Alleviating Depression and Anxiety through Wellness Promotion

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Current Model

- Mental health is viewed as an individual concern
- We’ve moved from seeing it as a moral problem to a medical model
- Individual treatment is viewed as the primary solution (medication and/or therapy)
A large NIMH study found that almost half of us (46%) met the criteria for at least one mental illness in our lifetime.
2015 NCHA data

- 35% felt so depressed it was difficult to function
- 57% felt overwhelming anxiety
- 9% seriously considered suicide
Mental Health Promotion

- Design and implement large scale interventions that lead to mood and behavior change
- Promote cultural change.
- More than outreach and awareness
Treatment & Wellness Promotion

The diagram illustrates a comparison between ill and well states.

- The ill state is represented by a bar at 10 units below the baseline.
- The well state is represented by a bar at 10 units above the baseline.

This suggests a significant difference between the two states, with the well state being more positive by 20 units compared to the ill state.
Prevention & Resiliency

- By teaching resiliency, stress management and wellness skills we can prevent mental health problems from occurring in the first place or speed recovery.

- Prevention is less measurable. If we prevent a suicide, how can we measure something that doesn’t happen?
Prevention Pays

I wish you had come to me sooner.

Happy B'day, Ralph!
The Wellness Challenge

An example of a scalable mental health intervention

4 weeks of engaging in wellness practices based on weekly themes of:

- Physical Wellness
- Emotional Wellness
- Spiritual Wellness
- Social Wellness
Participants

- 149 participants completed the Wellness Challenge!
  - 110 Students
  - 36 Staff
  - 3 Faculty

- Last year 55 participants completed
  - 30 Students
  - 22 Staff
  - 3 Faculty
Actively pursuing the goal of taking care of myself is a clear signal to myself that I'm worth something-- while the various activities were incredibly helpful in their own ways, I think overall just saying to myself that I'm worth spending my own energy on is incredibly powerful.
The slides show **student** results in comparison to the student control group.

**Participants**
- $n=110$ at post-assessment
- $n=94$ at 7-week follow-up

**Control group**
- $n=71$ at post-assessment
- $n=51$ at 7-week follow-up
## GAD-7 Measures

**Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?**

(Use “✔” to indicate your answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not being able to stop or control worrying</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Worrying too much about different things</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Trouble relaxing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Probable Anxiety Disorder

Percentage of students who met criteria for an anxiety disorder

Significance Level at follow-up .000
**PHQ-9**

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

*Use ✔ to indicate your answer*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Feeling tired or having little energy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Poor appetite or overeating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Feeling bad about yourself, or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite — being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mild to Severe Depression

**Significance Level at follow-up**

- **pre**
- **post**
- **follow-up**

- **participants**
- **control**

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks

Significance Level at follow-up: .000
I generally felt better, more well, during the past month than the majority of my time at the College.
Felt Dissatisfied with my Social Life

Significance Level at follow-up .000
Felt I didn't belong at Amherst

Significance Level at follow-up
.007
Felt very lonely

Significance Level at follow-up
.000
Felt dissatisfied with my experience as a student at Amherst

Significance Level at follow-up: .000
Felt Stressed/Overwhelmed by all I had to do

Significance Level at follow-up: **.000**
“I can only perform to my highest potential when I am being kind to my mind and body.”

“I learned how much attending to these aspects of wellness make me a happier and more productive person.”
The Math

- Amherst College has 1,800 students. Last year 6% of the student body completed the Challenge. This year I hope to get a 15% participation rate.

- Significantly reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression at completion Challenge

- Significantly prevented anxiety, depression and overwhelm at 7-week follow-up
Physical Wellness
Integrating Wellness Practices
Spiritual Wellness

Finding (or making) purpose and meaning in our lives and what we do.

What do you see as most meaningful in the work you do?

What is your work mission?

How can you connect with this more?
Integrating Wellness Practices
Social Wellness
Integrating Wellness Practices
Emotional Wellness
Integrating Wellness Practices
“I realized that there are many interesting ways to make your mental, physical and emotional state better and healthier. There are exercises that help us feel much better about ourselves and thus we are better to people around us so everyone benefits. Plus they are fun and you feel like you’re doing something that is RIGHT.”
Appendix A

Additional GAD-7 results
Feeling Nervous, Anxious or On Edge

Significance Level at follow-up

Significance Level at follow-up

participants

control

Significance Level at follow-up

0.000
Not being able to stop or control worrying

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks

Significance Level at follow-up

.000
Worrying Too Much About Different Things

- **Significance Level at follow-up**: $0.000$

- **Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks**
  - **Participants**: pre, post, follow-up
  - **Control**: pre, post, follow-up
Trouble Relaxing

Significance Level at follow-up

0.000
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen

Participants and control groups were compared for the percentage who experienced this feeling for at least several days in the past 2 weeks. The significance level at follow-up was 0.004.
Becoming Easily Annoyed or Irritated

The bar chart shows the percentage of participants and control groups who experienced being easily annoyed or irritated for at least several days in the past 2 weeks, categorized by pre, post, and follow-up. The significance level at follow-up is indicated as .000.
Being so Restless That It Is Hard To Sit Still

Significance Level at follow-up: \( .000 \)

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks:
- Pre: 10%
- Post: 15%
- Follow-up: 30%
Appendix B

Additional PHQ-9 Results
Little Interest or Pleasure in Doing Things

Significance Level at follow-up: .000
Feeling Down, Depressed or Hopeless

**Significance Level at follow-up**

- **pre**
- **post**
- **follow-up**

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks:

- Participants:
  - Pre: [Value]
  - Post: [Value]
  - Follow-up: [Value]

- Control:
  - Pre: [Value]
  - Post: [Value]
  - Follow-up: [Value]
Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much

Significance Level at follow-up: .001
Feeling Tired or Having Little Energy

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks

Significance Level at follow-up: .000

Participants and Control Groups Compared:
- **Pre**: Pre-intervention data
- **Post**: Post-intervention data
- **Follow-up**: Data collected after intervention

The chart shows a significant increase in the percentage experiencing tiredness or lack of energy in the control group at follow-up compared to participants.
Poor Appetite or Overeating

Significance Level at follow-up \( .001 \)

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks

- **Participants**
  - Pre: 15%
  - Post: 10%
  - Follow-up: 5%

- **Control**
  - Pre: 5%
  - Post: 10%
  - Follow-up: 40%
Feeling bad about yourself - or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down

Significance Level at follow-up

participants

control

Significance Level at follow-up

.003
Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television

Percentage who experienced for at least several days in past 2 weeks

Significance Level at follow-up: .000
Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or hurting yourself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Control</th>
<th>Significance Level at follow-up</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
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