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Introduction

DECISIONS is a 3-hour undergraduate workshop that helps participants understand ethical and critical decision-making and develop self-awareness around factors that affect decisions. In keeping with UNC's Excellence in Action Standards, the program helps participants align personal and University core values with their actions in an atmosphere of responsibility and accountability.

This workshop can be utilized as a sanctioning option by hearing officers in Housing, the Office of Student Conduct, the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and Community Involvement. The workshop also has the potential to be used by Student Wellness as a requested program option or outreach/collaboration with other campus organizations.

The program engages participants in a process of critical reflection and dynamic learning. It helps them understand aspects of their behavior and attitudes that have placed them at odds with community expectations. Participants learn applied skills, have opportunities to practice these skills, and also have the opportunity to identify and reflect on their values in order to make better choices moving forward. The workshop also introduces students to the practice of mindfulness, which has been shown to improve decision-making by increasing awareness of the present moment (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2010).

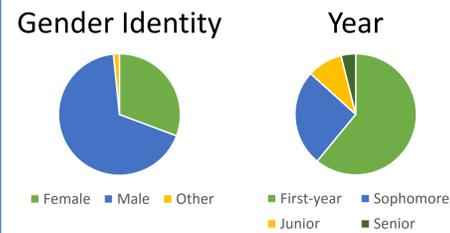
Citation: Ruedy, N. E., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2010). In the moment: The effect of mindfulness on ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 95, 73-87.

Methods

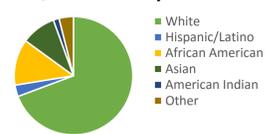
- 13 workshops held during 2015-2016 school year
- 156 participants referred from Housing or Student Conduct
- Workshops co-facilitated by one graduate-level Student Wellness program assistant and one Community Director from Housing
- Students are given a pre-test at the beginning of the workshop, and a post-test at the end. These are used to evaluate the workshop's impact on the extent to which participants consider and utilize values, ethics, and mindfulness when they make decisions.
- Curriculum was updated for Spring 2016 to include a focus on implicit bias. Students learn about various cognitive biases (e.g. availability heuristic, bandwagon effect, outcome bias, etc.) that can affect decision-making and consider these sources of bias throughout decision-making scenarios utilized in the workshop.
- Data from 128 participants that provided both pre- and post-test responses were analyzed with paired t-tests.

Results

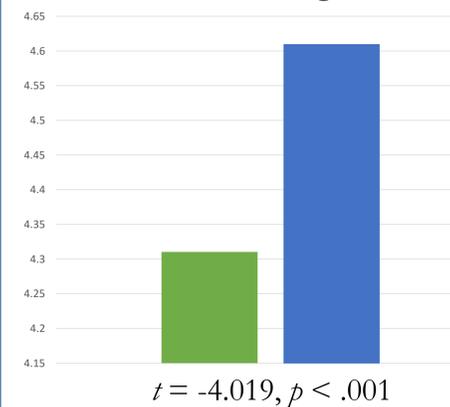
Participant Demographics



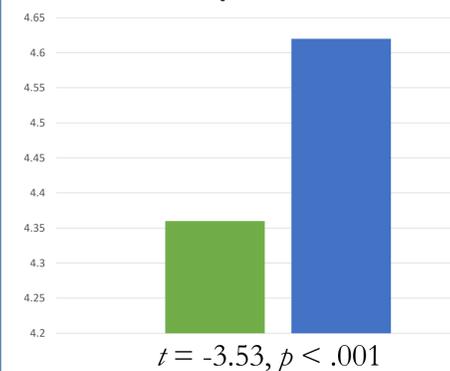
Race/Ethnicity



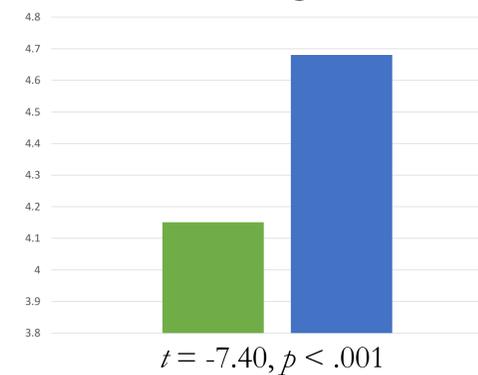
"It's important to me to think through a decision before making it"



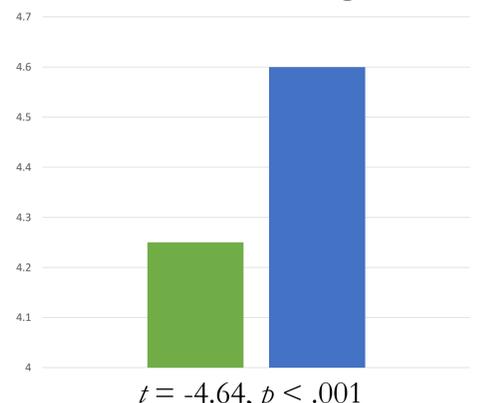
"I know the values that are most important to me"



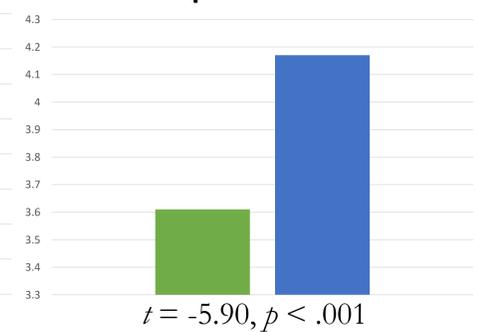
"I know at least one approach to decision-making"



"I have thought about the ethics that affect my decision-making"



"I expect this class to be helpful/this class was helpful for me"



Key: ■ Pre-test ■ Post-test

Discussion

As shown in the graphs to the left, students were significantly more likely to consider ethics and values in their decision-making, to know at least one approach to decision-making, and to believe it is important to think through a decision before making it after participating in the DECISIONS workshop. Specifically, while only 33.9% strongly agreed that they knew at least one approach to decision-making before the workshop, 71.0% strongly agreed with this statement after the workshop. Similarly, 42.0% of students strongly agreed that it was important to think through a decision before making it before the workshop, whereas 67.8% of students strongly agreed with this afterward. Finally, 83.9% of students agreed or strongly agreed that DECISIONS was helpful for them. Overall, DECISIONS appears to be an effective intervention to help students consider their values, ethics, and decision-making processes and should continue to be used as a space for students to reflect on these topics. DECISIONS should continue to be utilized as a sanctioning option and hopes to expand to include additional partners on campus.

How would you describe DECISIONS to a friend?

- A workshop that helped me realize who I am, and who I will become based on my decisions
- A series of activities to help give reason and purpose to decisions we make
- A helpful course to help you realize what matters to you
- A seminar which allows one to reflect on their beliefs and values as well as listening to others'
- Decisions is a judgment-free zone that allows for students to make choices that are appropriate and smart
- Thought-provoking and objective analysis of your decision-making process
- Really, honestly a beneficial step towards "waking up"
- It really helps you realize the impact one decision can have, and helps you learn how to make that decision
- A workshop that helps you find yourself, that helps you find who you want to become