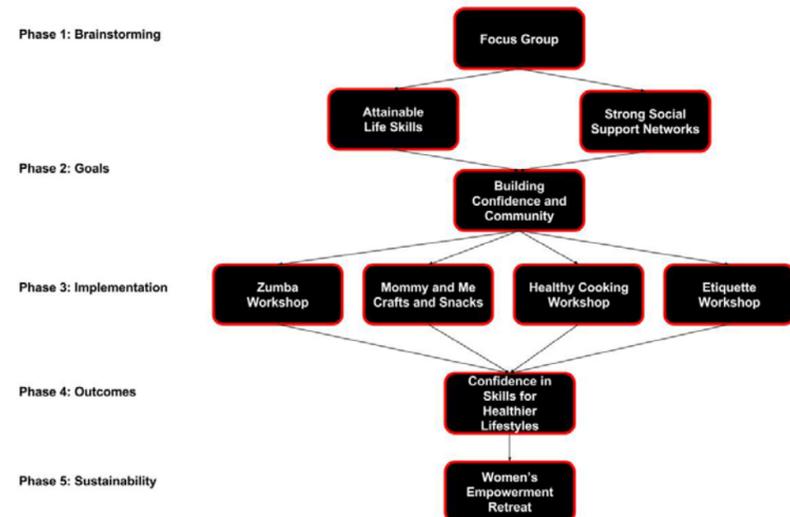


# Women's Empowerment: Towards a Healthier Future

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## Introduction

Single parents in the United States are faced with a great deal of challenging stressors. One notable stressor, and perhaps the most measurable, is the cost associated with raising a child. This stress can pervade their careers, homes, and personal lives. The Northern Kentucky Scholar House is a residential housing program for 48 single mothers and their children living in the greater Cincinnati area. Together with the Brighton Center, it provides these families with subsidized housing, daycare, and community resources. Requirements for living at the Scholar House include full-time enrollment in school, part-time employment, and attendance at self-development workshops that are provided through various local resources. From August 2016 to March 2017, 12 University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM) students partnered with the Scholar House to create a project that addressed a social determinant of health that the Scholar House residents deemed important to their well-being. These topics were all related to building social support networks to reinforce residents' endeavors to build healthy habits that will positively affect their lives.



## Methods

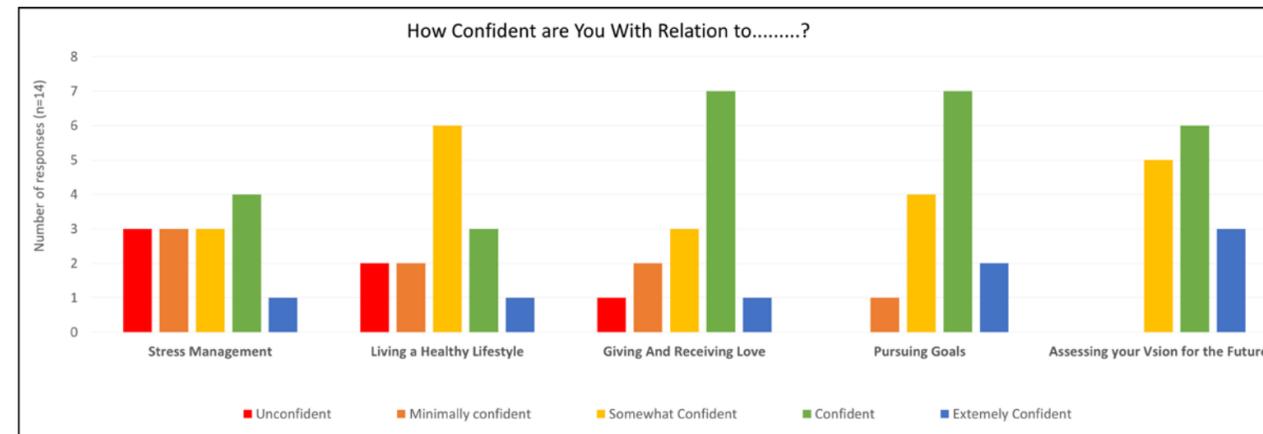
### Workshops:

- Group discussion with residents to assess their needs and goals
- Administration of survey to determine content of workshops designed to strengthen social support networks

### Wellness Retreat:

- Along with Northern Kentucky Scholar House, organized a wellness retreat facilitated by experts and professionals designed to reinforce the skills learned in the prior workshops.
- Administered a pre-retreat survey at the beginning of the first module and at the beginning of the last module. The survey measured areas of confidence and likelihood to use these skills in the future.

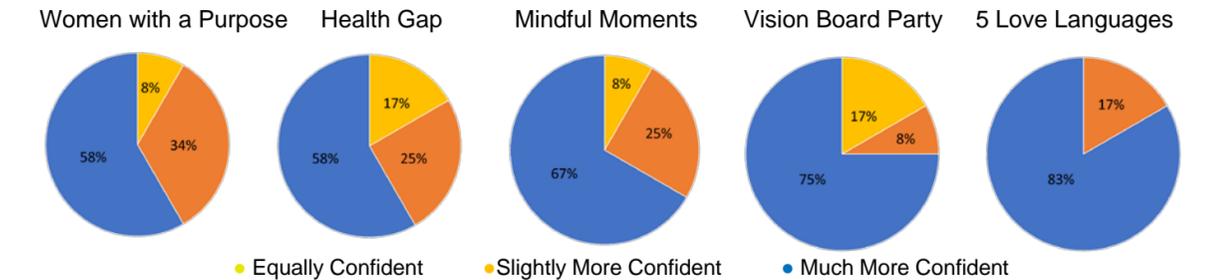
Workshop	Topic	Goals	Attendance
Zumba	Healthy Exercise Habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce entertaining exercise habits</li> <li>Build social networks through mutual exercise efforts</li> <li>Build relationships that will encourage accountability in exercise habits</li> </ul>	N/A
Mommy and Me	Activities to Build Parent-Child Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide distraction-free environment for parent-child interaction</li> <li>Give parents tools to engage in affirming exchanges with their children</li> </ul>	9
Healthy Cooking	Healthy Eating Habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer residents healthy alternatives to their favorite meals</li> <li>Provide resources to help evaluate recipes for their nutritious value</li> <li>Incorporate healthy foods into budget-friendly meals</li> </ul>	7
Etiquette	Professional Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate residents on proper interview and work attire</li> <li>Provide a meal for residents to learn and practice proper meal etiquette</li> </ul>	9



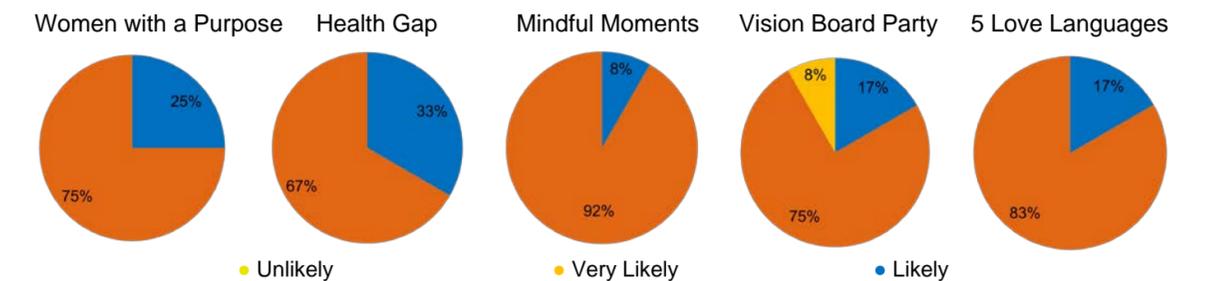
**Figure 1.** Results of the pre-retreat survey (n=14). 9/14 residents were less than confident in their skills at stress management, and 10/14 were less than confident in living a healthy lifestyle. 9/14 women were confident in their ability to pursue their goals, and assess their vision for the future, and 8/14 women were confident in their ability to give and receive love.

## Results

### Figure 2.1 How has your confidence changed in relation to the skills presented in each workshop?



### Figure 2.2 How likely are you to use the skills from each workshop in the future?



**Figures 2.1 and 2.2.** Results of the post-retreat survey (n=12). Every skill question in reference to the sessions of the retreat saw marked improvement in confidence levels. Even though the group already had a higher level of confidence in their ability to assess their vision of the future and in their ability to give and receive love, these areas still showed a designation of "much more confident" for 75% or more of the participants.

## Discussion and Conclusion

- Single parents have significant stressors and a need for positive coping outlets and support networks.
- Workshops that were implemented provided a way to teach confidence-building skills and improve social relationships among the residents of NKYSH while addressing the goals that the women had.
- The final retreat included a number of sessions to teach the resident's skills to help with their confidence.
- As indicated by the surveys, the retreat improved the residents' confidence in the areas indicated, and the women indicated that they would use these skills in the future

## Acknowledgements

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