



Thesis

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND SELF REGULATION THEORIES

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Dedication

To the obstacles I faced personally, they gave me the idea of this topic,
To my friend, who I've spent many hours in the library with,
To the researchers that dove into alternative ways of student support,
To the students: we are in this together.

Executive Summary

This thesis set out to research the mental health issues that students currently face and researched both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, this thesis also set out to research self-regulation theories and how these could be implemented at universities and colleges. Self-regulation theories discuss ways in which people can actively and consciously manage their thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Both desk and field research were used for the purpose of this thesis. Field research included a questionnaire that delivered results of 40 participants from university and college study programs. Unfortunately, there were no respondents from the United Kingdom in this questionnaire study. It is therefore recommended that more research should be done on this part of the investigation.

What was found, was first and foremost, that there is indeed a crisis going on surrounding mental health issues among students in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The numbers and trends in both countries are disturbing. Furthermore, it was also discovered that students were indeed interested in having the mentioned self-regulation theories implemented by the counseling teams, namely the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction, Fixed-Growth Mindset, and the Self-Determination theory.

More research needs to be done on the approaches of burnout, depression, and anxiety by counseling teams, on the implementation of self-regulation theories in the study programs and lastly, on the context situation in the United Kingdom.

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Introduction

The number of students who are suffering from mental health issues is significantly growing. News stations, researchers, universities, teachers, and students themselves have all reported a sharp and alarming increase in the number of students who are experiencing psychological distress. This development is a significant problem that ought to be addressed for several reasons. As Thorley accurately illustrates the necessity, "for individuals, it can affect their ability to learn, earn, form strong and meaningful relationships and live long and healthy lives. For government, it can affect productivity, demand for public services and levels of expenditure on out-of-work benefits" (Thorley, 2017, p. 8). Just as the number of students suffering from mental health issues is growing, the number of students seeking psychological help is growing as well. In 2018, Dutch newspaper NRC noted one in four Dutch students are experiencing burnout (Sedee, 2018). The consequences of mental health issues among students vary. Some are unable to complete their studies and are equally unable to further their career and thus contribute to society. This situation often leaves students with several additional issues and or anxieties, which could consequently, for example, result in alcohol and substance misuse. In fact, Windesheim notes as much as 30 to 45% of students are experiencing drug or alcohol addiction already (Windesheim, 2017).

A paradoxical narrative on this issue is emerging. On the one hand, there is a tragic and frustrating tale of students who have to drop out of college and university programs because of the problems they face. Additionally, there are students who, due to these mental health issues, take their own lives. On the other hand, the difficulties students are facing are explained by arguing these individuals are irresponsible, undisciplined, flaky, and immature. Thus, this explanation entirely ignores the tragic side and blames the frustrating problems of these students on the students themselves. The paradox then is that the state of the problem is worded as tragic, while the explanation is placed on the students' fault. What is the truth, then?

For this reason, several matters need further investigation. First of all, the issue needs to be thoroughly mapped in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as current research is lacking. Secondly, one should ask themselves if universities and colleges in both countries can handle the issue effectively. In other words, do they have the equipment, knowledge, and human resources to assist students and offer them proper

counseling services? Lastly, more research should be done on ways to address the issue. That is to say; alternative methods, in this case self-regulation theories, ought to be researched more carefully, as the current methods do not provide higher education with an effective solution.

This thesis focused on the student mental health crisis in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The 'student mental health crisis' refers to students suffering from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and burnout. These students experience difficulties in their educational career and private life because of these issues. This research provided recommendations as to how the higher education system could improve counseling services and assist students that are suffering from psychological distress. The main research question therefore was:

“What lessons can we learn from the different approaches of student mental health issues in higher education in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom?”

The sub-questions were as follows:

- *What does the student mental health crisis mean?*
- *How can these issues be addressed through theories on self-regulation?*
- *What is the approach of higher education support systems in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom?*

The main objective of this research was to provide recommendations and to research alternative, new, and innovative theories, namely self-regulation theories on matters such as stress reduction and the provision of psychological services. Studies showed that the current methods to help students have not been effective, which is why the investigation of different approaches, models and theories is imperative.

The key terms of this thesis are mental health, mental health issues, student mental health crisis, burnout, depression, anxiety, psychological distress, self-regulation theory, stress, coping, mindfulness, fixed-growth mindset and psychological engagement theory. The methods that were used for this thesis included mainly desk research, as well as field research. The reason for this is because the core of the research question focusses on the lessons that we could learn, which required an accurate analysis and description of the current situation in both countries. Moreover, an interview was done with a student and questionnaires were sent out to fill in the gaps in the experience of students themselves. It was not feasible to interview students from the United Kingdom, which is

why it is recommended to do further research there. The questionnaire included introductory questions, such as age, study program and year. Then, introductory questions on the student mental health crisis were asked, such as if the respondents were familiar with the subject. Lastly, the self-regulation theories were introduced in the questionnaire, which provided me with an insight look as to the feasibility of introducing these theories in the counselling services of colleges and universities. No other article or desk research method could have provided me with an answer for that question, which is why a questionnaire was needed. The results were gathered, analyzed and processed. The target group of the questionnaire were students from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Discourse on Mental Health

Many have heavily debated the issue of the 'student mental health crisis' over the last couple of years. There is much discussion about what the problem entails precisely, what the causes and factors are, and how many students are suffering from this issue. Who is to blame? What is to blame? Also, more importantly, what can be done about it? Firstly, when looking at the available resources, in a broad context, 'student mental health crisis' refers to students suffering from mental health issues that might lead them to obtain study delay, drop out of the study program or develop other (health-related) issues in their lives. The mentioned mental health issues in this thesis are burnout, depression, and anxiety and are discussed in more detail later on.

Reasons that showcase the importance of researching this topic is twofold. Firstly, it is imperative to work towards a more effective higher education support system as this particular group is more at risk. As Thorley states, "young adults aged 20-24 are less likely than any other age group to record high levels of wellbeing" (Thorley, 2017, p. 6). What is more, students are much more sensitive to depression. Stichting Farmaceutische Kerngetallen correlates this with a survey, showing the use of antidepressants among Dutch students has increased between the years 2007 and 2015 to a percentage of 40 (Preller, 2016). As Eisenberg, Golbertstein and Hunt mention, "the impact of mental health on educational outcomes may be larger in college as compared to primary and secondary education, to the extent that the impact in earlier years are muted by compulsory education laws" (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 6). Thorley argues in 2017, "between 2007 and 2015, the number of student suicides increased by 79 per cent" (Thorley, 2017, p. 6). Suicides are not only present in the Netherlands. Author Joshua Chaffin mentioned the United Kingdom has now stepped up after seven students

committed suicide in 18 months (2018). YouthSight also reports that the suicide rate at universities in the United Kingdom has never been so high (YouthSight, 2018). Contrastingly enough, research shows that only 25 percent of the people who committed suicide had been in contact with counseling or mental health services in the United Kingdom (Thorley, 2017).

Another reason why it is essential to research this topic is that the actual numbers on student mental health issues have long been unknown or uncertain. However, there is a current rise in research on the subject. However, the increase in demand for university counseling services demands more investigation. Research done in 2010 at a UK university already showed that there were higher levels of distress once students entered a university. It was, therefore, recommended universities take more exceptional care and pay more attention to these students and “ensure that students receive the support necessary throughout their studies” (Bewick, Koutsopoulou, Miles, Slaa, & Barkham, 2010, p. 1). In 2013, Macaskill noted that, although the mental health of students worldwide has been troublesome, the frequency of which students reported they were dealing with mental health issues was unknown in the United Kingdom. Universities and colleges now provide more numbers and data on student mental health problems. According to Thorley, “94 per cent report an increase in demand for counselling services” (p. 6, 2017). Numerous researchers, including Bewick and Stallman, argue that the number of first-year students experiencing mental health issues has increased fivefold in ten years (2018). Surprisingly, however, despite having the subject represented in last years' news topics, significant actual research in the Dutch context has not yet been facilitated enough.

Context of the Netherlands

Dutch news station RTL Nieuws indicates three in four students are emotionally exhausted and that one in three students have an increased chance to get a burn-out (RTL Nieuws, 2018). One of the respondents of the questionnaire, when asked about the obstacles they faced when experiencing burnout, noted feeling burned often leads to depression, and that teachers who assigned a significant amount of work, while juggling a job, self-care and social life, is tough (van Wijk, 2019). The recently introduced loan system and expansion of efficiency matters have left Dutch students feeling more anxious and stressed to deliver results, more so than previous generations. These students often feel under pressure to make the correct decision at the first try, because of the way the current educational system is set up. As ISO mentions, other factors that contribute to the heightened levels of stress and anxiety are obtaining the BSA that gives students a

foothold in the chosen study program, as well the idea that a job guarantee can only stem from excellent academic standing (2016). Just as was the case in the United Kingdom, there was a noticeable gap in research. The Dutch student union LSVB has attempted to fill this academic research gap on this topic in the Dutch context. The union argues, "systematic, scientific research to the causes of the reported psychosocial complaints among students on a national level in the Dutch context" has been missing (de Boer, 2017, p. 4). The union provides the reader with some numbers. Firstly, it is said in an LSVB report that a large percentage of 74,8% experience emotional exhaustion (de Boer, 2017).

Moreover, research also showed that four in 10 students are cynical about the use of the study program they are following. As de Boer of the LSVB argues, this combination of emotional fatigue and cynicism is precisely what increases the chances of a student obtaining a burnout. This notion was also visible in the results of the study of the LSVB, with 34,6% of students having a higher chance to get a burnout. De Boer compares the situation with the working and healthy population in the Netherlands. The percentage of people who are more likely to obtain a burnout in that particular group is 14,6%, making it significantly less (de Boer, 2017). Moreover, it was concluded in this study, that students experience more emotional exhaustion because of their studies than the working class does because of their jobs (de Boer, 2017). This information all contributes to the previous notion that students as a distinct group of individuals are more at risk.

Jolien Dopmeijer at the Windesheim Institute researched study delay and study dropout. Research shows that a third of students experience issues in their educational career as a consequence of taking on caregiving tasks (Windesheim, 2017). The factsheet of the year 2017 mentions, a staggering 88,3% of male and 87,3% of female students have a dangerous use of alcohol (Windesheim, 2017). Thirdly, more than a third of students, namely 38,9%, experience light to moderate anxiety or depression, and 14,4% of students experience from severe anxiety and depression complaints (Windesheim, 2017). It should be noted, however, that the Dutch government has been involved in the last two years by campaigning for young people suffering from depression (de Boer, 2017). According to the norm of the Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek, Windesheim discovered that 25% of students suffer from burnout complaints, resulting in emotional fatigue. Moreover, the pressure to perform is a noteworthy factor for many students (Windesheim, 2017). Lastly, one in five students have suicidal thoughts, have tried to commit suicide, or made suicidal plans for (Windesheim, 2017).

Context of the United Kingdom

Bewick et al. already mentioned the danger that British students were in when compared to students in other European countries and referred to a study done in 2005 (Bewick, Koutsopoulou, Miles, Slaa, & Barkham, 2010). Marsh notes that at the beginning of the year 2014, the number of students who dropped out of their study program had increased with 210% when compared to the academic year 2009/2010 (Marsh, 2017). She also quotes former health minister Norman Lamb, who argued that "there was a crisis on campus with regards to students' mental health" (Marsh, 2017). British news station BBC reports a sharp increase in students suffering from psychological distress and mentions the UK government from now on "will award a certificate of excellence to institutions which meet new standards of mental health care" (BBC, 2018). Researchers find it interesting to research the increase in the student mental health crisis in the United Kingdom, as the socioeconomic and demographic composition of the country is represented more accurately, as more students can go to university or college now. The government urges more students to participate and enroll in universities and colleges. Whereas the academic elite used to be the only ones to be able to attend university, students with other backgrounds can do so now as well. However, they are not as equipped to deal with mental health issues, as the academic elite is. The reason for this is because the academic elite has "more assured levels of family support, all of which decreased their vulnerability to develop mental health problems at university" (Macaskill, 2013, pp. 1-2).

For this reason, the UK Royal College of Psychiatrists argues that for this reason, there will be a rise in mental health problems among students. Other researchers, such as Thorley, support this notion (Thorley, 2017). McIntyre et al. mention the results of a poll done in 2016, which showed that more than one thousand UK students suffered from a mental health issue (McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018, as cited in YouGov, 2016). The numbers all indicate that more students have been affected by mental health illnesses. Author Thorley also notes that the increase in the United Kingdom consists mostly out of a more significant "proportion of young women who experience a mental health condition" (Thorley, 2017). In fact, when one looks back at a previous study done back in 2009/10, there was no difference between male and female students and the likeliness of them report a mental health issue. Contrastingly enough, a research project in 2015/16 showed that "female first-year students are more likely than male first-year students to disclose a mental health condition" (Thorley, 2017, p. 6). One of the other key findings in the research project done by IPPR is that the most significant

differences between numbers in the sexes can be found in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Thorley, 2017).

Causes of mental health issues among students

Researchers identified several reasons for the rise of mental health issues of students. This thesis categorizes these causes into social and cultural factors. Firstly, social factors can include a large variety of matters. For example, it could relate to a person's financial state. Eisenberg, Golberstein did a study, and Hunt concluded that students who are dealing with depression or anxiety, "are more likely to report having grown up in a poor family" (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 18). Moreover, as Yasin and Dzulkifli mention, social support, has been "recognized to have significant impact on the achievement of students" (Yasin, M.D. & Dzulkifli, 2010, p. 110). Other social factors revolve around the degree of isolation, feeling of loneliness, time pressure, the pressure to perform, the influence that social media has on students as well as the transition into adulthood. Researchers such as Macaskill and Chemers noted this transition "requires higher levels of independence, initiative, and self-regulation" (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001, p. 55). Palmer and Rodger agree by arguing the changes that come along with this transition have both a short- and a long-term effect on their lives (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 200). Lefkowitz adds on this by stating these effects may revolve around changes in "the areas of interpersonal relations, particularly with parents, religious views, and sexuality" (p. 40, Lefkowitz, 2005, as cited in Arnett, 2000; Marcia, 1966; Waterman & Archer, 1990). McIntyre et al. agree with the beforementioned statements and argue "financial, academic, and social-related stressors are some of the most common that university students encounter" (McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018, p. 3, as mentioned in Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999). The authors state "relationships stressors (i.e., family, romantic, peer, and faculty relationships) were the most commonly reported source of stress among university students (McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018, p. 3). McIntyre et al. note "other commonly reported stressors included high expectations from oneself and others, and a lack of tangible coping resources such as time, sleep, support and money" (McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018, p. 3, as cited in Hurst, Baranik, & Daniel, 2013). McIntyre et al. researched academic and non-academic predictors of distress among 1135 UK undergraduates. Brown summarizes the results of this study and mentions "loneliness was the strongest overall predictor of distress, academic stress was the strongest for academic outcome, with childhood trauma, a key background risk factor" (Brown, 2018, pp. 193-194).

Moving on to the second category when it comes to factors: cultural factors. These factors are essential to consider for this thesis, as education becomes increasingly internationalized due to globalization. As Schaufeli mentions, some mental health issues, such as burnout, are dependent on cultural factors (Schaufeli, 2017). Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt did the study, showing that "Asian students are less likely to report elevated anxiety" (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 18). Moreover, Schaufeli mentions burnout levels were higher in countries and cultures that were "uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, and where they accept and expect that power is distributed unequally, as well as in countries that value career success over quality of life" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 120). The study also found that "across all countries burnout was correlated to high job demands and coping styles driven by avoidance" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 120). When speaking of cultural factors, it is essential to address the contrast between individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures. According to Hofstede, the concept of individualism has to do with the self-image of people, noting that "in individualistic societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In collectivistic societies, people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty" (Hofstede, 2019). Over the last years, the development of a so-called 'narcissistic culture', in other words, a 'me-culture' took place in the Western world. Some researchers argue that mental health issues such as burnout are more prevalent in these individualistic cultures and that one can, therefore, describe this as a cultural rather than a social factor. These people tend to seek instant gratification, without ever feeling truly satisfied continually. Schaufeli also points out that in these individualistic cultures, "achievement is seen as personal achievement", "whereas in collectivistic cultures achievement is considered to result from group efforts" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 120). Schaufeli states that simply speaking, the two components 'depersonalization' and 'reduced personal accomplishment' "are ethnocentric Western concepts that cannot be applied in traditional societies" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 121). Contrastingly, according to the author, the third component of emotional exhaustion, "is likely to be a universal experience" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 121). For this reason, one could argue that modern, industrialized, and urbanized societies are more likely to include a large number of people suffering from mental health problems such as burnout.

What does the student mental health crisis mean?

With the provided context of the issue, this chapter discusses some of the mental health issues among students in more detail. These are burnout, depression, and anxiety. These issues were chosen, as they were also included in multiple other studies and because several articles focused on these three mental health issues.

Burnout

Bullock et al. explain the importance of understanding burnout as a concept and what effects it might have on students and society. It will namely “allow faculty and administration to plan curriculum, and provide information to students to understand, recognize, and create opportunities to decrease burnout” (Bullock, et al., 2017, p. 90). As Schaufeli mentions, “the term ‘burnout’ was first used in a clinical sense in the early 1970s by Herbert Freudenberger” (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 105). Since then, many have defined the term ‘burnout’. During the start of academic research on burnout, however, two mainstreams emerged and included a more practice-based approach and secondly, a theoretical research approach. According to Maslach and Jackson, when referring to a more theoretical research approach, there are three main elements to burnout, namely emotional exhaustion, development of depersonalization including cynicism, and lastly, reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, Maslach Burnout Inventory, 1997). Symptoms, therefore, include both energy resource depletion and lack of motivation (Schaufeli, 2017).

However, it should be noted that some other researchers believe this definition is outdated. The reason for that statement is because of the following rationale. The theory of Maslach and Jackson, states that burnout can be found among people who solely work in ‘social careers’, such as teaching and working in the medical field, i.e., working with other people. One could argue then, that people who are operative in other career fields are simply not able to fall into the category of ‘burnout’, according to this theory and framework. Contrastingly, and not surprisingly, this often turns out not to be the case. The fact that students increasingly report cases of burnout, already shows that people outside of the social career realm can have burnouts. Farber builds on the critique by arguing that the burnout of ‘the past’ “was based on a sense of internal disappointment”, as they believed the work they performed was not good enough in their opinion (Farber, 2000, p. 592). This belief led to frustration until one simply ran out of energy and thus obtained a burnout. Contrastingly, the current view of burnout stems from the pressure of rising to the

demands of others, by competition, the wish to earn more money, "or by the sense that one is being deprived of something one clearly deserves" (Farber, 2000, p. 592). Thus, this current view of burnout looks more to external factors and is based on a sense of external frustration, according to Farber.

Then comes the following question: what are factors that contribute to burnout? Schaufeli mentions that burnout "is a psychological condition that is rooted in a specific historical and socio-cultural context" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 125). He also suggests that globalization, privatization, and liberalization are part of the problem, as they lead to "the need to adopt new types of work, the imperative to achieve ever higher productivity, general acceleration, and increased temporal pressures, which, in their turn, may produce burnout" (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 119). This notion coincides with the social and cultural factors that influence the rise of student mental health problems that were mentioned before in this thesis.

Prevalence

Overall students tend to get less attention as a target group when it comes to burnout research. However, a substantial amount of research is available on the prevalence of burnout amongst medical students in particular. Chang, Eddins-Folensbee and Coverdale found that as much as 55% of respondents scored in the High Burnout range and that an alarming 60% had depressive symptoms (Chang, M.D., Eddins-Folensbee, M.D., & Coverdale, M.D., M.Ed, FRANZP, 2012, p. 177). For this project, they researched medical students in several years. The researchers discovered that 51.7% of the students experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion. What is more, 44% experienced high levels of depersonalization, and as much as 52% faced high levels of low personal achievement (Chang, M.D., Eddins-Folensbee, M.D., & Coverdale, M.D., M.Ed, FRANZP, 2012). The researchers of this study also suggested it would be best to provide an intervention amongst first-year students, as emotional exhaustion levels were found to be the highest in the first year (Chang, M.D., Eddins-Folensbee, M.D., & Coverdale, M.D., M.Ed, FRANZP, 2012).

Out of the 40 people who responded to the questionnaire, 18 of them had experience with burnout, which is almost half. Among the respondents of the questionnaire that was shared for this thesis, there were some medical students from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. They, however, indicated they did not have experience with burnout, either through their own experience or through friends or family members (van Wijk, 2019). Another student who responded mentioned they did not get enough help with planning the

rest of their students when they obtained a burnout. Therefore, this student had to figure it out by themselves or try to get a teacher to help them (van Wijk, 2019). Seek help with a teacher also happened with the interviewee, who went to her for help after being lost (Student, 2019).

Some reoccurring themes in the questionnaire results are the fact that the pressure and workload are too high, that it is not clear where to go, and that students find it difficult to motivate themselves. These matters contribute to the cause of burnout as well as the prolonging of a burnout. First of all, the pressure and workload. One of the respondents mentioned they pressured themselves too much for good grades. Another respondent talked about friends who opted for one less course per module in their Master's program. The student mentions that "every 5 EC course should, in theory, take the same amount of study time, but this is never the case. Depending on the courses the student chooses, the workload can be way too high" (van Wijk, 2019). However, these friends did not experience an actual burnout, as far as the student knows. Thus, the high workload does not necessarily mean that every student gets a burnout.

The other matter that often comes up is the fact that no one knows where to go. This was the case for the interviewee, and many other questionnaire respondents. Thirdly, the problem of finding motivation also proves to be an issue. Some students even doubted whether to continue with the study program. However, on the other side of that, they also found it to be challenging to start again once they did decide to continue with the program (van Wijk, 2019).

Diagnostic models

Various models can be used to measure the level of burnout in a student. The most used one is the Maslach Burnout Inventory, otherwise known as the MBI. Other essential and noteworthy questionnaires and models are the Burnout Measures (BM), the Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM), the Job Demands Resource Model (JD-R), and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011).

The Job Demands Resource Model has become increasingly popular among researchers because of its flexibility. It is a useful model to use in educational institutions. Contrary to the Maslach's burnout definition that it is a phenomenon in social careers, the makers of this model state that burnout "may be found in other occupational fields as well"

(Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001, p. 500). This model categorizes working conditions in job demands, which are related to burnout, or job resources, which are related to disengagement (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). In the figure below, one can see the different factors associated with both terms.

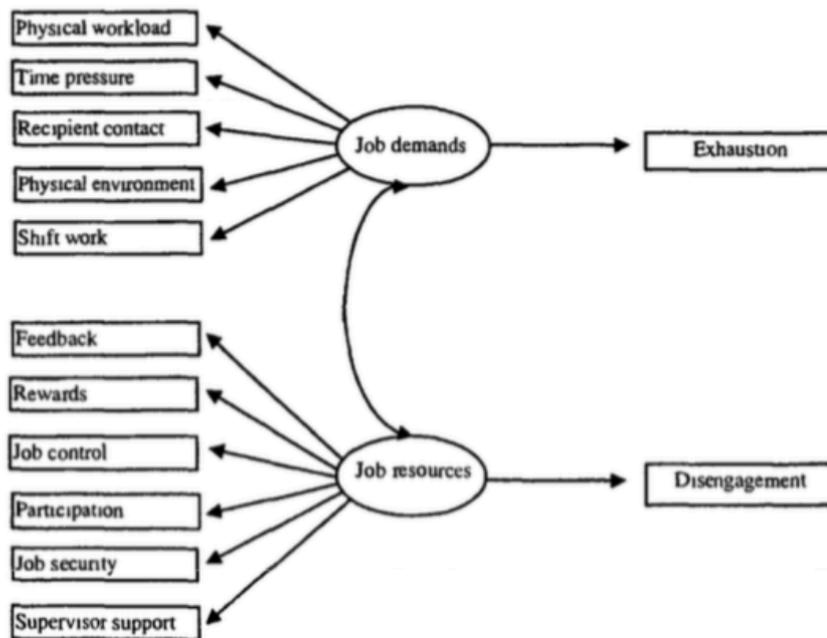


Figure 1. Job Demands Resource Model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

According to the authors, this model suggests that burnout can develop, regardless of the type of job, when job demands are high and when job resources are limited, as this can consequently lead to someone experiencing low levels of energy lowered levels of motivation (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001, p. 499). This model takes into account two core aspects of burnout formulated by Maslach, namely emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The reason for this is because Demerouti et al. argue, "personal accomplishment is the weakest burnout dimension in terms of significant relationships with other variables" (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001, p. 500).

However, it should be noted that this model, of course, has limitations and downsides too. For example, it can only take into account four elements. These are exhaustion, disengagement, job demands, and job resources.

Depression

Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt define depressive symptoms as “reduced interest or pleasure in usual activities (anhedonia), sleep disturbances (less or more than normal), reduced energy, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, restlessness or slowing of movement, and suicidal thoughts (which impair concentration or decrease interest in investing in the future)” (Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt, 2009, p. 4, as quoted in Sadock & Sadock, 2000). Eisenberg, Goldberstein & Hunt point out, “depression also appears to interact with anxiety” (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 2). Depression can also serve as an indicator for a likeliness to drop out of the study program, despite any efforts to better the academic standing and life circumstances (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009). Yasin and Dzulkipli concluded in their study that students with more social support have lower levels of depression (Yasin, M.D. & Dzulkipli, 2010). McIntyre et al. mentioned “university-related stressors are a moderate predictor of depression; however, general life stressors have been found to be a more important determinant of depressive symptoms” (McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018, p. 3, as cited in Lester, 2014). Students with depression can go to university counseling services. There is no information available on any specific theory or model that is used in these counseling services by the student psychologists or deans, to help students facing depression. In the United Kingdom, student unions offer student-led-services as well (NHS, 2016).

Prevalence

According to Pedrelli et al., depression has “prevalence rates in college students of 7 to 9%” (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, & Wilens, 2015, p. 3). The authors go on by saying “over half of all cases of depression has a first onset during childhood, adolescence, or young adulthood”, which reinforces the importance of studying students as a target group when it comes to mental health issues (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, & Wilens, 2015, p. 3). Pedrelli et al. refer to Kesller et al. by stating “that one out of every five individuals with depression had their first episode by the age of 25 years” (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, & Wilens, 2015, p. 3). According to Heiligenstein et al. 10% of the US population in 2010 was “likely to experience an episode of major depression in any given year” (Heiligenstein, M.D., Guenther, Hsu, & Herman, 2010). The results of the questionnaire show that out of the 40 people who filled in the questionnaire, 19 people have had experience with depression, either personal experience or through friends (van Wijk, 2019). It should be noted, however, that one student indicated that despite having had experience with depression, it was not necessarily linked to his or her studies, nor did it impact their studies (van Wijk, 2019). Contrastingly, another student indicated that the

depression-symptoms have become worse since starting at university (van Wijk, 2019). The student notes, “a major struggle has been finding the motivation to study, which results in bad grades, which results in no motivation to study for the next exam” (van Wijk, 2019).

Diagnostic Models

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale, otherwise known as DASS, can be used to measure depression amongst students. It is a popular self-report with 42 items that measure anxiety, depression, and stress. Lovibond and Lovibond developed it in 1995. As Crawford and Henry mention, “its popularity is partly attributable to the fact that, unlike many other self-report scales, the DASS is in the public domain” (Crawford & Henry, 2003, pp. 111-112), perhaps showing an implicit criticism.

Anxiety

Anxiety disorders can include social phobia, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorders (GAD), and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, & Wilens, 2015). Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt define generalized anxiety as “excessive worrying and difficulty controlling this worrying” (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 4). The authors define panic disorder as “recurrent and unexpected panic attacks, which include at least four of the following symptoms: palpitations, sweating, shaking, shortness of breath, feeling of choking, chest pain, nausea, feeling dizzy, derealization/depersonalization, fear of “going crazy”, fear of dying, numbness or tingling sensations, and chills or hot flashes (Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt, 2009, p. 4, as quoted in Sadock & Sadock, 2000). Yasin and Dzulkifli concluded in their study that students with more social support have lower levels of anxiety (Yasin, M.D. & Dzulkifli, 2010). This might be explained by the fact that depression and anxiety often interact with each other and work alongside each other or at the same time.

Moreover, both mental health issues are characterized by the isolation that one experiences. Thus, having social support means one can get out of isolation, which is why social support can help with anxiety, as well as depression. One of the questionnaire respondents mentioned, “the social isolation is not easy to cope with while being surrounded by so many people your age who seemingly do not go through the same thing you do” (van Wijk, 2019). One of the respondents of the questionnaire answered that the university had increased anxiety levels by tenfold (van Wijk, 2019). The fact that not graduating on time means getting in debt with the government is an essential factor that contributes to anxiety levels among respondents (van Wijk, 2019). Also, the fact that people in their network do not seem to understand the concept of anxiety causes one student to feel very socially isolated (van Wijk, 2019). One respondent argues that students who say they do not have experience with anxiety are the exception (van Wijk, 2019). There does not seem to be any specific theory or model that counseling staff at colleges and universities use in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. As far as research could tell, no specific agreements or guidelines have been set.

A feeling of being overwhelmed when faced with anxiety is present in the questionnaire results, as well as in the available research on the matter. As mentioned before, some students need to temporarily stop with their studies, to resume them later on. One of the respondents felt like he or she had to wait until they could handle anxieties before ‘restarting’ their studies (van Wijk, 2019). Another student argues that there are only a few

students who have to stop with their studies because of anxiety, but that when they do, it is because they face additional issues at home (van Wijk, 2019).

According to the questionnaire results, some matters students felt anxious about were anxieties to miss deadlines, workload, presentations, and the pressure to graduate. What also often happens is that students feel bad after they were not able to go to class due to their anxiety. This creates another obstacle for them, and thus creates a loop. One of the questionnaire respondents even mentioned that there are some courses they have never attended because of this (van Wijk, 2019).

Prevalence

According to Pedrelli et al., “anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric problems among college students, with approximately 11.9% of college students suffering from an anxiety disorder” (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, & Wilens, 2015, p. 2). Of the 40 questionnaire respondents, 22 have had experience with anxiety (van Wijk, 2019). In fact, one of the students argued that the people who did not have experience with anxiety would be the exception, that “the anxiety became so bad that people developed/experienced depression, mental breakdowns/burnouts and increasing of their mental health issues that were already present” (van Wijk, 2019).

A student noted in the questionnaire that they had been dealing with anxiety since their teenage years. Others indicated that they had friends with anxiety. One of the questionnaire respondents gave some concrete examples of how anxiety affected their lives. This student experienced test anxiety, having physical reactions towards exams. The student also experienced a numbness towards planning when going to social activities and often bailed last minute because they got too anxious and worried. Anxiety also made this student procrastinate on homework assignments, which they also acknowledged making the situation worse. Lastly, the school often felt too crowded and too much to handle, especially in the afternoon (van Wijk, 2019). Another respondent talked about a friend, who due to fear of failure, continued to have increased levels of anxiety and a corresponding blackout during exams. Another student had to take painkillers to take an exam that he or she had been working towards for the last four years, simply because he or she could not take it earlier due to anxiety.

Diagnostic models

Just as was the case with the previously mentioned mental health issue, the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) can be used to measure anxiety levels among students as well.

How can these issues be addressed through theories on self-regulation?

“Not knowing where to start solving problems”, a quote of a student that responded to the questionnaire when asked the question: what are the obstacles you face at university (van Wijk, 2019)? The rise in the student mental health crisis does not seem to be decreasing any time soon, and the current solutions offered are not sufficient enough. Currently, students can go to the Dean or a student psychologist. Some universities and colleges provide specific types of training. However, there is still something missing in the current support system for students suffering from mental distress. There is a clear and urgent need for an improved and redesigned mental health support system at universities and colleges, one that adequately fits the needs and wants of students. Researchers and others, such as entrepreneurs, have developed alternative and innovative ways and systems. This subquestion will revolve around some of these creative ways and methods: self-regulation theories. These theories focus on how someone can actively and consciously work on managing their behavior, feelings, and thoughts to achieve and reach their goals and ambitions.

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

It seems clear from the numbers that students are experiencing stress. Therefore, it is firstly imperative for colleges and universities to understand the actual concept of stress. Apart from that, it is also essential to comprehend the different ways students cope with stress. According to Brown, research showed that students with mental health issues “tended to worry more about coping with academic demands, completing the course and particularly whether it was worth the time, effort and money spent on university” (Brown, 2018, p. 194). In the questionnaire that was handed out for this, the question ‘how do you normally deal with stress’ was asked. Some interesting answers were as follows. Some students liked to make lists to prioritize tasks. Others did not have a routine at all and tended to postpone tasks or ignore stressors, which caused them to experience more stress. Another student mentioned that their “coping style has been destructive in the past years. First, I always sought control in working hard at school. After that, it became an obsession with food and sports” and that reaching deadlines is what helps the student most to find peace and rest. One student indicated to isolate themselves. Others tend to smoke more during periods with higher levels of stress. Others use exercise, sleep,

meditation, and breathing exercises to reduce stress levels. Talking about it with friends or family often helps these students as well (van Wijk, 2019).

To understand stress, one cannot merely look at the person and the environment only. One also needs to analyze the emotional aspect involved in an encounter and person. That is what Lazarus and Folkman set out to do. They developed the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, a theory that is still relevant to this day. Out of the 40 people who responded to the questionnaire, only two students were familiar with the model. Contrastingly, however, after having introduced the model to the students, 36 out of 40 students thought university counseling staff needed to better understand what stress is, where it comes from, and how to tackle it. Furthermore, 36 students out of the 40 who filled in the questionnaire, thought it would be helpful to them personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that they could learn more about this part of themselves (van Wijk, 2019).

Introduction

This theory states, “coping arises from an appraisal of harm, threat or challenge” and distinguishes between primary appraisal and secondary appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 147). Lazarus and Folkman define coping as “changing thoughts and acts an individual uses to manage the external and/or internal demands of a specific person-environment transaction that is appraised as stressful” (Lazarus & Folkman, Stress, Appraisal, and Coping, 1984, p. 34). As Lazarus and Folkman argue, people “constantly evaluate what is happening to them from the standpoint of its significance for their well-being” (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 145). According to the theory, the first step, namely primary appraisal, is the stage where one determines if a situation has an effect on us personally (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987). Folkman and Lazarus state that during this step, the mind can either determine that the situation is insignificant as it has already been experienced before, that it is threatening, or that the situation is challenging. The authors mention “the extent to which a human relationship is harmful or beneficial depends on social and cultural environment conditions on the one hand and the psychological characteristics that a person brings to encounters on the other” (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 145). Primary appraisal then, is where one evaluates if the situation is harmful if one has something to lose, and if so, what exactly it is that they could lose. If the situation is relevant and one indeed has a stake in this particular encounter, the authors state, “the quality and intensity

of the emotion will vary with what and how much is at stake" (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 146). The second step is named secondary appraisal and includes the process of determining if one has enough resources to deal with the issue or encounter. If one does not have enough resources, stress increases. If one does have enough resources, the threat is absent or minimal, and thus, there is less stress present.

Model in a higher education setting

How does this theory relate to university and college environments? According to researchers, younger individuals tend to assume more problem-focused styles of coping, such as "confrontive coping, planful problem-solving, and seeking social support" (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 155). Folkman and Lazarus applied this theory in a college examination to study how coping styles change among students as time passes by. How students coped with stress during the three stages of an exam was monitored in this study. These three stages were "an anticipation stage before the exam, a waiting stage after the exam but before grades were announced, and a post-confrontation stage after grades were announced" (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 154). In the first stage, students mostly held a problem-focused coping style as there were still stakes at play. During the waiting stage, however, this changed significantly to a distancing-style, as students were not able to do anything about the possible outcome anymore; it was out of their hands.

Using this theory at educational institutions is essential. As Lazarus and Folkman point out, there is already a "great danger that we will fail to understand what it is that people do and think to cope, what it is that they are coping with, and how adequately emotion regulation and problem-solving is accomplished" (Lazarus & Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping, 1987, p. 154).

Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction

Now that college and university staff is aware of the concept of stress, what it entails, and how students deal with that stress, one can attempt to reduce that stress. The Mindfulness-Based-Stress Reduction is the chosen method to do so in this thesis.

Introduction

Over the years, mindfulness has increased in popularity in society. Out of the 40 people who responded to the questionnaire, 12 students had experience with mindfulness (van Wijk, 2019). 10 Students practiced mindfulness once a month, seven students practiced mindfulness once a week, two students practiced mindfulness every day, and 21 students never practiced mindfulness (van Wijk, 2019). This approach has also found its way in the educational sphere and academic setting and proposes interesting debates on how one could cope with everyday obstacles and stressors at university and college. Firstly, this thesis will address the definition of mindfulness. According to Rosenzweig et al., "mindfulness can be defined as nonjudgmental awareness of moment-to-moment experience" (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003, p. 2). Palmer and Rodger add to that, by arguing one is better equipped actually to choose a response, "rather than react reflexively" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 199). Research showed that increased mindfulness levels could improve sleep quality and corresponding positive changes in one's mood and stress-levels (Caldwell, Harrison, Adams, Quin, & Greeson, 2010). One could, therefore, argue that it brings a sense of calmness to a person and could reduce stress, which is precisely what scholars researched. It has been shown one experiences the positive psychological effects when one lives mindfully (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Rosenzweig et al. have also done research on the impact of Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction, or MBSR, and proved it to be an effective intervention. Rosenzweig et al. also mention that it "cultivates concentration and insight, as well as physiologic relaxation" and that MBSR teaches both "formal and informal mindfulness practices" (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003, p. 2).

Mindfulness in a higher education setting

Palmer and Roger noted that mindfulness might enhance university counseling, which is of great importance, especially to first-year students (Palmer & Rodger, 2009). As was mentioned before, the transition to university and adulthood can be challenging and stressful. Practicing mindfulness can be done through Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and can be measured with the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. According to Rosenzweig et al., it is imperative for people to be able to deal with stress,

as one will need that skill in a career and it will be of great benefit to people's wellbeing (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003). It is therefore vital to include mindfulness in educational institutions, as it was concluded that the method reduced "anxiety, depression, and somatization while enhancing participants' overall sense of well-being", which are precisely the mental health issues students currently face (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003, p. 4). Another reason why it is essential is that it "strengthens relationships among participants" (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003, p. 4). Often, students facing psychological distress, lose contact with the study program, college or university. This method can, therefore, be used to attempt to counteract that. Lastly, this method does not apply to only one type of situation, but instead supports one in the capacity to handle and respond to a multitude of situations (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003). On another note, Palmer and Rodger studied this method as it connects with theories of coping styles.

Researches have studied how mindfulness-based-stress-reduction affects students in universities and colleges. For example, Rosenzweig et al. investigated how MBSR affected medical students and discovered it indeed might have a positive effect on them (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003). The most significant results, according to these researchers, could be found on "Tension-Anxiety, Confusion-Bewilderment, Fatigue-Inertia, and Vigor-Activity subscales" (Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003). University and college staff training are essential, and educational institutions promote the technique with increased intensity. The results from the Palmer and Rodger study of 2009 study showed "significant positive relationships between mindfulness and rational coping, and significant negative relationships with emotional and avoidant coping and perceived stress" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 198). According to these authors, their research suggested: "potential ways to enhance counseling services and programming for first-year university students during the often very difficult transition to university" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 198).

Colleges and universities can apply the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, or MAAS, to assess "one's presence or absence of attention to, and awareness of, what is happening in the present moment" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 199). Palmer and Rodger recommend including this scale in an assessment process at university or college, as it "may help clarify students' coping abilities" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 209). This mention to coping styles shows the link with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. According to Palmer & Rodger, mindfulness can be used as a coping style "to stimuli that may be negatively stress provoking" (Palmer & Rodger, 2009, p. 200). Adopting

mindfulness has shown to safeguard some of the stressors that are associated with the transition into adulthood and proceeding to university.

After having explained the theory to students who filled in the questionnaire, 27 out of 40 students believed there to be a necessity for university counseling staff to understand better what mindfulness is and how to implement that (van Wijk, 2019). Furthermore, 21 students thought it would be helpful to them personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that they could learn more about this part of themselves. 19 Students did not think this would be helpful to them personally (van Wijk, 2019).

Fixed-Growth Mindset

Apart from learning about stress and then actually reducing stress and anxiety, it is also imperative for college and university staff to determine the mindset of the student they are trying to help. This information will help the team in defining its approach to supporting students.

Introduction

Carol Dweck states that mindsets are a vital part of one's personality, but that they can, in fact, be altered (Dweck, 2016). As Auten accurately states, "if indeed mindsets are malleable and critical to academic performance, it makes sense to examine how community college educators can intentionally develop a growth mindset that leads to increased persistence and completion of academic goals" (Auten, 2013, p. 5). This notion also applies, naturally, to university educators. Intelligence is not innate, or a matter of nurture, nor a genetic question or that of surroundings. She divides people with a fixed mindset, and those with a growth mindset (Dweck, 2016). A fixed mindset argues that characteristics, talents, and qualities are fixed and cannot change. This mindset, as a result, creates a feeling of failure and incompetence when things do go wrong or not according to plan (Dweck, 2016). This mindset also argues that failure determines everything about a person. Lastly, it states that effort is only useful for people with 'defects', such as lack of talent. Making an effort can, therefore, bring one down, in the eyes of a person with a fixed mindset. The reason for this is because this action automatically means one does not already have what it takes, and that means one is 'less than', so to speak. Generally speaking, people with a fixed mindset prefer the type of success that is acquired without effort, because that is the best possible way for them to show off and prove their talents and worth. People with a fixed mindset, therefore, see risks as an opportunity for shortcomings coming to light. All of this is important to keep in mind in educational institutions when evaluating how to assist a student with mental health issues with a fixed mindset. A growth mindset argues that characteristics and qualities can, in fact, be developed (Dweck, 2016). People with a growth mindset do not label themselves, and thus, they do not create feelings of despair when things go wrong. They are prepared to take a risk and take on challenges with the belief in mind that everyone is capable of change by learning and getting experience. As Auten mentions, "growth mindset interventions demonstrated surprisingly lasting effects on student achievement and have sharply reduced racial/ethnic and gender achievement gaps" (Auten, 2013, p. 4). Apart from that, the author also states teaching students about a growth mindset caused for better grades, as well as more enjoyment of the learning

process (Auten, 2013). However, it is essential to keep in mind that this mindset does not argue that everything that can be changed should actually be changed (Dweck, 2016).

Theory in a higher education setting

According to the questionnaire results, only four out of the 40 students were familiar with this theory (van Wijk, 2019). Students were asked twice which mindset they believed to have. The first time, 26 out of 40 students believed to have a growth mindset. The second time, 25 out of 40 students believed to have a growth mindset. When asked if characteristics such as intellect can change over the years, or if it is inherent to that person, 33 out of 40 students thought such characteristics could change, and that if someone really wants to, one can change these aspects about one's personality.

The mindset of a student is essential, but the mindset of the educator or teacher is equally important. Auten states, "today's educational institutions operate predominately out of a fixed mindset belief system. Teaching methods, the school year, curricula, emphasis on grades, even the physical look of many classrooms locked into old traditions that result in practices that do not facilitate student learning" (Auten, 2013, as quoted in Lindquist and Lindquist, 2008, p. 17). It is, therefore, imperative that educators learn how to promote a growth mindset amongst college and university students. Auten explains the rationale for this, "when teachers decide that certain students are not capable, they may not take steps to help them reach their potential" (Auten, 2013, p. 14). Hochanadel and Finamore mention "Dweck's studies were demonstrating that teaching young students how the brain is capable of change when faced with challenges helped them persevere and develop a growth mindset" (Hochanadel, MBA & Finamore, EdD, 2015, p. 48). Dweck mentions that it is only logical that adolescents see the period during university and college as a test and try to protect their egos by holding a fixed mindset, instead of learning with a growth mindset. Some, however, do carry a growth mindset and take on every opportunity in this period of their lives to learn (Dweck, 2016). These students studied at college or university to actually learn. Hochanadel and Finamore accurately state "faculty should not focus on making just good grades, but how to challenge that person and teach them to create solutions. Also, teaching a growth mindset and grit facilitates long-term goals and how to achieve them" (Hochanadel, MBA & Finamore, EdD, 2015, p. 49). Auten mentions that useful classroom practices that educators can use to promote a growth mindset are "purposefully instilling a sense of belonging, expecting that all students could be successful, and scaffolding the curriculum so that students are continually building competence" (Auten, 2013, p. 18).

According to the questionnaire results, 33 students out of the 40 students that replied, believed university counseling staff needs to better understand different mindsets and how to adjust to that. 31 out of 40 students believed this to be helpful to them personally as well so that they could learn more about this part of themselves (van Wijk, 2019).

Psychological Engagement Theory: Self-Determination

Once one understands stress, how to deal with stress and has determined what the mindset of a student is, one can now go on with deciding how to engage students with the program or institution. The chosen method for this is the Self-Determination Theory or SDT. This theory of researchers Deci and Ryan serves as "a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality" (Deci & Ryan, Theory, 2019). What is more, this theory also includes "how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative, in addition to their well-being and the quality of their performance" (Deci & Ryan, Theory, 2019). Out of the 40 questionnaire respondents, only three students had experience with this theory (van Wijk, 2019). As mentioned before, one of the students who responded to the questionnaire mentioned that an obstacle for him or her was to find motivation (van Wijk, 2019). Often, when students are faced with mental health issues, they have trouble attending classes regularly and lose contact with the university or college. In fact, several students who responded to the questionnaire said it was almost impossible for them to get to class during a depression (van Wijk, 2019). They lose their connection with the program. This lost connection shows the need for counseling staff to find a way to engage students. This theory, therefore, fits nicely in the framework of this thesis.

Introduction

Deci and Ryan state that 'needs' in this theory are defined by "innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being" (Deci & Ryan, The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, 2000, p. 229). The primary psychological needs in this theory are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. If any of these needs is not supported or thwarted, it will have a significant negative impact on the well-being of someone. According to Self Determination theory, "autonomy refers to volition – the organismic desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to have activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self (other key concepts in this theory are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 231, as cited in Anguayal, 1965; deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1980). Self-Determination states that the definition of competence can be understood as something "that can energize human activity and must be satisfied for long-term psychological health" (Deci & Ryan, The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, 2000, p. 231). Relatedness in this theory "refers to the desire to feel connected to others – to love and care, and to be loved

and cared for" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 231, as cited in Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1958; Harlow, 1958, Ryan, 1993).

According to Deci & Ryan, intrinsic motivation "involves people freely engaging in activities that they find interesting, that provide novelty and optimal challenge" (Deci & Ryan, The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, 2000, p. 235). In other words, it is the motivation to do something based on the prospect of internal satisfaction and pleasure that comes from doing that activity. Deci and Ryan give the example of it being "activities that people do naturally and spontaneously when they feel free to follow their inner interests" (Deci & Ryan, The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, 2000, p. 234). The authors note that extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, "is behavior that is instrumental – that aims towards outcomes extrinsic to the behavior itself" (Deci & Ryan, Theory, 2019). In other words, it is motivation to do something because of the expected outcome and is not driven by the feeling or the pleasure one gets from doing that activity.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can come into contact with each other. To use an example, "when extrinsic rewards are introduced for doing an intrinsically interesting activity, people tend to feel controlled by rewards" causing them to "display less intrinsic motivation" (Deci & Ryan, The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, 2000, p. 234). Studies on this theory have produced other noteworthy results as well. Intrinsic motivation, as well as levels of creativity, the ability to solve complex issues and deep conceptual processing of information, can all be undermined when threats, surveillance, evaluation, and deadlines come into play. Contrastingly, having a choice and "acknowledging people's inner experience" caused an increase in intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 234, as cited in Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984). Furthermore, research concludes, "positive feedback enhanced intrinsic motivation relative to no feedback" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 234, as cited in Boggiano & Ruble, 1979; Deci, 1971). Similarly, providing feedback results in the satisfaction of the need for competence. According to the authors, "SDT hypothesizes that intrinsic motivation will be more likely to flourish in contexts characterized by a sense of secure relatedness" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 235, as cited in Ryan & La Guardia, 2000).

Theory in a higher education setting

As was mentioned before, this method is essential to apply this theory at universities and colleges as it can help determine staff how one can motivate and engage students and to

help them get back on track. However, there does not seem to be much data on how universities and colleges can apply this theory in an educational setting. As Jenő mentions, "SDT offers clear theoretical and empirical assumptions for learning" (Jenő, 2015). He does make recommendations for how the higher education system can apply this theory. On an institutional level, he argues that high-stakes measures, such as less funding if test results are disappointing, are "ineffective in terms of higher academic achievements and psychological wellbeing" (Jenő, 2015, p. 710). He proposes an outline that teachers can use with guidelines and matters to think about when organizing a lesson. He also asks teachers to establish if they have a growth or fixed mindset. He points out that in the pre-lesson phase, "teachers may identify students' personal interests and base the lesson around their interest to support their intrinsic motivation" (Jenő, 2015, p. 710). During the lesson, Jenő argues, "there are several measures that can be taken to increase autonomous motivation. For example, teachers can provide students with moderately challenging tasks. When facing tedious tasks or over/under challenging activities, teachers are recommended to acknowledge students negative affects and provide them with an informative rationale as to why the task or activity is important. Students may then internalize and integrate the behavior in their value system and move from controlled to autonomous motivation" (Jenő, 2015, pp. 710-711). Lastly, after the lesson, Jenő proposes that teachers ask themselves if they can imagine how their students experienced their teaching. He uses the example of using electronic student polls to ask students to assess the lesson (Jenő, 2015).

According to the questionnaire results, 36 out of 40 students believed there to be a necessity for university counseling staff to understand better how to engage students with the program (van Wijk, 2019). Furthermore, 30 out of 40 students argued this would be helpful to them personally as well if universities used this in their counseling approach so that they can learn more about this part of themselves (van Wijk, 2019).

What is the approach of higher education support systems in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom?

One of the respondents of the questionnaire accurately mentions, “getting the right help is hard because you deal with so many emotions and expectations at once” (van Wijk, 2019). The question then is, how do higher education support systems in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom approach this matter?

Colleges and universities in both countries are urged by governments to assist students in the recovery processes. The support system, or in other words, the university counseling service, can serve as more than merely mental health care. As Biasi et al. mention, it can be a resource for individual development as one can develop listening skills and learn how to accept challenges (Biasi, Patrizi, Mosca, & De Vincenzo, 2017). That leads to the question: what do the support system and university counseling look like in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom? Firstly, it should be noted that social support is an integral part of a person to go through life, tackle problems, and overcome obstacles. Without social support, people often face difficulty doing so, possibly leading to psychological issues, which is often the case for students. When students lack social support, albeit in their personal lives or at university, it is difficult to manage those issues properly.

An interesting finding of the questionnaire results was that 29 students wished for voluntary training sessions or workshops, separate from the curriculum, about the previously mentioned self-regulation theories. 11 out of 40 students wished for mandatory classes or courses (van Wijk, 2019). The interviewee believed it to be important that transmitting that piece of awareness and information about mental health issues to students, is essential, first and foremost. The interviewee argued for the training to be given during mentor-hours, as students will be introduced to the subject. If they do not experience these issues themselves, they are at least able to support and assist fellow students who do face these issues (Student, 2019). This method increases social support at universities and colleges.

The support system in the Netherlands

An increasing number of students in the Netherlands are suffering from mental health issues. When this happens, students can fall back on a so-called support system at their university or college. This system consists of Deans, student psychologists, and other staff members that can assist them during this period. It is imperative that students report

their troubles with mental health issues, as this can cause delays in their studies. It is especially crucial for students suffering from depression, as they can be granted postponement for their assignments or exams as well as an extra year of financial aid, as author Preller mentions (2016). However, the difficulty here lies in the fact that to do so, students first need to get a referral by a physician or a psychologist first.

This is often where obstacles lie, as not every college or university has experience with how to effectively approach students with mental health issues. This is corroborated by one of the respondents of the questionnaire, who has been dealing with burnout. The respondent mentions that there is no adequate help available. The student also mentions that there is a long waiting list to get an appointment with the student psychologist, and there is no information available a study delay (van Wijk, 2019). Another student, when talking about depression, mentioned that he or she was able to talk to the Dean about the issues they were facing and that because of this, there were no real obstacles (van Wijk, 2019). Another interesting quote derived from the questionnaire results is the following “obstacles were often self-made as you naturally want to continue studying and finish the degree. Contact with the teachers and telling them about this situation is not easy” (van Wijk, 2019).

According to the website, The Hague University of Applied Sciences offers a variety of programs and courses (The Hague University of Applied Sciences, 2018). These courses include ones for Assertiveness, Effective Studying with ADHD/ADD, EFT for Anxiety, Procrastination, Mindfulness, Presenting and Public Speaking, Self-Confidence, a Stress-Boot camp, Studying with ASD, Studying with Dyslexia and Fear of Exams. Student psychologists/counselors can help students dealing with depression, eating disorders, fear and anxiety, homesickness and isolation, mourning and loss, relationships, sexuality and (un) wanted pregnancies and stress (The Hague University of Applied Sciences, 2018). When writing this thesis, the current waiting time for a student to schedule an appointment with a counselor at The Hague University of Applied Sciences is three to four weeks (The Hague University of Applied Sciences, 2018). The University of Amsterdam offers several programs and courses for its students as well. These are Reducing Stress with Compassionate Mind Training (for Ph.D. students), Stress Relief with Compassionate Intervention (for Ph.D. students), Dealing with Worrying and Rumination, Managing Stress, Mindfulness, and a Graduation Support Group (University of Amsterdam, 2019). The University of Utrecht also notes students can seek help with the student psychologists and offer courses and workshops such as Introduction to Time Management, Dealing with Fear of Failure, Change your Self-Image, Mindfulness, Graduation Support Group. They

also offer courses for students with dyslexia, ADHD/ADD and those who are reconsidering their bachelor choice of studies, or who do not know which master program they should opt for (Universiteit Utrecht, n.d.). Radboud Universiteit offers a burn-out prevention program for its students, consisting of four meetings of two hours (Radboud Universiteit, 2019).

It should be noted, however, that the provision of information about the possibilities of support, is much better organized and communicated at universities in the Netherlands than at colleges. Newspaper author Els Anker from Metro Nieuws acknowledges this. She covered the subject of the student mental health crisis in 2016 and argued that this might be explained by the fact that students need to get a referral from the Dean first, as was mentioned before, and are not able to sign themselves up for support (Anker, 2016).

Support System in the United Kingdom

Students in the United Kingdom who face mental health issues are not helped right away. According to Buchan, students in the United Kingdom remain on the waiting list for up to four months or more (Buchan, 2018). Thorley argues in a research report done by IPPR, "there is currently too much variation in the extent to which universities are equipped to meet this challenge", referring to the student mental health crisis (Thorley, 2017). He also presses that "this sector-led approach should be complemented by strengthened NHS provision and new government initiatives to ensure that no student is held back by their mental health" (Thorley, 2017). Thorley also found considerable lacks in implementing effective support strategies among universities and colleges in the United Kingdom. The author mentions just "29 per cent have designed an explicit mental health and wellbeing strategy", "67 per cent do not provide students access to NHS mental health specialists who can deliver interventions onsite" and lastly, "23 per cent do not work closely with NHS secondary mental health services" (Thorley, 2017, pp. 6-7).

The University Mental Health Advisors Network, otherwise known as UMHAN, was founded in 2003 "as an information-sharing network for mental health specialists working in Higher Education" (UMHAN, n.d.). Their website also states that mental health inequalities for students with mental health difficulties were addressed (UMHAN, n.d.). NHS also mentions that students can get a so-called DSA, which stands for Disabled Students' Allowance. The mental health advisor of a student can help them obtain a DSA, provided the student presents a record of his or her long-term mental health condition. According to the NHS website, "the DSA pays for specialist equipment, such as a computer, if you need it because of your mental health condition or another disability,

non-medical helpers, extra travel as a result of your mental health condition or disability, other disability-related costs of studying" (NHS, 2016).

The University of Nottingham mentions they provide free counseling for registered students. Moreover, students do not need to get a referral and can make appointments themselves. The university offers several group workshops and programs, including ones on Mindfulness, Resilience, procrastination and anxiety and stress (University of Nottingham, No Date). The University of Liverpool also provides free counseling services to enrolled students as well as staff. Group workshops and programs also include ones on mindfulness, resilience, anxiety, stress, and procrastination (University of Liverpool, No Date).

Biasi, Patrizi, Mosca, and De Vincenzo point out that only a small percentage of students start with university counseling, despite having prolonged mental health issues. The fact that this service is not used as often as one would wish can be because of various reasons. The authors mention that students can overestimate their self-efficacy, or that students have "a tendency to deny their difficulties, resistance to attending the initial interview, avoidance of the perceived stigma of utilising mental health services and being unaware of these services" (Biasi, Patrizi, Mosca, & De Vincenzo, 2017, p. 248, as cited in Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, & Tinklin, 2009).

The future is in self-regulation at university, leaving the student mental health crisis in the past

A discussion, conclusion, and recommendation

This study has led us looking into the past, discussing the present, and reviewing opportunities and possibilities for the future. It seems as if the situation is relatively similar in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Both have disturbing increases in the number of students reporting mental health issues, and both face significant trends in suicide rates. It can be concluded that there is no doubt about the current 'crisis' going on surrounding student mental health. It can also be concluded that universities and colleges in the Netherlands as well as in the United Kingdom are trying to do something about it and support students. What is more, however, is that these approaches and methods are not always sufficient enough.

Mental health issues

Moreover, more research needs to be done on how counseling staff is approaching burnout, depression, and anxiety. There is little information available and questions such as 'is there any theory that is used in these counseling sessions', remain unanswered at the end of this thesis. It seems as if there is no unified approach at universities and colleges to address depression and anxiety, other than the option for students to go to university counseling. These university counseling services, however, do not have a consistent approach when it comes to using a specific theory to support depressed students.

Self-regulation theories

After having researched this topic, the mentioned order of self-regulation theories seemed most logical to implement at universities and colleges. Field research also showed the necessity, want, and need for this to be implemented and for students to be able to use and benefit from it. Therefore, this thesis recommends that universities and colleges use this order of models. However, it should be noted that more research ought to be done on the implementation process of these theories. Universities and colleges need to know how these self-regulation theories can be implemented; thus, practical information is needed. There is little information on this particular question, according to the desk and field research that was done. The university counseling staff needs to know if they need to follow any training, which areas in the organization need to be addressed and changed according to the self-regulation theories, and what budget is needed for this.

Moreover, whereas there is much research on fixed-growth mindsets in primary and middle school, there is little research on the growth mindset in college education settings. Thus, this thesis recommends that more research should be done on this particular age group, asking what needs to be kept in mind with individuals who are already in a later stage of development. Also, it is strongly recommended to review how can educators be motivated to teach students to hold a growth mindset more?

After reviewing the questionnaire results, this thesis recommends the following procedure to implement the self-regulation theories. Not everyone agreed on how they should be implemented, according to the questionnaire. 29 students out of the 40 that responded, believed that voluntary training sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum was the way to go. The other 11 believed that mandatory courses or classes would be the best way to implement these theories. There is something to be said of both them, which is why this discussion is always present.

On the one hand, classifying a course as mandatory often means students are less motivated to engage. This is the case for younger children, but many still feel the same later in life, which the questionnaire results corroborate. On the other hand, it is imperative to raise awareness on the issue and to inform students of the possibilities and resources at their university or college, should they ever face these issues. That is why this thesis recommends a mandatory course of these self-regulation theories to be built into the curriculum of all studies in the order that was mentioned. These courses need to be given by trained and knowledgeable staff in the first year of a study program during a mentor-hour. It is essential to do this in the first year of the study program, due to the fact that an intervention would be most effective in the first year of a study program, according to research (Chang, M.D., Eddins-Folensbee, M.D., & Coverdale, M.D., M.Ed, FRANZP, 2012). This way, the most significant number of students is reached. The exact length and frequency of these courses can be determined once the budget is known. This way, the students have the tools they need if they ever come across obstacles or find themselves in the student mental health crisis. After all, studies are supposed to equip students for the rest of their lives better. Personal development is an essential part of that; the university or college could partially provide that. In the same way, voluntary training sessions outside of the curriculum could, and should be given as well. Using these two trajectories, students are undoubtedly able to seek help at the university or college they are attending. Whether or not they chose to do so depends on other factors, perhaps out of universities' control.

Other remarkable findings

This thesis also found some remarkable facts. It was surprising that a research project in 2015/16 revealed that “female first-year students are more likely than male first-year students to disclose a mental health condition” (Thorley, 2017, p. 6). Perhaps more research could be done on whether or not there is a difference when one looks at gender. The same applies to culture: more research could and should be done on cultural factors and differences and whether or not they affect the number of students experiencing mental health issues. This thesis was not able to dive into that completely, due to not enough resources and lack of time.

Unfortunately, there were no respondents from the United Kingdom who filled in this questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent out to several colleges and universities, but none responded. Due to feasibility and lack of time, this thesis recommends another study further researches this part of the investigation.

The future

There is a continuous cycle of no motivation, lack of communication, and organization at the institution. Each time, approximately half of the respondents of the questionnaire indicated to have had experience with either burnout, depression, or anxiety. These numbers confirm the need for the research, as well as the notion that more research needs to be done on the previously suggested matters. It is imperative that one looks forward and to invest more in the abilities of students to self-regulate their thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Only then can one start to leave the student mental health crisis in the past and start building stronger and more resilient adolescents.

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Appendix

1 Questionnaire Layout

Student Mental Health Crisis & Self-Regulation Theories

Thesis questionnaire

“Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. I am writing my thesis about the student mental health crisis in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and I am researching if there are any self regulation methods that can help these students. This questionnaire consists of 24 questions. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to fill in. Your answers will be processed anonymously.”

1 What is your age? *

2 What and where do you study and in which year of your study program are you in? *

3 What do you know about the student mental health crisis? *

Explanation

“Over the last years, the number of students experiencing burnout, depression or anxiety during their studies has increased significantly. Many students drop out of their program, as they are unable to finish it.”

4 Have you had contact with burnout during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

5 Have you had contact with depression during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

6 Have you had contact with anxiety during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

Self-Regulation Theories

“I am researching if universities and colleges in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can adopt new ways of counseling according to self-regulation theory, which refers to conscious personal management of thoughts, feelings and behaviors to reach goals. The self-regulation theories and models I chose that can serve as a framework for this are Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction, Fixed-Growth Mindset and Self-Determination Theory. I would now like to ask you some questions about these theories/models.”

7 Are you familiar with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping? *

- Yes
- No

8 How do you normally deal with stress? Do you have a routine that helps you? *

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

“This model analyzes the emotional aspect of stress, indicating there are two steps you go through: primary and secondary appraisal.

Step 1: is the situation harmful to you or not (have you experienced it before)?

Step 2: do you have enough resources to deal with the situation? If you don't, stress increases. If you do, stress is less present.

You can then assess where additional resources among students can be gathered. This model can help university staff to determine what students are coping with and how adequately emotional regulation and problem-solving is accomplished.”

9 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand what stress is, where it comes from and how to tackle it? *

- Yes
- No

10 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself? *

- Yes
- No

11 Do you have experience with Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction? *

- Yes
- No

Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction

“Now that we understand stress, we can attempt to reduce that stress with Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction. Mindfulness can be defined as nonjudgmental awareness of moment-to-moment-experience. By practicing mindfulness, you are better equipped to actually choose a response, instead of reacting reflexively.

12 How often do you practice mindfulness since you started at university/college? *

- Once a month
- Once a week
- Every day
- Never

13 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand what mindfulness is and how to implement that? *

- Yes
- No

14 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself? *

- Yes
- No

15 Are you familiar with the Fixed-Growth Mindset Theory of Carol Dweck? *

- Yes
- No

16 Do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset? *

- Fixed mindset
- Growth mindset

17 Do you feel characteristics such as intellect can change over the years, or is that inherent to the person? *

- Yes it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspects about your personality, even intellect
- No this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are

Fixed-Growth Mindset - Carol Dweck

“This theory states there are two mindsets: fixed and growth mindset, and that your mindset can actually change. Fixed mindset: characteristics, talents, and qualities are fixed and cannot change. It creates a feeling of failure and incompetence when things go wrong. Failure determines everything about a person, they tend to see risks as an opportunity for shortcomings coming to light.

Growth mindset: characteristics and qualities can, in fact, change/be developed. They don't label themselves, which thus, does not create feelings of despair when things go wrong, are prepared to take risks/take on challenges, belief everyone is capable of change by learning and getting experience”.

18 Now that you know this information, I will ask the question again: do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset? *

- Fixed mindset
- Growth mindset

19 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand different mindsets and how to adjust to that? *

- Yes
- No

20 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself? *

- Yes
- No

21 Do you have experience with Self-Determination theory? *

- Yes
- No

Self-Determination Theory

“Once one understands stress, how to deal with stress and has determined the mindset of a student, you can now decide how to engage students with the study program. The chosen method for this is the Self-Determination Theory. The primary psychological needs in this theory are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. If any of these needs is not supported, it will have a significant negative impact on your well-being”.

22 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand how to engage students with the program? *

- Yes
- No

23 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself? *

- Yes
- No

24 If you indicated that any of these theories would be helpful for student counsellors to use, how do you wish these theories were implemented more at your university/college?
With the use of...

- Mandatory Classes/Courses
- Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum

The End

“Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Your input is very much appreciated! ”

2 Questionnaire Results

Question 1 What is your age?

Respondent 1: 24
Respondent 2: 24
Respondent 3: 22
Respondent 4: 18
Respondent 5: 23
Respondent 6: 27
Respondent 7: 19
Respondent 8: 19
Respondent 9: 25
Respondent 10: 22
Respondent 11: 19
Respondent 12: 28
Respondent 13: 21
Respondent 14: 21
Respondent 15: 25
Respondent 16: 20
Respondent 17: 22
Respondent 18: 22
Respondent 19: 22
Respondent 20: 20
Respondent 21: 22
Respondent 22: 20
Respondent 23: 20
Respondent 24: 22
Respondent 25: 18
Respondent 26: 23
Respondent 27: 25
Respondent 28: 21
Respondent 29: 22
Respondent 30: 22
Respondent 31: 23
Respondent 32: 20
Respondent 33: 18
Respondent 34: 23
Respondent 35: 22
Respondent 36: 22
Respondent 37: 27
Respondent 38: 27
Respondent 39: 22
Respondent 40: 23

Question 2 What and where do you study and in which year of your study program are you in?

Respondent 1: European studies at THUAS

- Respondent 2: 3rd year, European Studies, HHS
Respondent 3: European Studies - The Hague University of Applied Sciences - 3rd year
Respondent 4: Medicine, first year, Rotterdam
Respondent 5: European studies, second year and The Hague university of Applied Sciences
Respondent 6: ES, THUAS, 5
Respondent 7: Medicine at Erasmus University Rotterdam, 1st year
Respondent 8: Medicine first year
Respondent 9: European Studies, THUAS, year 6
Respondent 10: European Studies year 5, THUAS
Respondent 11: First year medicine student
Respondent 12: European Studies at HHS year 6
Respondent 13: European Studies, UvA, 2nd year
Respondent 14: THUAS, ES3, 1st year
Respondent 15: ES year 3
Respondent 16: HHS, European Studies, 2nd year
Respondent 17: European Studies, THUAS year 5
Respondent 18: European Studies, HHS, 3rd year
Respondent 19: MSc Political Science, 1 year
Respondent 20: European Studies at HHS, 2nd year
Respondent 21: I am studying in Utrecht and Rotterdam. Almost done with my Master degree. It took 2 years in total.
Respondent 22: 2nd year
Respondent 23: European Studies 4
Respondent 24: ES at The Hague Uni, 3rd
Respondent 25: European Studies year 1 (second time)
Respondent 26: ES, HHS, 4th year
Respondent 27: European Studies at THUAS year 4
Respondent 28: Finance & Control 2nd year
Respondent 29: MSc Food Technology, Wageningen, 1st year
Respondent 30: MSc Food Technology, Wageningen, 1st year
Respondent 31: Academic PABO, Erasmus University Rotterdam year 4
Respondent 32: European Studies, THUAS, 3rd year
Respondent 33: European Studies, THUAS, 2nd year
Respondent 34: MSc Food Science, 1st year
Respondent 35: Sound Design at the Netherlands Film Academy, last year
Respondent 36: Industrial Design Engineering, University of Twente, 1st year Master
Respondent 37: I study Communication at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam in my Master year
Respondent 38: Leiden University, last year
Respondent 39: I study Social and Organizational Psychology and I am currently in the first year of my master
Respondent 40: Master student of law in Leiden

Question 3 What do you know about the student mental health crisis?

Respondent 1: yes

Respondent 2: That we're basically all suffering due to the bizarre pressure from both school and society

Respondent 3: Not much besides my own experience

Respondent 4: Not much

Respondent 5: It's been increasing during the years

Respondent 6: Not much, other than that it exists. I heard record numbers of students are getting a burnout.

Respondent 7: Nothing

Respondent 8: Nothing

Respondent 9: I'm part of it

Respondent 10: I don't know how to answer this question.

Respondent 11: Nothing

Respondent 12: Everything, sadly

Respondent 13: Students increasingly are unable to cope with the pressure of university, social life and many other factors pressuring them which leads to a near epidemic of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety etc.....

Respondent 14: Basic knowledge

Respondent 15: It is present

Respondent 16: A lot of students are struggling with their mental health and there is not enough help available in HHS

Respondent 17: Many students are stressed out, feel a lot of pressure to do the best, too high work load, many are on the verge of a burn out or already have it and don't speak up about it because they feel like they should be able to manage everything and the social pressure of balancing work, friends, education etc

Respondent 18: Didn't know it had a name and was specific to students, but I know my generation has societal mental health issues

Respondent 19: Only what I have seen in the news - the new Dutch student loan system leading to a higher burden on students in terms of stress and worries over their future, as the system has made higher education less accessible.

Respondent 20: The mental health of especially students is getting worse (more cases of students suffering from mental health issues)

Respondent 21: Not much to be honest

Respondent 22: I've tried writing a report about burnouts ironically not finished it because of my own burnouts. I've seen my friends struggle with it and the effects of social media.

Respondent 23: Yes

Respondent 24: Not much

Respondent 25: Not a lot

Respondent 26: I know that it is becoming a more and more prevalent problem

Respondent 27: Not much. Some students experience mental health issues due to pressure from society to receive a diploma. Combining student life, working life and social life is really hard to carry out. Therefore, some students experience pressure and that's not fruitful for your mental health.

Respondent 28: Nothing

Respondent 29: 75% (not sure) of the students seem to suffer from high workloads as a result of the study and side activities which are seen as important for having a good CV

Respondent 30: That it is increasing in prevalence

Respondent 31: People demand a lot from students. Trying to meet those demands or failing to meet those demands causes for a lot of stress among students. Stress has an indirect influence on certain hormones that could be the cause of mental health issues

Respondent 32: It's a problem that many people dismiss. More and more workload is being dropped on students, them being expected to adapt easily because "they're young", whereas they're barely getting by

Respondent 33: That it is becoming a bigger problem

Respondent 34: A lot of stress related burn-outs, not much more

Respondent 35: A lot of students have mental health problems because of things like performance pressure, getting a job soon after graduating, paying rent and student loan debts.

Respondent 36: A lot of students experience stress from multiple factors (e.g. loans, available jobs on the market), which sometimes can lead to depression and other mental health issues.

Respondent 37: I know that multiple students are undergoing burnouts because of pressure. Pressure that hits the students harder because of less government fundings for students in the last years, the rise of social media and the pressure to be the best and always do nice things

Respondent 38: Not much

Respondent 39: I know a lot of students have been struggling with increased pressure which has caused some to experience a burnout

Respondent 40: I know that an increasing number of students have trouble with their mental health

Question 4 Have you had contact with burnout during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

Respondent 1: No

Respondent 2: I know several people that experienced burnouts or had their studies greatly interfere with their mental health. That also goes for me - although I never burned out, I walked the line. My anxiety and depression also severely increase(d). However, you still have to continue which is unfortunate.

Respondent 3: Burnout symptoms due to overworking during group projects

Respondent 4: -

Respondent 5: -

Respondent 6: I did. In my 4th year I had to write my thesis and do my minor and look for an internship all at the same time. As I am now a 5th year student, you can guess how well that went.

Respondent 7: -

Respondent 8: -

Respondent 9: Yes I had. I did not get enough help with planning the rest of my studies. Have to figure out on yourself or try to get a teacher willing to help.

Respondent 10: Yes, it is difficult to motivate yourself, concentrate and deciding whether to continue and when to stop working. Then it is hard to decide when you are ready to start again

Respondent 11: -

Respondent 12: No adequate help. Long waitinglist for the student psychologist. No information how to handle study delay, no special traject if missing the exam moment

Respondent 13: -

Respondent 14: -

Respondent 15: I have experienced the burn out & currently seeing a student psychologist.

Respondent 16: -

Respondent 17: I had/have a burn out because I pressured myself too much to get good grades. Obstacles are tiredness not being able to concentrate or do anything because I didn't take the time to recover because I thought it would go away itself

Respondent 18: -

Respondent 19: -

Respondent 20: Too much homework/courses/deadlines along with less time for friends/work/sports and the most important one: relax time

Respondent 21: The niece of my girlfriend has had trouble with completing her study. The pressure was too much in her life, so she put her study on hold. Luckily, she managed to get it under control.

Respondent 22: Because of my burnout diagnosed in February/March, my mentor advised to drop a few things for next year. I did not want to share my issues with everyone and sometimes that was hard. Not being able to participate fully can be disappointing and confusing. The physical effects burnout can have. Getting immediate psych. Help was hard. I wanted to be in my hometown more than in The Hague at uni. Getting right help is hard because you deal with so many emotions and expectations at once. The pressure to make deadlines before going on exchange and deadlines.

Respondent 23: Too much pressure

Respondent 24: I felt (feel) like more kept being added on my plate when I already didn't have space

Respondent 25: Yes I am struggling with too much stress and commitment to my studies myself. I think that it depends on my more than on the curriculum because I always work harder than the rest. Indropped out of school last year bc of an eating disorder which was a form of burnout for me.

Respondent 26: No

Respondent 27: -

Respondent 28: No

Respondent 29: -

Respondent 30: Yes, I personally almost had a burn-out but realized it in the early stage and could cope with it

Respondent 31: A friend of mine had a burnout. At university he had a lot of exams and deadlines in combination with the student association he was in, in which a certain devotion and commitment was expected of him as well (attendance at mixers and drinks, training sessions, bar-duty, etc.)

Respondent 32: I had some study delay, but was already in my second year. I felt too bad to stop halfway through, but I did not enjoy the rest of my second or third year at all..

Respondent 33: -

Respondent 34: -

Respondent 35: -

Respondent 36: Some of my friends decided to follow 2 courses per module (5 EC each) instead of 3 in the master programme, because they found that some courses took way more time than others. Every 5 EC course should in theory take the same amount of study time, but this is never the case (sometimes a course with a project takes more than twice as much time as others). Depending on the courses the student chose, the workload can be way too high. But they did not really experience a real burnout as far as I know.

Respondent 37: Yes, I have multiple friends who suffered burnouts. All of them are people who did not see it coming (I didn't for them either), and they had to recover for a long while

Respondent 38: -

Respondent 39: -

Respondent 40: -

Question 5: Have you had contact with depression during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

Respondent 1: No

Respondent 2: Both first-hand and through friends

Respondent 3: Yes, but not necessarily linked to studies. It did not impact my studies either

Respondent 4: I've been struggling with depression-like symptoms for years, but since I started uni it's become worse. A major struggle has been finding motivation to study, which results in bad grades, which results in no motivation to study for the next exam.

Respondent 5: Stress of school too much to deal with at times

Respondent 6: No

Respondent 7: -

Respondent 8: -

Respondent 9: Yes I had. The dean helped me with this, had no real obstacles

Respondent 10: -

Respondent 11: -

Respondent 12: Same as for burn-out

Respondent 13: Obstacles were often self-made as you obviously want to continue studying and finish your degree. Contact with the teachers and telling them about the situation is not easy

Respondent 14: Depression. winter break. the uni wasn't open and friends went home. hague was still a new city for me, i didn't know anybody, so more than a month i didn't really hang out with friends plus the work overload was crazy. and we cannot forget about "amazing" Dutch weather 24/7 rain, wind and cold

Respondent 15: I am in depression currently

Respondent 16: As personal experience I couldn't bring myself to go to classes anymore as that seemed impossible. Furthermore, it took a very long time until I finally got help

Respondent 17: Sadness not feel like doing anything, feeling like it's useless to do the work

Respondent 18: I've struggled with depression. I had no motivation, getting out of bed was hard, let alone go to class.

Respondent 19: -

Respondent 20: Depression no, but some light symptoms

Respondent 21: -

Respondent 22: -

Respondent 23: Hard time dealing with the responsibilities of the study

Respondent 24: I was depressed before starting this study

Respondent 25: A friend of mine has depression, and she is usually too stressed and insecure about our to-do list. She stays home quite often. I have had mental problems too, I do not take time to relax. Such as right now, while filling in this survey, I constantly feel the urge to study.

Respondent 26: Fellow students. They usually have issues showing up to class, making the deadlines and take more resits than students without mental diseases. Sometimes they also hand in assignments at the last minute after an all-nighter. After that they feel down for a while and don't show up to classes for some days.

Respondent 27: -

Respondent 28: No

Respondent 29: -

Respondent 30: No

Respondent 31: A friend of mine had a depression due to personal circumstances. This friend was not able to meet the demands of her study program. This friend took a break

from the study program to work on herself and the year after that she finished a number of university courses.

Respondent 32: -

Respondent 33: Not knowing where to start solving problems

Respondent 34: I have felt more sad during certain long periods of stress, but when the new courses began, I had some time to gather my thoughts, and the sadness usually subsided.

Respondent 35: -

Respondent 36: -

Respondent 37: No I have not, although I think its a symptom of having a burnout

Respondent 38: -

Respondent 39: -

Respondent 40: -

Question 6 Have you had contact with anxiety during your studies (through friends or first-hand-experience)? If so, can you tell me about some of the obstacles you or your friends faced at university (if you know about those)? If not, please skip this question.

Respondent 1: No

Respondent 2: Good lord has uni increased my anxiety by tenfold, and there's not much that can be done about it.

Respondent 3: Yes, but not due to my studies. The only way it impacts my studies is in lower scores with presentations and lack of participation during classes.

Respondent 4: -

Respondent 5: -

Respondent 6: The pressure to graduate is intense. If I don't graduate in time, I will owe the government a whole lot of money...

Respondent 7: -

Respondent 8: Yes, not passing my exams, not being able to concentrate

Respondent 9: Yes I had. Felt like I had to wait till I could handle my anxieties before 'restarting' my studies.

Respondent 10: Yes, presentations are difficult, overseeing the workload is hard

Respondent 11: -

Respondent 12: Yes. Anxiety to miss deadlines, study delay. Weird formulation of this specific question..

Respondent 13: Yes, the social isolation is not easy to cope with while being surrounded by so many people your age who seemingly don't go through the same thing you do

Respondent 14: Dumb people who have no idea what they are doing at THUAS but anyway they going to comment how difficult it is to keep up

Respondent 15: A lot of anxiety

Respondent 16: -

Respondent 17: -

Respondent 18: Still struggle with anxiety. The only real obstacle with school is that sometimes it gets me before I'm supposed to head to school and I don't go. Then if I've missed a class (especially a couple) that makes me anxious for the next one and it goes in a loop. There are courses I've never attended because of this.

Respondent 19: I think we are all stressed, down and anxious at some point during our studies, but I have seen only a few people who have had to stop their studies, and often, they faced additional challenges such as a bad situation at home.

Respondent 20: The people who didn't are the exception here. The anxiety became so bad that people developed/experienced depression, mental breakdowns/burnouts and increasing of their own mental health issues that were already present

Respondent 21: -

Respondent 22: Test anxiety giving physical reactions towards exams. The numbness of planning to go to a social activity and then bailing last minute because one get too worried. Anxiety makes me procrastinate my homework more making everything worse. The school can feel very crowded and too much to handle in the afternoon

Respondent 23: Stress

Respondent 24: I've had anxiety since my teenage years.

Respondent 25: I have multiple friends with anxiety. They find school too overwhelming, which I understand. Every subject demands a lot from us.

Respondent 26: Similar patterns as previous question

Respondent 27: -

Respondent 28: No

Respondent 29: -

Respondent 30: Yes, same as before

Respondent 31: A friend of mine has fear of failure to such an extent that she started the same study program twice, only in a different city. At university she has no trouble with

the assignments and group assignments. However, for the exams in which they test your knowledge only this friend knows everything beforehand as well as after the exam, during the exam however she gets a blackout and can only start writing the answers in the last ten minutes of the exam.

Respondent 32: Anxiety over whether I would pass and obtain enough credits to not get a year study delay for my final year. (Am still waiting for the result)

Respondent 33: Exams but that's just when stress gets on another level

Respondent 34: -

Respondent 35: -

Respondent 36: -

Respondent 37: I have had and have anxiety myself and was afraid of doing exams because the pressure was so high, It took me four years to do a certain exam, and I could only do it because I was drugged on painkillers.

Respondent 38: -

Respondent 39: -

Respondent 40: Through a friend. The deadlines for papers and exams for examples cause for a lot of stress.

Question 7 Are you familiar with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping?

Respondent 1: No
Respondent 2: No
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No
Respondent 5: No
Respondent 6: No
Respondent 7: No
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: No
Respondent 10: No
Respondent 11: No
Respondent 12: No
Respondent 13: No
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: No
Respondent 16: No
Respondent 17: No
Respondent 18: No
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: No
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: No
Respondent 23: No
Respondent 24: No
Respondent 25: No
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: No
Respondent 28: No
Respondent 29: No
Respondent 30: No
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: No
Respondent 33: No
Respondent 34: No
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: No
Respondent 37: No
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: No
Respondent 40: No

Question 8 How do you normally deal with stress? Do you have a routine that helps you?

Respondent 1: Sleep or eat

Respondent 2: I just try to do what I can and if I really cannot do it, I stop forcing myself, because forcing myself and failing will feel so much worse.

Respondent 3: I tend to just take an evening for myself where I do nothing for school

Respondent 4: I usually try to ignore it, which doesn't really work

Respondent 5: No I just deal with it

Respondent 6: I usually let the stress build up until shortly before the deadline, then use the pent up stress as energy to meet my deadline at the last possible moment.

Respondent 7: I try to do other things and hang out with friends.

Respondent 8: Making lists

Respondent 9: Walking, cleaning the house, talk about it

Respondent 10: Breathing exercises

Respondent 11: Accept the situation and keep on working hard, you cannot do more than your best

Respondent 12: I make to do lists and prioritize tasks. Then I eat sweets and treat myself (clothes, beauty treatment)

Respondent 13: I meditate

Respondent 14: Sport, smoking

Respondent 15: I try to think straight & prioritize the tasks.

Respondent 16: I actively try to make some time for friends and extracurricular activities no matter how much stress I have

Respondent 17: Procrastination until the stress gets too much and then do everything last minute or go to sleep. But it doesn't help

Respondent 18: I don't. I try to calm down or smoke for small stress but usually I'm just stressed for a couple of days until the cause is solved.

Respondent 19: I plan. Or at least, I try to. Right now, I am in what is hopefully the final stretch of my master thesis. It isn't the first time in my life that I have procrastinated to avoid the issue, but it has been the heaviest mental burden I have experienced so far. The only way I have found to deal with the stress is it force myself to write. Just force myself. Sit down and don't get up until I have 500 words on paper, or I have finished editing that section, or read and referenced at least 5 extra papers as source material. It's the only way to feel productive, and feeling productive is the only way to manage the stress.

Respondent 20: Cry, watch something to distract me and go for a walk

Respondent 21: I never really feel really stressed out. But if i will be stressed i try to do happy things.

Respondent 22: Getting up same time, ensuring social activities weekly, eating healthy

Respondent 23: No, only stressing more because I am stressing

Respondent 24: I'm either around a lot of people or I isolate myself and smoke a lot of weed.

Respondent 25: My coping has been really destructive the past years. First, I always sought for control in working hard on school. After that it became an obsession with food and sports. Now, I like to take a shower or sit down with my bullet journal. Although the thing that helps me most is reaching my deadlines for school.

Respondent 26: I think I'm quite stress resistant. But if I feel things get too much, I take a break and meet with friends or watch a movie.

Respondent 27: Work out, going out with friends.

Respondent 28: Take time for yourself

Respondent 29: If the risk of getting stress at a certain day is high, I try to avoid drinking coffee and/or alcohol. If I have mild stress, I drink tea which contain compounds which could make me a bit more relaxed or I go doing sports, watching tv. If I have more severe

stress I sometimes take a Valdispert (usually in this case I hardly have time to make fun). In longer periods of stress I do meditation.

Respondent 30: Working out or going for a walk, planning the work is also helpful

Respondent 31: Consciously saying to yourself to remain calm, that it is a temporary situation, that it is the hormones who make you feel so restless.

Respondent 32: I try to talk about it with my mom/friends, or try to suppress it by continuing other tasks that need to be done

Respondent 33: Make schedules, listen music, sleep

Respondent 34: No, I work until the source of the stress is finished

Respondent 35: Take a step back and breathe. Most of the time the stress you're feeling isn't necessary.

Respondent 36: I try to make sure I get enough sleep when I know I have a busy week. This often means that I cancel other activities. Sometimes I go outside for a walk when I am working all day towards a deadline.

Respondent 37: I try to take deep breaths and always make sure I have good and healthy foods around me

Respondent 38: Smoke, drink and nailbiting

Respondent 39: I usually deal with stress by ignoring it. So I will start doing something relaxing, like watching a movie on Netflix

Respondent 40: Make a schedule, but also do fun activities, get enough sleep and talk about it.

Question 9 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand what stress is, where it comes from and how to tackle it?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: Yes
Respondent 3: Yes
Respondent 4: Yes
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: Yes
Respondent 9: Yes
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: Yes
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: No
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: Yes
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: No
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: Yes
Respondent 26: Yes
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: Yes
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: Yes
Respondent 39: Yes
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 10 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: Yes
Respondent 3: Yes
Respondent 4: Yes
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: Yes
Respondent 9: Yes
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: Yes
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: Yes
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: Yes
Respondent 21: No
Respondent 22: Yes
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: Yes
Respondent 26: Yes
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: Yes
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 11 Do you have experience with Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: No
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No
Respondent 5: No
Respondent 6: No
Respondent 7: No
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: No
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: No
Respondent 12: No
Respondent 13: No
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: No
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: Yes
Respondent 18: No
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: Yes
Respondent 21: No
Respondent 22: No
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: Yes
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: No
Respondent 28: No
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: No
Respondent 31: No
Respondent 32: No
Respondent 33: No
Respondent 34: No
Respondent 35: Yes
Respondent 36: No
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: Yes
Respondent 40: No

Question 12 How often do you practice mindfulness since you started at university/college?

Respondent 1: Once a month
Respondent 2: Once a month
Respondent 3: Once a month
Respondent 4: Once a month
Respondent 5: Once a month
Respondent 6: Once a month
Respondent 7: Never
Respondent 8: Never
Respondent 9: Never
Respondent 10: Once a week
Respondent 11: Every day
Respondent 12: Never
Respondent 13: Every day
Respondent 14: Never
Respondent 15: Never
Respondent 16: Never
Respondent 17: Once a week
Respondent 18: Once a month
Respondent 19: Never
Respondent 20: Never
Respondent 21: Never
Respondent 22: Once a week
Respondent 23: Once a week
Respondent 24: Once a week
Respondent 25: Once a week
Respondent 26: Never
Respondent 27: Never
Respondent 28: Never
Respondent 29: Once a month
Respondent 30: Never
Respondent 31: Never
Respondent 32: Never
Respondent 33: Never
Respondent 34: Once a week
Respondent 35: Once a month
Respondent 36: Never
Respondent 37: Once a month
Respondent 38: Never
Respondent 39: Never
Respondent 40: Never

Question 13 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand what mindfulness is and how to implement that?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: No
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: No
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: No
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: No
Respondent 17: No
Respondent 18: No
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: Yes
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: Yes
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: No
Respondent 25: Yes
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: No
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: Yes
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: Yes
Respondent 39: Yes
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 14 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: No
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: No
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: No
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: No
Respondent 17: Yes
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: No
Respondent 21: No
Respondent 22: No
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: No
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: No
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: No
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: No
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 15 Are you familiar with the Fixed-Growth Mindset Theory of Carol Dweck?

Respondent 1: No
Respondent 2: No
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No
Respondent 5: No
Respondent 6: No
Respondent 7: No
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: No
Respondent 10: No
Respondent 11: No
Respondent 12: No
Respondent 13: No
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: No
Respondent 16: No
Respondent 17: No
Respondent 18: No
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: No
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: No
Respondent 23: No
Respondent 24: No
Respondent 25: No
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: No
Respondent 28: No
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: No
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: No
Respondent 33: No
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: No
Respondent 37: No
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: No
Respondent 40: No

Question 16 Do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset?

Respondent 1: Growth mindset
Respondent 2: Growth mindset
Respondent 3: Growth mindset
Respondent 4: Growth mindset
Respondent 5: Fixed mindset
Respondent 6: Growth mindset
Respondent 7: Growth mindset
Respondent 8: Growth mindset
Respondent 9: Fixed mindset
Respondent 10: Growth mindset
Respondent 11: Growth mindset
Respondent 12: Fixed mindset
Respondent 13: Fixed mindset
Respondent 14: Fixed mindset
Respondent 15: Growth mindset
Respondent 16: Growth mindset
Respondent 17: Fixed mindset
Respondent 18: Fixed mindset
Respondent 19: Fixed mindset
Respondent 20: Fixed mindset
Respondent 21: Growth mindset
Respondent 22: Growth mindset
Respondent 23: Growth mindset
Respondent 24: Growth mindset
Respondent 25: Fixed mindset
Respondent 26: Growth mindset
Respondent 27: Growth mindset
Respondent 28: Growth mindset
Respondent 29: Fixed mindset
Respondent 30: Fixed mindset
Respondent 31: Fixed mindset
Respondent 32: Growth mindset
Respondent 33: Growth mindset
Respondent 34: Growth mindset
Respondent 35: Growth mindset
Respondent 36: Growth mindset
Respondent 37: Fixed mindset
Respondent 38: Growth mindset
Respondent 39: Growth mindset
Respondent 40: Growth mindset

Question 17 Do you feel characteristics such as intellect can change over the years, or is that inherent to the person?

Respondent 1: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 2: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 3: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 4: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 5: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 6: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 7: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 8: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 9: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 10: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 11: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 12: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 13: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 14: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 15: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 16: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 17: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 18: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 19: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 20: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 21: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 22: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 23: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 24: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 25: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 26: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 27: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 28: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 29: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 30: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 31: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 32: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 33: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 34: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 35: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 36: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 37: No, this is part of you as a person: it is just the way it is, the way you are.

Respondent 38: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 39: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Respondent 40: Yes, it can change. If you really want to, you can change aspect about your personality, even your intellect

Question 18 Now that you know this information, I will ask the question again: do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset?

Respondent 1: Growth mindset
Respondent 2: Growth mindset
Respondent 3: Growth mindset
Respondent 4: Growth mindset
Respondent 5: Fixed mindset
Respondent 6: Growth mindset
Respondent 7: Growth mindset
Respondent 8: Growth mindset
Respondent 9: Fixed mindset
Respondent 10: Growth mindset
Respondent 11: Growth mindset
Respondent 12: Fixed mindset
Respondent 13: Fixed mindset
Respondent 14: Fixed mindset
Respondent 15: Growth mindset
Respondent 16: Fixed mindset
Respondent 17: Fixed mindset
Respondent 18: Fixed mindset
Respondent 19: Fixed mindset
Respondent 20: Fixed mindset
Respondent 21: Fixed mindset
Respondent 22: Growth mindset
Respondent 23: Growth mindset
Respondent 24: Growth mindset
Respondent 25: Growth mindset
Respondent 26: Growth mindset
Respondent 27: Growth mindset
Respondent 28: Growth mindset
Respondent 29: Fixed mindset
Respondent 30: Fixed mindset
Respondent 31: Growth mindset
Respondent 32: Fixed mindset
Respondent 33: Growth mindset
Respondent 34: Growth mindset
Respondent 35: Growth mindset
Respondent 36: Growth mindset
Respondent 37: Fixed mindset
Respondent 38: Growth mindset
Respondent 39: Growth mindset
Respondent 40: Growth mindset

Question 19 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand different mindsets and how to adjust to that?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: Yes
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: Yes
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: Yes
Respondent 10: No
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: Yes
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: Yes
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: Yes
Respondent 20: No
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: Yes
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: Yes
Respondent 26: Yes
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: Yes
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: No
Respondent 38: Yes
Respondent 39: No
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 20 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: Yes
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: Yes
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: No
Respondent 9: Yes
Respondent 10: No
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: Yes
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: Yes
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: Yes
Respondent 20: Yes
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: Yes
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: No
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: Yes
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: No
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 21 Do you have experience with Self-Determination theory?

- Respondent 1: No
- Respondent 2: No
- Respondent 3: No
- Respondent 4: No
- Respondent 5: No
- Respondent 6: No
- Respondent 7: No
- Respondent 8: No
- Respondent 9: No
- Respondent 10: No
- Respondent 11: No
- Respondent 12: No
- Respondent 13: No
- Respondent 14: No
- Respondent 15: No
- Respondent 16: No
- Respondent 17: No
- Respondent 18: No
- Respondent 19: No
- Respondent 20: No
- Respondent 21: Yes
- Respondent 22: No
- Respondent 23: Yes
- Respondent 24: No
- Respondent 25: No
- Respondent 26: No
- Respondent 27: No
- Respondent 28: No
- Respondent 29: No
- Respondent 30: No
- Respondent 31: Yes
- Respondent 32: No
- Respondent 33: No
- Respondent 34: No
- Respondent 35: No
- Respondent 36: No
- Respondent 37: No
- Respondent 38: No
- Respondent 39: No
- Respondent 40: No

Question 22 Do you think there is a necessity for university counseling staff to better understand how to engage students with the program?

- Respondent 1: Yes
- Respondent 2: Yes
- Respondent 3: Yes
- Respondent 4: Yes
- Respondent 5: Yes
- Respondent 6: Yes
- Respondent 7: Yes
- Respondent 8: Yes
- Respondent 9: Yes
- Respondent 10: Yes
- Respondent 11: No
- Respondent 12: Yes
- Respondent 13: Yes
- Respondent 14: No
- Respondent 15: Yes
- Respondent 16: Yes
- Respondent 17: Yes
- Respondent 18: Yes
- Respondent 19: No
- Respondent 20: No
- Respondent 21: Yes
- Respondent 22: Yes
- Respondent 23: Yes
- Respondent 24: Yes
- Respondent 25: Yes
- Respondent 26: Yes
- Respondent 27: Yes
- Respondent 28: Yes
- Respondent 29: Yes
- Respondent 30: Yes
- Respondent 31: Yes
- Respondent 32: Yes
- Respondent 33: Yes
- Respondent 34: Yes
- Respondent 35: Yes
- Respondent 36: Yes
- Respondent 37: Yes
- Respondent 38: Yes
- Respondent 39: Yes
- Respondent 40: Yes

Question 23 Would this be helpful to you personally if universities used this in their counseling approach so that you can learn more about this part of yourself?

Respondent 1: Yes
Respondent 2: Yes
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: Yes
Respondent 5: Yes
Respondent 6: Yes
Respondent 7: Yes
Respondent 8: Yes
Respondent 9: Yes
Respondent 10: Yes
Respondent 11: Yes
Respondent 12: Yes
Respondent 13: Yes
Respondent 14: No
Respondent 15: Yes
Respondent 16: Yes
Respondent 17: No
Respondent 18: Yes
Respondent 19: No
Respondent 20: No
Respondent 21: Yes
Respondent 22: Yes
Respondent 23: Yes
Respondent 24: Yes
Respondent 25: No
Respondent 26: No
Respondent 27: Yes
Respondent 28: Yes
Respondent 29: Yes
Respondent 30: Yes
Respondent 31: No
Respondent 32: Yes
Respondent 33: Yes
Respondent 34: Yes
Respondent 35: No
Respondent 36: Yes
Respondent 37: Yes
Respondent 38: No
Respondent 39: Yes
Respondent 40: Yes

Question 24 If you indicated that any of these theories would be helpful for student counsellors to use, how do you wish these theories were implemented more at your university/college? With the use of...

Respondent 1: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 2: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 3: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 4: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 5: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 6: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 7: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 8: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 9: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 10: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 11: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 12: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 13: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 14: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 15: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 16: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 17: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 18: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 19: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 20: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 21: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 22: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 23: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 24: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 25: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 26: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 27: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 28: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 29: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 30: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 31: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 32: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 33: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 34: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 35: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 36: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 37: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 38: Mandatory Classes/Courses
Respondent 39: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum
Respondent 40: Voluntary Trainings sessions or workshop separate from the curriculum

2 Interview Transcript

“Thank you for participating in this interview. I am writing my thesis about the student mental health crisis in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and I am researching if there are any innovative and new methods that can help students who are facing these issues. This interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Your answers will be processed anonymously.”

Introductory

1 What is your age?

23

2 What do you study and in which year of your study program are you in?

I am currently in my fifth year of European Studies at THUAS

3 How did/do you experience your educational career at The Hague University of Applied Sciences?

I really enjoy the study program, I really have a passion for that. I had a good experience at European Studies. Even though the work load was very high, it was nice. Sometimes I missed the immersion of the program, but then on the other hand, you try to look for that yourself in that case. I really enjoyed the exchange semester, this where all you work in the first two years leads up to. After that however, when I came back, it was not so pleasant anymore. Of course, you miss the ‘exchange-feeling’, but I also did not understand the necessity of some of the courses we had to take at THUAS. Also, the bureaucracy is very unpleasant at the study program, but other studies have this as well.

4 What do you know about the student mental health crisis?

I know that there is indeed a crisis going on, and I read that one in three students face burnouts. This is of course way too high. I do not know all of the specific when it comes to the numbers, but I have read disturbing articles about it.

“Over the last years, the number of students experiencing burnout, depression or anxiety during their studies has increased significantly. Many students drop out of their program, being unable to finish it”

5 Have you been in contact with burnout during your studies (albeit through friends or first-hand-experience)? If you experienced burnout, can you tell me about the obstacles you faced at university because of this? *Skip this question if the interview has not been in contact with burnout.

The first obstacle was awareness. The fact that we do not learn a lot about mental health is an issue. The fact that this issue is so present among students, would make you think that more effort would be made around raising awareness amongst these students about mental health issues, such as what students should pay attention to, what it is and certain patterns, what you can do about it. But this is often not the case, unfortunately. Also, I feel like because mental health issues are such a personal issue, you do not feel linked with your school anymore and you get further and further away from it, emotionally. You have to find help for the issues you are facing though, whether it is ‘normal’ or psychological help. I do want to note that I do not find student psychologists very helpful and accessible. It took a lot of effort from me to actually go to a dean. I feel like there is something missing between the student and the school, a sort of stepping stone.

6 Have you been in contact with depression during your studies (albeit through friends or first-hand-experience)? If you experienced depression, can you tell me about the obstacles you faced at university because of this? *Skip this question if the interview has not been in contact with depression.

I also have experience with depression because of my burnout. Often you see that those two go together. I faced similar obstacles when compared to burnout. Only with burnout I faced more physical complaints, which in some cases were okay to discuss with others. With mental health complaints on the other hand, I did not feel I could discuss those with others. I also noticed that people often do not immediately notify the school when they face depression. In my case, at first I thought everyone was depressed sometimes, and because it is not really something you can easily discuss, I was doubting whether to notify someone.

7 Have you been in contact with anxiety during your studies (albeit through friends or first-hand-experience)? If you experienced anxiety, can you tell me about the obstacles you faced at university because of this? Please skip this question if you have not been in contact with anxiety.

Yes, I also have experience with anxiety and I faced similar obstacles around this issue at THUAS.

What is your opinion on the support system at this institution?

→ **8** Is support/help easy to find/access?

When it comes to mental health, I would say no. When I had a burnout, I did not know where to go at all. I was in my fourth year at the time, so you do not have a mentor at that point. This means you do not know where to go. Eventually, I went to the first person I saw for help, and she was able to help me even though this was not in her job description. However, I do not feel that I was able to get help with any of the issues I notified the school of. It was also not possible for me to change deadlines, which truly is a pity. The main message was: it is a shame that you have a study delay now, but we will see what happens. It is also very frustrating and unfortunate that I have to see the exam board for any changes. This costs a lot of effort and energy, which I do not have enough of.

→ **9** Are you being welcomed?

I did feel welcome at the dean. Before that, I really did feel like a number, just one of the many. But unfortunately, my university counseling did not go further than talking with the dean.

→ Is there a feeling of understanding in your opinion at this institution?

Yes, there is a feeling of understanding with the dean. But with other teachers, less so. Other teachers however, did try to help me, but did not have the authorizations to do so.

→ Who did you visit for help? (The Dean, Student psychologist, others)

I went to the dean.

Self-regulation theories

“As I mentioned earlier, I am researching if universities and colleges in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can adopt new ways of counselling. Self-regulation theories can be used for this. The theories I chose that can serve as a framework for this are Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction, Fixed-Growth Mindset and Self-Determination Theory.

I would now like to ask you some questions about these theories.”

TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS AND COPING

12 Are you familiar with the transactional model of stress and coping? If so, could you tell me a bit more about that? If not, did you hear about it before?

No

13 How do you typically/normally deal with stress?

This is very difficult, I do not really have a routine. Sometimes stress just comes up. I do know now however, that I sometimes just have to make choices about whether or not I can do something, whether I have the energy for that. But still, this is a process of trial and error.

“In order to understand students with mental health issues, it is important to learn more about the concept of stress. To do so, you cannot only look at the person and the environment, you also have to analyze the emotional aspect that is involved. Lazarus and Folkman developed a theory to do that, namely the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. They argue that there are two steps when it comes to stress: primary and secondary appraisal. During the first step, the mind determines if the situation is harmful to you. It can either determine that the situation is insignificant as it has already been experienced before. Or, it can determine that the situation is threatening or challenging. During the second step, secondary appraisal, you undergo a process of determining if you have enough resources to deal with the situation. Putting it simply: if you don’t, stress increases. If you do, stress is less present. It is important for counselling services to understand stress among students, and this theory can help them in determining what students are coping with and how adequately emotion regulation and problem-solving is accomplished.”

14 In your opinion, would this be helpful for you and/or other students if universities used this in their counselling approach?

Yes, this could be helpful for everyone. When this all started, I did not know where to go. To have those resources and tools available, is very important and valuable. Especially considering stress is a real issue among students.

MBSR

15 Do you have experience with mindfulness-based stress reduction? If so, could you tell me a bit more about that? If not, did you hear about it before?

Yes, I have experience with this.

“Now that we understand stress, we can attempt to reduce that stress. Mindfulness-Based-Stress-Reduction, or MBSR, is the chosen method to do so in this thesis. Mindfulness can be defined as nonjudgmental awareness of moment-to-moment-experience. By practicing mindfulness, you are better equipped to actually choose a response, instead of reacting reflexively. There are many researched benefits of this technique, namely increasing concentration, insight and physiologic relaxation, as well as positive changes in your mood and stress-levels. More importantly, it was found that anxiety, depression can be reduced, which are precisely some of the mental health issues among students.”

16 How often do you practice mindfulness since you started at university/college?

I pray five times a day, which is a mindful moment for me to experience. Once or twice a week I use the headspace app on my phone, for mindfulness exercises. This is really nice before going to sleep. So I would say I practice mindfulness each day.

17 In your opinion, would this be helpful for you and/or other students if universities used this in their counselling approach?

Yes, certainly. I also think a lot of people do not even know what mindfulness is, or they see it as some trend. But I really think it is very important, also for smaller children to learn.

FIXED-GROWTH MINDSET

18 Are you familiar with the fixed-growth mindset theory of Carol Dweck? If so, could you tell me a bit more about that? If not, did you hear about it before?

No

19 Do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset?

Growth mindset

20 What type of language, thoughts and attitudes do you associate with a fixed mindset?

Someone who is not open for other ideas and opinions, someone who lives in this internal world. Someone who does not want to broaden their horizons and someone who does not want to learn new things.

21 What type of language, thoughts and attitudes do you associate with a growth mindset?

Someone who does have a broad horizon, someone who is open for new experiences, new ideas and other opinions. This person does not necessarily have to change of themselves but is aware of other visions.

22 Do you feel characteristics such as intellect can change over the years, or is that inherent to the person?

It depends. Some people who have not gone to university can be very intellectual, while the people who did attend university can be less so when compared. Other people can learn and learn, but not improve.

“It is also important to determine the mindset of the student they are trying to help as it will help the team in defining its approach to supporting students. According to Carol Dweck, mindsets are integral to one’s personality, but they can be altered. She divides people with a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. A fixed mindset argues that characteristics, talents, and qualities are fixed and cannot change. This mindset, as a result, creates a feeling of failure and incompetence when things do go wrong or not according to plan. This mindset also argues that failure determines everything about a person. People with a fixed mindset see risks as an opportunity for shortcomings coming to light. A growth mindset argues that characteristics and qualities can, in fact, be developed. People with a growth mindset do not label themselves, and thus, they do not create feelings of despair when things go wrong. They are prepared to take a risk and take on challenges with the belief in mind that everyone is capable of change by learning and getting experience”.

23 OQ: Now that you know this information, I will ask the question again: do you think you have a growth or a fixed mindset?

Growth mindset.

24 In your opinion, would this be helpful for you and/or other students if universities used this in their counselling approach?

Yes, I do think it would. Although it really depends on the subject or question you ask or the culture of the person that you are asking, whether or not someone has a fixed or growth mindset for example. Because to be honest, I think on some matters and aspects, I do have a fixed mindset.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

25 Do you have experience with the self-determination theory? If so, could you tell me a bit more about that? If not, did you hear about it before?

No

“Once one understands stress, how to deal with stress and has determined what the mindset of a student is, one can now go on with deciding how to engage students with the program or institution. The chosen method for this is the Self-Determination Theory or SDT. The primary psychological needs in this theory are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. If any of these needs is not supported, it will have a significant negative impact on your well-being”.

26 In your opinion, would this be helpful for you and/or other students if universities used this in their counselling approach?

Yes, certainly. Schools should definitely try to connect students more with the program. They should put more effort into creating engagement with the student. This is because students are already so unmotivated because of the issues they are facing. If the school is not cooperating, this causes for more stress. And this simply does not help. I would say that school can be more flexible when it comes to the curriculum and deadlines, but they could also ask more what they can do to help the student. This is important to create more motivation with students. When students have to chase every answer by themselves, it really demotivates them.

27 If you indicated that any of these theories would be helpful for student counsellors to use, how do you wish these theories were implemented more at your university/college? With the use of...

A mandatory class/course?

A voluntary training at the student psychologist office outside of the curriculum?

This is difficult. I do think that, even though one does not experience these mental health issues themselves, it would still be useful for them to know and learn more about it. It is very valuable if you can assist and support fellow students, if you have information on the subject. That piece of awareness should be mandatory for everyone in my opinion. For other theories and models, I think a voluntary training would be a good idea. I do think that all of this can be implemented more in the school, to make it more integral. These trainings do not have to belong to the curriculum, but on the other hand, they could also be given during mentor-hours.

“Thank you for participating in this interview and helping me write my thesis. Your input is much appreciated.”