

Steveatkinson@gmail.com steveatkinson@...

Should universities make mental health education a mandatory part of the curriculum?

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Should universities make mental health education a mandatory part of the curriculum?

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Should universities make mental health education a mandatory part of the curriculum?

Universities cannot be merely explained as institutions of academic study, but are also the remaining cocoons of development, in which young adults mature personally, socially, and emotionally. Nevertheless, in the last several years, statistics have shown that the issue of mental health among college students has reached the agony stage with a high level of anxiety, depression, and mental discomfort, which can have a serious impact on academic performance and the quality of life among people who study at the college level. Hence, the notion that mental health education should be made a mandatory course in university is rather valid. The objective approach of delivering comprehensive mental health education would not only eliminate the issue of critical awareness and coping strategies but also would provide students with the opportunity to lessen stigma, enhance early help-seeking, and general health, which would lead to academic performance and healthier campus settings.

Firstly, research has proved that college students are facing critical psychological challenges that ought to be handled by creating systematic educational intervention. Several reports have mentioned that stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among students are on the rise, which hurts both the students and their performance in school. Indicatively, one study, which assessed the experiences of students when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, has shown alarming rates of anxiety (almost 38%), depression rates (almost 30%), with major predispositions of suicidal ideation, which explains the psychological health burden imposed on the population (Park et al., 2023). This information leads to the absolute realization that solely reactive models are not sufficient in cases where help is offered only when a crisis occurs.

Second, mental health education might also be included in the curriculum to potentially promote mental health literacy, which is knowledge and competency to recognize, interpret, and respond to mental health problems, which has proven to promote awareness and reduce stigma.

The studies of mental health literacy training programs conducted by Reis et al. (2022) identified

that the intervention is an encouraging measure regarding the creation of awareness among students about the concepts of mental health and the support resources available, though the long-term outcomes could be investigated further in the research. The article concerning mental health education by Shim et al. (2022) suggests that college-specific education about mental illnesses can be helpful to establish awareness and remove stigma related to psychological disorders, which means that curricular interventions have the potential to make the peer and institutional culture more friendly.

Practical coping skills may also be developed through mandatory mental health education. Although research concerning curricular models is yet to be published, research on resilience and well-being interventions proves that systematic methods (e.g., a combination of psychoeducation, mindfulness, and skills-based training) may alleviate stress and anxiety in students (Laura et al., 2025). Interpreting such evidence-based components into the core of the coursework would guarantee that every student would have the basic training on emotion regulation, stress coping, and help-seeking models - mechanisms that are essential in negotiating the complicated psychosocial obstacles of college living.

Opponents might be tempted to claim that such courses should not be mandatory because of academic freedom or as a way of increasing student burden, but curriculum-based mental health education should not be seen as a separate course; with intelligent intervention, it can be integrated into existing courses as an interdisciplinary approach. Qualitative studies indicate that pedagogical strategies such as supportive assessment, scaffolded learning, and meaningful social interaction present themselves because of including wellbeing in course design (Upsher et al., 2023). That kind of integration points to the fact that mental health education should not be a burden but the logical extension of holistic education.

Lastly, compulsory mental health education is part of the overall obligation of care in universities. Institutions can already spend high amounts of money on counseling services and

wellbeing programs, but the demand surpasses the capacity. When students are provided with a proactive/anticipatory approach to education, they become equipped with peer support competencies and self-help skills, which could potentially lead to fewer students requiring mental health services at a crucial time, and a bushier campus at large.

In conclusion, the findings of the recent peer-reviewed studies support the argument that mental health education should be compulsory in the university curriculum. It would not only enhance mental health literacy and decrease stigma but may also equip individuals with necessary coping skills, encourage early intervention, and improve academic outcomes. Inclusion of mental health in education is not a luxury but an investment that will determine the well-being and success of the future generation..