STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The purpose of this study was to explore student perceptions of campus health and well-being resources. We employed user experience (UX) research methodology to observe and analyze how students navigate campus health and well-being resources. Twenty students participated in 60-minute interviews from July 2022 to May 2023.

How Students Think About Health and Well-being

When asked to describe what health and well-being meant to them, most students (17/20) provided holistic definitions that included both mental health and physical health. Some students also mentioned emotional, spiritual, and/or financial well-being.

Students also defined health and well-being as having a positive state of well-being, as having an absence of physical and/or mental health issues, as a measure of productivity and as having adequate access to health and well-being resources. Students measure their health and well-being in diverse ways.

The diverse ways students think about health and well-being shows up in the ways they search for resources online:

- When faced with a scenario they often searched for the related clinical condition (e.g., "body dysmorphia") or for a general resource to help with that scenario (e.g., "mental health services") rather than searching for a specific department (e.g., Counseling and Consultation Service).

- Students tend to see health and well-being as a single, large department rather than a combination of different departments.
    - Students may not be aware of every health and well-being department, but they may know about one or two departments that have the potential to connect them with other resources. Using high-frequency touchpoints to connect students with more resources could help students find a wider network of resources.

- Students' first instincts for addressing a problem can differ widely. Even within this small group of 20 students, there were many different approaches to addressing each scenario.
    - For example, when presented with a scenario about anxiety, students' first instincts included trying to address the source of the anxiety, talking about it with family/friends, exercising, reaching out to an academic advisor, reaching out to a medical doctor, and reaching out to a mental health professional.

Prioritizing Health and Well-being

Students value their health and well-being but see a trade-off between their well-being and their academics. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to educational and preventative resources – they are hesitant to utilize these types of programs and resources and tend to wait to seek resources when they have an immediate need.

- Framing resources as providing an immediate, tangible takeaway rather than framing them as broad educational resources could help students take the leap to utilization after identifying a resource that would help.

- For example, if resources can be described in such a way that students know that they will walk away with a tangible takeaway (e.g., individualized nutrition plan), students may be more likely to use them.

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