

Improving Mental Wellness to Improve Student Success

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Background

Nursing students face a variety of mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression. This student population is vulnerable to stressors due to:

- Rigors of nursing school
- Finances
- Life-work-school balance issues

These stressors often exacerbate pre-existing mental health challenges (Kondo et al., 2023). Nursing faculty report increases in mental health issues in students since COVID-19, and schools are challenged to create programs to promote mental wellness (Karaca et al., 2019).

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to describe a QI project advancing improvements in the mental wellness of nursing students.

Methods

One health sciences center (HSC) focused the accreditation-required Quality Enhancement Plan on student mental health. The School of Nursing (SON) within the HSC further developed a Wellness Program, appointed an Associate Dean for Wellness, and created program-specific processes. Strategies adopted by the Accelerated BSN Program included:

- Designation of a faculty Student Success Coordinator
- Implementation of a student mental health algorithm for triage and referral by faculty to the wellness team
- Inclusion of success and resiliency strategies as curricular adjuncts
- Development of a Student Success webpage

Results

The algorithm utilized by faculty in AY2023 referred 28 ABSN students to the Wellness Program for supportive services:

- Financial assistance
- Mental health crisis management
- Food insecurity
- Housing instability or insecurity
- Intimate partner violence

Retention Counselors across 7 sites collaboratively planned hybrid seminars addressing selected topics:

- Study techniques
- Test-taking
- Success strategies
- Available resources

Content/faculty created videos were posted on the Student Success webpage. Additionally, a grant was awarded to support other wellness activities. Wellness Program feedback reflects overall improvement of student outcomes.

Conclusion

The SON Wellness Program was identified as an exemplar, providing a template for other HSC programs and could be replicated at other institutions to advance improvements in student wellness.

Limitations

- Faculty understanding of referral process (i.e. location of online referral form)
- Student follow-up

Contact Information

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The complex block contains three main visual elements: 1) A screenshot of the 'Student Success' webpage, showing a navigation menu on the left and a main content area with a heading 'THE ABSN SUCCESS PROGRAM' and introductory text. 2) A screenshot of a 'Wellness referral - ABSN version' form, which includes fields for student name, email, and campus, and a section for selecting an algorithm (Red, Yellow, or Green). 3) A flyer for the 'WELL beyond' program, featuring two nursing students embracing and text that describes the Program of Assistance for Students (PAS) and provides contact information for the Counseling Center.

<https://www.ttuhsc.edu/live-well/>

References

- Karaca A, Yildirim N, Cangur S, Acikgoz F, Akkus D. Relationship between mental health of nursing students and coping, self-esteem and social support. *Nurse Education Today*. 2019 May;76:44-50. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2019.01.029. Epub 2019 Feb 6. PMID: 30769177
- Kondo A, Abuliezi R, Niitsu K, Naruse K, Oki T, Ota E, Ezeonwu MC. Factors related to mental health effect among nursing students in Japan and the United States during the coronavirus pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. 2023 Feb;32(1):186-198. doi: 10.1111/inm.13075. Epub 2022 Oct 2. PMID: 36184845; PMCID: PMC9538421