



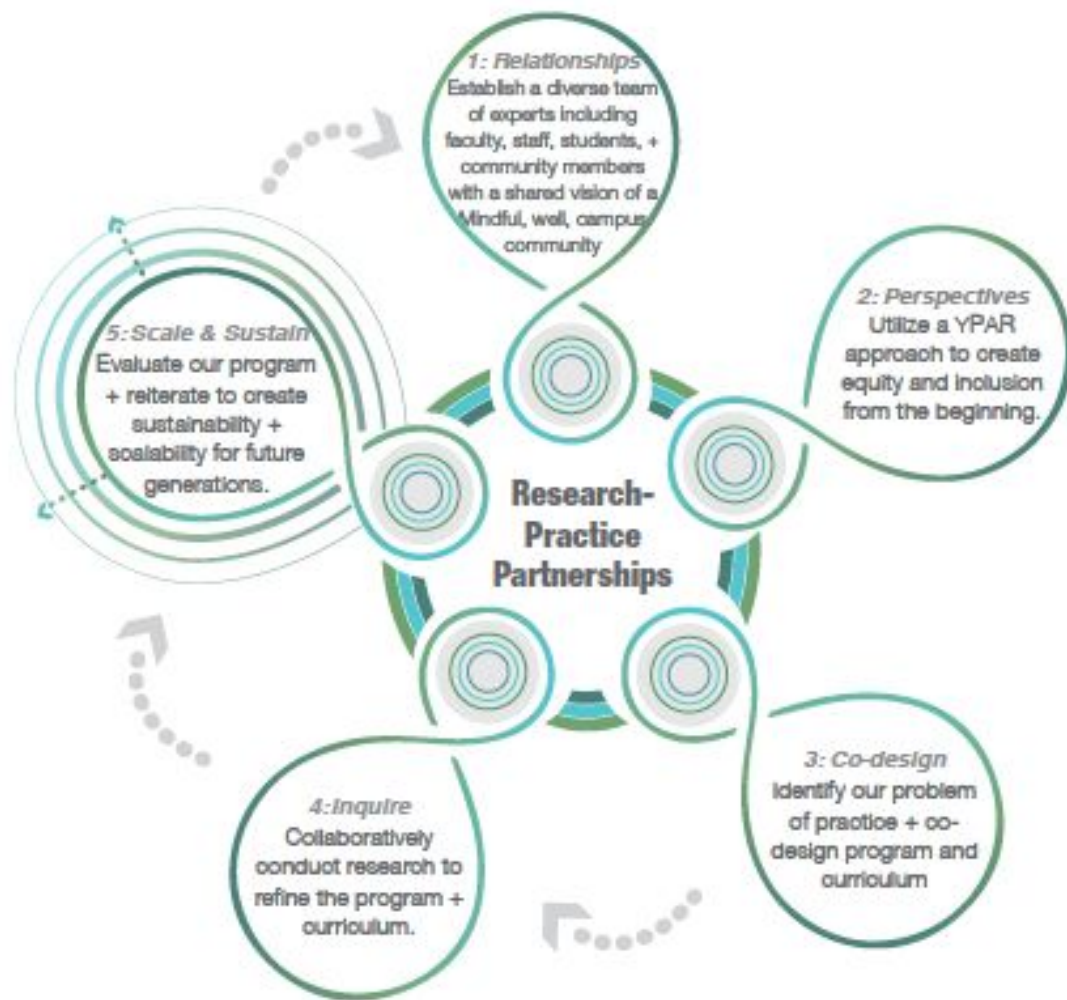
# The Campus Mindfulness Project

## Elevating Youth Voices in the Creation of Mindfulness Curricula

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The **Campus Mindfulness Project** aims to develop sustainable, long-term mindfulness programming at CU Boulder that will support undergraduate wellness and help students navigate the challenges of university life with joy and compassion.





# Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

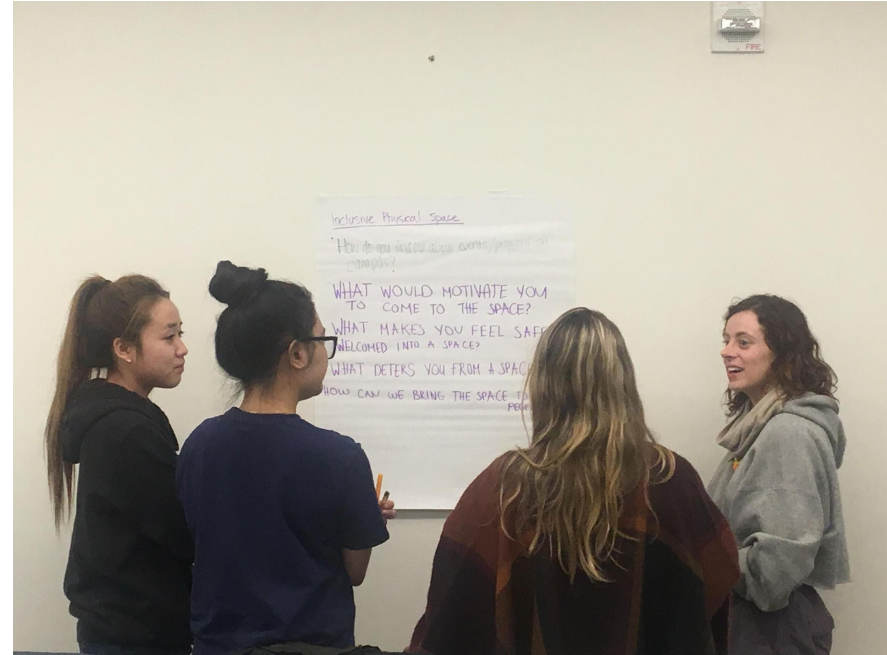
- The purpose of YPAR research is to democratize knowledge production and enable *action*.
- Faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students work together in a process of collective, self-reflective inquiry.
- Key values of YPAR:
  - Equality
  - Transparency
  - Support
  - Empowerment





# Our process...

- **February – May 2019:** A team of 12 undergraduate students worked together with facilitators to learn about Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), define our research question, and execute our research study.
- **May – June 2019:** 6 students from the original YPAR team worked with facilitators to do a data analysis “deep dive,” collaboratively completing a preliminary analysis of our qualitative and quantitative data.
- **July 2019 - present:** A co-design team which includes 6 youth consultants is working to design our pilot curriculum.



# YPAR Research Questions

What environments and supports cultivate ease of access to and increase in mindfulness practices among CU Boulder undergraduates?

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graph TD; A[What environments and supports cultivate ease of access to and increase in mindfulness practices among CU Boulder undergraduates?] --> B[What do students articulate as potential facilitators of mindfulness programming?]; A --> C[What do students articulate as potential barriers of mindfulness programming?]; A --> D[How do students understand the relationship between campus climate and student wellness?];
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What do students articulate as potential facilitators of mindfulness programming?

What do students articulate as potential barriers of mindfulness programming?

How do students understand the relationship between campus climate and student wellness?

# Methods – Research Instruments

- SURVEY

- ~25 min survey (multiple choice and open-text) to assess student understandings and opinions of mindfulness and student wellness.
- Example survey items include:
  1. Define what word “mindfulness” as you understand it.
  2. What is your view of mindfulness as a skill that supports college student wellness?
  3. Select the reasons that you would/would not choose to participate in a mindfulness class.

# Methods – Research Instruments

- FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS

- Semi-structured individual interviews (30-60 mins) and focus groups (1-2 hours) to further elicit student perspectives on mindfulness and student wellness.
- Example questions include:
  1. What do you think you need to support your well-being while an undergraduate student at CU Boulder?
  2. What value, if any, do you think mindfulness may have in your life?



# Participants

- SURVEY
  - N = 100
  - 69% women, 22% men, 9% other
  - 57% white, 43% non-white
- FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS
  - N = 14
  - 81% women, 19% men
  - 52% white, 48% non-white
- CU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (2018)
  - N = 14, 367
  - 49% women, 51% men
  - 67% white, 33% non-white

# Facilitators of Mindfulness

- **76%** of participants think mindfulness is a term that resonates with students.
- **79%** of participants would prefer an in-person class (as opposed to online).
- Participants often perceived a strong connection between mindfulness, inclusivity, and positive social relationships.

# Facilitators of Mindfulness - QUOTES

“Loving our (black and brown and queer and trans and disabled) bodies. Because we feel our oppression in our bodies. It's all a social construct but when something racist, misogynist, homophobic etc. happens, we feel it in our bodies. I felt shame for existing in my body for 18 YEARS. I still do but less—because of mindfulness and community.”

*Question #38: Thinking about mindfulness, compassion, or related ideas, is there a particular topic that you would be interested in learning more about?*

“I think mindfulness really helps me also keep a positive mindset and really appreciate the little things in life ... one example would be walking to classes—I could just walk and try to get where I'm going. Or take the time to be mindful of my surroundings and really appreciate the nice weather and the little things puts me in like a better headspace to prepare for my classes or wherever I'm going.”

(Interview #1)

# Barriers to Mindfulness

- *Select the reasons that you would not choose to participate in a mindfulness class, top 3 responses:*
  - “I don’t have time to participate in a mindfulness class.” (51)
  - “I don’t know how to practice mindfulness.” (16)
  - “Mindfulness practice is boring.” (14)
- Many participants said that they wouldn’t consider a mindfulness class because they are struggling to meet other, more basic needs.
- Perceived lack of time was by far the biggest barrier articulated by participants in the survey, focus groups and interviews.

# Barriers to Mindfulness - QUOTES

“Financial cost, emotional cost, time cost.”

Question #30: *What are the main reasons that you would not choose to participate in a mindfulness class?*

"It doesn't sound like a real class. It sounds like therapy for people who have no control over their lives. I would not take a class with that description for fear of seeming like I was mentally unstable. I have too much pride wrapped up here to allow for myself to go to what sounds like group therapy for credit.”

Question #46: *Why or why not [would you be likely to take the class described above if it were offered at CU Boulder]?*

“Mindfulness training has been kind of taken from the Buddhist practice of meditation... I could be getting some facts wrong but it's been changed to be more like a marketing thing. It's used a lot, like companies now to try to get workers to be more productive.”

(Focus Group #3)

# Campus Climate & Student Wellness

- Across all data collection instruments participants articulated much more negative perspectives on campus climate.
- Negative campus climate may be a barrier to participation in mindfulness programming and, conversely, mindfulness programming may have the potential to improve campus climate.



# Campus Climate & Student Wellness - QUOTES

“I remember when I took the tour to come here as a student who was giving the tour said if you're not in Greek life you are isolated. You are kind of like an outsider in this school.”

(Interview)

“I'm taking a conflict resolution class and I facilitated a dialogue on inclusion but everyone in my group was white. And so it was really hard to have a conversation about how do we fix this when the people who are affected the most aren't even part of the community.”

(Interview)

# “Problems of Practice”

- 1) How can we address the fact that students feel like they don't have time and resources to participate in wellness programming?
- 2) How will we understand our program in terms of individual and collective wellness?
- 3) How will we articulate mindfulness- and compassion-based practices in a way that is expansive and inclusive?
- 4) How will we recruit and train diverse, experienced facilitators and incorporate peer leadership into our facilitation model?



## YPAR TEAM

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