

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects

Hunt School of Nursing

Spring 2023

How Essential Oils Help Prevent Against Healthcare Workers' Burnout

Lauren Casey

Gardner-Webb University, lcasey@gardner-webb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/nursing-dnp>



Part of the [Nursing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Casey, Lauren, "How Essential Oils Help Prevent Against Healthcare Workers' Burnout" (2023). *Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects*. 67.

<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/nursing-dnp/67>

This Project – Full Written is brought to you for free and open access by the Hunt School of Nursing at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please see [Copyright and Publishing Info](#).

How Essential Oils Help Prevent Against Healthcare Workers' Burnout

by

Lauren M. Casey

A project submitted to the faculty of
Gardner-Webb University Hunt School of Nursing
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Nursing Practice

Boiling Springs, NC

2023

Submitted by:

Lauren Casey

Lauren M. Casey, RN, BSN

Approved by:

Tina Hendrick Lewis, DNP, FNP-C

Tina H. Lewis, DNP, FNP-C, ACHPN, CEN

April 20, 2023

Date

April 20, 2023

Date

Abstract

This project set out to see if *stress* and *anxiety* (leading to *burnout*) could be combatted with the use of *essential oils* (*EOs*). *Burnout* is a common concern amongst the medical community and *healthcare* providers are leaving their jobs and field at unprecedented rates. While *EOs* have been used for patients, they are rarely used for the *healthcare* providers' benefit. Because of that, this project wanted to focus on the employee for a change, which in turn would benefit the patient by having a mentally-present provider and the company by having less turnover. The project consisted of a pre-survey prior to implementation, proceeded by three lavender diffusion stations set up for 2-weeks. Afterward, a post-survey was sent out to the same employees. The goal of the project was to improve the employees' stress and anxiety levels by 20%, and that was achieved and surpassed by improving their levels by 33%. This is a simple yet impactful method to improve employees' mental health within the workplace, leading to improved patient experiences and employee retention.

Keywords: stress, anxiety, burnout, essential oils, healthcare, lavender

Table of Contents

Problem Recognition	7
Problem Statement	7
Literature Review and Synthesis	8
Reducing Burnout (i.e., Stress and Anxiety)	8
Miscellaneous Categories	9
Conclusion	10
Needs Assessment.....	10
PICOT Statement	10
Sponsors and Stakeholders	11
SWOT Analysis	11
Resources, Cost/Benefit Analysis, Outcome & Team Selection	12
Scope of Project	12
Goal, Objective, and Mission Statement.....	13
Goal of Project	13
Outcome Objective	13
Mission Statement.....	13
Theoretical Underpinnings.....	13
Orem's Self-Care Theory of Nursing	13
Work Planning	15
Project Management	15
Timeline	16
Budget.....	17

Evaluation Planning	18
Implementation	19
Threats and Barriers	19
Unanticipated Events	20
Successes.....	21
Monitoring of Implementation.....	21
Project Closure.....	22
Interpretation of Data	22
Qualitative and Quantitative Data.....	22
Process Improvement Data	23
Impact and Measurement.....	26
Sustainment.....	26
Measurements in Future.....	26
Summary	27
References	28
Appendices	
A: Informational Flyer	30
B: Pre-Survey Questions.....	31
C: Post-Survey Questions	32

List of Figures

Figure 1: SWOT Analysis.....	11
Figure 2: CTE Diagram	14
Figure 3: Gantt Chart	17
Figure 4: Complex Logic Model.....	19
Figure 5: Pre-Survey Results	25
Figure 6: Post-Survey Results.....	25

List of Tables

Table 1: Work Breakdown Structure	16
Table 2: Direct and Indirect Costs	18

Problem Recognition

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an undeniable strain on the healthcare system, with a high concern for direct patient-care providers. Examples include longer shifts, being short-staffed, uncomfortable protective equipment (if any protective equipment at all), and high rates of patient death, staff are being burdened with stress and anxiety, which is leading to burnout according to a study titled “Evaluating Advanced Practice Nurses’ Burnout and Potential Helping Modalities” (Stallter & Gustin, 2021). While provider burnout is not a new concept, it has worsened with the recent pandemic, and healthcare systems are seeing the toll it has taken in the form of provider turnover and decreased job satisfaction for those who have not left their job or profession altogether. Being that healthcare jobs are expected to be in high demand, with the need rising with our aging population, it is in hospitals' and clinics' best interest to offer wellness modalities to improve their staff's well-being before they lose their employees, only worsening staffing ratios. A few modalities that health systems could offer are “essential oils, quiet rooms, soothing music, art therapy, pet therapy, and mobile applications” (Stallter & Gustin, 2021).

Problem Statement

Healthcare workers are experiencing unprecedented rates of stress and anxiety since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to burnout within direct patient-care settings in the form of unhappiness in the workplace, leaving their jobs and their profession altogether.

Literature Review and Synthesis

The topic chosen was burnout, stemming from stress and anxiety, and how exposure to certain essential oils (EOs) has a positive effect on mental health. Healthcare is notorious for being a stressful environment to work in because of the sheer workload and long shifts. Couple the innate stresses with a 2-year pandemic, and those who have not already switched jobs and professions altogether, are feeling the physical and mental toll in a massive way. Lee-Baggley & Thakrar (2020) cited that, “There have been numerous reports of mental health decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, both during and after lockdowns. To preserve the remaining staff within healthcare there needs to be an innovative approach to protecting employees' mental health. There are countless measures that are out of employers' control such as patient load, lack of eligible applicants for open positions, and not enough supplies, but initiating a therapy such as diffusing stress-reducing oil in the work area is an easy, affordable, and effective way to help current staff (Lee-Baggley & Thakrar, 2020).

Reducing Burnout (i.e., Stress and Anxiety)

Burnout, Blackburn et al. (2020, para. 2) cited, is “defined as a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion resulting in elevated levels of depersonalization and low levels of personal satisfaction in one’s work. Blackburn et al. (2020) set out to teach healthcare workers several ways to reduce burnout with self-care practices, aromatherapy being one. At the end of their study, there was increased resilience and decreased burnout, which was sustained for 6 months. This is pertinent to healthcare so there are self-care strategies put in place to gain these same results (Blackburn et al., 2020). Stallter & Gustin (2021) were interested in defining the need for stress-reducing

modalities and preferences among healthcare staff. Though pet therapy ranked highest on employees' preference list, EOs are “low cost” and “easily implemented” and the “low cost of implementing these modalities is negligible compared with the high cost associated with health care staff turnover due to burnout” (Stallter & Gustin, 2021, para. 20). Varney and Buckle (2013) conducted a small pilot study, allowing participants to inhale an aromatherapy blend to see if it had a positive effect on mental exhaustion and moderate burnout. It was found that the aromatherapy group had a much greater reduction in both categories compared to the placebo group. Lee-Baggley & Thakrar (2020) were also curious about implementing strategies with patients and healthcare workers alike to combat the stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that various calming activities can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, one of which is inhaling favorite scents, such as EOs. They are especially effective when the oils are consistently used every day. Zielinski and Zielinski (2021) go over the many different conditions that EOs can combat, stress being one. He argues that stress is “actually the number one underlying cause of death worldwide” (p.77). Since stress is so far-reaching in terms of negative effects, it is pertinent to find alternative ways to combat it. He cites a 2009 study that found that lavender is a great antianxiety therapy while studying its effects on volunteers watching an anxiety-provoking film. While this study focuses on anxiety, it is not to say that lavender cannot also be efficacious in reducing stress.

Miscellaneous Categories

Blackburn et al. (2017) found that aromatherapy was a credible therapy for improving those with insomnia. While this is not necessarily related to burnout, it shows

that EOs are versatile and those with insomnia in turn experience stress and anxiety due to lack of sleep, meaning EOs inadvertently help improve the effects of insomnia. Han et al. (2018) found that their EO blend helped reduce central fatigue in rats, which helps expand our knowledge of modalities that can help insomnia and depression. While this is a study done on rats, it opens the door for a study on humans in the future.

Sowndhararajan and Kim (2016) looked at how different fragrances affect mood, stress, and working capacity. They studied natural EOs and synthetic scents in our world. While the brain reacts to every stimulus, some responses are not positive or desired. It was found that EOs had positive outcomes when it comes to mood, while the other synthetics had the opposite effect.

Conclusion

Burnout is the result of several smaller factors such as stress and anxiety, specifically in the case of healthcare workers, from low staff levels, poor patient ratios, low supply levels, and high-stakes responsibilities. In the above sources, EOs have been shown to positively affect humans' mood, both from surface level recognition and on smaller cellular levels, as well. With this therapy being inexpensive and simple to introduce to combat the loss of staff due to unhappiness, it should be considered as an implementation within the workplace of healthcare workers.

Needs Assessment

PICOT Statement

In Mary Wuebben Wellness healthcare workers, does the aerial diffusion (avoiding any allergies) of lavender compared to no intervention, have a 20% reduction rate of stress, and anxiety, within a 2-week timeframe?

Sponsors and Stakeholders

While the focus of this intervention is the healthcare worker, the proposed solution because of the intervention, benefits many parties. Coworkers and support staff would be supported by happier coworkers and better staffing because of employees being retained. This would in turn benefit hiring managers and save the company money by not constantly being short-staffed, where companies in turn are offering incentives for available shifts. Additionally, the company would not be constantly training new hires and instead invest in its current staff. Patients benefit because they get to interact with an experienced and happy provider at an institution with a good reputation because of their high retention because of a healthy work environment.

SWOT Analysis

Figure 1 depicts the SWOT analysis.

Figure 1

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively “cheap” intervention • “Clean” alternative to other coping mechanisms • Compelling evidence of effectiveness • Passive usage in the form of aeration 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low buy-in/interest/belief in the efficacy • What and where to buy/quality of product • Improvement measured by self-report
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new direction to go as far as coping mechanisms go, especially in the workplace • Excitement at trying something new 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires someone to set up and turn on • Stereotypes against such a therapeutic remedy • Inconsistent use • Measuring effectiveness

Resources, Cost/Benefit Analysis, Outcome & Team Selection

The intervention of EOs requires very minimal resources, and at a low cost. All that is needed is an electric diffuser, water, and the EO. There are different grades of EOs, so with a quality product comes an increase in cost, though the total cost would be minimal compared to the intended effect. The outcome of reducing employees' stress and anxiety levels by 20% seems realistic compared to the literature reviewed. Angie Doohen, the office manager at Mary Wuebben Wellness, helped assist with this project. Besides Dr. Lewis, the practice chair, there were no project committee members.

Scope of Project

The project addressed stress and anxiety rates felt by current employees at the functional health clinic by taking part in a pre-intervention survey in addition to a post-intervention survey after 2 weeks of implementing EO diffusion within the workplace.

The project did not address other feelings the employees are experiencing, nor did it address other existing problems the employee feels need fixing. The project is adding this intervention, not changing an existing policy, intervention, or problem that exists.

The project required resources such as the diffuser and EO. The practice partner ensured the diffuser ran the entirety of each day. While there were modest upfront costs, the potential gain and intended outcome are worth the initial costs. Additionally, there could have been pushback due to low buy-in of EO efficacy, but because of the passive nature of breathing in the aeration, the intended outcome takes place with or without someone purposely engaging in the activity. Therefore, employees were treated equally with the intervention and many employees were treated at one time.

Goal, Objective, and Mission Statement

Goal of Project

The goal of this project was to improve healthcare workers' mental health in the workplace and in turn, reduce stress and anxiety and increase employee retention.

Outcome Objective

The objective of the project was to reduce employees' anxiety levels by 20% in 2 weeks, which was measured using a pre and post survey on a 5-point Likert scale. This was attempted by having an 8-hour diffuser in the working area on weekdays. This allowed an intermittent mist of lavender to be aerated throughout the common workspace, allowing anyone in the area to benefit from the stress-reducing properties of the EO.

Mission Statement

The use of EOs is an affordable and minimal-effort intervention to positively affect healthcare workers' overall wellness within the workplace to ensure a reduction in stress, anxiety, and high turnover numbers in healthcare.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Orem's Self-Care Theory of Nursing

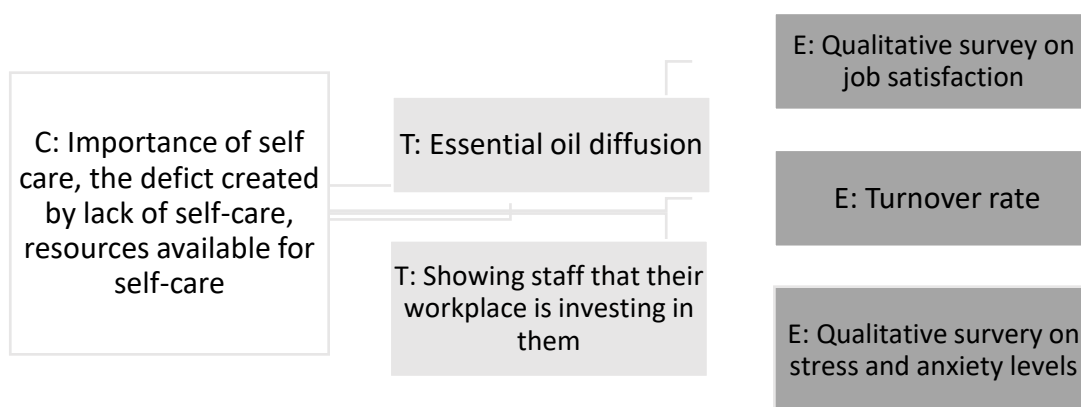
Zaccagnini & Pechacek (2021) delves into Dorothea Orem's self-care deficit theory of nursing. This theory is threefold and includes the theory of self-care, the self-care deficit theory, and the theory of nursing systems. Self-care, in the many ways that it could be defined, is essential in "maintaining life, health, and well-being" (Zaccagnini & Pechacek, 2021, p. 16). Some key points with the theory include "initiating and performing activities on one's own behalf," "therapeutic self-care demand is the set of

self-care activities needed to meet self-care needs,” and “self-care deficit is the gap between self-care agency and self-care demand” (p.16).

Though this theory is traditionally talking about patients, it can be applied to the medical staff as well. Thinking about self-care, it is imperative for caregivers to be partaking in these activities before they can give their whole selves to their practice. This will benefit the patient and the caregiver alike. One way that healthcare workers could practice self-care within their job role is by diffusing stress-relieving EOs into the air that surrounds them. While the simple act of taking a deep breath can relieve tension, a deep breath infused with the healing properties of those in EOs is even more beneficial. Orem’s theory may focus on advocating for patients’ self-care practices, but healthcare workers can not only benefit but be positive role models for patients by taking care of themselves as well. Figure 2 depicts the CTE diagram.

Figure 2

CTE Diagram



Work Planning

Project Management

A project, as quoted in Zaccagnini & Pechacek (2021) is “a sequence of tasks with a beginning and an end that is bounded by time and resources and that produces a unique product or service. Knowing how important planning is during a project, a project planning tool such as a work breakdown structure (WBS) is extremely helpful in naming a task, estimating the time to complete the said task, and if it is contingent on a previous task or stands alone.

Within the EO diffusion project, a work breakdown structure (WBS) (Table 1) was developed to outline the steps that need to be taken for the project to be successful. Starting with approval from the facility and then a practice partner was engaged to help facilitate the project. Within that, written approval by the office manager (practice partner) was obtained. Then, details about the project were talked over with the practice partner and they understood their rules and personal limits with the given medium, EOs. From there the entire staff was emailed about the project plan, in addition to the consent form and pre-survey. It was clarified that no one had allergies to the chosen oil, lavender. After that, supplies were gathered that were needed for the project and proceeded to implement the plan. The implementation strategy was to allow for the diffusion to continuously run each workday for 8 hours, for 2 weeks. Once the project implementation was finished, a post-survey was sent out which contained the same questions as the pre-survey.

Table 1*Work Breakdown Structure*

Task	Estimated Start	Estimated Length	Dependent Upon
A: Approval from the Facility	Now	4 weeks	Parallel: None
B: Know facility rules/limits	Week 1 spring semester	1 day	Sequential: A
C: Gather employees	Week 2 spring semester	1 day	Parallel: None
D: Go over plan/process	Week 2 spring semester	1 day	Sequential: C
E: Pre-survey	Week 2 spring semester	1 day	Parallel: None
F: Gather supplies	Week 2 spring semester	2 weeks	Parallel: None
G: Implement project	Week 3 spring semester	4 weeks	Sequential: F
H: Gather data/post-survey	Week 7 spring semester	1 day	Sequential: G
I: Gather qualitative feedback	Week 7 spring semester	1 day	Sequential: G

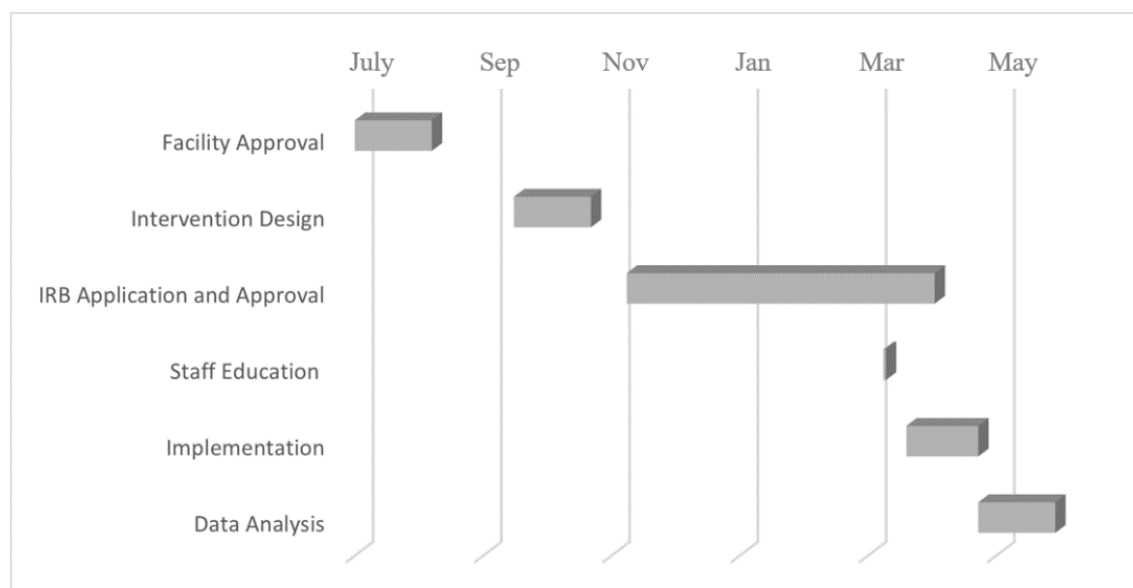
Timeline

Timelines are a broad outline of additional subprojects and tasks that are needed to fulfill the needs of a given project. While the WBS goes over what is needed for the project, the Gantt Chart timeline outlines what additional steps were needed to take this project from an idea to an evidenced-based project that was approved through Gardner-Webb University's IRB.

The timeline of events throughout the project is outlined in Figure 3. Each step was given ample time to be completed so that if there were delays, they were already accounted for. This project ran 2 weeks, which was felt to be the right amount of time to gain ample data, but also allowed proper time to evaluate the data collected.

Figure 3

Gantt Chart



Budget

Budgets are important to outline before a project begins so that one knows whether the costs are feasible and if the project can proceed (Zaccagnini & Pechacek, 2021). Within this specific project, costs were naturally low given the limited number of supplies and free labor. Since the clinic is small and the project leader brought in supplies, so there was nothing that the clinic needed to provide. Diffusers and oils were purchased, and the project leader set up the project each day. As for indirect costs, there were some, as this was a working building with employees and spaces that require upkeep, but those costs were being paid regardless. Table 2 outlines the project costs.

Table 2*Direct and Indirect Costs*

Cost Category	Resource	Detail	Total Cost
Direct	Person to set up machines and oils daily	I will be this person	\$0
	Machines	4@ \$25 each	\$100
	Oils	2 15 ml bottles of stress away, \$32 each	\$64 + shipping, estimated \$6
Indirect	Space	Cost for office rental, 1 month	\$2,000
	Internet	Cost for internet, 1 month	\$200
	Emails	Cost for time and email account, 1 month	\$200
Direct Total		Actual cost, cost covered by the student	\$170
Grand Total			\$1,570

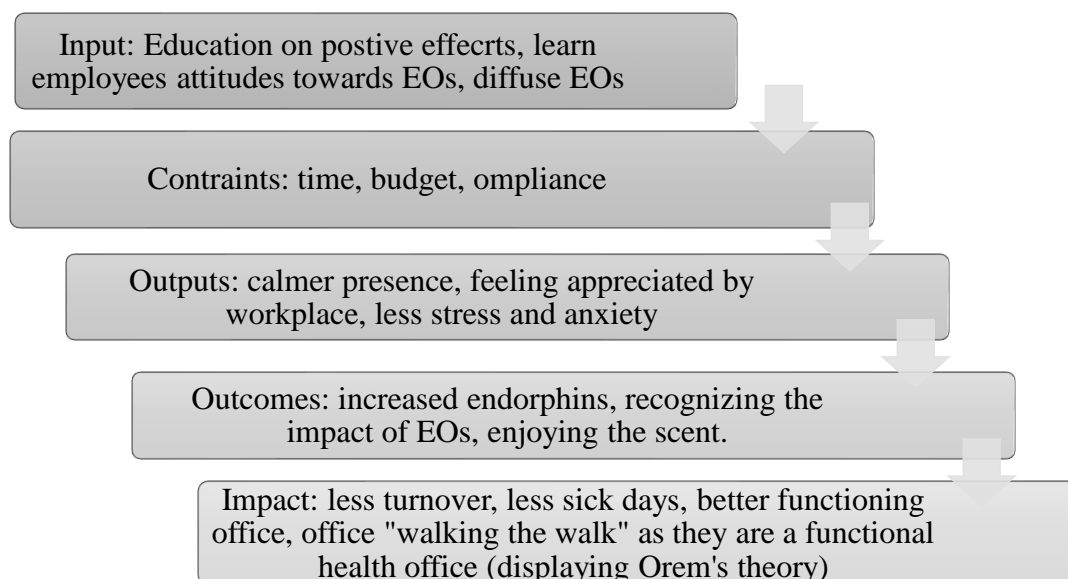
Evaluation Planning

Having a plan for a project is important, but as is a plan for evaluating the results. A project can be done flawlessly, but without a proper way to look over and analyze the data, the project is useless. For this project, the project leader developed a logic model

(Figure 4) for what was hoped to be achieved. Additionally, the project leader planned to use Demming and Walter Shewhart's PDSA model for evaluating the data (Zaccagnini & Pechacek, 2021). This model was useful in streamlining the improvement process of this project. It simply lays out how to collect data and analyze, make the necessary changes, and implement those, study the outcomes for better or worse, modify intervention based on those findings, and repeat. Figure 4 shows the logic model created for the project. As far as the method for collecting the data, an online anonymous survey was used through Qualtrics. Qualtrics has built-in safety measures to make sure all data is safe and private. All data was quantitative and gathered through Qualtrics.

Figure 4

Complex Logic Model



Implementation

Threats and Barriers

In any project, there are threats and barriers, and some can be predicted such as reduced interest over time or decreased funding (Zaccagnini & Pechacek, 2021). Within

this project, it was expected that the project would continue to develop during the IRB approval process. Given that, there was continuous communication between the project leader and the project site to discuss changes to the project and finalize details such as specific location and addressing any contraindications such as potential allergies to the essential oil used during the project implementation. In turn, this delayed approval and therefore project implementation. This put the project timeline in jeopardy, as it was not ideal to start the project during the holidays, which could impact employees' moods in general with a reduction in stress and anxiety falsely attributed to the project implementation.

One threat to the project was that there were not consistent responses to the pre and post surveys. Because of this, it was more difficult to compare results, further requiring the results to be compared as aggregate data. Additionally, there were a few surveys that were not completed in whole. Since this was an anonymous, optional survey, it is understandable why there was not more participation, however, for the project's sake, it is unfortunate this happened.

Unanticipated Events

While there are expected barriers and ways to plan for intended threats, unanticipated events are different. These obstacles cannot be prepared for as they are unforeseen events (Zaccagnini & Pechacek, 2021). Before beginning the project, a few employees voiced their concerns regarding lavender diffusion and their seasonal allergies. For this reason, the project was moved to individual office spaces, four in total. This was an anticipated adjustment for the project, for which the project leader was prepared with extra supplies to accommodate this change. Because of this, however,

during the project implementation's first day, the project site reported that the aroma of lavender was too strong. While the diffusers were enclosed in each room, the aroma was still wafting throughout the entire office, and in turn, the original plan of drops to water ratio was too strong. This was understood, as there were now four diffusers running as opposed to the original one. The project leader and office manager worked together to form a plan that would satisfy the project and employees. That said, it was later revealed to the project leader that the clinic manager made further adjustments to suit their needs best in the office. The project leader appreciated that they tailored the aroma to their liking, though, it is unknown how effective lavender is at that dilution.

Successes

The first success was the smooth process of sending out the informational email that contained the consent and pre-survey. This email relied on the clinic manager's participation, which was exceptional since becoming involved. Additionally, while setting up the project in the office, there were many employees voicing their excitement for the project to begin. There was an informational flyer (Appendix A) posted in the breakroom and by the copier to remind employees of the project that was taking place, as well.

Monitoring of Implementation

The project leader and clinic manager were in constant communication leading up to and during the project's implementation. All questions were answered, and pre-surveys were sent out. As stated above, on the first day of implementation, there was an adjustment to the project protocol, though after, there were no concerns. There were also constant reminders and thank-you emails sent out by the project leader to the clinic

manager to remind them of when the project was ending and when to send out the follow-up email containing the post-survey.

Project Closure

Upon project closure, it was assured that the project site was aware of this date and still participating up until that time. During communication with the clinic manager, there was an agreed-upon time for the project leader to come and gather the supplies. Additionally, there was one more reminder sent out regarding the post-survey, which was attached to an informational email thanking the employee for their participation.

Lessons learned included providing more buy-in before the project's start date. This could have led to more cheerful participation and the importance of completing the pre-survey. Achieving this could be done in a myriad of ways, one being an in-person meeting beforehand that educates the staff on EOs, the process of the project, and expectations from the project leader.

Interpretation of Data

Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The project consisted of a pre and post survey and the questions was as follows:

1. How often do (did) you experience stressful events or feelings of anxiety on a normal workday?
2. How often do (did) you practice healthful coping strategies for stress and anxiety on a normal workday?
3. How many times during the day do (did) you seek out stress-relieving therapies?
4. How does (did) stress and anxiety affect your job satisfaction?
5. How often do (did)you use essential oil therapy during non-work hours?

6. Would (will) you use essential oil therapy if (now that) you knew (know) the health benefits?" (Appendix B, Appendix C)

While the questions within the survey were qualitative in nature, the responses were quantitative using a 4-point Likert scale. This was used in order to easily compare pre and post data. There were six questions within the survey including stress levels at work, if coping strategies are used, frequency of coping strategies, if stress is affecting job satisfaction, the use of EOs currently, and the use of EOs in the future. There was a week allotted for response time for all employees, eight employees responded to the pre survey and 12 to the post survey.

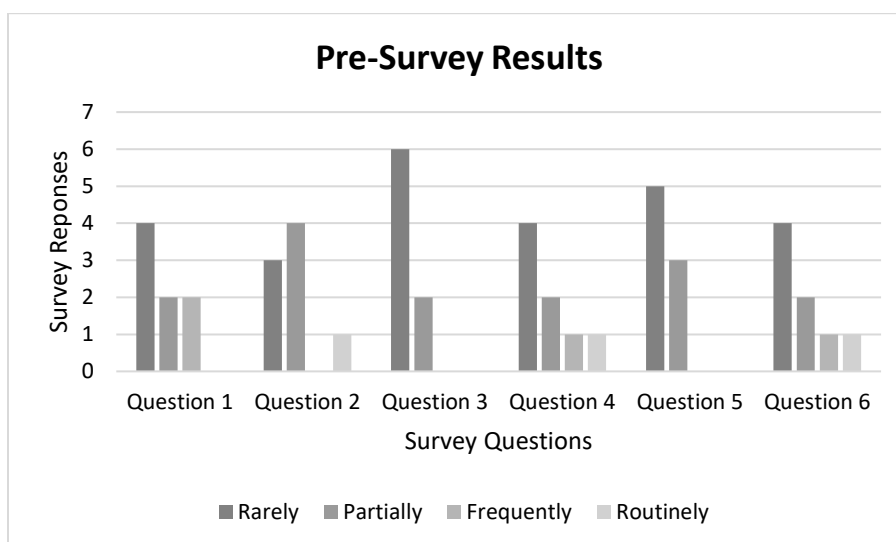
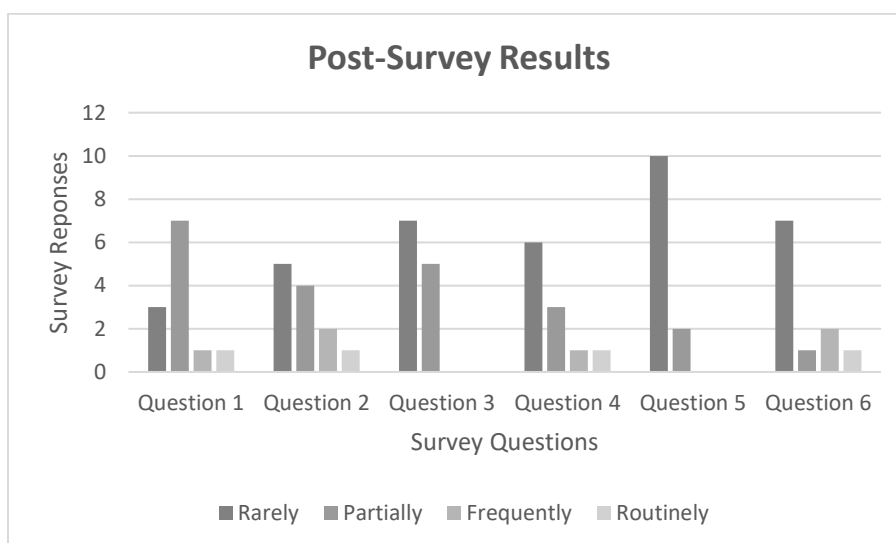
Process Improvement Data

The project's purpose was to decrease employees' stress and anxiety levels by 20% after 2 weeks of EO diffusion. This was measured with question 1, asking about stress and anxiety levels at work on a normal day. Success was achieved as there was a 33% increase in those who answered "partially" in comparison to frequently or routinely. Additionally, questions 2 and 3 were similar in nature, asking about coping strategies and how often employees practiced these. There was a 17% increase in those who practiced healthful practices more frequently and an 11% increase in their regularity. Question 4, regarding how stress and anxiety impact their job satisfaction, there was a 12.5% decrease in those who said it routinely affects their job, and instead picked options such as partially and rarely. While question 5, asking about EO usage when not at work, did not show improvement. In question 6 there was a slight increase at 5.5% in those who said they will routinely use them in the future now knowing the benefits.

Overall, given the above data, the outcome of the project was marginally successful. While there were improvements in some categories, there were others that did not improve and one that was negatively impacted. This could be dependent on more respondents on the post survey, however, the data was converted into percentiles and accounted for the different number of respondents.

After the implementation of this project, there were a few positive responses in the survey by participants indicating they would be using essential oils in the future for their stress and anxiety needs, at work and home. This was a positive change because there was convincing evidence for these participants to partake in EOs on their own.

The impact of this project was small when considering the survey data. If the responses had been improved by more percentiles in the post-survey, the project would have been viewed more successfully. However, the goal of this project was a modest 20% improvement in stress and anxiety levels, and when looking at question 1, there was a 33% difference in those who felt that stress and anxiety frequently or routinely affected their job and post-intervention felt that it only affected their job partially. Though there are many more data points to evaluate, this alone is reassuring of the efficacy of EOs. Figures 5 and 6 compare the pre and post survey results.

Figure 5*Pre-Survey Results***Figure 6***Post-Survey Results*

Impact and Measurement

Overall, the project had positive verbal feedback and excitement within the clinic. There were statements such as, “I’m excited for next week,” “I love the smell of lavender,” and “Am I going to get a diffuser in my room?!” The survey data was not a complete picture of the project's success, though, can be viewed more positively with the verbal dialogue among the staff and the quantitative data reviewed prior to this project’s implementation. Overall, the consensus within this study and many within the literature review, is that EOs have the potential to affect people’s mood and is a cost-effective way to help combat common feelings such as stress and anxiety, especially while at work.

Sustainment

The project itself is easily replicable and sustainable because of low cost, minimal set-up time and maintenance, and high reward. To be sustained, there must be organized data from more than this individual project presented to the clinic manager which shows positive results and therefore, would be motivated to invest in supplies themselves and continue to set up the diffusers daily.

Measurements in Future

Future measurements would be more significant than day-to-day, such as employee retention and morale. If overall stress and anxiety levels are reduced daily, the employees, over time, will be happier from increased moods, have better work ethics because of reducing distracting feelings, and ultimately feel appreciated by their company. Employees who feel appreciated and have a positive environment to work in tend to stay with their companies longer (Broome & Marshall, 2020). This would be an

interesting task that the clinic could take on and measure themselves if they truly see the value in their employees and essential oils alike.

Summary

Overall, the project leader was proud of the topic chosen for the project. At first glance, it may seem very simple and unimportant compared to others' project topics and the number of people they reached. However, the project leader would argue that choosing to focus on the individual is equally as important. That is why she decided to implement it at a small private practice that she knew personally, where she could talk to each participant individually about the project, if and when they had questions. She wanted these 8-12 people to feel as though their stress and anxiety levels while in the workplace were equally as important as treating their patient's chief complaints. Often employees feel forgotten, only a number in the production chain. She wanted to address this concern and make the employees feel as though they matter, they are important, and most importantly, their mental health is the first priority because if it is not, how will they help their patient's to the best of their ability? The project leader would love to repeat this study in different settings and change a few details about it to ensure further success. The project leader benefits from EOs in her life and was proud to have had the opportunity to share that with others in her scholarly studies.

References

- Blackburn, L., Achor, S., Allen, B., Bauchmire, N., Dunnington, D., Klisovic, R. B., Naber, S. J., Roblee, K., Samczak, A., Tomlinson-Pinkham, K., & Chipps, E. (2017). The effect of aromatherapy on insomnia and other common symptoms among patients with acute leukemia. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 44(4), E185-E193. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1188/17.ONF.E185-E193>
- Blackburn, L., Thompson, K., Frankenfield, R., Harding, A., & Lindsey, A. (2020). The THRIVE[®] program: Building oncology nurse resilience through self-care strategies. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 47(1), E25-E34. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1188/20.ONF.E25-E34>
- Broome, M. E., & Marshall, E. (2020). *Transformational leadership in nursing: From expert clinician to influential leader*. Springer Publishing Company
- Han, C., Li, F., Tian, S., Liu, Y., Xiao, H., Wu, X., Zhang, W., Zhang, W., & Mao, M. (2018). Beneficial effect of compound essential oil inhalation on central fatigue. *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12906-018-2375-6>
- Lee-Baggley, D., & Thakrar, S. (2020). Helping patients and health care providers through the COVID-19 pandemic: Empirically based tips and strategies to manage mental and physical health. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 47(6), 511-521,572. <http://dx.doi.org/10.37526/1526-744X.2020.47.6.511>

- Sowndhararajan, K., & Kim, S. (2016). Influence of fragrances on human psychophysiological activity: With special reference to human electroencephalographic response. *Scientia Pharmaceutica*, 84(4), 724–751.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm84040724>
- Stallter, C., & Gustin, T. S. (2021). Evaluating advanced practice nurses' burnout and potential helping modalities. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 17(10), 1297-1299. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2021.07.003>
- Varney, E., & Buckle, J. (2013). Effect of inhaled essential oils on mental exhaustion and moderate burnout: A small pilot study. *Journal of the Australian - Traditional Medicine Society*, 19(4), 246.
- Zaccagnini, M., & Pechacek, J. M. (2021). Nursing science and theory: Scientific underpinnings for practice. In *the Doctor of Nursing Practice Essentials: A New Model for Advanced Practice Nursing* (4th ed., pp. 3-30). Jones and Bartlett Learning.
- Zielinski, E. & Zielinski, S. A. (2021). *The essential oil apothecary*. Rodale Books.

Appendix A
Informational Flyer



It relieves mild **anxiety**, produces **relaxation**, soothes the **nerves**, lowers **hearttrate**, reduces the **stress** (the biggest contributor to chronic disease).

A bonus is that it has a **pleasant aroma**, without being an **endocrine disputer** like synthetic chemicals in traditional candles, wall flowers, and other scents/fragrance in most products.

Appendix B

Pre-Survey Questions

Scale: Rarely (0%-29% of the time); Partially (30%-58% of the time); Frequently (59%-79% of the time); Routinely (80%-100% of the time)

1. **How often do you experience stressful events or feelings of anxiety on a normal workday?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

2. **How often do you practice healthful coping strategies for stress and anxiety on a normal workday?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

3. **How many times during the day do you seek out stress-relieving therapies?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

4. **How does stress and anxiety affect your job satisfaction?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

5. **How often do you use essential oil therapy during non-work hours?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

6. **Would you use essential oil therapy if you knew the health benefits?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

Appendix C

Post-Survey Questions

Scale: Rarely (0%-29% of the time); Partially (30%-58% of the time); Frequently (59%-79% of the time); Routinely (80%-100% of the time)

1. **How often did you experience stressful events or feelings of anxiety on a normal workday during the 2-week project implementation?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

2. **How often did you practice healthful coping strategies for stress and anxiety on a normal workday during the 2-week project implementation?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

3. **How many times during the day did you seek out stress-relieving therapies on a normal workday during the 2-week project implementation?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

4. **How did stress and anxiety affect your job satisfaction on a normal workday during the 2-week project implementation?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

5. **How often did you use essential oil therapy during non-work hours in the past 2 weeks?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely

6. **Will you use essential oil therapy in the future?**

Rarely Partially Frequently Routinely