

Assessing the Impact of Mental Health First Aid Training within a Pharmacy Curriculum

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Background

- Nearly one in five (18.9%) U.S. adults live with a mental illness, yet much of the public, including healthcare professionals, stigmatize mental illness every day.¹ Much of the stigma and social distancing stems from a lack of education and low mental health literacy.
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches participants how to identify and understand a mental illness and provides the skills necessary to reach out, respond, and help someone who may be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis.

Methods

Purpose: to assess changes in mental health literacy, stigma, and social distance in 1st year pharmacy students after MHFA training completion.

- Administered validated, 35-item Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS)² before and after MHFA training.
- 73 first-year pharmacy students at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) completed MHFA training.
- 65 students completed the pre and post-survey and were included for analysis.
- MHLS provides a scoring system (higher score=higher literacy).

Assessment Tool Questions

Q3. If someone experienced a low mood for two or more weeks, had a loss of pleasure or interest in their normal activities and experienced changes in their appetite and sleep then to what extent do you think it is likely they have Major Depressive Disorder?

Q16. I am confident that I know where to seek information about mental illness.

Q20. People with a mental illness could snap out if it if they wanted.

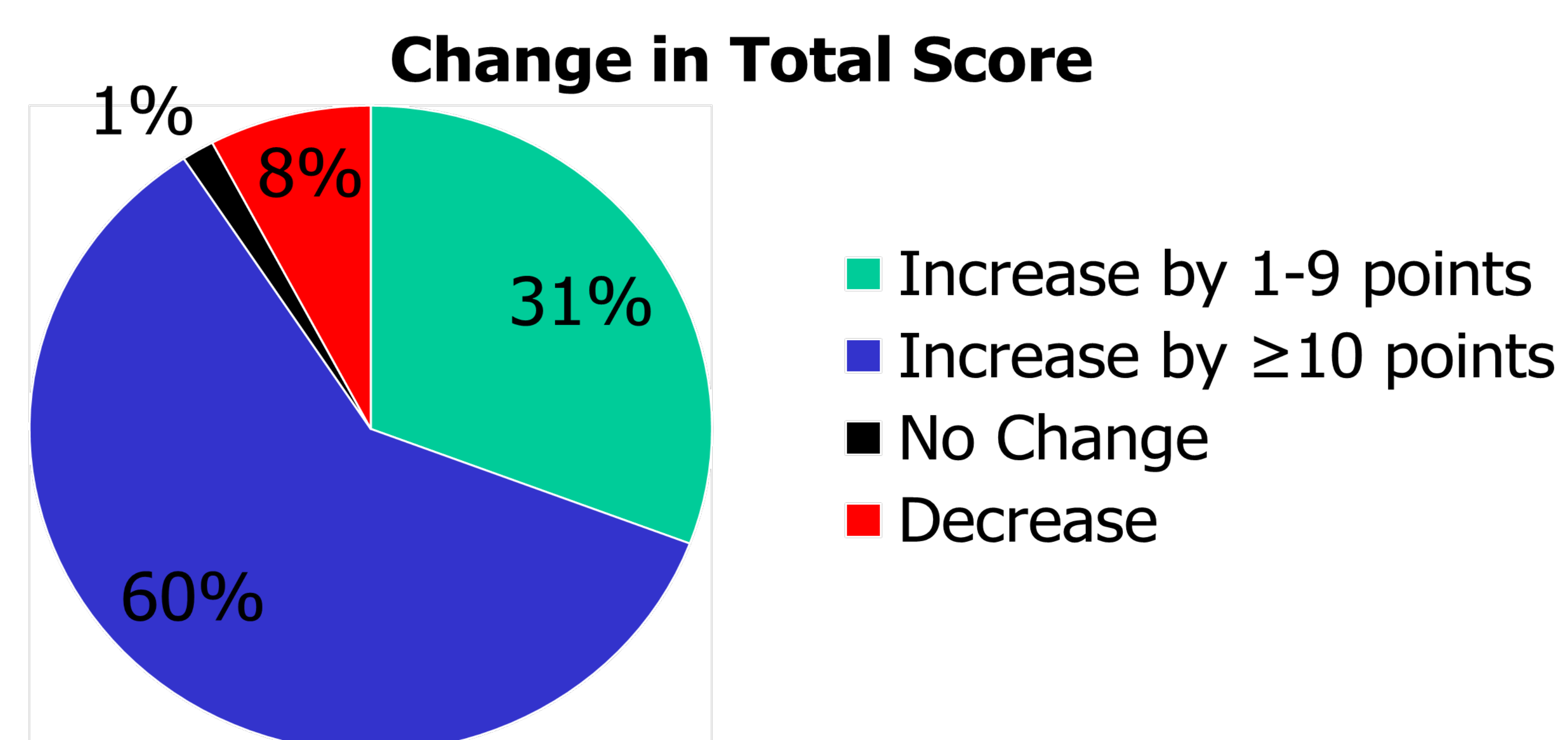
Q21. A mental illness is a sign of personal weakness.

Q23. People with a mental illness are dangerous.

Q29. How willing would you be to move next door to someone with a mental illness?

Results

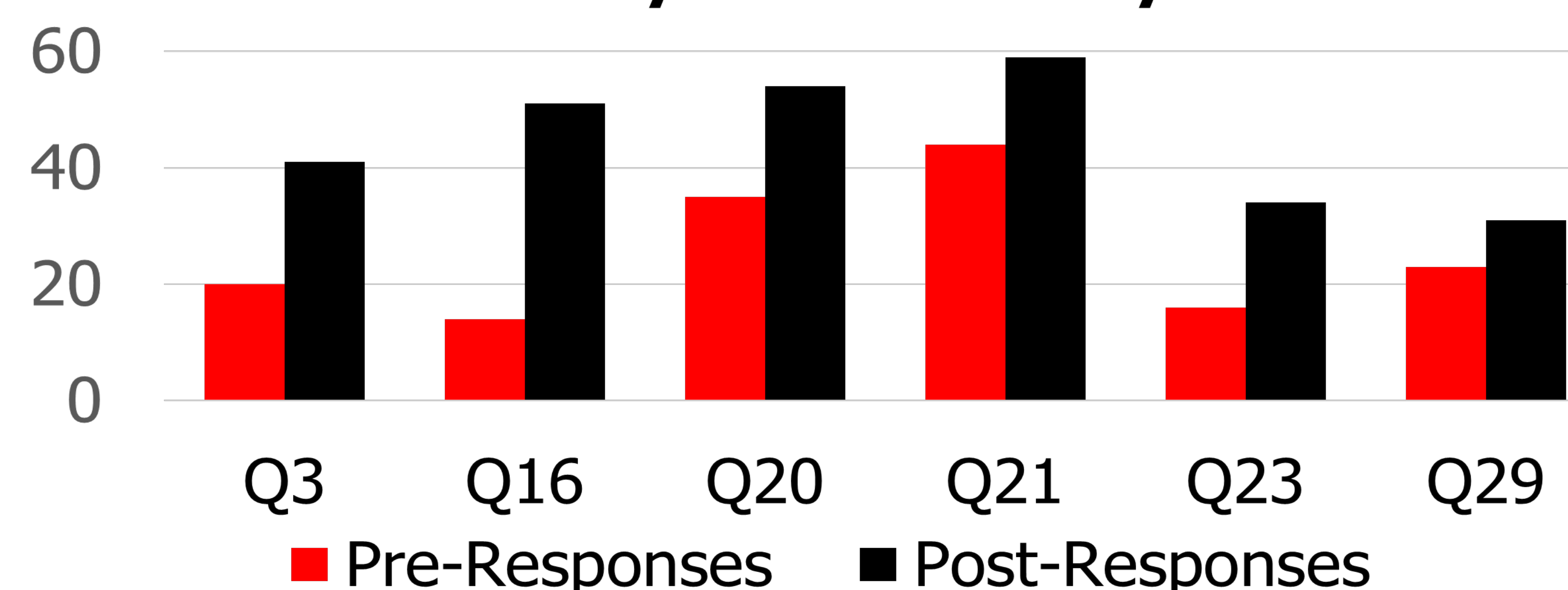
Primary Endpoint: Total scores increased by an average of 12.1 points per participant



Analysis of Individual Questions

Questions	Component Assessed	Number of Ideal Responses	
		Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Q3	Identification	20 (31%)	41 (63%)
Q16	Confidence in seeking info	14 (22%)	51 (78%)
Q20	Stigma	35 (54%)	54 (83%)
Q21	Stigma	44 (68%)	59 (91%)
Q23	Stigma	16 (25%)	34 (52%)
Q29	Social distance	23 (35%)	31 (48%)

Number of Ideal Responses in Pre-Survey vs. Post-Survey



Limitations

- Small study population of 65 participants
- Population restricted to first-year pharmacy students at SIUE
- Limited statistical analysis

Conclusions

- MHFA training is effective at improving mental health literacy, stigma, and social distance in first year pharmacy students and is capable of shifting the public perception of mental illness.
- Implementing MHFA training into healthcare curriculums could improve patient care while also supporting healthcare professionals as effective and influential leaders for the public.

References

- Mental Health Information and Statistics. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>. Published February 2019. Accessed April 9, 2020.
- O'Connor M, Casey L. The Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS): A new scale-based measure of mental health literacy. *Psychiatry Research*. 2015;229(1):511-516. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2015.05.064