

# Curating Being Present with Art for Nursing Graduate Students

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## BACKGROUND

Being Present with Art, or BPWA, is a method of integrating mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) meditation, with art and museum pedagogy. A research study examining the impact of the BPWA method on stress, attention and sense of belonging, or connection, showed that participants self-reported lower stress levels, increased attention, and a greater sense of belonging after each session. Additionally, participants continued to self-report less stress a month after completing the four-week-long BPWA curriculum. Since its development in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BPWA method has been offered to diverse audiences, with nurses and nursing students comprising a significant group. BPWA has activated artwork in the Yale University Art Gallery's collection for Yale School of Nursing graduate students, as well as sparked novel connection between the Barnes Foundation and nursing faculty and students in the greater Philadelphia region.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

For The Art of Observation, Roksana Filipowska, PhD., will offer a demonstration of the BPWA module that has proven most effective with nursing graduate students. "Drawing with Art" is a BPWA module curated to cultivate equanimity, which is often

defined as a psychological state of evenness under stress. The module begins with a guided equanimity meditation, which is a genre of meditation within MBSR, and continues to feature line drawing exercises often used by art museum educators to facilitate close looking. Though the module is applicable to most art museum collections, selected artwork(s) should feature symmetry to serve as a visual counterpart to the equanimity meditation.

#### RESULTS

When paired together, meditation and group engagement with art deepen the participant's experience of feeling the symmetry of one's own body as two halves that are also part of a whole. Nursing students who have experienced this module often comment that it allows them to face stress and paradox with greater resilience.

#### DISCUSSION

Integrating mindfulness meditation with art and museum pedagogy can support nursing graduate students by leading to self-reported less stress, as well as increased attention and a greater sense of belonging. The method is a tool for preventing caretaker fatigue and burnout, addressing loneliness and developing resilience in the face of uncertainty.

#### CONCLUSION

This demonstration includes a guided meditation, guided close looking, a drawing exercise, and focused questions to spark reflection and group discussion. Following the demonstration, Filipowska will present on her long-term partnership with Nursing Professor Ashley Heidler, MSN, RN, CPN, at Gwynedd Mercy University, which is located in the greater Philadelphia region. Filipowska will identify components of the partnership that are especially supportive of nursing faculty and students, as well as examples of how participants have applied this module to their nursing practice and personal lives.

## REFERENCES

Filipowska, R., Weinberg-Wolf, H., Vaghenas, A. (2024). Being Present with Art: Mindful and Interactive Engagement with Art Lowers Stress While Increasing Attention and Belonging. *Journal of Museum Education*, Volume 49, Issue 3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2023.2217568>