

The Need for Holistic Well-Being in Higher Education

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Abstract: This project was created to help support students through the many challenges they may face throughout college. College students are under incredible levels of stress. The American College Health Association (2017) found that 45.1% of college students reported experiencing higher than average levels of stress, and 12% reported tremendous amounts of stress. Similarly, 87% of students felt overwhelmed with responsibilities within the last year, and 84% felt mentally exhausted (American College Health Association, 2017). Outside of the United States, Robotham (2008) examined various studies regarding the levels of stress for college students and found that stress levels are increasing. The most common stressors rated by students as “traumatic or very difficult to handle” were academics (47.5%), finances (31.8%), intimate relationships (30.9%), and sleep problems (30%). College students face physical, social, and mental changes. College students consistently face difficulties due to academic pressure, adaptation to new environments, fear of failure, struggle to create uniqueness, inferiority, and attaining social familiarity (Yikealo, Yemane, & Karvinen, 2018). With increased levels of stress and anxiety, learning can be impaired. Stress and anxiety can hinder attentiveness, recall, and critical thinking, leading to poor academic performance, burnout, and even dropping out of college (Kitzrow, 2003). Neglecting student mental health needs is as costly for the university as it is for the students. Through a review of well-being initiatives and research across campuses, strategies which supported the whole student, including their roles outside of campus, were shown to have the greatest impact. Holistic well-being provides a framework for supporting individuals for all dimensions of their wellness. Utilizing holistic well-being, this project created six modules to help assist students with their mental wellness throughout their college careers. They are as follows:

Module 1: Well-Being Resources Currently Available at Chico State.

Module 2: The Need for Holistic Well-Being

Module 3: Coping Skills

Module 4: Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Module 5: Self-care Basics and Mindfulness

Module 6: Individual Self-Care Plan

After the modules, students are asked to complete a short assessment of five questions to identify successes, unmet needs, and continue to improve the curriculum.