

Monkey Mind Pirates: American Indian Family Center (AIFC) Report of Evaluation Findings,

Prepared for Z Puppets Rosenschnoz by *Blue Scarf Consulting*



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INTRODUCTION

In partnerships with the American Indian Family Center (AIFC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Z Puppets Rosenschnoz (Z Puppets) conducted a multiple week *Monkey Mind Pirates* summer camp with first through fifth grade youth and presented a public performance of *Monkey Mind Pirates* in August 2012. *Monkey Mind Pirates* (MMP) is an innovative approach combining mindfulness with playfulness through the arts, offering creative tools for youth and adults to navigate anxiety, distraction and stress. In addition to documenting the immediate effects of the program on participants, the AIFC program offered an opportunity for Z Puppets to build internal capacity for doing and using evaluation.

Z Puppets engaged Blue Scarf Consulting (Blue Scarf), a Minnetonka, Minnesota evaluation service, to help them design and implement evaluation instruments, analyzes the resulting data and report on trends in order to better understand the effectiveness of the MMP summer camp and performance.

The evaluation aimed to answer the overarching question:

- How and to what degree does the *Monkey Mind Pirates* experience affect participants' understanding of stress, knowledge of and intentions for using tools and skills for dealing with stress?
 - o What shared language do they use to communicate and work through stressful situations?
 - o What specific techniques will they use and when?

This report provides the methods and findings from data collected from both youth program participants and adult audience members.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

Youth Island of Calm Drawings

To measure the affect of MMP language, characters, and concepts on participating youth, a reflective drawing activity was embedded into program activities¹ (Appendix A). Jointly designed by Z Puppets and Blue Scarf, the "Map to My Island of Calm" instrument allowed participants to reflect in two ways. First, they were instructed to make a map to their Island of Calm. Then they were instructed to turn the map over and write or draw responses to three reflective questions: 1) How will you know when you need to get to your Island of Calm; 2) What monkeys might show up on the way to Calm; and 3) What can you do to tame your monkeys so they don't keep you from Calm?

¹ A second drawing activity using youth's individual yoga mats was also conducted but digital photographs taken of the mats were too difficult to decipher and code.

A total of 17 maps were collected from camp youth. Z Puppets and Blue Scarf were initially going to create a low/medium/high rubric to score the maps but time constraints were not conducive to doing so. Instead, only youth's responses to the three questions were analyzed for ties to MMP language, characters, and concepts.

Sailor Chorus Survey

Adults who participated in the MMP performance as the Sailor Chorus were asked to complete a paper-and-pencil survey consisting of 14 checkbox, multiple choice, rating scale, and open-ended questions related to their motivation for attending the performance, what was valuable about the Sailor Chorus experience, the characters they and their children identified with, their level of focus and engagement during the performance,² the program components - music, ideas, characters, techniques - that resonated with them, their intentions to use MMP materials as well as some group demographics.

A total of seven adults completed the survey, the majority of who were over 30 years of age. The children (3 boys and 8 girls) who performed with them in the Sailor Chorus were mostly between the ages of 8 and 14, with a few under 7 years old. Most (71%, n=5) learned about Monkey Mind Pirates from AIFC staff. Most were motivated to join the chorus because it was something fun to do with kids. Two respondents were interested in yoga/mindfulness, two had a desire to perform, and two had seen MMP previously. All but one respondent said they had had previous exposure to yoga and/or mindfulness.

Figure 1: Age range of AIFC adult audience survey respondents.

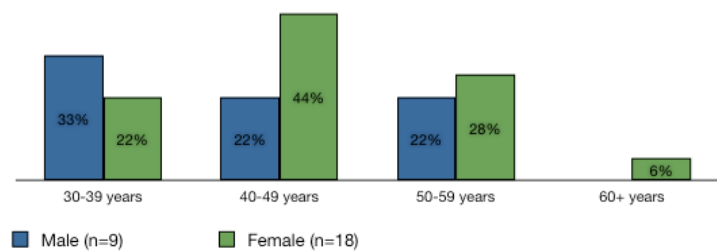
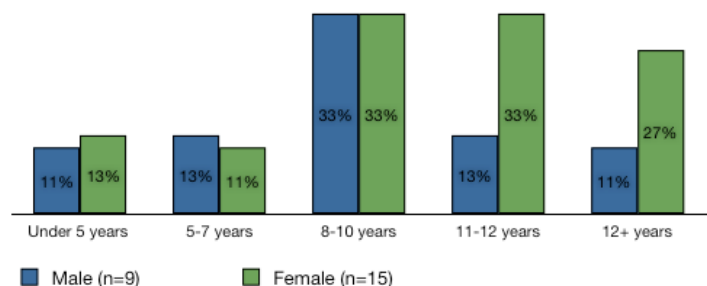


Figure 2: Age range of children accompanying AIFC adult audience survey respondents.



² Drawn from research conducted by WolfBri transformational experiences of theatrical p

Public Performance Audience Survey

Adults attending the AIFC performance on August 14, 2012 were asked to complete a paper-and-pencil survey similar to the Sailor Chorus Survey minus questions about the experience of participating backstage and onstage.

A total of 18 surveys were collected for analysis. All adults were 30 years old or older with women tending to be 40-49 years old (44%, n=8) and men being spread almost equally between the ages of 30 and 59 (Figure 1). The children that accompanied adults tended to be 8 to over twelve years old (Figure 2).

More than half of adult survey respondents (59%, n=10) said they found out about MMP from a friend; a few (18%, n=3) learned about MMP from a flier; and the remaining respondents said they heard about MMP from through Z Puppets (12%, n=2), yoga studio or meditation center (6%, n=1), or other media (6%, n=1). Most were motivated to attend the AIFC performance because it was “something und to do with kids” (35%, n=6). Others were interested in yoga/mindfulness (18%, n=3), had seen MMP before (18%, n=3), or had a desire to perform (12%, n=2). Roughly half (57%, n=10) said they or their children had had exposure to yoga and/or mindfulness prior to the MMP performance.

FINDINGS

Children's responses to the guided reflections questions provide a good deal of insight into the level of information that stuck with them from the MMP program. Data from nine of the maps that included responses to the three reflective questions suggests that the AIFC youth were able to articulate negative situations that they saw as signals to "get to their Island of Calm" and recognized which "monkeys" might show up on their journey there. How to "tame" the monkeys reflected MMP concepts fairly well.

How will you know when you need to get to your Island of Calm?

- 63% (n=5) mentioned anger as a signal that they need to find calm. Stress, meanness, and being too happy were also mentioned. No MMP characters were mentioned directly. For example:

Mad, hyper

Mad, yelling at me.

When I'm mad or sad and not feeling well or happy.

When I'm rushing, stressed, too happy or sad.

When [others] are mean to me

What monkeys might show up on the way to Calm?

- 67% (n=6) described a MMP character but only one respondent mentioned a character by name, Lady Bronte. This finding indicates youth understood and recognized what characters were experiencing rather than identifying symptoms with specific characters. For example"

The hyper monkey will try to make me get up and run around, scream and yell.

The mad and crabby one. The ones that worry.

The monkey that try to pull you back.

The talking monkey and the worried monkey.

- One youth offered a long list of unrelated "monkeys" more reflective of his/her world view/fears.

Killers/gangsters; army people; cops/fireman; cows/pigs; sheeps/moose; alligator/turtles; old people.

What can you do to tame your monkeys so they don't keep you from Calm?

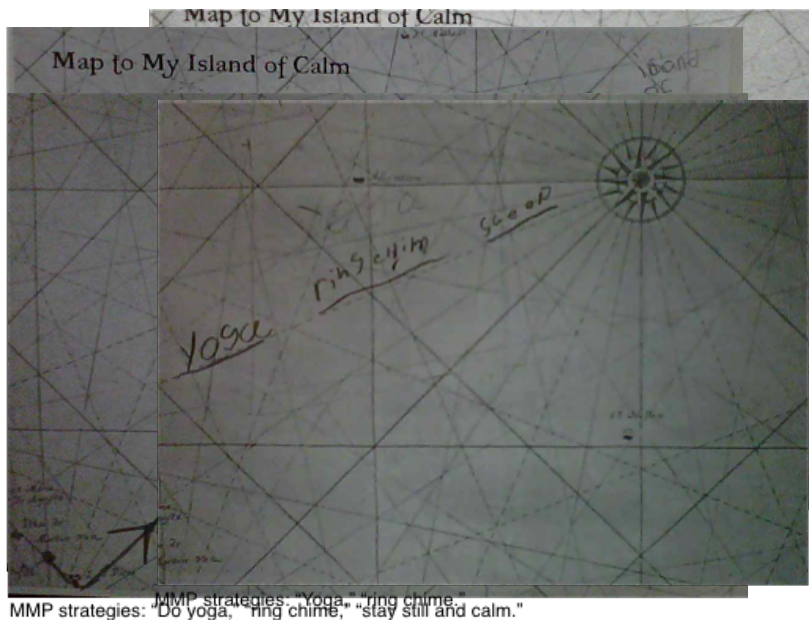
- Only a few responses contain MMP strategies. For example:

Take deep breaths, lay/sit down for out 5 minutes. *Stop and breath; think something happy; sing, dance*

Talk to people that can help you; do yoga. *Think of the opposite, something that makes me happy.*

- One response contained several unrelated or nonsensical strategies, i.e. *Kill them... go on Facebook and read every status; kick them; poop them out; run away; where is your loyalty now when all the cards have been left on the table.*
- 33% (n=3) said they would ignore, yell at, or run away from their monkeys

The eight map drawings provide better examples of how MMP strategies resonated with AIFC youth. For example:



In addition to these maps' reflection of MMP strategies and how AIFC youth might apply them, they provide validation for providing both a written and drawing option for gathering data. This is important given that the AIFC Draw Your Island of Calm instrument saw its first use with the AIFC program.

Data from adult audience members suggests that the 45-minute production not only enjoyed the program but also identified with the characters, were well engaged

and focused, and intended to follow-up the experience in one or more ways.

Engagement and Focus

- The majority of adult audience respondents (88%, n=15) enjoyed or greatly enjoyed the MMP presentation. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Didn’t enjoy” and 5 is “Loved it,” 59% (n=10) rated MMP a 5 and 29% (n=4) rated it a 4. Their reasons for the high ratings included:

Cuz it was awesome

Fun to see kids perform.

Because Cap'n Fitz goes "Who's there?"
- Horace

Great music, really unique.

Lyrics and music are wonderful and funny. Puppet characters so "real" in life.

My kids really enjoyed this. Was pretty exciting!

Really helped me. Wonderful.

Very creative. Was able to make analogies to life.

Two adults shared positive reactions and noted difficulty hearing or understanding parts of the show.

I thought the show was very cute and it touched my heart but I couldn't understand some characters and parts of the show.

I liked the show a lot but could not hear all the words; some were not clear.

Two other adults shared their and their children’s disinterest in MMP.

Not MY thing personally, but I appreciate the skill and creativity and if my child were younger, he'd have loved it.

Kids with Asperger's & ADHD "didn't like it that much."

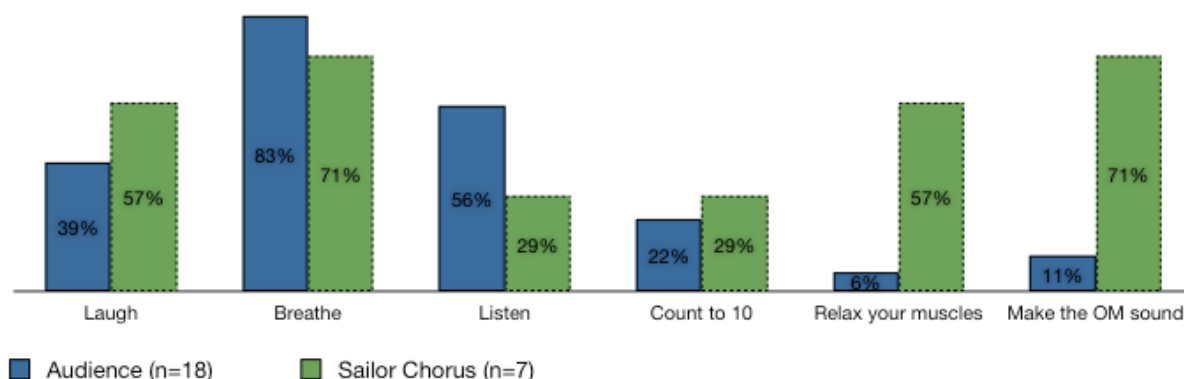
- Adults’ level of engagement was also very high. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “My mind wandered,” and 5 is “Fully engaged,” 39% (n=7) said they were fully engaged. When asked to compare their level of focus with other performances they had seen recently, 80% (n=12) said they were a good or great deal more focused during MMP.
- Of the 15 audience adults who responded, 47% (n=7) indicated that their children most identified with Captain Fitz; 40% (n=6) identified with Ansel the Antsey; 33% (n=5) identified with Lady Bronte; 20% (n=3) identified with The Sea Monkey or Sir Winston; and 7% (n=1) identified with The Ferret.
 - o Sailor Chorus adults indicated that 71% (n=5) of children identified with Lady Bronte; 57% (n=4) with Ansel the Antsy; 29% (n=2) with Sir Winston; and 14% (n=1) with Captain Fitz. None identified with The Sea Monkey or The Ferret.

- Of the 16 audience adults who responded, 56% (n=9) said they identified most with Captain Fitz; 44% (n=7) said Lady Bronte; 19% (n=3) said Ansel the Antsey; and 13% (n=2) said The Sea Monkey, Sir Winston, or The Ferret.
 - o 57% (n=4) of Sailor Chorus adults identified with Lady Bronte; 43% (n=3) with Sir Winston; and 29% with Captain Fitz, The Sea Monkey, or Ansel the Antsy. None identified with The Ferret.

Resonance

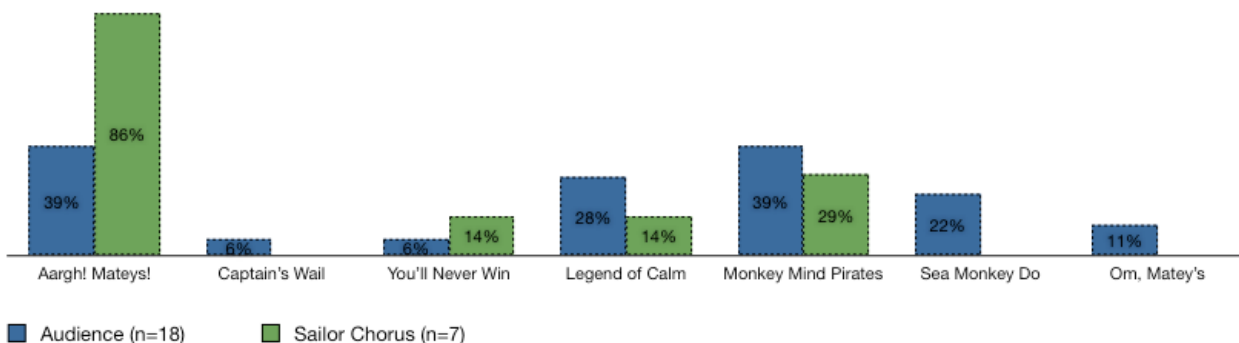
Every idea or message from MMP stuck with at least one adult survey respondent. Breathe was most often selected by both Audience and Sailor Chorus respondents. Sailor Chorus adults also selected Make the OM sound as many times as Breathe (Figure 3). Sailor Chorus respondents' selection of Relax your muscles and Make the OM sound may be higher than Audience adults due to the extended exposure they had to MMP prior to the performance.

Figure 3: MMP ideas/messages that "stuck" with AIFC survey respondents.



MMP songs also stuck with audience members. *Aargh! Mateys!* and *Monkey Mind Pirates* were the most often selected songs from the list of seven provided (Figure 4).

Figure 4: MMP songs that "stuck" with AIFC survey respondents



Respondents provided a range of reasons for their selection of MMP ideas, messages, and songs. Reasons included:

Calming down.

That these "monkeys" can be addressed once you face them and be in the now.

They work with practice - it's helpful to hear them from a different source.

What is this all about-something I'm always asking and this song [Legend of Calm] gets at that.

Catchy tune.

Easy to remember; because of the funky part in the song.

Reminder

The delivered with plenty of hook-laden grooves.

I have a hard time remembering to take deep breaths when I'm really stressed and that fun song helped me remember to take deep breath.

Because it feels comfortable.

For my son it's mainly about fun but he does practice breathing.

Sailor Chorus adults found the experience valuable in a number of ways. Some talked about the chorus activities, singing, dancing, performing. Others emphasized MMP concepts and practices such as yoga and finding calm. Still others said they and their children found value in being backstage, doing "special tricks" and having fun together.

Cotton candy; Aargh Matey's song; dancing, singing, and learning calming techniques as a family.

Glow in the dark puppets; being backstage.

Not being a good singer and it was ok!

Having fun with my kids, performing on stage. Callista likes being able to do a special trick for the audience (cartwheel).

Dancing, puppets, singing, yoga, finding calm.

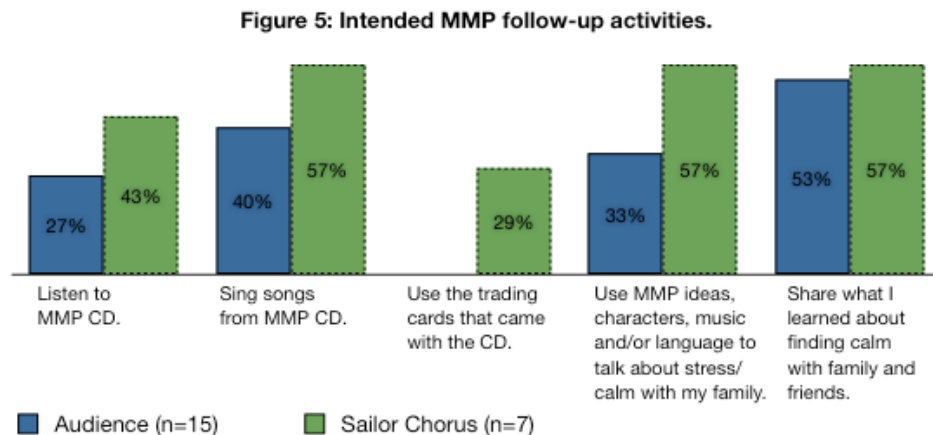
Showing to the other people.

I liked putting the jail on Capt. Fitz; I liked singing with my son.

Bronson likes being [able] to do a moonwalk for everyone to enjoy.

Intended follow-up

Just over half of adult audience respondents said they intended to share what they learned from MMP with friends and family. Singing songs from the MMP CD and using MMP ideas, characters, music and/or language to address stressful situations were the second and third activities respondents intended to do as follow-up to the MMP performance (Figure 5).



Several

respondents shared in “Other comments” how much they enjoyed MMP.

I love how the show continues to evolve. Lots of tweaks...never stale.

We have fallen for MMP BIG!

My son stayed focused the entire time.

Wonderful. Great for all ages.

Your music and puppets gave our family a way to talk more clearly about emotions with our children. You provide good, practical ideas to children and adults about how to transform and face emotions.

Timing was great. Really needed to be able to do something silly and fun. Lots of stress right now!! Thanks.

In addition to these comments, one respondent thought that the location and setting were “great.” Another respondent said that their five-year-old child was interested in how “she can be part of the show.”

CONCLUSIONS

The MMP program and performance had a positive impact on those who participated. Children's responses and drawings directly reflected MMP concepts, characters and language. Adults identified with specific MMP characters and could identify MMP characters with their children's behavior. They found the messages, music, language, and strategies useful and engaging and had intentions to follow up in one or more ways with MMP materials. Adults were so taken with MMP that the most often mentioned ways of following up their MMP experience was to practice and share what they had learned about finding calm.