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# Mental Health and Wellness

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# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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# TOPIC

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

I decided to pick this topic because it is an important aspect related to psychology. I wanted to focus on different definitions and giving advice on how to handle things like stress and anxiety, two common and frequent problems faced by college students.

This lesson defines mental health terms and discusses things and activities that are often used to improve someone's well being and educates about self care and how to continue these skills in he future.

# PURPOSE AND GOALS

As a student who started college during an isolated and all-around tough period of time, my mental health was not the best. Missing out on certain 'normal' college experiences, not socializing, doing online classes and work all impacted my well-being and I, among presumably every other college student was experiencing a hard time transitioning and enjoying classes. Because I have already experienced this, I wanted to be able to emphasize how important mental health and self care are especially during college.

I decided to use this topic because I wanted to be able to help my students in a way I wish I had accessible when I was a freshmen. When entering college, maintaining a good mental health state and improving well-being may not be what some students are prioritizing when it should be. My goal was to introduce small, daily tasks that can be used to improve someone's mood, increase productivity and overall promote well being --  which are all important when entering the field of psychology.

# MATERIALS

## BEING A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR...

- Mental health is a central component of psychology and why we study it - we understand how important it is, and we are in this field because want to be that person who is able to help others better understand it and work through it.

- You will encounter people who have good or bad mental health statuses.

- A big part of the job is to understand where such problems may come from and how to help the individual experiencing any stressors, anxiety, mental illness, etc.

- Self-awareness and understanding of your own mental health / wellness is a very important piece and will allow you to optimally help others.

## DEFINITIONS

**Mental Well-Being**: the state you are in when your mind is in order and functioning in your best interest; when you're able to think, feel and act in ways that create a positive impact on your physical and social well-being.

**Mental Health:** includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being; affects how we think, feel, and act; it also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices

**Mental Disorder:** a clinically significant disturbance in someone's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior. There are several classifications and types of disorders that can occur.
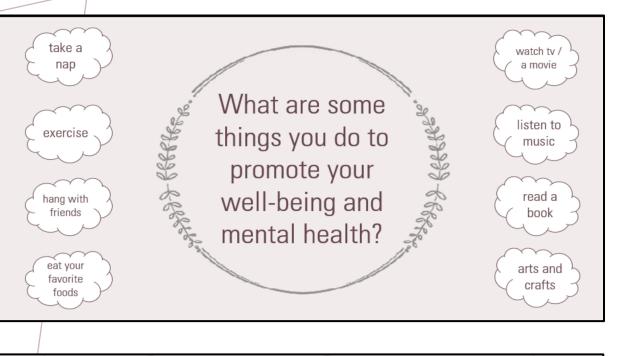
## ANXIETY AND STRESS

Anxiety is defined by a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness, also a persistent and excessive worries that don't go away, even in the absence of a stressor

Stress is defined any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain; a physiological response that requires attention or action

It's Ok Not To Be Ok – Mental Health Stigma

PERSONAL STORIES FROM OTHERS

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=LXQOVC4-RL0

## What are some things you do to promote your well-being and mental health?

take a nap

exercise

hang with friends

eat your favorite foods

watch tv / a movie

listen to music

read a book

arts and crafts

## Kahoot!

https://play.kahoot.it/v2/lobby?quizId=9fb9bcd2-5100-4cf8-9284-49b4dadb3ca6

## PRACTICES

1. Take up a relaxation techniques — meditate, utilize daily affirmations, mindfulness
2. Make rest a priority — we are not robotic, and we cannot be on go-mode 24/7. This can include getting better sleep or partaking in an activity you feel good doing.
3. Aim to be 1% better — pick one thing you want to improve and build upon that each day.

## RESOURCES

- SUNY Cortland Counseling Center
  Phone: (607)-753-4728
  Office: Van Hoesen, Room B-44 or Room B-1 to make appointments.
  Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am to 12pm and 1pm to 4 pm
  Telehealth or in-person
- **Counseling Services of Cortland**
  Phone: 607) 662-0209
  Office: 17-29 Main St. #202 Cortland, NY 13045
  Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9am-8pm and closed Sundays
- **Myself and Krista**

# METHODS AND APPROACHES

When meeting with my instructor, we discussed how to get our normally quiet class engaged during my lesson. I didn't want to pressure anyone into feeling like they were going to be put on the spot, especially with a (possibly) sensitive topic to some students.
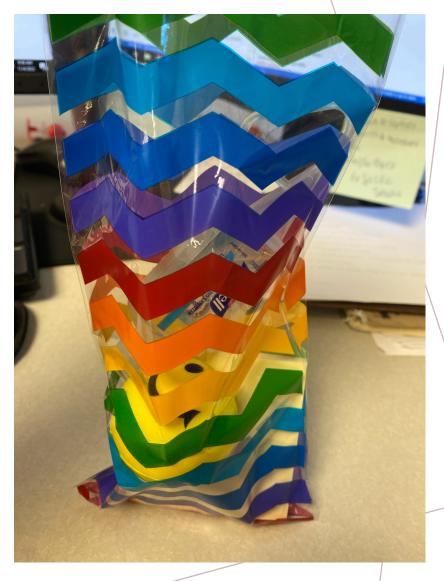
First, I discussed the importance of mental health, especially when studying psychology -- how they will one day need to be someone who helps others, and they must familiarize themselves with their own well-being in order to optimally help others.

I went over definitions regarding mental health and how they apply to psychology, and showed a video titled "It's OK not to be OK". I asked for them to give feedback on the it and what they thought about the statement.

# METHODS AND APPROACHES (CONT.)

I then asked my students what they did to promote their own well-being, and this caused a discussion to happen! Many responded and participated, and I also shared my own methods. I listed some examples of activities that they can start doing if they hadn't mentioned it already. We did a Kahoot together on self-care I found to take a break from me 'lecturing' and to allow them to interact more with the lesson.

I explained three different methods and practices they can start incorporating into their daily life, asking if they knew what they were and what they thought about them. I felt that prompting them often to reflect or comment would stir more conversation or help them feel better about participating. In order to further educate them on resources in the area, I provided hours, numbers, and locations of the school and local counseling centers. I ended the lesson by giving out 'stress kits' created by my instructor and I, which contained a smiley face stress ball, pens, a notepad and hand sanitizer.

# LESSON REFLECTION AND OUTCOMES

Mental health and wellness are very important topics, and something I am very passionate about. Teaching this lesson helped myself and my students in different ways -- we were able to learn more how to better manage their stress and anxieties and how to be more attentive to our mental states.

I was already familiar with some topics I covered but I found new and interesting information that I can now use to even help myself. I also knew transitioning into college was still a long and difficult process some of them were still going through and wanted them to be familiar with self-care methods and its importance.

I was happy with how many people wanted to participate/discuss as opposed to other lessons! I made sure to emphasize how I can help in different ways as a fellow peer and as someone who has personally struggled with mental health. Being a psychology major, they came into college caring about mental health and wellness and want to someday help others, as well as help their selves, which I both admire and relate to.

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