Fall 9-20-2019

Technology and College Student Mental Health

Glinda Rawls
Western Michigan University, glinda.rawls@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership

Part of the Mental and Social Health Commons, and the Telemedicine Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership/99

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Faculty Development at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Leadership Academy by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
Increased Demand for Mental Health Services on Campus
Since 1983, Robert Gallagher has surveyed college counseling center directors to obtain information about the trends in student mental health on campus. Below are some results from these surveys.

- In 1988, counseling center directors were asked about the increase in the number of students presenting in their centers with severe psychological concerns. 56% agreed that they had more students that fit this description.
- When asked the same question fifteen years later in 2003, the number of directors who felt more students with severe psychological problems were arriving in their counseling centers increased to 81% and in 2007 that number jumped to 92% of counseling center directors.
- A 2011 survey revealed that over 90% of directors have reported the trend toward greater numbers of seriously disturbed clients at their centers.
- In 2004, 45% of directors reported increases in staff responding to crisis situations and in 2008 this percentage had climbed to 56% and 78% in 2011.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) identifies suicide as the second leading cause of death for individuals between 15-24 years old. Below are a few more statistics regarding college students and mental health.

- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), suicide is the third leading cause of death on college campuses.
- A 2011 American College Health Assessment (ACHA) report revealed that anxiety and depression were top impediments to academic performance.
- According to NAMI, one in five adults between 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness.

College counseling centers have observed increases in the prevalence and severity of mental health issues that student experience. One strategy is to address the increased demand for services is the use of online therapy. Online therapy can be accessed through the internet. Online therapy provides people with a platform to seek help with their mental health issues. There are many different forms of online therapy or counseling. They include video chat, messaging, video conferencing and chat rooms.

One very popular online counseling platform for colleges and universities is Therapy Assistance Online (TAO). TAO is a digital platform of tools and educational materials to help improve mental health, wellness and life functioning. It includes interactive educational sessions, a mindfulness library, practice tools, screenings, and progress measures. It has a HIPAA-compliant video conferencing tool.

Currently, Central Michigan University, Ferris State University, Calvin University, and Northern Michigan University are using TAO. There are 150 schools in the US and Canada who have licenses to use this platform.

TAO Outcome Research
TAO benchmarked outcome data from 700 patients treated with TAO at 15 college mental health clinics with a published study of outcomes for 25 student mental health clinics.

The results from the study revealed that patients treated with TAO had more improvement than patients in traditional therapy on several scales or measures of progress.

The five measures of progress included the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Behavioral Health Measures-20 (BHM-20), Warwick-Edinburgh Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), and Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7). The five treatment pathways used in TAO are CBT for anxiety, CBT for depression, ACT, BA and RC.

Medical News Today ranked the top ten best mental health apps. Five are mentioned below. The others include: Headspace, 7 Cups, Anxiety Relief Hypnosis and Happily.

Calm focuses on four key areas: meditation, breathing, sleeping and relaxation.

Moodnotes is another app to assist users with mental health. It is a thought journal and mood diary.

Moodpath was described by Medical News Today as a pocket sized mental health companion. This app asks the user questions daily to assess well-being and it screens for depression. At the end of two weeks, the app generates an electronic document the user can share with their doctor or mental health professional.

Pacifica is an app that addresses conditions like anxiety and stress. It provides the user with a daily toolbox of strategies like CBT, meditation, and mood tracking. And it connects users to establish a highly supportive community.

SuperBetter is a game based app focusing on increasing resilience and the ability to remain strong, optimistic, and motivated when facing challenges or obstacles in life.