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Why Is Mental Illness Not Being Treated On College Campuses?

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“I’m stressed out.” “I’m tired.” “I’m so overwhelmed right now.” These are the common phrases spoken on every college campus all around America. It has reached to the point that it is becoming more of a norm. There is never a day that has gone by when a student does not hear something similar from their peers or from their own mouths; however, these statements should not be considered mindless banter when one of your peers says these words to you. It could be them asking for help. Mental health disorders are becoming one of the most prevalent issues in the United States. A myriad of individuals every year are diagnosed with mental illnesses and some of them are consumed by it, never able to return to who they were before. Statistics state that college students are more prone to mental health issues and the number is increasing. Therefore, students are not receiving treatment that can change their life. So, why is the next generation suffering so much?

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## First and Foremost, Are You Okay?

Most of the time, probably not. One in three undergraduate college students report that they are experiencing a level of depression that reaches to the point where it makes it difficult for them to function properly. This issue has even gotten to the point where one in ten students report of seriously considering suicide, due to their mental health. Therefore, it is safe to assume that whenever you are in a classroom, one of your peers could be going through these issues themselves. Therefore, if you are experiencing this illness, do not feel you are alone because you are definitely not.

## So, How Do You Know If You or Your Friends Are Okay?

Due to such a large population of students experiencing these issues, it is best to ensure you and your friends are okay. Some professionals identify that these traits are common in students that are experiencing mental health issues: loss in interest in activities you enjoy, problems concentrating, problems with going to sleep or remaining asleep, loss of appetite, etc. Therefore, if you or a peer is experiencing a multitude of these issues or an intense change in behavior in general, it is time consult professional help.

## Okay, So Why Are My Classmates And/Or MySelf So Prone To Poor Mental Health?

Mental health illness does not have a singular cause; therefore, it is hard to clearly define and pinpoint the root of all evil. However, college students do go through some situations where mental health issues have a higher likelihood of occuring. These circumstances include: living away from family, experiencing issues in relationships, experiencing new and frustrating school work, and one of the bigger contributors, worrying about finances. However, even though students are more likely to experience mental health issues due to the circumstances with going to college, most college students never get professional help. Why is that?

## Why Are People Scared To Say “I Need Help”?

This is the million dollar question. Why? Why are people not able to take the first step in helping themselves? Why are they not getting the proper treatment that could change their life? Well, according to 37 research studies, between 30 to as high as 80 percent of students experience mental health issues and never get treatment for their conditions. These people try to rationalize their decisions based off of: Limited awareness, the feeling of hopelessness, and the most common reason why students do not seek medical help is Fear and Shame. Students recognize the negative stigmas associated with mental illness and they do not want to be labeled as “crazy” or anything negative by their peers. Students think that if they were to seek out medical help, they will lose their social life. Some even fearing that this label will affect them in obtaining a job after graduation as well; however, this is not the case. Studies have found that people that have mental health issues have a harder time getting employment; therefore, if students leave their illnesses untreated then what they fear will occur. So it is in everyone's best interest to receive professional help as soon as possible, but how does one go about this?

## Now, Where Does Help Truly Begin?

Most Universities have a departments that provides counseling and guidance for students; however, based off the statistics students are not going to said facilities. Even though, according to A Naturalistic Longitudinal Evaluation of Counseling in Primary Care, after patients were provided counseling “there was a significant reduction in severity of symptoms”. Therefore, the question is how to do people begin to come organizations similar to CAPS?

Well, help begins with the destigmatizing of mental illness and get rid of the label of being “crazy” by receiving treatment. This is more towards media. People need to understand that mental issues is more similar to the flu or other mainstream illness. They both affects the mind and body of the host, and causes them to feel weak and do things that is out of character of themselves. They are in the same group. Due to one not having a organism, does not mean it is not an illness. You do not see others calling other people “insane” for having the flu and it should be the same here.

Another way to help the cause is by telling the students that mental illness is more of a “norm” than they think. As stated before one in three college students experience such emotions and state of mind. If you are experiencing such problems, you are not “crazy”. You might be able to say you are in the majority.

Finally, another way to destigmatize going to counseling is bringing someone. Having a familiar face around when trying to go to a place that may make you feel uncomfortable will make the experience a lot easier. It can also destigmatize counseling for the other person as well because they can witness that these facilities are only meant to help individuals. If we can prevent the fear and shame of going to organizations like CAPS on college campuses, maybe mental health issues can stop being a epidemic.

Work Cited

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