



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DODGE COUNTY

## Human Development & Relationships Programming: April-June



Pattie Carroll, Human Development and Relationships Educator, highlights the importance of a wellness series (WeCOPE) for incarcerated individuals, emphasizing its role in building resilience and promoting emotional well-being.

### Overview

The WeCOPE program is a 6-week wellness series designed to teach incarcerated individuals strategies that enhance awareness of the mind-body connection. The primary goal is to reduce stress and increase positive emotions through evidence-based coping skills.

### Background

- A social worker from Dodge Correctional Institution reached out to Pattie Carroll seeking Extension programs for inmates.
- Carroll responded by delivering the WeCOPE program, grounded in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) principles.

### Program Delivery

- Initial Engagement: Carroll toured the facility to understand the environment and participant needs.
- Format:
  - Week 1: In-person session to build rapport and trust.
  - Weeks 2–6: Virtual sessions to ensure continuity and accessibility.
- Content: Focused on small, practical strategies to manage stress and build resilience.

### Outcome

The WeCOPE wellness series at Dodge Correctional Institution yielded highly positive outcomes among participants. All 14 individuals who completed the post-program survey reported gaining skills to help them manage stress more effectively. Notably, 93% expressed a willingness to continue practicing at least one new coping skill several times a week. These results highlight the program's success in equipping incarcerated individuals with practical tools to support their mental and emotional well-being.

#### As a result of the program: N=14

Participants reported having gained new skills to cope with stress	100%
Reported a willingness to practice at least one new skill weekly	93%

***"I like how it (the class) focused on small things. When life gets hectic, it's the small basics that start changing the course of life." — Participant***

### Conclusion

The WeCOPE series demonstrates the value of bringing wellness education into correctional settings. By equipping participants with practical coping tools, the program supports mental and emotional well-being, laying the groundwork for healthier outcomes during and after incarceration. Building on the success of this initial series, Carroll plans to continue working with this audience to expand access to wellness education. Future efforts will aim to deepen the impact and reach of these vital coping strategies within the correctional system.

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