

Kofi Student Survey Findings

Academic Year 2022-2023

Overview

Kofi is a culturally specific school-based mental health program for Black and African American students provided by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. The program serves students in grades 2-12 across various Saint Paul public and charter schools. Students in the program work with culturally matched therapists in individual therapy sessions, and also participate in large group activities with other Kofi students to experience information about their culture through discussions, art, and storytelling.

Kofi aims to promote success at home, in school, and in the community by providing culturally responsive, holistic mental health services to students and their families. Kofi's goals are to help students improve their behaviors in school and at home, strengthen students' relationships with their communities, and strengthen students' cultural identities.

In total, 19 students completed this survey during the 2022-2023 academic school year. Not every respondent answered every question; percentages in this report are based on the sample size for each individual question.

This survey gathers information about the impact of participating in the Kofi program for students in grades 5 through 12. The breakdown of students by grade (Table 1) and by gender (Table 2) are reported below.

1. Grade level of survey respondents (N=19)

	%
5 th grade	26%
6 th grade	16%
7 th grade	21%
8 th grade	0%
9 th grade	11%
10 th grade	0%
11 th grade	16%
12 th grade	11%

2. Gender (N=19)

	%
Male	37%
Female	63%
Another identity	0%
Don't want to answer	0%

Key findings

Students were asked to choose whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with a list of statements regarding their mental health and well-being. A full table of results is in the Appendix.

In addition to the closed ended questions, students were also given the prompt “After working with my Kofi therapist...” to help guide their answers. Students were also asked to share up to three examples of how the Kofi program has helped them. Key themes from the open and closed ended questions are summarized below.

Kofi has created a community of support where students feel connected to other Kofi students, and can safely share their experiences with others

In the open-ended responses, some students reported a feeling of connection and support from their Kofi therapist. These students shared that Kofi has provided them a safe space and safe people to talk to when feeling alone, and helped them feel welcomed and special at Kofi events.

It has helped me because I was able to meet other Kofi students and connect with them. ... They made me feel welcomed at the events. – 6th grade Kofi student

It has given me someone to talk to when I feel like I have no one. – 9th grade Kofi student

Friends. I feel good when I talk to others. – 5th grade Kofi student

I can share my life story without anyone noticing. I can say how I feel without people hearing. I feel safe over sharing. – 7th grade Kofi student

It has helped me heal from very traumatic childhood experiences – it has helped me trust people more – it has given me someone to talk to when I feel like I have no one. – 9th grade Kofi student

Students feel more capable identifying different emotions and can apply coping strategies they have learned from their Kofi therapist

All students who took the survey either agreed or strongly agreed that being in the Kofi program helped them recognize when they were feeling difficult or positive emotions. All students also agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to use the skills they learned from their Kofi therapist to manage difficult moments in their lives.

Students elaborated on the ways Kofi has helped them improve their self-awareness, coping, and emotional regulation in the open-ended comments.

[The] Kofi program has helped me with my anger issues and they helped me control what I say. – 6th grade Kofi student

[Kofi helped me] identify my feelings and how to address them. – 9th grade Kofi student

It has helped me control my emotions, regulate them, and deal with hurtful situations better. – 5th grade Kofi student

It helped me not get as mad [and] how to handle things better. – 7th grade Kofi student

Kofi has helped students improve their relationships with family, peers, and school staff

Being in the Kofi program has helped students improve their interpersonal relationships with the people in their lives. Eighty-four percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were getting along better with their parents/guardians and 74% get along better with other students. Seventy-nine percent agreed/strongly agreed that they were getting along better with their teachers. Some students shared how Kofi has helped them relate better with others through setting boundaries, increasing feelings of trust, and communicating appropriately.

[Kofi helped me] respond to the people around me appropriately and expressing myself. – 9th grade Kofi student

It has helped me trust people more. – 9th grade Kofi student

It helped me with setting boundaries and accepting challenges. – 12th grade Kofi student

[Kofi has helped me] get along with other teachers. – 6th grade Kofi student

Students feel more confident and love themselves for who they are

Eighty-nine percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that Kofi has helped them love themselves more. Ninety-five percent were happy with who they are. All students agreed/strongly agreed that Kofi helped them feel like their voice matters. Some students shared that Kofi has helped them feel more self-love, and has empowered them to feel more confident to speak up about their needs and feelings.

I love me. – 5th grade Kofi student

How to love myself and be okay with things I go through, and I'm not alone. – 11th grade Kofi student

[Kofi has helped me with] speaking up, coping skills, and letting out emotions. – 11th grade Kofi student

Kofi has allowed students to feel connected to, and appreciate their Black/African American identities

A major component of Kofi is to help students find strength in their cultural identities. To assess the impact of participating in Kofi on students' cultural identity, participants were asked "Since joining Kofi, have there been any changes in how you feel about...", and were given the option to select from a list of statements regarding different aspects of one's cultural identity (e.g. learning about Black/African American history, cultures, and/or customs, connection to Black/African American culture, how their life may be affected being Black/African American). Students were given the option to select all that applied.

Half of the students reported that they have experienced changes in their connection to Black/African American culture, and what it means to be Black/African American. Thirty-nine percent reported that they experienced changes in their activities with predominantly Black organizations and social groups, and how their lives may be affected by being Black/African American.

[What has changed was] that being Black can make it harder for you to get a job that you want, and there is a limited amount of stuff you can do because of your skin tone. – 6th grade Kofi student

How I see myself and how I respond to my peers. – 9th grade Kofi student

Students most frequently know they can talk to their therapist and friends when they need to talk about their emotions

Students were asked to share who they can talk to about their emotions. Students most frequently said they can talk to their therapists and friends. About three out of four students (74%) reported that they could talk to their therapists, and about 58% could talk to their friends. Forty-two percent of students said they can talk with their parents/guardians, and 32% said they could talk about their emotions with their teachers.

Students are satisfied with Kofi services

Overall, students were satisfied with the services they received from Kofi. All of the students who completed the survey felt respected by their therapists, liked being in the Kofi program, felt understood by their therapist, and felt that Kofi made them feel better.

Limitations

- It is important to recognize that these survey findings cannot be generalized to all Kofi students. Kofi serves over 100 students from grades 2-12. This report summarizes findings from 19 Kofi students in grades 5-12.
- The survey did not measure students' baseline level of cultural identity. It may be possible that students already had a strong connection to their Black/African American identity prior to joining Kofi, and, thus, may not have experienced any changes in how they felt about the cultural aspects listed in the survey.

Appendix

Program outcomes

A1. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES

How much do you agree with the following statements? (N=19)	% of students who responded "Agree" or "Strongly agree"	% of students who responded "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree"
I know when I am feeling difficult or positive emotions	100%	0%
I get along better with my parents/guardians	84%	16%
I get along better with other students	74%	26%
I get along better with my teachers	79%	21%
I can use the skills I learned with my Kofi therapist to manage my difficult moments	100%	0%
I feel closer to my community	84%	16%
I feel like I can talk about mental health with others in my community	74%	26%
I love myself more	89%	11%
I feel like my voice matters	100%	0%
I am happy with who I am	95%	5%

A2. PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

I know I can talk to...when I need to talk about my emotions (N=19)	%
My therapist	74%
My friends	58%
My parents/guardians	42%
My teachers	32%
Another person	32%
My siblings	16%
No one	5%

A3. CULTURAL IDENTITY OUTCOMES

Since joining Kofi, have there been any changes in how you feel about... (N=18)	%
Something else	6%
Learning about Black/African American history, cultures, and/or customs	17%
Your skin tone	22%
There was no change	22%
Your hair (i.e., long, short, curly, straight, etc.)	28%
How your life may be affected by being Black/African American	39%
Being active in organizations or social groups that include mostly people who are Black/African American	39%
What it means to be Black/African American	50%
Your connection to Black/African American culture	50%

A4. PROGRAM SATISFACTION

How much do you agree with the following statements? (N=19)	% of students who responded "Agree" or "Strongly agree"
I like being in the Kofi program	100%
Kofi helps me feel better	100%
I feel like my Kofi therapist respects me	100%
I feel like my Kofi therapist understands me	100%

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