

STUDENT TEACHERS AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH:

UNDERSTANDING HOW MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS MAY
AFFECT STUDENT TEACHER SUCCESS



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- Introductions/Role of investigators
- Setting
- Why this study?

LITERATURE

- The World Health Organization World Mental Health Survey (2016) indicated that at least 20% of college age students had a mental health condition.
- The American Psychological Association's October 2018 report titled "Stress in America: Generation Z" stated that individuals aged 18-21 were significantly more likely to report their mental health as poor (27%) compared to **22-37 year-olds** (15%), **38-52 year-olds** (13%), and **53-72 year-olds** (7%) who report their mental health as fair or poor (APA, 2018).
- Research has shown how the increase in mental health conditions is having a negative impact on how college students succeed (Linden & Judi-Harge, 2017).
- In addition, Kessler et al., (2007) report over 75% of those who will have a mental health condition, have had it by the age of 25, which includes a significant portion of college age students.
- Forty-one percent of student teachers reported dealing with issues of depression (Uzman & Telef, 2015).

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Methodology

- Anonymous online survey of students in their final two semesters in College of Education (117 eligible) (demographic in nature)
- From online survey-solicited participants for one 30-60 minute interview with investigators (qualitative)
- Reviewed transcripts of all interviews for the themes; coded and reviewed descriptors

Two RQs:

1. How does having a mental health condition(s) affect a student's ability to perform as an effective student teacher?
2. What supports positively affect the performance of student teachers with a mental health condition?



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Data/Results

- Online survey-59/117 respondents-53 female/6 male
- 46-non-white/non-Hispanic; 9 Hispanic; 3 African-American; 1 Mixed ethnicity
- 27 students self-disclosed they were living with a mental health condition, and 32 indicated they were not
- Interviews-17 participants-15 female/2 male
- Semi-structured with same 10 questions posed to all participants
- Identified three themes

THEMES - RESULTS

- Theme One: Mental Health as a Barrier to Student Success
 - *Susan-"I was also finding it hard to find the motivation...because I didn't feel like myself."*
- Theme Two: Student Teaching as a Positive Part of Living with a Mental Health Condition
 - *Kathy-"...like it can really help me heal because now I feel like lots of love and kids love me and my teacher loves me."*
- Theme Three: Lack of Awareness, Education, and Support for Students with Mental Health Conditions
 - *Heidi-"Hey, some days I'm not skipping on purpose, but I'm missing because I have this."*

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SELF-DESCRIBED SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Crying
- Panic Attacks and other physical symptoms
- Lack of motivation
- Withdraw
- Suicidal thoughts
- Overthinking/dwelling

SELF-REPORTED DIAGNOSES

- Anxiety – participants reported most
- Depression
- Combination of Anxiety and Depression
- ADHD

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BARRIERS

- Internal – symptoms prevent student teachers from attending school, meeting deadlines, showing enthusiasm and exhibiting confidence, etc.
- External -Inflexible teaching style, unclear directions, extensive written directions, unexpected changes, online course delivery, etc.

SUPPORT

- Self-help – exercise, meditation, music, strong support system, reading, medication, etc. (no one reported self-medicating)
- University – Counseling Center, Adaptive Services
- College of Education - student teaching, accessibility of professors, accommodating professors/supervisors

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Recommendations for Awareness, Education, and Support

- Faculty and advisor training in mental health literacy so they know what to look for and how to approach a student who may have a mental health condition.
- Peer mentors –those living with a mental health condition supporting others with similar conditions.
- Have a safe person within the college to talk to about personal and college related issues.
- Course on mental health – increases awareness, reduces stigma, helps people who have symptoms and those who know people with mental health conditions. Prepares them for addressing future student needs as well.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Possible resource based on Theme Three: Mental Health First Aid training.
www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.
 - Teaches people to recognize warning signs, how to approach someone about mental health, and how to connect them with professionals.
 - In the state of Florida, K-12 education is in the process of expanding mental health practices to everyone who encounter children. Not just school-based mental health professionals.
- Future study
- For student teachers, the barriers to success created by living with a mental health condition carries over into their first years of being new teachers (Seth, 2016; Woudstra, et al., 2018).

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- Q&A
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