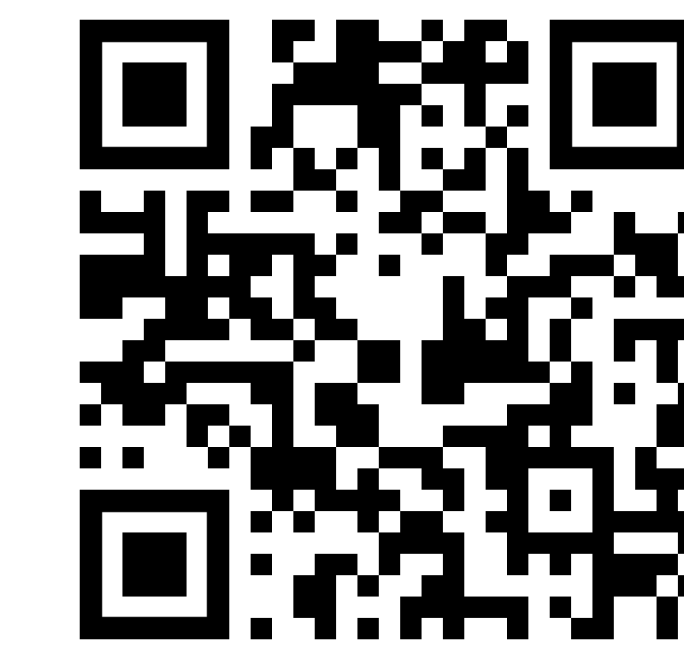


Student Experiences of Health and Wellness on Campus

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Scan the QR code on your mobile device to access more information on the Data Fellow's program.

1. Open your camera app on your mobile device.
2. Hold your device over the QR code so that it is clearly visible.
3. Open the website when it pops up on your screen.

Research Questions

The proposed project aims to better understand the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of CSULB students regarding their health and wellness. Results from the project will provide invaluable information on how current campus programs can better meet the needs of individuals in ways that are strengths-based, affirming, and relevant to a diverse student body.

Research Questions:

1. What does positive mental health mean to CSULB students?
2. What makes CSULB students feel healthy and well?
3. What strengths do CSULB students possess?

Introduction

Student Health and Wellness

- College students are experiencing significant psychological and social disruptions including problems sleeping, increased depression, anxiety, sadness, and struggles with motivation (Tasso et. al, 2021).
- Approximately one in five college students report symptoms of serious psychological distress (Auerbach et. al, 2016).

Campus Resources

- Despite high need, only a small percentage of students receive services (Eisenberg et. al, 2011).
- This largely due to perceived stigma (Eisenberg et. al, 2009) and lack of knowledge and information for where to locate services (Yorgason et. al, 2008).

Methods

Participants

- Flyers containing a QR code were posted on CSULB campus on approved bulletin boards and kiosks.
- Flyers were also shared via campus cultural centers, DSA services, and on campus social media.

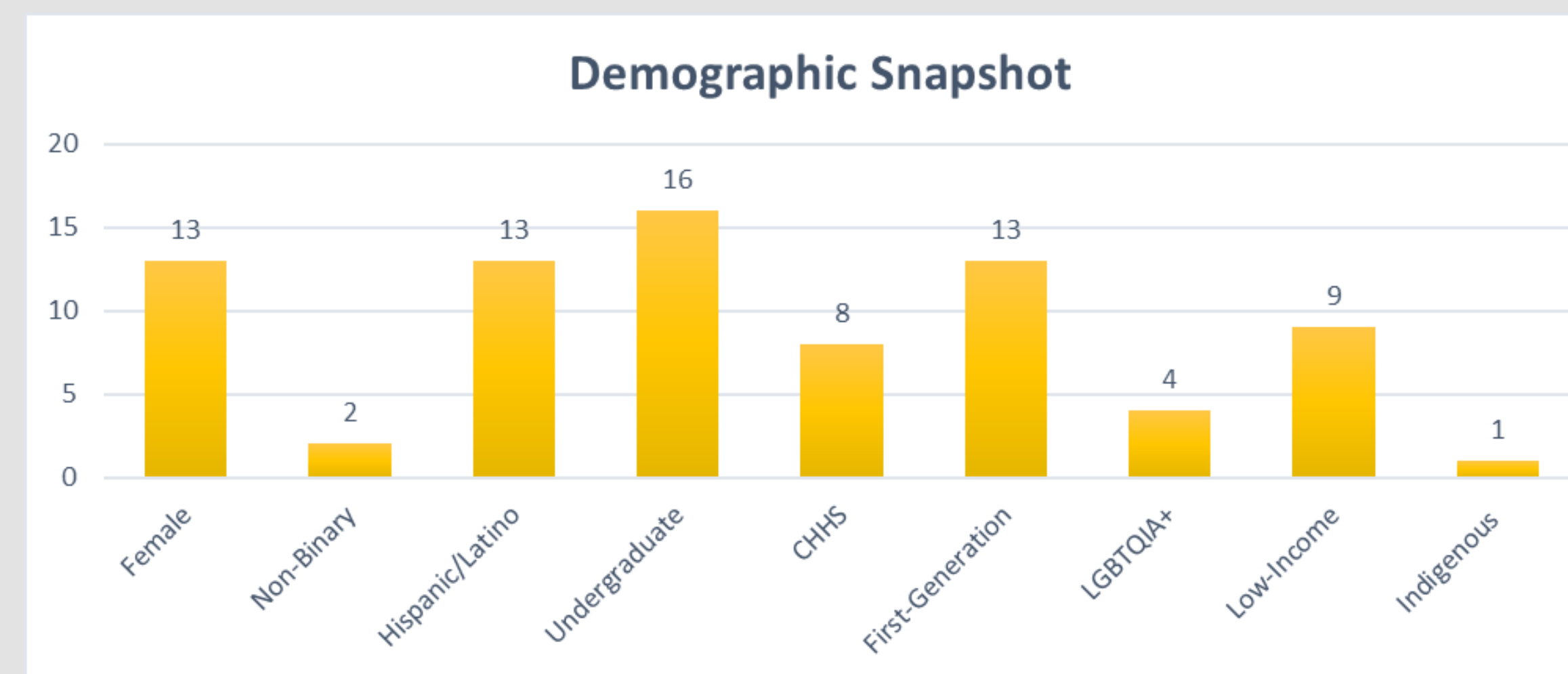
Procedure

- Between January and March 2023, 8 focus groups were conducted with a total of 20 CSULB students.
- Focus groups were one-hour in length and were conducted remotely using Zoom software.
- Questions focused on what positive mental health and wellbeing means to students, what makes students feel safe and engaged on campus, and what students feel their greatest strengths and assets are.

Analytic Plan

- All focus groups were transcribed.
- Transcripts were content analyzed by two investigators.
- Themes were identified.

Results



RQ 1: What does positive mental health mean to CSULB Students?

Theme	Definition	Student Quote
Engaging in Self-Awareness	The ability to reflect, be mindful, and recognize how you're feeling mentally and physically	"Having meditations and just being more mindful, such as when I'm eating, you know. Trying to just savor every bite and just simply when you're walking even as well. Just the little things."
Maintaining a Sense of Perspective	Having perspective that things will not be like this forever, keeping a positive mindset, how you view life, and having a positive outlook	"I think having, like, positive thoughts, a positive mindset, I think that helps a lot. When you do tend to think very negatively, I think that really does take a toll on a person, but I think that's kind of hard to keep a positive mindset, but at the same time, it's manageable. Anybody can that a positive mindset."
Finding Balance	Balancing wellbeing and school/work/family/obligations, making time for yourself even when there is little or no time	"I think, like, positive mental health with yourself means the balance between your priorities. Finding the balance between school, work, if you have a significant other, spouse, if you have children. Familial duties. If you work full time or not, finding like the peace between it all. So actually, finding time for yourself outside of those things to keep like a regulated internal happiness."
Developing a Sense of Self	How you think about yourself, how you treat yourself, how you view yourself in relation to others	"I feel that positive mental health may mean being accepted, being comfortable in my identity and in myself and as well as not comparing myself to others and just having that satisfaction, feeling good enough. That's one possibility of mental health for me."

RQ 2: What makes CSULB students feel healthy and well?

Theme	Definition	Student Quote
Personal Care Routines	Students described being able to take care of their basic personal care as something that makes them feel well.	"Making sure I get enough sleep makes me feel well in the morning. Just taking time to actually eat a meal throughout the day. I know sometimes we can be busy. Just doing little things like that can make me feel well throughout the day."
Hobbies	Students noted that taking time to enjoy their hobbies helps them feel well.	"I like to go towards like fitness and physical activity, being outdoors. I love trying new foods, cooking, and sleeping. Spending time with like loved ones and family, friends, socializing, dancing."
Social Support	Being with family, friends, and loved ones, having support in the community, and being able to see professors face to face helps students feel well.	"Being with people that make you feel comfortable and secure is a really positive thing for making me feel well at the end of the day."
Self-Awareness	Students mentioned being intentional and intuitive about their body and needs, reflecting and recharging, and mindfulness as important.	"Personally, getting enough sleep is very simple. That is a big self-care. Listening to what my body feels like if I'm feeling tired, intuitive self-care. And just kind of working on my hobbies. Setting time aside to make sure I have time for that outside of school and work."
Positive Mindset	Students noted that mindset plays an important role in feeling well, i.e. being openminded, positive, and purposeful.	"I think being able to recognize that everyone comes from a different background and that everyone's circumstances is not the same. And focusing on positive self-image and being able to find positivity in ourselves and undo the harmful effects of social media."

RQ 3: What strengths do CSULB students possess?

Theme	Definition	Student Quote
Intuitive Skills	Students described experiences of being in tune with their body, resting and recovering, and managing their emotions.	"I guess I learned to kind of trust myself and/or listen to myself and know when I'm feeling that things are going badly or just knowing that things will be okay later on."
Maintaining a Sense of Perspective	Students recognized a positive mindset and outlook as an important strength.	"Recently I learned that phrase that says it's okay not to be okay. And when things are wrong, things are just temporary. Some things are just temporary, and we'll pass through it."
Coping Skills	Students identified taking time to implement coping skills as a strength.	"For me, when times get tough, I usually journal, so I type out what's going on ... this is going on, and just let it out like a little reset for myself."
Perseverance	Students shared that they see their ability to keep going, push through, and survive as a strength.	"Even when things are hard, I'm like, no. I take a break, I cry if I need it, but like I never give up. I keep going."
Goal-Oriented	Students believe setting goals and working toward them is a strength.	"Just focusing on the end goal or my short-term goals and I'm someone who is very driven so..."
Connecting with Others	Students shared communicating how they feel and turning to others for support is a strength.	"Reminding myself that I can't do everything by myself and that I need community support. So that's where I lean into building community and building connections with others."
Lived Experience	Lived experience, both their upbringing and learned from trial and error, is a strength.	"From childhood, my parents worked really hard, and I can tell that. My parents are immigrants and had that working mentality and they put that onto me."

Conclusion / Discussion

- CSULB students believe positive mental health encompasses the ability to be "in-tune" with one's thoughts, emotions, and needs, the ability to view life with perspective, balance competing demands, and maintain a sense of personal identity.
- Positive mental health does not mean just the absence of mental illness or "toxic positivity," but rather finding balance and the need to continually work toward it as life changes.
- Helping CSULB students develop self-awareness is a promising area for bolstering positive mental health.
- CSULB students possess many strengths that can be recognized and supported.
- Many students view their perseverance as a strength, however for some students this comes at a cost to their mental health.

Implications for Action

- Develop supports and resources that support students' self-awareness, identity development, and social networks.
- Develop information campaigns targeting important personal care routines and hobbies students find important (e.g., Did you drink enough water today?)
- Focus on the idea that surviving is not thriving. Perseverance does not mean "at all costs."
- House Counseling and Psychological Services(CAPS) in various campus locations to meet students where they are.
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Scheduled Appointments
 - Student, Staff, Faculty Consultation
- Fund an outreach position for a CAPS information campaign
- Continue the student text messaging initiative (OCELOT)
 - Real person
 - Proactively reach out to and check-in with students
 - Beginning of semester, before midterms, before finals
 - Follow-up with CARES referrals that are unreachable
- Lunch and Learns for Faculty/Staff on Behavioral Health
- Continue the Wellness Ambassador Program
 - Educate faculty and staff
 - Provide tools
- Launching new virtual training platform for faculty/staff

Next Steps / Future Directions

- Continued integration within more departments on campus
- Focus more broadly on Health, not just mental health
- Implement a peer partner program (someone who has had their own experience with mental illness)
- Incorporate wellness resources into every course syllabus
- Create a campus center on health that includes CAPS
- Develop a centralized health resource
- Strategize on how to connect with "hard to reach" students