Feelings, something most people may avoid talking about. Emotions, we all have them, whether we choose to open up about how we feel or ignore them, numb ourselves, push the feelings down, or hopefully seek help. Neglecting your mental Health can lead to severe mental illnesses. According to the CDC “More than 1 in 5 US adults live with a mental illness” (CDC, 2023). A person’s Mental Health affects how a person behaves/acts, how they think and feel. Many of us have someone in our family, friends circle or quite possibly yourself that may suffer from a mental illness, as it affects billions around the world. For College students attending WCTC there is lack of Mental Health support for Online/Off campus students.

Some students work the typical 9-5 job, maybe have kids, don’t have transportation, or have other responsibilities that restrict or limit their ability to meet with a mental health professional during WCTC’s limited office hours. There is a lack of mental health resources nights and weekends for online/off campus students. According to the WCTC Website, the office hours are 8am-430pm Monday-Thursday and 8am- 4pm on Fridays (WCTC.EDU, 2024). Many Students are enrolled in Online or Asynchronous courses due to busy schedules outside of school or lack of transportation.

My proposed solution is to implement some a 24-7 accessible online chat/hotline specifically for WCTC students to go to at any time of day to chat with someone about their struggles with mental health. This solution will be able to reach more students who work later than 430pm, possibly parents, or have other obligations that do not allow for them to meet with a professional on campus. The accessible chat will also reach more students that may feel anxious or uncomfortable meeting face to face to discuss such personal topics. The CDC does state that mental health can change over time. “When the demands placed on a person exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health could be impacted” (CDC, 2023). The paragraph goes on to explain that “…if someone working long hours, caring for a relative, or experiencing economic hardship, they may experience poor mental health”. For example, a student overstimulated, burnt out, taking on too much at once. Maybe a student enrolled in 6+ credits, who works 40 hours a week and has a kindergartener.

On the other hand, some people may disagree, and say that if it that urgent of an issue just call 911 or the suicide hotline, which is provided on the WCTC website directly under the office hours, phone number and email contacts. By clicking on the “More Counseling Information and Resources” (WCTC, 2024) Hyperlink, There is a variety of helpful tabs to explore for different mental health needs. In a much smaller font, there is also a statement that says “Contact us for evening appointments” (WCTC, 2024), so there are options for night appointments if the student plans ahead.

*Deal with it, it’s not that bad, someone else has it worse, just hang in there, you don’t need help, and you can get through this alone.*

Those may be the thoughts of someone who is struggling with mental health. If they think and feel that way. Eventually it can make a person feel alone, defeated and hopeless. There can never be enough help and resources when it comes to a person’s mental health. Everyone is different and depending on the timing, a day may feel too overwhelming and like there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe if everything else is going wrong but then a student had the opportunity to reach out and remind them *tomorrow is a new day, you can do this, lets figure out a way to help you succeed.* Then that student wouldn’t feel so alone, maybe that chat means a worlds’ difference.

In conclusion, a person’s mental health can affect how they think, how they act towards others and how they feel emotionally. WCTC could provide more mental health resources during nights and weekends for online/off campus students. My proposed solution to create an online chat available at any time would reach a wider variety of students with limited schedules or obligations. WCTC does indeed provide a variety or other options on a case by case basis. The proposed solution could however, just be the difference that a student really needs to get them through, the difference between giving up and succeeding.

References

WCTC. (2024, January 5). WCTC.edu. *Counseling Services: Home*, <https://www.wctc.edu/campus-life/wellness-support/counseling-services.php>

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