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## Use of Case Study Videos and Peer Mentoring to Promote Health Habits in First-Semester College Students

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**Learning Objective (Upon completion, participant will be able to....):** Describe the effectiveness of case study videos in combination with peer-to-peer mentoring for engaging first-semester college students in critical discussions about health issues affecting their peer group.

**Learning Need Code:** 6010 Behavior change theories, techniques

**Track:** Education, Training, and Counseling (primary), Wellness and Public Health (secondary)

**Relevance:** College is a prime time for establishing lifelong health habits. However, the learning and support needs of young adults differ from older individuals. Although knowledge of chronic disease risk factors is present in college students, perceived immediacy of the need for personal health behavior change is lacking.

**Priority:** Health, Wellness, and You is a learning community for first-semester college students. Through required coursework, students participate in physical and mental health assessments. Methods for sharing health data with students have evolved from feedback sheets (individual results) to interactive discussions sparked by case study videos (whole group themes) combined with peer-to-peer mentoring. Students provided qualitative feedback regarding the efficacy of pairing case studies with peer mentoring.

**Results:** Over three years, 50 males and 117 females were assessed. Upon entering college, health risks included excess weight (45.8% with BMI  $\geq 25.0$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>), poor sleep quality (54.5% per the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index), and alcohol misuse (31.8% per the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test). Qualitative feedback indicates “videos were a great way to present data as well as start a discussion on what can be done,” and peer mentors “helped in feeling like you weren’t alone” and “gave me good solutions.”

**Synthesis:** Preliminary feedback indicates that the combination of case study and peer mentoring is an effective strategy for engaging students in critical thinking about health concerns affecting their peer group. Additional evaluation will examine the efficacy of this strategy for prompting physical and mental health behavior change during college.

# Use of Case Study Videos and Peer Mentoring to Promote Health Habits in First-Semester College Students

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## RELEVANCE

- College is a prime time for establishing lifelong health habits.
- However, the learning and support needs of young adults differ from older individuals.
- Although knowledge of chronic disease risk factors is present in college students, perceived immediacy of the need for personal health behavior change is lacking.

## PRIORITY

- Health, Wellness, and You is a learning community for first-semester college students.
- Through required coursework, students participate in physical and mental health assessments.
- Methods for sharing health data with students have evolved from feedback sheets (individual results) to interactive discussions sparked by case study videos (whole group themes) combined with peer-to-peer mentoring.
- Students provided qualitative feedback regarding the efficacy of pairing case studies with peer mentoring.

## RESULTS

- Over three years, 50 males and 117 females were assessed.
- Upon entering college, health risks included
  - Excess weight (45.8% with BMI  $\geq 25.0$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>),
  - Poor sleep quality (54.5% per the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index), and
  - Alcohol misuse (31.8% per the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test).
- Qualitative feedback indicates “videos were a great way to present data as well as start a discussion on what can be done,” and peer mentors “helped in feeling like you weren’t alone” and “gave me good solutions.”

The combination of **case study videos** and **peer mentoring** is an effective strategy for engaging students in **critical thinking** about **health concerns** affecting their peer group.



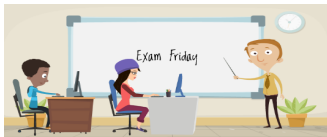
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**MINDFULNESS.** This case study shows Freddie, college student and Starbucks barista, make mistakes at work such as writing the wrong customer’s name on drink cups, making the wrong orders, and accidentally starting a fire.



**PHYSICAL HEALTH.** Frieda thinking about going to the gym before deciding not to go and taking a nap instead in the physical health case study. Other poor health decisions like skipping breakfast and eating mostly processed foods are shown in the video.



**OVERWHELMED.** Scene from the overwhelmed case study displaying Frieda being distressed from her school work, job, social life, and other extracurricular activities.



**EXCESSIVE PARTYING.** The effects of drinking three nights in a row portrayed by Freddie in the excessive partying case study.