



2001-2003 Program Evaluation

MindOH! Discipline Series Pilot Study

July 29, 2003



The process of evaluating the MindOH! DLSS involved establishing six short-term goals and then analyzing the degree of their intended effects.

Executive Summary

MindOH! L.L.C. was created to research and develop innovative, measurable character education software systems that effectively increase high school completion rates and decrease suspensions, alternative school transfers and dropout rates in secondary schools, juvenile justice and youth organizations. MindOH! offers direct support to students navigating their way through the disciplinary process with its *Discipline and Life Skills Series™ (DLSS)*, which consists of three discipline modules: *What's Up?: Student Incident Report*, *Rule 1: Respect*, and *Taking Charge: Responsibility*.

The Company conducted a two-year research study of the *MindOH! Discipline Series* in five Houston middle schools. This report outlines findings of the Pilot study, with data collected from April 2001 to May 2003 from four of the middle schools participating in the study. The participating middle schools have been given code names for privacy reasons.

In this report, infractions that deal with disrespectful behavior are referred to as “respect infractions” and infractions that deal with irresponsible behavior are referred to as “responsibility infractions.”

Data analysis and reporting were conducted by Dr. Beth Manke, Associate Professor in the Human Development Department at the California State University, Long Beach. Analyses are presented separately by module in a question-answer format. Quantitative data has been supplemented by qualitative case studies, testimonials and observations to provide additional information about the application of the DLSS.

The process of evaluating the *MindOH! Discipline Series* involved identifying the intended impact or goals of the three modules. Once goals were identified, one could assess, through various methods, the degree to which the modules actually produce the intended

effects. Following are the Company's six short-term goals for the *MindOH! Discipline Series* and the key findings addressing those specific goals:

1. Prepares students for a meaningful conversation with school authority. Teaches a powerful communication tool and increases the amount of information students are willing to communicate to authorities, which may result in more effective administrator intervention.

- In the *What's Up?* module, the average number of total words used was 147. The fact that students wrote so many words provides indirect support for the idea that the modules encourage communication.
- In the *What's Up?* module, on average, students endorsed 4 different emotions out of a possible 22 listed feelings or emotions. The highest ranking emotions selected were: Angry, Worried, Frustrated, Confused and Scared.
- In the *Respect* module, 73% of students reported that they were more successful in telling their side of the story after having previously completed the *What's Up?* module.
- In the *What's Up?* module, 37% of students wanted to talk to someone else on campus. Forty-six and 48% of students wanted to talk to someone else on campus in the *Respect* and *Responsibility* modules respectively. This is significant given that these students were making the transition to adolescence. Although students this age think about their feelings more often than younger children, they are typically less likely to want to talk to adults about their problems. Adolescents frequently believe that adults couldn't possibly understand their situations or feelings, claiming that their situations are unique, a phenomenon known as the adherence to a “personal fable.”



Both the What's Up? module (45%) and Respect module (41%) showed a significant decrease in feelings of emotional distress.

2. Provides a mechanism for students to “calm down” emotionally as emotional control is the key to speaking rationally about an incident, listening, and thinking critically. Helps students develop effective coping strategies and enhances stress management.

- In the *What's Up?* module, there was a significant decrease (45%) in emotional distress over the course of the module (beginning to end). In the *Respect* module, there was a significant decrease (41%) in feelings of emotional distress from the beginning to the end of the module. This is important to note because it suggests that this module continues to help students calm down. In the *Responsibility* module, 32% experienced some form of decrease in emotional distress from the beginning to the end of the module.
- In a control group study, results reveal module users experienced a decline in emotional distress whereas control group students did not. These results demonstrate that the effectiveness of the *What's Up?* module in reducing emotional distress is not due simply to time.
- In the *Respect* module, 68% of students felt that at least “maybe” they were respected the way they wanted to be respected. However, only 31% of students were certain that they were respected in the way they wanted to be respected.
- In the *Responsibility* module, almost 90% of students reported that they had a better understanding of why being responsible will get them better results.

3. Assists students in reducing resistance to accepting responsibility for their choices and actions. Encourages students to make amends for their infractions.

- In the *What's up?* module, on average, students endorsed 1.3 different actions they could take to make amends for their infractions. The most commonly cited action to make things right again was to do what the student was originally supposed to do.
- In the *Respect* module, 56% percent of the students reported that, at the very least, the consequences assigned to them may be fair, and in the *Responsibility* module, 69% of students felt their consequences were at least “maybe” fair.
- In the *Respect* module, 84% of students were willing to take more responsibility for the choices that got them into trouble.
- In the *Responsibility* module, 74% of students reported at the beginning of the module that they would consider taking responsibility for the choices that got them into trouble, whereas 79% of students reported at the end of the module that they would consider taking responsibility for the choices that got them in trouble.

4. Teaches better conflict resolution strategies and problem-solving techniques.

- In special analysis of repeat users of the *What's Up?* module, during their second time of use, students calmed down more quickly. In fact, they experienced the majority of their decline in emotional distress from the time of the incident to the beginning of the module. This result suggests that repeat offenders may have learned something the first time they used the module about regulating their emotions that carries over to the second time they commit an infraction and were assigned to use the module. Ultimately this result suggests that the *What's Up?* module may have long lasting effects, not just immediate or short-term results.



The Company's founding philosophy is that all individuals have within them the inner resources for the development of strong character and a healthy self-concept.

- In the *Respect* module, 86% of students were willing to look at things from another point of view. And, 86% of students want respect even when others disagree with them.
- In the end of the *Respect* module, 80% of students reported that they had a better understanding of the different types of respect, and almost 75% of students agreed that they had learned more about how to make better choices.
- In the *Responsibility* module, the majority of students (88%) were willing to work to get a positive result.
- Although students at School #1 were equally likely to be referred to the *What's Up?* module for respect and responsibility infractions, students at Schools #2 and #3 were significantly more likely to be referred to the modules for respect infractions.
- In the *Respect* module, the 2 most commonly cited infractions were disruptive behavior and authority violations, accounting collectively for 75% of the total infractions.
- In the *Responsibility* module, the most commonly cited infraction was cutting class, accounting for 44% of the total infractions, followed by turning in assignments late (12%), and general dress code violations (11%).

5. Helps identify students at risk for more serious problems. Modules help identify students who have other problems in their lives or who may be likely to cause harm to themselves or others.

- In the *What's Up?* module, 40% of students reported that something else was going on in their life that may have contributed to their infraction. This is particularly significant as these students were making the transition to adolescence, a time when many youth begin to deny having problems or difficulties in order to not appear weak in front of their peers. Additionally, students may be more open to answer truthfully in a computer environment versus face to face with an administrator.
- In the *Respect* module, over 75% of students thought it was very important to keep school safe.

6. Assists in the identification of disciplinary infraction trends on school campuses.

- In the *What's Up?* module, the top infractions cited were disruptive behavior (26%), not obeying authority (16%), and cutting class (11%).

In addition to the six short-term goals, MindOH! has identified long-term, global objectives for the DLSS, which will involve additional studies and long-term research.

For More Information

To receive an electronic copy of the entire MindOH! 2003 Program Evaluation, please email info@mindoh.com.

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