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

Elizabeth Traxler  
*Bowling Green State University, etraxle@bgsu.edu*

Josie Mansperger  
*Bowling Green State University, josiem@bgsu.edu*

Megan Bingaman  
*Bowling Green State University, megangb@bgsu.edu*

Emily Gill  
*Bowling Green State University, emgill@bgsu.edu*

Jessica Kiss  
*Bowling Green State University, jekiss@bgsu.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

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Author(s)
Elizabeth Traxler, Josie Mansperger, Megan Bingaman, Emily Gill, Jessica Kiss, Amy Morgan, and Mary-Jon Ludy

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Authors: Traxler EG, Mansperger JA, Bingaman MG, Gill EM, Kiss JE, Morgan AL, Ludy MJ

- Elizabeth Traxler etraxle@bgsu.edu
- Josie Mansperger josiem@bgsu.edu
- Megan Bingaman megangb@bgsu.edu
- Emily Gill emgill@bgsu.edu
- Jessica Kiss jekiss@bgsu.edu
- Amy Morgan amorgan@bgsu.edu
- Mary-Jon Ludy mludy@bgsu.edu

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 ≥25.0 kg/m²), poor sleep quality (54.5% per the Pittsburg 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.
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.

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

Elizabeth (Lizzy) Traxler1,2, Josie Mansperger1, Megan Bingaman1, Emily Gill1, Jessica Kiss1, Amy Morgan1, Mary-Jon Ludy1

Bowling Green State University1
Case Western Reserve University2

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
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  - Excess weight (45.8% with BMI ≥25.0 kg/m²),
  - Poor sleep quality (54.5% per the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index), and
  - Alcohol misuse (31.8% per the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test).
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