

**FACT 1:** Labyrinths are outdoor and indoor installations across the globe, beginning 4000 years ago in Crete.

Our research advocates for the inclusion of labyrinth training in the professional development of health education specialists (HES), medical professionals (MP), and therapists (TH). We advance a new data collection instrument called The Labyrinth Survey to pilot test the effectiveness of a Labyrinth Training Module (LTM).

Labyrinth training can empower HES, MES, and TH to lend support, promote behavior change, adapt a new strategy for health, and seek solutions for healing of self and others. Labyrinth walking can be helpful for professionals challenged by burnout, stigma, oppression, addiction, and loss. Labyrinths can also be safe places for practicing celebrations of health and healing.

**Methods:**  
We conceptualize labyrinth walking as an intervention for professionals to develop their careers to “educate for health” while assisting others to improve their health, commune with nature, pray for insight, and walk for pleasure. Other benefits include: grieve a loss, deal with change, cope with a stressor, and release a painful encounter - all which can be walked out and reflected upon in a labyrinth – while alone or with others

**Results:**  
Labyrinths are often installed in hospital courtyards, gardens, retreats, parks, and universities. Labyrinth walking is conceptualized as a contemplative practice within the mindfulness movement. Labyrinths are often walked during critical life transitions and tipping points in our careers when faced with change. In our LTM, professionals will learn how to negotiate and practice three phases of the labyrinth walk: Release, Receive, and Return. Journal writing can accompany this circuitous experience, along with talking sessions with an attentive listener (after the walk). Hence, the connections to health, healing, and therapy.

**FACT 2:** A Labyrinth Training Model can be used in professional development for celebrating life and for problem solving loss & change.

**FACT 3:** The Labyrinth Survey has been previously field tested and recently piloted as an online assessment tool for understanding the benefits of labyrinth walking.

Summary of Data for Labyrinth Finger Tracing (April 23, 2018)

Labyrinth walking will....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total N = 19
1. Enhance my inner sense of peace and tranquility.	10.5	52.6	15.8	15.8	5.3	100.0
2. Heighten my sense of creativity.	0	42.1	36.8	15.8	5.3	100.0
3. Help me resolve a conflict with another person.	10.5	21.1	36.8	26.3	5.3	100.0
4. be an exercise for my mind and my body.	26.3	42.1	15.8	10.5	5.3	100.0
5. improve my overall health and well-being.	21.1	31.6	31.6	10.5	5.3	100.0
6. help me heal from a painful or traumatic event.	15.8	15.8	47.4	10.5	10.5	100.0
7. be a way to celebrate a change in my life.	0	26.3	10.5	15.8	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
8. help me cope with a change in my life.	5.3	26.3	15.8	5.3	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
9. help me to solve a problem.	15.8	10.5	26.3	5.3	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
10. help me to feel inspired.	5.3	36.8	36.8	10.5	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
11. be a place for releasing a loss or change in my life.	10.5	31.6	21.1	15.8	10.5	89.5 (N=17)
12. be a spiritual experience.	15.8	47.4	21.1	5.3	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
13. help me clear my mind.	26.3	36.8	21.1	5.3	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
14. give me insight and wisdom.	15.8	26.3	31.6	10.5	10.5	94.7 (N=18)
15. help me to regulate my emotions.	10.5	26.3	15.8	0	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
16. reduce stress in my life.	15.8	47.4	15.8	10.5	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
17. help me think about my life purpose.	10.5	42.1	26.3	5.3	10.5	94.7 (N=18)
18. help me be more self aware.	15.8	26.3	42.1	5.3	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
19. have a calming effect on me.	15.8	36.8	26.3	5.3	10.5	94.7 (N=18)
20. help me to regulate my feelings.	15.8	26.3	31.6	15.8	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
21. help me to regulate my thoughts.	10.5	36.8	21.1	21.1	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
22. help me interact with nature.	31.6	26.3	21.1	10.5	5.3	94.7 (N=18)
23. improve my sensory awareness and observations.	15.8	21.1	15.8	0	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
24. improve how I read my nonverbal communication and body language.	0	15.8	26.3	10.5	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
25. help me make thoughtful decisions.	0	42.1	5.3	5.3	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
26. help me set goals for health and healing.	5.3	15.8	21.1	10.5	5.3	57.9 (N=11)
27. is a therapeutic movement for me.	15.8	21.1	15.8	0	5.3	57.9 (N=11)

The Labyrinth Survey (Ubbes, 2018) is an assessment tool on digital devices (including paper-and-pencil formats) with an aim to advance labyrinth research of individuals pursuing health, medical, and therapeutic careers. The Labyrinth Survey (above) has 27 questions based on a 5-point Likert Scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Pilot results show the data collected from undergraduate students who gave consent to evaluate The Labyrinth Survey as an online assessment tool in April 2018. Future research will include labyrinth walking as an intervention among different professional careers (e.g., HES, MES, and TH), including those participating in a Labyrinth Training Module and those not participating.

Labyrinths are a ...  
Celebratory foot path or finger path of intentionality which leads to emotional expression, self regulation, & equilibrium through body, mind, and soulful actions of joy, praise, and thanksgiving, interwoven with insights of loss, grief, guilt, and shame.

An individual seeks renewal on the repeating foot or finger path to Release, Receive, and Return from the labyrinth with a contemplative sense of purpose and personal agency that is soulfully his or her own. Labyrinths have the potential to connect our heartstrings to the earth, its inhabitants, and beyond.

A labyrinth can be perceived as a “safe space within a place” which individuals experience in different ways when exploring natural or artificial environments. Labyrinth pathways call us to go “inward and outward”, “above and below”, and “straight and curved” for constructing meaning about our human journey. Labyrinth communication engages a corporeal body language, but oral language and written language are also forms of interaction with nature, God, and other human beings on the path. Three health outcomes emerge from labyrinth training: identity formation, empowerment, and language autonomy. Through this ecological experience, a new “voice and choice” emerges ever so gently as a hidden health and wholeness.

Valerie A. Ubbes



**Labyrinth Survey**

Directions for the Labyrinth Survey: After tracing your finger along the path of the labyrinth paper, please answer each question as honestly as possible.

Q1 Labyrinth walking will enhance my inner sense of peace and tranquility.  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Q2 Labyrinth walking will heighten my sense of creativity.  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Q3 Labyrinth walking will help me resolve a conflict with another person.  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
○   ○   ○   ○   ○

