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
Research Questions

● **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?
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?

- 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.
- 13.1% applied for unemployment and never received it.
- 63.1% never received a stimulus check.
- 41.4% considered withdrawing from the school year to work full time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Aspect</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>Description</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 “how healthy they feel” 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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