



THE CURRENT SITUATION




Students are consistently identified as a vulnerable group for mental health distress

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Students are consistently identified as a vulnerable group for mental health distress



Ulster University Student Wellbeing Survey:

- Only 37.8% of first-year students who met the criteria for a lifetime disorder had sought treatment
- If difficulties arose, only 22.7% of students said they definitely would seek help


THE CURRENT NARRATIVE



Stigma?

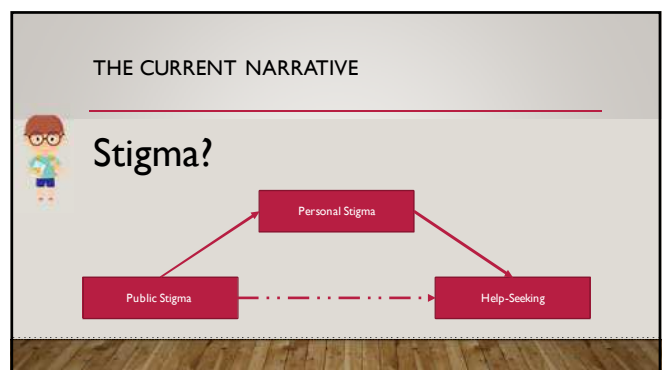
- Small association between stigma and reduced help-seeking behaviours

THE CURRENT NARRATIVE



Stigma?

- Small association between stigma and reduced help-seeking behaviours
- Czyz et al (2013): Few students endorsed stigma as a barrier
 - Perception that treatment was not needed
 - A lack of time
 - Preference for self-management



THE CURRENT NARRATIVE



Stigma?



Structural Barriers?

THE CURRENT NARRATIVE



Stigma?



Structural Barriers?

Time

Transportation

Availability of
services

Financial cost

AIM:

To examine the reasons associated with *not* seeking help among New Zealand university students.

METHODS

- 379 Students
 - 210 first years, 169 second years
 - 317 female, 61 male, 1 non-binary
- Measures
 - Patient Health Questionnaire - 9
 - Would they seek help?
 - What stops them from seeking help?
- Method
 - Online survey

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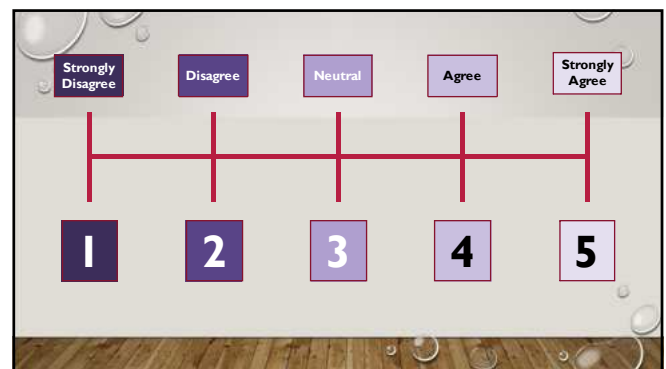
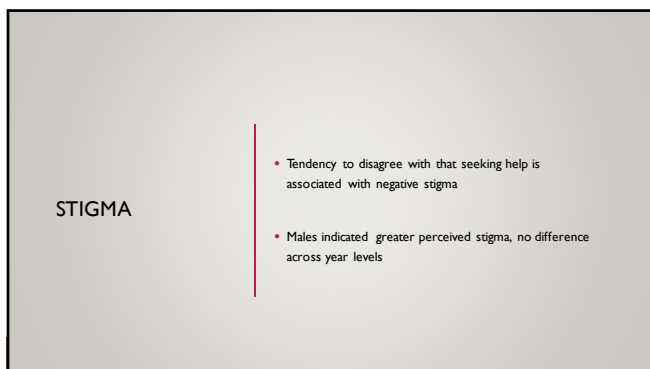
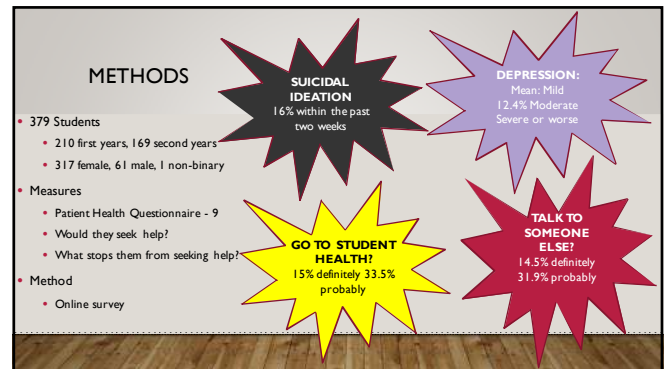
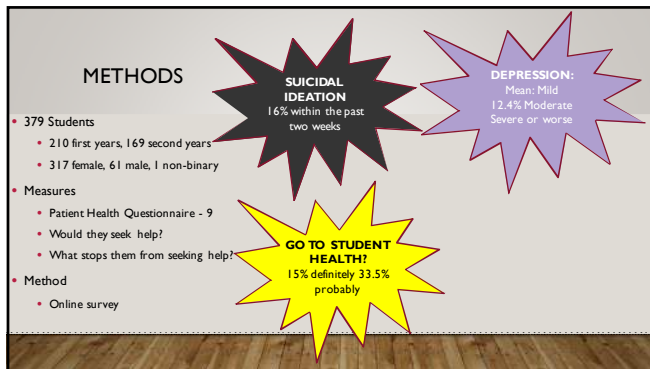
DEPRESSION:
Mean: Mild
12.4% Moderate
Severe or worse

METHODS

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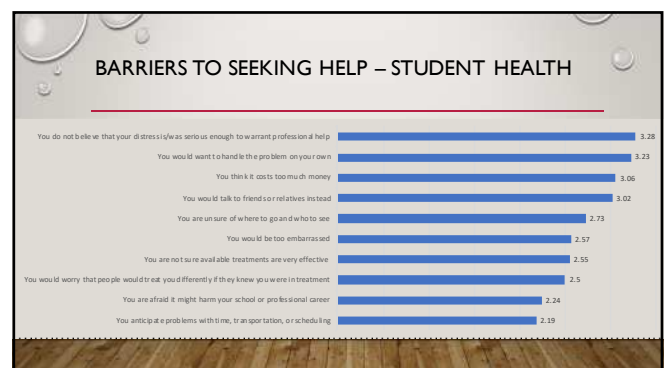
SUICIDAL
IDEATION
16% within the past
two weeks

DEPRESSION:
Mean: Mild
12.4% Moderate
Severe or worse



BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – STUDENT HEALTH

Reason	Total	Gender (mean and SD)		Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Year level (mean and SD)		
		Males (n = 55)	Females (n = 266)		First Year (n = 182)	Second Year (n = 140)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.28 (1.14)	3.24 (1.09)	3.29 (1.16)	1.14 (.55 – 2.35)	3.28 (1.13)	3.29 (1.16)	1.02 (.77 – 1.34)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.23 (1.19)	3.25 (1.39)	3.23 (1.15)	0.90 (.42 – 1.96)	3.16 (1.16)	3.33 (1.23)	1.18 (.90 – 1.57)
You think it costs too much money	3.06 (1.18)	2.71 (1.40)	3.13 (1.36)	2.17 (1.04 – 4.52)	3.16 (1.40)	3.01 (1.35)	92 (.70 – 1.18)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.02 (1.27)	3.05 (1.41)	3.02 (1.24)	0.93 (.44 – 1.99)	2.99 (1.27)	3.06 (1.26)	1.07 (.82 – 1.42)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.73 (1.27)	2.64 (1.16)	2.74 (1.29)	1.18 (.58 – 2.40)	2.78 (1.28)	2.66 (1.25)	0.89 (.68 – 1.18)
You would be too embarrassed	2.57 (1.29)	2.67 (1.32)	2.55 (1.29)	0.79 (.38 – 1.63)	2.54 (1.35)	2.59 (1.22)	1.07 (.82 – 1.42)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.55 (1.12)	2.75 (1.13)	2.50 (1.11)	0.55 (.27 – 1.13)	2.59 (1.12)	2.50 (1.12)	0.92 (.70 – 1.22)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.50 (1.27)	2.75 (1.34)	2.45 (1.25)	0.56 (.26 – 1.17)	2.48 (1.32)	2.52 (1.20)	1.07 (.81 – 1.41)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.24 (1.32)	2.27 (1.45)	2.23 (1.29)	1.04 (.48 – 2.25)	2.15 (1.27)	2.35 (1.37)	1.20 (.91 – 1.60)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.19 (1.18)	2.04 (1.28)	2.22 (1.16)	1.87 (.85 – 4.10)	2.24 (1.20)	2.13 (1.16)	0.89 (.67 – 1.18)



BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – STUDENT HEALTH X GENDER

Reason	Gender (mean and SD)		
	Males (n = 55)	Females (n = 266)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.24 (1.09)	3.29 (1.16)	1.14 (.55 – 2.35)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.25 (1.39)	3.23 (1.15)	0.90 (.42 – 1.96)
You think it costs too much money	2.71 (1.40)	3.13 (1.36)	2.17 (1.04 – 4.52)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.05 (1.41)	3.02 (1.24)	0.93 (.44 – 1.99)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.64 (1.16)	2.74 (1.29)	1.18 (.58 – 2.40)
You would be too embarrassed	2.67 (1.32)	2.55 (1.29)	0.79 (.38 – 1.63)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.75 (1.13)	2.50 (1.11)	0.55 (.27 – 1.15)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.75 (1.34)	2.45 (1.25)	0.56 (.26 – 1.17)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.27 (1.45)	2.23 (1.29)	1.04 (.48 – 2.25)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.04 (1.28)	2.22 (1.16)	1.87 (.85 – 4.10)

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – STUDENT HEALTH X YEAR

Reason	Year level (mean and SD)		
	First Year (n = 182)	Second Year (n = 140)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.28 (1.13)	3.29 (1.16)	1.02 (.77 – 1.34)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.16 (1.16)	3.33 (1.23)	1.18 (.90 – 1.57)
You think it costs too much money	3.10 (1.40)	3.01 (1.35)	.92 (.70 – 1.18)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	2.99 (1.27)	3.06 (1.26)	1.07 (.82 – 1.42)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.78 (1.28)	2.66 (1.25)	0.89 (.68 – 1.18)
You would be too embarrassed	2.54 (1.35)	2.59 (1.22)	1.07 (.82 – 1.42)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.59 (1.12)	2.50 (1.12)	0.92 (.70 – 1.22)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.48 (1.32)	2.52 (1.20)	1.07 (.81 – 1.41)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.15 (1.27)	2.35 (1.37)	1.20 (.91 – 1.60)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.24 (1.20)	2.13 (1.16)	0.89 (.67 – 1.18)

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – OTHER SUPPORTS

Reason	Total	Gender (mean and SD)			Year level (mean and SD)		
		Males (n = 57)	Females (n = 266)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	First Year (n = 183)	Second Year (n = 141)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.28 (1.14)	3.25 (1.07)	3.29 (1.16)	1.11 (.55 – 2.26)	3.29 (1.13)	3.28 (1.15)	0.86 (.65 – 1.13)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.21 (1.20)	3.23 (1.36)	3.21 (1.17)	0.94 (.44 – 2.00)	3.12 (1.18)	3.33 (1.23)	1.22 (.93 – 1.62)
You think it costs too much money	3.05 (1.37)	2.77 (1.39)	3.11 (1.36)	1.86 (.90 – 3.82)	3.13 (1.39)	2.96 (1.35)	0.87 (.65 – 1.13)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.01 (1.26)	3.09 (1.35)	3.00 (1.24)	0.85 (.41 – 1.78)	3.00 (1.26)	3.03 (1.27)	1.04 (.79 – 1.37)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.75 (1.27)	2.70 (1.16)	2.76 (1.29)	1.09 (.54 – 2.19)	2.82 (1.29)	2.67 (1.23)	0.87 (.66 – 1.15)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.59 (1.12)	2.87 (1.09)	2.54 (1.13)	0.52 (.25 – 1.07)	2.66 (1.13)	2.51 (1.11)	0.87 (.65 – 1.14)
You would be too embarrassed	2.58 (1.30)	2.67 (1.31)	2.56 (1.29)	0.81 (.40 – 1.67)	2.59 (1.35)	2.56 (1.23)	0.99 (.75 – 1.30)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.51 (1.27)	2.74 (1.33)	2.47 (1.26)	0.58 (.28 – 1.20)	2.53 (1.33)	2.48 (1.21)	0.97 (.74 – 1.28)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.25 (1.31)	2.26 (1.43)	2.24 (1.28)	1.10 (.51 – 2.34)	2.17 (1.27)	2.35 (1.36)	1.18 (.89 – 1.56)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.23 (1.17)	2.11 (1.28)	2.25 (1.15)	1.66 (.77 – 3.59)	2.27 (1.18)	2.16 (1.15)	0.89 (.67 – 1.18)

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – OTHER SUPPORTS

Reason	Total
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.28 (1.14)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.21 (1.20)
You think it costs too much money	3.05 (1.37)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.01 (1.26)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.75 (1.27)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.59 (1.12)
You would be too embarrassed	2.58 (1.30)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.51 (1.27)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.25 (1.31)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.23 (1.17)

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – OTHER SUPPORTS



BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – BY YEAR OR GENDER



Females were more likely to think going to University of Otago Student Health would cost too much money

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – OTHER SUPPORTS X GENDER

Reason	Gender (mean and SD)		
	Males (n = 57)	Females (n = 266)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.25 (1.07)	3.29 (1.16)	1.11 (.55 – 2.26)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.23 (1.36)	3.21 (1.17)	0.94 (.44 – 2.00)
You think it costs too much money	2.77 (1.39)	3.11 (1.36)	1.86 (.90 – 3.82)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.09 (1.35)	3.00 (1.24)	0.85 (.41 – 1.78)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.70 (1.16)	2.76 (1.29)	1.09 (.54 – 2.19)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.87 (1.09)	2.54 (1.13)	0.52 (.25 – 1.07)
You would be too embarrassed	2.67 (1.31)	2.56 (1.29)	0.81 (.40 – 1.67)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.74 (1.33)	2.47 (1.26)	0.58 (.28 – 1.20)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.26 (1.43)	2.24 (1.28)	1.10 (.51 – 2.34)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.11 (1.28)	2.25 (1.15)	1.66 (.77 – 3.59)

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP – OTHER SUPPORTS X YEAR

Reason	Year level (mean and SD)		
	First Year (n = 183)	Second Year (n = 141)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
You do not believe that your distress is/was serious enough to warrant professional help	3.29 (1.13)	3.28 (1.15)	0.86 (.65 – 1.13)
You would want to handle the problem on your own	3.12 (1.18)	3.33 (1.23)	1.22 (.93 – 1.62)
You think it costs too much money	3.13 (1.39)	2.96 (1.35)	0.87 (.65 – 1.13)
You would talk to friends or relatives instead	3.00 (1.26)	3.03 (1.27)	1.04 (.79 – 1.37)
You are unsure of where to go and who to see	2.82 (1.29)	2.67 (1.23)	0.87 (.66 – 1.15)
You are not sure available treatments are very effective	2.66 (1.13)	2.51 (1.11)	0.87 (.65 – 1.14)
You would be too embarrassed	2.59 (1.35)	2.56 (1.23)	0.99 (.75 – 1.30)
You would worry that people would treat you differently if they knew you were in treatment	2.53 (1.33)	2.48 (1.21)	0.97 (.74 – 1.28)
You are afraid it might harm your school or professional career	2.17 (1.27)	2.35 (1.36)	1.18 (.89 – 1.56)
You anticipate problems with time, transportation, or scheduling	2.27 (1.18)	2.16 (1.15)	0.89 (.67 – 1.18)

DISCUSSION POINTS

SUMMARY: WHAT IS LIMITING HELP-SEEKING?



A lack of evidence for public stigma but evidence towards personal stigma



Greatest barrier appeared to be the perception that one's distress was not severe enough



Not due to anticipated problems between time, transportation, or scheduling



Only gender-based difference was due to perceived cost of Student Health

LIMITATIONS



Ethnic homogeneity



Data collection during transition to COVID-related lockdown

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



The primary barriers that limit Otago students from seeking help appear to be:

- The perceived lack of severity
- The desire for self-management



What does this mean for services that are already struggling to cope with current demands?



WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR STUDENTS TO ASK FOR HELP

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