Mental Health During COVID-19 at Elon

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 The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for both students and faculty. Increased isolation due to physical distancing regulations has led to a decrease in social support. This means that students are spending more time alone which is leading an increase in anxiety and other mental illnesses (Liu et al., 2020). Nearly half of all college students experience anxiety during their time at school, meaning that anxiety is common in the student population. Yet over two thirds of students experiencing anxiety do not receive any form of treatment (*Statistics*, n.d.). These statistics are shocking when you think about it. If you feel sick or injured, you immediately go to the doctor to seek treatment, so why don’t students apply this same logic to mental illness? There are a variety of factors that play into this decision, and I will specifically focus on reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and showing the ease of getting help.

 Destigmatizing mental health is an objective that has seemed out of reach for many years. Students feel as though they suffer mental health issues alone, and that none of their fellow classmates could possibly feel the same way. This is not the case. A study conducted in institutions across the United States found that 48.8% of college-aged students attended counseling over the course of an academic year. This same study found that one third of college students are taking a medication to help with mental illness (*The College Mental Health Crisis*, 2017). These statistics show that mental illness is common among students on college campuses. Furthermore, students should seek some comfort in knowing their classmates understand their struggle and can empathize with them.

 It is also easy to get help. At Elon, students have access to free counseling appointments through Elon Counseling Services. However, Counseling Services also provides a myriad of other services for students. On their website, there are resources to help both yourself and others with mental health concerns. You are able to take a free mental health screening to check in with yourself, and this resource also allows you to determine if you need to make a counseling appointment. Counseling services also provides access to WellTrack, a program that acts as a personal therapy tool through mood tracking. These two services provided by counseling services allow students to take initiative to seek help. Finally, counseling services provides free counseling appointments for all Elon students, and these appointments are conducted by trained professionals.

 Stress is present in everyone’s lives, especially in these challenging times. It is important to remember that you truly are not alone when you experience troubles with your mental health. Nearly half of all college students experience anxiety or another mental illness, but less than half seek help (*Statistics*, n.d.; *The College Mental Health Crisis*, 2017). Elon’s mental health resources are numerous, all it takes is some initiative to seek help. Get the help you need, whether that be a counseling appointment, taking a mental health screening or even just talking with a friend; then see your life change.

References

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