

Mental Health Outreach Initiative for Undocumented Students

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Introduction

- The prevalence of mental health disorders in the U.S has been on the rise and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Underlying circumstances such as financial instability, fear of deportation, or an unfavorable political climate cause undocumented individuals to be disproportionately affected by poor mental health.
- At the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), mental health has been an integral aspect of healthcare; however, these services have lacked attendance, particularly by undocumented students.

Purpose

- An initiative between the USS organization and UCSD public health students was launched to increase awareness of UCSD's existing mental health support program and to encourage undocumented students to seek out its services.
- To post a short promotional video about a designated psychologist, Dr. Lilian Salcedo, to the USS organization's media accounts to emphasize Dr. Salcedo's personal background and promote a sense of relatability between students and the psychologist.

Methods

- A needs assessment survey was conducted by the USS organization and had a total of 205 responses. 190 of which were undergraduates, 15 were graduates, and 47 of the total were transfers.
- A video was produced, emphasizing the CAPS psychologist, Dr. Lilian Salcedo.

Results

- Needs assessment survey found that 73.4% of undocumented undergraduates reported a negative impact on mental health due to remote learning or the COVID-19 pandemic and 56.99% reported difficulty in accessing campus resources & services.

Conclusion

- The data results emphasized a need to pay attention to the mental health of undocumented undergraduates. We hope our outreach initiative encourages them to use the resources provided by UCSD.

Limitation & Public Health Implication

- The effectiveness of this outreach initiative is a possible limitation as this only tackles one factor that can help increase awareness of UCSD's mental health support program among undocumented undergraduates.
- A higher percentage of undocumented undergraduates will seek out mental health support services, which can positively impact their mental health, including their academic performance.

“ We understand how talking about personal experiences that are at times tied to serious things such as trauma can be a very difficult process. We think that a video can enable students to form a level of trust with the mental health professionals, in addition to promoting an environment that makes students feel comfortable when it comes to seeking mental health support “

UCSD Public Health Students



Dr. Salcedo is a psychologist and first-generation graduate from California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego. She has her Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, and Doctor of Psychology. She is originally from Mexico City, Mexico, and has special interests for first-generation and undocumented college students' mental health issues.

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