

# Stress Management Among Norfolk Drug Treatment Court Participants

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## Background

### Community Partner:

- Adult Probation Office in Norfolk, Virginia
  - 18 month, five-phase system providing intensive outpatient services with supervision by Probation and the Court

### Aggregate description

- Non-violent, adult felony offenders in Norfolk with substance use
- Drug court reduces recidivism (Weatherburn et al., 2020)

### Health Needs Assessment Form

- Stress management ranked as most important
- Participants had little knowledge on healthy coping strategies
- Substance use is directly associated with stressful events (Preston et al., 2018)
- Incorrect management of stress can lead to major health problems (Ladakis & Chouvarda, 2021)

## Objectives

Priorities: The clients manage stress effectively

- By the end of the 12 class education series, the clients will be able to
  - Demonstrate better stress management techniques
  - Verbalize benefits of stress management each session
  - Engage in effective techniques both during sessions and throughout the week



## Project Description

### Planning process:

- Strengthened rapport with cohort by offering self and utilizing therapeutic communication
- Develop Stress Evaluation Survey
- Scheduled meeting times based on participant availability

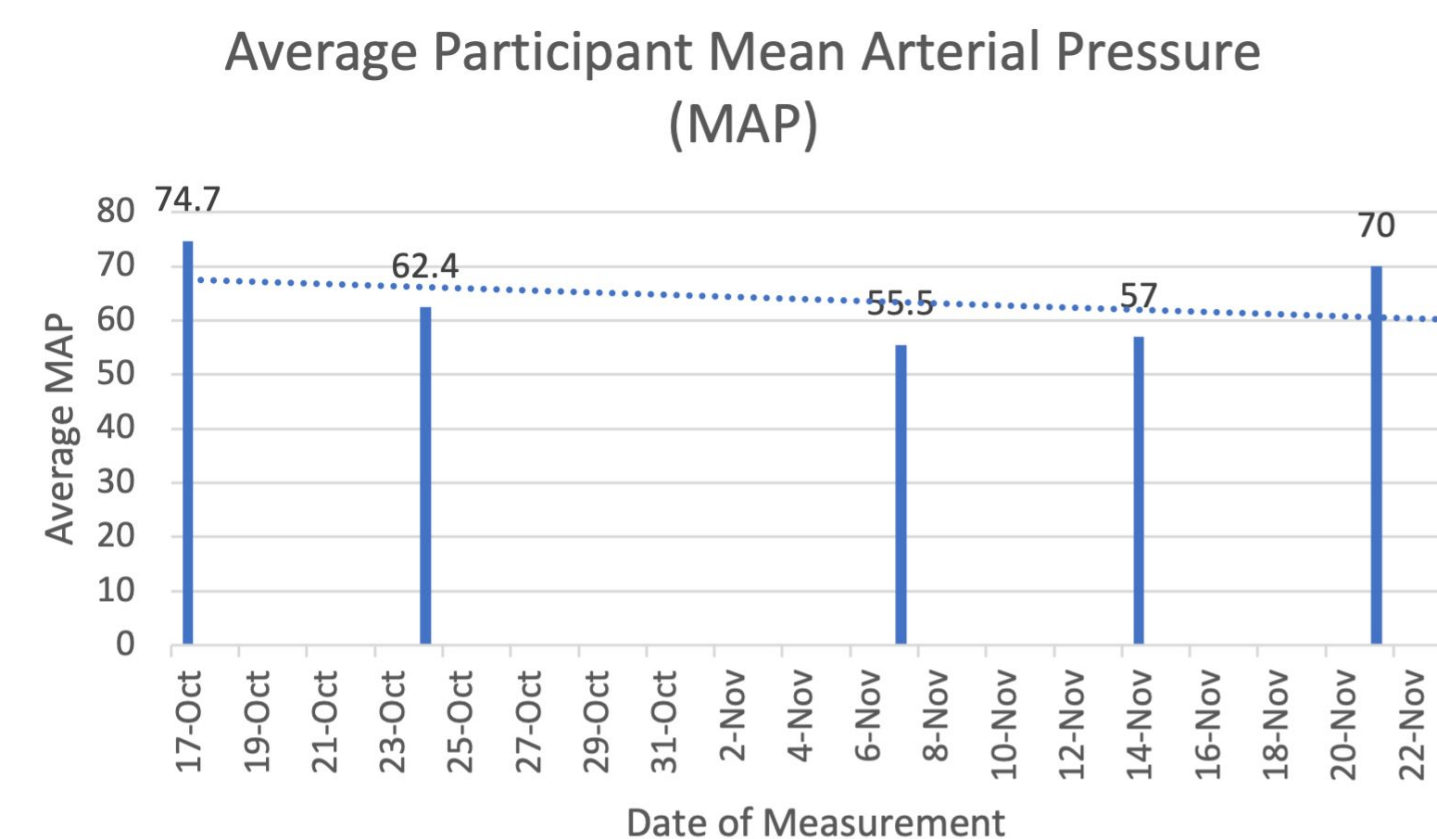
### Interventions:

- Educate on stress management techniques and implement weekly stress management techniques
- Assess blood pressure every week
- Administer Stress Evaluation Survey monthly

### Plan for evaluation:

- Assess the trends of the cohort's blood pressures and five item Stress Evaluation Surveys

## Findings



- Downtrend in average MAP readings
- Reported lower levels of stress
- Additional decreased levels of stress coinciding with lower blood pressure readings over time is expected.

## Conclusions & Implications

### Conclusions

- Average stress rating at a score of 4
- Nutrition and exercise teaching helped manage the most stress
- Clients need consistency and additional life skills teaching
- Nurses need to actively emphasize stress management for holistic care

### Implications

- Nursing students can play an important role in providing stress management strategies to drug court participants
  - Drug court team can continue overseeing clients' stress management

### Barriers

- Low health literacy
- Unwillingness in some participants to open up about personal issues
- Limited communication via telehealth
- Limited to 6 in-person participants
- Inconsistent attendance
- Inconsistent completion of stress survey

### Reflection

- Clients accept traditional and alternative approaches of stress management
- Benefits might increase with more face to face participants

## References

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## Recommendations

### Strategies to Overcome Barriers

- Avoiding complicated medical terminology
- Maintaining nonjudgmental atmosphere
- Resume face-to-face interactions when allowed
- Ensure all written material is FLESH-KINCAID score of 4th grade level
  - FLESH-KINCAID score for Stress Evaluation Survey was at a 7th grade level

### What Would We Do Differently?

- Utilize teach back method to assess aggregate understanding of material
- Utilize the Stress Evaluation Survey routinely every two weeks

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