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A Study on Mental Health Issues Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of college students experiencing mental health problems demands prompt action. The present incidence of mental health disorders, risk factors and triggers, effects on academic performance and personal well-being, obstacles to obtaining mental health resources, and efficacy of interventions are all part of this study. In an attempt to understand why students experience mental health problems and if they are doing something to address it, the study examines these factors.

Keywords: Mental health, college students, perceptions, attitudes, support systems, survey study

Introduction

According to W.H.O. mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development. Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes. Mental health conditions include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm. People with mental health conditions are more likely to experience lower levels of mental well-being, but this is not always or necessarily the case.

The rising prevalence of mental health concerns among college students underscores the necessity for comprehensive understanding and proactive intervention strategies within higher education institutions. In response to this imperative, this study seeks to explore the multifaceted landscape of mental health perceptions among college students. By examining students' attitudes towards seeking help, perceptions of institutional support, and the influence of various factors on mental well-being, the study aims to provide insights that can inform the development of effective mental health initiatives and support systems within college campuses. Through a survey-based approach involving 110 participants, this research endeavors to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding mental health in higher education and to advocate for student-centered approaches to mental health promotion and support.

Literature review

The study conducted by Cerolini, et. Al. (2023) This systematic review of 66 studies primarily in North America explores mental health, help-seeking behaviors, and attitudes toward counseling among university students. It identifies barriers to seeking professional mental health care, such as stigma, and highlights the need to expand counseling services globally. The review emphasizes the prevalence of psychological symptoms among students and the effectiveness of face-to-face and online interventions. It also discusses challenges faced by international students and perspectives of counselors and healthcare providers. Suggestions for improvement include addressing access barriers, expanding services, and providing targeted support for diverse student populations. Future research should focus on intervention effectiveness and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health services.

Pandya and Lodha, (2022) The abstract outlines findings from a scoping review on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on college students' mental health and institutional strategies. Following the Arksey and O'Malley framework and PRISMA-SCR guidelines, 36 records were analyzed from an initial 1038. Results highlighted challenges such as academic disruptions, financial struggles, and psychological distress, with stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness prevalent. Institutions responded with helplines, online counseling, and awareness campaigns. The discussion emphasized proactive mental health promotion programs, especially in low- and middle-income countries, offering strategic recommendations for supporting students during the pandemic and college re-openings. The study advocates prioritizing mental health services in academic settings during public health crises, despite limitations, to inform student-centered support programs and mitigate pandemic-related education disruptions.

Zou, et. Al. (2020) The article explores the link between sleep quality and mental health issues in male college students through a longitudinal study. It finds that poor sleep quality correlates with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, worsening over a year. The study reveals a bidirectional relationship where poor sleep predicts future mental health issues and vice versa. Specifically targeting male college students, it identifies baseline sleep quality as a predictor of future anxiety symptoms. Using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), the research sheds light on this relationship, supported by funding from China's National Natural Science Foundation and the National Key R&D Program.

Wathelet, et. Al. (2020) The article investigates the impact of COVID-19 quarantine on the mental health of university students in France, revealing heightened stress, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts during the quarantine period. Risk factors include female or nonbinary gender, financial/housing issues, prior psychiatric history, COVID-19 symptoms, social isolation, and inadequate information. Despite increased mental health issues, there is low uptake of mental health services, indicating potential access barriers during quarantine. The study underscores the urgent need for public health measures to address these challenges, comparing findings with pre-quarantine estimates. Methodologically, it employs a survey study among French university students, utilizing online questionnaires and multivariable logistic regression analyses to assess mental health symptoms and associated risk factors.

Torrano, et. Al. (2019) The introduction underscores the growing concern over rising mental health issues among university students globally despite the potential of universities to offer support services. It advocates for synthesizing research and employing bibliometric approaches to understand the field's evolution and guide policy for comprehensive support systems. The following section provides an overview of various perspectives on conceptualizing mental health, including biomedical, behavioral, and social sciences, highlighting the influence of cultural context on definitions. Embracing pluralism in defining mental health is emphasized to facilitate culturally appropriate support and knowledge exchange, alongside the evolution of mental health definitions to encompass well-being.

Z. Ma, et, al. (2019) The study evaluates mental health issues among 746,217 college students in China during the COVID-19 outbreak, utilizing standardized measures for acute stress, depression, and anxiety. It identifies psychosocial and epidemic-related factors linked to heightened mental health risks, revealing that 45% of participants exhibited probable acute stress, depressive, or anxiety symptoms. Factors associated with increased risk included exposure to COVID-19-related media coverage, low perceived social support, prior mental health issues, and certain demographic variables. Tailored interventions and social support strategies are crucial implications drawn from the findings.

Saleem, Mahmood, Naz, (2013) This research investigates anxiety proneness among university students, proposing guidelines for interpreting severity categories based on Standard Deviation (SD) scores. Findings reveal that 31% of participants experience "severe" problems, with 16% classified as "very severe". Specific dimensions include dysfunctional sense (17%), loss of confidence (16%), lack of self-regulation (14%), and anxiety proneness (12%). These results underscore a significant prevalence of anxiety-related issues among students. Discussion explores factors influencing prevalence rates, such as demographics and assessment methodologies, informing targeted support interventions and counseling services for students grappling with mental health concerns.

Objective of the study

- To evaluate how well current support networks and interventions are working to address mental health issues among college students.
- To know if the students feel the need to seek professional help or counseling for mental health concerns.
- To examine the perception of students regarding mental health issues and the resources that are accessible to them.

Research gap

A significant research gap in studying mental health problems among college students lies in understanding the effectiveness and accessibility of mental health services tailored to their diverse needs. The ambiguity of current research prevents it from addressing issues like stigma and scarcity of resources that prevent students from seeking help.

Scope of the study

- The study was conducted for 110 respondents.
- The study was conducted withing the geographical boundaries of India

Research Methodology

Size of the study- The sample size from which we chose to collect the information was 110 students.

Source of data collection- Data collection utilized both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was acquired through a questionnaire, while secondary data includes information sourced from published research papers and articles.

Sampling Technique- We used a Simple Random Sampling method to gather data for our study. To understand how well current support networks and interventions are working to address mental health issues among college students, we gave a survey to 110 students using a fair method. This way, everyone had an equal chance to participate, giving us diverse views across different places. Our goal is to see if the colleges is providing adequate resources to students related to mental health issues.

To ensure our study reflects various perspectives, we included participants from different age groups. This diversity helps us uncover possible variations in preferences and experiences with mental health problems. By using a random sampling technique, we avoid biases and aim for a better understanding the perception of various students on mental health. The findings from this study will provide valuable insights to take a corrective action.

Data Analysis

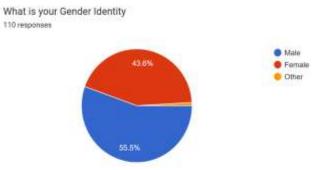
Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to extract useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. In the context to the study conducted, 'Mental Health Issues Among College Students,' data analysis involves examining the collected information from the questionnaire responded by 110 respondents. The collected data are coded and transferred to the master sheet separately and diagrams are drawn with available data.

- Pie charts
- Interpretation
- Analysis

Table: Showing the Gender wise distribution of respondents.

S.No	Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Male	61	55.5%
2	Female	48	43.6%
3	Other	1	0.9%
	Total	110	100%

ANALYSIS: The table reflects that 55.5% of the respondents are male and 43.6% of the respondents are females and 0.9% respondents who identify themselves as other.

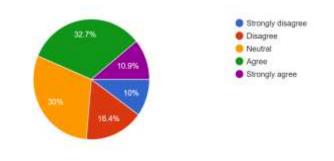


INTERPRETATION: From the above analysis it is inferred that 55.5% of the respondents are male.

Table 1: Showing how many students are experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression while attending college/ university.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	11	10%
2	Disagree	18	16.4%
3	Neutral	33	30%
4	Agree	36	32.7%
5	Strongly Agree	12	10.9%
	Total	110	100%

Analysis: This suggests that a notable portion of students (over a quarter) do not perceive themselves as experiencing significant levels of stress, anxiety, or depression while in college or university. This neutral stance could indicate uncertainty or a lack of clear identification with experiencing such symptoms, or it may imply that students have varying levels of awareness or acknowledgment of their mental health status. This suggests that a substantial portion of students (almost half) acknowledge experiencing these mental health challenges while attending college or university.



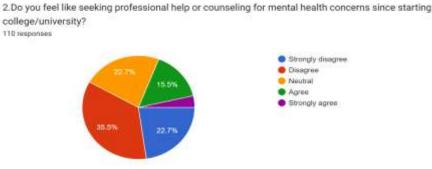
Do you experience symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression while attending college/university?
 110 responses

Interpretation: Approximately 26.4% of students (combining strongly disagree and disagree) express a lack of agreement with experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression. A significant proportion, 30%, of students feel neutral about experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression. Collectively, 43.6% of students (combining agree and strongly agree) indicate agreement with experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	25	22.7%
2	Disagree	39	35.5%
3	Neutral	25	22.7%
4	Agree	17	15.5%
5	Strongly Agree	4	3.6%
	Total	110	100%

Table 2: Showing the number of students willing to seek professional help or counseling for mental health concerns since starting college/university.

Analysis: This suggests that a majority of students are hesitant or resistant to the idea of seeking professional assistance for their mental health issues. This neutrality may stem from uncertainty, lack of awareness about available resources, or varying levels of comfort with the idea of seeking professional support. While this percentage is lower compared to those expressing reluctance, it still signifies a significant portion of students who are receptive to the idea of seeking professional support for their mental well-being.



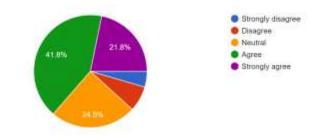
Interpretation: A combined total of 58.2% of students (summing strongly disagree and disagree) express a reluctance or unwillingness to seek professional help or counseling for mental health concerns since starting college or university. A notable proportion, 22.7%, of students feel neutral about seeking professional help or counseling for mental health concerns. Combined, 19.1% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) indicate a willingness or openness to seeking professional help or counseling for mental health concerns for mental health concerns since starting college or university.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	5	4.5%
2	Disagree	8	7.3%
3	Neutral	27	24.5%
4	Agree	46	41.8%
5	Strongly Agree	24	21.8%
	Total	110	100%

Table 3: Asking if they find their friends and peers helpful when it comes to discussing mental health issues?

Analysis: This suggests that a relatively small portion of students feel that their friends and peers are not supportive or helpful when it comes to discussing mental health concerns. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of comfort or effectiveness in discussing mental health topics with friends and peers, or it may indicate uncertainty about the extent of support available. This indicates that a significant majority of students find their friends and peers supportive and beneficial when it comes to discussing mental health concerns.

3.Do you find your friends and peers helpful when it comes to discussing mental health issues? 110 responses



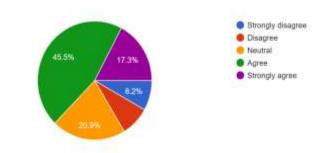
Interpretation: Combined, 11.8% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) indicate a lack of perceived helpfulness from their friends and peers when discussing mental health issues. A notable proportion, 24.5%, of students feel neutral about the helpfulness of their friends and peers when discussing mental health issues. Combined, 63.6% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) perceive their friends and peers as helpful when discussing mental health issues.

Table 4: Showing that overall culture at y	your college/university, impacts student's mental health	ι.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	9	8.2%
2	Disagree	9	8.2%
3	Neutral	23	20.9%
4	Agree	50	45.5%
5	Strongly Agree	19	17.3%
	Total	110	100%

Analysis: This suggests that a relatively small proportion of students do not perceive the overall culture of their institution as influential in shaping student mental health outcomes. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or understanding of how the institutional culture influences mental health outcomes among students. This indicates that a significant majority of students perceive the institutional culture as having a significant impact on student mental health outcomes.

4.Do you think the overall culture at your college/university, impacts student's mental health? 110 responses



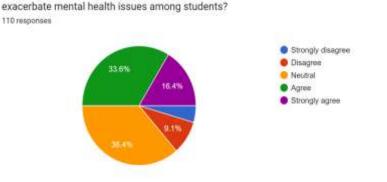
Interpretation: Combined, 16.4% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) indicate a lack of belief in the impact of the overall culture at their college/university on student's mental health. A notable proportion, 20.9%, of students feel neutral about the impact of the overall culture at their college/university on student's mental health. Combined, 62.8% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) believe that the overall culture at their college/university impacts student's mental health.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage	
1	Strongly Disagree	5	4.5%	
2	Disagree	10	9.1%	
3	Neutral	40	36.4%	
4	Agree	37	33.6%	
5	Strongly Agree	18	16.4\%	
	Total	110	100%	

Table 5: Are there any specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment exacerbate mental health issues among students.

Analysis: This indicates that a relatively small portion of students do not perceive any specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment as contributing to the exacerbation of mental health issues. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or understanding of the specific triggers or factors contributing to mental health challenges within the institutional setting. This indicates that a majority of students perceive the presence of specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment as contributing to the exacerbation of mental health issues among students.

5.Do you think that any specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment



Interpretation: Combined, 13.6% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) do not believe that specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment exacerbate mental health issues among students. A significant proportion, 36.4%, of students feel neutral about whether specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment exacerbate mental health issues among students. Combined, 50% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) believe that specific triggers or factors within the college/university environment exacerbate mental health issues among students.

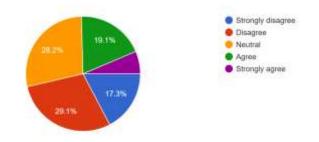
S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage	
1	Strongly Disagree	19	17.3%	
2	Disagree	32	29.1%	
3	Neutral	31	28.2%	
4	Agree	21	19.1%	
5	Strongly Agree	7	6.4%	
	Total	110	100%	

Table 6: Asking if any student has experienced stigma or judgment from others due to seeking help for mental health concerns while in college/university?

Analysis: This suggests that a significant portion of students have not encountered negative attitudes or perceptions from others regarding their decision to seek help for mental health issues while in college or university. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or perception of stigma or judgment from others, or it may reflect uncertainty about the extent of negative reactions experienced. This indicates that a minority of students have encountered negative attitudes or perceptions from others regarding their decision to seek help for mental health issues while in college or university.

6.Have you experienced stigma or judgment from others due to seeking help for mental health concerns while in college/university?

110 responses



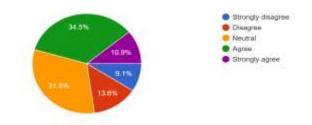
Interpretation: Combined, 46.4% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) have not experienced stigma or judgment from others due to seeking help for mental health concerns. A notable proportion, 28.2%, of students feel neutral about whether they have experienced stigma or judgment from others due to seeking help for mental health concerns. Combined, 25.5% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) have experienced stigma or judgment from others due to seeking help for mental health concerns.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	10	9.1%
2	Disagree	15	13.6%
3	Neutral	35	31.8%
4	Agree	38	34.5%
5	Strongly Agree	12	10.9%
	Total	110	100%

Table 7: Does your college/university addresses mental health struggles and provides support to students.

Analysis: This suggests that a notable portion of students feel that their college/university falls short in addressing mental health concerns and providing adequate support to students. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or perception of the mental health support services and initiatives offered by their institution, or it may reflect uncertainty about the effectiveness of these efforts. This indicates that a majority of students perceive their college/university as actively addressing mental health concerns and providing support to students.



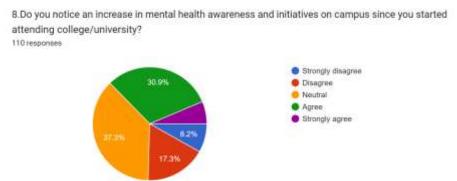


Interpretation: Combined, 22.7% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) do not believe that their college/university adequately addresses mental health struggles and provides support to students. A significant proportion, 31.8%, of students feel neutral about whether their college/university addresses mental health struggles and provides support to students. Combined, 45.4% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) believe that their college/university addresses mental health struggles and provides support to students.

Table 8: Have they noticed an increase in mental health awareness and initiatives on campus since they started attending college/university.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	9	8.2%
2	Disagree	19	17.3%
3	Neutral	41	37.3%
4	Agree	34	30.9%
5	Strongly Agree	7	6.4%
	Total	110	100%

Analysis: This suggests that a notable portion of students feel that there has not been sufficient improvement or attention to mental health awareness and initiatives on campus during their time at college or university. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or perception of mental health initiatives and activities on campus, or it may reflect uncertainty about the extent of change over time. This indicates that a majority of students perceive a positive change or improvement in mental health awareness and initiatives on campus during their time at college or university.

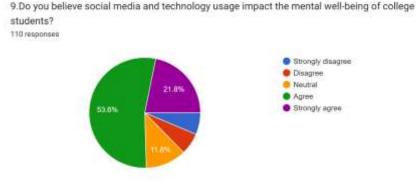


Interpretation: Combined, 25.5% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) do not perceive an increase in mental health awareness and initiatives on campus since they started attending college/university. A significant proportion, 37.3%, of students feel neutral about whether there has been an increase in mental health awareness and initiatives on campus since they started attending college/university. Combined, 37.3% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) believe that there has been an increase in mental health awareness and initiatives on campus since they started attending college/university.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage	
1	Strongly Disagree	7	6.4%	
2	Disagree	7	6.4%	
3	Neutral	13	11.8%	
4	Agree	59	53.6%	
5	Strongly Agree	24	21.8%	
	Total	110	100%	

Table 9: Social media and technology usage impact the mental well-being of college students.

Analysis: This suggests that a notable portion of students do not perceive a significant correlation between social media and technology usage and the mental well-being of college students. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of awareness or understanding of the potential impact of social media and technology on mental health, or it may reflect uncertainty about the extent of influence. This indicates that a majority of students perceive a correlation between social media and technology usage and the mental well-being of college students, with varying degrees of certainty.



Interpretation: Combined, 25.5% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) do not believe that social media and technology usage impact the mental well-being of college students. A significant proportion, 37.3%, of students feel neutral about whether social media and technology usage impact the mental well-being of college students. Combined, 37.3% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) believe that social media and technology usage impact the mental well-being of college students.

Table 10: Showing if students are comfortable of	liscussing mental health	h openly with faculty or staff	members at your college/university.

S.No	Choices	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	17	15.5%
2	Disagree	29	26.4%
3	Neutral	36	32.7%
4	Agree	24	21.8%
5	Strongly Agree	4	3.6%
	Total	110	100%

Analysis: This suggests that a significant portion of students feel uncomfortable or hesitant about engaging in discussions about mental health with faculty or staff members. This neutrality may stem from varying levels of comfort or past experiences with faculty or staff members regarding mental health discussions, or it may reflect uncertainty about the level of support and understanding. This indicates that a minority of students feel comfortable engaging in open discussions about mental health with faculty or staff members, with a smaller percentage feeling strongly comfortable.

10. Do you feel comfortable discussing mental health openly with faculty or staff members at your



Interpretation: Combined, 41.9% of students (comprising strongly disagree and disagree) do not feel comfortable discussing mental health openly with faculty or staff members at their college/university. A notable proportion, 32.7%, of students feel neutral about discussing mental health openly with faculty or staff members at their college/university. Combined, 25.4% of students (comprising agree and strongly agree) feel comfortable discussing mental health openly with faculty or staff members at their college/university.

Finding of the study

- Most students admit to having symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression, although a sizable percentage are neutral. A notable proportion of
 students don't think they're dealing with serious stress, anxiety, or depressive symptoms.
- Most students don't think they need to get counseling or professional assistance for mental health issues. But several of the students say that
 after enrolling in college or university, they have been willing or open to obtaining professional assistance or therapy.
- When talking about mental health difficulties, most students think that their friends and peers can be of assistance. Only a small percentage of
 respondents said they didn't think their friends and classmates were very helpful during these conversations.
- The vast majority of students think that their college or university's general culture has an effect on student's mental health. Nonetheless, a
 sizeable fraction maintains a neutral stance regarding the influence of institutional culture on mental health.
- According to half of the students, certain triggers or elements of the college or university setting make mental health problems worse. A
 comparatively small percentage believe that there are no particular causes or variables that exacerbate mental health problems.
- Most students who have sought care for mental health issues have not encountered stigma or condemnation from others. Nonetheless, a few
 students have encountered discrimination or disapproval from others in this context.
- While many students feel that their institution or university does not do enough to address mental health issues, most do not think so. Regarding the suitability of institutional support for mental health issues, a sizable fraction has a neutral stance.
- Many students do not believe that since they began attending college or university, there has been a rise in mental health awareness and activities on campus. The majority do, however, believe that efforts and awareness surrounding mental health on campus have improved or changed for the better.
- A sizeable percentage of students do not think that using technology and social media negatively affects college students' mental health. Nonetheless, most believe there is a link between college students' mental health and their use of social media and other technology.
- Many students are uncomfortable having an honest conversation about mental health with teachers or professionals. Few students are at ease having candid conversations about mental health issues with teachers or staff.

Suggestions

- It's critical to de-stigmatize and make counseling services more widely available to students, as many may not realize when they need professional help. Encouraging students to seek help when required can be achieved by including mental health resources into academic advising and providing counseling sessions as part of orientation programs.
- Considering that students frequently feel more at ease talking about mental health issues with friends and peers, it can be quite helpful to encourage peer support networks and provide safe environments for candid discussions. Peer-led workshops, awareness campaigns, and support groups can all contribute to lessen the stigma associated with mental health concerns and promote an environment of understanding and care for one another.

- It's critical to recognize how institutional culture affects students' mental health. Establishing supportive settings that encourage overall wellbeing should be a top priority for colleges and universities. This may entail putting in place laws that support work-life balance, stressreduction plans, and campaigns for mental health education.
- For mental health services to be effective, it is imperative to comprehend the stressors and triggers unique to college or university environments. Institutions should carry out routine evaluations to spot possible triggers and put plans in place to lessen their effects. This can entail offering tools for stress relief, coping mechanisms, and time management.
- Raising awareness of social media's and technology's potential effects on mental health is crucial, especially in light of their ubiquitous
 presence. Students can minimize the negative impacts of technology on their mental health and create a balanced relationship with it by
 participating in seminars on digital detoxification, receiving resources on digital well-being, and being encouraged to adopt healthy
 technological practices.
- Breaking down barriers and fostering a supportive campus environment can be achieved by encouraging students, professors, and staff to have honest and open talks regarding mental health. Students might feel supported and understood if teachers and staff are trained in identifying and assisting distressed students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the information gleaned from students' viewpoints regarding mental health in college or university settings highlights how crucial it is to place a high priority on overall wellbeing and create supportive environments. Institutions can better meet the varied needs of their students by destigmatizing counselling services, encouraging peer support networks, and realizing the influence of institutional culture on mental health. Promoting general well-being also requires recognizing and addressing triggers particular to academic settings as well as increasing public awareness of the negative effects of technology on mental health. Colleges and universities may build inclusive communities where students feel empowered to prioritize their mental health by encouraging open communication and dismantling obstacles. Accepting these recommendations can help create a more resilient and caring campus environment where students can succeed academically, emotionally, and socially.

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