Wellness Coaching:
Fostering Sense of Belonging and Resiliency among First Year Students

Focusing on the First Year Conference
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Introductions

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Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to…:

- describe Keyes’ (2002, 2005, 2007) theory of mental health as flourishing and how it applies to first year students,
- identify initiatives and practices that cultivate resilience, sense of belonging, and ability to flourish in college for first year students, and
- evaluate and incorporate practices and tools to utilize for interactions with first year students.
Resilience is...

- ...the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress (APA, 2014)
- ...a stable trajectory of healthy functioning after an adverse event (Bonanno, 2012)
- ...the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the development of that system (Masten, 2014)
- ...a process to harness resources in order to sustain well-being (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013)

Resilience Basics

1. Resilience is a universal capacity
2. Different people possess different levels of resilience
3. High levels of resilience are a result of external resources combined with nurturing one’s inherent capacity for resilience
“Highly resilient people are flexible, adapt to new circumstances quickly, and thrive in constant change. Most important, they expect to bounce back and feel confident that they will. They have a knack for creating good luck out of circumstances that many others see as bad luck.”

- Siebert, 2005

The Resiliency Advantage

“We have begun to ask questions that really haven't been asked before, such as

‘Why are most people able to cope so well?’

(Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014)
MENTAL HEALTH

Health and Wellness Concerns

Table 14 | Top Issues Facing Student Affairs, by Issue Area and NASPA Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Region I</th>
<th>Region II</th>
<th>Region III</th>
<th>Region IV-East</th>
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(Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014)
How We Respond

What are the standard approaches to supporting student mental health on college campuses?

Treatment /trē'tmənt/

noun:
Administration or application of remedies to a patient or for a disease or an injury; medicinal or surgical management; therapy
Prevention /prē-ven’shūn/
noun:
Action so as to avoid, forestall, or circumvent a happening, conclusion, or phenomenon (disease prevention)

Assumptions
• What population are these services for?
• How do we assess success?
• What might we (implicitly or explicitly) communicate to students through these approaches?
Mental Health

What might change if, when we said “mental health,” we meant capacities for enhanced intellectual, emotional, and social functioning?

FLOURISHING
Flourishing

A state of positive mental health characterized by high levels of positive emotions, psychological well-being, and social well-being, that supports generativity, growth, and resilience.

(Keyes, 2002, 2005, 2007)

Mental Illness vs. Mental Health (Keyes)

MENTAL ILLNESS CONTINUUM

Presence of Disorder  Absence of Disorder

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

Languishing  Flourishing

Devoid of emotional, psychological or social wellbeing, but not mentally ill  Moderately mentally healthy: neither flourishing nor languishing

10% of Adults  72% of Adults

3 Factors: Social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing

18% of Adults
From Diagnoses to Transitions

Transition: Any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles (Schlossberg, 1984)

Role of perception is KEY and involves two levels of appraisal:

1. How the individual feels about the transition
2. How the individual feels about their resources in dealing with the transition
What are common transitions in the first year of college?

Consider that these transitions are normative.

What other transitions might students encounter during their first year?

Is there a common theme among these transitions?

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How Transitions Impact Students

• What are the potential health concerns that could come from facing these transitions?
• The potential benefits…?

College students who report being engaged in the process of navigating their own lives reported higher levels of mental health and flourishing

(Robitschek & Keyes, 2009)
What can we do to better support students’ ability to feel a sense of belonging in college, to navigate transitions, and to flourish?
Wellness Coaching was created to **promote mental health** by facilitating students’ capacity to navigate the transitions that they encounter in their lives.

2014-2015 Demographics

Over 300 students attended over 1000 individual and group sessions

33% of individual wellness coaching sessions were for first-year students

38% male
62% female
What is Wellness Coaching?

Wellness coaching is a peer-driven student service – a collaborative partnership grounded in evidence-based interventions from positive psychology and wellness research.

OSU Wellness Model

- Career
- Creative
- Emotional
- Environmental
- Financial
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Social
- Spiritual
Coaching Through Transitions

Working with both levels of appraisal:

1. How the individual feels about the transition
   • REFRAMING with wellness and strengths

2. How the individual feels about their resources in dealing with the transition
   • CONNECTING clients to internal and external resources for change

Wellness Coaching Outcomes

“I have tried many new things this year as a freshman, and I can say with the utmost confidence that wellness coaching was by far my best decision/choice I made. I would not have made as much progress as I have without it!”
Coaching Outcomes

1. Enhanced sense of belonging
2. Increased self-acceptance
3. Greater ability to thrive in college
   • Academic Determination
   • Engaged Learning
   • Positive Perspective
   • Social Connectedness

Assessing Resilience

Brief Resilient Coping Scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004)

1. I look for creative ways to alter difficult situations
2. Regardless of what happens to me, I believe I can control my reaction to it
3. I believe I can grow in positive ways by dealing with difficult situations
4. I actively look for ways to replace the losses I encounter in life
RESILIENCE
WORKSHOPS
(FYSS)
Taking in the Good
(Hanson, 2009)

Gratitude
(Emmons, 2013)
Self-Compassion

(Neff, 2011)

Discussion

We discussed coaching and workshops to support belonging, resilience, and flourishing. How might you...

1. ...support students' sense of belonging?
2. ...cultivate students’ resilience?
3. ...encourage students to flourish in college?
4. ...implement any ideas or practices from coaching or resilience training in your work?
QUESTIONS?

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