

Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative

Daniel Community Scholars Project Proposal

The Blackburn Institute 2019

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Abstract: This report provides statistical background for mental health issues existing nationally, within Alabama, and within specific groups in the Tuscaloosa community. Our Daniel Community Scholars Project focuses on improving accessibility and affordability of mental health services for Shelton State Community College and Stillman College students by creating access to MindWise Innovations kiosks and customizable URLs. This, coupled with our extensive social media campaign and launch events, will inspire engagement among students and student groups and provide valuable data to college administration.

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Research

With data obtained from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Institute of Mental Health compiled statistics on mental health in the United States. In order for mental illnesses to be included in the NSDUH, each must be currently diagnosable, of sufficient duration to meet the diagnostic criteria in the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), and exclude developmental and substance abuse disorders.¹ In this survey a distinction was made between any mental illness (AMI) and serious mental illness (SMI). Any mental illness is defined as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that can vary in impairment.² It was estimated that 46.6 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States had AMI in 2017, which would be equivalent to 18.9% of all adults.³ Young adults aged 18-25 years were the age group with the highest prevalence with a 25.8% prevalence. Females had a higher prevalence of AMI at 22.3%, and adults reporting two or more races had the highest prevalence (28.6%) followed by white (20.4%).⁴ Of 46.6 million adults with AMI in 2017, only 19.8 million mental health services (42.6%). Among young adults aged 18-25, only 38.4% accessed mental health services. According to a facts graphic provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is between eight and ten years.⁵

During young adulthood most mental health disorders have peak onset (KESSLER ET AL.) Anxiety disorders, including social phobia, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, are among the most prevalent with approximately 11.9% of

¹ “Mental Illness.” National Institute of Mental Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 2019. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>.

² National Institute of Mental Health

³ “Mental Illness”

⁴ “Mental Illness”

⁵ “Mental Health Facts: Children and Teens.” *Mental Health Facts: Children and Teens*. National Institute of Mental Health, 2016.

students suffering. Depression is also very common with approximately 7-9% of students suffering, followed by bipolar disorder at 3.2%. Alcohol and illicit drug use is also prevalent during this age, with one in five college students meeting the criteria for alcohol use disorder and one in twenty college students meeting the criteria for drug use disorders. There is a high rate of mental illness in college students with mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse being the most common.⁶ In a study conducted by Pedrelli and associates, Pedrelli states “lack of identification or acknowledgement (denial) of mental health symptoms and/or lack of or inadequate treatment are common problems among college students and may contribute to persistence of mental health problems.”⁷

Mental health care concerns have progressed at the state and local levels. In July 2019, the Tuscaloosa County Probate Court called to have more mental health officers. One officer acknowledged Tuscaloosa’s reputation of high numbers of mental health problems. Officers are called to help and evaluate people with all kinds of mental health issues. While this is helpful for the community, these officers are being used to help patients after their mental health has been developed and led to the actions with law enforcement. A program that identifies and aids college students in Tuscaloosa before problems involving law enforcement occur will eventually lead to fewer older individuals with unidentified mental health issues in the city of Tuscaloosa.

In order to gauge opinions on mental health in Alabama, two students at The University of Alabama created a survey to assess mental health accessibility and affordability. The survey was shared through social media, email, and text message. With over 100 responses, they received input from individuals ages 14-68. Most of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 24. Of responses of this age group, only 49% of participants were Alabama residents, but 81.7% had lived in Alabama for more than two years. In addition, 25.8% had been diagnosed and 66.3% had a personal relationship with someone who has a diagnosed mental illness. Some

⁶ Pedrelli, Paola, Maren Nyer, Albert Yeung, Courtney Zulauf, and Timothy Wilens. “College Students: Mental Health Problems and Treatment Considerations.” *Academic psychiatry : the journal of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training and the Association for Academic Psychiatry*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, October 2015. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4527955/>.

⁷ “College Students: Mental Health Problems and Treatment Considerations”

questions included: have you or someone you know had trouble accessing mental health care and have your or someone you know had trouble affording mental health care. Overwhelmingly participants responded they were unable to afford or access the help they needed. One response stated, “my family is low-income and from a rural area. Mental health is stigmatized, and care is absolutely not accessible in our area,” while another said “it is difficult when you’re dealing with mental illness because you’re treated as if you were well and able to work and function like a ‘normal person’ financial problems are symptoms of the illness”. Participants were asked how they would like mental health care in Alabama to improve. Many of the responses included eliminating the stigma around mental illness, bettering mental health education, making care more affordable and accessible, and talking about mental illness more. Considering this survey as well as the statistics on mental health throughout the United States and specifically in Alabama, the lack of accessibility and affordability of mental health care for college-aged is apparent.

During a phone interview, a college dean of a historically black college (HBCU), described the need for mental health services at smaller colleges and among racial minorities. He explained how some African American students struggle with mental wellness due to their race or ethnicity. The Department of Nursing website states that “minority groups — African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans — are more likely to experience the risk factors that can cause [mental illness]”.⁸ Additionally, “African Americans were also more likely to report their depression as being extremely severe and disabling.” This website further discusses how “those who choose to seek treatment often receive inferior care because there tends to be little diversity among mental health providers and decreased understanding about the different mental health needs across minority groups.”⁹ Both HBCUs and with predominantly African-American student bodies, neither Stillman nor Shelton State have any mental health resources on their campuses. While even well-resourced schools have not been able to keep up with the rising demand of mental health issues, “many schools with smaller

⁸ “Understanding Barriers to Minority Mental Health Care.” Understanding Barriers to Minority Mental Health Care - Blog, May 10, 2018.

<https://nursing.usc.edu/blog/discrimination-bad-health-minority-mental-healthcare/>

⁹ “Understanding Barriers to Minority Mental Health Care”

endowments or income streams—especially community colleges, which often serve communities with some of the greatest mental health needs—don’t have the resources to staff up any further.” Many community colleges and HBCUs are not equipped to support the growing mental health needs of students.

In an article published by the American Psychiatric Association it is suggested, “ that in addition to expanding capacity, increasing use of ‘preventive and digital mental health services, such as those delivered via mobile apps,’ could help address the need.”¹⁰ MindWise Innovations provides an online mental health screener that can be purchased for colleges and universities. The screener screens for alcohol use, anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression (adult and adolescent), eating disorders, problem gambling, posttraumatic stress disorder, psychosis, and substance misuse. Students are able to get a “check-up from the neck up” in less than two minutes with easy accessibility. With the customizable URL and a kiosk, students will be able to access the screener anywhere and at anytime. The goal of Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative is to bring an affordable and easily accessible mental health resource to Stillman College and Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa. Due to the fact that neither school has mental health resources available to students, this screener will provide students with screening opportunities and a list of potential resources available to them. After purchasing the screener, students will be able to take a free screener even if they do not have access to a smartphone, laptop, etc. The screener is anonymous, and limited data will be taken and reported to each school to direct further resources based on behavioral health trends. The kiosk will help make mental health check-ups just as common as blood pressure screenings, hopefully working to end the stigma around mental illness and getting treatment. The anonymity will encourage students to take the screener without the fear of stigmatization or discrimination. After students complete the screener, a page will show their results as well as personalized resources available to them in Tuscaloosa based on those results. Bridging the gap between health care providers and students is an important feature included with the online screener. Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness

¹⁰ Among College Students, Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment are Up, Stigma is Down, November 5, 2018.
<https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/news-releases/among-college-students-mental-health-diagnosis-and-treatment-are-up-stigma-is-down>.

Initiative aims to encourage students to have discussions about mental health and take the next steps in receiving treatment.

Community Partners

MindWise Innovations offers one-year subscription packages for online mental health screening for college campuses. The University of Alabama introduced the MindKare mental health kiosk earlier this year through MindWise Innovations, improving the accessibility and affordability of mental health services for students. The Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative will expand the MindWise Innovations kiosk and link to the other two colleges in Tuscaloosa, Stillman and Shelton State. This will provide students access to free screening and suggested resources, as well as data on behavioral health trends to administration for each campus.

Isaac McCoy, member of the Blackburn Advisory Board and Dean of the School of Business at Stillman College, expressed the evident need for mental health resources on campus. Nicole DuBose and a member of the Shelton State student resource team are identified points of contact for implementation. School contacts have been able to provide insight to problems specific to each campus. Partners will facilitate coordinating catering, giveaways, speakers, and other event details through collaboration with project directors.

Proposed Action

The MindWise Innovations online screening package will address the lack of accessibility and affordability of mental health screening and risk assessments on the Shelton and Stillman college campuses. After introducing kiosks to each campus, The Blackburn Institute will promote the launch of the kiosk and customizable web address to further increase accessibility of mental health resources. The launch event at each campus will be preceded by three days of tabling and an extensive social media campaign.

The launch at each campus includes distinguished speakers, an opportunity for students to network with speakers, administration, and student groups to engage in meaningful conversations surrounding the topic of mental health awareness and support. To encourage attendance at the campus launch events, The Blackburn Institute will partner with student groups on campus to cosponsor the event, as well as academic departments to offer extra credit for students attending. Food will be provided and prizes given away to those in attendance. Speakers at the events will include Stillman College School of Business Dean, Isaac McCoy, Tuscaloosa County Judge Ward D. “Rob” Robertson, III, Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox , and a member of Shelton State Community College Administration. Volunteers will be transported to Stillman and Shelton for tabling and the kiosk launch events via The University of Alabama vans. Four

Blackburn students will be present at each tabling session and twenty will be volunteering at both launch events.

Four student volunteers will be needed for each of the three days at each school to table. Tabling at the school will consist of event advertising and sharing the social media campaign. The campaign will consist of kiosk and link promotion, pledge to end mental health stigma, and awareness graphics to share the visible consequences of the current lack of accessibility and affordability of mental wellness resources available on Stillman and Shelton's college campuses. Whereas green is the officially recognized color for mental health awareness, volunteers at tabling and the launch event will wear green. Ten student volunteers will be responsible for collecting items for the prize giveaways. Volunteers will be recruited from the new and returning Blackburn students.

Project Leads: Director Roles and Responsibilities

Taylor Roberson is serving as the Director of the Launch Events. As head of logistics, she will organize catering for each launch, night-of giveaways and raffles, and introduce the speakers for the evening and inviting the attendees to participate in the networking and food following the presentations. Taylor is responsible for securing speakers and the venue for the launch events. She is responsible for music and decorations for the launch events to provide a comfortable and professional environment for the attendees.

Payti Harrison is the Director of Social Media and Event Promotion. Payti will utilize the existing social media platforms for Stillman, Shelton, and The Blackburn Institute to encourage attendance at the launch events, as well as promote the kiosk and link and mental wellness overall. This role will include creating social media platforms for the Tuscaloosa Mental Wellness Initiative, and sharing the event logistics with volunteers and potential attendees. The target attendance is 100 attendees at each launch event, to include Blackburn student volunteers, speakers, and students at the hosting college.

Marquis Hollingsworth is the Director of Tabling and Campus Engagement. He is responsible for coordinating tabling and displaying the banners and flyers on Stillman and Shelton's campuses. The posters will include a pledge to end the stigma associated with mental health, launch event logistics, link and kiosk information, and visual representation of the importance of mental wellness, awareness, and utilization of available resources. The banner, to be displayed at both launch events, will solidify the aims of the project to promote mental wellness. Through tabling, Marquis will oversee the distribution of buttons and flyers, as well as volunteer management for tabling. Finally, Marquis will work with student organizations and departments to incentivize attendance.

Olivia Smith is the Director of Volunteer Organization and Training, as well as our news media contact. Through a myriad of communication platforms geared toward volunteer engagement. Olivia will organize Blackburn student volunteers for securing donations for the raffle giveaways, tabling, and working the launch events. As the news media contact, she will contact news media outlets and provide statements from MindWise to sources such as AL.com,

Tuscaloosa News, The Crimson White, and student media on Stillman and Shelton's campuses. Generally, she is responsible for keeping the volunteers informed, engaged, and involved in the project while promoting the initiative publicly.

Volunteer Timeline

The Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative provides opportunities for the Blackburn student class and community members to engage through the promotion of mental health awareness campaign, tabling at Shelton State and Stillman, and the launch events for the kiosks. The volunteer timeline is as follows:

December- Student members of The Blackburn Institute will be made aware of the Initiative details and volunteer opportunities. Each member of the new student class will be required to select at least one of three roles: raffles/giveaways, tabling, or launch event set-up and tear down. Volunteers will be provided with specific roles and descriptions prior to Winter Break.

January- Volunteers working on obtaining donations for the launch event giveaways will secure donated goods and gift cards by February 5th. Volunteers working on tabling will commit to dates and times and attend a workshop training on what to say. Volunteers working the launch event will attend a workshop overview of the event and expectations.

February- Volunteers working on giveaways will submit donations to the Directors. Volunteers will table at Shelton February 24th, 25th, and 26th, and the launch event for Shelton State Community College will take place on February 27th.

March- Volunteers will table for Stillman on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. The launch event will be on the 5th. The directors will be available for Shelton and Stillman for the remainder of March, with the objective to connect the campuses with MindWise to become more self-sustaining. At the end of March all volunteers will attend a debrief meeting.

Note: Directors will communicate regularly with campus representatives to prevent scheduling conflicts. In the event of suspected inclement weather on the day of the launch event, tabling and the launch will be postponed to the week after The University of Alabama's Spring Break.

Sustainability:

A point of contact will be established at both Stillman and Shelton for MindWise management and ongoing data analytics. There is an option to renew the subscription to continue use of the kiosk and web address; however, each college will have access to data collected from students using the kiosk and URL that can be utilized for future mental wellness initiatives specifically addressing identified needs of the student population. By promoting the kiosk and campaign, the Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative will inspire action by Stillman and Shelton administration and student groups to promote a more inclusive, aware, and mentally well campus.

Budget:

The budget accommodates for the launch events and tabling at Stillman and Shelton. The majority of the funds supports the schools in providing the kiosks and personal web addresses for the students of the respective colleges. The price of the kiosk and personal url are based on the population of the community. After the Mindwise products are paid for, the rest of the budget will be utilized for everything needed with the events. To help with risk management the Initiative provides transportation to tabling and the events, using University of Alabama issued sedans for the four students going to table each day and two vans for the twenty student volunteers needed for each of the launch events. Food and drinks will be provided at the two launch events for all in attendance. The rest of the funds will be used to purchase raffle gifts, supplies for tabling, and decorations for the launch events. The money provided by the Daniel Foundation of Alabama will allow the Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative to improve affordability and accessibility of mental health resources to underserved college students in Tuscaloosa.

Group Number:	3-Olivia, Taylor, Payti, and Marquis				
Project Name:	Tuscaloosa Collegiate Mental Wellness Initiative				
	Quantity	Revenue	Total	Running Total	Notes / Details
Revenue:					
Daniel Foundation Grant	1	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	
TOTAL REVENUE				\$ 5,000.00	
	Quantity	Expense per	Total	Running Total	Notes / Details
Expenses:					
<i>Example: Supplies</i>	30	\$ 2.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	Example - Coloring Books for Classroom Activity
<i>Example: Volunteer Management</i>	50	\$ 3.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 210.00	Example - Snacks for Volunteer Training (50)
<i>Example: Ticket Costs</i>	30	\$ 5.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 360.00	Example - Zoo Field Trip for Pre-K Students (30)
<i>Example: Transportation</i>	4	\$ 60.00	\$ 240.00	\$ 600.00	Example - Shuttle Rental (4 hours) for Field Trip
<i>Stillman Kiosk</i>	1	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	Kiosk that will be placed on Stillman's campus
<i>Shelton Kiosk</i>	1	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 1,500.00	Kiosk that will be placed on Shelton's campus
<i>Chick-fil-A Catering</i>	10	\$ 27.50	\$ 275.00	\$ 1,775.00	Nugget platter
<i>Gourmade Kitchen Catering</i>	18	\$ 15.00	\$ 270.00	\$ 2,045.00	Mac&Cheese bites
<i>Gourmade Kitchen Catering</i>	18	\$ 12.00	\$ 216.00	\$ 2,261.00	Spinach Dip
<i>Gourmade Kitchen Catering</i>	8	\$ 50.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 2,661.00	Fruit and Cheese Tray
<i>Gourmade Kitchen Catering</i>	10	\$ 15.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 2,811.00	Fiesta Pinwheels
<i>Sam's Club (drinks)</i>	13	\$ 12.90	\$ 167.70	\$ 2,978.70	Tea and Bottled Water
<i>Sam's Club</i>	2	\$ 15.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 3,008.70	Cups
<i>Sam's Club</i>	4	\$ 13.88	\$ 55.52	\$ 3,064.22	Plates
<i>Sam's Club</i>	1	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 3,072.22	Napkins
<i>Sam's Club</i>	1	\$ 10.50	\$ 10.50	\$ 3,082.72	Forks
<i>Airpods from Best Buy</i>	2	\$ 145.00	\$ 290.00	\$ 3,372.72	Big Raffle prize
<i>Rubber Bracelets</i>	300	\$ 0.15	\$ 45.00	\$ 3,417.72	Tabling give away
<i>Handouts</i>	600	\$ 0.05	\$ 30.00	\$ 3,447.72	Handouts for tabling
<i>Publix Cookies</i>	4	\$ 31.00	\$ 124.00	\$ 3,571.72	Cookies for event
<i>Pure Buttons</i>	300	\$ 0.29	\$ 85.80	\$ 3,657.52	Tabling give away
<i>Transportation(vans)</i>	2	\$ 80.26	\$ 160.52	\$ 3,818.04	Vans to transport Blackburn students to the
<i>Transportation(sedan)</i>	1	\$ 150.36	\$ 150.36	\$ 3,968.40	Sedans to transport small group for tabling 3
<i>Transportation(vans)</i>	2	\$ 82.36	\$ 164.72	\$ 4,133.12	Vans to transport Blackburn students to the
<i>Transportation(sedan)</i>	1	\$ 153.72	\$ 153.72	\$ 4,286.84	Sedans to transport small group for tabling 3
<i>Posters</i>	10	\$ 20.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 4,486.84	Posters of the event to hang around Shelton and
<i>Banner</i>	1	\$ 210.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 4,696.84	Banner to bring with us to the event
<i>Décor</i>	1	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 4,946.84	Decorating the events
TOTAL EXPENSES				\$ 4,946.84	
DIFFERENCE				\$ 53.16	Balanced or Budget Surplus