The UC Davis Health Radiation Oncology department used their Mini-Grant funds for two wellness-focused ideas. Part of the funds were used to create the Zen Den – a comfortable, outdoor patio area for employees and staff to relax during breaks and lunches. Another portion of the funds were used to purchase various items that would help promote relaxation and stress relief throughout the department. Some of these items included a diffuser and essential oils, noise canceling headphones, relaxation coloring books, and a small fountain.

By creating the Zen Den and purchasing items that would help promote relaxation while at work, Zina’s goal was to decrease stress levels among Radiation Oncology department members. In an effort to encourage use of the Zen Den, Zina used flyers (left) to spread awareness. At first, use of the Zen Den was seen only within the Radiation Oncology department, but now, the relaxing area is greatly used by many other staff at the Comprehensive Cancer Center as well.

Zina has decided to use surveys as a way to measure the impacts the Zen Den and the additional relaxation items have had on staff and employees within the department in regard to stress levels. The first survey, which measured department stress levels, was given before the mini-grant funds were used, and those results will later be compared to results from a follow-up survey, which will measure department stress levels after using the mini-grant funds. The follow-up survey will be sent out to staff and employees closer to the end of the year, but Zina has already been receiving positive feedback. Zina states, “Employees from the cancer center have reported that they enjoyed the upgrades to the patio area,” and “Some folks liked the relaxation items so much that they actually purchased their own diffusers and fountains to help them reduce stress on a more regular basis.”

Since making these positive changes in the Radiation Oncology department, Zina has noticed a shift in morale among her coworkers. The increase in employee and staff morale, as well as positive verbal feedback, have encouraged Zina to continue making efforts to promote health and well-being in other ways around the department, too. Zina has recently been speaking with her supervisor about potentially hosting a day where chair massages are given to the whole department as a way to further decrease stress and improve wellness.