A Look at the Self- help Strategies among Indian College Students

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Abstract

This study examined self-help strategies used by Indian College Students to improve mental health and explored their views on such a self-help approach. For understanding the same, a photovoice study was used which is a participatory action research method that employs photography to deepen their understanding of the idea of self-help strategy. A photovoice is concerned about peoples experiences and their context. The study involved a survey of 20 college students who had already taken therapy or are currently taking therapy, who provided their insights on the most effective self-help techniques for improving their mental health and managing stress, anxiety, and depression. The findings reveal that college students prefer self-help strategies that are practical, accessible, and evidence-based, such as mindfulness exercises, physical exercise, and positive self-talk. In this study, students were asked about their use of self-care strategies and the perceived effectiveness of those strategies. The study found that the most commonly used self-care strategies among college students included exercise (80%), spending time with friends and family (75%) and journaling (65%). Other commonly used self-care strategies included engaging in hobbies or other interests, eating a healthy diet, and practicing mindfulness. The study also identifies the reasons for the use of these strategies and their comparison with therapy. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the perspectives of college students on self-help strategies, which can inform the development of mental health promotion programs in educational settings.

Keywords: Self-help Strategies, College students, Photovoice study

Introduction

The use of self-help strategies to manage one's own mental health has gained popularity in recent years. Self-help refers to any strategies or activities that an individual engages in for the purpose of managing their distress or mental health in general. These strategies could be self-initiated or acquired through interaction with healthcare providers as part of a supported self-management process. Examples of self-help strategies include reading self-help books, involving in support groups, practicing meditation, and accessing online health resources. Individuals may choose self-help over professional help or supplement professional help for various reasons such as they cost less, are easier to access, and are less stigmatizing as compared to psychotherapy (Marley, 2011).

There are several studies which revealed a positive correlation between Self-help strategies and improved mental health.

Anderson and McLean (2016) explore the benefits and limitations of self-help materials (e.g. books, online resources) in psychotherapy. They suggest that self-help materials can be a valuable supplement to traditional therapy and can empower clients to take an active role in their own treatment. Self-help materials, such as books and other written materials, can be a valuable supplement to traditional therapy, empowering clients to take an active role in their own treatment (1) . Bennett et al. (2019) review studies on the effectiveness of self-help interventions (e.g. cognitive-behavioral therapy workbooks, mobile apps) for depression and anxiety. They find that self-help interventions can be effective, especially when combined with therapist guidance and support (2).

The study conducted by Carlbring et al. (2018) was a systematic review and meta-analysis that aimed to compare the effectiveness of internet-based cognitive behavior therapy (ICBT) with face-to-face cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) for treating psychiatric and somatic disorders. The results showed that ICBT was equally effective as face-to-face CBT in treating various psychiatric and somatic disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and chronic pain, promising alternative to face-to-face therapy, as it offers several benefits, including greater accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and convenience (5). Blom et al. (2015) found that internet-based interventions were effective in improving sleep quality, reducing sleep onset latency, and decreasing wake after sleep onset (3). Ebert et al. (2015) studied whether brief intervention could increase the acceptance of internet-based mental health interventions among primary care patients with depressive symptoms in Germany. The study found that the intervention group in comparison to control group had significantly higher acceptance of internet-based interventions compared to the control group with higher levels of trust in online interventions, greater motivation to engage in such interventions, and fewer concerns about data security and privacy (9). Bower et al. (2013) conduct a meta-analysis of studies on low-intensity self-help interventions (e.g. guided self-help, bibliotherapy) for depression. They found that these interventions can be effective, particularly for individuals with mild to moderate depression (4).

Cavanagh et al. (2014) conducted a cluster-randomized trial and economic evaluation to assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of psychological interventions for postnatal depression.. The authors concluded that psychological interventions delivered by midwives could be an effective and cost-effective way to address postnatal depression in women (6). Another study by Donker et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review to investigate the effectiveness of smartphone-based mental health programs delivering mental health interventions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness-based therapy. The analysis found that smartphone-based interventions were effective in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, with small to moderate effect sizes. Additionally, the study found that participants reported high levels of satisfaction with smartphone-based interventions and perceived them as convenient and accessible (8).

Gellatly et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the factors that make self-help interventions effective in managing depressive symptoms. The study identified several factors that were associated with greater effectiveness, including greater adherence to the intervention, more frequent contact with a therapist or coach, and the inclusion of components such as cognitive restructuring or behavioral activation. The authors concluded that self-help interventions can be effective in the management of depressive symptoms, but their effectiveness may depend on the inclusion of specific components and the provision of support and guidance (12).

Self-help strategies have been extensively studied in the context of depression and anxiety (Grime, 2017) (13) . A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that self-help strategies, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, behavioral activation, and mindfulness-based interventions, were effective in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Lopez et al., 2018) (17). Another meta-analysis found that self-help interventions for depression had moderate to large effect sizes (Linde et al., 2015) (19). Similarly, self-help interventions for anxiety have been found to be effective in reducing symptoms (Hunot et al., 2007) (16). Karyotaki et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the efficacy of self-guided internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy (iCBT) in treating depression. The study found that self-guided iCBT was as effective as therapist-guided iCBT, suggesting that it may be a cost-effective and accessible alternative to traditional therapist-guided treatments (22).

Self-help strategies have also been studied in the context of stress management. A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that mindfulness-based interventions were effective in reducing stress levels (Khoury et al., 2015) (25). Another meta-analysis found that relaxation techniques, including deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, were effective in reducing stress (van der Zwan et al., 2015) (29).

Huang et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of 12 randomized controlled trials to examine the effectiveness of self-help books in reducing depression symptoms. The study found that self-help books had a small but significant effect on depression symptoms, indicating that they can be a cost-effective intervention for those experiencing depression (15). Another study by Khanna and Sharma (2020) aimed to investigate the impact of self-help books on

the mental health of individuals. They found that self-help books can be an effective tool for reducing anxiety, depression, and stress. The studies included in the review involved a total of 1,341 participants who had self-help books as an intervention for their mental health concerns. The studies were conducted in various settings, including primary care, community centers, and online platforms. The results of the review showed that self-help books were effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress (22). Another study by Mains and Scogin (2003) examined the efficacy of self-help books as a treatment for depression in older adults. They concluded that self-help books can be a helpful adjunct to therapy and can also be an effective standalone treatment option for some individuals (20). Additionally Elison et al. (2020) investigated the effectiveness of self-help books for individuals with insomnia. They found that self-help books can be a useful tool for improving sleep quality and reducing insomnia symptoms (10).

In addition to these specific areas of research, there is a growing body of literature on the general benefits of self-help strategies (Seligman, M. E. P. 2011) (26). One study found that engaging in self-help strategies was associated with increased feelings of control and greater overall life satisfaction (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderón, 2017) (14) .

The Rationale of the Present Study

There are several reasons studying the impact of self-help strategies on mental health among college students is crucial:

Firstly, many people may not have access to professional mental health services or may feel hesitant to seek them out. Self-help strategies can be an accessible and low-cost alternative for managing mental health symptoms. Secondly, even for those who do seek professional help, self-help strategies can be a useful complement to treatment. They can empower individuals to take an active role in managing their mental health and provide additional support between therapy sessions. Thirdly, there is a growing body of research supporting the effectiveness of various self-help strategies for improving mental health outcomes. However, more research is needed to understand which strategies are most effective and for whom, as well as the underlying mechanisms of their effectiveness.

Finally, studying the view of college students on self-help strategies effectiveness on mental health can have practical implications for developing and implementing mental health interventions. It can inform the development of self-help materials and interventions that are evidence-based and tailored to specific populations, and provide guidance for healthcare providers in recommending self-help strategies to their patients. Overall, the study of self-help strategies for mental health has the potential to contribute to the development of accessible and effective interventions for individuals struggling with mental health issues.

METHOD

This study examined self-help strategies used by Indian College Students to improve mental health and explored their views on such a self-help approach. To understand the same, photovoice was used which is a participatory action research method that employs photography and group dialogue as a means for marginalised individuals to deepen their understanding of a community issue or concern. As photovoice participants, individuals share ideas and concerns about their experiences and their community.

Research Objective

This study examined self-help strategies used by Indian College Students to improve mental health and explored their views on such a self-help approach.

Focus areas-

Reasons for engagement in self-help strategies

Types of Self –help strategies used to improve mental health

Effectiveness of self-- help strategies to improve mental health

Variables:

Independent variable- Self-help strategies

Dependent variable- improved mental health

Sample

Participants. The participants for this study (n= 20) are male and female college students in India who meet the following

Inclusion criteria.

- College students from universities across India

- Age group 19-24 years old

Individuals who have taken or are currently taking psychotherapy.

Exclusion criteria.

- Individuals who have not taken or are not currently taking psychotherapy.

Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach. The purpose of qualitative methodology is to describe and understand, rather than to predict and control (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995).

Thematic analysis of the data using inductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The following are the 6 phases:

Phase I- Familiarizing yourself with the data: This phase involves reading and rereading the textual data in order to get a better understanding of the data.

Phase II- Generating initial codes: systematic analysis of the data begins through the process of coding.

Phase III- Searching for Themes: In this phase there is a shift in the analysis process from codes to themes, which represent some level of patterned responses within a data set.

Phase IV- Reviewing potential themes: During this phase the developing themes are reviewed in relation to the coded data and the data set.

Phase V- Defining and naming the themes: This process involves clearly stating the unique and specific characteristics of each theme.

Phase VI- Producing the Report

Within the qualitative approach, photovoice was adopted as the method of choice for the present study. Photovoice is a visual research methodology that puts cameras into the participants' hands to help them to document, reflect on their experiences.

Procedure

participants meeting the inclusion criteria for the study were identified based on convenient sampling, and approached by the researchers. In order to explain the purpose of the study and clarify the participants' role. Rapport was formed and the interview was scheduled with each participant to ask them questions about self-help strategies as given in the appendix. All doubts were clarified. At the end of the interview, participants were then asked to click 2 to 5 pictures while performing the self-help strategies within a period of 15 days.

Data analysis.

The data consisted of photos of students performing self -help strategies and transcription of the interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse all the data.

Results and Analysis

Table 1. Thematic Analysis results from Interview

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
The desire for improved mental health	Taken therapy in past	- yes I have taken therapy - have taken therapy for my anxiety - yes I'm currently taking therapy - yes I am taking therapy on and off for my mental health
	Value for self-care	- I want toa be a high-functioning individual and I soon realised I could only be that once I work on my mental health - I live in a hostel. And I am my caregiver, so taking care of mental health becomes very important
Types of Self-help Strategies	Lifestyle Changes	- Nutrition and dietary changes can also play a role in mental health, as consuming a

		balanced diet can improve energy levels and mood. - Developing healthy sleep habits and establishing a regular sleep routine
	Added to lifestyle to improve mental health	- Journaling and self-reflection can also be effective tools for gaining insigh - eading self-help books which can provide guidance. - Engaging in hobbies and creative activities can also be helpful, as they provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment. - Practising self-care and setting boundaries - relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or visualization - alternative therapies such as acupuncture, massage, or herbal remedies.

		- Engaging in creative activities such as art or music - Using positive affirmations and reframing negative thoughts can help shift one's perspective and promote self-acceptance - spending time in nature - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) worksheets - Digital detox: Taking a break from digital devices and social media - Having a pet
Reasons for engaging in mental health		- Academic stressors being a significant one - Emotional Stressors - challenges such as financial difficulties, family issues, and career-related stress.
Effectiveness of Self-help	Self-help Vs Therapy	- Self-help strategies can be helpful for individuals who are experiencing mild to moderate levels of

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>distress or who want to improve their overall well-being.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>- These strategies can be used on one's own and are often readily accessible and affordable.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>- Therapy being beneficial for individuals with more severe or complex issues, such as anxiety disorders or depression.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>- Therapy provides a supportive and confidential space to work through difficult emotion.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>- gain insight into patterns of behavior and thought, and learn new coping skills.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>- In some cases, a combination of both self-help strategies and therapy may be most effective.</td></tr>
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	Rating	- self- help strategies are an 7/10 for emotional stress - Will give 8/10 to these techniques for organizing life and reducing stress. - 5/10 for self help strategy and 5/10 for therapy

Discussion

This study examined self-help strategies used by Indian College Students to improve mental health and explored their views on such a self-help approach. For understanding the same, photovoice was used which is a participatory action research method that employs photography and group dialogue as a means for marginalized individuals to deepen their understanding of a community issue or concern. As a photovoice participant, individuals share ideas and concerns about their experiences and their community.

The present study examined self-help strategies used by Indian College Students to improve mental health and explored their views on such a self-help approach. Focus areas included reasons for engagement in self-help strategies, types of Self –help strategies used to improve mental health and effectiveness of self-- help strategies to improve mental health. The participants for this study (n= 20) are male and female college students in India who meet the following inclusion criteria - college students from universities across India, age group 19-24 years old and individuals who have taken or are currently taking psychotherapy. The themes, along with their sub-themes are discussed below:

The desire for Improved Mental Health

Theme 1 showcases participants desrire for improved mental health. This desire for improving mental health have caused participants in the past or at present to engage in therapy and continuing to practise self-help strategies. Two sub-themes are Taken therapy in past and value for self-care.

Taken therapy in past and value for self-care showcases a struggle with mental health as one participant said reported *"I have had many emotional issues in past and for that, i have been in therapy for 8 months", a*nd the need to give importance to mental health along with physical and social well-being, another participant reported *" My mental health is my top priority right now"*

Types of Self-help strategies used by College Students

There are numerous self-help strategies that college students use in place of therapy that can be categorised in lifestyle changes and addition of healthy habits. One common strategy is exercise, which has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety while improving mood and overall mental health. Meditation and mindfulness practices are also popular, as they help individuals learn to manage their thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment without judgment. One participant reported, *"Mindfulness has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental health. Meditation involves focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity to achieve a state of calmness and relaxation"*. It has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and improve the overall well-being of students.

Journaling and self-reflection can also be effective tools for gaining insight into one's behaviour and emotions. Writing down thoughts and feelings can be a helpful way to process emotions and gain insight into one's mental health.

Another common self-help strategy is reading self-help books which can provide guidance.
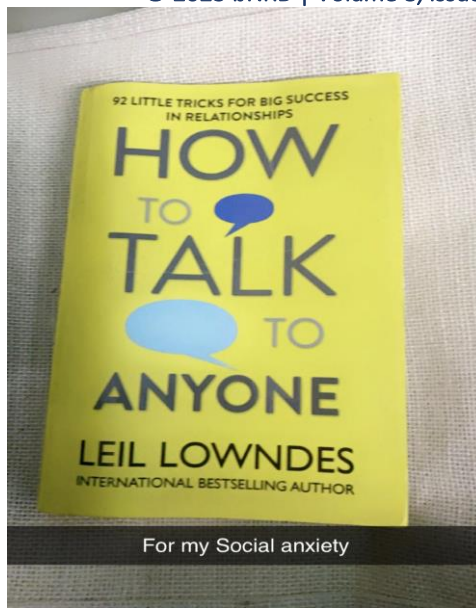
Engaging in hobbies and creative activities can also be helpful, as they provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment. Creative expression: Engaging in creative activities such as art or music can be a helpful way to reduce stress and express emotions.

Having a pet can reduce feeling of loneliness among the students who live alone. Practising self-care and setting boundaries is also important, as it helps individuals prioritize their own needs and reduce stress. Using positive affirmations and reframing negative thoughts can help shift one's perspective and promote self-acceptance. Setting goals and establishing a sense of purpose can also provide a sense of direction and motivation.

Learning relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or visualization can also be effective in managing stress and anxiety, as on participant reported *"Practicing deep breathing exercises can help reduce stress and improve mental clarity"*.

Nutrition and dietary changes can also play a role in mental health, as consuming a balanced diet can improve energy levels and mood. One participant reported, *" Making dietary changes such as reducing sugar and processed foods and increasing whole foods and hydration can have a positive impact on mental health"*.

Some people also turn to alternative therapies such as acupuncture, massage, or herbal remedies.

Developing healthy sleep habits and establishing a regular sleep routine is another self-help strategy that can improve mental health, as one participant reported *" establishing good sleep habits, such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule and creating a relaxing bedtime routine, can improve overall well-being"*.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) worksheets: These worksheets can be found online and are designed to help people identify and challenge negative thoughts and beliefs that may be contributing to their mental health concerns.

Engaging in social support and connecting with others through social activities or volunteering can also improve mental health. . This can include family, friends, and support groups. Digital detox: Taking a break from digital devices and social media can be a helpful way to reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

Taking breaks from technology and <u>spending time in nature</u> can also be beneficial. Seeking out professional guidance or counselling when needed is also important in managing mental health. These self-help strategies can be used alone or in combination with therapy to promote mental wellness and improve overall quality of life.

Reasons for Engaging in Self-help Strategies

The journey of a student can be filled with various challenges and stressors, from academic pressure to emotional stress. In this context, engaging in self-help strategies is an essential practice for students to maintain their mental health, well-being, and personal growth.

One of the most significant stressors that students experience is academic stress, as one participant reported, *"the constant pressure to perform well on exams, meet deadlines, and balance multiple courses can take a toll on their mental and emotional health"*. Engaging in self-help strategies can help students manage their academic stress and succeed in their academic pursuits, as participant reported, *" time management is a critical self-help strategy that can help students prioritize their tasks and allocate their time effectively. By creating a schedule and breaking down their assignments into smaller, manageable tasks, students can reduce their academic stress and achieve their goals more efficiently"*.

Another valuable self-help strategy for managing academic stress is developing effective study skills. Effective study skills can help students absorb information more effectively, retain information for longer periods, and perform better on exams. For instance, note-taking, active reading, and mnemonic techniques are all valuable study skills that can enhance student's learning experience and reduce academic stress.

In addition to academic stress, students may experience emotional stress from personal or social challenges. Emotional stress can manifest in various forms, such as anxiety, depression, or relationship issues. Self-help strategies can help students manage their emotional stress and improve their mental health. For example, practising mindfulness, meditation, or yoga can help students reduce their anxiety levels and promote a sense of calm and relaxation. Similarly, seeking counselling or therapy can help students address underlying emotional issues and develop coping mechanisms to deal with their stressors.

Moreover, students may face other challenges, such as financial difficulties, family issues, or career-related stress. Engaging in self-help strategies can help students develop resilience and cope with these challenges effectively. For example, seeking mentorship, networking, or taking advantage of career counselling services can help students build their professional skills and secure better job opportunities. Similarly, engaging in physical activities, practising self-care, and seeking social support can help students cope with personal challenges.

Emotional stress, such as relationship issues or anxiety, can also impact students' mental health and academic success. Self-help strategies like journaling, practising mindfulness, and seeking counselling or therapy can help students manage their emotions and improve their overall well-being.

Moreover, students may face other challenges such as financial difficulties, family issues, and career-related stress. Engaging in self-help strategies can help students build resilience and develop the skills to cope with these challenges effectively.

In conclusion, self-help strategies are vital for students to manage academic stress, emotional stress, and other challenges they may face during their academic journey. By practising self-help strategies, students can develop self-awareness, manage their stress levels, build resilience, and achieve their goals effectively. It is essential for students to prioritize their mental and emotional health and seek support when needed to ensure a successful and fulfilling academic experience.

Effectiveness of Self-help Strategies

There are many self-help strategies that individuals can use to improve their mental health, including mindfulness practices, exercise, journaling, and connecting with social support networks. These strategies have been shown to have a range of benefits, such as reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, improving mood, and promoting overall well-being.

Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, have been shown to be particularly effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and stress. Mindfulness helps individuals become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, allowing them to recognize and manage negative thought patterns that may contribute to anxiety or stress.

Exercise has also been shown to have numerous benefits for mental health. Regular physical activity can improve mood, reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and help individuals manage stress.

Journaling can also be an effective self-help strategy for promoting mental health. Writing down one's thoughts and feelings can help individuals gain insight into their emotions and gain perspective on difficult situations. Journaling can also be a useful tool for identifying negative thought patterns and developing more positive self-talk.

Finally, connecting with social support networks can be an effective self-help strategy for promoting mental health. Spending time with friends and family, participating in group activities, and engaging in hobbies or other interests can help individuals feel more connected and supported, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation that can contribute to poor mental health.

While self-help strategies can be effective, it's important to note that they may not be sufficient for everyone. If an individual is experiencing severe or persistent mental health symptoms, seeking professional treatment may be necessary. However, even in these cases, self-help strategies can be used in conjunction with professional treatment to support recovery and promote overall well-being.

The effectiveness of self-help strategies to improve mental health can vary widely among students, as each individual's experience with these strategies may be different. Some students may find self-help strategies to be very effective in promoting mental health and well-being, while others may not find them helpful at all.

In this study students were asked about their use of self-care strategies and the perceived effectiveness of those strategies. The study found that the most commonly used self-care strategies among college students included exercise (80%), spending time with friends and family (75%) and journalling (65%). Other commonly used self-care strategies included engaging in hobbies or other interests, eating a healthy diet, and practicing mindfulness.

Overall, the majority of students in the study reported that they found self-care strategies to be effective in improving their mental health and well-being. Specifically, 92% of students reported that self-care strategies had a positive effect on improving their mental helth. Additionally, 57% of students reported that self-care strategies had a positive effect on their academic performance, and 60% reported a positive effect on their relationships with others.

Both self-help strategies and therapy can be effective in helping students cope with stress and mental health issues, but they serve different purposes and are suited to different situations.

Self-help strategies are techniques and practices that individuals can use on their own to improve their well-being and mental health. Some common self-help strategies include mindfulness practices, journaling, exercise, and connecting with social support networks. Self-help strategies are often readily accessible and affordable, and can be useful for individuals who are experiencing mild to moderate levels of stress or who are looking to maintain their mental health and well-being.

There are many benefits to using self-help strategies for mental health. For example, mindfulness practices such as meditation and deep breathing can help reduce stress and anxiety, while journaling can help individuals gain insight into their thoughts and emotions. Exercise has been shown to improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression, while connecting with social support networks can provide a sense of community and belonging.

However, self-help strategies may not be appropriate for everyone, especially those who are experiencing more severe or complex mental health issues. For example, if an individual is struggling with symptoms of depression

or anxiety that are interfering with their daily life, self-help strategies alone may not be sufficient to address their needs.

In such cases, therapy can be a more appropriate option. Therapy involves meeting with a trained mental health professional who can provide support, guidance, and treatment for mental health issues. There are many different types of therapy available, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), and psychodynamic therapy.

Therapy can be particularly helpful for individuals who are experiencing more severe or complex mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety disorders, or trauma. In therapy, individuals have the opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a supportive and confidential environment. They can gain insight into patterns of behavior and thought that may be contributing to their mental health issues, and learn new coping skills to manage their symptoms.

Therapy can also be effective in helping students manage stress related to academic and personal pressures. For example, some students may benefit from learning stress-management techniques or developing better time-management skills. Therapy can provide a supportive and non-judgmental space to explore these issues and develop effective strategies for coping.

In some cases, a combination of self-help strategies and therapy may be most effective. For example, an individual who is experiencing mild symptoms of depression may benefit from using mindfulness practices and exercise to improve their mood, while also working with a therapist to develop more effective coping strategies and address any underlying issues.

It's important for individuals to consider their own unique needs and preferences when deciding on the best approach for them. Seeking the guidance of a mental health professional can also be helpful in determining what approach is best for each individual. Ultimately, whether an individual chooses self-help strategies or therapy, taking steps to prioritize mental health and well-being is an important part of maintaining a healthy and fulfilling life.

Limitation

In the current research the participants were selected through convenience sampling (non-probability sampling) which can restrict representative results. The use of convenience sampling can make the results hard to replicate. The research was done on a small number of participants, there is an issue of external validity or generalizability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study provides a comprehensive view of self-help strategies that are effective in promoting mental health among college students. The findings suggest that college students prefer practical and accessible self-help techniques, such as mindfulness exercises, physical exercise, and positive self-talk, which can be easily integrated into their daily routine. However, the study also reveals that several barriers hinder the implementation of these strategies, including a lack of motivation, time constraints, and stigma around mental health.

The study recommends the development of interventions that can enhance the effectiveness of self-help strategies for promoting mental health among college students. Educational institutions can use the insights gained from this research to design interventions that address the unique needs and preferences of college students. By promoting the use of evidence-based self-help strategies and addressing the barriers to implementation, educational institutions can create a supportive environment that fosters mental health and well-being among college students.

In this study students were asked about their use of self-care strategies and the perceived effectiveness of those strategies. The study found that the most commonly used self-care strategies among college students included exercise (80%), spending time with friends and family (75%) and journalling (65%). Other commonly used self-care strategies included engaging in hobbies or other interests, eating a healthy diet, and practicing mindfulness.

Overall, this research paper provides valuable insights into the perspectives of college students on self-help strategies for improving mental health. It highlights the need for a holistic approach to mental health promotion that includes self-help strategies as an integral part of the intervention. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the development of effective mental health promotion programs in educational settings, which can ultimately lead to improved mental health outcomes among college students.

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