

Flourishing with the Emotional Challenges and Stressors Associated with College

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Abstract

This informational exhibit reviews the current information regarding college student emotional well-being and attempts to explain how students can flourish with the emotional challenges and stressors associated with college. The variables that tend to have the greatest impact on the overall emotional well-being are discussed as coping mechanisms, social support systems, and resilience. Reviewing this literature is important as it is becoming increasingly more evident that college student emotional well-being is a major concern.

Introduction

Students' ability to flourish is subjected to stressors and emotional challenges. Common stressors include: change in social activities, work with people you do not know, change in sleeping habits, change in sleeping habits, increased class workload, lower grade than anticipated, placed in unfamiliar situation, change in living environment (Acharya et al., 2018).

We can think of human well-being or flourishing as mental and physical health. Measures of flourishing include happiness and life satisfaction, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships (VanderWeele, 2017). Psychologists link emotional well-being to human flourishing (Courtwright et al., 2019).

Variables that have the greatest impact on the overall emotional well-being of students: coping mechanisms, social support systems, and resilience.

The purpose of this paper is to review the essential information and skills for students to cope with the stressors and flourish in college. This research is important for students because "During this time period, 12-25% suffer from a diagnosable psychological disorder" (Huenergarde (2018, p. 41).

Coping Mechanisms and Flourishing

Coping mechanisms, or stress management, are ways in which individuals seek to regulate their emotions and reactions to stress (Neely et al., 2009). In order for a student to flourish, it is vital that healthy coping mechanisms are present. Some include self-compassion or self-kindness, goal regulation, meditation, and walking.

One who is early in the development of healthy coping mechanisms, will resort to common unhealthy coping mechanisms (Böke et al., 2019). These include, alcohol and substance use, overindulging in poor eating or sleeping habits, or resorting to other external resources.

Social Support Systems and Flourishing

Supportive attributes are what counts towards the ability to flourish. For example, a network of trusting relationships with supportive friends, family, romantic partner, or counselor. More than two-thirds of students do not seek professional help (Huenergarde, 2018).

Various factors affecting whether or not students will seek professional help: social influences, cultural differences, stigmas, and gender (Huenergarde, 2018). Recent research shows the effectiveness of seeking professional help in reducing stress.

Resilience and Flourishing

Resilience "refers to a pattern of functioning indicative of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity" (Guimarães, 2018, p. 1146).

Resilience relates to the ability to flourish in the sense that without it, it would be significantly more troublesome to maintain or sought out social support systems and cope with stressors.

Conclusion

There is evidence that shows the overwhelming need for mental health services. With that being said, mental health professionals are overwhelmed.

An emphasis needs to be placed on utilizing counseling services because psychological difficulties impact academic performance. Students must do their part by seeking help from a professional counselor if necessary.

The help of positive coping mechanisms and a social support system goes a long way, as well as the ability to be resilient.

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