Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on UMT Students' Mental Health

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The Effects of COVID-19 on University of Montana Students’ Mental Health

The University of Montana Franke Global Leadership Initiative
Team Members

Liza Donier - Marketing, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Digital Marketing

Elaine Chandler - Finance and management information systems

Kat Liston - Marketing Major, Music Minor

Haylie Peacock - Media Arts - Filmmaking, Spanish

Talia Randle - Dance and Psychology

Kit Smith - Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology

Sami Sykes - Criminology, Communications, Forensic Science

JT Vineyard - Music Composition, Media Arts, Entertainment Management
Purpose + Goals

- Little research has been completed on pandemics in relation to the mental health of university students
- Determine the major effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on University of Montana students’ mental health
- Educate the greater UM community on these effects
- Ultimate goal: Make recommendations based on our findings to the University of Montana and other local institutions that will further support students’ mental health
How we collected information?

Methods

- Created a quantitative data analysis in the form of an online survey to determine how the pandemic has affected University of Montana students
- Conducted live interviews over Zoom to gather qualitative data from students around the U.S. and internationally.

Survey

- Anonymous digital survey to only University of Montana students
- 23 Demographic Questions
- 29 Study Questions

Interviews

- Interviews conducted by all group members to various university students from the U.S. and other countries such as Kazakhstan, Sweden, etc.
- Interview questions preselected
Main Research Question:
- What effects has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the mental health of University of Montana students?

Sub Questions:
- What have been the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on University of Montana students?
- What have been the academic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on University of Montana students?
- How have University of Montana students’ routines, relationships, and health been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
Corona University: the Mini-Documentary

● In order to make recommendations, we figured that learning what has and hasn’t worked in other places would be in order.
● Reached out to friends we made while studying abroad, as well as some UM students and interviewed them.
  ○ Global Perspective
  ○ Qualitative information
● Interviews + Survey Data = Mini Documentary
  ○ Why?
  ○ Where?
Demographic Results

- 56.6% are third - fourth year college students
- 62.1% identify as female
- 85.4% are Caucasian
- 84.8% are between the ages of 18 and 24
- 37.4% have diagnosed mental illnesses, 23.2% have undiagnosed mental illnesses
- 97.5% of those who have mental illness said they feel impaired in some way because of it, with 68.4% being moderately to significantly impaired
Mental Health Impacts on Students

61.7% felt guilt for engaging in activities that used to be routine

77.7% felt anxiety, fear, or worry

23.2% considered therapy, 10% started therapy, and 17% continued therapy

67.7% indicated that their desire or motivation to do things they enjoy increased

60.6% indicated that important relationships were negatively affected

55.6% indicated that their spending habits have changed, with 22% becoming more concerned about money

29.0% report sleeping less, 52% feel less healthy, and 33% reported that their substance use has increased.
What have been the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on University of Montana students?

- 19.1% had rent increase since the Pandemic began
- 35.4% have lost hours at a job due to the Pandemic
- 15.2% lost a job due to the Pandemic
- 28.8% had utility expenses increase since the Pandemic began
- 41.4% considered withdrawing from the school year to work full time
- 13.1% applied for unemployment and never received it
- 63.1% never received a stimulus check
### Does stress due to the Pandemic affect any aspects of your academic studies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>Motivation to do homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>Ability to focus during online classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>Frustration with how your classes are being taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>Guilt for spending money on school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>Feelings that you should be studying instead of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>Feelings that you should be working instead of studying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How have University of Montana students’ routines, relationships, and health been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>said their physical activity levels have decreased since the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>said their weight has increased as a direct result of the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>said their substance use has increased as a direct result of the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>said &quot;how healthy they feel&quot; has decreased slightly as a direct result of the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>started therapy due to the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>considered starting therapy due to the Pandemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

- Expand access to mental health professionals at Curry.
- Publicize current mental health facilities.
- Increase access and awareness of scholarships.
- Expand access to emergency grants.
- Professors actively adapting course requirements based on student feedback.
- Pause increases in student rent and other fees.
- Decrease required student screen time, increase incorporation of alternative learning methods
Thank You!

If you have questions, you can contact Haylie Peacock at:

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