Surpassing the Stigma: Educating Students on Mental Health

Sarah K. Bucknam
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Elena R. Conroy
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Emma-Jane Turton
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters/336

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Problems Seminar at DigitalCommons@WPI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Problems Seminar Posters by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WPI.
Surpassing the Stigma: Educating Students on the Importance of Mental Health
Sarah Bucknam (BME), Elena Conroy (BC), Emma-Jane Turton (BBT)
Advisors: Helen Vassallo (Management) and Jill Rulfs (Biology)

Abstract
Mental health can be difficult to maintain, especially for students entering college. For this project, we created an education plan that can be carried out at colleges, such as WPI, providing information on six different mental health issues. A survey was distributed in order to determine the current state of students’ mental health on campus, and in five years the same survey will be used to determine the success of the project.

Project Goals/Objectives
Instill the idea that mental health is just as important as physical health
Educate students on six mental health issues that could impact their transition to college

Methods/Process
- Distribute survey to determine current status of mental health on campus
- Make pamphlets available to all students via SDCC
- Include in orientation packets
- Conduct same survey 5 years later to determine success of project
- Show short informational video during NSO and before weekend movies
- Conduct same survey 5 years later to determine success of project

Survey 1
Survey 2
PSA

Autism
- Second most prevalent neurological disorder among children
- Often associated with high intelligence
- Often diagnosed in college when students struggle to adjust to new independence

ADHD
- About 30% of students report feeling so depressed that functioning was difficult
- More than 6% of college students report seriously considering suicide

Depression
- Especially concerning during stressful transition college
- Affects nearly 70% of students seeking psychiatric help

Anxiety
- Can severely impact students success in college if left untreated
- Will not go away by itself, so it is important to seek treatment/help

OCD
- Classified by uncontrolled tics
- These tics can increase as a result of stress such as the beginning of school

Tourette’s

Conclusions/Recommendations
- By increasing awareness of these mental health issues, students are more likely to seek help if they need it, or to help a friend in need
- Through collaboration with Active Minds and the SDCC, the education plan can be spread to all of campus easily and will reach more students
- Over time a strong support network can be formed to help students with different mental health issues adjust to college life and be able to succeed

Current Stats and Projected Stats for students seeking help for mental health issues

Need no psychiatric help (35%)
Needs some kind of help (65%)
Did not seek help (55%)
Sought and received help (10%)

Resources