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COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT LITERATURE

## Contents

- Annotated Bibliography: College Student Development Literature, 2014-2017

  - Theme 1: Specialized Campus Populations
    - Sub-theme 1A: Ethnicity
    - Sub-theme 1B: International Students & International Campuses
    - Sub-theme 1C: First-Year Students
    - Sub-theme 1D: GLBTQ
    - Sub-theme 1E: Greek Life Students
    - Sub-theme 1F: Student Athletes
    - Sub-theme 1G: Students with Disabilities

  - Theme 2: College Student Counseling & Mental Health Needs & Presenting Concerns

  - Theme 3: Wellness & Psychological Adjustment

  - Theme 4: Substance Use

  - Theme 5: Mental Health Programming on Campus

  - Theme 6: College Adjustment & Academic Success

  - Theme 7: Eating Disorders

  - Theme 8: Professional Issues & Trends

  - Theme 9: Dating & Relationship Violence
- Theme 10: Family of Origin Influences & Issues

- Theme 11: Social Media: College Counseling Implications

- References: College Student Development Literature, 2014-2018
THEME 1: SPECIALIZED CAMPUS POPULATIONS

SUB-THEME 1A: ETHNICITY


This study examined the following: (a) rates of Native American college students’ victimization compared to students of different ethnic identities, (b) understand the different types of victimization experienced by the participants, (c) rates of substance abuse among participants compared to students of different ethnic identities, (d) the impact, if any, of victimization and substance abuse on the perception of academics, and (e) the ability of victimization and substance abuse to predict perceived academic success. The participant sample consisted of 148,891 students; within this sample, 69.6% identified as White, 9.8% identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, 6.6% identified as Latino, 6.0% identified as Black, 3.4% identified as biracial or multiracial, 2.6% identified as other, 1.4% identified as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian (all whom were referred to as Native American in this study), and 0.6% did not identify their ethnicity. The results suggest that the increased levels of victimization experienced by the Native American participants did, in their perception, did have an impact on their academics. The perception of substance use had an impact on academics, but there was no impact of the substance use on academics. A similar finding was found when examining the relationship between alcohol use and academics, wherein the perception of alcohol use had an impact on academics, but the actual alcohol use did not have an impact on academics. The results also suggest that students who identify as Native Americans may have higher rates of substance abuse than the peers, and it may be utilized to help alleviate the distress from the discrimination experienced. The implications of this study suggest student affairs professionals provide individual support to Native American students as they experience greater levels of violence and discrimination. Universities can provide students a space where they can meet with other students who have had similar experiences to be able to share with each other and support each other. The authors also propose that student affairs professional’s response to Native American students should not be to force students to use resources that are not congruent to the ways of being of the Native American students. Providing resources that align with Native American student’s beliefs will not only support students but will also help promote students sense of belonging.

The authors sought to answer the following research questions: (a) How willing are Asian American college students willing to utilize professional mental health services? (b) What relationships exist between: the stigma of mental illness, willingness to seek mental health help, acculturation, and preference for racially/ethnically similar counselors? (c) What is the connection between demographic characteristics and willingness to seek mental health assistance? and (d) After controlling for acculturation and demographics, does mental health stigma contribute to willingness to seek mental health assistance? The results suggested that more than half of the participants were willing to utilize mental health services if needed and had a mental health concern. Participants who were willing to seek mental health services were significantly more acculturated than the participants that were not willing to seek services. Further, results suggested that the stigma of mental health significantly impacted the participants willingness to access and utilize mental health services. The results also suggested that participants were not always aware of the available resources in the community, which impacted their level of willingness to access resources. Implications from this study suggest that universities be more aware that not all students are aware of services that are available, and that counselors and other practitioners need to be aware of the potential impacts of student’s culture on their willingness to access services. Additionally, universities need to take an effort to hire more culturally competent and aware counselors and other practitioners.


The authors examined racial and ethnic discrimination experienced among college students, but more specifically examined if family supports and peers supports served as protective factors against negative adjustment as a result of discrimination. Research for this study was conducted at a large, public, urban campus in California. Participants (n=142) were ethnically diverse and completed questionnaires for data collection. The results suggested that an increased perception of discrimination was related to poorer student adjustment, support from peers did mediate the negative impacts to an extent. Results also suggested that an increased in perceived discrimination from others resulted in an increase in physical issues or complaints. Neither family support nor peer support proved a mediator of depressive symptoms (e.g. loneliness). This research also found that participants rated peer support as more influential and impactful than family support while in college. Implications from this study propose that universities should have and enforce clear anti-discrimination policies. Student affairs practitioners (e.g. Multicultural affairs) can provide educational programming that can foster an increase in understanding of issues that relate to race, and racial/ethnic discrimination. Services on campus can be combined (e.g. student health services and mental health services) to meet the needs of students and to promote available resources on campus.

The authors wanted to gain insight into college students’ (who identify as mixed-race), experiences coping with discrimination and prejudice. For this study, the guiding research question sought to examine what coping strategies were used by college students who experienced prejudice and discrimination? Purposeful sampling was used to gain participants with varied and rich experiences to share. The sample consisted of 22 college students who identified as mixed-race and attended one of seven universities on the East Coast of the United States. The results suggest that one coping strategy used by participants was educating the individuals who discriminated against them. Next, students turned to their peer networks for support from others when prejudice or discrimination was experienced. Students also identified that racial boundaries were ignored and their personal background was used as a way to relate to students of other racial backgrounds. And finally, students minimized their experiences as a way to reduce the negative impact of the experiences. Implications from this study recommend colleges and universities include education on multiracial issues in their classes and promote social justice advocacy opportunities on campus. Universities should also create spaces that allow college students a safe environment to discuss their experiences with each other and to utilize the appropriate resources on campus.


The authors examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and college students’ level of self-esteem and attempted to answer the following research questions: (a) Are racial microaggressions a predictor of lower self-esteem? (b) Are specific types of racial microaggressions predictors of lower self-esteem? And (c) Do individuals of diverse racial groups experience racial microaggressions differently? Participants for this study consisted of 225 undergraduate students who were currently enrolled at a university at the time of the study. A total of 163 participants were born within the United States, and 62 participants were born outside of the United States. The authors included White participants (19.1%) in this study as previous literature supported that White people do experience microaggressions, although it is less frequent than people of color. All participants (n=225) completed the online survey and demographic questionnaire, with each session or research lasting approximately 30 minutes. The results suggest that there is a relationship between experienced racial microaggressions and an individual’s self-esteem. Although the relationship was weak, it does suggest that the more racial microaggressions experienced by an individual, the lower the individuals’ self-esteem. Further, the results suggest that a person exhibits lower self-esteem when those individuals experience microaggressions when individuals are treated like “criminals” or “second-class citizens”, and microaggressions that are experienced at work or school. Some implications of these results suggest that Student Affairs practitioners should be educated on different types of microaggressions as to diminish the negative impacts those experiences can have on a person’s self-esteem. Additionally, practitioners can help encourage students to develop healthy coping skills that can be utilized when microaggressions are experienced. And finally, professionals in the field and help promote discussions about microaggressions so students can find support from one another.

The authors of this study examined the impact of therapy fears and mental health stress on mental health service utilization within a population of diverse college students. The hypotheses that focused this study were: (a) Students who previously engaged in mental health services will have less fears about future or current use of services, (b) Students who identify as non-European and or non-European descent will self-report less mental health services use, and (c) males will report less mental health service utilization than females. All participants (n=248) attended the same institution in central Texas, and all were enrolled in psychology courses. Results suggested that students with a higher level of fears related to mental health service uses were less likely to utilize those services. The results also shared that European American students were more likely than other students in the sample to participate in mental health services. Other mental health distress (either from past participation in mental health services or not) predicted the potential future engagement in mental health services. Prior research has connected mental health wellness to academic success, and this connection highlights another side of the importance of mental health wellness on college campuses. Implications for this study suggest mental health awareness and mental health wellness should be given priority and attention on college campuses. Counseling centers can provide outreach services to reach students on campus and can provide more education to students on the importance of mental health wellness.


Authors sought to understand the relationship between race and ethnic identity and nonsuicidal self-injury (NNSI). Researchers aimed to address the following research questions: (a) Are there differences across racial groups as it relates to NNSI? (b) Are there differences across racial groups in the methods used in NNSI? (c) When controlling for mental health symptoms (e.g. anxiety and depression), is there a relationship between NNSI and ethnic identity or a perception of belonging to one’s ethnic group? Participants from this study were from two different universities; one was a predominately White institution in the Southeast (referred to as University A), and a large Hispanic serving institution (HSI) in the Southwest (referred to as University B). A total of 1,096 students met the established criteria and participated in the study. Results suggested that African American students and Asian American students were less likely than students of other racial or ethnic groups to engage in NNSI behaviors. Another notable result, which was not consistent with previous research, is that ethnic identity may not be explanatory of NNSI, but sense of belonging was not found to be a robust indicator of NNSI. An important factor which was not explored in detail, identified that the majority of the Hispanic students in this study attended an HSI, this may impact the results for Hispanic students and their self-reported sense of belonging as at an HSI, Hispanic students represented the majority of the student population. Implications from this study suggest that there are differences among racial and ethnic groups as it relates to NNSI behaviors, and first responders should be trained to be culturally aware when responding to NNSI behaviors. Further implications suggest that other
student affairs professionals should be educated on NNSI behaviors as it is not always related to a suicide attempt, which is a common misconception.
THEME 1: SPECIALIZED CAMPUS POPULATIONS

SUB-THEME 1B: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & INTERNATIONAL CAMPUSES


The authors examined the relationship between mental health issues, school adjustment, and social supports within a group of mainland cross-border Chinese college students. This study was directed by the following research questions: (a) Is there a significant direct effect of social support and school adjustment on the mental health of students? (b) Is there an indirect effect of social support and school adjustment on the mental health of students by lowering overall stress? and (c) What is the interaction between school adjustment and social support and the students’ mental health? For this study, the Beck Depression Inventory Second Edition (BDI-II), was used to collect the data. The results suggest that there was a negative relationship between school adjustment and depression, and social support and stress. There was a significant positive relationship between stress level and depression. Further, a higher-level school adjustment was related to a decreased level of stress and depression. Additionally, analyses propose that social supports may indirectly, and significantly, decrease depression while increasing student’s school adjustment. Implications from this study suggest that institutions provide more situations that will promote interactions between students that will foster social support programs for cross-border students. With an increase in social support networks, students can also have an increased chance for increased mental health outcomes.


The authors wanted to determine if self-esteem is a mediator in the relationship between students’ level of adjustment and the support received (either in the social arena or from their families). A total of 418 first-year university students participated in this study. The results suggested that higher levels of support received had a positive relationship with student adjustment. Further, the results indicated that with an increase in self-esteem from the support received from both family and peers, there was also an increase in students’ level of adjustment to the university. Implications from this study provide support for the importance of institutions to provide support for students, as well as for institutions to continue to discuss the importance of parental support for students. Programming can be geared both toward students and parents surrounding supports needed for college students.

The authors utilized a quantitative study approach and case study approach to examine the effects of acculturation patterns of students who identify as Korean or Korean American. This study aimed to answer the following research questions: (a) How do levels of acculturative stress compare among Korean men, Korean women, Korean American men, and Korean American women? (b) How do the members of the identified group cope with the stress of acculturation? Participants were first identified by his or her last name utilizing the school directory, then each eligible student was emailed and asked to participate in the study. A total of 86 participants completed the study, with participants being both undergraduate and graduate students. 43 total participants identified as Korean, and an additional 43 identified as Korean American. After the completion of the questionnaire, 5 students participated in follow-up interviews. The results suggested that Korean men experienced the highest level of acculturation stress, women experienced acculturation stress differently than men, and men and women experienced coping differently in response to the stress. Implications from this study suggest that college counselors should program more for Korean men on campus as the experience of Korean men depicts the need for more support.


This study examined the relationship between acculturative stress experienced by Korean international students and various social support systems, with the consideration of demographic variables. The participants (n=164) for this study included 112 undergraduate students and 52 graduate students who attended different universities in the United States. Data was collected through providing the call for participation and online survey link within online forums for Korean community organizations. The results indicated that Korean international students who are older are more likely to experience stress related to acculturation, and rates for females were found to be higher than males. The researcher also described that younger Korean international students are able to speak English more fluently, and due to this fact were likely to experience less acculturation stress than older students who were not as fluent in English. The only significant result in the examination of the correlation between supports and acculturation stress were the friendships/relationships with people within the United States. Here, a significant negative relationship was identified. All findings from this study support previous research conducted on the same variables and correlations between the variables. Implications from this study suggest that the impact of acculturation stress can provide negative outcomes both psychologically and interpersonally for Korean international students. Recommendations from this study promote universities providing programming and resources for international students that would promote acculturation, while also providing education on acculturation stress and the impact of that stress. Opportunities that allow international students to experience American culture should also be promoted. As students become more familiar with the American culture, there is the chance that acculturation stress could decrease.

This study conducted semi-structured interviews to understand international students’ attachment to the community in which these students were attending college. Further, this study sought to examine the international students’ adjustment to the American community and college environment. A total of seven international student completed this study, with five students identifying as female and five identifying as male. All participants were either a junior or senior in college during the time of the interview and all participants attended a college in the Midwest. The results suggested that students needed places to socially engage with others to foster a feeling of attachment. Additionally, environments that allowed students to recall and reenact their individual cultural traditions allowed for further connection to the culture of their current environment. The results also suggested that when the participants mastered the adoption of the culture in the United States and their local community, there was an increase in perceived personal growth. It is important to note that one participant identified a negative reaction to adjusting to the local community and reported increased feelings of isolation, limited social supports, and limited connection to the local community. Implications for this study suggest that institutions should create a space where international students can come together to reenact customs and rituals, while also having the opportunity to discuss their experiences and emotional responses to the adjustment, or lack of adjustment. This will assist students in fostering meaningful attachments to their new environment which will allow for international students to become more involved in the area, and also have a desire to remain in the community if they are attached to the environment.
THEME 1: SPECIALIZED CAMPUS POPULATIONS

SUB-THEME 1C: FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS


This study examined the impact of students’ depressive symptoms on their overall academic success. For the purposes of this study, the depressive symptoms discussed are the depressive symptoms that are present for students upon their beginning college, and academic success was described as overall GPA at the end of their first academic year. Two different studies were conducted within the sample to compare the impacts of different factors such as student’s high school GPA and effort regulation (student’s ability to control their attention with addressing uninteresting tasks). Study 1 sought to determine if effort regulation mediated the relationship between depressive symptoms and first year GPA for the participants (N = 138). Study 2 sought to examine the impact of current depressive symptoms on later effort regulation attempts for participants (N = 102). The results of this study suggest that the presence of depressive symptoms impacts a student’s academic success at the end of their first year. Depression impacts a student’s ability to regulate attention when faced with an uninteresting academic task. The results also suggested that prolonged depressive symptoms will have a reduced ability to regulate their efforts, which can also have an impact on the student’s depressive symptoms. Implications for this study suggest that universities identify students with depressive symptoms in an effort to help students cope with their symptoms to have an increase ability to regulate their efforts, which in turn yields higher academic achievement.


The authors conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between parent attachment and academic adjustment in first-year college students. This study also examined the role of attitudes regarding help-seeking, and help-seeking behaviors, as a mediator between the relationship between parent attachment and academic adjustment. The following hypotheses were explored: (a) higher levels of parental attachment would predict better academic adjustment while help-seeking attitudes would be a mediator for the effect, and (b) female students would have more positive attitudes about academic help-seeking than male students. This study was conducted at a small residential liberal arts institution located in the Northwest of the United States. All participants (n=93) were from the same institution. Data was collected through web-based surveys which were conducted at two different times during the first-year of college, the beginning and end of the first semester. The survey measured parental attachment, attitudes about academic help-seeking, and academic adjustment. The results suggested that higher levels of parental attachment predicted attitudes that were more favorable toward academic help.
seeking. Additionally, the results suggested female students had significantly more favorable attitudes toward academic help-seeking. Further, the results suggested that attitudes toward help-seeking behaviors was a significant mediator between parental attachment and academic adjustment. Implications for this study suggest ways faculty and student affairs professionals can assist in educating students on help-seeking behaviors that can allow students to take action when it comes to academics and academic performance. Peer mentor programs can also be utilized to assist students in increasing positive attitudes toward help-seeking behaviors that can increase students’ academic adjustment.


This study examined the experiences of first-generation students who were engaged in the GenOne program on their campus. The researchers set out to determine if the first-generation student program had a positive impact on the participants overall mental health. A convenience sample was used to select participants (N = 25) from a large public university in the Southeast. Data was collected through focus groups and individual interviews. Through thematic analysis, the findings suggested that overall, students believed the program had a positive impact on their overall mental health in the following ways: (1) felt as though someone else had concern for them, (2) increased sense of belonging within community, (3) better stress management, (4) stress management, and (5) students became more resilient. The implications of this study suggest that campus administrators can use programs for first generation students to provide multiple outcomes such as a positive impact on mental health support. This demonstrates that students can receive mental health support through different types of programming on campus.

The authors examined students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual, (LGB) and their adjustment to the transition of attending college as compared to heterosexual counterparts. This study used a matched sample method from a larger sample, to include a sample of heterosexual students (n=46) and LGB students (n=46) from a midsized urban university. Research was conducted at the time students entered the institution and through their first year in school. The results suggest that students from both subsamples experienced an increase in stress as they transitioned to college. When compared to their heterosexual peers, participants in the LGB subsample identified a higher level of stress, a decrease in psychological well-being, and higher cognitive vulnerabilities. Results also suggested that LGB students may be at a higher risk for mental health concerns when transitioning to the college environment, and additional services that are directed to LGB students may be needed. LGB students also demonstrated a lower level of social well-being through the first year of college. Implications from this research suggest that college and university programming should be geared toward LGB students as LGB students transitioned to college. Further, environments that foster a safe environment for LGB students should be created and promoted by colleges and universities.


The authors examined the relationships between mental health and various issues faced by LGBTQ college students. The other items examined include: pride, psychological resilience, microaggressions, victimizations, and outness, and their specific relationship with depression and suicide. The participants (N = 776) of this study represented 37 states across the United States from various institutions. The guiding hypotheses were: (a) microaggressions and victimization would be positively related to depression and risk for suicide, and (b) psychological resilience, outness and pride would promote a decrease in depression symptoms and risk for suicide. Results suggest that microagression and victimization were significantly related to symptoms of depression, while a significant decrease in depression symptoms was related to resilience. Further, resilience had a negative relationship with depression and risk for suicide. Some implications of this study suggest that universities continue to program toward increasing student resiliency. Institutions can also work to eliminate the tolerance for microaggressions and
victimization from the university environment to promote the mental health and wellbeing of members of the LGBTQ community.
THEME 1: SPECIALIZED CAMPUS POPULATIONS

SUB-THEME 1E: GREEK LIFE STUDENTS


This review of current literature focused on issues related to members of fraternities, and issues related to sex, substance use, process addictions, issues related to academics, and use of fake identification (ID). The results were broken down into subcategories. When examined issues related to sex, the results suggest that membership to a fraternity, and the behaviors related to membership contributed to the presence of sexual aggression and rape myths within the culture. Although membership in a fraternity and the presence of hypermasculine behaviors did show an increase in hostile attitudes, but it was not a significant difference from non-fraternity members. Results also suggest that although fraternity parties are deemed ‘riskier’ there is not a significant difference in sexual assault cases stemming from fraternity-related party than there are from parties that are not fraternity related. General drug use was not found to be higher for fraternity members, but cigarette smoking was found to be higher for fraternity members when compared to non-fraternity members, and it was found to have sustained use. This review also included a study that reviewed the incidents of hazing on one campus, and it was found that the higher level of hazing incidents occurred within the Greek-lettered community followed by varsity athletes. Implications for this study suggest that practitioners working directly with fraternity and sorority members can provide programming that link the university priorities and guidelines with fraternity and sorority values. Utilizing peer support and education is another effective approach to allow students the opportunity to investigate alternative health behaviors on campus. Further, members of the Greek-lettered community can be linked by staff members in Fraternity and Sorority Life to other campus programs that share similar values of those organizations. By linking students with other departments and offices students can explore their values and become more committed to the campus environment.


This study explores the relationship between hypermasculine attitudes and sexually aggressive attitudes, and accounts for ways in which fraternity membership and disinhibition may mediate the relationship. All participants (n=217) in this study were males between the ages of 18 and 25 from three different institutions in the southern part of the United States. From the total participants, 182 participants attended a predominately White institution, 28 participants attended a historically Black college or university (HBCU), and 7 participants attended another HBCU. Participants were recruited through the psychology departments, gyms, and student centers at
their respective institutions. Of the participants (n=217), 81 men self-identified as members of fraternities. In review of the results, multiple relationships were found between the variables, but minimal significant relationships were found. Results suggested that hypermasculine attitudes and disinhibition significantly predicted attitudes toward sexual aggression. It was found that for fraternity members, as hypermasculine attitudes increase, so do hostile attitudes towards women. This result was consistent for males without fraternity membership, but there were confounding factors that the authors contributed to this result. For non-fraternity members, results suggested that as disinhibition increased, hostile attitudes toward women decreased. Overall, in this study, a significant relationship existed between disinhibition and sexual aggression. Implications of these results suggest that university offices can jointly provide programming that would allow university men can explore their true selves and can begin to understand themselves as opposed to conforming to the attitudes present in their environment. Further, campus organizations and offices should provide programming that help men establish healthy relationships and boundaries with women.
THEME 1: SPECIALIZED CAMPUS POPULATIONS

SUB-THEME 1F: STUDENT ATHLETES


The authors examined the relationship between perceived public stigma (PPS) of mental illness, and the impact this has on college athletes versus nonathlete college students. Researchers focused three hypotheses: (a) there would be a positive relationship between PPS and a person's’ individual stigma about mental illness, (b) personal stigma would be lower than PPS, and (c) student athletes would experience higher PPS and personal stigma regarding mental illness than student nonathletes. The sample for this study consisted of 304 athletes that are members of 16 different Division I NCAA teams, and 103 nonathlete students. In order to work with students’ athletes, the data was collected from student athletes during practices and other team gatherings. Results suggested a significant relationship between PPS and persona stigma for the college athlete participants. When the athletes were compared to the nonathletes, athletes were found to have a higher level of personal stigma than PPS. For the athlete participants, there was a higher level of personal stigma than PPS. Implications from this study suggest that student athletes have struggle with the personal stigma of mental illness and PPS of mental illness may be impacted by the student’s status and treatment on campus. Other implications suggest that universities work with both the athletic department and the counseling center to collaboratively provide services to student athletes. A position could be created and provided for a mental health practitioner to be physically situated so that student athletes would have easy access to the services that student athletes need.

The focus of this study was to compare psychological characteristics of students with disabilities as they enter college. All research for this study was conducted at a large mid-Atlantic American university, and all participants (n=1,226) were first year students at this institution. Results were not consistent for students with various disabilities, yet the characteristics of the students who reported a psychological disability were unique. Students with psychological disabilities self-reported lower self-esteem when compared to students with other disabilities. Additionally, the results suggested that students with psychological disabilities also reported lower life satisfaction, limited social supports, and perceived an increase in obstacles that would hinder these students from reaching their goals. Further, students with a psychological disability are less likely to utilize the disability support services to receive academic accommodations on campus when compared to students with other disabilities. Implications from this study suggest that professionals who work in either disability resource centers or counseling centers on campus collaborate with other offices to approach personal programming that can reach students with disabilities. Some programming can be geared towards specific groups for students (e.g. students with psychological disabilities) as each group has their own unique needs.

The authors examined the restoration practices used by students while experiencing stress and the different types of environments where the restorative practices took place and examined the possibilities of pre-established restorative environments. A total of 407 undergraduate students from the same large public university on the west coast participated in this study, and all were recruited through different electronic communication platforms. The most common restorative factor for students experiencing stress was students socializing with friends in man-made environments (e.g. cafés or coffee shops). Students who viewed their activity with friends as being a restorative activity also reported a lower level of perceived stress after the completion of the activity. Students who engaged in activities deemed to be “creative” reported increased levels of restoration. Implications from this study suggest that campus personnel promote the use of leisure and other restorative activities for students that students’ find enjoyable. Universities can provide and promote events that are of an interest to their students. Further, campuses can develop spaces that can be used deliberately for restorative purposes.


The authors examined the impact of transitional instability, both directly and indirectly, on psychological stress and risk-taking sexual behaviors. This study was guided by the following research questions: (a) Will there be a direct effect of transitional instability on psychological distress? (b) Will there be an indirect impact of transitional instability on psychological distress as seen through increased self-doubt? (c) Will sexual risk-taking behavior be directly impacted by transitional instability? and (d) Will sexual risk-taking behavior be indirectly impacted by transitional instability through increased self-doubt? The sample totaled 402 participants and were gathered from a larger study that was geared toward overall adult behaviors. The results suggest a strong relationship between both transitional instability and psychological distress and transitional instability and risk-taking behaviors when there was an increased level of self-doubt. Student affairs professionals can provide more programming related to self-doubt and can provide education on ways to decrease self-doubt as a way to reduce psychological distress and sexual risk-taking behaviors. Another recommendation is for universities to provide support groups for first year students to help students manage psychological distress.
The authors examined the impact of grief and complicated grief on college students. Two different studies were used, one wherein mental services were compared between grieving and nongrieving students, and a second study focused on one institution and the impacts of not utilizing counseling services and the barriers that prevented these students from utilizing mental health services. Study 1 utilized pre-existing data from 28 different four-year institutions over a four-year time frame. Of the total participants (n=2,470), 84.6% indicated that they had not utilized mental health services after experiencing the loss of a family member or friend. Further, results indicated that students who had experienced a loss in the previous year, 17.7% of students sought counseling at least once, while 14.4% of students who had not suffered a loss sought counseling services. For Study 2, 117 participants engaged in the research and were all from a medium-size institution located in the Southeast, and all had reported suffering from a recent loss. A total of 21.4% of students self-reported “long-term” impacts on social interactions, academics, and psychological and physical well-being. Approximately one-fourth of the participants reported not being aware of the mental health services available to them, and less than half of the total participants could correctly identify the available resources. The results also indicated a few common barriers to utilizing services reported by the participants: time limitations (22.2%), limited belief in the benefits of services (17.9%), and limited knowledge on how to utilize the resources (15.4%). Implications from both studies suggest that students who experience grief occur more frequently than previously thought from research, and the grief experienced further complicated the stress already experienced as a college student. Further, colleges and universities need to promote resources available to students on campus. Specific programming can provide education to students and other university officials on signs and symptoms of prolonged grief, as many are not aware of the impact of prolonged grief. University offices and departments can also collaborate and work together to bring outreach services to students in need.

This qualitative study evaluated the experiences of college students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with specific focus and attention paid to the role of personal identity, public disclosure, and institutional support. Semi structured interviews were conducted with all nine participants; during the interviews, participants were asked to describe their experiences related to their development, their decision about public disclosure of ASD, and about their fears related to attending college. The findings of this study suggest that students with ASD disclosed their diagnosis in academic settings to obtain appropriate formal university accommodations. Participants disclosed their diagnosis with members of their peer group when it seemed necessary and needed to disclose. Participants discussed two different parts of their identity (internal and external), with internal identity being focused on how ASD fits into their established sense of identity and external identity being the ways in which students disclose and
share their diagnosis with others. Students shared that as a part of their internal identity, they were aware they had some differences from their peers. Internal and external identities often clashed when students would try to engage with others without disclosing their diagnosis. Implications from this study suggest that faculty and staff be trained to respond to students with various disabilities. Further, funding for counseling centers should be increased so counseling centers on campus can accommodate students with specific needs such as ASD, and the potential accompanying mental health challenges as well.


This study examined the benefit of the instrument used by many physicians (World Health Organization Five Well-Being Index [WHO-5], is beneficial when used with college students to identify which students experience significant feelings of anxiety and depression. A total of 903 undergraduate students were a part of the sample, with students from an institution Rocky Mountain West (n=428), and from an institution in the Pacific Northwest (n=475). Results suggest that the WHO-5 questionnaire could be used to accurately identify students who are exhibiting severe symptoms of anxiety and depression. These results suggest that this tool would be useful in identifying students who exhibit symptoms that place them at higher risk for other behaviors related to anxiety and depression. Implications of this study propose that campuses can use tools similar to WHO-5 to identify students who are struggling with anxiety and depression or who are at increased risk to suffer from anxiety and depression. Colleges and universities would be able to identify students who are at a higher risk and can address needs of students in a proactive manner rather than serving students in a reactive nature.


From the clinical perspective of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), psychological flexibility refer’s to an individual’s ability to maintain mindful awareness of his or her thoughts and emotions in the present moment while engaging in behaviors congruent with his or her values. This study reports on the statistical and practice evidence regarding an adaptation of one major measure of this construct for use with college and university students.


These authors examined the ways in which peer bonds and parental bonds impacted self-esteem and depression as students transition to college. The following research questions were addressed: (a) Are parental and peer supports positively related to self-esteem? (b) Are parental and peer supports negatively related to depression? (c) Does peer support mediate the relationship between peer support and self-esteem and depression? (d) Does parental support
predict greater peer attachment, and in turn predict psychological adjustment? All participants (N=197) were selected through purposeful sampling and met the following criteria: undergraduate students under the age of 21 and with a class status of first-year or second-year. The results suggested that peer support partially mediated the relationship between parental support and psychological adjustment. The research found that there was a difference when the attachment was reported by parents versus when it was reported by the students. And, research suggests that the mother reports and child reports of relational support was weakly correlated.


In this study, researchers sought to understand the relationship between students’ wellbeing and anxiety, with identity mediating the relationship. This study was conducted at one university with three different cohorts of students serving as the participants (N = 188) for the study. The data was collected from a sample population within a pre-established longitudinal study. Three different questionnaires were utilized in this study (Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being, Dimensions Identity Development Scale, and Erikson Psychosocial Inventory Scale. The results suggested a negative relationship between students’ anxiety and sense of well-being. Results did indicate a positive relationship between higher levels of sense of identity and commitment to self and well-being. Further, higher levels of identity had a negative relationship with anxiety, and a positive relationship with sense of well-being. The implications of this study suggest that interventions that promote identity development and identification may be of importance to colleges and universities as this can be related to students’ anxiety levels and sense of wellbeing. Combined efforts to promote these interventions on campuses can have a positive impact on students overall.


The authors examined the relationship between traumatic events and the following variables: suicidal ideation and behavior, suicidal risk, and college adjustment, with posttraumatic growth serving as a mediator. Utilizing questionnaires (Trauma History Survey [THS]), data was gathered from 557 undergraduate students. For the purpose of this study, traumatic events included: the death of a close loved one, death of a close friend, death of a significant other, a family member who has suffered from a serious medical condition, a divorce, a serious injury resulting from an accident where the participant or someone close to them was the victim, a serious medical problem, a sexual assault, a physical assault, being a victim of stalking, having their home damage by a natural disaster, and being the victim of a mugging or robbery. The results indicated that posttraumatic growth did serve as a mediator in the relationship between severe traumatic events and suicide risk. Results suggested students who experienced the severe traumatic events, and had posttraumatic growth, were less likely to experience suicide risks, and more likely to have a an increased level of college adjustment. Implications from this study propose that colleges and universities provide resources that promote posttraumatic growth and cognitive processing to aid in the decrease of suicide risk and to promote college adjustment. This is especially important for colleges and universities as college students report a higher
number of traumatic events than their peers of the same age group who did not attend college. Campuses can also facilitate programming that can help students find a sense of belonging on campus as suicide research suggests that people with a higher sense of belonging have a strong desire to live.
THEME 3: WELLNESS & PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT


This quantitative study explored an individual’s sense of identity as it mediates behavioral and emotional concerns and substance abuse. The authors sought to test the hypotheses: (a) Stress and behavioral/emotional concerns would be positively associated; (b) Identity development would be negatively correlated with stress and behavioral/emotional concerns, while identity development would be positively correlated with GPA; (c) identity development would mediate stress and students with higher identity development would exhibit better adjustment, and conversely students with lower identity development would exhibit lower adjustment. A total of 187 undergraduate students were recruited from introductory and mid-level psychology courses at a mid-sized institution in located in the northwest. The results suggested that stress was somewhat associated with substance abuse and identity development was negatively associated with substance abuse. Independently, stress and identity development were somewhat negatively correlated. Additionally, the results suggested that GPA was positively associated with identity, while negatively correlated with stress. Implications of this study indicate that identity should be studied as a variable that can change over a period of time and interventions from student affairs professionals and counselors can provide interventions and link students to resources that can help further develop students’ sense of development.


Current mental health needs of college students, there is an important need for students to learn and practice health coping skills to help them cope with stressors. The authors examined the impact of credit-based education on coping skills and the outcomes related to overall well-being. This qualitative study gathered data in two ways: focus groups and interviews with individual participants. The participants were recruited through leadership education courses - a total of eight focus groups were conducted (one per class section), and a total of seven individual interviews were completed. The results suggested these courses allowed students to try new types of skills that were taught in the class to develop new coping skills that can have a positive impact on well-being long-term. The added pressure of the course required students to maintain the coping skills throughout their class. Students reported an overall decrease in stress, or at minimum an increase ability to manage stress, through different activities and gained a new appreciation for the different coping skills. Overall, students reported these courses had a positive impact on their ability to manage their stressors. Implications for this research calls for
an integrated approach - for coping skills of different methods to be introduced to students throughout their college curriculum. By integrating these skills throughout a students’ educational journey, students will have different coping skill options that can be used to aid in managing stressors.


The authors conducted a study to explore the relationship between college students who have a chronic illness and loneliness. This study sought to answer the following research questions: (a) Do chronically ill college first-years and their healthy peers differ in health-related quality of life and measures of loneliness? And (b) Do college first-years use available health services and other resources? Research for this study was conducted at a private institution with all participants (n=163) having enrolled at the university only one month prior. Of the 163 participants, 45 reported having a chronic illness, 22 of those students reported have a physical illness (PI), 23 reported having a mental illness (MI), and 1 reported having both a MI and PI. The remaining 118 participants reported not having a chronic illness (non-CI). In reference to the first research question, non-CI students reported lower level of loneliness than both the groups of PI and MI students. The results as it relates to the second research question showed that only 15% of students with a chronic illness had a physician locally, and 17% of MI students and 13% of PI students had registered with the appropriate support services on campus. Implications from this study suggest that colleges and universities should be more aware that students with a chronic illness suffer from increased levels of loneliness, and universities should provide additional resources and programming to assist chronically ill students.


The authors of this study investigated the changes in empathy of college student males, and if there is a predictive relationship between that change and extracurricular involvement on campus. The guiding research questions for this study were: (a) Can empathy change for male college students through the course of undergraduate education? and (b) Does involvement in extracurricular activities predict the change in empathy for college student males? A total sample of 471 male participants age 18-21 completed all four waves of the data collection process. Data was gathered through the subscale of Perspective Taking of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Students were asked to self-report their involvement in extracurricular activities at each data collection point. The results suggest that male college student’s empathy is able to change during their college career. As a response to the second research question, the results were mixed. Students who had “high” participation in extracurricular activities showed positive changes in empathy, while students who were engaged in fraternities showed a lack of empathy growth. Implications of this research suggest colleges and universities to promote student involvement in extracurricular activities that will allow students to have exposure to new thoughts and ideas.
Universities should also be aware that students who are only involved in organizations that promote within-group development may limit empathy growth in students.


This study examined the impact of bullying experienced during school-age timeframes and the student’s adjustment in college with coping serving as a moderator. This study was guided but the following hypotheses: (a) There is a negative relationship present between being a victim of bullying during primary and secondary education and college adjustment and (b) Coping moderates the relationship between bullying and college adjustment. All participants (n=270) in this study were from the same Midwestern public university and were all recruited from an introductory psychology course. The results indicated that an increased level of bullying was related to a decreased level of college adjustment. Bullying was also related to reduced emotional adjustment and other mental health stressors. Further, results also indicated when active coping skills were not used, there was a decrease in levels of adjustment. Implications from this study suggest student affairs professionals should think about how the bullying that occurred during primary and secondary education can have negative impacts on students long-term. Knowing that adjustment can be difficult for students who have experienced bullying, college professionals are more prepared to address the needs of students as they transition to college. When student affairs professionals can accurately target assessments, resources for students can be targeted and can potentially provide more successful outcomes.


Over the past 10 years, research has indicated that college students are experiencing mental health issues at a higher rate than before, which has been linked to a decrease in student overall performance. This study examined student’s involvement throughout their four-year college experience, and how that relates to students overall psychological health. The authors worked to answer the following research questions: (a) Is there an impact from the students’ involvement on campus with leadership positions or sports teams impact the students’ psychological well-being at the end of their four years in college? and (b) Are the effects of student involvement different when considered in separate categories by type of involvement? Using data from WNS with three different groups of students from 46 different institutions, a sample of 4,402 students were included in this study. Data was collected in three stages: at the beginning of their first year, at the end of their first year, and at the end of their fourth year. Results from this study suggest that begin a Resident Assistant (RA), being involved with an intermural sport, or being involved at a higher level of leadership in student organizations were positive predictors of psychological well-being at the end of the fourth-year, with being an RA being the most significant predictor. The analyses identified that diversity-related experiences, and interactions and/or relationships with others were the two significant factors that contributed to the student’s psychological well-being. Implications from this study suggest that students should be encouraged to be involved in organizations on campus and take leadership roles when able to do
These findings can be useful for implementation of other over-all wellness goals for practitioners and can be used to promote and further overall intuitional initiatives for continued student involvement.


The authors focused on emotional, psychological, and social experiences of students as these areas are more likely to impact students’ well-being. This study was conducted at a large mid-Atlantic university, a pilot study was conducted in 2012 and in 2014 a study was conducted with two different learning formats to evaluate the undergraduate student experiences, with 76 total participants. The results suggested that a overall integrative and holistic approach has a positive impact on students’ overall well-being. The study did not find any significant results for any one intervention but did recommend that a combined experiential and classroom approach to addressing learning and support will provide students with an increased sense of well-being. The authors did recommend further study into the role of social supports in experiential learning as previous research has found that social supports increase a students’ sense of well-being. The implications of this study suggest that a cocurricular approach at the university level can promote an increased sense of well-being. Further, making the cocurricular programming accessible to all students from various backgrounds and university standings can also allow for an increased sense of well-being for students.


The authors wanted to examine students; practice of self-care and their overall well-being. The questions guiding this study were: (a) Is there a relationship between self-care and well-being? and (b) What behaviors are and are not linked with an increase in students’ sense of well-being? This study was conducted at a public Australian university and a total of 206 participants engaged in the study. Results suggested sleep hygiene, receiving social supports, and mindful acceptance were the most significant self-care practices, whereas physical activity and mindfulness did not have significant results for self-care practices. For female participants, the most significant predictor of wellness was awareness. Another significant predictor of well-being was students’ social support. And other significant predictors of well-being was sleep hygiene and healthy-eating. Implications for this study support programming related to teaching and demonstrating self-care practices for students. The encouragement of self-care practices can lead to an increase in self-care and an increase in well-being. Another implication of this study is to include education in mindfulness and awareness in college courses to reinforce the promotion of student self-care.

This study examined the impact of binge drinking on academic performance while considering the impact of academic involvement as a mediator. For this study, three sets of data was used the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNSLAE). The results from this study suggest that binge drinking does impact academic performance, but the frequency of binge drinking had more of an impact on academic performance. Binge drinking was linked to a decrease in motivation for academics, which in turn impacts the academic success of the student. Further, there is a negative relationship between academic involvement and binge drinking at a rate of 20-30%. The impact of academic involvement on binge drinking differed when the researchers controlled for gender. Academic involvement indirectly was responsible for male binge drinking at a rate of 41%, and a rate of 26% for females. When academic involvement was the moderating factor for between binge drinking and academic performance, there was no difference for males and females who engaged in binge drinking three times or more a week. Implications from this study suggest student affairs professionals work together on campuses to address alcohol education at an institutional, group, and individual level. Focus should remain on addressing the engagement in binge drinking behavior, not on just the frequency in participating in binge drinking behavior. Educational programming should be geared toward reducing binge drinking behavior for both males and females, as there is no difference in the impacts of binge drinking for males or females.


The authors examined the relationship between dangerous drinking and readiness to change, and the readiness to change alcohol use and relationship satisfaction. This study focused on the following hypotheses: (a) alcohol use and relationship satisfaction are negatively related, (b) readiness to change regarding alcohol use would be positively related to relationship satisfaction (among those with dangerous drinking behaviors), (c) dangerous drinking and readiness to change would be negatively related to readiness to change in relationships (for those with low relationship satisfaction). The results suggested that there was a negative relationship between alcohol use and relationship satisfaction among participants who had dangerous drinking behaviors, and people with high satisfaction in their relationship would be more willing to change their alcohol use than individuals with a lower relationship satisfaction. The results did not confirm the third hypothesis that people with a lower satisfaction in their relationship would
be less willing to make changes with their alcohol use. Implications of this study recommend that universities and colleges provide relationship education and services on campuses as it has proven to be effective with married adults. To further promote relationship health among college students, more educational programming can be implemented into already established programs and classes to reach college students. The authors also suggest that mediated education platforms could be used to reach current college students.


The authors examined the impact of self-efficacy on bystanders intervening in risky alcohol situations. This study was guided by the following hypotheses: (a) An increase in self-efficacy with prior intervention experience will be related to an increased chance of bystander intervention, (b) participants who have a history of intervening in alcohol situations will have a higher self-efficacy related to future interventions, and (c) self-efficacy would serve as a moderator between previous interventions and potential future interventions. Results suggested that self-efficacy was a moderator between previous and future interventions in an alcohol-related risky situation. This also requires the individual to identify the situation as an emergent situation that would warrant an intervention. An important finding in this study is that prior experience in intervening in alcohol-related situations was positively related to self-efficacy in intervention. Implications from these findings propose that providing scenarios that allow students to hypothetically experience what a risky alcohol-related situation would be like so there is an opportunity to increase their self-efficacy and the likelihood of potential future intervention.


This study investigated the services and resources available to students who attend a 2-year institution. Authors of this study utilized a list of 1, 413 2-year institutions that were accredited by the American Council on Education (ACE), and who were also listed in the 2008 College Handbook, which brought the sample pool to 201. Participants for this study were the highest-ranking official on each campus, and the goal was to have one participant from each institution and resulted in a total of 106 participants representing 36 states. Data was gathered through an electronic survey that was emailed to the participant to complete. Results suggested that almost every participant indicated that student alcohol use presented a problem on their campus. The majority of the participants stated that a screening for alcohol use issues was completed retroactively in response to a student incident already involving alcohol. Only 12% of the representatives indicated that their institution offered some type of alcohol intervention program for students. And only 10% of participating institutions provided formal treatment for students who are identified as having a problem with alcohol use. Roughly 63% of the institutions did not require alcohol educational programming for all students. Results also indicated that there were varied responses as to the regulation of alcohol use on campus for students; some varied on age, others varied on locations on campus, required permits, and few institutions (3%) prohibited
alcohol use altogether on campus. Implications for this study suggest proactive educational programming surrounding alcohol consumption, and preventative screenings to occur before students are found in violation of campus alcohol use policies. Further, campus policies relating to alcohol use should be enforced consistently on campus for the policies to have the intended impact. Universities can also encourage various offices on campus (e.g. student health center and the counseling center) to work together in programmatic and screening efforts across campus.


Alcohol consumption on college campuses continues to pose different concerns and risks for college students. The authors sought to understand the differences between first generation college students (FGCS) and continuing generation college students (CGCS). In this study, drinking motives of FGCS and CGCS are examined. Authors were guided by the following research question: Are drinking motives and alcohol use impacted by students’ sex and generations status? Researchers used a convenience sample across 22 different classrooms of a mid-sized public institution. A total sample of 483 participants engaged in the study. Although different variables were compared, significant results were found for drinking as a way of coping and negative alcohol-related consequences. FGCS females and CGCS males were found to have lower levels of drinking motives for coping, whereas FGCS males and CGCS females reported higher levels. Additionally, FGCS females and CGCS males reported lower alcohol-related consequences than FGCS males and CGCS females. Further, the results suggest that the most at-risk group of students are FGCS males as it related to drinking motives and consequences faced from alcohol use. Implications suggest that student affairs professionals can provide population-specific programming for this population when utilizing educational and prevention models. Next, counseling services can be tailored to address the stressors that FGCS face when entering the college environment.


The authors sought to understand the experiences of college students’ opinions of drinking and to determine when college students’ behavior transitioned from acceptable to unacceptable. Through qualitative methodology, the authors address two research questions: (a) to examine the unappealing aspects of drinking behaviors in different relationship types, and (b) to determine if the acceptability of drinking behaviors change by when gender is considered. Participants were recruited from an existing study designed to reduce risky alcohol behaviors. All participants (N=78) previously completed an intervention designed to address their minor alcohol policy violation on their campus. From this study, three major themes were identified: (a) a negative reaction to the lack of control present, (b) female participant’s dissatisfaction with uncontrolled sexual behavior by self and others, and (c) aggression induced by alcohol. Implications of this study suggest that college students are easily able to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors as it relates to alcohol use, there was a reoccurring theme of loss of control as related
to the perceptions of behaviors after alcohol consumption, and that the presence of injunctive norms may also be a determining factor and should be explored further.


Although there is prior research that examines the impact of binge drinking on college students in various ways, but limited information is present on the impact on a student’s cognitive thinking development. This study examined the impacts of binge drinking of student’s cognitive function throughout four-years of college. A total of three questions guided this study: (a) What are the effects of binge drinking on college student’s functioning after four years of college? (b) Do students with different levels of cognitive functioning at the start of college respond differently to binge drinking? (c) How does the frequency of a student’s binge drinking facilitate the relationship between binge drinking and cognitive functioning? Data for this study was gathered from the WNS. The WNS gathered information from three groups of students at the following times: early fall during their first year of college, late spring during of their first year of college, and in the spring of their fourth year of college. Participants in this study were from 17 different institutions across the country. A total for 826 students completed the data collection process. Results suggested that students who began college with lower levels of cognitive skills at the beginning of college, and then participated in binge drinking behaviors during their four years in college, had a lower level of cognitive functioning than the other participants in the study. Implications of this study suggest that universities and student affairs professionals should continue to focus on the importance of education on the effects of binge drinking, and the connection between binge drinking, cognitive functioning, and overall student well-being. As college and university officials continue to address binge drinking, there can be positive impacts on overall student cognitive functioning.
THEME 5: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING ON CAMPUS


The researchers wanted to explore the impact of an established intervention group focused on personal stories program for students. The focused hypothesis of this study was to determine if the intervention group and the showing of the film *Someday Melissa* will have reduced anxiety (both toward self and outward stress) and social distance. Another hypothesis of this study was that the anxiety produced when thinking about interacting with someone who has a mental illness is grounded in self-focused anxiety rather than other-focused anxiety. A total of 46 participants completed this study but was not representative of the campus population with the sample being 80% female. The research was conducted at a medium-size liberal arts school. Results suggested that after the completion of the intervention group, there was less intergroup anxiety, and less social distant present. Additionally, the film alone resulted in enough of a decrease in anxiety and social distance as the group discussion format intervention. The major findings of the study show that other-focused anxiety is a partial predictor of social distance, and self-focused anxiety is not a predictor of social distance. The implications of these findings suggest campuses can provide educational programming on the way emotional reactions toward a stigmatized group can impact not only the individuals but the campus community as well. Other programming on anxiety and anti-stigma campaigns can benefit the campus community as a whole.


The authors examined the use of peer education theater which was grounded in theories of diffusion of innovation and entertainment education to answer two research questions: (a) Does attending SCREAM Theater result in significant changes in rape myth acceptance and bystander attitudes? And (b) Are the changes in the rape myth acceptance and attitudes by bystanders’ attitudes were consistent among different demographic variables? This study was conducted at a large public university in the Northeast. This study was designed using a pre- and post-test design with the pre-test administered before the participant population observed the SCREAM Theater presentation at the participants’ New Student Orientation, and the post-test was administered through an online medium. Of the original 3,000 pre-test participants, a total of 693 students completed both the pre- and post-test components, resulting in a total participant population of 643. The results showed that after the participants attended the SCREAM Theater production, a decrease in the participant’s rape myth acceptance, and an increase in positive attitudes and the likelihood that they would intervene. It was also determined that the changes in rape myth acceptance and bystander attitudes did not vary over different demographic groups. The implications of this study describe the benefits of including peer education to address the prevention of sexual violence on college campuses.

The authors wanted to examine the impact of mental health first aid training for student affairs professionals. This study was conducted at a large, research intensive, midsized university in Ontario. The research was guided by the following questions: (a) Did the training result in an increased knowledge about mental health issues? (b) Did participants become more aware of issues related to mental health? (c) Did the training result in an increase in self-confidence to recognize and identify mental health concerns? A total of 215 participants were included in this study, and all completed the questionnaire online. Of the initial 215, 26 participants also engaged in pre-interview and post-interview for the related training. The results suggested that professionals with both limited and continued experiences with mental health issues had an increase in their knowledge of mental health issues. Participants also became more aware and sensitive to the experiences of individuals with mental illness and resulted in an increased ability to recognize and want to assist in areas with mental illness. The implications of this research suggest that all student affairs professionals should receive mental health first aid training as it can increase the chances that a student in need with be referred to the appropriate resources. Students who can be identified early as having a mental health concern, or a potential mental health concern, have an increased chance of academic success.


A study was conducted to evaluate the mental illness advocacy efforts of Active Minds (AM), an organization that works with campus chapters to promote advocacy. Through quantitative methods, a total of 46 participants engaged in the study to evaluate if the organizations prioritized help-seeking advocacy as much as mental illness stigma on campuses. The results suggest that the student organizations promote efforts that directly benefit individuals who suffer from a mental illness more than the stigma reduction on campus. Implications from this study suggest that campus partners can focus more on promoting student well-being.


The authors examined the impact of a suicide prevention training program on resident assistants (RAs). The program was developed and implemented by the University of Texas at Austin Counseling and Mental Health Center. Participants (N = 99) completed pre- and post-training questionnaires, as well as a questionnaire to evaluate the experiences of RAs during the training. Results indicate the RAs also experience suicidal ideation and at a rate similar to their college peers, but RAs are less likely to report those experiences. RAs are just as vulnerable to the same stresses as their undergraduate peers. The majority of RAs (over half) knew someone that attempted suicide in their lifetime. Of the many situations that RAs face in their role, addressing suicidal students is the most stressful. It is important to note that although RAs may experience
triggering events when addressing suicidal students, it does not impact their ability to cope with
the experiences long-term. Implications from this study suggest that RAs that complete the
gatekeeper training are likely able to address the concern earlier and reach out to the appropriate
mental health provider/services on campus.

@ Purdue train-the-trainers program. Journal of College Student Development,
56(8), 861-866. doi:10.1353/csd.2015.0084

The authors of this study utilized counseling graduate students to provide suicide prevention and
awareness training to Resident Assistants on campus who were not able to be trained by the
campus counseling center. This study utilized the concept of training more trainers to provide the
education and training to the needed “gatekeepers” on campus. Researchers focused on the
following research questions: (a) Do the participants in the study gain the knowledge necessary
through the training? (b) Does the knowledge predict the participants crisis communication after
the completion of training? A total of 12 participants engaged in this study. Data was collected
via a pre- and post-test method. The results of the study suggest that although knowledge-related
assessments were not impacted by the training, there was a significant impact on their
communication skills during a crisis. The results also suggest that skills were not predicted by
knowledge. The implications of this study suggest that universities can use the method to provide
the appropriate training and services where needed, and the students trained will also get the
ability to develop their skills and abilities further.
THEME 6: COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT & ACADEMIC SUCCESS


The authors examined the relationship between academic habits and experiences and mental skill knowledge for college students. A sample of 322 participants who were enrolled in freshman-level English composition course at a public midsize institution located in the Pacific Northwest. The participants were categorized into a high mental skill knowledge and use group (n=159), and low mental skill knowledge and use (n=163). Results suggested that students with high mental skills likely have a relationship between educational factors such as goal setting, focus, confidence, and a higher development of resilience. Students in the higher skill group also scored higher on the Grant and Franklin academic self-efficacy assessment and suggest a correlation between the two variables. Further, students in the high skill group also scored higher in the academic category. Implications for this study suggest that universities and colleges can provide more education on mental skill building as this could have long-term educational and academic benefits for students.


The authors sought to understand the different environmental factors that either increased or prevented college students’ procrastination while focusing on what is necessary to either change those behaviors or prevent the change in behavior. This study was conducted at a large midwestern university with a total of 303 undergraduate students. All participants previously completed a skills course at the university level, and the data was collected through a self-assessment questionnaire focused on procrastination habits. The results indicated that for students to change their behaviors, the following conditions needed to be made: taking responsibility for the change, recognition of personal negative and positive outcomes from the change, allowing themselves the time to enact the change, and taking action toward the change. The following was found to be inhibitors to change: when the behaviors are identified as occurring in a response to outside situations (e.g. a certain course), feeling paralyzed by internal pressures to enact change, lack of belief in the ability to make the change occur, and lack of making action out of what was learned in the course. Implications from these results suggest that encouraging students to take the knowledge learned in the classroom and relating it to self will have a longer impact on the potential for change to occur. University administrators can utilize this information to tailor presentations or programs to ask students to apply the information to self as opposed to providing just helpful tools and suggestions to students.
Authors of this study examined the relationship between the perception of academic competition on campus and anxiety/depression. Data for this study was collected from 40,350 undergraduate students who attended 70 different institutions. Results from this study suggest a positive relationship between the perception of academic competition and the presence of both anxiety and depression. This result was more significant within marginalized participants and students who have historically been underrepresented in post-secondary education. Although this result was consistent across different subpopulations within the participants sample, there was some variance noted within those different subpopulations. Further findings suggest that students who suffer from discrimination on campus, and who have a weaker peer support group, have increased levels of anxiety and depression. Students of subpopulations where examined further on the presence of anxiety and depression, and students who self-identified as queer have a higher chance of experiencing both anxiety and depression when there is the perception of a more competitive academic environment. Implications from this study propose creating environments that promote and foster strong peer relationships between students as the findings suggest a positive relationship between peer relationships and anxiety/depression. As the major finding of this study reported when there is a significant presence of academic competition, there is an increased risk of anxiety and depression. While campuses cannot eliminate academic competitions, the university can change the way it approaches the competition.


This study investigated college students’ experiences in college counseling centers while also examining the relationship between academic success and those counseling outcomes. This study was guided by four research questions: (a) Is there a relationship between students’ GPA and/or graduation rate and the number of counseling sessions attended? (b) Is there a relationship between GPA and the total times the student returned to counseling? (c) Is there a relationship between a completed treatment plan and GPA? and (d) Is there an improvement in overall functioning as well as an improvement in GPA as a result of attending the counseling sessions? This study was conducted at one institution, and a total sample of 871 participants. Overall, the results suggested that students who engaged in counseling services until mutual termination was determined (between the counselor and the student/client) were more likely to have a higher GPA than their peers who did not complete the counseling services. A student’s level of functioning prior to engaging in counseling services, and the student’s GPA prior to beginning counseling services, were predictors of the students’ academic success after the engaging in any counseling services. This study also suggests a positive relationship between the amount of counseling center sessions academic success, as well as a positive relationship between the completion of treatment with a student’s overall GPA. Implications of this study suggest that colleges and universities work to identify students who are at risk for mental health concerns and/or at risk academically as early as possible, and for those students to be referred to
counseling centers for support and services as soon as possible. Further implications suggest that for a student to complete the referral process to the counseling center, it is important for higher education professionals to provide encouragement for the services, as many students will feel social pressure from the stigma of mental health services and will not follow-through on the referral. Academic success coaches, academic advisors, and other academic personnel should also discuss the potential academic benefits from engaging in counseling services. Counseling center professionals should keep in mind the academic benefits of the successful completion of services, and work with students to eliminate barriers to treatment completion.


The authors examined the relationship between homesickness, students’ academic performance, and student retention. This relationship was evaluated with a focus on the following research questions: (a) For first year students, what factors predict homesickness? (b) How does homesickness impact academic performance? and (c) How does homesickness impact student retention? Data for this study was obtained through the MAP-Works survey at a large land-grant institution in the Midwest. The sample size in this study was 10,217, and all participants were first year students. Results suggest the highest predictors of homesickness remain gender, residence, and parents’ highest degree. A notable finding that was not previously discussed in the literature is the impact of the student’s parents’ education. Students with college educated parents were less likely to experience homesickness. The prior knowledge of college provided to these students may allow students to be more prepared for college life and may receive a different type of support from their parents. Further, students with a higher sense of belonging reported a lower level of homesickness. Results also suggested that residence (in-state versus out-of-state attendance) and student sense of belonging where the highest predictors of student retention. Students who live within the state in which they are attending college are more likely to retain from their first year to their second year of college. Students who feel a sense of belonging are also more likely to be retained. Implications from this study suggest offering education on homesickness and explain that the presence of homesickness is a part of the college experience and it decreases across time. Other suggestions include providing social connections for students to begin connecting with each other prior to the first day of classes to foster a sense of belonging. Campus communities that are inclusive and promote interactions within the larger community as well. Students should be educated on the available resources on campus and how to utilize those resources.

These authors examined the relationship between college student binge eating behaviors and attachment, psychological needs, satisfaction, and emotional regulation. The purpose of this study was not to establish a causal relationship, but rather to examine the relationship between the different factors. The hypothesis that drove this study was that emotional regulation and psychological needs would mediate the relationship between binge eating and attachment, whereas psychological needs would serve as the mediator between emotional regulation and binge eating. A total of 820 students (253 male, 562 female) from a university in the Midwest participated in this study. The results indicated that psychological needs did mediate the relationship between emotional regulation and binge eating behaviors, and emotional regulation mediated the relationship between psychological needs and binge eating behaviors. Implications from this study suggest that universities can provide programming to incoming and new students that educate on how the transition to college can trigger unhealthy behaviors such as binge eating behaviors. Further, student affairs professionals can work with other professionals on campus to work with students on addressing attachment needs through educational programming. Additionally, counselors can provide groups for students to develop healthy emotional regulation behaviors.


The authors examine the relationship between college students who have completed developmental tasks less effectively and binge eating behaviors, with emotional attachment insecurity as the mediator of the relationship to address two hypotheses: (a) Attachment insecurity and binge eating will be positively related, and (b) Attachment insecurity and binge eating relatedness will be mediated by maladaptive emotional regulation. This quantitative study was complete by recruiting students via email through the university registrar and included the potential for an incentive for participation. Total participants (N=381) comprised of both graduate and undergraduate students attending a large Midwestern University. Results indicated that insecure attachment, emotional regulation, and binge eating are all positively related. Attachment insecurity was found to be predictive of binge eating behaviors, and maladaptive emotional regulation brokers attachment insecurity predicting binge eating behaviors. Implications for the findings in this study include counselors’ ability to tailor interventions for students with binge eating disorders with the consideration of the student’s attachment security level.

The researchers sought to examine the relationship between binge eating patterns and food selection for college students. Specifically, the researchers wanted to examine the food decisions of college students when eating in response to an emotion. Data was collected in two phases; the first phase included 500 participants who completed a online surveys and received course credit for their participation, and the second phase included 283 volunteers who completed a survey in a class utilizing an audience survey response systems. Results suggested that students who supported disordered eating behaviors were more likely to engage in those behaviors when experiencing an emotion (e.g. sadness, depression, frustration, or stress) than students who did not support disordered eating behaviors. Students who identified as having less inhibited eating behaviors were more likely to search out food from an off-campus location when experiencing triggering emotions. Students who engaged in disordered eating behaviors would often purchase food in larger quantities when experiencing the triggering emotion. Implications of this study suggest that universities work with students to provide education in patterns of food selection as to assist students in identifying their own eating behaviors. Universities can also work with dining halls to regulate portion control for food as to not allow students to have unlimited servings of food. Dining plans that allow students to utilize it’s funds for off-campus food options could be eliminated, which would require students to use their own funds for off campus food sources which would potentially change the way students view the off-campus food options.
THEME 8: PROFESSIONAL ISSUES & TRENDS


The authors establish the need for a merger of a mental model for case management with student affairs standards to provide an approach for case management within the realm of student affairs. Case management in higher education is a relatively new concept that emerged after the tragedy at Virginia Tech in 2007. The need for student affairs professionals to provide these services for students who are experiencing a crisis was present but without a guiding model. The following stages are proposed: assessment of the student and/or client, advocacy for the student, empowerment of the student, following-up with the student after the initial intervention, and then the resolution of the crisis. This model can not only be applied in Dean of Students offices and counseling centers, but also to other student affairs offices to reach an early intervention for students in need.


The authors describe the way personality traits and characteristics can be used to describe and explain student outcomes in educational research. Researchers identified five different traits that are the most salient across different cultural groups: extraversion, openness, agreeableness, neuroticism and emotional stability, and conscientiousness. Three samples were used for this study into the relationship between personality traits and related college experiences. The first sample consisted of 3,700 college seniors across four different research universities. The second sample consisted of 375 American college business students. And the third sample included 211 German students, all whom were on the business-track program. The results suggest that the inclusion of the personality traits further describe and explain the outcomes in the study with in samples located with the United States and within the international sample. Implications of these findings suggest that personality can be included when examining the theoretical approaches as a way to further explain results and outcomes.


Helping skills are often taught in student affairs and higher education to help student affairs practitioners meet the various needs of today’s college students. Competencies are established to evaluate the level of need for a student and to make appropriate referrals to help students get the assistance that is needed. This study examined the helping competencies addressed in course syllabi and if they matched with what experts in the field reported student affairs students
needing to know to help their future students. A total of 16 programs in different regions of the United States provided copies of their syllabi for this study. The results suggested that programs that were connected or housed within counseling departments were more likely to have courses focused on helping skills. The skill experts described as being most important for students to know (e.g. listening and other counseling microskills) were found in all of the syllabi in the study. Experts next cited that crisis intervention and management was the next most important skill, yet only a minimal number of syllabi included this skill. The following skills were cited by experts as being important for students to know, yet they were minimally included in course syllabi: mentoring, supervision, suicidality, other mental health issues, and eating disorders. The results suggest that the most common skills taught in the courses were counseling microskills, self-exploration/development, and multicultural awareness. With the growing needs of college counseling students, student affairs professionals who are equipped with helping skills will be better suited to identify student concerns and either provide the assistance needed or refer students to the appropriate campus or community partner.
THEME 9: DATING & RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE


The authors in this group sought to examine the presence of unwanted sexual contact experienced by students who identify as having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) when compared to two other groups of students: (a) college students who identify as having another disability other than ASD, and (b) college students who do not have a disability. The data for this study was gathered from a study including 9 public 4-year universities, with a total of 34,879 participants. The data was initially collected from a college climate survey that was conducted in 2012. The results suggested that students with disabilities are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances and sexual contact than their peers without disabilities. Further, students in this study who identify their gender is women or non-gender binary are at a higher risk for unwanted sexual contact than students with other gender identifications. Implications from these findings suggest that university practitioners should design sexual education programs specifically for students who identify as having an ASD, as these students are at higher risk for unwanted sexual contact. Other implications are that these programs should be designed with the needs of students of ASD in mind (e.g. concrete examples, frequent breaks) while also being aware of gender-specific needs.


This study examined the occurrence of stalking, physical, sexual, and emotional violence over the past six months on campus. Participants were provided with an anonymous survey to collect data. The participants (n=910) were from three different urban colleges in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Results suggested that stalking occurred the most frequently for participants, and most of the offenders were not intimate partners. The results also suggested that stalking occurs at a more frequent rate for college students than previously believed. This is important for colleges and universities as stalking is now required to be reported under the Clery Act. College and university officials, counselors, and practitioners need to include more educational programming on stalking for the campus community. There are available resources that may be under-utilized if students are not aware of them and are unsure as to how to utilize those resources. Although previously not previously considered a form of violence, practitioners need to reconsider the types of violence a college student can experience, and further, the negative impacts of that violence for victims. Additionally, being a victim of stalking can result in poor physical health and mental health outcomes. Collaborative efforts can further education and allow students to interact with multiple resources at one time.

This qualitative study sought to explore the relationship between parenting styles, overall well-being and adjustment outcomes for college students. The following hypotheses were examined: (a) There is a significant relationship between parenting styles, parenting styles, emotional well-being, self-esteem, and overall academic adjustment, (b) Parenting styles would predict students’ self-esteem and emotional well-being, and (c) Self-esteem and emotional well-being would predict students’ academic adjustment. All participants (N=315) were either from the same community college which was identified as a predominantly White university and from two separate historically Black universities from different university class standings (e.g. freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). Participants were recruited from different departments from within the university and faculty members allowed recruitment to occur from within their classes. The results suggested a relationship between the identified variables, parenting practices are related to self-esteem, well-being, and early childhood adjustment. The results also suggested that certain parenting styles can be predictive of self-esteem and emotional well-being. The implications of this study suggest that the newest generation of college students are presenting with adjustment issues that are not consistent with the years of students who previously attended college.

The authors of this study examined the presence of cyber aggression on a college campus, and to learn from undergraduate students about their perception of the role the university plays in addressing cyber aggression. Further, the authors wanted to also determine what factors would predict, if any, the potential for distress when someone is a victim of cyber aggression. A total of 1,078 participants who were all undergraduate students from the same large public university in the southwest. The sample was weighted and was established to be representative of the host institution. The results suggest that the platform of type of mediated communication had the strong prediction for the level of distress experienced by a student. Although not completely founded in by the results, the researched identify that the largest platforms with the largest audiences caused the most distress for victims. Anonymity also played a large role in the impact of distress because the victim was not able to address the aggressor. Another noted result is that freshman students were less likely to experience the anonymous cyber aggression when compared to other students in different class standings. Further, Students who identified as members of Greek-lettered organizations reported a higher level of distress when they were victims of cyber aggression as it could threaten their position within their respective organizations. Implications from this study suggest that students have a desire for the university to take an active role in addressing the presence of cyber aggression. Universities can develop, implement, and enforce a policy that addresses cyber aggression. As victims of cyber aggression, students are more likely to develop other maladaptive coping behaviors that can lead to further harm.
REFERENCES
UNANNOTATED LISTING


Page 49 of 52


