

Importance of Social Health

HPU Health Fair: Social Health
Research and Website found by Anthony Buzzeo

Abbot, G. (2021, October 21). *How social interaction affects university students' mental health*. Psychreg. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://www.psychreg.org/social-interaction-affects-university-students-mental-health/>

1. Social interaction is crucial to stabilizing and maintaining one's mental health. The stresses and anxiety put upon students during college can be overwhelming, but social interaction can relieve the pressure thrust upon them. Connecting with others causes your brain to release hormones that combat anxiety and depression. Another reason behind the importance of social health lies in the outpouring of energy. Many students can find themselves in their own heads stressing and causing themselves even more anxiety. Social interaction opens a gateway to release that energy. Expressing emotions and talking about problems with someone a person trusts allows that person an outlet for stress and anxiety and for them to develop trust with the person their communicating to.
2. Social isolation is at an all-time high in the modern era. During the pandemic, it was found that 32% of graduate students suffered from major depressive disorder. Social isolation can also cause sleep disorders and concentration difficulties. Studies showed that about 2 out of 3 people that dropped out of college suffered from mental disorders. It is crucial for students to get involved social activities and build relationships.
3. Solutions and Tips to Help!
 - a. Find a club, sport, team, or activity to join.
 - b. Stay on campus in the dorms.
 - c. Be open to learning and experiencing new things.
 - d. Attend campus and school events.
 - e. Take advantage of social media and connect with others.

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- i. Social media is a great way to begin connecting with others. Taking advantage of social media is about connecting with groups and individuals to get involved in activities or clubs. So in essence, it's finding ways to connect and meet in person. Social media is being used as a first point of contact to plan in-person events, activities, hang-outs, etc. It's first contact and connecting with groups to get involved with in-person events, NOT the means of building relationships or socializing!

Abbot, G. (2020, November 16). *How to improve social health: College life*. Classrooms.com. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://classrooms.com/how-to-improve-social-health-in-college/>

1. This article is written by the same researcher as the previous article. Within the article, Abbot discusses the relationship between social health and mental health. Her studies found that one's social life is closely linked to one's mental and emotional health. This article focuses on how to maintain a healthy work and social life balance. Abbot uses this article as an opportunity to offer advice on how to improve one's social health.
2. Her first piece of advice is to keep your dorm room door open. This acts as an invitation for others to approach you and shows that you are open to making friends. Similar to this, she also says going to the library to study is another way to get yourself in social situations, yet also give yourself a place to study.
3. Abbot's second piece of advice is to get involved in clubs. These are great social circles that share a common interest. In a club, everyone has a common interest so it is easy to break the ice and start a conversation. Plus, many clubs are linked to similar career paths.
4. Hitting the gym or getting exercise is the third topic in Abbott's list. Working out addresses physical, mental, and social health all at once. Not only does it help your body

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stay in shape and get stronger, it also relieves stress and can put you in positive social situations. Abbott suggests finding a workout partner and getting to work! If the gym is not intriguing, another option is going hiking or getting involved exercising outdoors.

5. Abbot's fourth piece of advice is to volunteer or find a part-time job. This will put you in connection with people that support or care about the same issues. Working a part time job, especially in a specific field of interest, will help one develop connections and find people with similar interests.

Page, S. (2020, June 11). *What is Social Health? A pillar of Wellness Workers Need Now*. Employee Wellness. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/what-is-social-health>

1. This article is written in response to the social changes due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and explains what we have learned in the time since. The biggest points are the link between social health and physical health and how to encourage good social health habits.
2. The first section focuses on defining social health. Page defines social health as “the ability to form healthy and rewarding interpersonal relationships with others.” Examples of good social health include being able to adapt to social changes, creating healthy boundaries in relationships, and balancing social and personal time.
3. In the second section, Page emphasizes that social health has a direct impact on physical health. Poor social health can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, and mental health issues.
4. New research is showing the effects that loneliness can have on a person's health. Chronic loneliness has the same impact on an individual's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. However, it is important to identify the difference between being alone and loneliness.

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Being alone by choice is good for you at times. Loneliness is being alone consistently not by choice. This can lead to depression and other mental health issues.

5. Page also touches on the subject of building quality relationships. The relationships that are built need to be deep and interpersonal allowing one to connect with someone else.

When assessing relationships, look for quality over quantity.

Cookingham, L. M., & Ryan, G. L. (2015). The impact of social media on the sexual and Social Wellness of Adolescents. *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, 28(1), 2–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpag.2014.03.001>

1. In this journal article, the authors look to address the increasing impact that social media has on the social development of young adults and teenagers. One of the traits that the authors identified as being deeply impacted is the increase in risky behaviors, specifically sexual risks. With 95% of teenagers having a regular online presence and 80% being involved in a social media, the exposure and impact that social media has is drastic.
2. The authors explain that despite the promise of increased socialization and communication, social media has actually decreased the social wellness of young adults and teens. One of the most common impacts of social media is the lowering of self-esteem.
3. The greatest impact that social media has had on the new generation is the encouragement of increasingly risky and bold behavior. Social media can quickly change the social norms. Typically, these changes are not for the better when it comes to social wellness.

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4. A critical issue with social media is what some researchers refer to as “self-exploitation” which refers to the distribution of inappropriate material. This can be photos, videos, or comments. When this occurs online, it often encourages others to do the same despite the dangerous and unhealthy nature that the action is.
5. Social media’s effect on social wellness largely falls under the encouragement of risky behaviors. Researchers are finding that social media is beginning to jeopardize the sexual wellness of the rising generations.

Baldwin, D. R., Towler, K., Oliver, M. D., & Datta, S. (2017). An examination of College Student Wellness: A Research and liberal arts perspective. *Health Psychology Open, 4*(2), 205510291771956. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2055102917719563>

1. This article is not specifically written about social health, but rather touches on the overall wellness of a college student. Social wellness is emphasized as being the result of having good overall wellness. The study defines a high-level of wellness as students having “a zest for life, a sense of meaning and purpose, a sense of social responsibility... and acquiring skills for adapting to the challenges of a changing environment.
2. The study identified two main predictors of well-being. The first predictor is that self-esteem is an accurate predictor of physical health. Perceived stress is the predictor for social well-being.
3. The authors found that students that attend private, small, liberal arts institutions often had better overall wellness practices compared to students at other colleges and universities. This is often because the school’s wellness programs are reaching a greater

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percentage of the student population and are often quicker to respond to new developments or major issues in wellness.

4. The researchers found that a sense of belonging played a critical role in the social health of college students. Specifically, women were found to have a much higher need of the sense of belonging than men do.
5. Research showed that college students that are involved in organizations often have higher social wellness than those who are not. These organizations include athletic teams, school clubs, professional development organizations, and even study groups.

Researchers stated that students should find a way to get involved with organizations on campus in order to maintain and create good social health.