**Mental Health Awareness:**

**A Proposal for On Campus Mental Health Awareness**

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Contents

[Executive Summary 2](#_Toc509827641)

[Current Situation 3](#_Toc509827642)

[Proposal 4](#_Toc509827643)

[Benefits 5](#_Toc509827644)

[Precedents 5](#_Toc509827645)

[Proposed Plan 5](#_Toc509827646)

[Budget 7](#_Toc509827647)

[Works Cited 7](#_Toc509827648)

# Executive Summary

Untreated mental health issues have an impact on student's academic performance. Mental health services exist on our campus; however, there is a lack of advertising, and the advertisements that do exist are lacking in reach. We propose that Arapahoe Community College add a separate page to the website about mental health and services provided by the school. College students would benefit from advertisement and support for mental health. A precedent for our proposal is the National Mental Health Innovation Center (NMHIC) at the University of Colorado (CU). CU is working with leaders from all four campuses of the University of Colorado to minimize social stigma associated with seeking mental healthcare and ways to help understanding and awareness of mental illness. Another precedent is Northwell Health who created a Behavioral Health College Partnership (BHCP) at the Zucker Hillside Hospital in Queens, NY, working with college students, parents, and their insurance companies. If approved, we would first like to see an independent webpage on the Arapahoe Community College website dedicated to mental health services. Our proposal would be minimal cost.

# Current Situation

**Untreated mental health issues have an impact on student's academic performance.** Sometimes students have to manage stressful situations and other responsibilities while experiencing psychological illness. When these feeling become pervasive, they can have a negative effect on student's performance. According to Sara K, Michael G, Justin H, Kathryn B, and Daniel E (2015), in the article Variation in Students Mental Health and Treatment Utilization across US College and Universities, mental health problems cause difficulties for students which prevent them from succeeding during the academic year, increase the risk of dropping out, and decrease graduation rates. Nonresidential campuses show a higher rate of mental health issues and a lower rate of resource utilization.

**Mental health services exist on our campus; however, there is a lack of advertising, and the advertisements that do exist are lacking in accessibility.** This leads to students not receiving the necessary information about these services and ultimately not having the proper tools to help themselves or another person who is in need of mental health treatment.

Students also found it difficult to find information on ACC’s services on ACC’s current webpage.

# Proposal

**We propose that Arapahoe Community College add a separate page to the website about mental health and services provided by the school.** We also propose they distribute monthly emails and put up posters.

# Benefits

**College students would benefit from advertisement and support for mental health.** Students would not only benefit in their personal life but would also do better academically. Students would be able to focus on their studies better, which would lead to higher graduation rates. Add source material

# Precedents

**The National Mental Health Innovation Center (NMHIC) is working with leaders from all four campuses of the University of Colorado to minimize social stigma associated with seeking mental healthcare and ways to help understanding and awareness of mental illness.** They have initiated the following mental health campaigns in academic year 2017/18:

* A student-led mental health panel, featuring personal stories to increase understanding and address stigma
* Virtual reality (VR) demos open to all on campus, hosted by NMHIC, to show the power of VR in mental healthcare
* A faculty-led mental health panel, also featuring personal stories to increase understanding and address stigma

NMHIC is also working on another initiative to engage The JED Foundation to prevent student suicide and promote mental health.

**Northwell Health created a Behavioral Health College Partnership (BHCP) at the Zucker Hillside Hospital in Queens, NY, working with college students, parents and their insurance companies.** The partnerships’ protocol allows the schools to share information regarding a student’s medical history with mental healthcare professionals. This protocol protects the student’s privacy and minimizes social stigma associated with seeking mental healthcare. It also ensures the best outcome for the student.

# Proposed Plan

**If approved, we would first like to see the creation of an independent webpage on the Arapahoe Community College website dedicated to mental health services.** This webpage should be accessible under the “Current Students” or “Community” tabs on the homepage.

*Webpage*This webpage should include:

* Detailed information about the counseling center and their services
* Biographies on each team member who works in the counseling center
* Counseling center hours and location
* A calendar for students to schedule appointments with a counselor

*Emails*In addition, we would like to see monthly emails from the counseling department sent to all Littleton ACC students. These emails should:

* Differ each weekly and cater to a specific problem or topic
  + For example: how to deal with finals, homework stress and management, bullying, suicide awareness, or noticing and preventing abusive relationships
* Include how to contact the counseling department/set up an appointment
* Include how to refer a concern about a friend/peer

*Posters*Finally, we would like the counseling department to design and hang up mental health awareness posters throughout the school. The posters should:

* Clearly advertise the counseling center and their services
* Be eye-catching
* At least 12’ by 12’
* Include the phone number, website, and location of the counseling center
* Be hung up in various spots throughout the school, including the stairwells and all other bulletin boards

We believe the counseling center should be responsible for creating the website, sending out the emails, and hanging up the posters.

This plan is cost effective and quick to execute; if put into action right away, it will be completed by the fall 2018 semester.

We found students on campus supported these changes and would benefit from them, see charts below.

# Budget

**Our proposal would be minimal cost.** The highest cost for our proposal is the cost of materials for posters, which ACC’s already spends for other posters around campus. Other costs would be time to create an individual page on ACC’s website, which is also already done for other services.

# References

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