



Veterans Yoga Project Subjective Pain and Distress Analysis 2023

Veterans Yoga Project (VYP) provides Mindful Resilience Yoga (MRY) classes to veterans, family members, and first responders in multiple settings and through our online streaming program. The program is adapted to the safety, predictability, and comfort needs of participants, including the use of adaptive and chair yoga. All programs are taught by a teacher trained by Veterans Yoga Project. This analysis includes programs at Veterans Service Organizations, a yoga studio, Vet Centers, and US Department of Veterans Affairs locations that focus on mental health, PTSD, serious mental illness, physical medicine and rehabilitation, geriatrics and extended care, and general outpatient needs. Separate data are presented for live VYP Online Streaming Classes.

Benders Yoga Studio, Iowa City, IA
Chillicothe VAMC Yoga Wellness, OH
VAMC Northport, NY
Fort Hamilton Army Base Fitness Center, Brooklyn, NY
American Legion Gold Star Post #1365 Staten Island, NY

Elks Lodge, Kerrville, TX
Richmond Vet Center, VA
Everett Vet Center, WA

Program Impact

VYP has completed an evaluation of effectiveness of the program for 2023. Anonymous responses were provided for 2514 encounters taught by 10 instructors across 537 classes in 8 host programs. Separate data are also presented for 2445 encounters from participants who have attended any of our publicly available online streaming classes.

Participants provided subjective ratings of their pain and stress before and after each yoga class. These consisted of pre and post self-assessments of current pain using a numeric rating scale and stress using a subjective units of distress scale (SUDS). Both pain and stress were assessed on a scale of 0 through 10 in which zero is no pain or stress and 10 is extreme pain or stress. These scales enable the class participants, the instructor, and the clinical staff to note changes associated with each class.

Specific Individual Yoga Programs

Over this period, pain scores both before and after each class were reported for a total of 2479 encounters (see p. 4)(note: not everyone reports both pain and distress scores). With regards to pain, 69% of all encounters were associated with a reduction in pain and the average pain reduction for all encounters was 47% (Note: these included participants with starting pain of zero). Further, 32% of participants experienced at least a 2-point improvement in pain, a common threshold for meaningful pain improvement in clinical settings. When pain score analysis was limited to only those encounters with pain scores of five (5) or greater at the beginning of class (n = 608), 78% of encounters were associated with a reduction in pain with an average pain reduction of 45%. Of those, 60% experienced at least a 2-point improvement in pain.

Over this year period, distress self-assessments both before and after each class were reported for a total of 2495 encounters (see p. 5). With regards to stress, 81% of all encounters were associated with a reduction in distress (Note: these include those starting with zero distress). The average stress reduction for all encounters was 57%. When stress score analysis was limited to only those encounters with stress scores of five (5) or greater at the beginning of class (n = 689), 93% of encounters were associated with a reduction in stress with an average stress reduction of 52%.

Online Streaming

Over this year period, pain scores both before and after each class were reported for a total of 2445 encounters (see p. 6). With regards to pain, 72% of all encounters were associated with a reduction in pain and the average pain reduction for all encounters was 53% (Note: these included participants with starting pain of zero). Further, 55% of participants experienced at least a 2-point improvement in pain, a common threshold for meaningful pain improvement in clinical settings. When pain score analysis was limited to only those encounters with pain scores of five (5) or greater at the beginning of class (n = 988) 92% of encounters were associated with a reduction in pain with an average pain reduction of 53%. Of those, 82% experienced at least a 2-point improvement in pain.

Over this year period, distress assessments both before and after each class were reported for a total of 2445 encounters (see p. 7). With regards to stress, 75% of all encounters were associated with a reduction in stress. The average stress reduction for all encounters was 66%. When stress score analysis was limited to only those encounters with stress scores of five (5) or greater at the beginning of class (n = 1004), 99% of encounters were associated with a reduction in stress with an average stress reduction of 66%. Changes in online streaming classes are reported after class to maximize ease of collection. Interpretation of reported change scores is therefore limited by participants' ability to accurately recall their pain and distress at the beginning of class.

Any increases in pain or distress may represent a variety of experiences, such as granting oneself permission in the safe space of yoga class to experience one’s current mental and physical state, whether positive or negative, and decrease the use of physical and mental avoidance strategies. Increases in these cases are increases in self-awareness and not always an increase in underlying conditions. Instructors use individual and class data to support attendees in their wellness goals and to avoid exacerbation of pain and distress. Actions may include offering more practice modifications, changing a class structure, offering education and adaptive attitudes for yoga practice, and notifying medical staff of participants’ experience for additional care outside of class. Our instructors take participants’ feedback seriously and work with them and host organizations to support recovery and resilience.

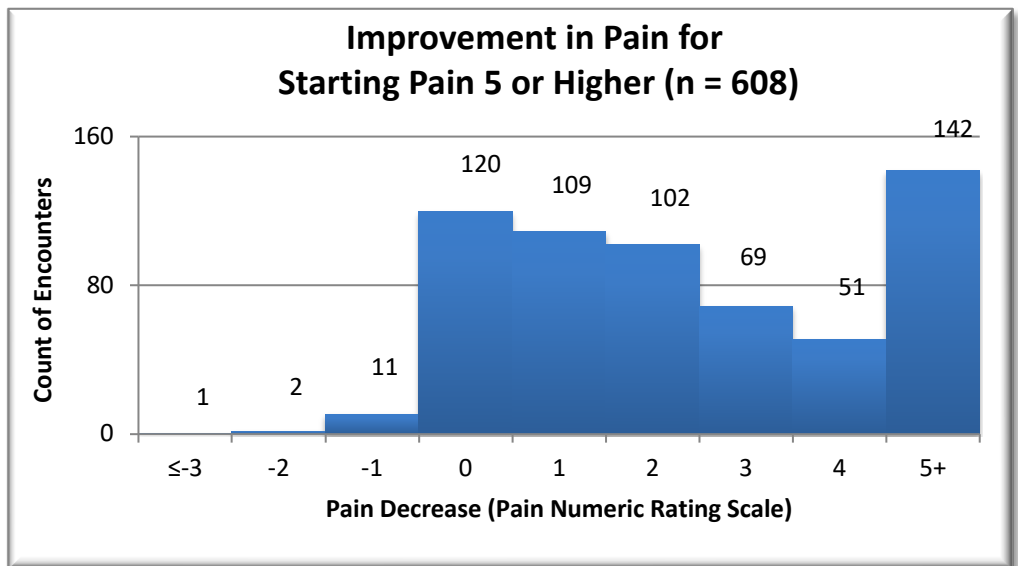
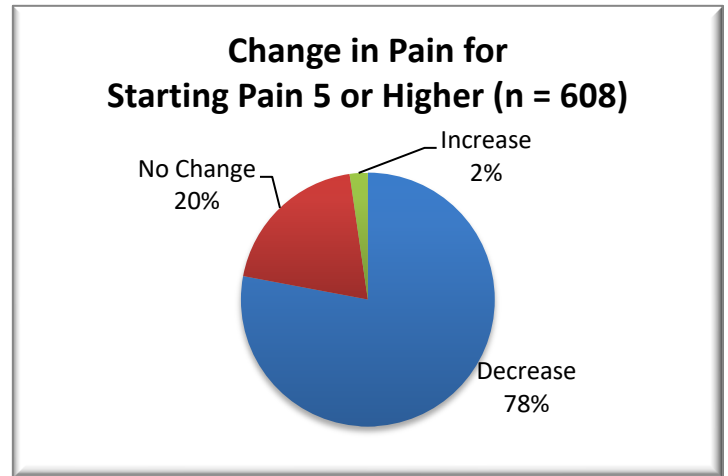
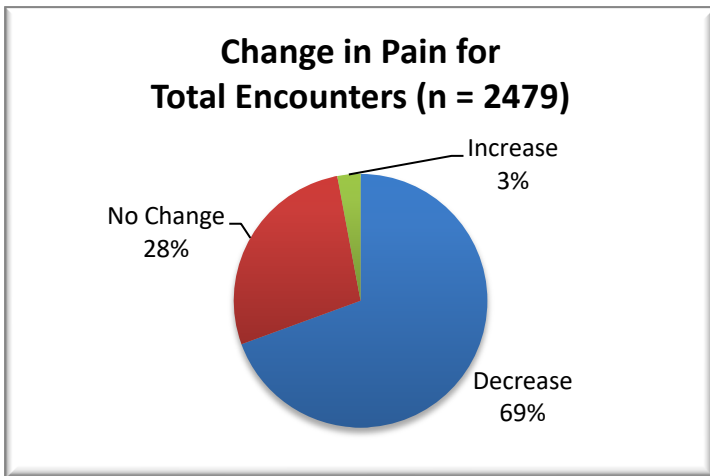
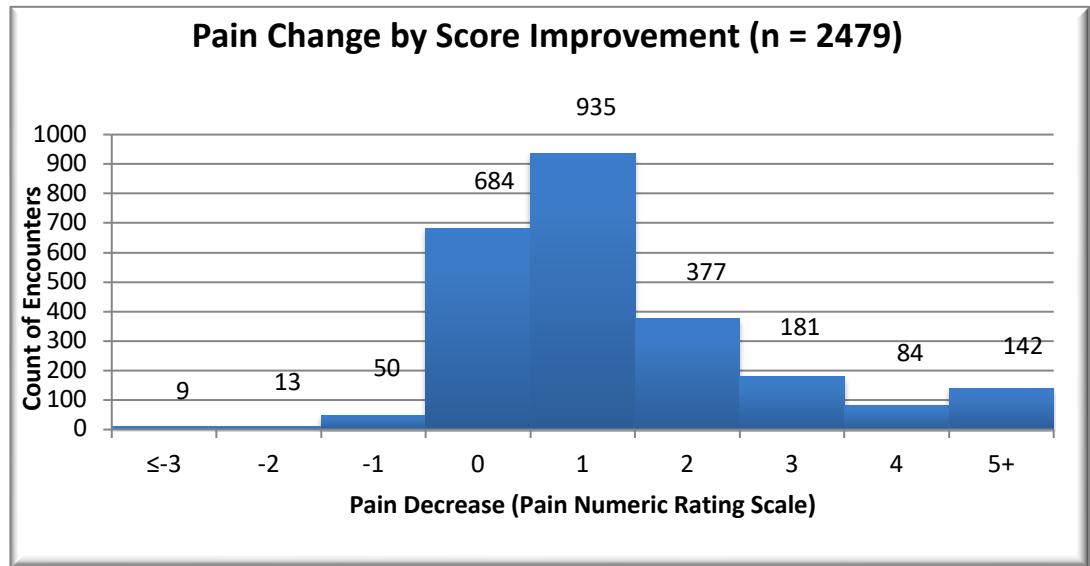
Class participants provided 1306 written and verbal statements to instructors about the classes, including:

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| “Great Instructors!” | “This class has added so much calm and good feelings to my daily life!” | “This was my 1st ever class with VYP and I loved it. Thank you.” |
| “Feel very relaxed and stretched. Great class!” | “Grateful for the space each teacher holds; variety of offerings I am able to find what practice fits.” | “I am very grateful for this community.” |
| “Thank you so much. This helps me sleep and relax.” | “Enjoyed Gail's back yoga class. Less pain now. Thank you.” | “Great class!! Estelle is the best!” |
| “Distress associated with life concerns. The session did provide a positive experience Simone was AWESOME!” | | |

Respectfully Submitted,

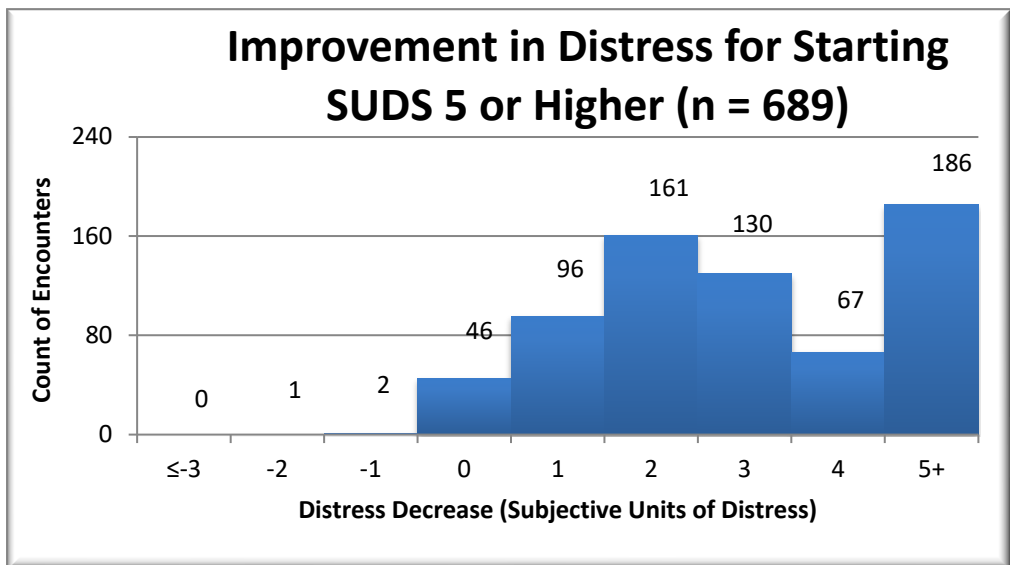
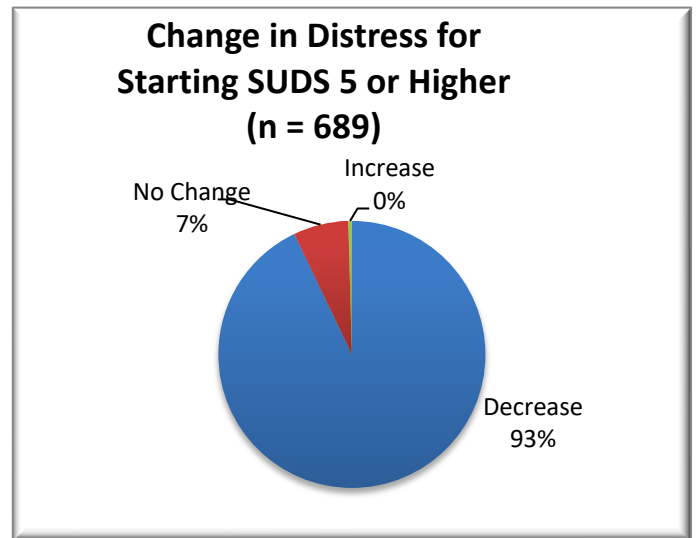
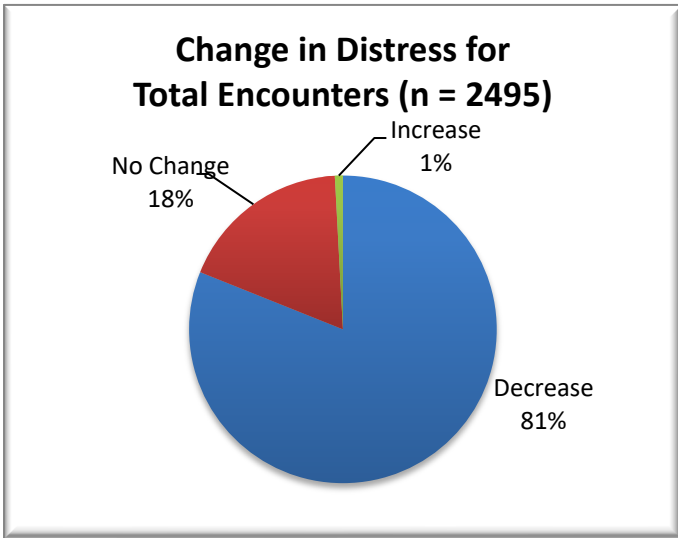
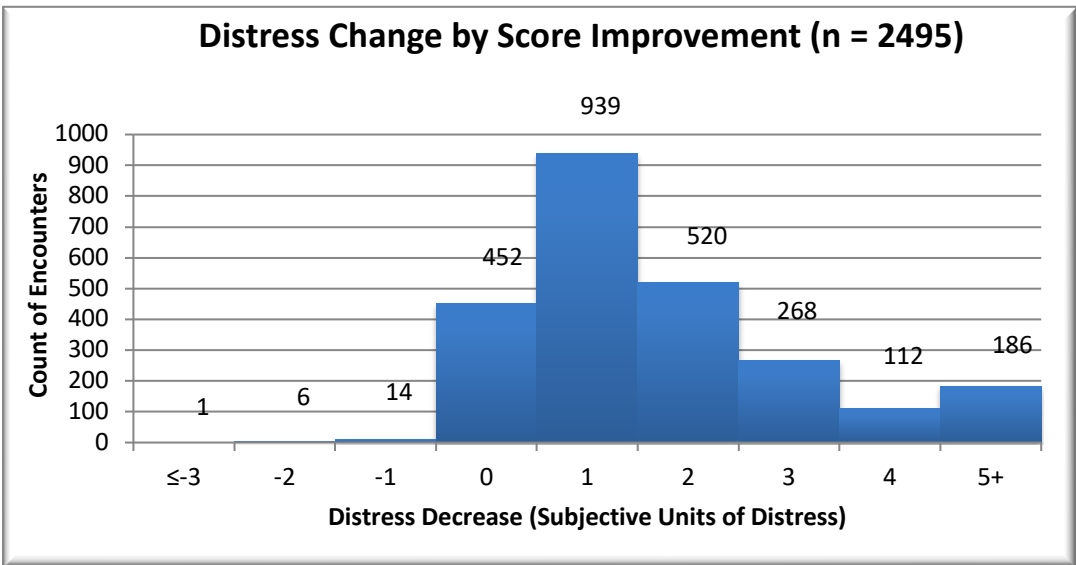
Timothy J. Avery, Psy.D.
 Director of Program Evaluation
 Veterans Yoga Project

Specific Individual Yoga Programs – Pain Scores

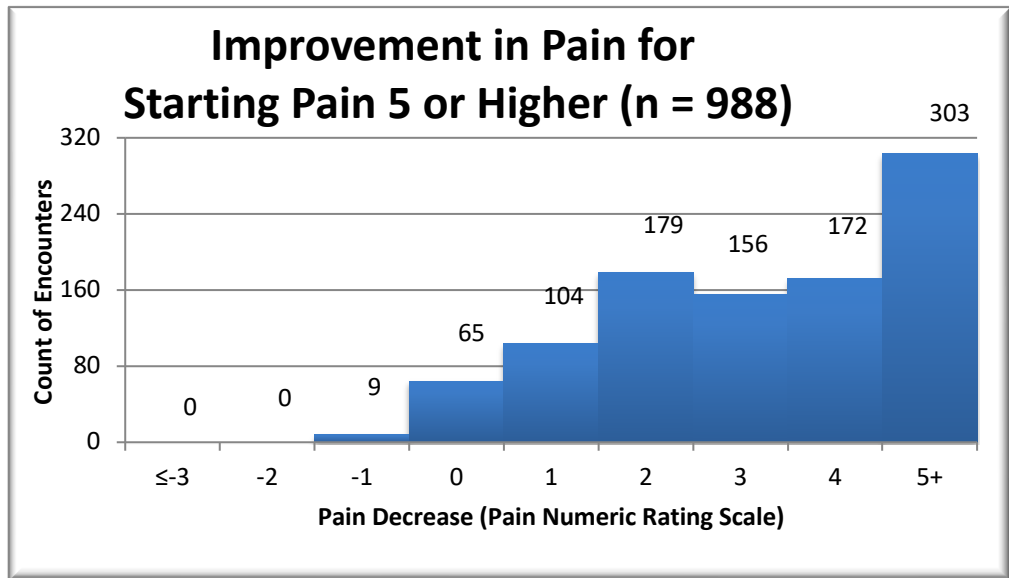
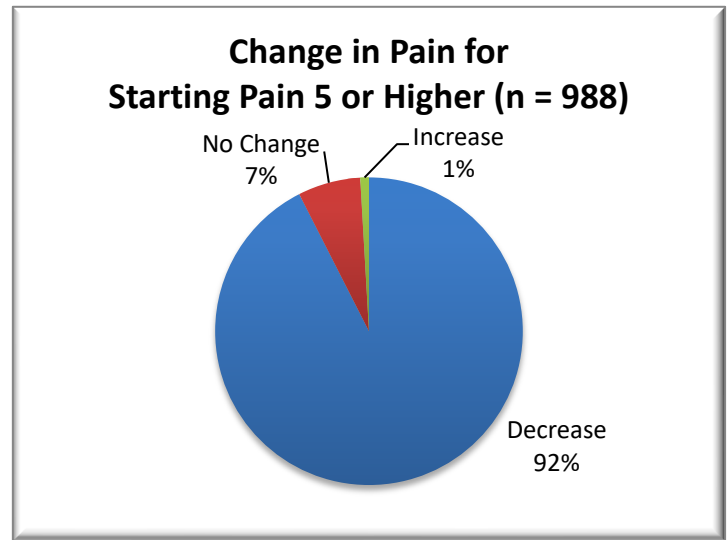
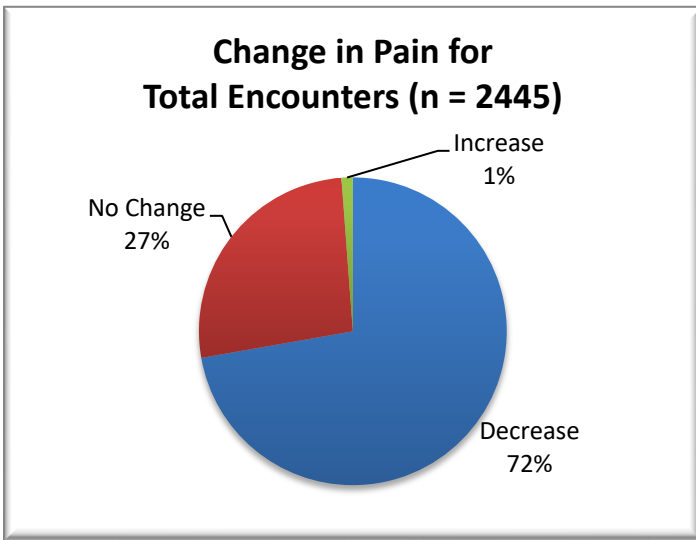
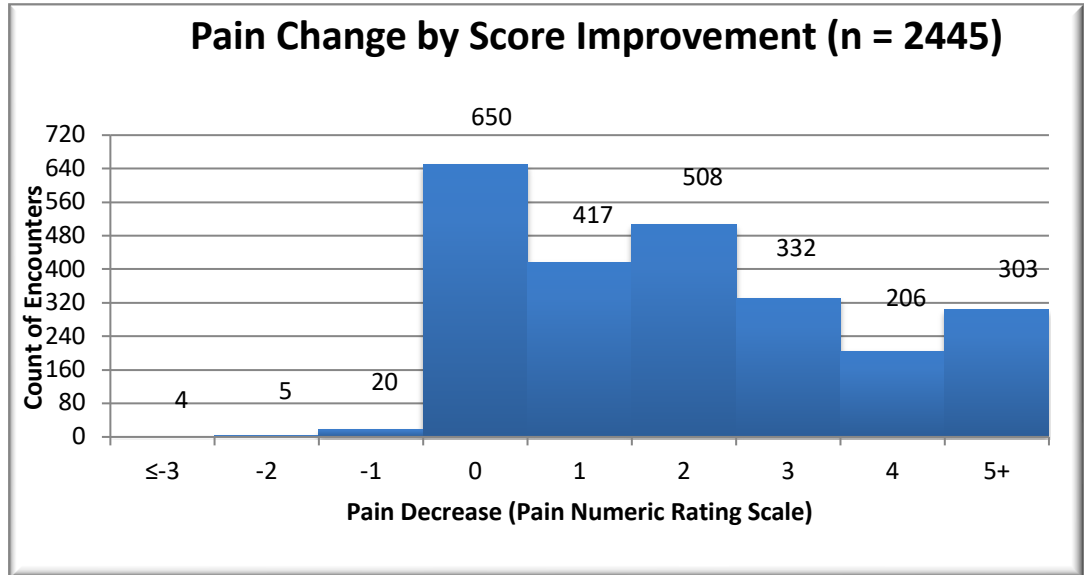


Specific Individual Yoga Programs – Distress Scores

Distress Change by Score Improvement (n = 2495)



Online Streaming Classes – Pain Scores



Online Streaming Classes – Distress Scores

