

**267 W McMillan St,
Cincinnati, OH 45219**

April 20, 2023

Shuxin Wang, President
President Office
Chongqing University
Shazheng Street, 400044

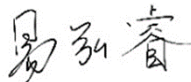
Dear President Wang:

I am pleased to submit to you a proposal for enhancing mental health support for our students. We aim to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing mental health issues among our students, as we recognize the importance of mental health in academic success and personal development.

The proposed approach includes several methods, such as providing WeChat access for students to reach the counseling office, offering a self-assessment tool on the university website, organizing a CQU Mental Health Day activity, and improving the condition of the school counseling room. These methods are designed to provide a holistic and accessible support system for students facing mental health challenges. The overall cost is low, but the schedule involves 6 principals to keep the proposal feasible.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. We believe that by working together, we can make a positive impact on the mental health and well-being of our students. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the Chinese characters '易弘睿' (Yi Hongrui).

Hongrui Yi

Undergraduate Student, UC-CQU Joint Co-op Institute

A Proposal for Enhancing Mental Health Support in Chongqing University (2022-23)

Prepared for
The President Office
Chongqing University
Shazheng Street, Chongqing

By
Hongrui Yi, Dawen Huang, Xinran Liu
Undergraduate Student from UC-CQU Joint Co-op Institute

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SUMMARY

We write this proposal for enhancing mental health support for students at Chongqing University. We aim to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing mental health issues among students, as they affect their academic success and personal development.

According to our investigation, Chongqing University's mental health services are inadequate, and students face various barriers to accessing them. Long wait times due to limited availability of mental health professionals, difficulty scheduling appointments, and stigma are among the challenges that students encounter when seeking mental health support. These issues can have a detrimental effect on students' mental health, exacerbating existing problems and leading to long-term consequences.

We listed solutions for student mental health at Chongqing University and suggest four methods to improve the situation: providing WeChat access for students to reach the counseling office, offering a self-assessment tool on the university website, organizing a CQU Mental Health Day activity, and improving the condition of the school counseling room. The total cost of this proposal is estimated to be low. The proposal argues that this investment is necessary and worthwhile to ensure that students receive the care they need to thrive.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Mental health is a crucial factor that affects students' academic performance, social skills, and personal growth. However, many students struggle with stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges that may interfere with their learning and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, as students face isolation, uncertainty, and disruption in their routines. Therefore, it is essential for Chongqing University to provide comprehensive and accessible mental health support for students.

Background

According to the American Psychological Association, one in three college students reported having a mental health disorder in 2018 [1]. The most common disorders were anxiety (41.6%), depression (36.4%), and substance use (14.5%). Moreover, a American College Health Association survey found that 63% of college students experienced overwhelming anxiety, 45% felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, and 13% seriously considered suicide in the past year.

Mental health problem is also a serious issue that affects college students in China. Chongqing University, as one of the top universities in China, has a large and diverse student population that may experience different types of mental health problems. According to some recent studies, mental health problems among Chongqing University students are influenced by factors such as lifestyle habits, the COVID-19 epidemic, and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). For example, a study by Yang et al. (2022) found that computer usage time and fried food consumption were associated with a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms among male college students at Chongqing University [2]. Another study by Zhang et al. (2021) reported that the first-line medical staff in Chongqing University Three Gorges Hospital had high levels of anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 epidemic and needed psychological intervention [3]. Moreover, a study by Li et al. (2020) showed that China faced challenges in NCDs, mental health, and some infectious diseases in achieving the 2030 health-related Sustainable Development Goals [4]. These studies indicate that mental health situation at Chongqing University is affected by various factors and requires more attention and intervention from different stakeholders.

These statistics show that mental health problems are prevalent and serious among students of all ages and levels. However, many students do not receive adequate or timely help for their mental health needs. Some of the barriers that prevent students from accessing mental health services include stigma, lack of awareness, cost, availability, and cultural factors.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM

The inadequate state of mental health services at Chongqing University raises concern for the whole society. Lots of students who require mental health support face various barriers to accessing these services. One of the most critical barriers is the long waiting time. Due to the limited availability of mental health professionals, students may have to wait for extended periods to receive the support they need. This delay can be detrimental to their mental health and could even exacerbate their existing issues.

Another issue that students face is the limited availability of mental health professionals. Chongqing University may not have enough mental health professionals to cater to the growing demand for mental health services. This shortage could make it difficult for students to receive timely and adequate mental health support.

Difficulty scheduling appointments is another challenge that students face when trying to access mental health services. Due to the high demand for these services, students may find it challenging to set appointments at a time that works for them. This challenge can be particularly difficult for students who have tight schedules due to academic demands or other commitments.

Finally, some students may feel embarrassed or ashamed to seek help for their mental health issues. This stigma could discourage them from seeking mental health services, even when they need them. This reluctance to seek help could exacerbate their mental health issues and have long-term consequences on their wellbeing.

In conclusion, the inadequate state of mental health services at Chongqing University is a significant challenge for the mental health and wellbeing of the student population. To address this challenge, the university needs to take steps to improve access to mental health services and reduce the barriers that students face when trying to access these services.

PROPOSED PLAN

Methods

The school can provide better mental support by improving both hardware and software support.

1. Provide self-assessment on the website.

Chongqing University has an official website for counseling appointments. We believe that this website can be used to provide self-assessment for students. Self-assessment can provide students with a way to assess their mental state whenever they are under stress. According to interviews at multiple universities in China, more and more students are aware of the importance of mental health. They are willing to check their mental condition regularly to keep track of themselves. However, with all kinds of psychological test websites on the network mixing together, it is difficult for students to find a formal way to self-test. The school's psychological website can provide professional tests for all students to access. A variety of different tests can be launched to offer assessment in different aspects. This will not only help students to have a better understanding of their own condition but also helps the school to keep track of the student's psychological condition.

2. Provide WeChat access for students to reach the counseling office.

The current remote access of the school counseling office is through the phone. Some students reported that the phone was often busy. This reveals the fact that the number of students who need psychological treatment is increasing. More access should be provided for this situation. WeChat is widely used in China. The school counseling office can set up an official account for students to provide remote access. Establishing a WeChat official account is not only cheap but also has many uses. It can offer an online appointment service and simplify the students' booking process.

3. Organize CQU Mental Health Day activity.

CQU has been organizing all kinds of activities regarding mental health. However, all these activities are small events that only include one or two departments. Compared to large school-wide events, department-based events have less influence on students and are often ignored by students who are not interested in their mental health. We suggest hosting a school-based event called 'Mental Health Day'. On this day, different departments can have their booth to hold different events. The activity can be performed by gaming styles and competition will be held between departments. This will attract more students to engage in the event and have fun learning psychological knowledge during the day. The student can vote for their favorite booths and a prize can be given to the winner for encouragement. The students who participated in the setup will learn a lot from the experiment of preparing the activities. This is not only a good event to promote the importance of mental health, but also a good way to help students relax from heavy schoolwork and enjoy colorful school life. I believe the activity will also help release their stress and build a healthier mental condition.

4. Improve the condition of the school counseling room.

According to the study, consultant rooms can improve the diversity of psychological counseling methods and patients' satisfaction.[8] According to students' feedback, there is no counseling room on campus. The counselor works in the psychological office with only desks, chairs, and basic computer setups. Since it is important for the counselors to apply treatment to the patient, we suggest adding equipment like soundscape, and comfortable chairs or sofas. Yifan's paper mentioned that adding soundscapes can significantly improve the efficiency and accuracy of counseling.[9] A comfortable environment can help the counselor gain more trust in the patient. We also suggest repainting the wall of the counseling office. Jiulin mentioned in his paper that warm colors will provide visitors with a better counseling environment. [10]

Timeline

Our proposed timeline is itemized in Table 1, but the main point is clear: If the goal is to remain viable, changing the timeline is essential for meeting our projected goal.

Table 1. Task Schedule for next year

Task Schedule			
Action	Start Date	Finish Date	Principal
Build self-assessment on website	1 Jul. 23	15 Sep. 23	Web programmer
Build WeChat official account	1 Aug. 23	15 Sep. 23	WeChat public account operator
Purchase sofa and chairs	15 Aug. 23	30 Aug.23	Purchasing manager
Paint counseling room's wall	15 Aug. 23	1 Sep. 23	Facilities management department
Hold the CQU Mental Health Day	1 May.24	2 May.24	Student life center

Conclusion

With these effective solutions to the challenges faced by Chongqing University, we are confident that the shortage of mental health services for students will improve. While the project budget may be higher than anticipated, it is essential for the university to prioritize the mental health of its students and allocate resources accordingly.

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