Wellness Writing in Classrooms and Residence Halls: Reduce Stress and Anxiety Through Journal Prompts

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The Problem

- One in three college students reported prolonged periods of depression
- 91% of OSU students have reported feeling overwhelmed
- Half of college students rated their mental health below average
- 70% of college counseling center directors believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems on their campuses has increased

Proven Benefits of Journaling

- Promotes stronger immune systems
- Used to treat people with eating disorders, depression, addiction and other problems with psychological roots
- Helps students with text anxiety to boost performance
- Supports soldiers suffering from PTSD or post-combat stress via Ft. Bragg’s Warrior Transition Battalion
- Is mentally beneficial when expressing gratitude in writing

Supporting Research


Methods

- Engaged with 72 undergraduates and 3 graduate students
- Conducted workshops in Lincoln Tower, Scott House, Barrett House and UCAT book group
- Worked with ENG 4189 Capstone Internship and ENG 5194 Career Preparation students
- Discussed rising concern over mental illness on college campuses and asked about their experiences
- Shared scientifically proven benefits of journaling
- Provided six prompt options and allowed for one 10-minute writing session (classes) or two 10-minute sessions (workshops)
- Led post-journaling discussions, requested email addresses and sent electronic surveys

Anecdotal Evidence

“I have anxiety … these prompts gave me tools to cope.” – Anonymous
“Frequent journaling has improved my mood and outlook” – Grace Lower, English
“I felt more at peace with myself” – Sara Grybowski, Mechanical Engineering
“I felt a wave of relief” and my mind was made up (about whether to graduate on time or stay at OSU to finish a minor).” – Monica Eckford, Strategic Communication
“I’m not as freaked out (about a bad grade on a chemistry test) as when I came in.” – Abby Simon, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
“The wellness prompts helped me cope when my Seasonal Affective Disorder flared up” – Anon.
“Your journaling program … helped me process (the loss of a friend)” – Julia Fletcher, Fisher

Statistical Results

- 100% stated they are “More likely to turn to journaling during times of anxiety, stress or uncertainty.”
- 97% reported lower anxiety/stress levels after the session
- 97% are in favor of Wellness Writing as part of class curricula

Journaling Sessions Reduced Stress and Anxiety Levels

Students ranked their pre- and post-session stress/anxiety levels on a 0-10 scale, with 10 being highest stress/anxiety level.

With Gratitude To

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