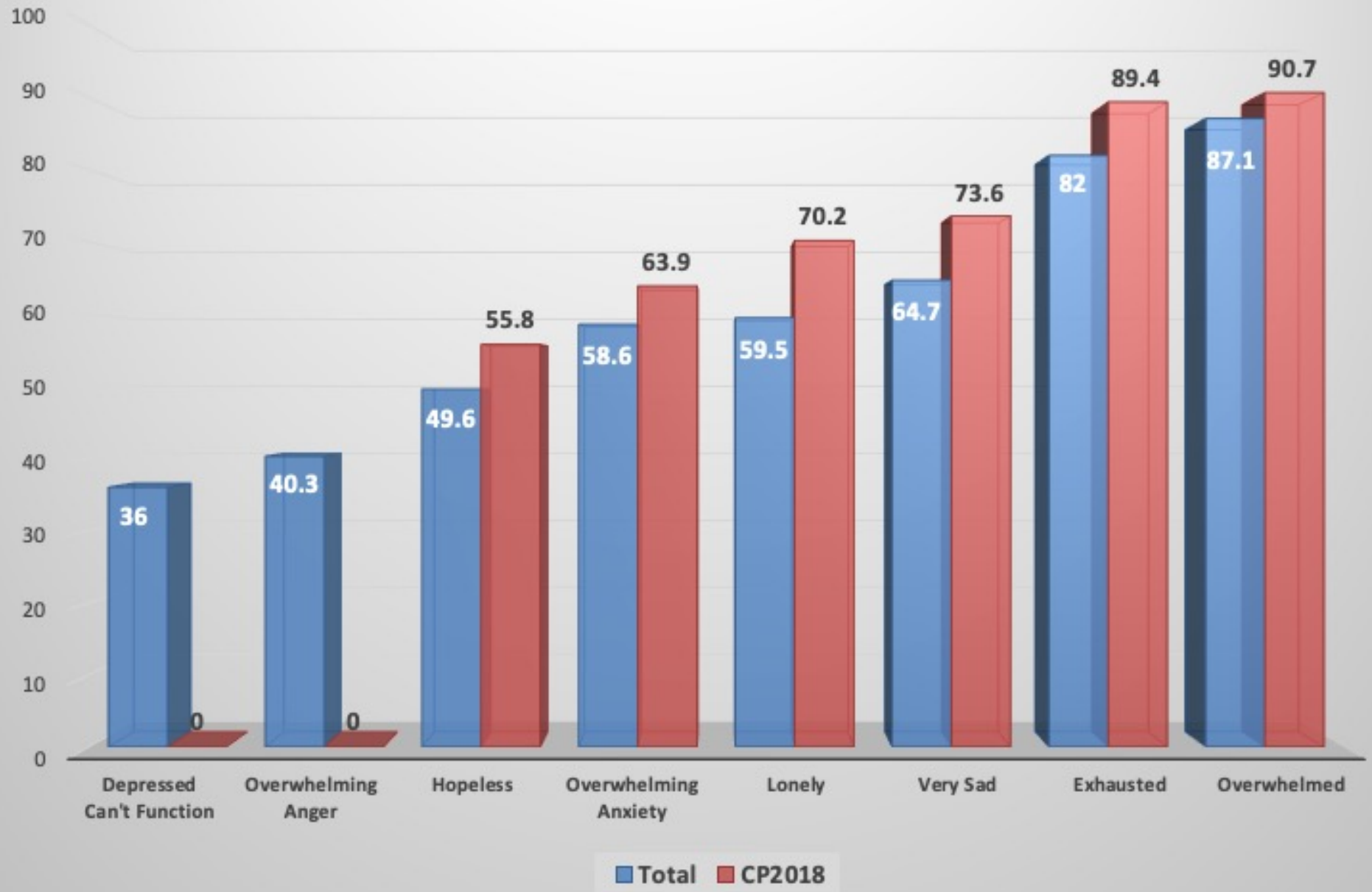
uncertainty

stress, worry, anxiety,
overwhelm, helplessness, fear

difficulties sleeping, mood swings, depression

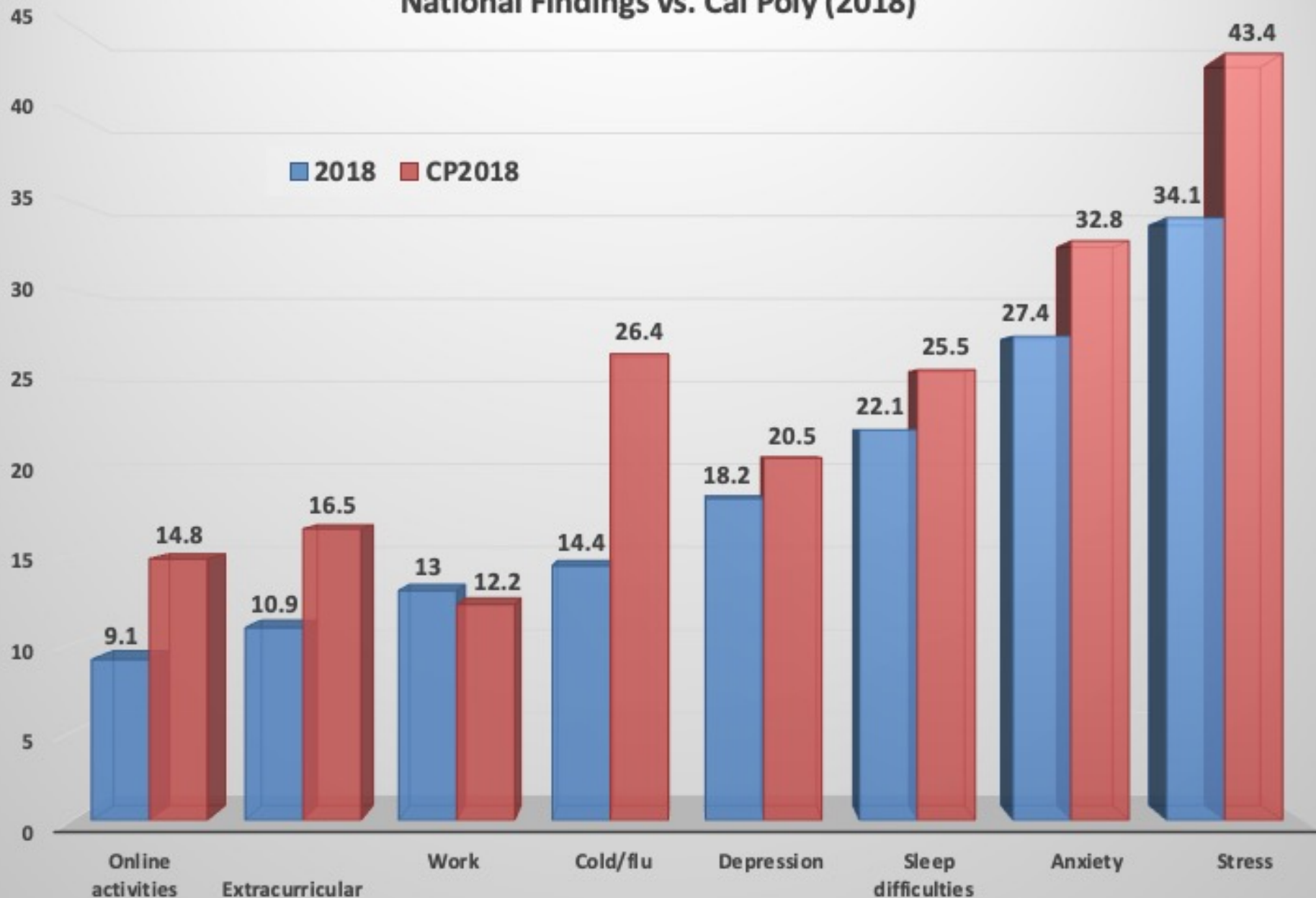
Mental Health Indicators | Spring 2018

National vs. Cal Poly



Factors Affecting Undergraduate Academic Performance

National Findings vs. Cal Poly (2018)

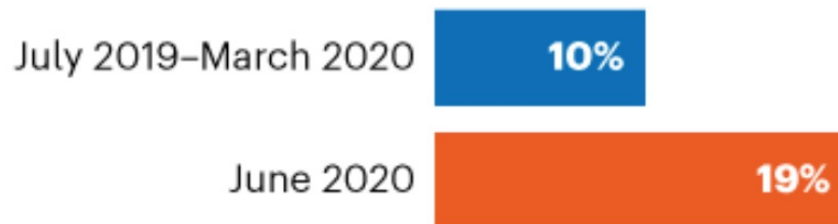


COVID'S MENTAL STRESS

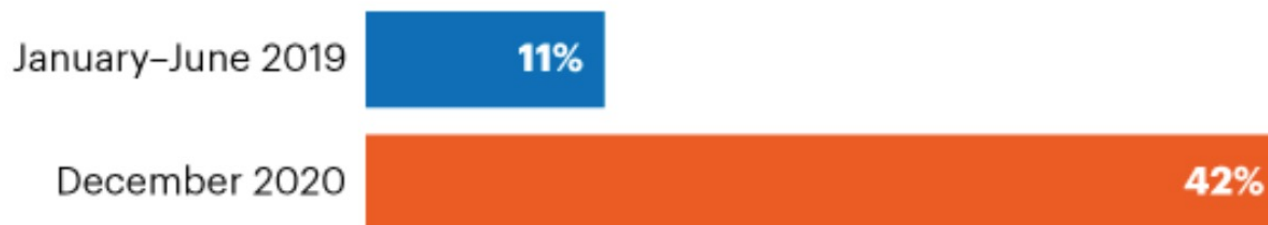
The percentage of people experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety has surged amid the COVID-19 pandemic, data from nationally representative surveys show.

■ Before pandemic ■ During pandemic

UK adults reporting symptoms of depression



US adults reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression



©nature

Source: Office for National Statistics (UK data); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US data).

Research:

The Benefits of Mindfulness

- **Lessens stress, fear, loneliness & depression**
- **Lessens worry, anxiety & impulsivity**
- **Helps sleep better**
- **Increases optimism & relaxation**
- **Improves immune system & energy level**
- **Improves resilience against pain & adversity**
- Enhances self-esteem & self-acceptance
- Helps prevent emotional eating & smoking
- Better cognitive skills & creative thinking
- Better decision making & problem solving
- ...

The way out is in.

Thich Nhat Hanh



*Vietnamese Buddhist monk,
peace activist, author, poet, teacher
(1926-2022)*

Mindfulness

- Based on Buddhism
- All faiths or no faith are invited to participate with mutual regard
- You have to find out what works for you



*Siddhartha Gautama Buddha
Nepalese spiritual teacher &
founder of Buddhism
(480 BCE – 400 BCE)*

Confidentiality

- What **you can share** with others after this workshop
 - Anything that I said
 - Anything that you learned
 - Your own experience
- What **you cannot share** with others after this workshop
 - Anything anyone else said
- Important to create safe container



Mindfulness Talking & Mindfulness Listening

How are you doing?

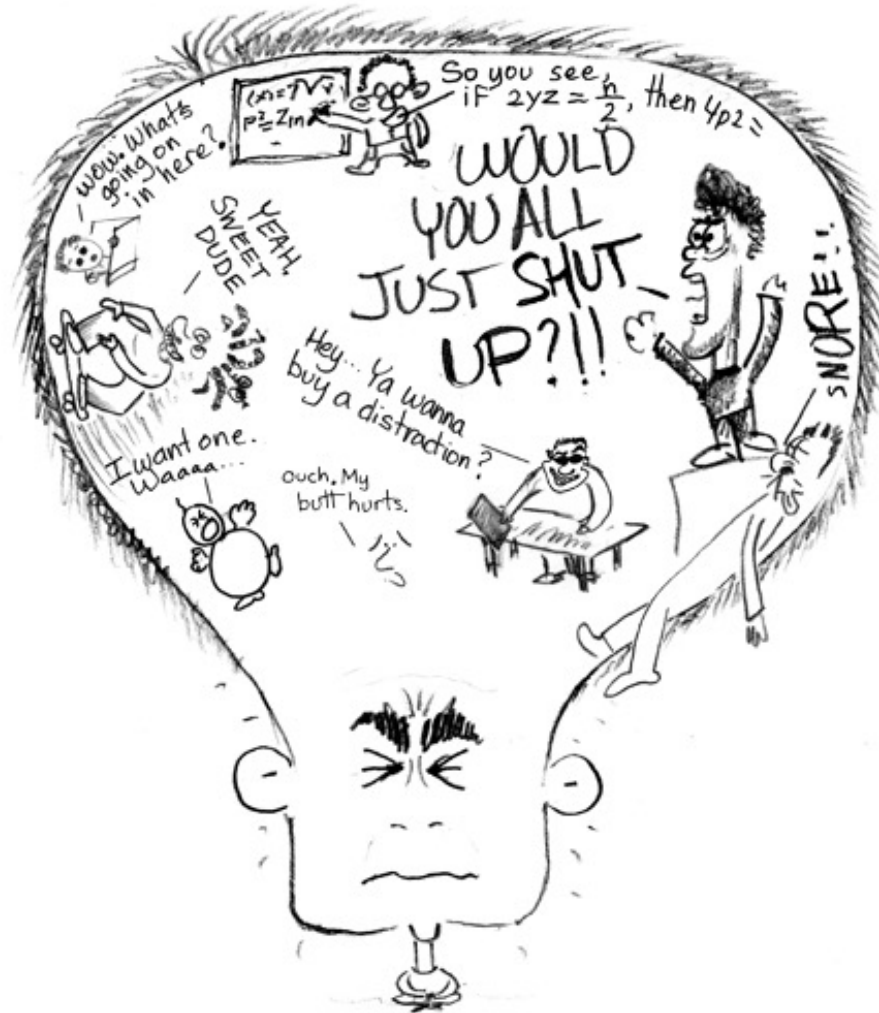
Meditation

A state of deep peace that occurs when the mind is calm and silent

A state of no-mind



Often, in reality...



What you practice grows stronger

Are you practicing meditation or judgement & frustration?

Mindfulness

Paying attention with loving kindness

Practicing awareness in a non-judgemental way



Guided Meditation

Mindful Eating

Mindful Walking

How was this experience for you?

All there ever was,
all there ever will be,
is the present moment.

Everything can become a practice in mindfulness.

Mindfulness – one aspect of a bigger picture

Consider mind, heart and body as a whole
(sleep, nutrition, exercise, social, nature...)

Tell me, what brings you joy?

Some Resources

<https://vbennert.github.io/>

Cal Poly Counseling Services:

<https://hcs.calpoly.edu/counseling>

Cal Poly Basic Needs Initiative:

<https://basicneeds.calpoly.edu/>

Questions/Comments/Feedback?