Article

Proof of Concept for a Novel Social-Emotional Learning Programming: The B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. Framework

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Abstract: Despite the known benefits of social-emotional learning (SEL) for children, evidence-based, culturally sensitive, and multisensory SEL programs are limited. To address existing challenges in SEL for underprivileged youth, we developed the multicomponent B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. (BMF) framework that capitalizes on (1) cultural tailoring to foster acceptability, (2) tools and strategies to build healthy habits, (3) parental engagement using the Child-Mediated Health Communication Model, (4) social engagement of teachers via peer interaction during learning experiences, and (5) multisensory learning. Each letter (component) of the BMF stands for a unique SEL skill. To test the BMF framework, we developed a proof of concept (POC) focused on one component of the BMF—mindfulness and gratitude SEL (M-letter). The POC includes a description of immersive and interactive multimedia modules with tailor-made music, digital games, cartoons, and booster activities. The outcomes from the POC will inform the development of fully powered randomized studies of each component of BMF and, ultimately, the implementation and dissemination of the entire BMF program. The Multisensory Multilevel Health Education Model (MMHEM) guided the design of the program. In the POC, we used a learning management system (LMS) platform to facilitate program scalability. The modules encompassed culturally and age-relevant real-world examples and were digitized and integrated with traditional learning approaches. This article presents qualitative and quantitative data evaluating feasibility, preliminary acceptability, and preliminary outcomes from the mindfulness and gratitude modules (letter "M" of the BMF). The studies were conducted with 4th and 5th-grade students (Studies 2–4) attending a New York City public school-affiliated after-school program in the Bronx and Queens and their teachers (Study 1). **Study #1** presents the focus group data on teachers and principals; **Study #2** shows the focus group data on minoritized students; **Study #3** presents data from the pilot testing of study-specific outcome measures; and **Study #4** presents data on the preliminary efficacy of the BMF mindfulness and gratitude modules using a within-subjects repeated measures pre-posttest study design. Results suggest that the "M" component (mindfulness and gratitude) of the BMF framework is feasible and highly engaging among minoritized children, with high acceptability among teachers and students. We also found a positive impact of the intervention on measures of gratitude and life satisfaction (preliminary efficacy).

Keywords: social-emotional learning (SEL); multimedia SEL; B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. framework; multisensory SEL; Multisensory Multilevel Health Education Model (MMHEM)

1. Introduction

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) [1] defines social-emotional learning as "the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" [2]. CASEL has developed five core standards for social and emotional learning (SEL) [1]. These standards encompass self-awareness (recognizing emotions and strengths), self-management (regulating emotions and behaviors), social awareness (empathizing with others), relationship skills (establishing

positive connections), and responsible decision-making (making ethical choices and solving problems). They provide a holistic approach to fostering students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and overall well-being [1,3].

Social-emotional learning (SEL) skills can help underserved youth cope with adversity and improve academic outcomes, peer relationships, resiliency, and community belongingness [4–8]. SEL programs help students and teachers deal with stress and create healthy, caring schools [9]. SEL studies have shown that participants of SEL programs have a higher level of well-being between six months and eighteen years after the termination of SEL interventions [9]. These programs support healthy childhood development and desirable public health outcomes across children's lifespans [10], healthy eating, active living, and adequate sleep. SEL skills provide some level of protection against developing substance use, addictions, and risky health and sexual behaviors [11,12]. Moreover, evidence suggests effective SEL school-based interventions are cost-effective [4,13,14]. Despite the benefits of SEL, their cultural relevance has been a challenge [15] due to several factors, including a lack of teachers' buy-in, the acceptability of the program by the stakeholders, and implementation hurdles [15].

The current article addresses some of these challenges using a POC design for the B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. (BMF) SEL approach that is culturally sensitive, easy to use, and acceptable to teachers and students. The manuscript briefly describes the multicomponent BMF framework. Then, it focuses on testing the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary efficacy of one component of the BMF program—letter "M" (mindfulness and gratitude)—through (1) the development of digital 20-min LMS-based SEL POC modules and other relevant materials focused on habit formation; (2) teacher-facilitated classroom-based SEL; (3) the incorporation of Child-Mediated Health Communication principles (CMHC) [16] via which children share what they learn with their parents; (4) the integration of SEL with academic-relevant content: art and humanities, music, physical education, and technology; (5) testing using qualitative and quantitative approaches; and (6) multisensory learning. We focused on the mindfulness and gratitude component of the BMF because they were found vital for children from our priority communities who are disproportionally exposed to adverse childhood experiences by helping to foster self-regulation [7], coping, and resilience [8–11]. In addition, the BMF mindfulness and gratitude POC was designed to be "fun" by introducing engaging strategies: multimedia, play, and experimentation. The program also introduces humor through character design, fun content, and narration style. Introducing humor makes the SEL experience more relatable and improves children's emotional and cognitive engagement [17].

See Figure 1 for some of the mindfulness and gratitude modules' scenes.

1.1. B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. Framework: Description, Multimedia Components, and Content

The BMF framework is a theory-driven multimedia approach to SEL for 4th and 5th graders. To address existing challenges in SEL for underprivileged youth, the BMF framework leverages (1) cultural tailoring to foster acceptability [18]; (2) tools and strategies to build healthy habits [19,20] and sustain program effects [21]; (3) parental engagement using the CMHC developed by our group [16]; (4) social engagement of teachers via peer interaction during learning experiences [22,23]; (5) a broad range of SEL competencies; (6) integration with academic curriculum: art and humanities, music, physical education, and technology; (7) teacher training and support; and (8) multisensory learning. These factors were designed to align with the modern digital environment and include culturally and age-relevant real-world experiences.

Each letter of the BMF framework stands for essential SEL skills. Table 1 depicts the mapping of BMF skills against the CASEL framework and select activities for each BMF letter. Activities within each BMF letter include (1) a 20–25-min self-administered gamified multimedia digital module complemented by (2) a 20-min-long teacher-facilitated reflection session and (3) booster activities to ensure the acquired skills are practiced outside the classroom.
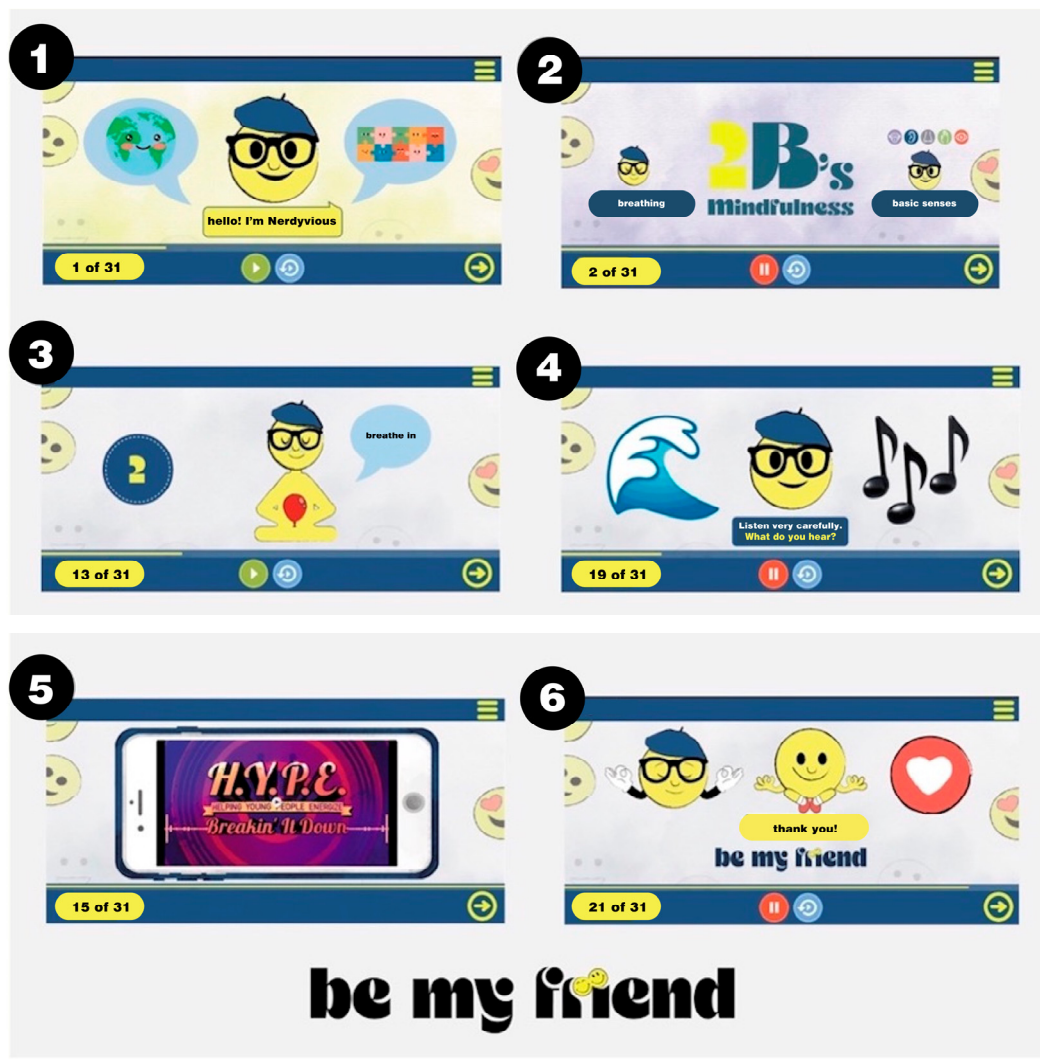
Figure 1. (**1**) Nerdyvious (one of the main characters) introduces himself and the mindfulness and gratitude modules; (**2**) the scene teaches children about the 2B's of mindfulness; (**3**) Nerdyvious demonstrates a belly breathing technique; (**4**) Nerdyvious invites students to explore gratitude and their sense of hearing; (**5**) mindful dance "H.Y.P.E. The Break"; (**6**) Nerdyvious and Mindful M send students love, kindness, and gratitude.

Table 1. BMF skills mapped against the CASEL framework and select activities.

B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. Skills—What Each BMF Letter Stands for	CASEL Framework Theoretical Concept	Examples of BMF Activities
B-brave (self-esteem & confidence)	self-awareness, self-management	*"positive affirmations"; "I can SEE my goals"; "BraveHeart star"*
E-emotionally savvy (emotional intelligence and self-regulation)	relationship skills, self-management, self-awareness	*"emotions words game"; "magic moments"; "loving-kindness meditation"*
M-mindful (mindfulness and gratitude)	**self-management, self-awareness**	***"mindful breathing"; "belly breathing"; "basic senses"; "grateful clouds"***

Table 1. *Cont.*

B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. Skills—What Each BMF Letter Stands for	CASEL Framework Theoretical Concept	Examples of BMF Activities
Y-youthful (healthy eating, exercise, and sleep hygiene)	self-management, responsible decision making	*"H.Y.P.E. the Breaks! activity";* *"pajamas party"*
F-friendly (kindness and cultural competence)	social awareness, relationship skills	*"we are beautifully different"; "we are one"; "a good friend"*
R-resilient (resilience and resourcefulness)	self-management	*"find my strengths"; "my coping tricks"*
I-imaginative (creativity)	self-awareness, self-management	*"awe moments";* *"imagineland—a city of endless creativity"*
E-empathic (empathic listening and communication)	social awareness and relationship skills	*"an active listener; "share a laugh"; "color your heart"*
N-notable (self-expression)	self-awareness	*"sticky note"; "tune-in"; "be you"*
D-do it daily (habits formation)	self-management, responsible decision making	*"do-it-daily"; "habit-rabbit loop"*

The development of the BMF framework was guided by the Multisensory Multilevel Health Education Model (MMHEM) [24], the CASEL approach to the SEL [2], and (3) the SAFE principles [23]. The BMF framework also incorporates New York State Learning Standards for the Arts. It is designed to be delivered via learning management systems (LMS).

1.2. The Development of the B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. Framework and BMF POC Based on the Multisensory Multilevel Health Education Model (MMHEM)

The development of all BMF modules was guided by the MMHEM [24]. The MMHEM was developed by the authors to guide the development and implementation of health education interventions targeting diverse communities [24]. The model provides a framework for integrating **Art, Science, and Culture** into multiple levels of influence of the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) (intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy) [25]. MMHEM has been successfully applied to a range of health domains, including stroke [24], physical activity [26], nutrition, SEL for preschoolers (i.e., Rhythm & Move Early Childhood Movement), and COVID-19 resources.

The "Art" domain of the MMHEM pertains to health education strategies that are multisensory and aesthetically sensitive. They leverage visual (iconic), auditory (echoic), tactile, and kinesthetic sensory inputs in their design through the creative arts [24]. **The "Science"** domain highlights the importance of utilizing evidence-based methods and evidence-based outcome evaluations [24]. It promotes incorporating strategies for optimizing cognitive processes linked to memory and learning [24]. **The "Culture"** domain emphasizes the need to consider culture across the entire spectrum of health education design and implementation [24].

The "Art" domain incorporated in the BMF framework promotes the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies into the SEL messages [24]. BMF was optimized for immersion by incorporating music, movement, cartoons, and games.

The "Science" domain encapsulates insights from education, marketing, psychology, neuroscience, and SEL literature. BMF utilized (1) theories of change [27], Social Cognitive Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior/Reasoned Action [28,29], and (2) methods used to enhance memorability ("stickiness") [30], shareability ("contagiousness") [31], and engagement through "nudge" principles [32]. For example, BMF messages were designed to be "sticky" through rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and an acronym embedded in the modules. SEL literature informed the selection of the BMF content.

The "Culture" domain of MMHEM was applied to the BMF framework (and current POC) by incorporating elements from cultural adaptation frameworks, such as the Ecological Validity Model (EVM). The EVM consists of eight aspects of adaptation: language, persons, metaphors, content, concepts, goals, methods, and context [33]. These adaptations were made across the BMF POC module content via community engagement techniques (e.g., focus groups, iterative development, and pilot studies) to ensure the intervention is relevant and generalizable to our priority audience [33]. Moreover, the Identity Signaling concept [34] informed the design of BMF characters in the module and communicated "inclusivity." The characters represented cultural, ethnic, and racial groups of the BMF priority audience (e.g., stories of culturally celebrated public figures discussing the importance of mindfulness in their lives). The stories, role models, music, art, and dance were all drawn from African American and Hispanic cultures to foster inclusiveness. We used the Narrative Performance Scale (NPS) [18] to adapt further and tailor the BMF modules. The NPS evaluates three components of a compelling message: interest, realism, and identification [18]. Diverse teachers assessed the cultural appropriateness of the modules' content (e.g., language, music, metaphors, and visual symbolism). The program features culturally and racially concordant narrators in BMF activities, hip-hop music and dance movements, and culturally sound visual imagery.

In addition to development, the design of BMF was also guided by the MMHEM, which encourages the a priori alignment of the intervention with multiple levels of children's social and physical environment. This socioecological contextualization promotes cultural robustness and the sustainability of the program's behavioral influence by (1) building family-school-community partnerships and family engagement based on Child-Mediated Health Communication [16]; (2) fostering culturally competent, responsive, sustainable SEL practices; and (3) considering how specific school, state, and federal policies may influence children and interact with SEL programming (see Figure 2).
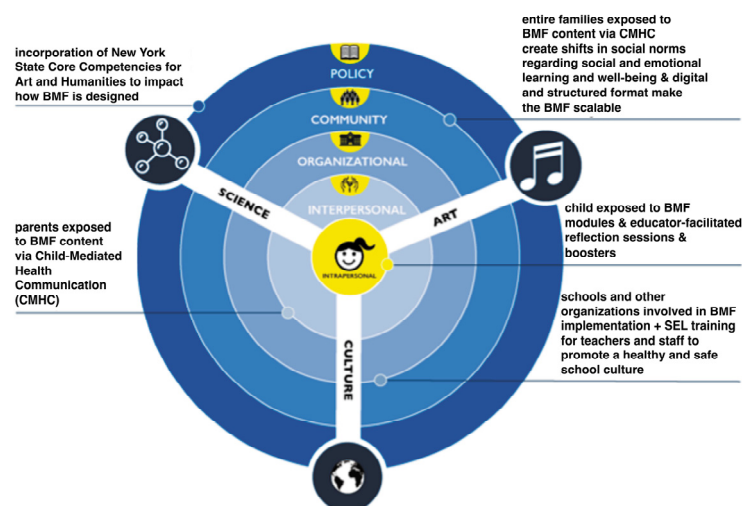

Figure 2. B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. framework presented in the context of the MMHEM.

1.3. The Importance of SEL for 4th and 5th Graders

Promoting the social-emotional skills of fourth and fifth graders is essential because of the critical developmental and transitional stages of this period of their lives [35]. During this time, children develop stronger self-awareness, self-concept, and empathy [36,37]. They are also preparing to transition to middle school, which involves navigating a more complex social environment and increased academic responsibilities [38]. SEL can help fourth and fifth graders develop the focus, self-discipline, self-regulation, and healthy habits they need to succeed in middle school [39,40]. SEL can also help equip them with the tools to nurture positive relationships with their peers, friends, and family [40,41]. These

skills can help them navigate conflicts with others, stand up against bullying, and become more empathic friends [42].

1.4. The Importance of SEL for Marginalized Children

SEL skills development must also be understood within the broader context of the social determinants of health, mental health, and youth development [43]. Indeed, the physical, social, and emotional capabilities that develop early in life provide the foundation for lifelong health and well-being [43,44]. Many existing SEL programs have been criticized for not being relatable to culturally and ethnically diverse students [45] and not addressing their values, beliefs, and life challenges [46]. Traditionally, underserved groups are more likely to be exposed to adverse community environments and childhood experiences that inhibit social and emotional development, altering the rate at which they gain these SEL skills [5]. Prolonged stress, adverse experiences, community isolation, a lack of opportunities, and racial discrimination continue to reduce social-emotional learning opportunities for underserved youth [47]. Lack of access to resources and poor social support structures may also be significant life challenges for minoritized children [48–50]. SEL skills can help enhance the coping skills of minoritized youth and promote positive school engagement and achievement 15 years after the completion of SEL programs [51,52].

1.5. The Importance of Multimedia and Technology for 4th and 5th-Graders—Members of Generation Alpha

Born to millennial parents, Gen Alpha is identified as the generation with birth years ranging from 2010 to 2025 [53]. The year 2010, which marks the beginning of this generation, overlaps with the launch of the iPad and Instagram [54]. Gen Alpha has grown up in an era of significant technological disruption [55]. Indeed, technology is an integral part of their daily lives and plays a central role in their recreational activities and social connections. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the role of technology in children's education [56]. Gen Alpha children are adept with technology from a very young age. In fact, by age two, children have been observed to master touchscreen navigation and skillfully use various smartphone apps [57]. Accordingly, the members of Gen Alpha have often been characterized as 'screenagers', 'digital natives', or 'wired generation' [55].

1.6. Gaps in Current SEL Programs and BMF' Solutions

Culture is essential in shaping the development of SEL competencies [58]. A "one size fits all" approach has been shown not to work [58]. Studies have also demonstrated that most SEL programs do not capitalize on students' cultural assets [59]. Culture-conscious approaches require SEL pedagogies to center the student, family, and cultural context in the SEL curricula [58]. Facilitating this approach requires practices that incorporate (a) inclusive norms, values, and culture; (b) cooperative learning; and (c) the use of multicultural, multisensory, and multimodal instructional strategies that foster immersion in the content (e.g., storytelling, art, dance, and music) without stereotyping or oversimplifying children's lived experiences [60–63]. We leveraged these approaches while developing the BMF framework and its BMF mindfulness and gratitude components.

SEL curricula provide an opportunity to deploy emerging digital technologies [64]. Yet, integrating different media and engaging visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches remains underdeveloped in SEL [65,66]. These challenges are further amplified by the competing media-saturated environment children navigate daily [66]. Therefore, an opportunity to provide children with user-friendly, evidence-based, well-organized, and easy-to-navigate multimedia SEL content becomes even more critical [67]. Learning management systems currently used in classrooms provide infrastructure for creating a "Transformative SEL (TSEL)" [68]. TSEL leverages digital learning environments to support children's identities, belongingness, and agency during online learning [68]. Importantly, technology-based SEL curricula offer the opportunity for scale [69,70].

The BMF framework has been designed to create culturally adapted and immersive SEL experiences. BMF's LMS-integrated multimedia format; its engagement of family members outside the classroom [16]; its potential for scale; its habit formation boosters; and its incorporation of teacher-facilitated sessions bring virtual and real worlds together in SEL experiences.

The current POC preliminary studies focus on one component of the BMF framework—the letter "M"—mindfulness and gratitude. Study #1 examines the feasibility and acceptability of the BMF approach by teachers via focus groups; Study #2 explores the feasibility and acceptability of the BMF approach by minoritized students via focus groups; Study #3 presents the pilot-test outcomes of study-specific outcome measures, and Study #4 evaluates the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary efficacy of the BMF approach via a single group, repeated measures pre-posttest study design. Given the exploratory nature of this POC, these studies employed purposeful sampling methods. We deliberately selected participants based on predefined criteria (low-income status defined by zip code, fifth-grade level, and diverse cultural backgrounds) [71,72]. This approach was used because our BMF's POC intervention was designed for low-income, minoritized children [73].

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. STUDY #1: Focus Groups with NYC Public School Teachers and Principals

2.1.1. Purpose

We conducted focus groups with teachers and principals to examine the acceptability and feasibility of the mindfulness and gratitude content proposed in the pilot POC BMF program (see Appendix A). These teachers and principals represented the same ethnic and racial groups as our priority audience, making their feedback valuable regarding (1) the cultural appropriateness of the BMF approach, (2) insights into program implementation barriers and facilitators, (3) program alignment with the organization's goals and values; (4) initial buy-in, and (5) other organizational-specific considerations related to the implementation of the BMF program at their organization.

2.1.2. Participants

A purposeful sample of public school principals, educators, art teachers, and school staff (*n* = 15) participated in this focus group. The teachers participating in the focus group represented an ethnically and culturally diverse sample of teachers, including African Americans, Hispanics, and White participants.

2.1.3. Procedures and Protocol

The focus group study was conducted via Zoom (during the pandemic). Participants were shown the selected BMF activities for the mindfulness and gratitude modules. Open-ended probing questions adapted from the Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM) and Feasibility of Intervention Measure (FIM) [74] were used to facilitate discussion regarding participants' perceptions of the modules. Examples include: *"What do you see as the strong points of this project?", "What do you see as the points that could be improved?"," What did you like/dislike about the activities"* (acceptability); *"Can you envision these modules being delivered within your school?", "How might they need to be modified?"* (feasibility).

2.1.4. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative analyses were conducted on all questions included in the focus groups. A thematic analysis was performed using NVivo software on each of the questions. We used the same six-step procedure for qualitative data analysis described in Study 2 below.

2.2. STUDY #2: Focus Groups with Minoritized and Culturally Diverse Students: The BMF Mindfulness and Gratitude Modules

2.2.1. Purpose

To examine the acceptability of the final BMF mindfulness and gratitude modules. Figure 3 shows the examples of the focus groups.

Figure 3. (**1**) one of the students with her 30-day BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal designed by Nigel Holmes; (**2**) one of the students taking a quiz; (**3**) one of the students mindfully exploring the sense of touch; (**4**) one of the students watching a video about the sense of smell.

2.2.2. Participants

A purposeful sample of eight 5th grade public school students aged 10–11 participated in this focus group; they represent the priority audience of our BMF program (e.g., zip code, ethnicity, etc.).

2.2.3. Procedures and Protocol

Children interacted with the mindfulness and gratitude modules on their devices. Once they completed the module, a researcher asked them a series of questions adapted from the Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM) [74] about their experience to receive their immediate feedback. Children subsequently received a 30-day BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal (see Appendix B) to practice and reflect on their learned skills. The teacher facilitated the experience and supported their students in the process.

2.2.4. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative analyses were conducted on all questions included in the focus groups. A thematic analysis was performed using NVivo software on each of the questions. Thematic analysis is a widely used a qualitative method that helps to identify, analyze, and report "themes" (i.e., responses or meaning patterns within a verbatim data set) [75,76].

We followed the six steps introduced by Braun and Clarke, which include (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes that are descriptive of the content, (3) searching for themes by organizing and grouping related codes to identify potential patterns in the data, (4) reviewing themes to ensure they accurately capture the data, (5) defining and naming themes by giving each theme a meaningful and descriptive name, and (6) writing the report and providing an in-depth analysis of each theme, its relevance to the research question, and its implications) [75].

2.3. STUDY #3: The Feasibility Pilot Test of the Outcome Measures

2.3.1. Purpose

To evaluate the feasibility of implementing outcomes instruments among underserved minoritized children: (1) the CAMM (Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure) measures mindful attention; (2) the Gratitude Adjective Checklist (GAC) measures gratitude; and (3) the Brief Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) measures well-being.

2.3.2. Participants

A purposeful sample of eight 5th grade public school students aged 10–11 years. We recruited minoritized students because they represent the priority audience of our BMF program.

2.3.3. Protocol

Children completed all the baseline measures on Qualtrics. They received the 30-day BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal for their participation.

2.3.4. Data Analysis

We analyzed the means and standard deviation scores of each measure and compared the scores with the previously reported normative scores for this age group and population.

2.4. STUDY #4: The Preliminary Efficacy of BMF Mindfulness and Gratitude Modules Using a Pre-Posttest Study Design among 4th and 5th Grade Minoritized Students

2.4.1. Purpose

(1) to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of implementing the BMF mindfulness and gratitude modules in a classroom with teachers' facilitation of the experience; (2) to evaluate the effect of these SEL experiences on students' mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction immediately and one week after classroom implementation.

2.4.2. Participants

A purposeful sample of two separate classrooms comprising 41 4th and 5th-grade public school students (class 1 = 27 students; class 2 = 14 students) attending an after-school program and their parents participated in the study (see Table 2).

As with the studies above, these minoritized students represented the priority audience of our BMF program.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the parents/guardians.

Demographic Characteristics	%
Ethnicity/Race	
Hispanic	40%
Black or African Americans	15%
Asian/Pacific Islanders	10%
Multiple Ethnicities	6%
White	27%
Missing Data	2%
Education	
High School or Equivalent	20%
Some College, Bachelor's, Associate	35%
Graduate or Professional Degree	30%
Prefer Not to Answer	13%
Annual Household Income	
Below $50,000	15%
$50,000–$99,999	10%
$100,000 and above	23%
Prefer Not to Answer	48%
Gender	
Female	80%
Male	20%
Age	
25–34-year-old	22%
35–44-year-old	40%
45–54-year-old	20%
65–74-year-old	5%
Prefer Not to Answer	12%

2.4.3. Procedures and Protocol

Following ethics review board approval, informed consent was obtained from parents/guardians, and assent was obtained from the participating children. Parents completed the PSC-17 to assess their child's well-being and a demographic questionnaire. Gathered in classrooms, students completed baseline survey measures of mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction, and engaged with the BMF mindfulness and gratitude POC modules on their laptops or tablets. Once finished, they immediately completed the same outcome measures **(1st follow-up)** and responded to an acceptability question adapted from the Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM) [74] about the program. Students who completed the modules received BMF-branded t-shirts and the 30-day BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal for reflection and practice (knowledge booster). One week following the BMF modules, outcome measures were repeated on students (**2nd follow-up**). Teachers facilitated the experiences at all three time points by being in the classroom with their students and supporting them. The teachers also directly observed each student's experiences and monitored whether students completed the module.

2.4.4. Measures

Children

The CAMM is a 10-item self-report measure of present-moment awareness and non-judgmental, nonavoidant responses to thoughts and feelings in children and adolescents aged 10 to 17 [77].

The Gratitude Adjective Checklist (GAC) is a three-item measure comprised of the sum of affective adjectives: grateful, thankful, and appreciative. It can be framed over short or longer time windows by varying the time specified in the instructions, e.g., right now, think about "yesterday" or "the past one week". The GAC has a minimum gratitude score of 5 and a maximum of 15. GAC scores have demonstrated strong psychometric properties in an early adolescent population [7], obtaining alphas ranging from 0.78 to 0.88.

The Brief Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) is a 5-item measure. Each item denotes one of the five life satisfaction domains (family, school, friends, self, and living environment) [78]. The five items are summed up to obtain a total life satisfaction score. Athay and colleagues [78] recommended that response choices for the BMSLSS should be on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 '*Very Dissatisfied*' to 5 '*Very Satisfied*'). The adjusted 5-point BMSLSS scale was found to have strong validity and reliability properties for children and adolescents [79].

Acceptability question: The questionnaire included two acceptability questions adapted from **the Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM)** [74]. The original AIM is a four-item measure of implementation outcomes often considered "leading indicators" of implementation success [74]. The IAM items could be modified to specify a referent organization, situation, or population. In the current study, the measures were modified to fit the qualitative format of the focus groups.

Participants were asked to type their answers to the acceptability questions: *"Did you like/dislike the modules? What did you like the most, and what did you like the least about the modules, if anything?"* As with the qualitative data above, a thematic analysis was conducted on each question, and the main themes were identified using the strategies described above.

Parents/Guardians

The PSC-17 is a 17-item psychosocial scale designed to facilitate the recognition of risk for cognitive, emotional, and behavioral problems. Each item on the PSC-17 is scored from 0 to 2 (*0 = Never, 1 = Sometimes, 2 = Often*). The total score can range from 0 to 34. It is rated by a parent or guardian on behalf of the child. It has three subscales: *internalizing, attention, and externalizing* [80]. The PSC-17 has good internal reliability for the total score (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89) and all three subscales (0.79, 0.83, and 0.83, respectively) [80]. The baseline PSC-17 assessed children's mental health and explored whether the intervention impacted the primary research outcomes (mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction) independently of children's mental health status.

2.4.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS (version 27). A repeated measure within-subjects ANOVA analysis was conducted to assess the effect of the BMF mindfulness and gratitude pilot modules on students' mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction levels across **three time periods: (1) baseline, (2) 1st follow-up (immediately after the implementation), and (3) 2nd follow-up (one-week post-implementation).** The repeated within-subjects measure ANOVA was selected to capture correlated observation over time (i.e., the measures were implemented on the same participants at three-time points under the same conditions: the same schools, classrooms, and teachers). It should be noted that, due to the exploratory nature of this POC study, we did not include a control group. However, to ensure no significant SEL baseline differences between the participants in the two BMF intervention classrooms included in this study, we examined baseline levels of mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction across the two groups and found equivalent baseline results.

3. Results

3.1. STUDY #1: Focus Groups with NYC Public School Teachers and Principals

We identified the following key themes on the acceptability and feasibility of the B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. approach.

3.1.1. Positive Evaluation

Participants expressed positive attitudes towards BMF's mindfulness and gratitude POC modules. For example, one participant linked the BMF's content to the social and emotional themes of the movie "Inside-Out," underscoring the importance of recognizing sadness to reach joy. Others appreciated the therapeutic nature of the activities and the calming effect of the music (e.g., "*A lot of activities were very therapeutic, the music was calm.*"). There was also a suggestion to introduce the module to younger students: "*It should be done for 3rd graders as well—all the music and the ideas presented were great and would be very helpful for our students*".

3.1.2. The Importance of Music/Multimedia

Participants emphasized the value of integrating music and multimedia into the SEL curriculum, viewing music as a comforting, educational tool that facilitates student self-expression and healing. For example, one teacher noted how students react to music: "*Students respond to music uniquely—music shapes emotions.*" Another teacher stressed music's role in fostering emotional regulation and empowerment, allowing children to proactively manage their feelings instead of merely reacting to them (e.g., "*Expressing oneself through the art is very important—letting children express themselves through music.*").

3.1.3. The Importance of Movement

Teachers appreciated that music, movement, and dance are integrated into the BMF framework. Participants noted that movement and dance were necessary ingredients for an impactful SEL education by improving students' mood and engagement (e.g., "*Movement definitely helps (...) it keeps them happy, excited, and engaged.*"). For example, one teacher discussed children's affinity for movement by saying: "*Children like the movement. They like to move around because they sit a lot*".

3.1.4. Safety First

Participants emphasized the need for students' psychological safety and regular well-being monitoring during SEL programming and implementation, suggesting periodic "*check-ins or surveys*" to assess these factors. For example, one educator stated the value of surveys in obtaining students' feedback: "*I like surveys a lot because it allows students to share more information, so asking them what is working, what is not working, (...) giving them a platform like that is important.*" Others stressed that feedback should be acted upon: "*A really important part of feedback surveys is that you implement some of the things students share so that they feel they have a voice*".

3.1.5. Journaling

Participants identified journaling as a key emotional processing, healing, and self-expression method. Reflecting on the BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal, a few teachers mentioned using journals for tracking daily feelings (e.g., "*I used journaling for the kids to write down how they were feeling every day*"). Others highlighted the motivational impact of personalizing journals, citing an instance where students designed and personalized their journal covers.

3.1.6. Involvement, Interactivity, and Autonomy

Teachers stressed the importance of involving children throughout BMF's entire process, from development to evaluation. One teacher underscored the need to listen to children when designing SEL content, noting the power of children's voices and the bal-

ance between teaching and listening (e.g., *"Listen to the kids—involve them in the activities just like in the loving/kindness example you have shown us"*). Others highlighted the need for engaging students with activities that strike a balance between challenging and fun (e.g., *When things are too simple or too difficult for them, they do not want to participate because it is not fun, so finding that middle ground where they are challenged but it is not too difficult for them is important"*).

3.1.7. Practice Makes Perfect

Participants emphasized the value of the short mindfulness and gratitude booster activities from the BMF pilot in building self-efficacy. These activities can prompt children to apply the skills in real-life situations outside the classroom. Teachers appreciated the real-world relevance of the SEL lessons, which students can integrate into their daily lives, emphasizing their usefulness during challenging times (e.g., *"I like the idea of incorporating these activities into everyday life, and how students can use it if there is an issue"*).

3.1.8. Parents/Guardians as Coparticipants

Participants deemed it crucial to involve guardians/parents in children's SEL education, asserting that this dual focus bolsters the program's engagement (e.g., *"Allow family members to be part of it, which brings a sense of security and normalcy to the child."*). The sentiment was shared by others, who believed parental inclusion enriches the learning experience and fosters a stronger sense of community (e.g., *"if we purposefully include guardians in these activities because it would mean more to the children and it will help them with applying some of the lessons because now it is a together thing, and it helps build community; it will spread faster and go further"*).

3.1.9. Community/Togetherness

Participants valued the BMF framework's emphasis on fostering meaningful relationships among all stakeholders, seeing this as a crucial factor for creating a support network and ensuring program sustainability. One teacher noted the importance of sharing experiences: *"Sense of sharing ideas with family and friends is important."* Another added that children value emotional sharing with familiar peers (e.g., *"Children like to be with each other - they like to be with the kids they know"*).

3.1.10. Teachers as the Agents of Change

Participants emphasized the pivotal role of teachers in facilitating BMF's culturally tailored and interactive SEL education. They believed teachers should guide BMF's module implementation, encouraging and moderating student reflection (e.g., *"Teachers should moderate these modules—we know how to fill in to keep students engaged."*). Teachers "presence is particularly important in the context of digital SEL learning (e.g., *"When it comes to online learning, children like familiarity. They want to see someone they know as they warm up into activities"*).

3.2. STUDY #2: Focus Groups with Minoritized and Culturally Diverse Students: The BMF Mindfulness and Gratitude Modules

Overall, students' reactions to the program were positive, highlighting the acceptability of the POC mindfulness and gratitude component of the BMF framework (e.g., *"I loved it. I learned about five senses. . .taste, hearing, smell, seeing, and touching"*). They liked the program and found the experience appealing; they welcomed and appreciated multisensory BMF strategies. The following key themes were identified:

3.2.1. Presenting a Variety of SEL Curricular Content Activities for Personalization

Children had varied preferences for the mindfulness and gratitude activities. For example, some favored belly breathing, and others preferred featuring celebrities to inspire calm.

Student 1: "I liked the belly breathing the most—it took all the stress away at the moment."

Student 2: "I liked the celebrities in the module because celebrities are some people's idols, and the way they talk about mindfulness would inspire a lot of people."

3.2.2. Multisensory Approaches to Learning Appeal to Children

Children expressed their most (and least) favorite sensory activities:

Student 1: "I liked the touch sense the most..."

Student 2: "I liked the hearing..."

3.2.3. Stress Coping Strategies Are Helpful Tools for Children

Children reported learning about tools to help them cope with stress and stay calm.

Student 1: "I liked how it showed me how I can get out of stressful behavior when I am stressed by breathing."

Student 2: "It really calmed me down (...) it took all the stress away at the moment."

3.2.4. SEL User Experience Is Essential

Children liked the simplicity of the modules and how clearly the characters explained the SEL concepts:

Student 1: "It was easy to move from one scene to another."

Student 2: "The character explained things to me in an easy way, not like other people explain things to me sometimes."

3.2.5. Students Engaged in Sharing Their Recommendations for Improvement

When asked about what can be improved, children commented on adding things that they already liked:

Student 1: "I would add more questions to the quiz—the feedback helped me to learn."

Student 2: "I would add more videos—I like them a lot."

Student 4: "I would add more celebrities."

3.3. STUDY #3: The Feasibility Pilot Test of the Outcome Measures

Data analysis and results: All outcome assessment measures were completed in full. The mean score on the CAMM of 22.75 (SD = 7.44) is consistent with previously reported mean norms for this age group (e.g., 20.17; SD = 9.18) [81] and among similar minoritized cohorts (20.67, SD = 7.75) [77]. The mean score for gratitude was 12.37 (SD = 2.13), which is also consistent with norms for the same age group (e.g., 13.02, SD = 2.18) [7]. On average, participants obtained mean scores for life satisfaction (i.e., 4.3, SD = 0.7), which is consistent with the previously reported scores for this age group (e.g., 3.81, SD = 0.7)—a score greater than 4.5 is considered a high score, while a score less than 3.3 is considered low. Scores between 3.3 and 4.5 are considered medium scores [79].

3.4. STUDY #4: The Preliminary Efficacy of BMF Mindfulness and Gratitude Modules Using a Pre-Posttest Study Design among 4th and 5th Grade Minoritized Students

3.4.1. Parents

PSC-17: The mean total score for PSC-17 was 6.52 (SD = 5.49). The mean for the Internalizing scale was 1.87 (SD = 155), for the Externalizing scale was 1.97 (SD = 2.35), and the Attention scale 2.67 (SD = 2.36). All these scores are consistent with previously reported norms for this age group and population (total score: 6.74 (5.62), Internalizing sub-scale:

1.27 (1.71), Attention sub-scale: 2.67 (2.43), Externalizing sub-scale: 2.78 (2.78) [82]. Only one student in our sample scored above the cutoff score.

3.4.2. Children

A repeated-measure within-subjects ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the impact of the BMF mindfulness and gratitude POC modules on children's mindfulness, gratitude, and life satisfaction levels across three-time points: **baseline, 1st follow-up (immediately after the implementation), and 2nd follow-up (one-week post implementation).** See Table 3 below for means and standard deviations of the outcome measures.

Table 3. Means and SDs of the outcome measures.

Outcome Measure	Baseline	1st Follow-Up (Immediate)	2nd Follow-Up (One-Week)
CAMM *(mindfulness)*	23.26 (0.89)	23.10 (1.27)	22.97 (1.62)
GAC *(gratitude)*	11.71 (0.44)	12.78 (0.49)	12.71 (0.52)
BMSLSS *(life satisfaction)*	4.37 (0.09)	4.32 (0.12)	4.54 (0.12)

The results indicated no statistically significant effect of time on **children's mindfulness** $F_{(2, 74)} = 0.35$, $p = 0.966$). The mean mindfulness scores did not differ significantly across three-time points (23.26, SD = 0.894); 23.10, SD = 1.27; 22.97, SD = 1.62, respectively). These findings are consistent with previously reported norms for this age group and similar minoritized cohorts [77] and the norms reported in Study 3.
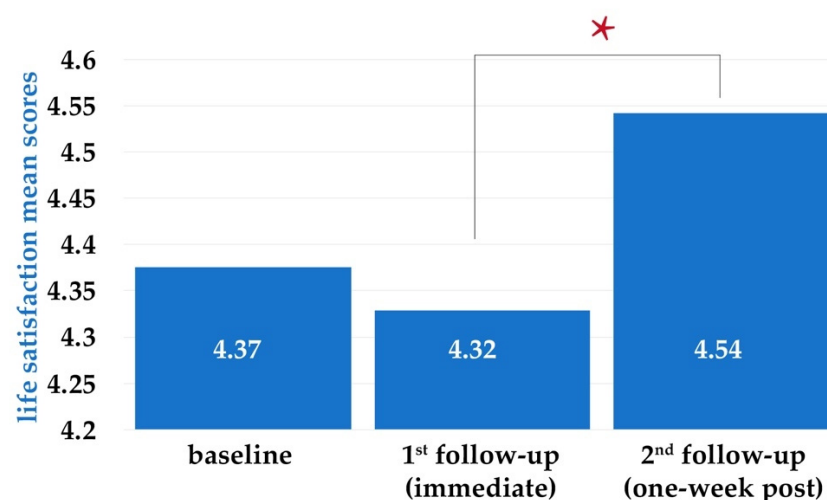
There was a statistically significant effect of time on **children's life satisfaction** ($F_{(2, 70)} = 3.39$, $p = 0.03$). A post hoc pair comparison using Bonferroni correction showed an increased life satisfaction score between the first and second (one-week post) follow-up assessments (4.32, SD = 0.12 vs. 4.54, SD = 0.12, $p = 0.00$). The life satisfaction scores improved one-week post intervention (2nd follow-up) as compared to immediately after the intervention (1st follow-up) (see Figure 4). Although there was no statistical difference between the baseline and the 2nd follow-up (one-week post) (4.37, SD = 0.9 vs. 4.54, SD = 0.12, $p = 0.12$), and baseline and 1st follow-up (4.37, SD = 0.09 vs. 4.32, SD = 0.12, $p = 0.56$), the baseline and the 1st follow-up scores are considered medium scores (scores between 3.3 and 4.5). The 2nd follow-up is considered a high score. These findings are consistent with previously reported norms for this age group and similar minoritized cohorts [79] and the norms reported in Study 3.

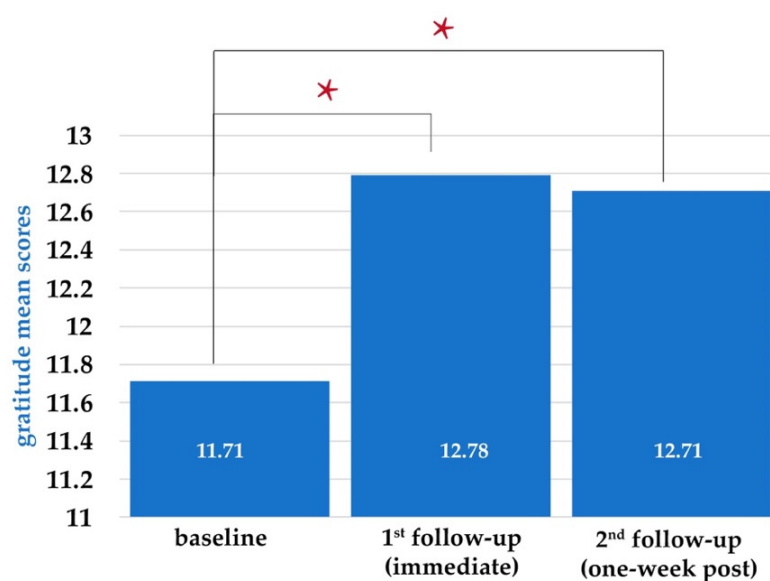**Figure 4.** Life satisfaction (BMSLSS) mean scores across three different time points. The red star in the figure represents statistically significant differences between different time points.

There was also a statistically significant effect of time on **children's gratitude** ($F_{(2,74)} = 4.95$, $p = 0.01$). A post hoc pair comparison using Bonferroni correction showed increased gratitude scores between the baseline and the 1st follow-up assessment (11.71, SD = 0.44 vs. 12.78, SD = 0.499, $p = 0.01$), and baseline and the 2nd follow-up assessment (11.71, SD = 0.44 vs. 12.71, SD = 0.52, $p = 0.02$). There was no statistical difference between the first and the second follow-up assessments (12.78, SD = 0.49 vs. 12.71, SD = 0.52) (see Figure 5), indicating that the gratitude level increased immediately after the intervention and stayed the same one-week post intervention. The results are consistent with previously reported norms for this age group and similar minoritized cohorts [7] and the norms reported in Study 3.

Figure 5. Gratitude (GAC) mean scores across three different time points. The red star in the figure represents statistically significant differences between different time points.

We did not find a significant correlation between any of the demographic variables and each of the primary outcome variables. We did not find a correlation between PSC-17 scores and the primary outcome variables. The small sample size may confound these findings.

Acceptability Questions

A few themes were identified based on the children's responses to the question: *"Did you like/dislike the modules? What did you like the most, and what did you like the least about the modules, if anything."* Overall, students expressed positive attitudes towards the BMF mindfulness and gratitude modules. Among the 86% of children with a strong favorable response to the overall activities presented in modules, the majority (64%) reported liking a specific activity included in the module (e.g., *"I loved learning all about five senses"*). Many children noted that the BMF modules made them feel *"calm and relaxed"* and that it was *"fun"* to participate in the experience. However, 14% of children disliked some activities included in the modules (see Figure 6).
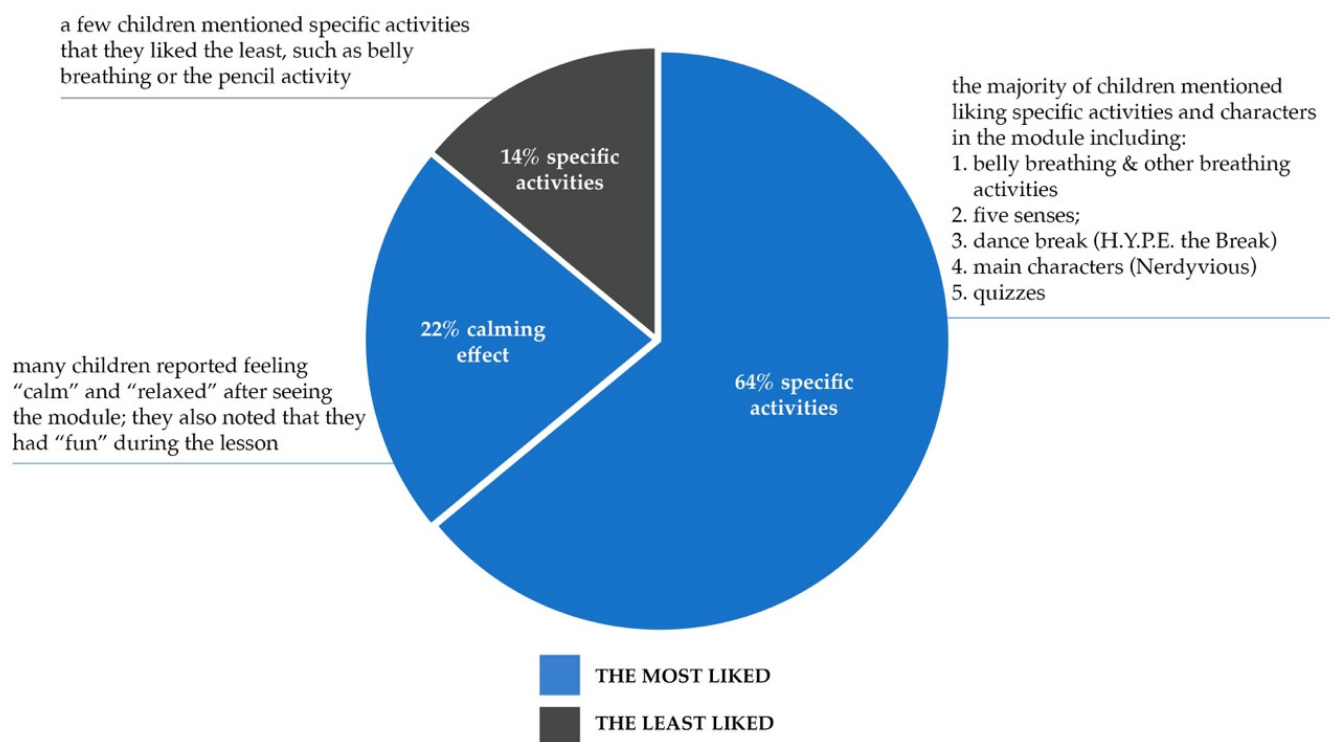
a few children mentioned specific activities that they liked the least, such as belly breathing or the pencil activity

14% specific activities

the majority of children mentioned liking specific activities and characters in the module including:
1. belly breathing & other breathing activities
2. five senses;
3. dance break (H.Y.P.E. the Break)
4. main characters (Nerdyvious)
5. quizzes

22% calming effect

many children reported feeling "calm" and "relaxed" after seeing the module; they also noted that they had "fun" during the lesson

64% specific activities

THE MOST LIKED

THE LEAST LIKED

Figure 6. Themes were identified based on children's responses to the acceptability questions.

4. Discussion

Every day in NYC public schools, our teachers meet emotionally challenged students. Overwhelmed by hopelessness, poverty, and discrimination, these children are often plagued by low self-esteem and aspirations. Time and again, the research underscores that with the right blend of support, resources, encouragement, and education, along with a conducive environment for growth, every child has the potential to lead a purposeful and fulfilling life. In developing the B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. framework for SEL in underserved communities, we considered students' sociocultural context and leveraged participatory pedagogical approaches to the program development guided by the Multisensory Multimedia Health Education Model. At its core, BMF's SEL strategy combines digital immersive solutions with traditional classroom interactions and experiences. The BMF framework leverages evidence-based SEL standards, which include (1) the optimal time for SEL sessions, which is around 30 min administered 2–3 times per week for ten weeks [2,9,83–86]; (2) a mixed-methods evaluation approach [85,87]; (3) a holistic approach to SEL [85,88]; (4) longitudinal follow-up evaluations to assess the impact of the BMF intervention [9,14,83,89].

Our outcomes support the POC for the BMF framework and highlight the critical acceptability and feasibility factors that recognize (1) the individual learning sensory modes preferred by different children, (2) the personal nature of learning, (3) the impact of a brief intervention on children's gratitude and life satisfaction, and (4) the importance of considering both teachers' and students' perspectives when designing such programs. Our preliminary POC findings also highlight the importance of cultural adaptation of SEL programs [90]. Indeed, programs that recognize and integrate students' cultural backgrounds tend to be more effective in supporting students' social and emotional development [90].

The BMF's mindfulness and gratitude POC program was well received by teachers and students, achieving high acceptability, feasibility, and engagement. The outcomes of Study 1 suggest that teachers and principals find the BMF SEL format feasible and acceptable, expressing their interest in implementing the remaining BMF modules and the entire program in the future. Indeed, recent studies highlight the importance of teachers' SEL beliefs about SEL as a critical factor for successful programs' implementation [91].

Study 2 illustrates that children may have different SEL preferences involving the engagement of various senses, such as visual, kinesthetic, audio, and touch. This multisensory approach aligns with the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner [92], which suggests that individuals have unique strengths and preferences in learning. It also aligns with the Multisensory Multilevel Health Education Model [24]—upon which the B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. framework was built—and previous SEL literature [93]. The multisensory modes of teaching discussed in the model has been successfully applied to various health behavioral domain such as stroke [24], physical activity [26], and nutrition. Recognizing these diverse multisensory learning modes in SEL is essential, as it highlights the need for flexible educational approaches that can adapt to children's needs, strengths, and goals [94]. The qualitative portion of Study 4 revealed that students responded uniquely to different activities presented in the module. For example, some preferred belly breathing activities, and others did not. SEL is an inherently personal process, and multimedia social-emotional learning programs, like BMF, enable learning personalization. These outcomes support the growing body of research advocating for personalized or "precision" SEL learning for children [95]. The more SEL is tailored to individual students' needs, interests, and cultural backgrounds, the more they engage and internalize the skills they learn [95].

Study 3 informed and validated the choice of the measures for Study 4. All outcome assessment measures were completed in full, and children's scores were consistent with the previously reported norms for this particular age group and a similar minoritized population of children.

Regarding the preliminary behavioral efficacy of the mindfulness and gratitude component of BMF (Study 4), there was no significant improvement in mindfulness across the three-time points (baseline, 1st follow-up, and 2nd follow-up), which contrasts with previous research suggesting that social-emotional learning programs can improve children's mindfulness [96]. It is possible that the brief pilot duration and dose of the intervention influenced these results. Indeed, research shows continuous practice helps maintain and enhance mindfulness benefits [97]. With consistent practice, mindfulness can become a more automatic response—a way of engaging with the world. It becomes less of a "technique" and more of an integrated aspect of children's daily lives [97]. It is possible that we might have seen improvement if we measured children's mindfulness levels beyond the short follow-up period once children had a chance to practice mindfulness via their BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal. Additionally, the CAMM items are reverse scored. Recent research suggests that reverse scores might not be comparable to direct items [98]. Finally, because 80% of the items are abstract, the children's comprehension may have been compromised [99].

Significant positive effects of the intervention were found on the children's measure of gratitude, and these effects were sustained for at least one week post intervention. These findings are encouraging and consistent with previous research [8], highlighting the importance of incorporating gratitude in SEL education [7]. Gratitude has been found to improve children's well-being, relationships with others, empathy, academic performance, and even physical health [100]. Finally, consistent with previous research [101], we found significant positive effects of our intervention on the children's measure of life satisfaction. Just as gratitude, and unlike mindfulness, life satisfaction can change based on one's perspective. Given previous research showing the positive influence of gratitude on subjective well-being and life satisfaction [102,103], it is possible that the gratitude content made children look at their lives in a more favorable light.

Finally, as technology continues to evolve, so will SEL concepts, methods, and the ability to personalize learning. BMF may be a novel approach to centering these evolving virtual experiences around real-life challenges. Technology can enhance SEL by (1) democratizing students' access to SEL activities and resources, (2) facilitating SEL content personalization, (3) allowing for real-time feedback, gamification, a multimedia library of content, (4) enabling parental involvement, and (5) enriching evaluation strategies, methods, and data type (e.g., LMS-based engagement data) [103–107]. Researchers

can now explore how digital platforms can be used to assess students' social and emotional needs, deliver personalized interventions, and monitor progress over time [108]. Through technology, the nurturing community of parents/guardians, teachers, and schools can help students develop and apply these skills outside the classroom [109].

5. Implications for Research and Practice

Researchers and practitioners must pay special attention to the diversity of students when considering SEL programming. Building SEL programs based on scientifically sound, evidence-driven approaches, such as MMHEM, CASEL, or SAFE, is necessary to optimize outcomes. Although brief interventions can improve children's gratitude and life satisfaction, the effects may be temporary unless the interventions are part of a broader, sustained effort to support children's well-being. All B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. SEL components are designed to account for different learning preferences, and the use of music and art is feasible and may enhance engagement and acceptability [108]. Connecting the technology-based SEL modules, personalization, art and humanities with the real-life practice of social-emotional skills is also critical. This principle will guide further refinement and research on the entire B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D. program. In particular, we will develop, implement, and test the remaining components of the BMF (all BMF skills/letters), incorporating (1) cultural tailoring [18], (2) tools and strategies to reinforce the learning, build healthy habits [19,20], and sustain program effects [21], (3) parental engagement [16], (4) social engagement of teachers via peer interaction during learning experiences [22,23], (5) integration with academic curriculums: art and humanities, music, physical education, and technology, and (6) multisensory learning. Finally, we also developed an accompanying BMF app prototype composed of BMF activities and boosters for students and supporting teachers and parents/guardians.

6. Limitations

Because the focus of these preliminary studies was to develop a POC for the BMF approach, limitations of our study include small sample size, limited scope of SEL skills (mindfulness and gratitude—letter "M" of the BMF framework), brief duration of the intervention, non-randomized design/lack of control group, and reliance on self-reported measures, which may be subject to bias. The goal was to examine the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary efficacy of the overall BMF approach using mindfulness and gratitude component of BMF. It does not represent a comprehensive approach, which limits conclusions about generalizability and effectiveness. Study 4 did not evaluate the effect of the intervention on the parents/guardians of the students to assess the intervention's influence on them via CMHC. Future B.E. M.Y. F.R.I.E.N.D research will employ fully powered randomized studies of each component of the BMF, pre-post parental measures, and, ultimately, the implementation and dissemination of the entire BMF program. Some objective measures of SEL (e.g., attendance and discipline records, grade reports, peer teacher and parent ratings, etc.) will also be implemented along with extended follow-up periods to examine the long-term impact of the intervention. Finally, although the current POC Study 4 included a small sample size, limited scope, and a non-randomized design, the entire BMF framework is designed based on the gold SEL standards.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

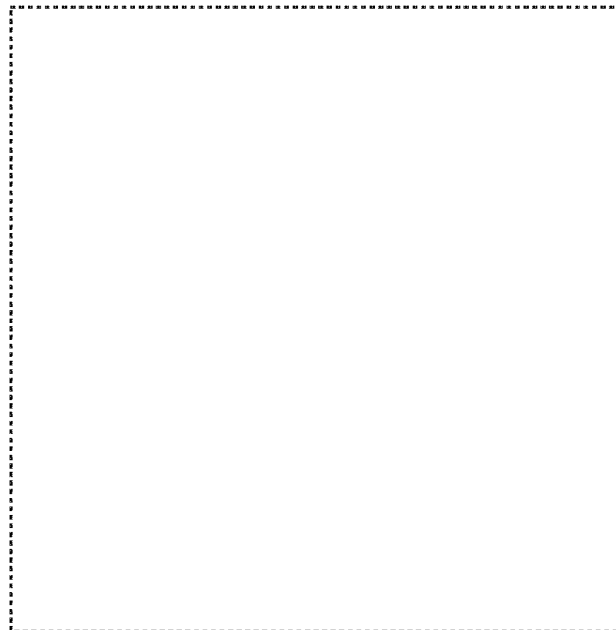**Appendix A. Examples of the BMF Concept and Mindfulness and Gratitude Pilot Activities Shared with the Teachers**

Figure A1. (**1**) BMF's style guide for the development of the virtual modules; (**2**) the 30-day BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal designed for children to practice the skills; (**3**) "Mindful Beats" song to create a relaxing atmosphere for the learning experience; (**4**) emoji animations exemplifying some of the other BMF's SEL skills (i.e., resilience and emotional intelligence); (**5**) BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Musical and Graphics Experience composed by Murray Hidary and designed to practice mindfulness and gratitude; (**6**) name the emotions virtual game.

Appendix B. Select Pages of the BMF Mindfulness & Gratitude Journal Designed by Nigel Holmes

Be My Friend Journal

This journal belongs to _____

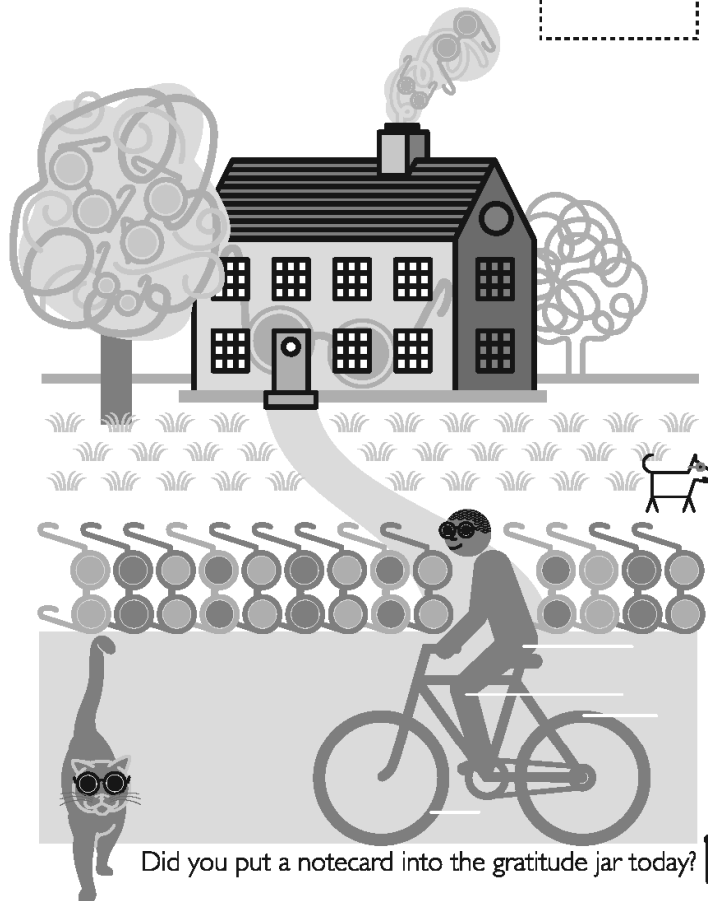✎ Your cover drawing (or photo) here

My journal buddies are _____

_____

_____

(It's OK if it's just one friend, or a member of your family)

DAY 5 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Where Are My Sunglasses?

Search the drawing to find sunglasses hidden in this drawing. **How many can you see?** When you have counted them, write the total here.

Did you put a notecard into the gratitude jar today?

DAY 9 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Color the Day

What is your favorite **color**?

....

Now, **write the name of your favorite color** at the beginning of each line below...

...then **fill in the blank** on each line here.

.... is the color of the ....

.... reminds me of ....

.... tastes like ....

.... sounds like ....

.... looks like ....

.... makes me feel ....

Share your favorite color with your journal buddies and family members, and ask them about **their favorite colors.**
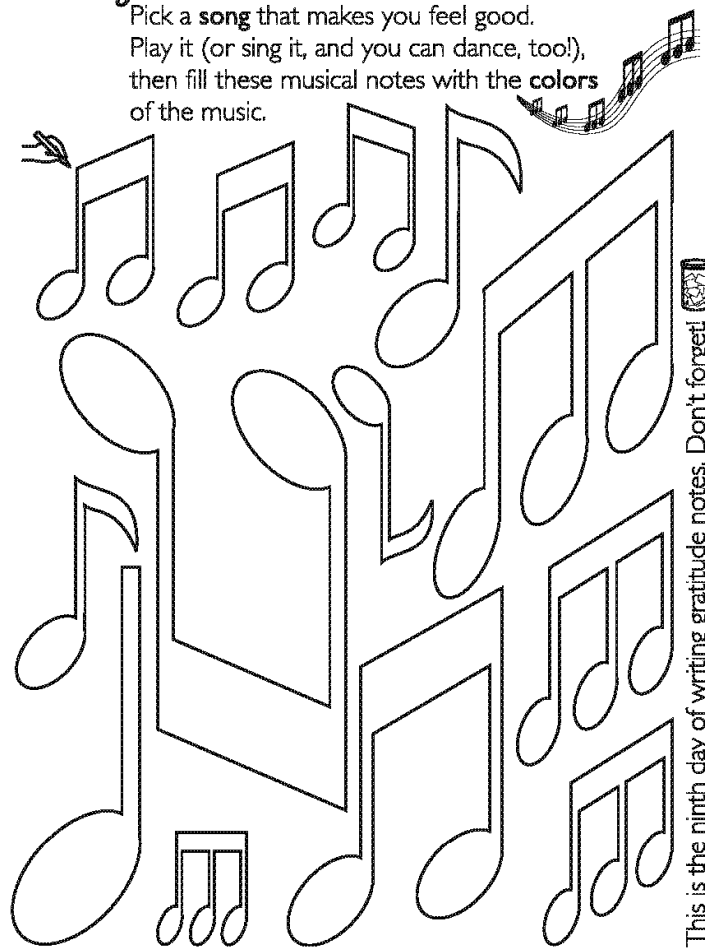
The gratitude jar is waiting!

DAY 11 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Color Your Music!

Pick a **song** that makes you feel good.
Play it (or sing it, and you can dance, too!),
then fill these musical notes with the **colors**
of the music.

This is the ninth day of writing gratitude notes. Don't forget!

DAY 13 How do you feel today?
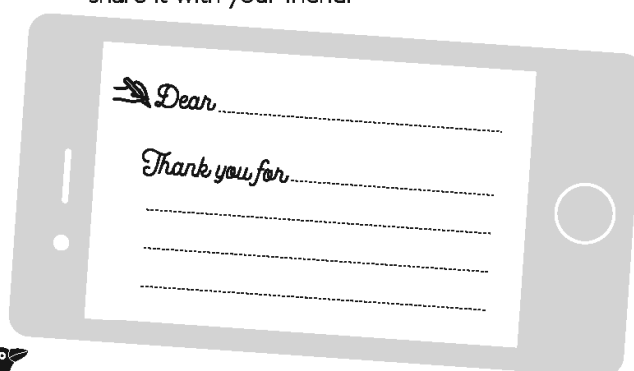Color in one of these →

Thank you Note

Write a thank you note to your friend.
In your note, thank young friend for
something small or big that they did for you.

Dear ....

Thank you for ....

....

....

....

Now, take a photo of your note and
share it with your friend.

Dear ....

Thank you for ....

....

....

....

DAY 16 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Gratitude Extravaganza

Using a colored pencil, **write one thing that** you are thankful for.

Feel free to make your page as **beautiful and uplifting** as you wish. Once you finish, take a **photo** of what you have written and drawn and make it your home screen, or go back to your art often to help you start each day with gratitude.

I'm thankful for

DAY 24

How do you feel today?
Color in one of these → 😜 ☺ 😐 ☹ 😞

What's on Your Playlist Today?

Pick a song that's **inspiring** you today.

What's the **name** of the song?

✎ --

Now play it. Notice as much as you can about this song: **rhythm, lyrics, melody, instruments,** and check the boxes here.

is it fast? ☐   ☐ is it rhythmic?

is it slow? ☐   ☐ is it soft?

is it happy? ☐   ☐ is it loud?

is it sad? ☐   ☐ are there words?

can you hum the melody? ☐
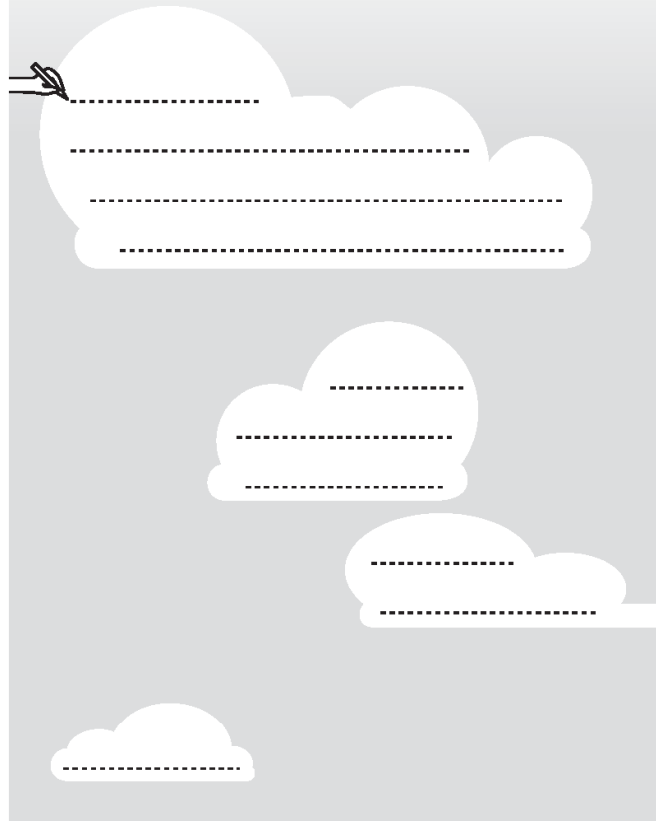
do you hear a guitar? ☐
piano? ☐
trumpet? ☐
drums? ☐

Listen to the song as many times as you want, and feel free to dance, too. Share your song with your journal buddies.

DAY 25 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Grateful Clouds

Write some things you are grateful for in this moment. Then fill the clouds below with **colors** of your choice.

DAY 29 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Gratitude Jar

Go back to your gratitude jar and **pick one card** from it. **Write** about what's on the card and draw a picture of it, if you can.

DAY 30 How do you feel today? Color in one of these →

Mindful Ideas

When you hear the words **mindfulness** and **gratitude,** what do you think of?

What did you learn about **mindfulness** and **gratitude** in the pages of your journal?

MINDFULNESS

GRATITUDE

Each letter of **Be My Friend**
stands for something important.

B BRAVE

E EMOTIONALLY SAVVY

M MINDFUL

Y YOUTHFUL

F FRIENDLY

R RESILIENT

I IMAGINATIVE

E EMPATHIC

N NOTABLE

D DILIGENT

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