

## BACKGROUND

- Nurses are expected to provide safe, competent care while showing compassion to their patients and families.
- The constant need for nurses to demonstrate compassion often leads to a phenomenon referred to as compassion fatigue (CF).
- Problem:** New graduate nurses are at a high risk for experiencing CF<sup>1,2</sup>. There is no current standardized inclusion of CF education in nursing school curricula.
- Purpose:** To develop a pilot initiative to educate undergraduate nursing students on the prevention, recognition, and treatment of CF.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

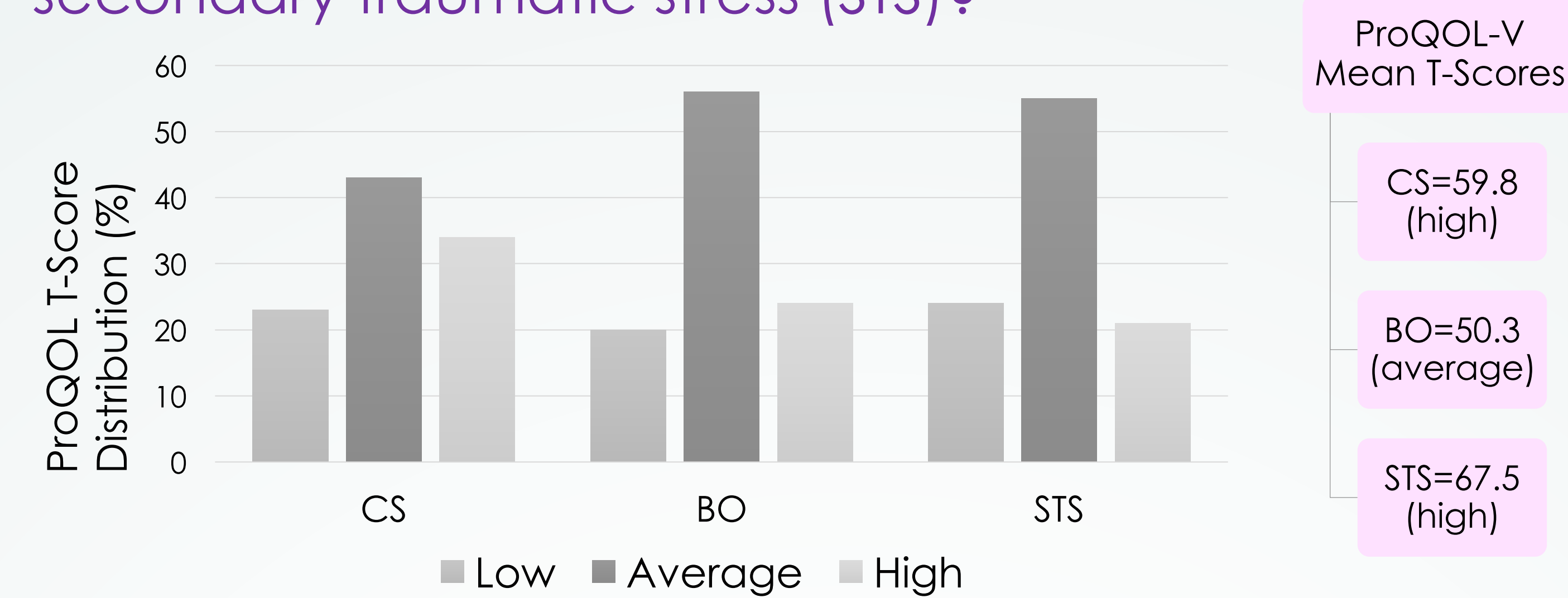
- Related CF risk factors:** young age, lower levels of competency and/or experience.<sup>3</sup>
  - New graduate nurses report high levels of burnout.<sup>2</sup>
  - Current turnover rates for new nurses: 20% within the first year and 25% within the first 2 years.<sup>6</sup>
- Resiliency Strategies:** Self-care, rejuvenation, setting boundaries, building a support network, using active coping, practicing mindfulness
  - Nurses who practice self-care are less likely to suffer from compassion fatigue than those who do not<sup>3,4,5</sup>.
- Gap in the literature:** No studies to date have been published regarding the implementation of CF education into nursing school curricula.

## METHODS

- Design:** Quantitative quasi-experimental
- Participants:** Cross sectional cohort convenience sample of 95 Belmont University undergraduate nursing students
- Intervention:** 30-minute compassion fatigue prevention program (CFPP)
- Compassion Fatigue Prevention Program topics of discussion:** definitions, risk factors, emotional and physical symptoms, how to reduce risk, and what to do if you start experiencing CF
- Data collection:** 10-minute post-program survey (demographic questionnaire, the ProQOL-V, and 7 Likert-style questions)

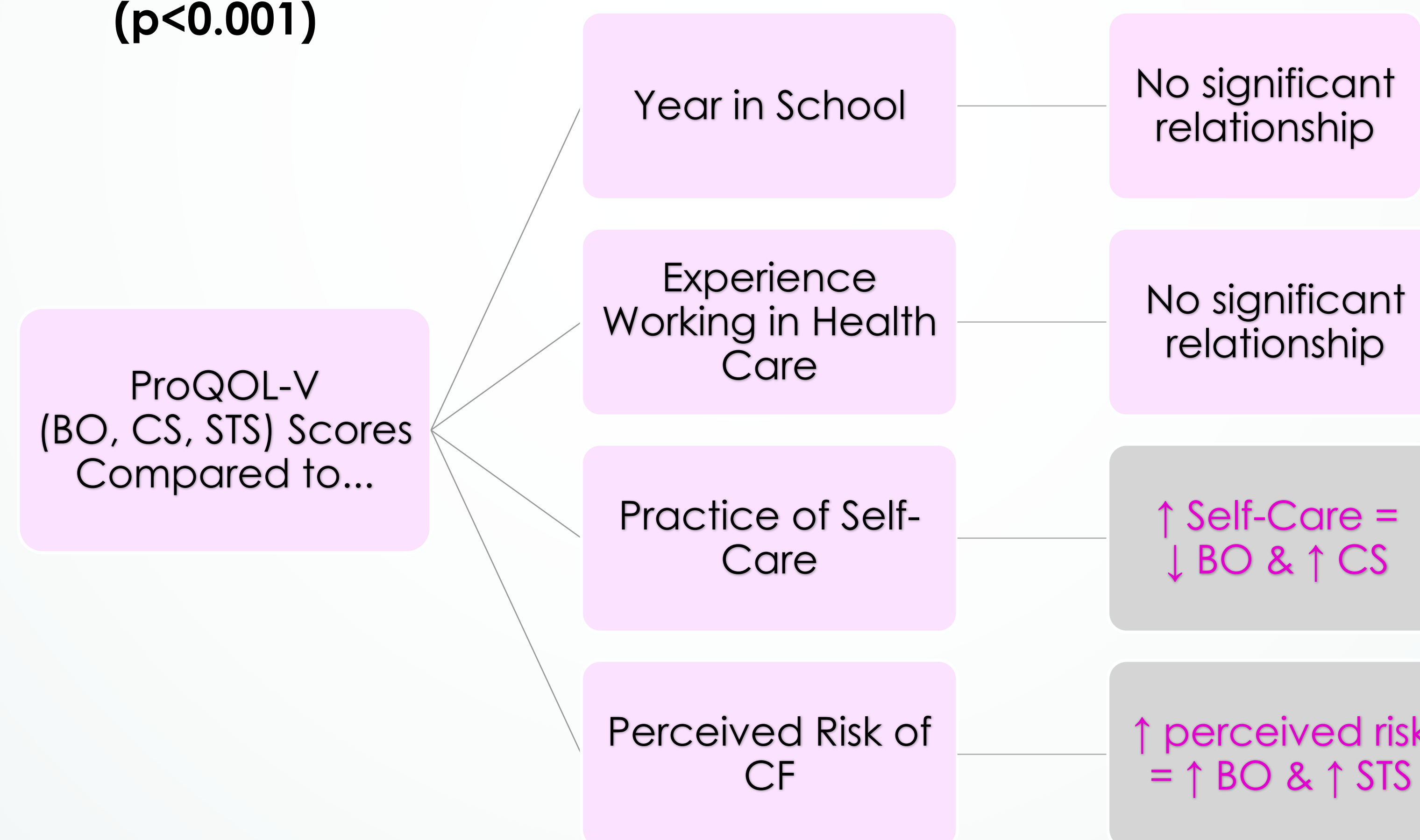
## RESULTS

1) Do BSN students experience low, normal, or high levels of compassion satisfaction (CS), burnout (BO), and secondary traumatic stress (STS)?



2) Do BSN students report different levels of CS, BO, and STS on the ProQOL-V based on their year in school, experience working in health care, practice of self-care, and perceived risk for experiencing compassion fatigue?

- Subjects who practiced self-care had **lower BO (p=0.002) & higher CS (p=0.055)**
- Subjects who perceived themselves as being at high risk for experiencing CF had **higher BO (p=0.001) and higher STS (p<0.001)**



3) Does the completion of a compassion fatigue prevention program impact how prepared undergraduate nursing students feel to prevent and combat compassion fatigue throughout their nursing careers?

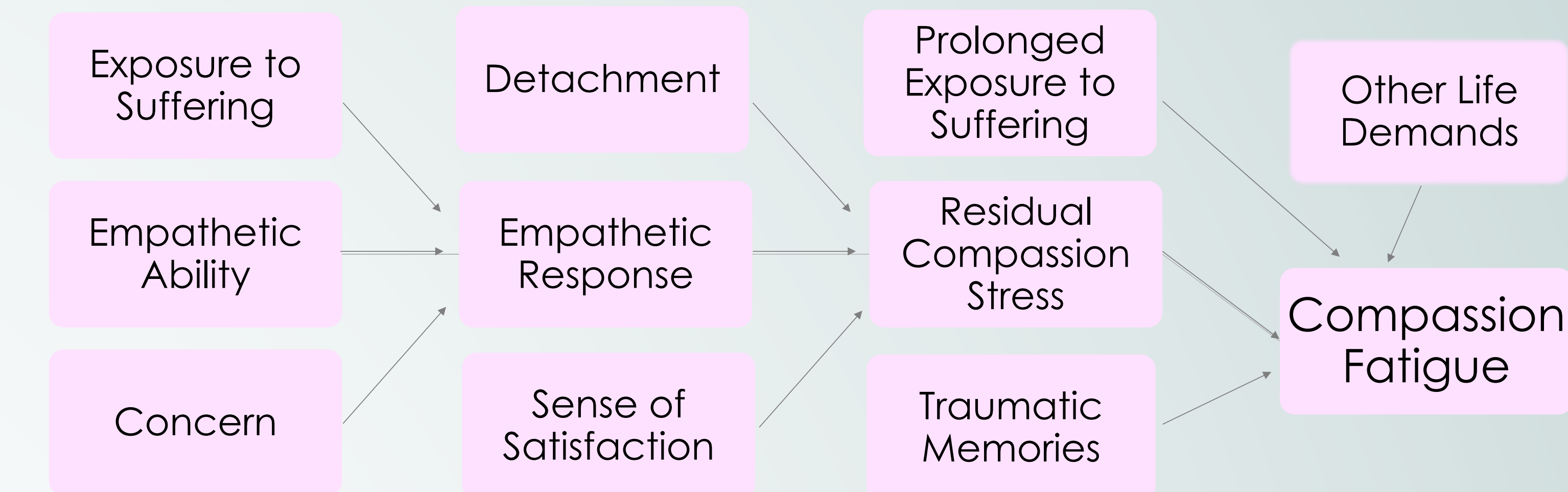
>96% reported that the program made them:

- more aware of the importance of self-care
- more prepared to:
  - reduce their risk of CF
  - identify the signs and symptoms of CF
  - seek help for CF

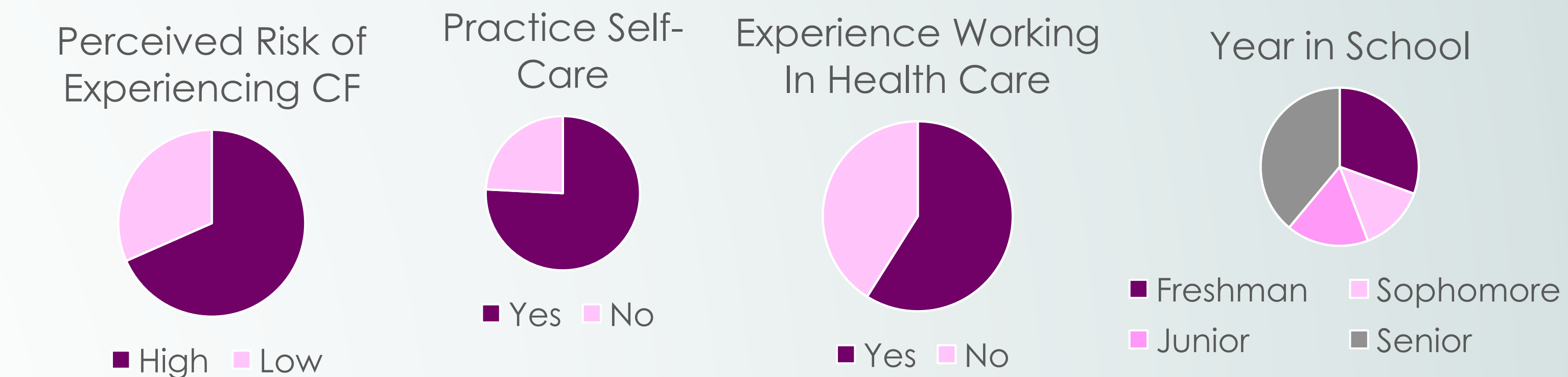
96.8% reported that the CFPP should be incorporated into their university's curriculum in the future

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Figley's 1995 Compassion Stress and Fatigue Model



## DEMOGRAPHICS



## CONCLUSIONS

- Nursing students can experience burnout and secondary traumatic stress
- Practicing self-care can decrease burnout and increase compassion satisfaction
- Compassion fatigue education increases how prepared nursing students feel to combat and deal with CF
- Nursing educators should introduce evidence-based strategies to maximize student resiliency to compassion fatigue
- Ex: Assisting students with the development of individual comprehensive self-care plans

### Suggestions for Future Research

- Longitudinal RCT comparing the BO, STS, and CS of nurses who received CF resiliency education in their nursing programs versus those who did not
- Phenomenological review of nursing students' perceptions and understanding of CF
- Longitudinal comparison of CS, BO, and STS in BSN students throughout their nursing education

### Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the Belmont University Honors Program and the Belmont University School of Nursing. I collaborated with the Vanderbilt University Department of Nursing Research in the creation of this poster.