

the
LEAN on me
PROJECT

**2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT**



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OUR STORY

It all began on January 2019!

The Lean On Me Project is a program designation with NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) to provide the tools, the leadership, the mentorship and the access to elevate the educational community.

Amy Weinberger, MEd. and Jordan Stonecypher, who currently attends Lenior-Rhyne University to complete her MA in clinical mental health with a dual licensure in school counseling, was handpicked by a local donor who wanted to give back to teens. Bob Cohn approached Amy after the Mental Health Awareness Program In Sarasota, FL, One Thing I Wish You Knew (January 2019).

Bob inquired if Amy could create an easily accessible mentoring program for schools in the local area. Amy, of course, responded, "YES." Not knowing where this would lead, she pressed on as the evidence was readily available and by June 2019, Amy and Jordan were ready to pitch it to the Sarasota County School Board administrators. Jordan suggested that the school community would greatly benefit from a middle school youth peer-based group mentoring program that focused on building students' leadership, emotional regulation, self-care, and relationship skills. After all the boxes were checked off, and the first program launched In October 2019.

Then COVID happened. In response, LOM transformed into a 100% virtual mentoring outreach program for students, teachers, staff, and parents to help students. When the new school year began (2020/2021), LOM continued to do its signature program at the time, while also launching an elementary school peer mentoring program and many teacher wellness initiatives.

Because we have the advantage of cross-over employees between NAMI and the LOM Teams, we are rich in talent, enthusiasm, peer specialists, and academic experts, community connections, and transformative relationships.

"There are always miracles gifted to you if you open your eyes!" - Amy F. Weinberger, MEd

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

WE LISTEN & CONNECT! WE ARE APPROACHABLE!

To heal is to listen. When an administrator, a school counselor, a teacher, etc. has an idea to boost morale for their staff, increase student participation & learning, and/or involve parents more dynamically, they call us.



WE CREATE & INNOVATE! WE ARE GENEROUS WITH PRAISE & SERVICE!

Brainstorming ideas leads to innovation, action-plans, and intentional initiatives for the educational community.



WE CARE & CREATE BURSTS OF JOY THAT LEADS TO SMILES!

Our mission to heal education is deeply rooted in lived experiences. Forming trusting relationships matter to us.

OUR SUPER TEAM



Jordan Stoncypher
CO-FOUNDER
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Amy Weinberger
CO-FOUNDER
DONOR



Bob Cohn
CO-FOUNDER
DONOR



Vanessa Miller
SEA CAFE AND
STUDENT CAFE PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALIST



Emma Armstrong
SEA CAFE AND
STUDENT CAFE PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALIST



Taylor Walker
SEA CAFE AND
STUDENT CAFE PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALIST

OUR SUPER TEAM



Marci Vitkus

SEA CAFE AND PEER TO
PEER CAFE MENTOR
TRAINER



Katie Booth

SEA CAFE AND PEER TO
PEER CAFE MENTOR
TRAINER



Sarah Miller

POWER CAFE
FACILITATOR
FAMILY NAVIGATOR



Kyle Carroll

STUDENT CAFE PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALIST



Kelly Boucher

SEA CAFE AND
STUDENT CAFE PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALIST

OUR SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

The Student Cafe

The Student Cafe is the original program that started Lean On Me. It is an opportunity for middle schoolers to connect with mentors in a group setting to bring good peer role modeling into their lives, create authentic connections, and while learning relationships, emotional regulation, self-care, and leadership skills through fun activities.

The Peer to Peer Cafe

The purpose of the Peer to Peer Cafe program is to build relationships and connections between upper and underclassmen that promote the growth of relationship and emotional regulation skills. It is an opportunity for upperclassmen who have been chosen by their teachers based on their leadership, social, and emotional skills to work with underclassmen that is in need of a peer to look up to.

The SEA Cafe

The SEA (Support, Empowerment and Awareness) Café program purpose is to reduce teacher stress and burnout while also promoting relationship and emotional skill building for the students. SEA Cafe is a program where Lean On Me comes into a classroom for an hour to do an activity based on the identified needs of the students that the teacher has identified. While The Lean On Me Project is in the classroom, the teacher has an extra hour to catch up on work.

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Number Of People Served at Our Signature Programs

Student Cafe: 60

Peer to Peer Cafe: 50

SEA Cafe: 137

Number Of People Served at Our Other Initiatives

Book Joy Event: 800+

WATCH Cafe: 286

POWER Cafe: 12

Schools That Were Involved

Brookside Middle School

McIntosh Middle School

Woodland Middle School

Brooker Middle School

Sarasota Middle School

Tuttle Elementary School

Tatum Elementary School

Alta Vista Elementary School

Lamarque Elementary School

Wilkinson Elementary School

Fruitville Elementary School

Brentwood Elementary School

Community Day School

the
LEAN on
me
PROJECT

**2022-2023 SCHOOL
YEAR**

**THE STUDENT CAFE
NUMBERS**

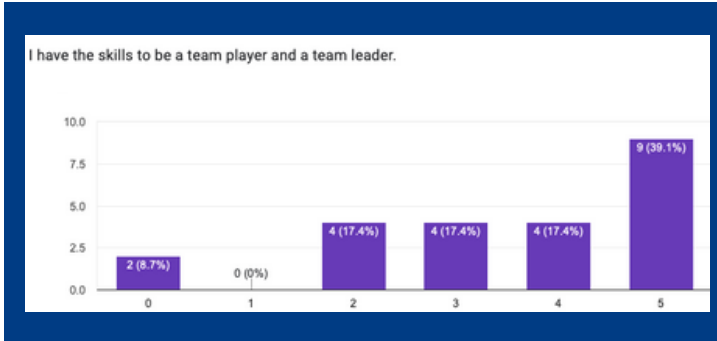


nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

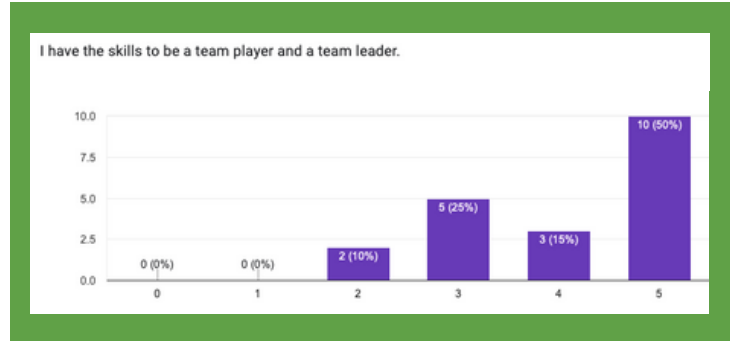
Sarasota and
Manatee Counties

Leadership Skills Outcomes

Row 1: Survey results before the students started the group



Row 2: Survey results after the students finished the group



When we asked students to finish the sentence: Because of this group I learned...

how to be a better team member and leader

how to make more friends

self awareness

how to work as a team

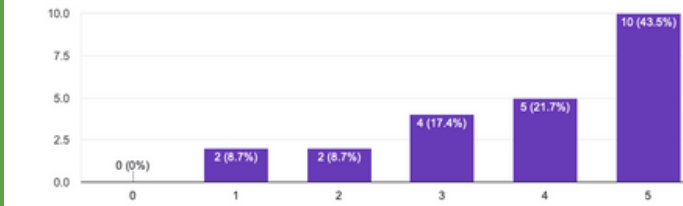
how to control myself

how to be a better team member and leader

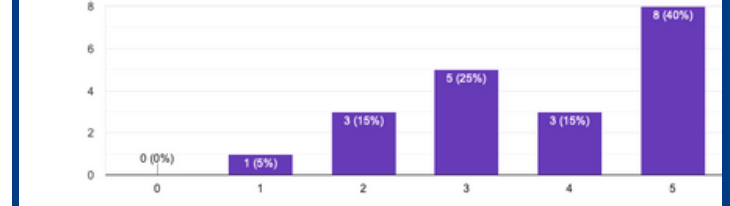
to be respectful, have fun, and think about what you want to do when you get older

that it is okay to talk about your feelings because if you don't it will come out at the wrong time

I can accomplish things I set my mind to.



I can accomplish things I set my mind to.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: My favorite part of this group was...

the leadership project I envisioned

hearing about others ideas

making new friends

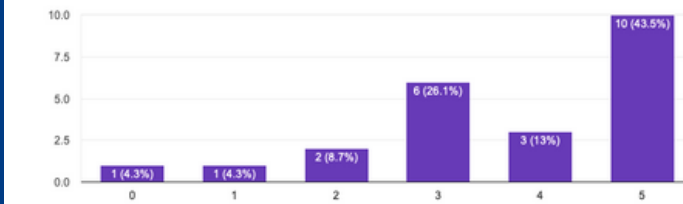
the people in it

when we played fun games

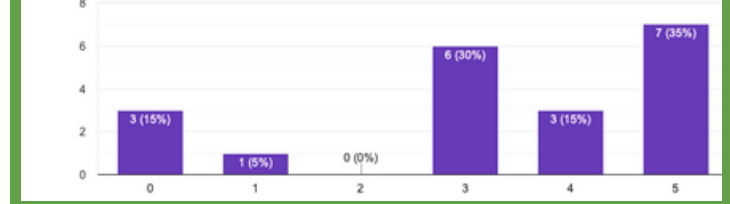
the humor

just being in the room and learning and being free to express myself

I can identify leadership skills in myself.



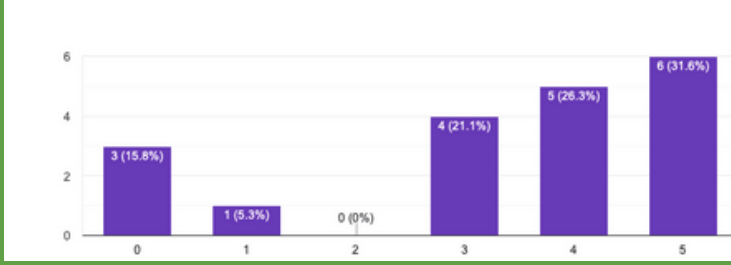
I can identify leadership skills in myself.



Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Leadership Skills General Outcomes

I feel comfortable talking about this topic more because of this group.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: Thank you Lean On Me at NAMI Sarasota-Manatee for...

making me feel welcomed and letting me express myself

helping me with my emotions

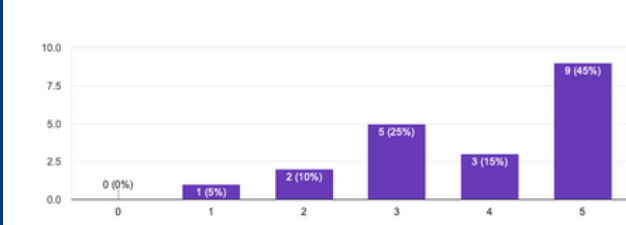
letting us share our ideas

teaching me about leadership skills

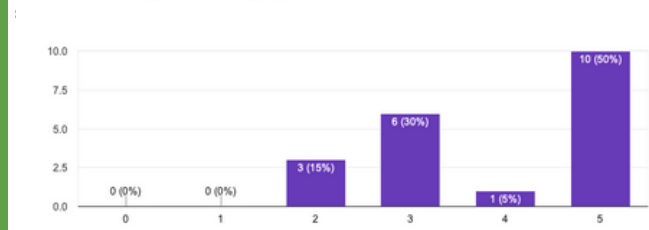
cheering me up

helping me with my confidence

I felt encouraged to participate in this group.



I've learned something new from this group.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: The last thing I would like to say to Lean On Me is...

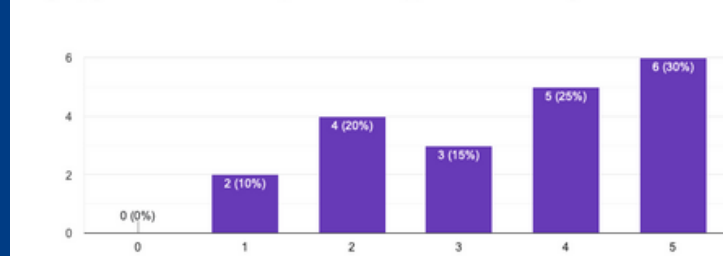
thank you, I appreciate all the work you guys have done

this is great program for me

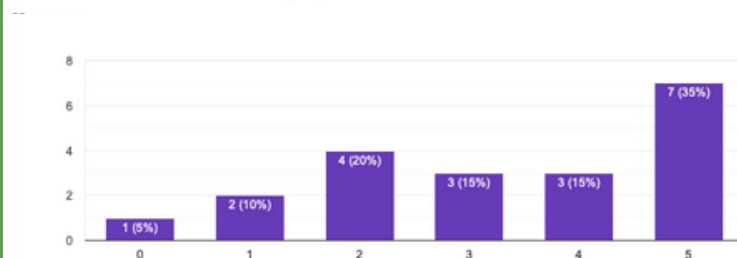
thank you for keeping me in my growth mindset

thank you for being a support system to me

This group gave me information to help me deal with my problems and challenges.



I feel better now than I did before the group started.



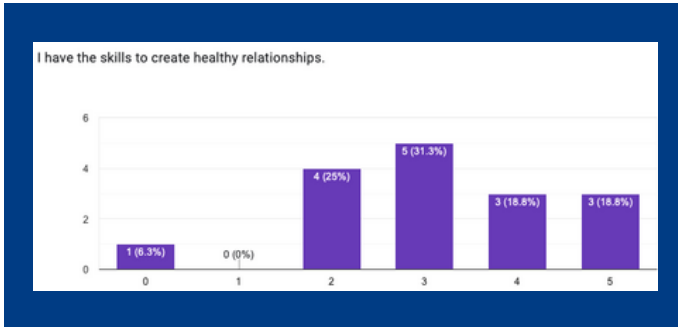
Final Thoughts Quarter 1 thoughts

The general decrease in responses from the lower quintiles suggests we are made some progress in building leadership skills amongst the students. The data on page 2, along with the qualitative data, appears to suggest that Lean On Me is showing success by creating helping and supportive connections with the students.

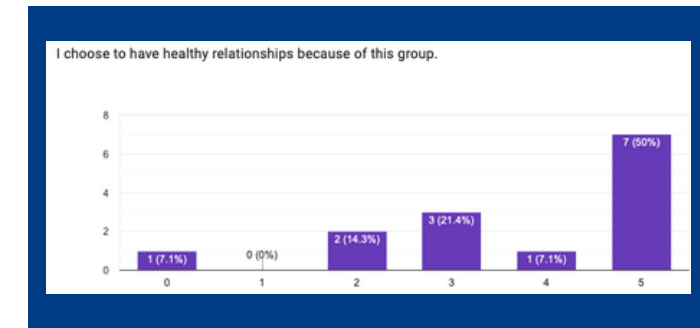
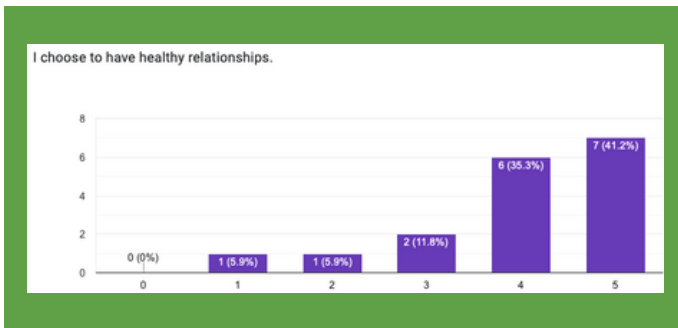
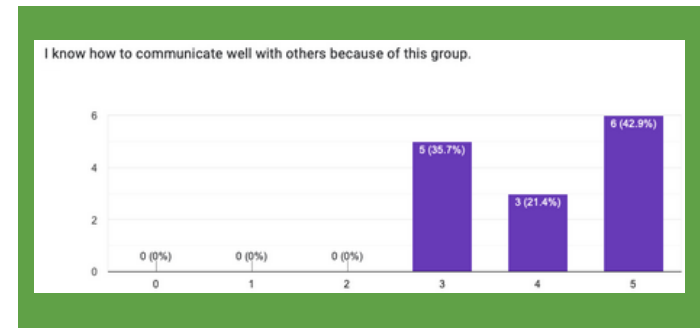
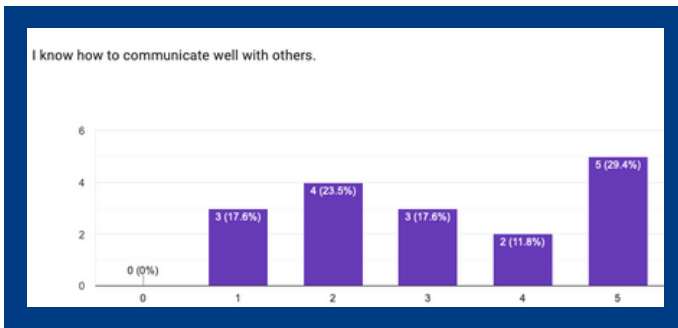
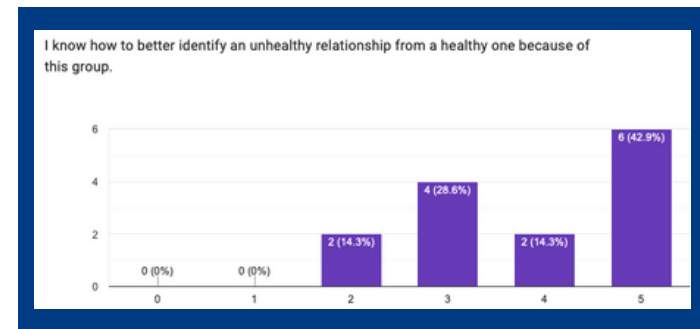
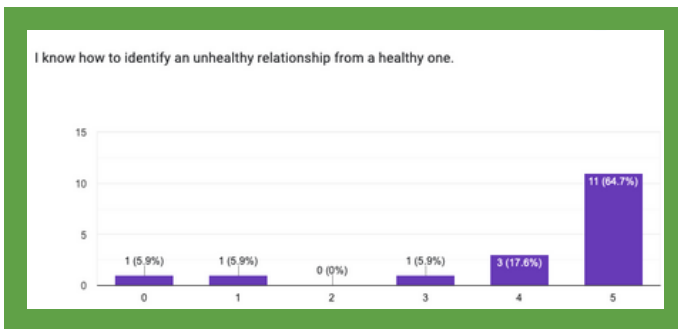
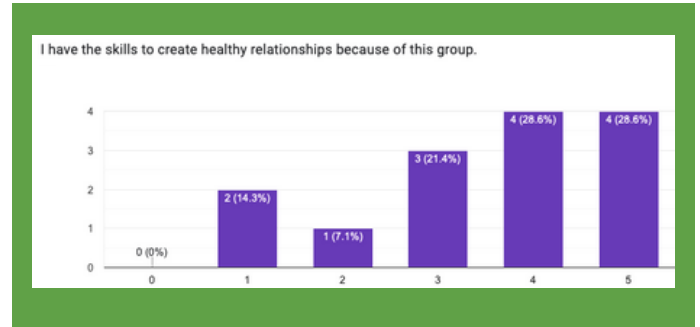
We thank you for letting us connect with your students!
We look forward to quarter 2 group!

Relationship Skills

Row 1: Survey results before the students started the group



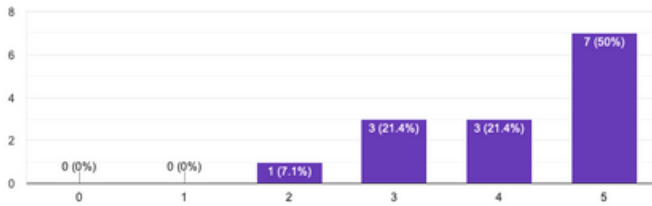
Row 2: Survey results after the students finished the group



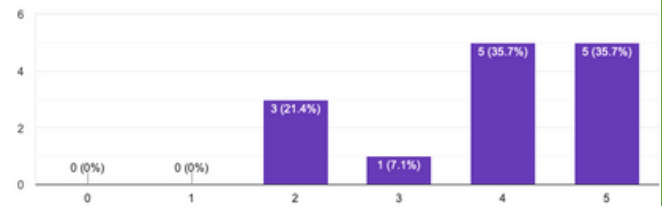
Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Relationship Skills General Outcomes

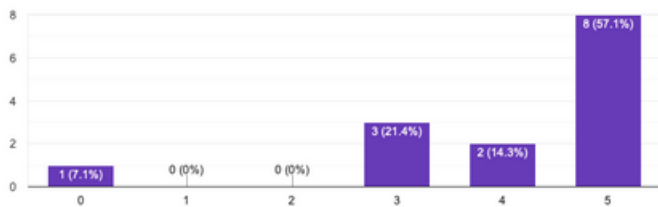
I feel better now than I did before the group started.



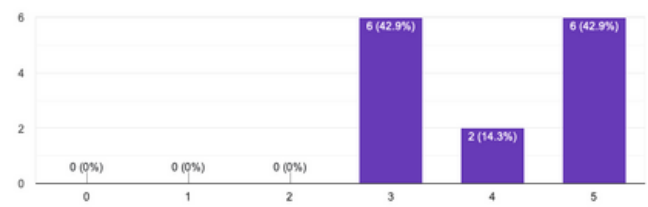
I've learned something new from this group.



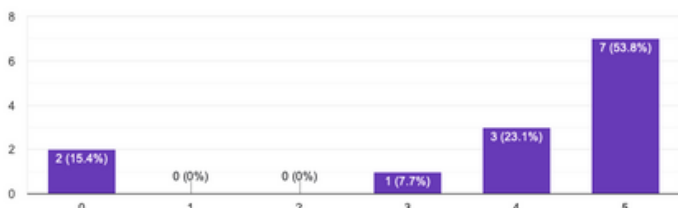
I felt encouraged to participate in the group.



This group gave me information to help me deal with my problems or challenges.



I feel more comfortable talking about this topic because of this group.



Final Thoughts Quarter 2 thoughts

The general decrease in responses from the lower quintiles suggests we are made some progress in building relationship skills amongst the students. The data on page 2, along with the data, appears to suggest that Lean On Me is showing success by creating helping and supportive connections with the students.

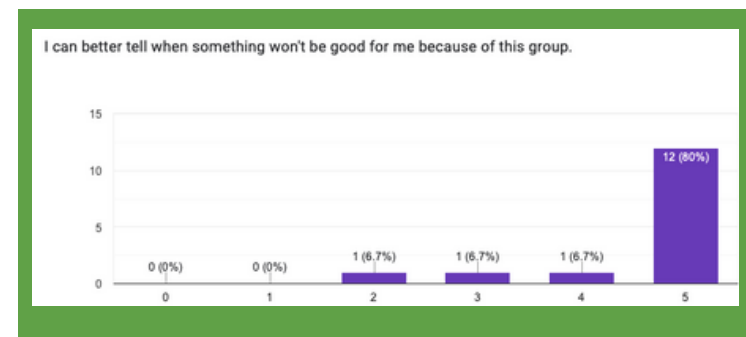
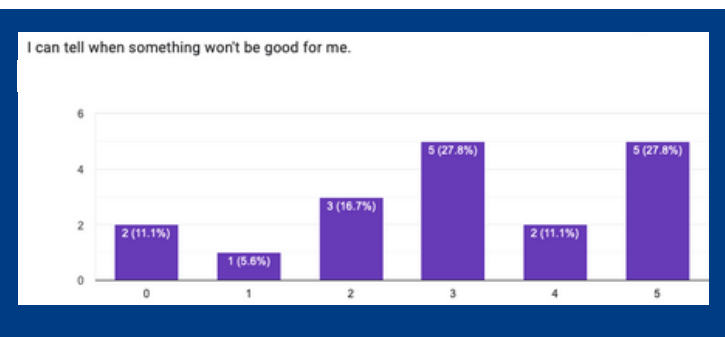
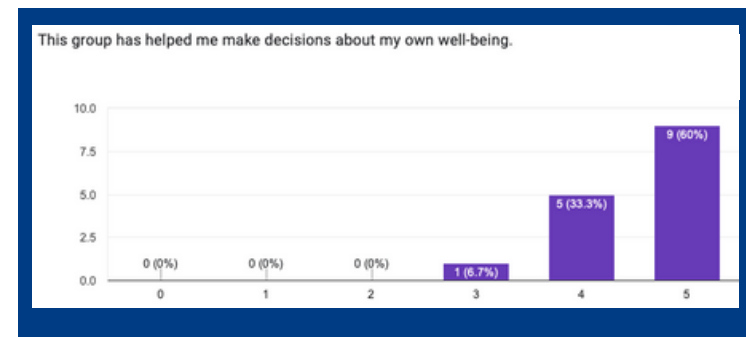
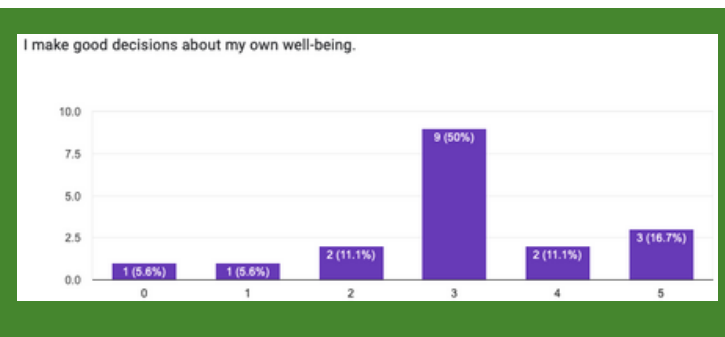
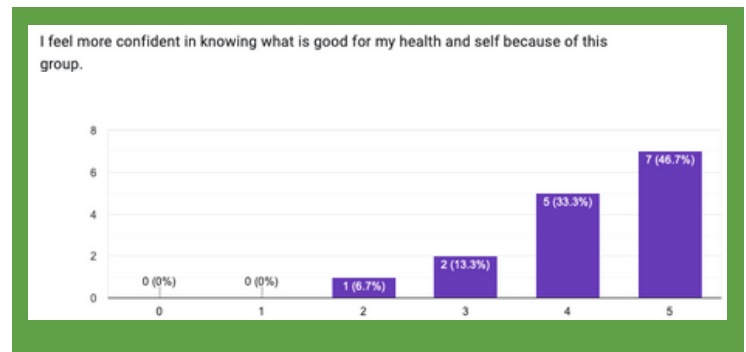
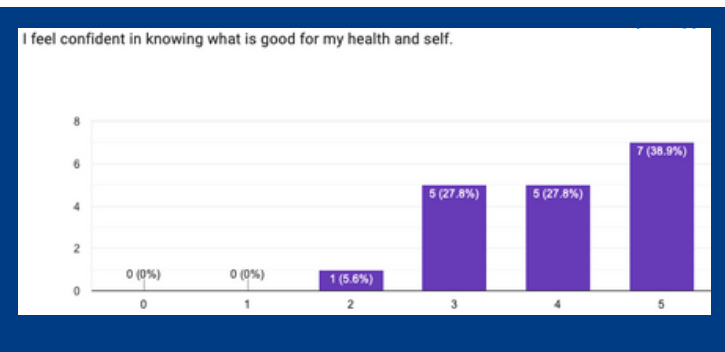
We thank you for letting us connect with your students! We look forward to quarter 3 group!

Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Self Care Skills

Row 1: Survey results before the students started the group

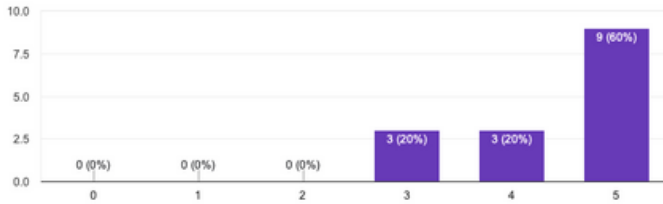
Row 2: Survey results after the students finished the group



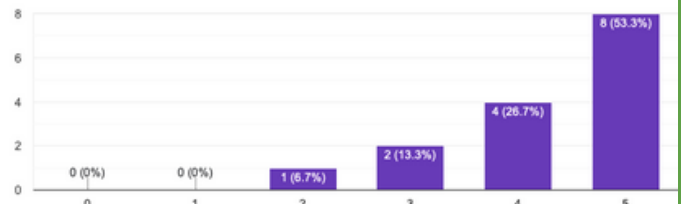
Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Self Care Skills General Outcomes

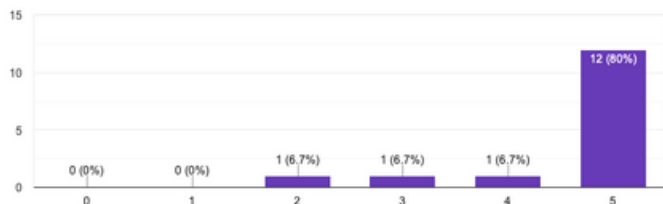
This group gave me information to help me deal with my problems or challenges.



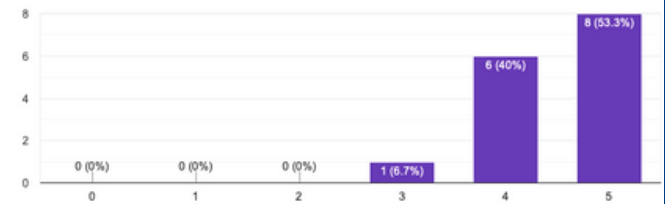
I feel better now than I did before the group started.



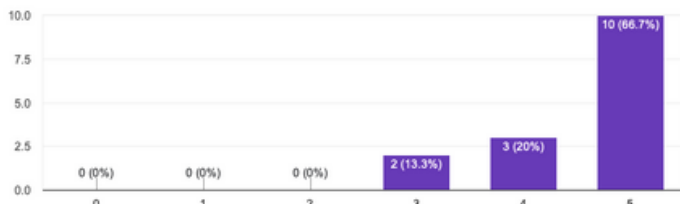
I've learned something new from this group.



I felt encouraged to participate in the group.



I feel more comfortable talking about this topic because of this activity.



Final Thoughts Quarter 3 thoughts

The general decrease in responses from the lower quintiles suggests we are made some progress in building self-care skills amongst the students. The data on page 2 appears to suggest that Lean On Me is showing success by creating helping and supportive connections with the students.

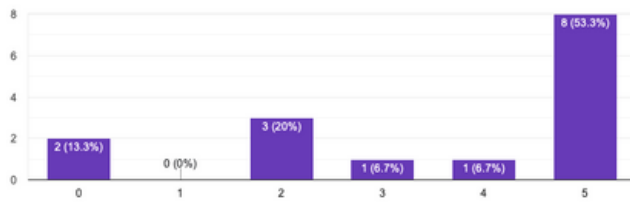
We thank you for letting us connect with your students! We look forward to quarter 4 group!

Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Emotional Regulation Skills

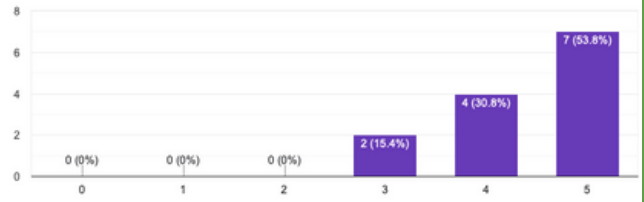
Row 1: Survey results before the students started the group

I know if I'm having a hard time, I will get through it.

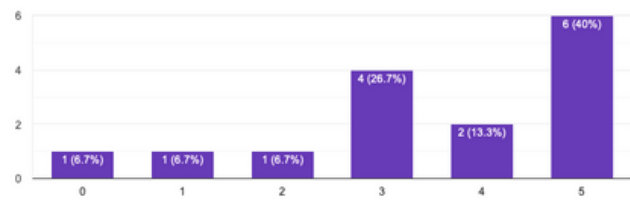


Row 2: Survey results after the students finished the group

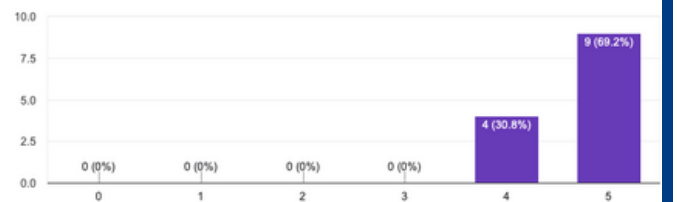
I know if I'm having a hard time, I will get through it because of this group.



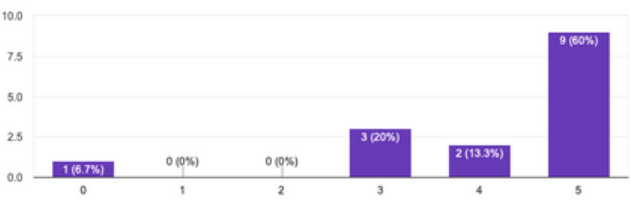
I have skills that can help me feel better.



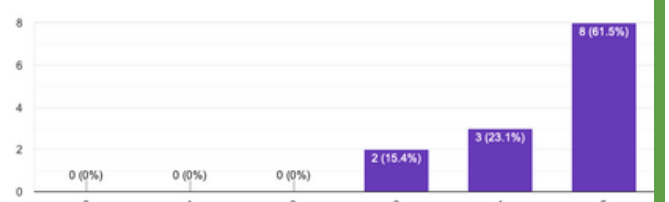
I have skills that can help me feel better because of this group.



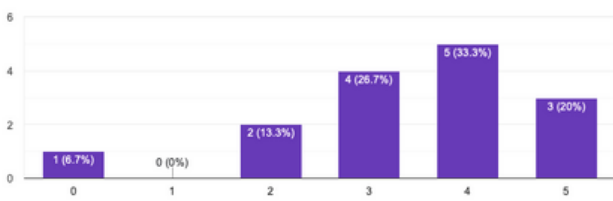
I know who I can ask for support from.



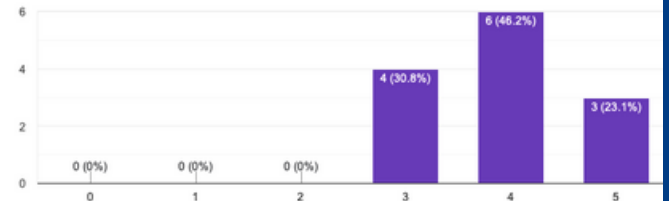
I know who I can ask for support from because of this group.



I can control my emotions when I need to.



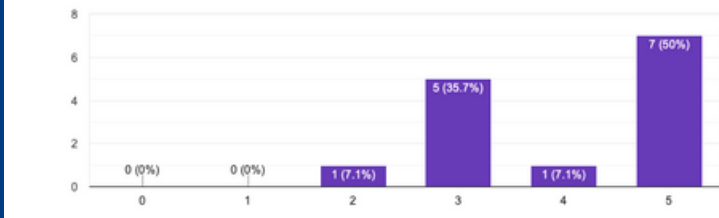
I can control my emotions better when I need to because of this group.



Scale legend: 0 = not at all | 5 = absolutely

Emotional Regulation Skill General Outcomes

I feel more comfortable talking about this topic because of this activity.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: Thank you Lean On Me at NAMI Sarasota-Manatee for...

teaching me about me

freeing me

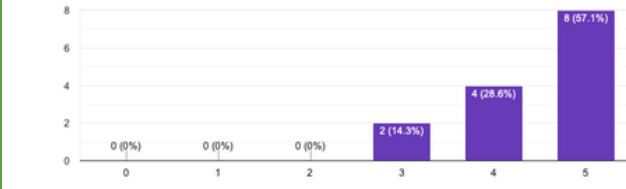
helping me make new friends and helping me learn stuff about other people

helping me with my patients and anger

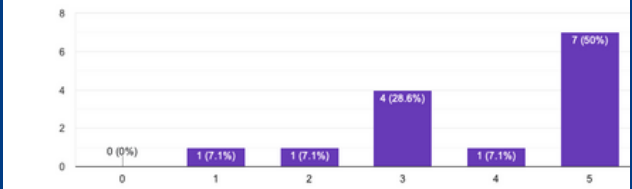
letting me talk about how I feel

being here

I felt encouraged to participate in the group.



I've learned something new from this group.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: Because you I learned...

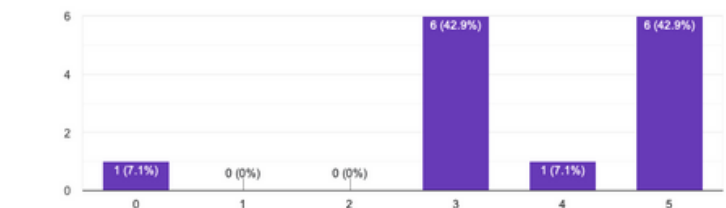
to love myself

a lot of stuff and new people

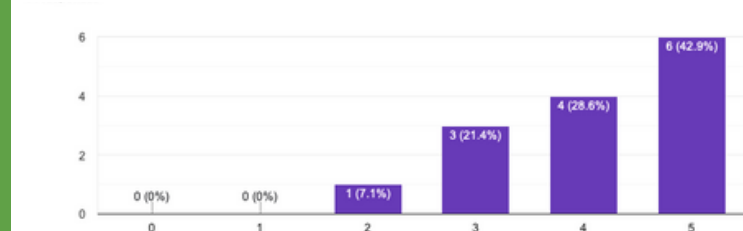
to be myself

to control my anger and have patients and it helped me a lot

This group gave me information to help me deal with my problems or challenges.



I feel better now than I did before the group started.



When we asked students to finish the sentence: My favorite part was..

when we share how we were doing

always coming together to talk

hanging with y'all

sitting here and learning new things about people

meeting new friends

playing the games

the
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**2022-2023 SCHOOL
YEAR**

**THE S.E.A. CAFE
NUMBERS**

Leadership Skills

60% of students agreed that they could see leadership skills in themselves and others because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

58% of students agreed that they believed they can a team player and a team leader because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

Relationship Skills

69% of students agreed that they know how to tell an unhealthy relationship from a healthy one because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

Emotional Regulation Skills

81% of students agreed that they believed they have skills that can help them feel better because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

80% of students felt like they knew if they were having a hard time, they would get through it because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

92% of students agreed that they know who I can ask for help from because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

Teacher Feedback

"Thank you all for the fun times you've brought into our classrooms... It was very productive having some extra planning time, and very enjoyable to watch the students participate in all your activities!" - Teacher

"I know the students absolutely love when you come in. You all do amazing work!" - School Admin

General Outcomes

67% of students agreed that they learned something new because of the SEA Cafe activity they participated in.

53% of students agreed that they felt better after participating in the SEA Cafe activity.

62% of students agreed that they felt encouraged to participate in SEA Cafe activity.

the
LEAN on
me
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**2022-2023 SCHOOL
YEAR**

**THE PEER TO PEER
CAFE NUMBERS**



nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Sarasota and
Manatee Counties

Peer to Peer: Mentor Outcomes

Row 1: Survey results before the students started as mentors

74% believed they could see leadership skills in themselves and others.

75% believed they can meet goals and do tasks they set their mind to.

74% believed they can be a team player and a team leader.

67% believed they have the skills to have healthy relationships.

Row 2: Survey results after the students finished being a mentor

100% believed they could see leadership skills in themselves and others.

92% believed they can meet goals and do tasks they set their mind to.

92% believed they can be a team player and a team leader.

100% believed they have the skills to have healthy relationships.

Peer to Peer: Mentor Outcomes

Row 1: Survey results before the students started as mentors

**50% believed they know how to
tell an unhealthy relationship
from a healthy one.**

**71% believed they can talk well
with others.**

**69% believed they can control
how they feel when I need to.**

**78% believed they know who they
I can ask help from.**

Row 2: Survey results after the students finished being a mentor

**100% believed they know how to
tell an unhealthy relationship
from a healthy one.**

**100% believed they can talk well
with others.**

**93% believed they can control
how they feel when I need to.**

**100% believed they know who
they I can ask help from.**

Peer to Peer: Mentor General Outcomes

93% Agreed that this group gave me skills to help me deal with my problems.

When we asked students to finish the sentence: Thank you Lean On Me at NAMI Sarasota-Manatee for...

the time I had with my mentee

teaching me how to help others

teaching me how to become a mentor and how to express myself

letting me be myself and express my feelings

teaching life school

making me a better person

94% Agreed that they feel better now than they did before the group started.

93% Agreed that they learned something new from this group.

When we asked students to finish the sentence: Because you I learned...

how to communicate more with others

I can help people with kindness

how to interpret a situation

how to be more confident

how to be more patient and observant

how to make myself feel good and control my emotions during hard times

93% Agreed that they felt encouraged to participate in the group.

93% Agreed that they can talk about being a mentor better because of this group.

When we asked students to finish the sentence: My favorite part was..

when my mentee was always happy and gave me happiness when I wasn't really happy and that mean a lot to me.

being with my mentee and having some great moments with her

when I got to meet the Lean On Me staff and make friends

helping

Peer to Peer: Mentee Outcomes

100% Agreed that their mentor gave them skills to help them deal with their problems.

83% Agreed that they felt better now than they did before they started with their mentor

83% Agreed that they have learned something new from their mentor.

80% Agreed that they felt encouraged to participate with my mentor.

83% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, I can see leadership skills in myself and others.

100% Agreed that, Because of having a mentor, they can meet goals and do tasks I set they mind to.

100% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, they can be a team player and a team leader.

83% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, they like to have healthy relationships.

Peer to Peer: Mentee Outcomes

100% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, they can control how they feel when they need to.

When we asked students to finish the sentence: Thank you Lean On Me at NAMI Sarasota-Manatee for...

helping me experience new stuff

helping me on my friendship skills

teaching me to be a better person and teaching me manners

helping me with reading

the new friend I have

meeting my mentor

When we asked students to finish the sentence:
Because you I learned...

manners, reading, and friendship skills

how to make new friends

more about perseverance

how to control my anger

how to be patient

to never give up

100% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, if they're having a hard time, they will get through it.

100% Agreed that, because of having a mentor, they have skills that can help them feel better.

When we asked students to finish the sentence: My favorite part was..

that my mentor taught me new things

when me and my mentor hung out

when I got to meet the Lean On Me staff and make friends

doing activities and talking

the
LEAN on
me
PROJECT

THANK YOU!

The Lean On Me/NAMI team thanks all the amazing schools, staff members, and students for being a part of an amazing school year at Lean On Me. We look forward to the 2023-2024 school year!