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APPROACHING OUTREACH FROM A SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE

Goals of Presentation

- Understand why it is necessary to apply a social justice framework to outreach on college campuses

- Determine how to apply a social justice framework to a college outreach program

- Determine how to apply a social justice framework to individual outreach workshops

What is social justice?

- Definition: Full and equal participation of all groups of a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs and provides physical and psychological safety to all members (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997)

What does social justice in outreach involve?

- Understanding the social influences (systems) that contribute to mental health concerns
- Communicating that you understand these systems and how they affect students both individually and as a group
- Taking the approach of working to change the system from the inside-out in order to promote mental health

Why is it important to apply a social justice framework to an outreach program?

Answer...

- Discrimination and disparities in access to resources are major contributors to mental illness
- Students bring their histories of discrimination and disparities with them to campus
- Discrimination and disparities exist on college campuses

And…

- Addressing discrimination and disparities allows students to see that you understand where they are coming from
- Addressing discrimination and disparities allows you to have a positive impact on student mental health

Traditional Outreach on College Campuses

Based on remedial medical model

⬇

Implies problem is with the individual student

⬇

Ignores dysfunctional systems

⬇

Leads to status quo

⬇

Perpetuates social injustice

Social Justice Outreach on College Campuses

Focuses on dysfunctional systems

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Encourages awareness/change of dysfunctional systems

⬇

Leads to social change

⬇

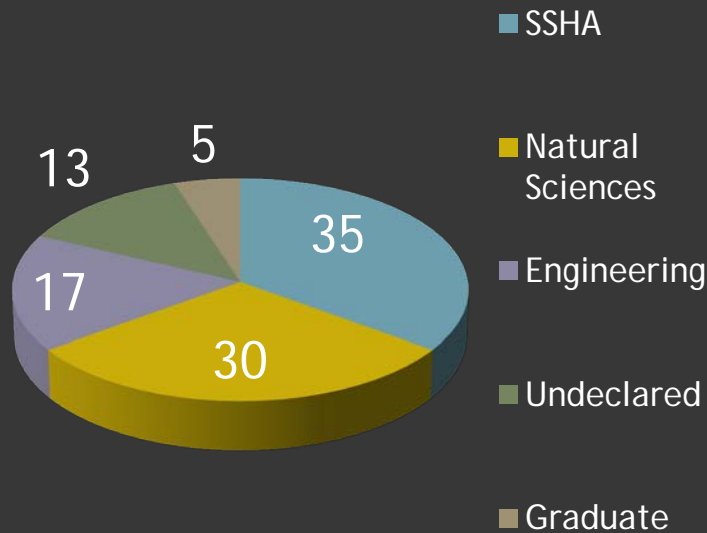Has impact on wider range of students (i.e., improved mental health)

How do you apply social justice to an outreach program?
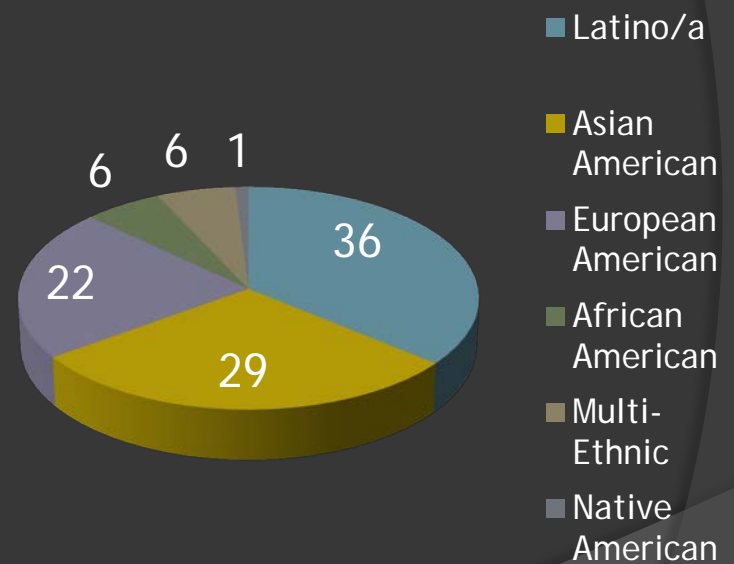
Know your student demographics!

- Allows you to understand the concerns that students might be experiencing
- Allows you to tailor outreach approach and workshops to these concerns

UC Merced Demographics, 2011-2012 Academic Year

UC Merced Demographics, 2011-2012 Academic Year

- 51% Male, 49% Female
- 60% First Generation College Students
- Majority Low SES Background

Based on this information…

What might be some concerns of UC Merced students?

Concerns of UC Merced Students

- Stress related to first-generation status
- Trauma related to history of discrimination, poverty, and lack of resources
- High level of intellectualization
- High degree of somatization of emotional symptoms

Know your campus culture

- Allows you to determine what inequalities/disparities exist on your campus, as well as how these impact student mental health

- Allows you to avoid making assumptions about what students need

- Helps you plan/be intentional around outreach development

Culture of UC Merced

High stigma regarding mental health concerns

+

Low understanding of importance of self-care

+

Concern regarding privacy

=

Difficulty accessing services

How do you get to know your campus culture?

Knowing the presenting concerns at the counseling center is a good start, but it is not enough!

Also…

- Participate in campus activities outside the counseling center
- Understand community concerns
- Engage in continuing education around the issues that are prevalent on your campus
- Collaborate with other departments

Socioecological Model

- Framework for understanding the multiple effects and interrelatedness of factors that contribute to a variety of issues (Hawley, 1950; Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Socioecological Model

- Intrapersonal: Individual factors
- Interpersonal: Influence of significant others
- Institutional: Rules, norms, and expectations of the university
- Communal: Setting in which university exists
- Global: Social/cultural norms, social policy, laws, government policy, etc.

Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

⊙ **Intrapersonal**
- Genetics
- Physical/mental health
- Substance use
- Procrastination

⊙ **Interpersonal**
- Roommates
- Friends
- Work
- Family responsibilities
- Late-night activities

Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

- Institutional
  - Dorm over-crowding
  - Late-night classes
  - Instructor expectations
  - Student beliefs/norms
  - Transportation

- Communal
  - Noise
  - Air quality
  - Heat
  - Safety

Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

- Global
  - Social/cultural norms
  - Social policy
  - Laws
  - Government policy

How do you apply a social justice framework to individual outreach workshops?

A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Establish good sleep hygiene
  - Engage in time/stress management
  - Exercise
  - Maintain healthy diet

- **Interpersonal**
  - Manage conflicts with roommates
  - Discuss importance of good sleep habits with family and friends
  - Manage work stress

A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

- <u>Institutional</u>
  - Challenge university norms
  - Petition for adequate class time/space
  - Petition against overcrowding

- <u>Communal</u>
  - Petition to have noise ordinances in place/enforced
  - Establish neighborhood watch programs
  - Discuss importance of good air quality

A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

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- Global
  - Work to end social inequality

Contact Information

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