

WELLNESS IS KEY

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in four students has a diagnosable illness and 40 percent of those students do not seek help. Mental health can be a taboo topic to discuss socially. To combat these statistics, college students could be targeted with a health campaign focused on managing stress with an emphasis on staying active. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America cites the most common symptoms of anxiety as a lack of sleep, poor performance in school and substance abuse. If this problem is not addressed, students will become more anxious and struggle in school. The causes of these factors are due to college students feeling pressured and overwhelmed by their responsibilities.

The target audience in this program will be college students and young adults ages 18-25. Additional audiences that could help bring about change would be university health and wellness officials, teachers and parents.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
College students will be easily reached with a highly saturated social media campaign using real life stories from those who have mental health issues	If students are unwilling or scared to talk about this program, it could impact the implementation and success of the campaign.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Utilizing real stories will most likely change college students behaviors toward and awareness of mental health issues. Along with real stories, the campaign will implement ways to ask and search for treatment.	Students who already feel overwhelmed may not feel like there is worth in asking for help.

CAUSES & COPING MECHANISMS

The lives of college students are infiltrated with personal, family and social stresses. From keeping up with inundated social media timelines to making good grades and succeeding after college, stress and anxiety impacts almost all college students. This intense stress causes negative impact on a student's psychological and mental health (Gubata, Urban, Cowan & Niebur, 2013). Some coping mechanisms are listening to music, sleeping, and exercising.

Past research suggests that physical activity is a direct way to reduce anxiety and stress (Baghurst & Kelley, 2013). It seems that people who are more active tend to exhibit less signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety. Many students have learned to deal with their stress. Research shows that college students who have a high tolerance for stress are significantly more likely to take part in physical activity as a coping mechanism (Bland, Melton, Welle & Bigham, 2012).

Students are more likely to engage in physical activity if their friends are doing it, too. Those who do not identify themselves as avid exercisers are more likely to be physically active if their friends' demonstrate positive attitudes about maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Yun & Silk, 2011). This could be classified as a type of positive peer pressure. The strategic approach of this campaign will utilize stories of college students who have used being physically active to combat mental health issues, such as stress and anxiety.

MARKET RESEARCH

This research project aims to discover if those who exercise on a regular basis feel less stress and anxiety. The research will aid in a health communication campaign targeted toward college-aged individuals. Fifty-three participants willingly participated in an online study conducted by the researcher. The questionnaire began by asking the participants about their exercise habits. Questions about stress and anxiety came next. For example, participants were asked to list the effects they feel from stress and how they relieve this stress. The survey concluded with demographic questions, such as age, level of education, gender and geographic location.

The online questionnaire was distributed to students at a Midwestern university and on the researcher's social media websites. A total of 53 people were surveyed. Responses came from Florida, Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas. The survey was completely voluntary and anonymous.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ 1: Does an increase in exercise help relieve anxiety in college-aged students?

RQ 2: What type of programs can universities implement to help relieve stress and anxiety in college students?

RQ 3: How stressed are college students on a daily basis during the school year?

RQ 4: What could schools provide to students to help lower and/or manage stress?

DATA COLLECTION

1. Do you feel you get too much exercise, too little exercise, or about the right amount of exercise?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Much too much | Slightly too little |
| Somewhat too much | Somewhat too little |
| Slightly too much | Much too little |
| About the right amount | |

2. How important is exercise to you?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

3. In a typical week, how many days do you exercise?

- I don't regularly exercise
- 1 to 2 days a week
- 3 to 4 days a week
- 5 to 7 days a week

4. In the past 30 days, how many times did you exercise for at least 30 minutes?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Not at all | 9 to 12 times |
| 1 to 4 times | More than 12 times |
| 5 to 8 times | |

5. What types of exercise do you typically do? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Lift Weights | Pilates |
| Walk | Play a team sport |
| Run | Aerobics |
| Hike | Yoga |
| Dance | Swim |
| I don't typically exercise. | |
| Other (please specify) | |

DATA COLLECTION

7. In general, how would you rate your overall health?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

8. On the scale below, 1 being not stressed at all and 100 being the most stressed, please indicate how stressed you feel on a daily basis during the school year.

9. What effects do you feel from stress? Select all that apply.

- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Insomnia
- Over Eating
- Lower Grades
- Mood Swings
- Other (please specify)

10. How do you relieve your stress? Check all that apply.

- Eating
- Shopping (online or in store)
- Sleeping
- Browse Social Media
- Drinking
- Computer/Video Games
- Drugs
- Meditation
- Exercise
- Other (please specify)

11. During the past 4 weeks, how bothered did you feel by emotional problems such as feeling anxious, depressed, irritable, or sad?

- Extremely bothered
- Very bothered
- Somewhat bothered
- Not so bothered
- Not bothered at all

DATA COLLECTION

12. What are the causes of stress in your life? Check all that apply.

School/Grades	Money
Family/Friends	Work
Health Issues	Significant Other
Time Management	Not getting enough exercise
Other (please specify)	

13. What is something your school or work organization could provide to you to help lower/manage stress?

14. What is your gender?

15. What is your age?

16. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

18. In what state or U.S. territory do you live?

RESULTS & SUMMARY

The majority of respondents noted that they feel they get slightly too little or much too little exercise. On a scale from one (being not stressed at all) to 100 (being the most stressed), during the school year the average number was 61. This shows that students are stressed over 50 percent of the time during the school year. The majority of respondents listed eating, sleeping, exercise and browsing social media as the key ways to relieve this stress.

The main causes of stress in their lives are work, money, time management, school and grades and family and friends. This aligns with the research from Pamela Aselton (2012) who found that the main causes of depression in college students are roommate issues, academic problems, financial and career concerns and pressure from family to perform well in school.

When prompted to list a way that their school or work organization could help to lower and/or manage stress and anxiety, many responded with things such as “less work,” “paid time to exercise,” “less emphasis on test grades,” “take into account you are also taking four other classes,” “encourage mental health awareness more,” and “less demanding course work.”

With the majority of college students feeling stressed or anxious during the school year, universities should employ different ways to aid in reducing those mental health issues.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Target Audience Segmentation

The primary audience of this campaign is people of all races and ethnicities who are between 18-25 years old. Ideally, they will be in college or be recent college graduates. The behavior determinates that distinguish “doers” from “non-doers” are eating healthy and regularly exercising. The “non-doers” seem to be more susceptible to feeling stress and anxiety. I would allocate a limited amount of resources to targeting health officials at universities. Many of them interact with the primary target audience of college students. Those who are at risk will be receptive to persuasive messages and will have a high readiness to change.

Current & Desired Behaviors

The primary audience of this campaign is people of all races and ethnicities who are between 18-25 years old. Ideally, they will be in college or be recent college graduates. The behavior determinates that distinguish “doers” from “non-doers” are eating healthy and regularly exercising. The “non-doers” seem to be more susceptible to feeling stress and anxiety. I would allocate a limited amount of resources to targeting health officials at universities. Many of them interact with the primary target audience of college students. Those who are at risk will be receptive to persuasive messages and will have a high readiness to change.

Prioritize Health Factors

The majority of my respondents noted that they feel they get slightly too little exercise. This could factor in to them feeling stressed on a daily basis during the school year. The largest health factor this campaign will focus on is how students relieve their stress. My survey found that the majority copes with stress and anxiety by sleeping browsing social media. This campaign aims to change those coping mechanisms to healthier behaviors, such as physical activity. Although sleeping is good for you, it can also be detrimental.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

The largest potential benefit is for the target audience to start to maintain a healthy lifestyle to combat stress. The benefits they get for adopting this behavior are a greater sense of mental and physical wellbeing. A possible barrier that could deter them is self-doubt and lack of time management.

The survey found that most students were overwhelmed by the amount of coursework demanded of them. They could continue to leave out addressing their mental health when they have issues that seem more pressing, such as work or studying for exams. The target audience wants professors and employers to understand when they are expecting too much of them.

CAMPAIGN GOALS

The goal of this campaign is to help college-aged students manage stress by being physical active. The information channels that will be used are social media, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The goal is to change college student's attitudes and how they handle anxiety and life pressures by providing a healthy outlet for their stress.

A potential barrier in reaching these goals is fighting for college students' time. We want the students to exchange their time to change behaviors by encouraging physical activity and mental well-being.

INTERVENTION TACTICS

Although social media can have a solid organic reach, certain platforms, such as Facebook, believe in a “pay-to-play” business model. The majority of the advertising dollars budget will be utilized on targeted Facebook and Twitter advertisements.

Budget

\$2,500 will be dedicated to this campaign. \$1,500 will be spent on promoted Facebook posts, and \$500 will be spent for sponsored Twitter posts. The remaining \$500 will be saved for additional costs, such as email marketing software and the purchase of a domain.

Social Media Ad Preview

—
Don't stress! Start your school year on the right foot with these FREE wellness planning goals.



👍 Like

💬 Comment

Timeline

The time frame given to start seeing change is one school year, from July 1 to June 30. Because it will take time for our target audience to receive our message, one year is an adequate, measurable time frame. The social media campaign will begin on July 1. The first round of messages will focus on starting off the school year right.

Starting in July, instead of January, will give the campaign a solid start. Because wellness is such a huge focus at the beginning of every year, circling back to that topic in July will refresh any of the target audience’s wellness goals that were set at the beginning of the year. Plus, this age group is already so heavily targeted by ads for workout plans and smartphone applications.

INTERVENTION TACTICS

To supplement the social media campaign, the website will house blog posts and additional wellness tips. There will also be an email sign up link to encourage users to subscribe to our newsletter. The newsletter will be sent out at the first of each month, with different key messages regarding health and wellness.



Blog Topics

- Quick Workouts for Any Day of the Week
- For a Stress Free Life, Try Exercise
- How to Talk to Your Doctor About Your Mental Health



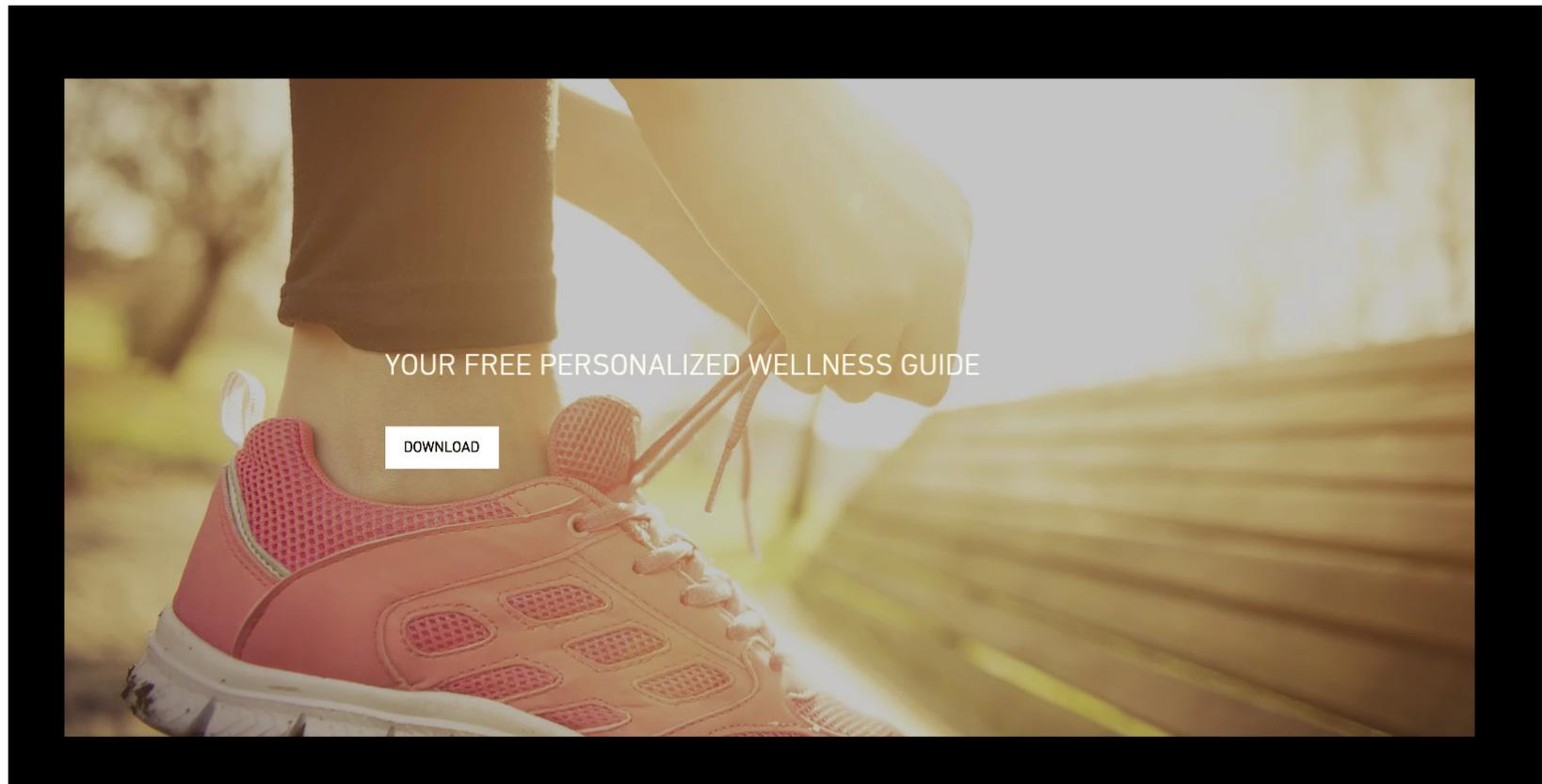
Subscribe

Submit

INTERVENTION TACTICS

The social media posts will link to a website that houses an excel spreadsheet set up as a calendar. Before they download the calendar, they will be prompted to answer three short questions regarding stress and mental health. The calendar will have a week of suggested workouts, but the user can download it to edit to be more personalized to him or her.

The survey research suggested that college students feel overwhelmed the majority of the school year. Having these calendars readily available to students, no matter where they are in their wellness journey, will take the planning component out of the picture. They will benefit from the ease of the ability to download the calendars. Hopefully, we will be able to track the amount of downloads the calendar receives. We will be able to contact those users who supplied their emails with a survey a few months later to measure stress levels and fitness goals.



EVALUATION PLAN

To verify the program is being implemented in the correct manner, impressions will be monitored while the social media advertisements are live to identify how well the program is reaching our target audience. Any qualitative responses, such as comments or replies, will be addressed. The team will either “like” the message or formulate a reply. Any comments regarding our websites or emails received will also generate a response from us to the user.

Quantitative data consists of link clicks and conversions. A conversion occurs when a user clicks on the ad and then proceeds to take action the page. Each ad will link to a page with options to download or donate. To download the calendar, the user will have to answer a short, one-page survey that asks for their email.

MEASUREMENT

Social media monitoring software, such as Hootsuite, will help us measure metrics such as impressions and engagements, along with in-depth analytics. With the free version of Hootsuite, we can connect our social media profiles to help manage our account. Monitoring keywords and relative hashtags gives us a glimpse into what our target audience is thinking.

To measure website traffic, Google Analytics will show us our most visited pages, the amount of time users are spent on each page and the bounce rate of each page. To ensure our wellness calendar that can be used, more quantitative data can be collected with a survey distributed to those who download our wellness calendar from the website. A final book with all reports and analytics will be presented at the conclusion of the campaign.

Evaluation Questions

- How many conversions do we receive each month?
- How many impressions do we garner each month?
- What questions have we received?
- What are our engagement levels on social media?

SOURCES

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