University of Rhode Island DigitalCommons@URI

Senior Honors Projects

Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island

4-2019

### Changing the Age-old Stigmatization of Mental Health

Ashley E. Fontana *University of Rhode Island*, ashleyefontana@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog

Part of the Psychology Commons

### **Recommended Citation**

Fontana, Ashley E., "Changing the Age-old Stigmatization of Mental Health" (2019). *Senior Honors Projects.* Paper 742. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/742https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/742

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

# Changing the age-old stigmatization of mental health Ashley Fontana, Psychology, Criminology and Criminal Justice Sponsor: Kathleen Webster, Psychology

# Introduction

For years, the importance of mental health has been overlooked. In the past, individuals possessing unstable mental health were not only neglected, but they were highly stigmatized. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these individuals were thought to have demonic roots—they were feared. The mentally ill have been institutionalized, deinstitutionalized, and institutionalized yet again.

Some progress has been made in changing society's fierce stigmatization of mental health, but not nearly enough.

Mental health stigmatization has detrimental effects on those that fall victim to it—ridding our society of this cruel stigmatization is long overdue.

While prior research has shown that contact with mentally ill and mentally unstable individuals, as well as organized protests against mental health stigma, can be effective means of diminishing mental health stigma, the most effective means has been education.

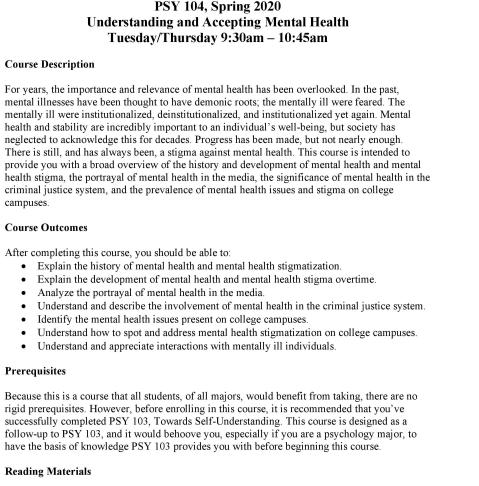
Research has also shown that over 25% of adults between 18 and 24 have a mental illness. This makes many college-aged individuals vulnerable to mental instability and makes seeking treatment during the college years essential. However, 40% of college students with mental health conditions don't seek help, often because of stigma.

## Methods

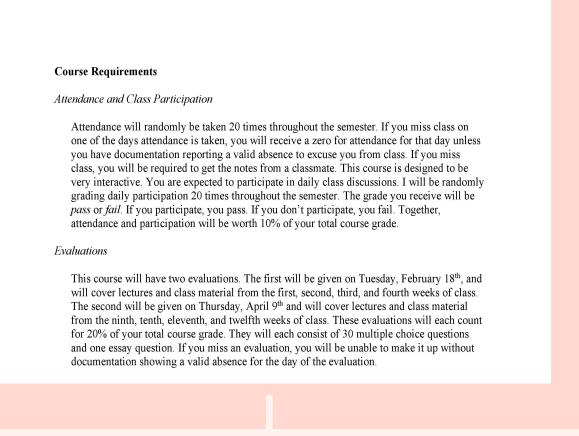
I'm proposing a new college course aimed at contributing to changing this age-old stigmatization of mental health. This proposed course is intended to provide students with a broad overview of the history and development of mental health and mental health stigma, the portrayal of mental health in the media, the significance of mental health in the criminal justice system, and the prevalence of mental health issues and stigma on college campuses.

Proposed aspects of this course have been created including a syllabus, a lecture, and exam questions which complement the lecture. A proposed update to the curriculum sheet has also been drafted.

Should this course be implemented, I hope that it would reduce mental health stigmatization, and normalize seeking help for mental instability on college campuses.



t the semester you will be required to read a number of research articles in preparation for lectures. These research articles will be available through the URI Library Database. In order to access them, go to the library homepage (https://web.uri.edu/library/).



A course syllabus that extensively outlines the proposed course has been created. The course is titled PSY 104, Understanding and Accepting Mental Health.

This syllabus includes a course description, a list of outcomes, and a schedule of classes. It also includes information about prerequisites, reading materials, course requirements, and grading.

A sample lecture has also been created. This sample lecture is titled Mental Health on College Campuses. This lecture would be given during week 11 of the proposed course.

Evaluation I

1. What two mental illnesses are most often cited as impediments to academic performance?

3. What is the most common reason that college students don't seek help for mental health

4. Why is it important that college students seek help for mental health conditions?

Directions: This evaluation contains 30 multiple choice questions, each worth 2.5 points.

which is worth 25 points. Answer the essay question in narrative format, to the best of your ability. For all questions, please fill in your answer on the answer sheet provided.

c. Bulimia and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Choose the best answer for each question asked. This evaluation also co

2. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death on college campuses

b. They don't know what resources are available to them

d. They are unaware that they need help

b. Increased likelihood of completing colles

b. When they feel there are no other options

b. Self-care can improve physical health

c. Self-care can improve emotional well-being

. When should students seek help for mental health conditions'

a. Self-care is the only way to cope with mental illness

a. When friends and/or family recognize external symptoms

Sample Questions: Mental Health on College Campuses

a. Anxiety and Depression

b. Depression and Anorexia

d. Anxiety and Anorexia

a. They can't afford to

a. Improved quality of life

c. When they're suicidal d. As soon as possible

c. Stigma

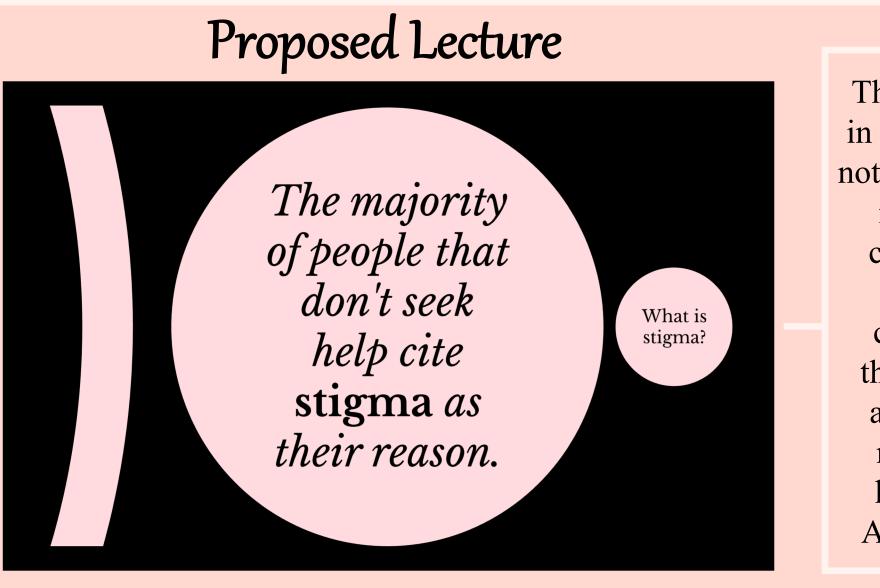
c. Both a and b

d. Neither a or b

6. Why is self-care important?

d. Both b and c

a. True b. False



# Proposed Evaluation Questions

Based on the sample lecture about mental health on college campuses, sample evaluation questions have been created. These questions would be included in the second evaluation.

These questions test a students knowledge of the prevalence of mental health on college campuses, the stigmatization of mental health on college campuses, when students should seek help, why self-care is important, and the current trends on American college campuses, in regards to mental health awareness.

> 7. Self-care is common sense a. True b. False

8. Mental health services are becoming more prevalent on college campuses. a. True b. False

# Proposed Syllabus

Calculation of Grades				
Attendance and Participation Evaluation I Evaluation II Mental Health in the Media Project Personal Experience Essay <b>Grading Scale</b>			10% 20% 20% 25% 25%	
A A- B+ B B- C+	93-100 90-92 97-89 83-86 80-82 77-79	C C- D+ D F	73-76 70-72 65-69 60-64 0-59	

### Schedule of Classes

Week 1 – Introduction to the Cours Tuesday, January 21st – Lecture Thursday, January 23rd - Lecture Week 2 – The History of the Mentally Ill in America Tuesday, January 28th – Lecture Thursday, January 30th – Lecture Week 3 – Modern Mental Health and Stigmatization Tuesday, February 4th - Lecture Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – Lecture Week 4 – The Effects of Mental Health Stigmatization Tuesday, February 11th – Lecture Thursday, February 13th - Lecture Week 5 – Mental Health in the Media Tuesday, February 18th - Evaluation Thursday, February 20th – Lecture Week 6 – Mental Health in the Medi Tuesday, February 25th – Lecture Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> – Lecture Week 7 – Mental Health in the Media Project Presentation Tuesday, March 3rd - Groups 1, 2, 3 Present Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> – Groups 4, 5, 6 Present Week 8 – Spring Breal

### Proposed Curriculum Sheet This lecture gives an in depth look at some THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FALL 2018-SPRING 2019 Psychology-BA 120 Credits Total 32-47 Credits in Major notable statistics about mental health on The BA in Psychology will provide a better understanding of human behavior and an enhanced awareness of themselves and society, as well as skills for analyzing and evaluating information and data. The BA program also encourages various college campuses, avenues for experiential learning with practical career-related and hands-on research experience STEP 1: seeking help on 42 credits at the 300-level or highe major and general education courses may fulfill th campus, self-care Course emester | Credits | Grad PSY 113† 3 PSY 232, 235, throughout college, 3 or 254‡ PSY 232, 235, 3 or 254‡ and current trends 4 PSY 200† regarding mental Additional Major Requirements PSY 301† 4 credits Applied Psychology from: 103\*, 104\* health services at 275, 334, 399, 465, 466, 471, 478 American colleges. Free elective credit credits Topics in Psychology from: PSY 255.3 35, 361, 381, 384, 385, 399, 425, 432, 434, 436, 442 meet the 120 credits required for graduation 460, 464, 470, 479, and 480 PSY \_\_\_\_\_‡ 3 PSY \_\_\_\_‡ 3 PSY \_\_\_\_‡ 3 credits Experiential Psychology from: PSY 305 473, 488, 489, 499\*\*; ITR 301/302\*\*; CSV 302\* + 3 onal Major Electives (do not exceed 47 PS +Grade in course must be C or better Average grade in courses must be C or better \*Course counts for general education credit \*\*Course does not count toward the 32 credit inimum required for the major. Please note: Both major and cumulative GPA must be 2.00 or higher in order to graduate. A proposed update to the course curriculum sheet has been drafted. This would include PSY 104 in both psychology and general education curricula. References Corrigan, P. (2004). How stigma interferes with mental health care. American Psychologist, 59(7), 614-625. doi:10.1037/0003-066x.59.7.614 Corrigan, P. W., River, L. P., Lundin, R. K., Wasowski, K. U., Campion, J., Mathisen, J., ... Kubiak, M. A. (2000). Stigmatizing attributions about mental illness. Journal of Community Psychology, 28(1), 91-102. https://doiorg.uri.idm.oclc.org/10/1002/(SICI)1520-6629(200001)28:1<91::AID-JCOP9>3.0CO;2-M Eisenberg, D., Downs, M. F., Golberstein, E., & Zivin, K. (2009). Stigma and Help Seeking for Mental Health Among College Students. Medical Care Research and Review, 66(5), 522-541. doi:10.1177/1077558709335173 Rössler W. (2016). The stigma of mental disorders: A millennia-long history of social exclusion and prejudices. EMBO reports, 17(9), 1250-3. Rüsch, N., Angermeyer, M. C., & Corrigan, P. W. (2005). Mental illness stigma: Concepts, consequences, and initiatives to reduce stigma. European Psychiatry, 20(8), 529-539. doi:10.1016/j.eurpsy.2005.04.004

