Mass General Brigham
Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital

Recognizing and Responding to Bias and Microaggressions in the Workplace

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Background

- Underrepresented clinicians in the workplace are facing consistent microaggressions and bias that are detrimental to their mental and physical well-being (Ackerman-Barger et al., 2020; Fattoracci & King, 2023; Gilliam & Russell, 2021).

- Healthcare organizations typically focus on patient microaggressions and marginalization, overlooking staff attitudes toward each other.

- Best practices for recognizing and responding to microaggressions and bias include targeted educational initiatives, organization structures and processes such as clear policies and anonymous reporting systems (Gilliam & Russell, 2021).

- It is important to educate registered nurses, especially newly licensed nurses, to be respectful and accepting of individuals from multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds, whether they are patients or colleagues.

Setting

- 171-bed Magnet with Distinction™ designated community teaching hospital in the Northeast U.S.

Purpose

- To determine the effectiveness of an educational intervention for newly licensed nurses (NLNs) in recognizing and responding to bias and microaggressions in the workplace.

Evidence Based Practice Intervention

Project Design: A single-group pretest-posttest

Sample: 14 NLNs participating in a nurse residency program
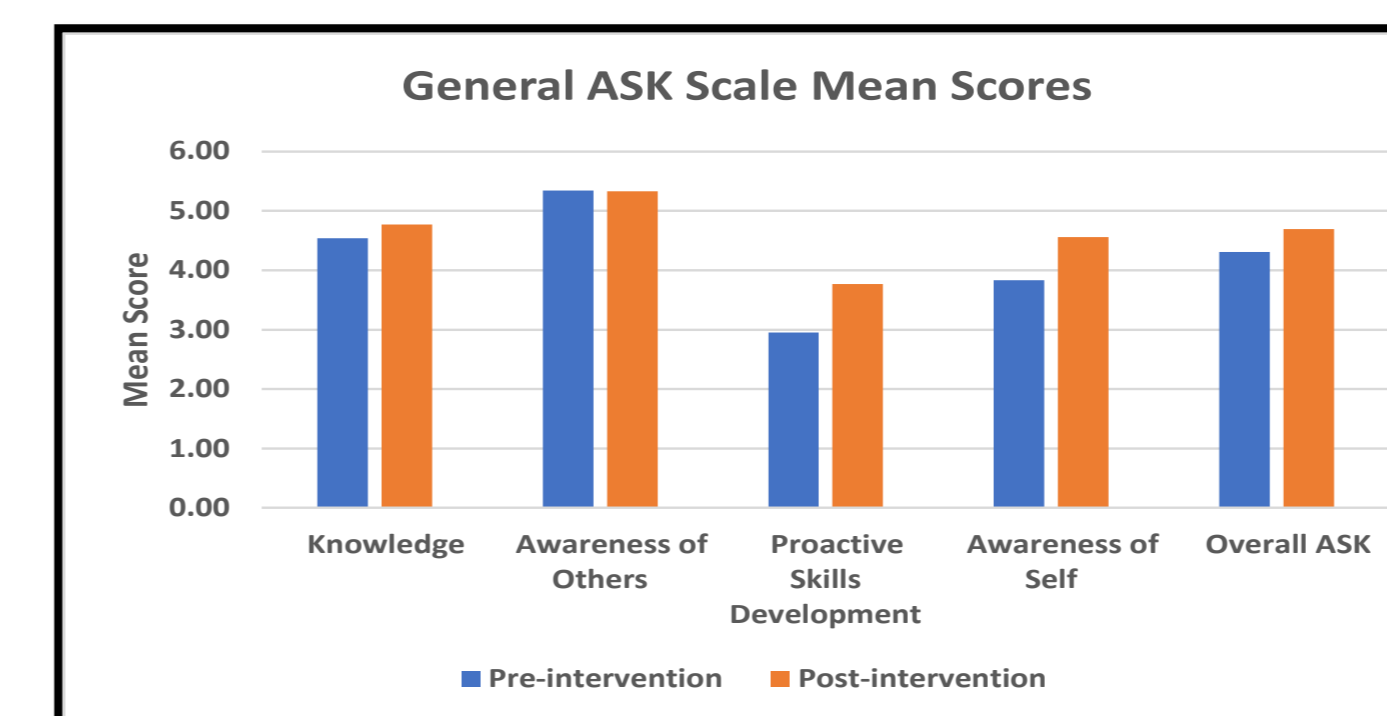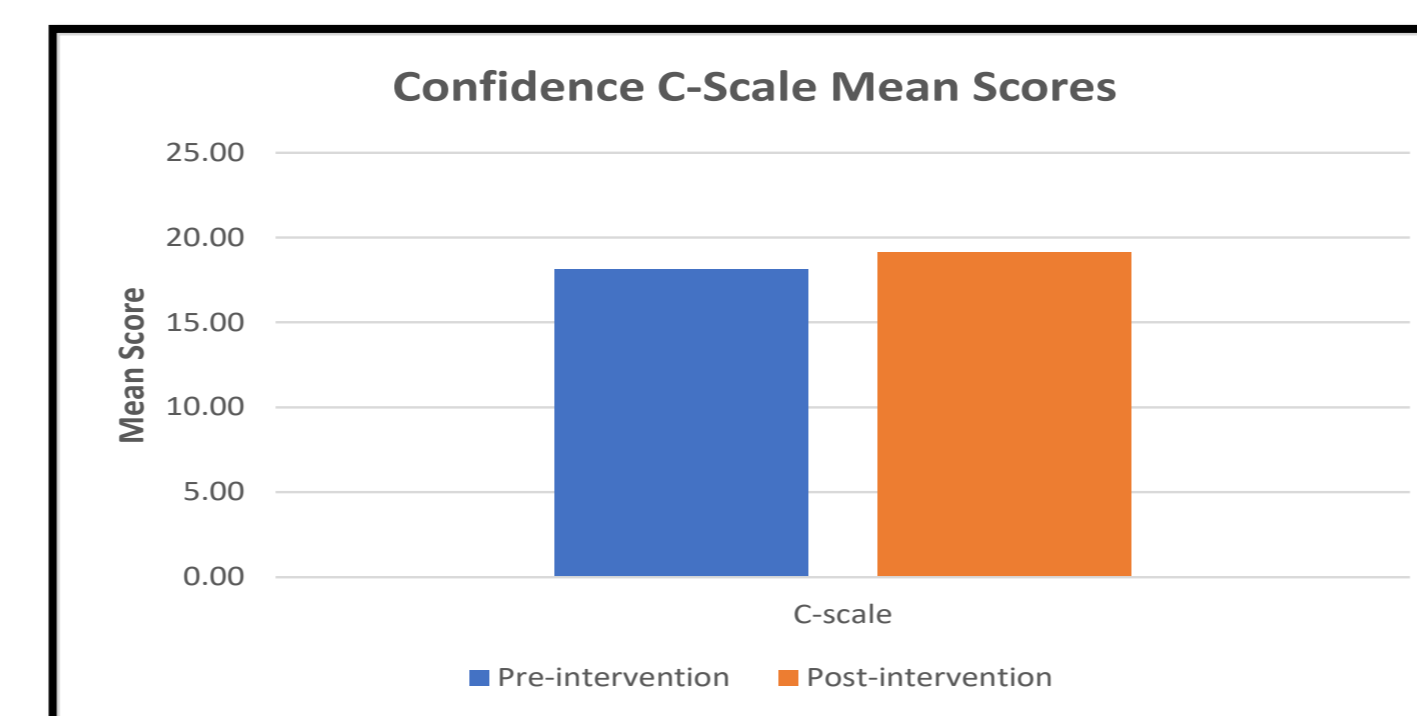
Intervention:

- A two-hour multi-modal educational intervention

- Education developed using evidence-based frameworks from the Organization of Nurse Leaders (ONL, 2022) and the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE, 2021)

Measurement:

- **Demographic Questionnaire**

- **Awareness, Skills, Knowledge: General** (ASK-G; Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2022): 37 item instrument, 6-point Likert-type scale measures cultural competence; overall Cronbach's α = .94

- **Confidence Scale Development and Psychometric Characteristics** (C-Scale; Grundy, 1993): 5 item instrument, 5-point Likert-type scale measures confidence in responding to bias and micro-aggression before and after participating in role playing; Cronbach's α = .85.

- **Program Evaluation:** Likert-type scale to evaluate program effectiveness in meeting objectives.

Data Analysis: A paired t-test was completed on group means

Results

Confidence C-Scale Mean Scores

General ASK Scale Mean Scores

Findings

- Overall results showed an increase in mean scores from pre- to post-intervention suggesting positive effects of the educational intervention.

- Overall mean ASK-G scores increased from 4.31 pretest to 4.69 posttest with the largest improvements in proactive skills development (2.95 pretest; 3.77 posttest) and awareness of self (3.83 pretest; 4.56 posttest).

- Overall confidence as based on the C-scale improved from 18.14 (pretest) to 19.14 (posttest).

- Program evaluations were extremely positive with participants providing specific feedback on how they will use skills and tools in their practice.

Discussion

- Findings from this project suggest that targeted education for nurses is an effective strategy for enhancing their ability to recognize, reflect on, and respond to bias and microaggression in the workplace.

Next Steps

- Collaborating with healthcare system DEI committee to expand program within the organization and across the healthcare system.

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