

Solution-Focused Wellness: An Evidence-Based Approach to Wellness Promotion

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Abstract : Research indicates that college students are experiencing mental health challenges of greater severity, and an increased number of students are seeking help. Contributing to the compromised wellness of the college student population are the prevalence of unhealthy lifestyle habits and behaviors such as alcohol consumption, tobacco use, dietary concerns, risky sexual behaviors, and lack of physical activity. Alternative approaches are needed for this population that emphasize prevention and holistic lifestyle change that mitigate mental health and wellness challenges and alleviate strain on campus resources. This presentation will introduce a Solution-Focused Wellness (SFW) intervention model and examine wellness domains solution-focused strategies to promote personal well-being, and provide supporting research from multiple studies that illustrate intervention effectiveness with a collegiate population. Given the subjective and personal nature of wellness, a therapeutic approach that provides the opportunity for individuals to conceptualize and operationalize wellness themselves is critical to facilitating lasting wellness-based change. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is a strength-based modality defined by its emphasis on constructing solutions rather than focusing on problems and the assumption that clients have the resources and capacity to change. SFBT has demonstrated effectiveness as a brief therapeutic intervention with the college population in groups and related to health and wellness. By integrating SFBT strategies with personal wellness, a brief intervention was developed to support college students in establishing lifestyles trends consistent with their conceptualizations of wellness. Research supports the effectiveness of a SFW model in improving college student wellness in both face-to-face and web-based formats. Outcomes of controlled and longitudinal studies will be presented, demonstrating significant improvements in perceptions of stress, life satisfaction, happiness, mental health, well-being, and resilience. Overall, there is compelling evidence that utilization of a Solution-Focused Brief Therapy approach with college students can help to improve personal wellness and establish healthy lifestyle trends, providing an effective prevention-focused strategy for college counseling centers and wellness centers to employ. Primary research objectives include: 1) establish an evidence-based approach to facilitating wellness pro motion among the college student population, 2) examine the effectiveness of a Solution-Focused Wellness (SFW) intervention model in decreasing stress, improving personal wellness, mental health, life satisfaction, and resiliency, 3) investigate intervention impacts over time (e.g. 6-week post-intervention), and 4) demonstrate SFW intervention utility in wellness promotion and associated outcomes when compared with no-treatment control, and alternative intervention approaches.

Keywords : wellness, college students, solution-focused, prevention

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