

Session 2



California Community Colleges

Social Media Outreach: Connecting or Competing?

Ritchie Rubio PhD

October 8, 2025

10:00 – 11:30 a.m. PT



Our Learning Objectives



Identify at least **three current social-media usage patterns** among California community college students and spot potential gaps in mental health outreach strategies.



Differentiate between at least two documented benefits and two risks of social-media engagement for student mental health and evaluate how content strategies may impact diverse student populations using an equity lens.



Describe **three best practices for designing social media outreach** that supports stepped-care mental health systems, including co-production, culturally relevant storytelling, and identity-affirming messaging.

MENTAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE REVIEW



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Mental Health Challenges and Help-Seeking among College Students



- 44% of U.S. college students reported **depressive symptoms**, and 15% considered **suicide** within the past year (Eisenberg et al., 2023)
- Over **60%** of students met criteria for one or more **mental health issues** in 2020–21, a nearly 50% increase since 2013 (Lipson et al., 2022)
- Among students with mental health problems, treatment rates increased modestly. However, significant **disparities** persist; e.g., past-year treatment for AANHPI and Black/African American students declined (Lipson et al., 2022)

Healthy Minds Study (2022-2023)



The Healthy Minds Network

Estimated values of selected measures	Percentage of students
Major depression (positive PHQ-9 screen)	20%
Depression overall, including major and moderate (positive PHQ-9 screen)	41%
Anxiety disorder (positive GAD-7 screen)	36%
Eating disorder (positive SCOFF screen)	14%
Non-suicidal self-injury (past year)	29%
Suicidal ideation (past year)	14%
Lifetime diagnoses of mental disorders	46%
Psychiatric medication (past year)	29%
Mental health therapy/counseling (past year)	36%
Any mental health therapy/counseling and/or psychiatric medication among students with positive depression or anxiety screens (past year)	59%
Personal stigma: agrees with "I would think less of someone who has received mental health treatment."	6%
Perceived public stigma: agrees with "Most people would think less of someone who has received mental health treatment."	41%

California Community College Students: High Need, Limited Access



- 43% of students at 14 California community colleges report **moderate to severe symptoms of depression or anxiety** (Johnston et al., 2024)
- Students with these symptoms are significantly **less confident about degree completion** and face academic setbacks (Johnston et al., 2024)
- CCC students have similar mental health prevalence but **lower access to services** compared to 4-year institutions (Lipson et al., 2021)

SOCIAL MEDIA KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS



What is Social Media?

- Places where students **create, share**, and **interact** (video, images, text, live streams)
- What you see is **algorithm-driven** (ranked for attention, not purely chronological)
- Happens **publicly** (posts, stories, lives) and **privately** (DMs, groups)
- Built-in actions (likes, shares, saves) can **normalize help-seeking** or **spread bad info**
- Use platform safety tools + clear campus referral links (counseling, 988)



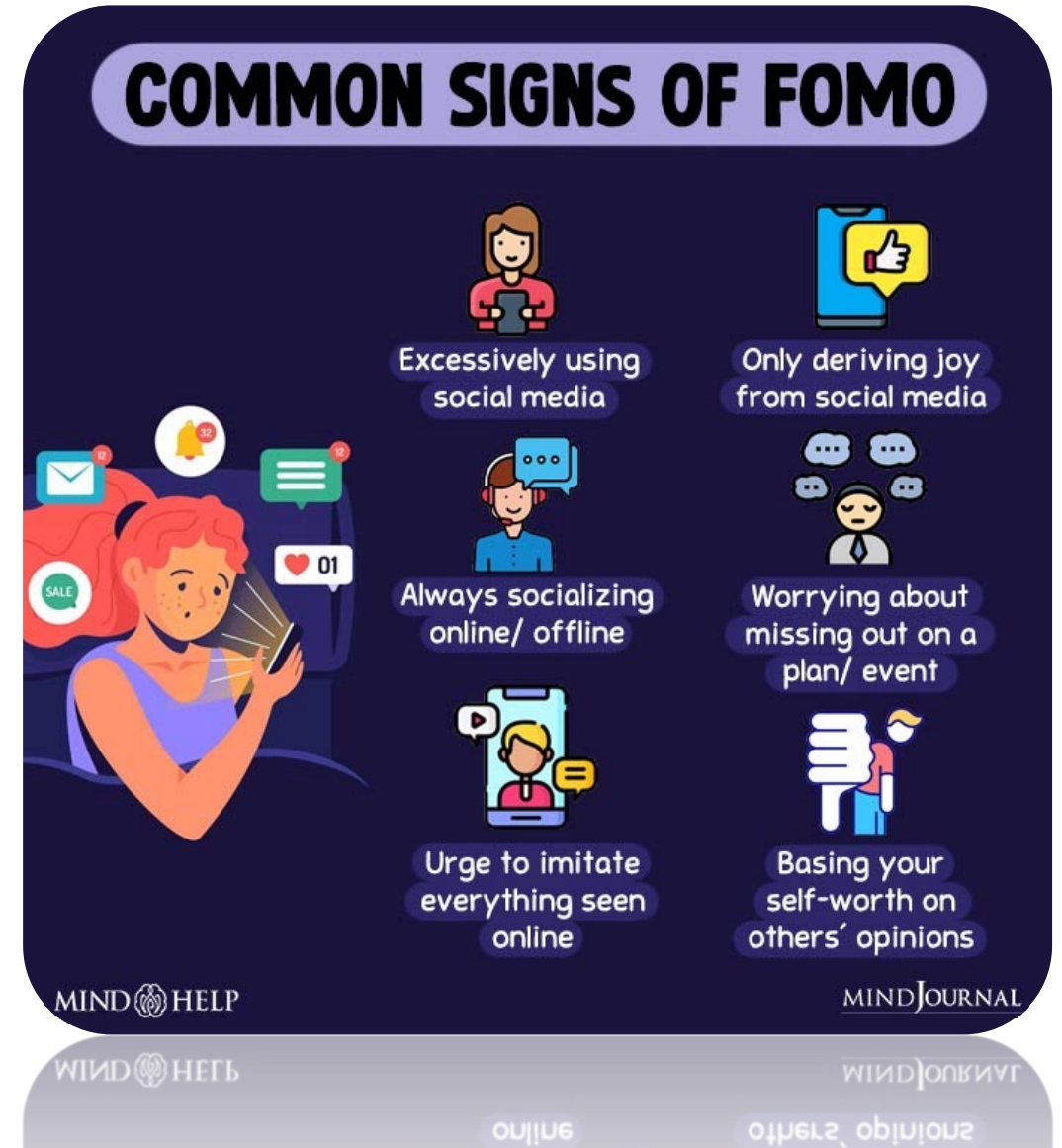


Key Concepts and Terms

- **Algorithm / For You Feed:** Personalized content stream curated by the platform to maximize attention.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Likes, comments, shares, saves, and link clicks — measures of user interaction.
- **DMs / Group Chats:** Private messaging or small-group channels within platforms for direct communication.
- **Content Creators:** Individuals producing short-form or long-form posts, videos, or reels that shape online discourse.
- **Influencers:** Users with large or trusted followings who can sway opinions, behaviors, and help-seeking.
- **Hashtags:** Keywords preceded by “#” that categorize content, amplify visibility, and build communities.

Psychology Ideas

- **Social comparison and FOMO:** highlight reels can fuel anxiety/body-image concerns
- **Emotional contagion:** moods spread in feeds and comments (good or bad)
- **Parasocial bonds:** students feel they “know” creators or influencers
- **Echo chambers:** feeds can trap us in one viewpoint; media-literacy is essential



SOCIAL MEDIA PREVALENCE AND USE



Big Picture: Social Media Is Ubiquitous

- **Most U.S. adults use social media**; YouTube & Facebook lead; ~half use Instagram, smaller shares use TikTok/Snapchat.
- Usage has **grown steadily** since 2012 across platforms (see next chart slide).
- Over half (54%) of adults say they sometimes get news via social media, part of daily info diets. (Pew Research, 2024)

Who uses each social media platform?

Usage of the major online platforms varies by factors such as age, gender and level formal education.

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use ___ by ...





	AGE	GENDER	RACE & ETHNICITY	HOUSEHOLD INCOME	EDUCATION
	←				
	Ages 18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	
Facebook	68	78	70	59	
Instagram	76	66	36	19	
LinkedIn	40	41	30	15	
X (formerly Twitter)	38	25	15	8	
Pinterest	43	43	33	22	
Snapchat	65	32	14	4	
YouTube	93	94	86	65	
WhatsApp	30	40	28	18	
Reddit	46	35	11	4	
TikTok	59	40	26	10	
BeReal	10	2	1	<1	

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-June 10, 2024.




College-Age Snapshot (18–29)

- **YouTube:** 93%, **Instagram:** 76%, **TikTok:** 59%, **Snapchat:** 50%, **Reddit:** 46% of 18–29-year-olds report using each platform (see table slide).
- These are the same platforms students cite in **campus engagement** and **MH outreach** work. (Pew Research, 2024).

Most Common Social Media Platforms

Platform	Usage Rate	Primary Use	Mental Health Use/Risks
YouTube 	~95% of college students	Entertainment, tutorials, student-created content	Used for wellness education (e.g., meditations)
Instagram 	~84%	Visual storytelling, peer validation, identity	Peer connection, but high comparison risk
TikTok 	~75%	Short-form content, cultural trends, peer sharing	Popular for mental health tips; misinformation risk
Snapchat 	~80%	Private peer communication, group messages	Emotional disclosure to close friends

Most Common Social Media Platforms

Platform	Usage Rate	Primary Use	Mental Health Use/Risks
Reddit 	~40–45% of college-aged users	Anonymous support, interest-based forums	Used for mental health support subs
Facebook 	~70%	School groups, family, events	Community mental health pages, declining use
Twitter/X 	~45–50%	News, venting, academic connections	Advocacy and visibility; echo chambers risk

Heavy, Daily Use

- About 7-in-10 U.S. teens visit YouTube daily; ~6-in-10 visit TikTok daily. (Pew Research Center, 2024).
- A sizable share report “almost constant” use (e.g., YouTube 15%, TikTok 16%). (Pew Research Center, 2024).
- Takeaway: incoming students arrive with high-frequency social habits that persist into college.



Social Media for Mental-Health Info/Support (Prevalence & Reach)



- 5% of U.S. adults use social media to **get health information/advice** at least occasionally; 18–29s are the heaviest users and **more trusting** of TikTok/YouTube health content. (KFF, 2025).
- On TikTok, #mentalhealth content shows **massive engagement** (top videos analyzed; supportive comments common). (Basch et al., 2022).
- College-focused YouTube videos on mental health attract **strong engagement**, offering **stigma reduction** and **coping tips**. (Choi et al., 2021).

Mental-Health on Social Media: Proceed, But Carefully

- **Quality is uneven**: many depression videos on YouTube scored poor/very poor on reliability metrics. (Chen et al., 2024).
- Even so, large shares (especially young adults) **trust some health advice** seen on TikTok/YouTube. (KFF, 2025).
- Peer support forums (e.g., Reddit-style) can **reduce loneliness** when moderated. (Marshall et al., 2024).

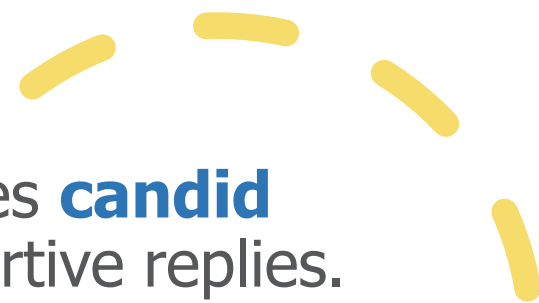


SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES





Peer Support & Belonging

- 
- Anonymity on Reddit enables **candid self-disclosure** and supportive replies. r/depression & r/Anxiety threads show emotional and instrumental **support** patterns (De Choudhury & De, 2014).
 - Moderated peer forums can **reduce loneliness** and increase empowerment.
 - Realist synthesis: peer-to-peer communities aid **confidence to seek care** (Marshall et al., 2024).
 - COVID-era college subreddits: students **validated stress** and **shared campus resources** (Garcia et al., 2022).

Examples of Peer Support and Belonging

- “You notice that there’s thousands... **in the same boat** as you.” (Popat & Tarrant, 2022).
- “Typing this out makes me realize **I’m not alone.**”
- “It feels like a warmhearted environment... You **feel connected.**” (Smit et al., 2021).





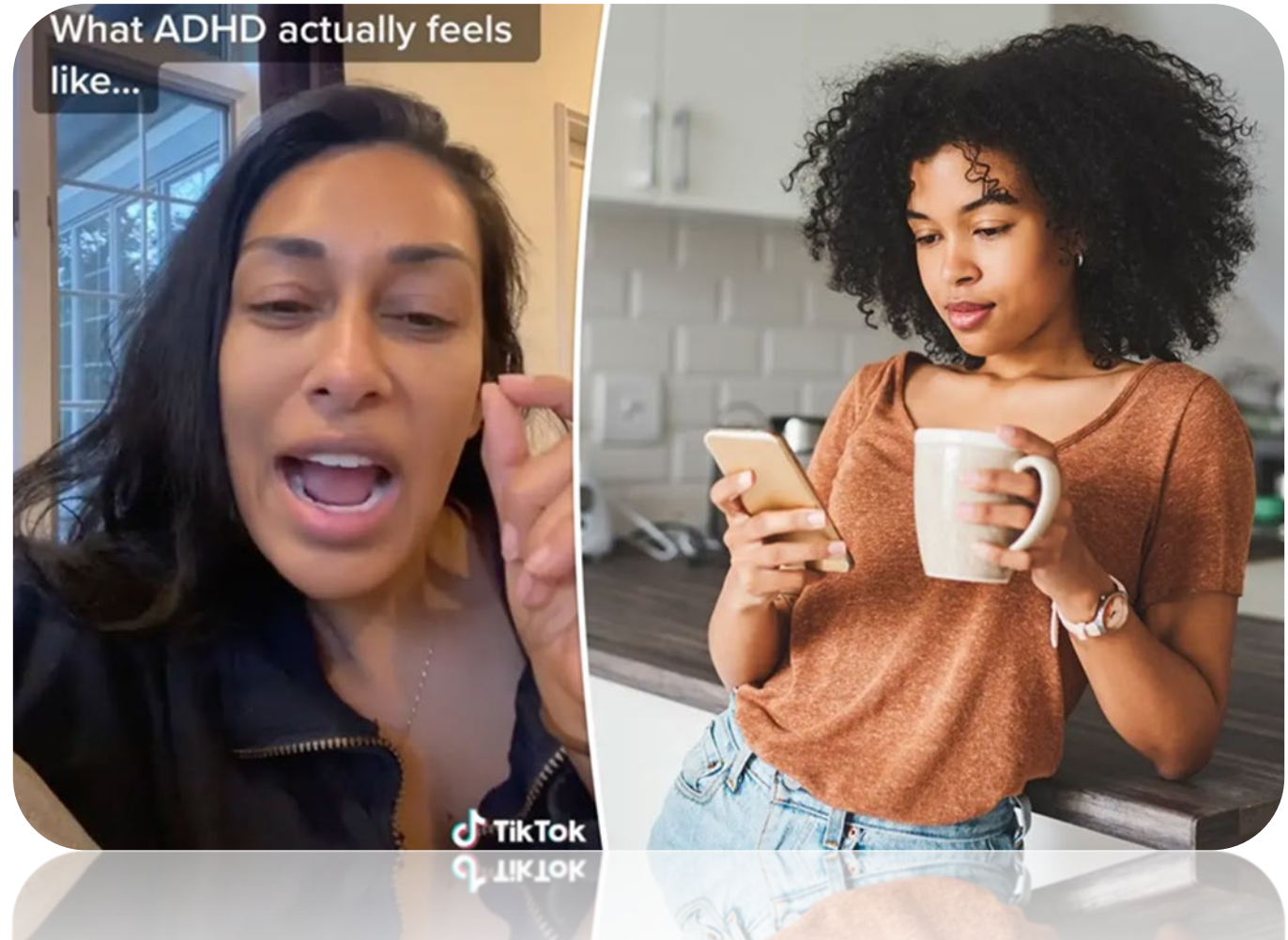
Psychoeducation and Help-Seeking via Short Video



- College-related YouTube mental health videos draw **strong engagement** (Choi et al., 2021).
- TikTok #mentalhealth content shows **massive reach**; many posts include **supportive comments** (Basch et al., 2022). TikTok analyses identify **destigmatizing narratives** and **peer validation**.
- Survey: most viewers report **behavior changes** after health videos (Mohamed & Shoufan, 2024).

Examples of Psychoeducation and Help-Seeking

- “Many of my patients have first **considered a diagnosis** because ‘I saw it on TikTok.’” (Hamdani, 2023)
- “I truly had no idea I had ADHD until I joined TikTok.”
- “I needed to get this off my chest.”





Reach, Access and Equity



- 18–29s: high use of YouTube (93%), Instagram (76%), TikTok (59%) **meeting students where they are** (Pew Research Center, 2024).
- 55% of U.S. adults seek health **info/advice** on social media; young adults lead (KFF, 2025).
- Short, free videos can boost **mindfulness** and **well-being** (Wang et al., 2024).



Examples of Reach, Access and Equity

- “TikTok... a powerful platform for information transmission.” “The true value... is its immense potential **public health impact.**”
- Campus campaigns leveraging Instagram/TikTok/YouTube **reach large student segments** (Pew Research Center, 2024).
- Adults report learning and acting on health content found on social platforms (KFF, 2025).
- RCT: brief YouTube meditation improved mindfulness indicators (Wang et al., 2024).

SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS AND DANGERS



Problematic Use & Mental-Health Symptoms

- Rollout of Facebook on campuses **worsened mental health** (Braghieri, Levy, & Makarin, 2022).
- Reviews link **heavy social-media use** with **depressive symptoms** in youth/young adults (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2019).
- Large student samples show **problematic use** patterns among university students (Bányai et al., 2017).



Examples of Problematic or Compulsive Use

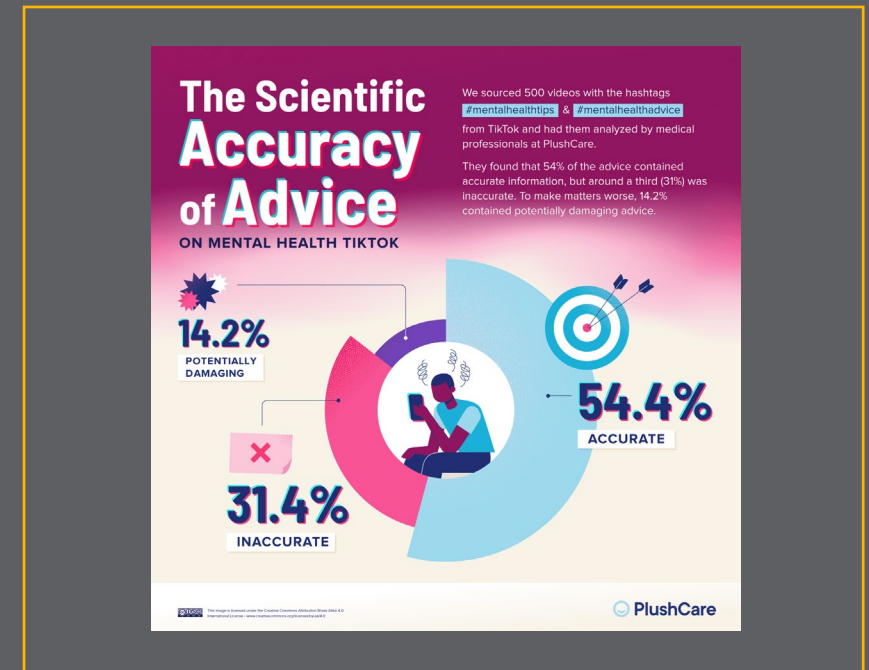
- “Social media is like an **online drug**.” (quoted in Popat & Tarrant, 2022).
- “You’re always wondering ‘**What’s everyone else doing?**’... it affects my sleep.” (quoted in Popat & Tarrant, 2022).
- “I’m too preoccupied with the forum... worry too much about others.” (Smit et al., 2021).

Misinformation and Low- Quality Advice

- Many YouTube depression videos score **poor/very poor on quality** (Chen et al., 2024).
- TikTok mental-health content mixes support with **non-evidence-based** claims (Basch et al., 2022).
- Young adults report **trusting health info** on social media despite uneven quality (KFF, 2025).

Examples of Misinformation and Low-Quality Advice

- “A lot of it was absolute garbage.” (Hamdani, 2023).
- “I truly had no idea I had ADHD until I joined TikTok.” (Ducharme, 2021).
- YouTube depression videos showed “overall low quality of online depression information.” (Chen et al., 2024).



Harmful Content, Social Comparison and Self-Harm

- Instagram use tied to **body-image dissatisfaction** and **lower self-esteem** in students (Alfonso-Fuertes et al., 2023).
- Youth ranking: **Instagram rated most detrimental to well-being** (anxiety, FOMO) (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017).
- Self-harm communities can **normalize risky behavior** if poorly moderated (Lundeen et al., 2024).



Examples of Harmful/Triggering Content & Comparison

- Instagram's algorithm "actively contributes to the **spread of self-harm content.**" (The Guardian, 2024).
- "If you're exposed to a lot of stuff about self-harm... it might affect you mentally." (quoted in Popat & Tarrant, 2022).
- "You want **to be popular**... you want **people to like you.**" (quoted in Popat & Tarrant, 2022).

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



TikTok: How it's been used successfully for mental health

- Easy, low-barrier access. Youth describe TikTok MH info as “**immediate and free**... less intimidating than services” (Turuba et al., 2024).
- Feeling seen & less alone. Stories/coping posts helped youth “know that [they’re] **not alone**” and gave “hope” (Turuba et al., 2024).
- Large-scale peer validation. #MentalHealth videos drew >1B views; 61% of comment threads offered **support/validation** (Basch et al., 2022).
- Creator-clinicians can **boost literacy**. 23.57% of TikTok posts by MH-professional “influencers” improved recognition of specific difficulties (Pretorius et al., 2022).



TikTok: Risks and pitfalls for mental health

- **“Trauma dumping”** without warnings. Only 3.7% of trauma-tagged videos had trigger warnings—risking vicarious trauma (Woolard et al., 2024).
- **Misinformation & credential cues.** Youth flagged creators “pumping credentials,” implying professional advice; evidence links/verification are limited (Turuba et al., 2024).
- **Harm to recipients of oversharing.** Unsolicited trauma stories can be “really triggering” and cause “secondary trauma” (Colombo, 2021).
- **Distressing content is common.** Nearly half of sampled #mentalhealth TikToks expressed mental distress; scholars note “triggering” content concerns (Basch et al., 2022).



Instagram: How it's been used successfully for mental health

- Brief social-contact videos delivered via Instagram were feasible and **reduced stigma**. (Amsalem et al., 2025).
- Instagram's #HereForYou campaign surfaced **lived-experience stories** and **linked to help** (National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society, 2017).
- Clinician-run accounts can build **mental-health literacy** and **model safe messaging**. (Pretorius et al., 2022)

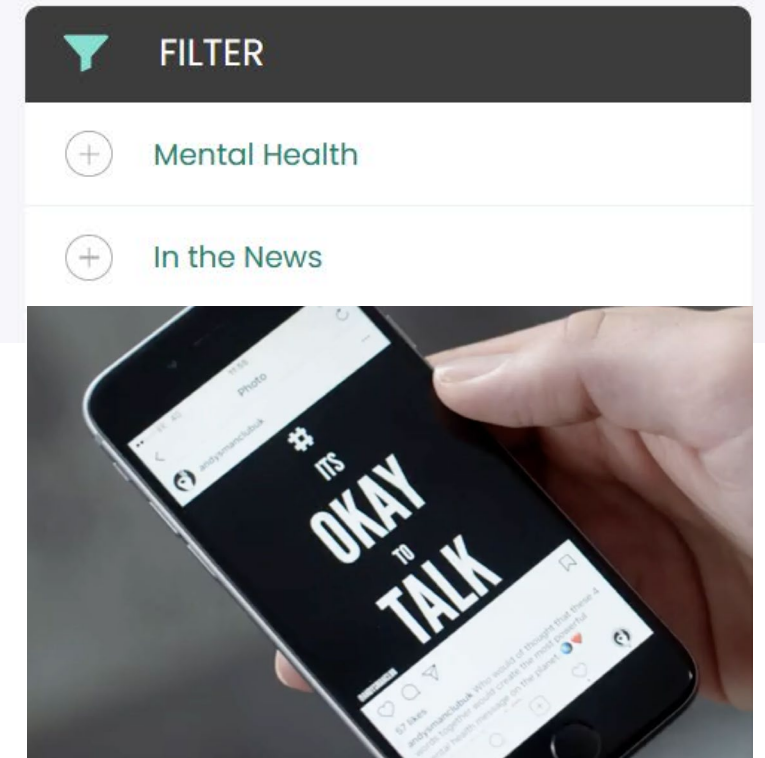


Instagram unveils #HereForYou mental health awareness campaign

Instagram has chosen to shine a light on mental health issues, launching a campaign which aims to underline the people sharing their mental health stories on the platform.

The Facebook-owned company's #HereForYou project seeks to encourage users to use the hashtag to open up about their own struggles with mental health and kickstart a global conversation.

"Every day on Instagram, we see people share their mental health journeys and connect with



Instagram: Risks & pitfalls for student mental health

- More time on Instagram → higher appearance comparison, lower self-esteem, worse body image. (Alfonso-Fuertes et al., 2023).
 - Heavy use linked to depressive symptoms, poor sleep, and cyberbullying. (Balamurugan & Vijayarani, 2025).
 - Social-comparison pressures are salient among college women. (Hill, 2022).
 - Credibility gaps in influencer content; risk of misinformation. (Pretorius et al., 2022).
-



YouTube: How it's been used successfully for mental health

- Short YouTube Health videos **improved mental health literacy**. (Schröder et al., 2025).
- Many viewers use health videos to **make care decisions** (84.7%). (Mohamed & Shoufan, 2024).
- Personal stories on anxiety/depression offer **validation** and **reduce stigma**.
- Health panels/shelves surface authoritative sources (YouTube, 2023)

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OCD STARTS HERE 8:47
OCD explained for beginners - how I wish I was taught
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TEMPORAL LOBE 5:02
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LISTEN LIKE A THERAPIST 15:51
How to listen like a therapist: 4 secret skills
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QUICK ANXIETY RELIEF 22:18
10 quick anxiety relief techniques
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SHOULD I MAJOR IN PSYCH? 16:05
Should I major in psychology?
608K views • 5 years ago

DEPRESSED? TRY THIS! 9:53
5 ONE-MINUTE Habits to Beat DEPRESSION
574K views • 2 years ago

Stop Panic Attacks Now 19:28
Stop having panic attacks: beginner's step by step guide
500K views • 5 years ago

10 THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I BECAME A THERAPIST 11:03
What I wish I knew before I became a psychotherapist
493K views • 6 years ago

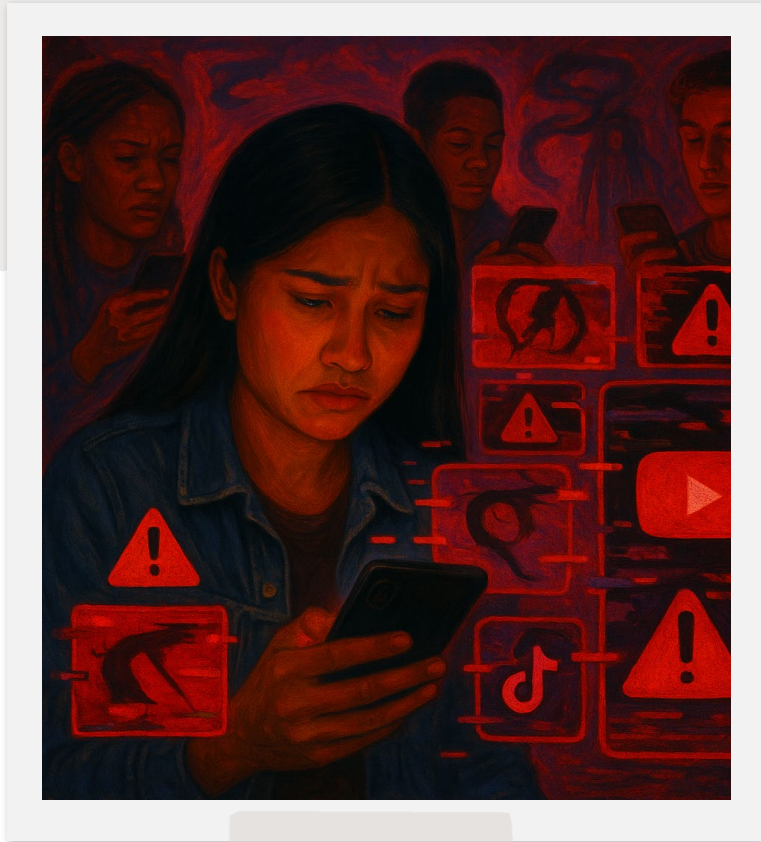
SHY INTROVERT AUTISTIC ANXIOUS? 14:34
Social Anxiety Disorder explained for beginners - how I wish I was taught
321K views • 2 years ago

TREATING TICS 7:20
How to stop tics (WITHOUT MEDICATION)
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ESSENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY BOOKS 6:38
7 Essential Psychology Books
266K views • 8 years ago

MISOPHONIA TREATMENT 7:22
What to do when you hate sounds (misophonia treatment)
257K views • 7 years ago

YouTube: Risks & pitfalls for mental health

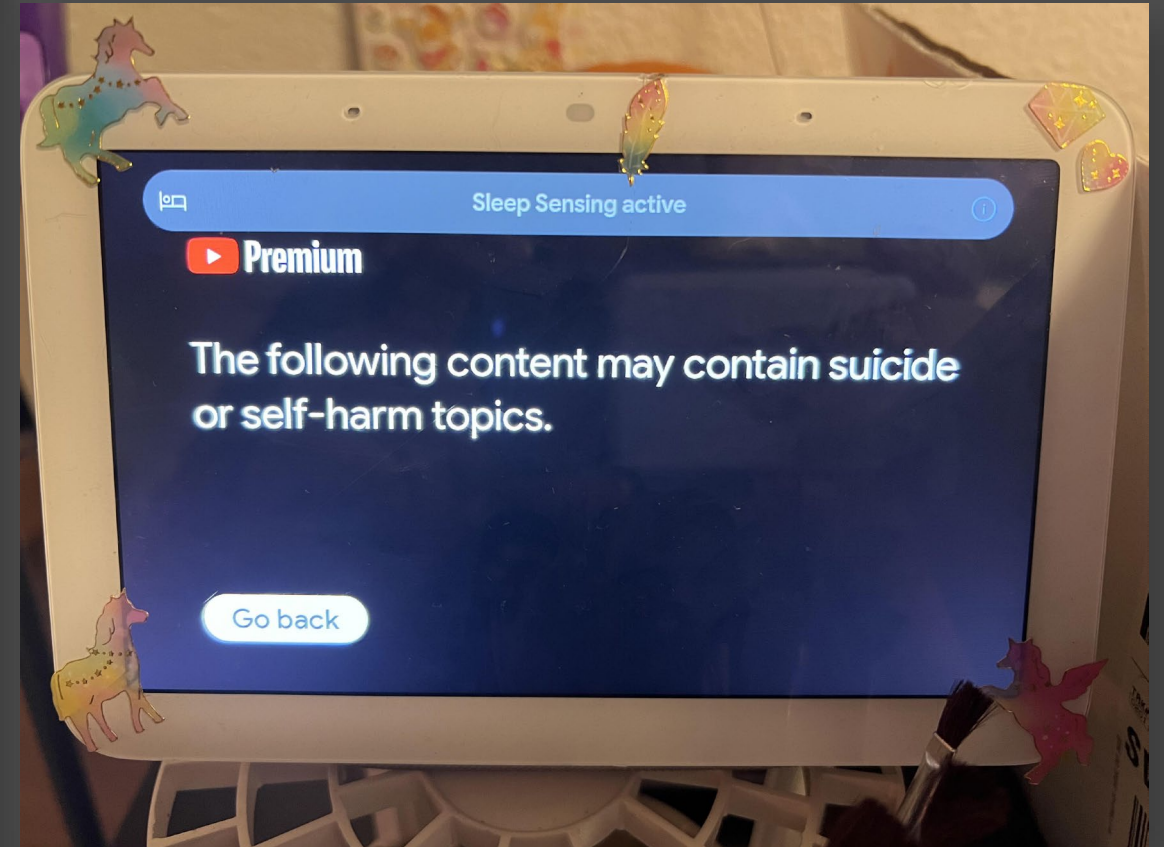
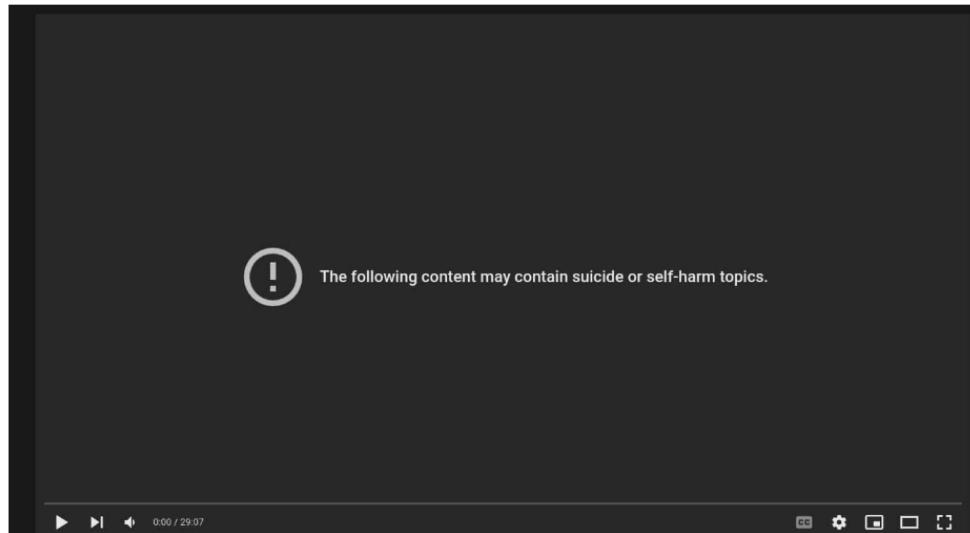


- **Quality is uneven**; misinformation persists in MH topics. (Nguyen et al., 2024).
- NSSI/self-harm videos can **normalize harmful behavior**. (Lewis et al., 2012).
- Investigations show ED-related content can be algorithmically pushed to teens. (Center for Countering Digital Hate, 2024).
- Problematic YouTube use links with **distress/insomnia** in youth. (Jafari et al., 2024).

Why Does this “The Following Content May Contain Suicide or Self-Harm Topics” Warning Appear on YouTube?

Updated June 26, 2025

We all spend much of our time scrolling YouTube videos, as it has become a regular element of our internet usage. However, we get to see a warning message saying, “The following content may contain suicide or self-harm topics” occasionally. This kind of message appears when there’s specific content in the video being played that is not appropriate for all viewers. This article will discuss the possible reason for this message and how to bypass it.



Reddit: Benefits & Risks for College Mental Health

- **Benefit:** Anonymity enables candid disclosure and strong peer support (De Choudhury & De, 2014)
- **Benefit:** College-specific subreddits share coping strategies during stress and remote learning (Garcia et al., 2022)
- **Risk:** Variable quality; misinformation and lack of professional oversight (Morini et al., 2025)
- **Risk:** Exposure to self-harm/suicidality content may normalize risky behaviors (Lundeen et al., 2024)



Discord: Benefits & Risks for College Mental Health

- **Benefit:** Peer support in “vent channels” (Oladeji et al., 2024)
- **Benefit:** Partnerships link users to crisis resources (Discord, 2023)
- **Risk:** Poor moderation → harmful content (Jiang et al., 2021)
- **Risk:** Vent channels may create conflict/frustration (Oladeji et al., 2024)



COMMUNITY COLLEGE SOCIAL MEDIA EXEMPLARS





Foothill College

- Platforms: **Wellness Ambassadors** on Instagram; **Togetherall** (clinically moderated, anonymous peer forum). (Foothill College, 2021; Foothill College Mental Health & Wellness Center, n.d.)
- Student voice: “Togetherall enables long-distance aid... my peers and I can receive the assistance we need.” (Foothill College, 2021).
- Why it works: **Moderated online peer forums** reduce loneliness and increase empowerment. (Marshall et al., 2024).
- YouTube shorts (e.g., Tips to Improve your Mental Health)

Mental Health & Wellness Center

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RESOURCES

Meet Our Wellness Ambassadors

Mission

Wellness Ambassadors are the student representatives of Foothill College Mental Health & Wellness Center. They aim to promote mental health services, reduce stigma surrounding mental health disorders, create community, and foster an inclusive and non-judgemental campus culture.

Alexi Aguilar


Hey, I'm Alexi, and I'm excited to be part of the Wellness Ambassador team! I'm a first-year college student and I'm majoring in Mechanical Engineering. As someone who's passionate about mental health and well-being, I want to help




IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY



**Need Support?
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Mental Health & Wellness Center

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 fhmhwc@foothill.edu

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Campus Center, Lower Level
(next to Health Center)



WAYS TO IMPROVE
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



Tips to Improve Your Mental Health

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Speak with a Mental Health Professional – Online, Any Time!

Starting April 1, 2025, [Tbh](#) is our new online partner for 24/7, 1-on-1 virtual support, formerly provided by [TimelyCare](#).

Tbh provides free mental health care and other resources for Foothill students. Use it **on your phone** or any connected device to get virtual care from anywhere. [See how to get started with Tbh.](#)

In case of an emergency, [see who to call.](#)



MENTAL HEALTH Wellness Center



Join Us for Our May 2025 Event Series

Each spring, we plan a series of events for Mental Health Awareness Month. *Check out ways to relax and rejuvenate in May.*



El Camino College

- Platform: Togetherall + Trained Peers program (24/7, clinician-moderated; peers amplify support). (Togetherall, 2023).
- Campus rollout: Student Health Center prioritized **online peer support** for a large, diverse commuter campus. (The Union—El Camino College, 2023).
- Effectiveness signal: Trained Peers reported greater confidence and reached hundreds in pilot weeks. (Togetherall, 2024).



El Camino College adopts digital peer support service, including Togetherall's new Trained Peers Program



Large, diverse community college brings on clinically moderated peer support in addition to Trained Peers

NEWS



Sacramento City College

- Platforms: Instagram reels promoting services + districtwide. **Togetherall** access for all students. (Sacramento City College, 2025).
- Use case: Reels guide students to “link in bio” for counseling, crisis lines, and 24/7 peer support.
- Ecosystem fit: Togetherall adds always-on, **anonymous support** alongside **on-campus therapy**.





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This May, in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, we encourage all students, faculty, and staff to prioritize self-care and embrace practices that support mental wellness. Los Rios offers a number of mental health and wellness services - find out how we can support you through the link in bio.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, you can access immediate support by calling 911 or through:

☎ National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988

📱 Crisis Text Line: 741741

**No comments yet.**

20 likes

May 9

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Student Health and Wellness

Patient Portal: Make and Manage Appointments

Physical Health Services ▶

Mental Health and Wellness Services ▾

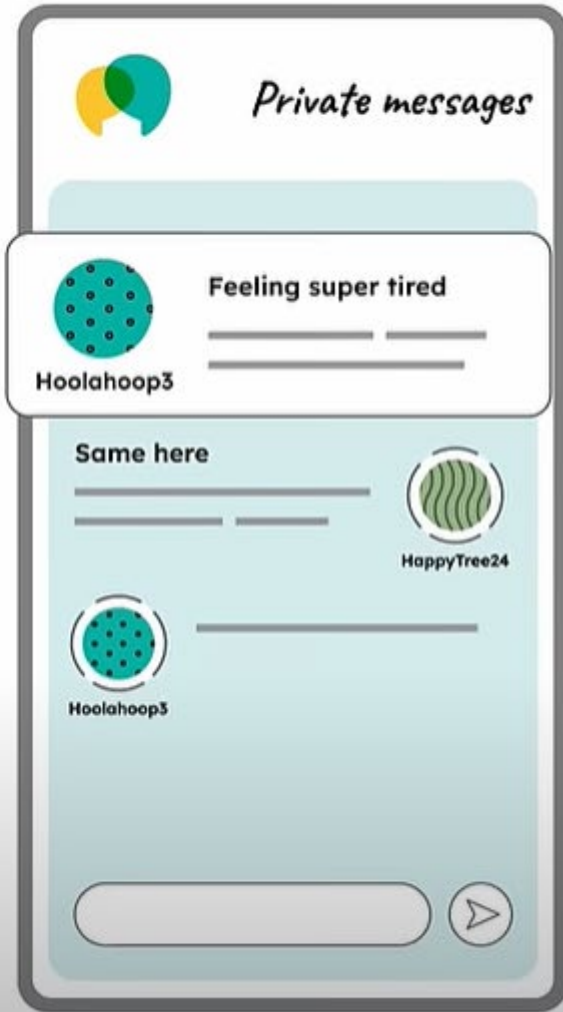
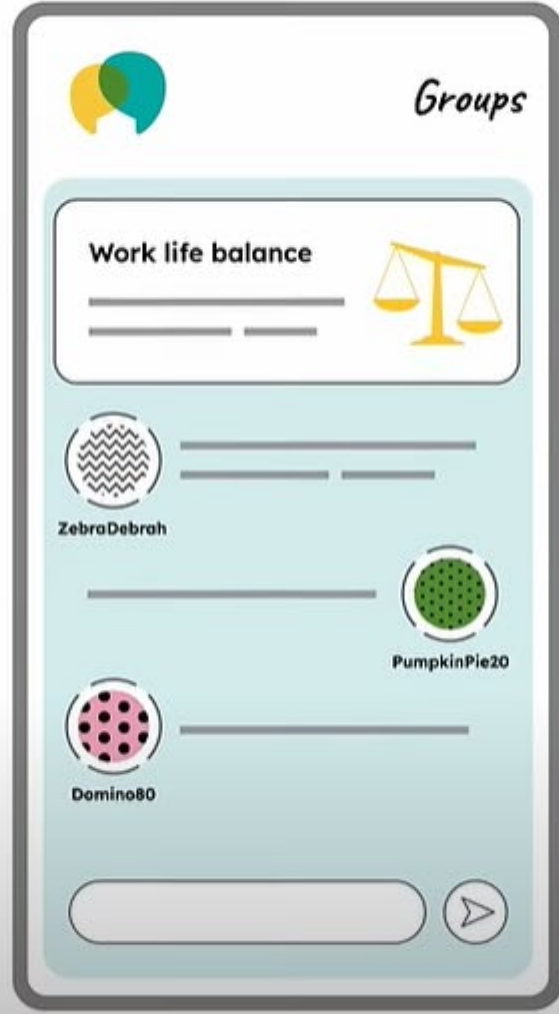
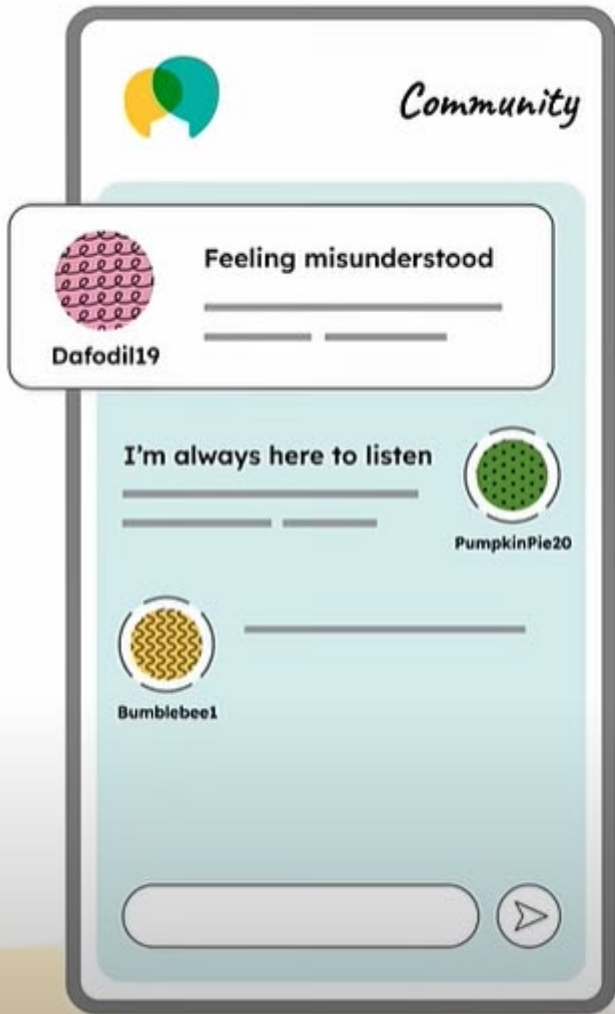
Patient Portal: Make and Manage Appointments

Connect. Get Support. Feel Better.

Share In a Safe, Anonymous Space

When you have a question or are in a tough situation, it can help to talk about it with your peers. Togetherall is a safe, anonymous, and free online space dedicated to supporting mental health and well-being. Join Togetherall to give and get support, learn new strategies, and unlock helpful self-care tools.





togetherall

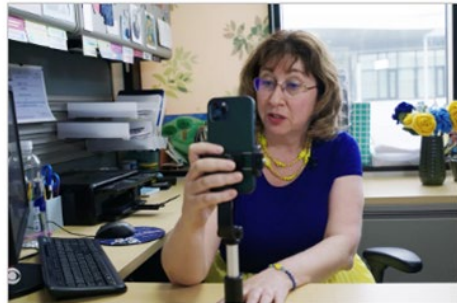
San Diego Mesa College

- Platforms: Faculty-led TikTok/YouTube **myth-busting** (psychology prof. Dr. Inna Kanevsky). (San Diego Mesa College, 2023; CBS News, 2023).
- Reach & purpose: >1M TikTok followers; content debunks risky "wellness" advice and builds **media-literacy**. (CBS News, 2023).
- Student-friendly format: **Short explainer clips** adapted from class concepts to meet students where they scroll. (San Diego Mesa College, 2023).



February 28, 2023
From CBS NEWS

How San Diego Mesa College psychology professor Dr. Inna Kanevsky became "TikTok famous"

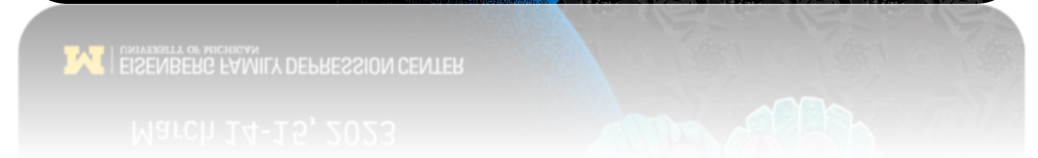
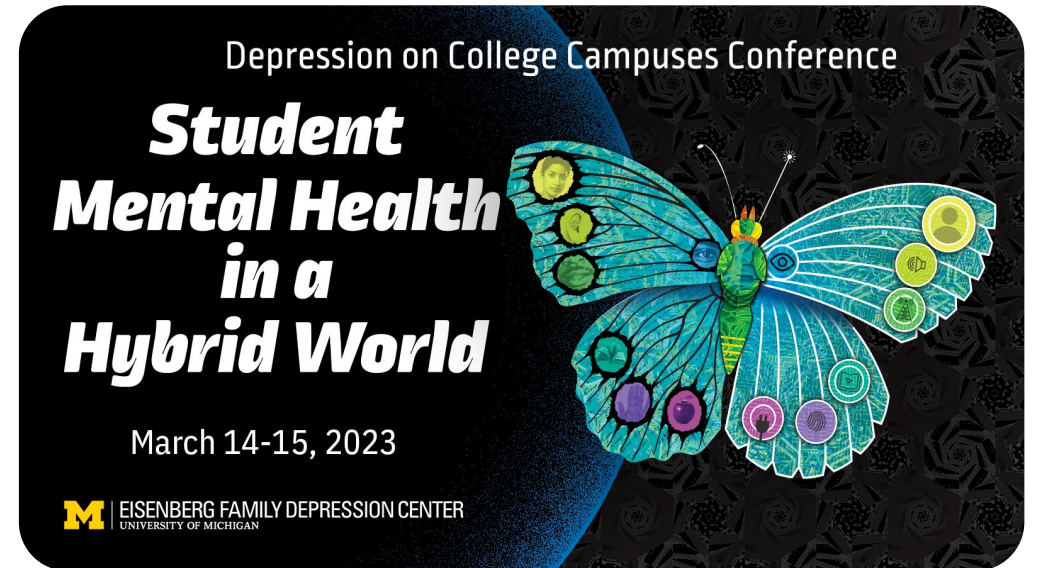


View the Video: San Diego psychology professor Dr. Inna Kanevsky gained TikTok fame by debunking mental health misinformation on the popular social media platform. She now has more than a million followers as she fights to make content creators stick to scientific facts.



University of Michigan (Depression on College Campuses / YouTube Series)

- YouTube-hosted **panel discussions** and **student-built mental health stories** routinely get 10–50k views per video
- Attendees (75% students) self-reported **decreased stigma** and increased intent to **seek help** three months post-viewing
- Student feedback: “Hearing peers talk openly made it OK for me to ask for help.” (Taubman et al., 2021)



Encourage **EQUALITY** between physical and mental illness

TALK OPENLY about mental health

EDUCATE yourself

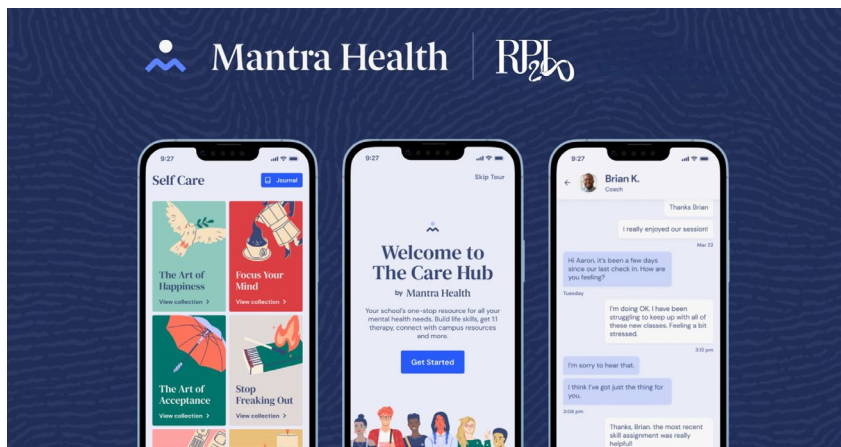
MENTAL HEALTH TOWN HALL
#EndingTheStigma
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16
 7:00-8:00 p.m. - DCC 330 or WebEx
 Refreshments!!
 Sponsored by Student Senate & the Counseling Center
 Register online at bit.ly/RPITownHall

Show **COMPASSION** for those with mental illness

Choose **EMPOWERMENT** over shame

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) “Mental Health Mondays”

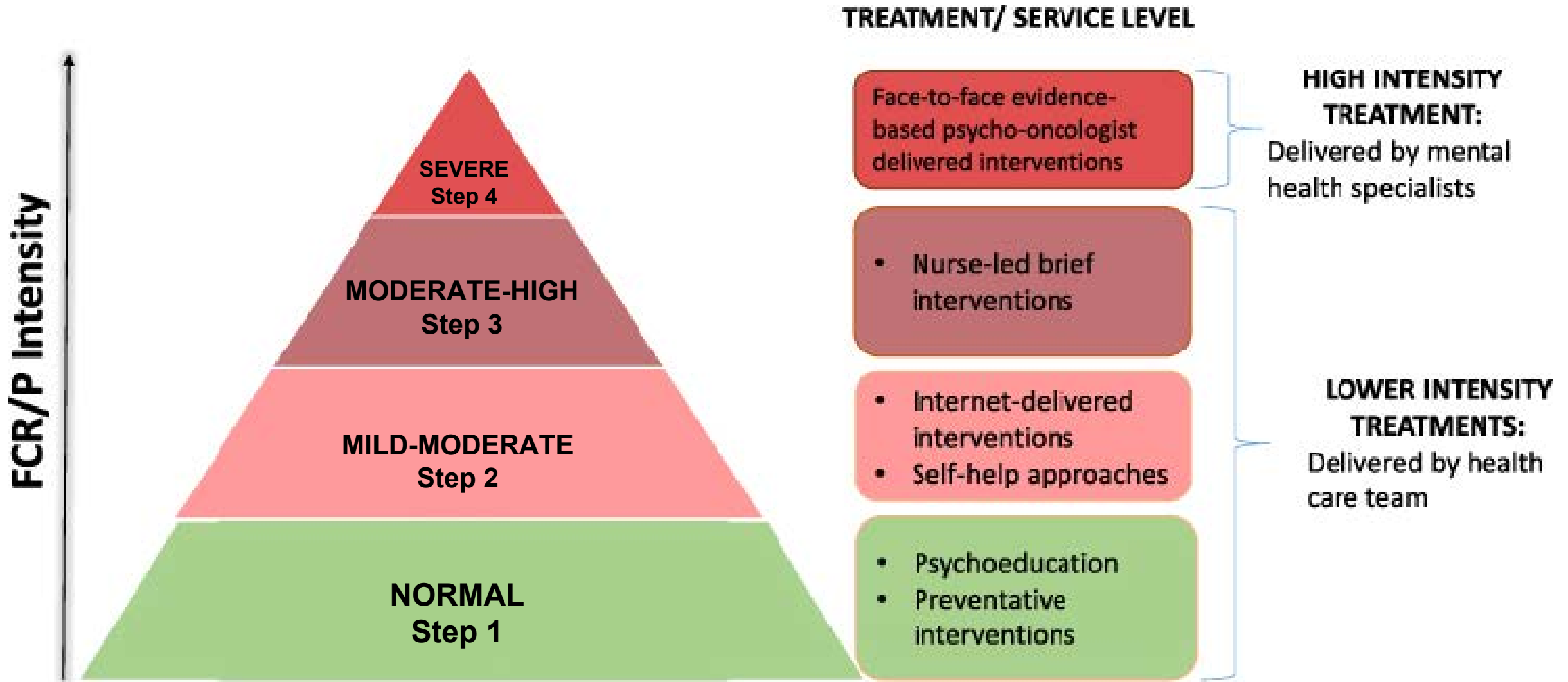
- Instagram campaign: **weekly wellness posts** reaching ~60% of undergrads during campaign weeks
- Usage of eight wellness dimensions increased post-campaign; student satisfaction flagged high relevance
- Student remark: “It grounded my week, something I looked forward to.” (Terlisner, 2021)



SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH



Stepped-Care Pyramid for Mental Health Support in Community Colleges



From Scroll to Care: Mapping Social Media to Stepped Care

1

Psychoeducation via Instagram reels, TikTok explainers, YouTube shorts

2

Peer support forums (e.g., moderated Reddit/Discord) to encourage help-seeking

3


Student ambassadors or clinician content creators linking directly to counseling services

4

Referral links to 988, campus crisis lines embedded in posts

Turning Likes into Referrals

- Use “**link in bio**” or story swipe-ups to route students to counseling and 24/7 peer support
- Train **peer ambassadors** to follow up in DMs with consented **warm handoffs** (Pretorius et al., 2022)
- Pair campaigns with Togetherall or other **moderated platforms to sustain connection** (Marshall et al., 2024)
- Track engagement analytics → translate reach into **booked appointments** or **group attendance** (Downs et al., 2023)




Free Mental Health Services

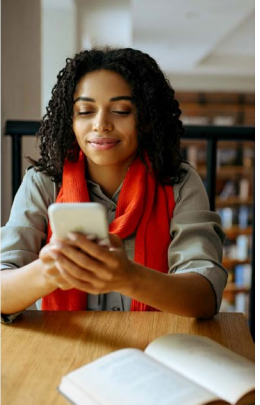
Shamiri is hooking you up with free access to mental health services on our app!

- Daily and goal setting
- Fun & gamified Experience
- Group Sessions and individual therapy

Interested? Sign Up with the Link in Bio!



togetherall



Avoiding Pitfalls: Performative vs. Authentic Connection

**Mental
Health
Matters**



- **Performative posts** (e.g., awareness days only) rarely shift stigma/help-seeking (Hamdani, 2023)
- **Authenticity** grows when students **co-create** and appear in content (Terlisner, 2021)
- **Over-sharing trauma** without moderation risks harm to peers (Woolard et al., 2024)
- Build trust: focus on **consistent, identity-affirming, culturally resonant** messaging (Garcia et al., 2022)

Why Co-Design or Co-Produce?

- Students trust peers and creators more than official accounts → higher engagement & credibility (Amsalem et al., 2025)
- **Co-production** ensures cultural resonance and avoids “top-down” messaging (Garcia et al., 2022)
- Involving students reduces stigma and normalizes help-seeking (Taubman, 2021)
- **Ambassadors model authenticity:** content feels relatable, not performative.



Examples of Co-Production

College of San Mateo



Overview

Health Portal - Log In

Services

CARES

Timely Care

Mental Health Peer Educators

Sexual Misconduct, Harassment, Assault & Title IX

FAQs

Wellness Center

Meet the Staff

Contact Us

Personal Counseling & Wellness Services

Mental Health Peer Educators

Mental Health Peer Educators normalize the conversation about mental health and turn awareness into action. These student leaders cultivate a positive mental health culture on campus by facilitating a range of educational activities, workshops, and even in various formats to support all students to thrive. Mental Health Peer Educators are oftentimes the first line of assistance for someone in a moment of need and are equipped to refer students to mental health and wellness related resources on-and-off campus. Mental Health Peer Educators are understanding of the concerns and challenges their fellow students face and proactively respond to help students deal with their stressors. Our services aim to be culturally responsive and pay attention to addressing specific mental health needs of CSM's diverse campus community.

Have questions? Would you like to collaborate or request a workshop or classroom presentation? Message Gil Perez perezgil@smccd.edu for more information.

Be sure to check us out on Instagram! [@csmactiveminds](https://www.instagram.com/csmactiveminds)

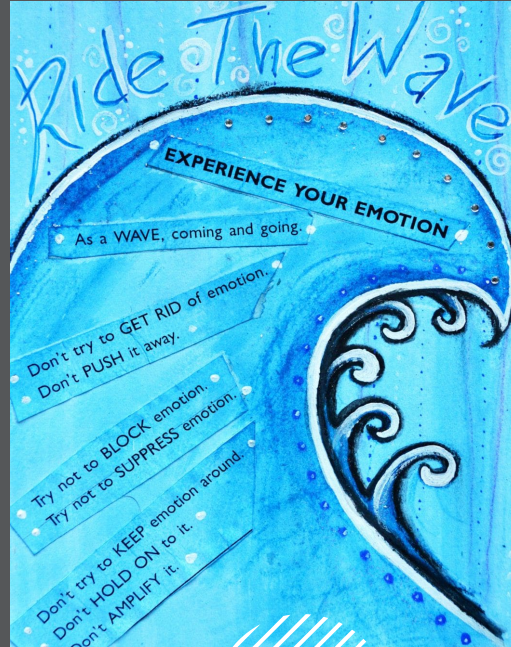
- **Peer Ambassadors:** Trained students sharing wellness reels or TikTok myth-busting
- **Student Clubs:** Mental health campaigns co-run with affinity groups and cultural orgs (Downs et al., 2023)
- **Co-Designed Content:** Videos with lived-experience storytelling; students edit/write scripts (Pretorius et al., 2022)
- **Shared Platforms:** Student-generated posts paired with faculty/professional oversight for safety (Marshall et al., 2024)



Why Culturally Resonant Outreach Matters

- **Build trust:** Consistent, identity-affirming messages foster belonging (Garcia et al., 2022)
- **Representation matters:** Students engage when content feels relatable
- **Feeling seen:** “It was a place where I felt seen and celebrated”
- **Better outcomes:** Identity-affirming messages support well-being (Vaingankar et al., 2022)

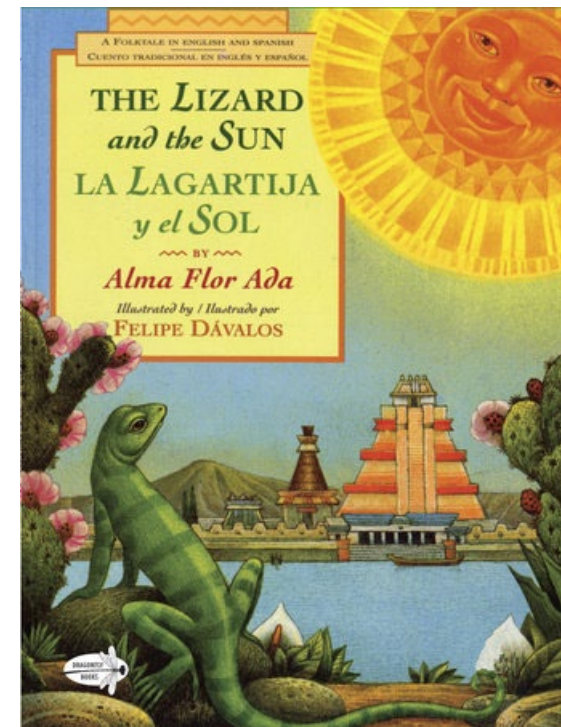
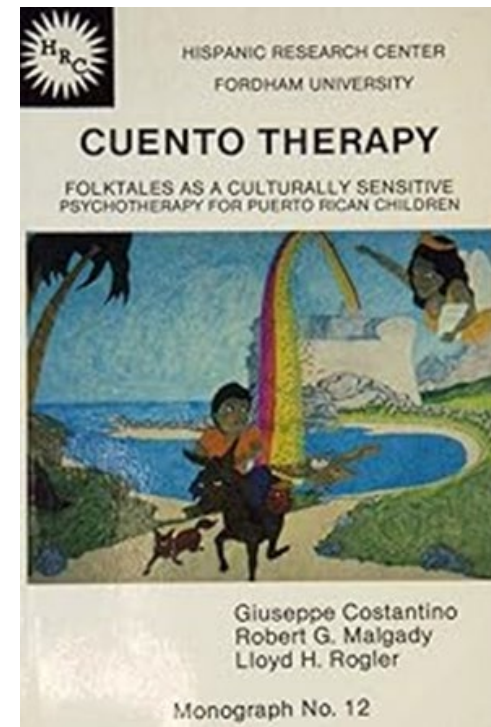
Metaphors as Bridges to Cultural Meaning



- Metaphors in therapy help **bridge cultural worldviews** and increase accessibility (Hwang, 2006)
- Wei-Chin Hwang highlights metaphors as a powerful **adaptation** that aligns CBT strategies with cultural values (Hwang, 2009)
- Example: emotional balance = “a bamboo that bends but doesn’t break” → used as a short Instagram reel or TikTok animation showing resilience
- Social Media Integration: Share bite-sized reels/posts with **metaphor visuals** (e.g., bamboo, rooted trees, ocean waves) paired with coping tips

Cuento Therapy: Narrative Healing in Action

- Cuento therapy uses folktales (cuentos) to **reinforce cultural identity** and reduce anxiety for Latina/o/x/e/Hispanic youth, it improves self-esteem & academic performance (Constantino et al., 1986)
- Role-playing stories in Spanish/English helps bicultural students feel seen
- **Social Media Integration:** Feature short student-made TikTok or YouTube shorts retelling a cuento or cultural proverb linked to help-seeking



Digital Storytelling for Indigenous Students

- Social media fosters storytelling among Indigenous students, **strengthening cultural ties** disrupted by historical displacement
- Platforms enable sharing of traditional practices, **identity affirming stories**, and resilience narratives in accessible formats
- Applies directly to community college learners who often use digital media to **connect cultural heritage with mental wellness**



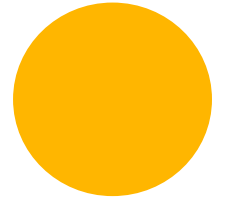
Embedding Culturally Resonant Healers and Storytellers

- **Community-based healers** (e.g., elders, cultural navigators, peer storytellers) can be featured in social media campaigns to ground outreach in cultural credibility
- For example, a video featuring an elder describing a healing ritual, followed by a student reflecting on it, blends cultural tradition with student voice
- This aligns with Hwang's Formative Method for Adapting Psychotherapy (FMAP), a **bottom-up, stakeholder-engaged framework** that encourages community-generated adaptations (Hwang, 2009)



Gender-Affirming Social Media for LGBTQIA+ Student Well-Being

- **Affirming spaces:** Online communities
- often feel safer than school/home (EdWeek, 2024)
- **Identity support:** Social media aids safe exploration and peer connection (Berger et al., 2022)
- **Storytelling campaigns:** Projects like MyStoryOutLoud amplify LGBTQ youth voices
- **Protective messaging:** Gender-affirming environments linked to lower suicide risk (Trevor Project, 2024)



CONNECTING OR COMPETING?



Connecting

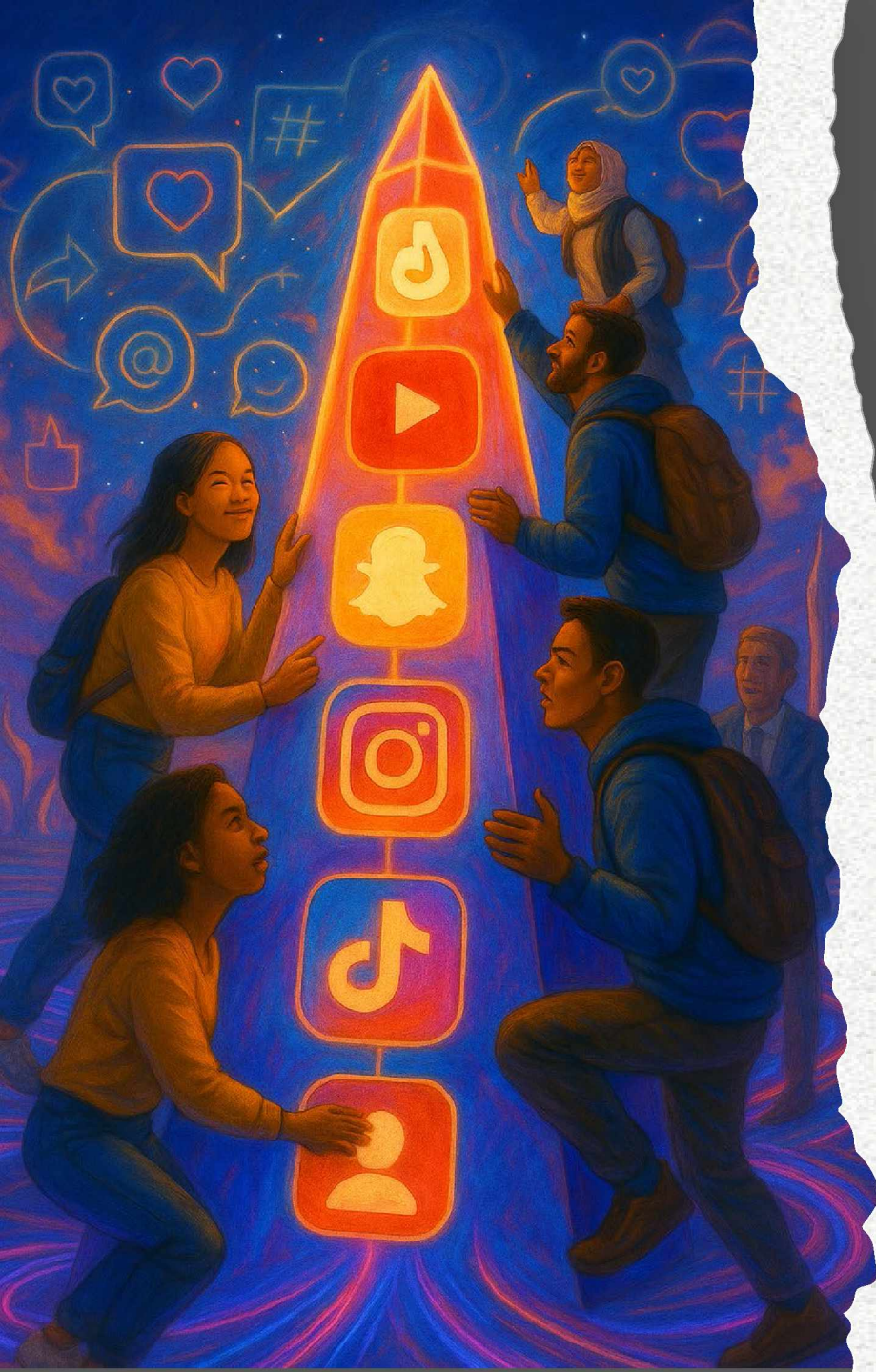
- Social media fosters peer support and belonging through **moderated communities** (Marshall et al., 2024)
- **Identity-affirming storytelling** increases trust and help-seeking (Garcia et al., 2022)
- Student **co-production** boosts authenticity & engagement (Terlisner, 2021)
- Short videos **normalize mental health** and **reduce stigma** (Choi et al., 2021)





Competing

- **Overuse** linked to depression, anxiety, poor sleep (Keles et al., 2019)
- **Misinformation & low-quality advice** spread widely (Chen et al., 2024)
- **Social comparison** drives body-image dissatisfaction & low self-esteem (Alfonso-Fuertes et al., 2023)
- **Performative**, one-off posts risk eroding credibility (Hamdani, 2023)



Practical Campus Takeaways: Steps to Start

- **Assess current outreach:** Audit which platforms and student groups you are (and aren't) reaching
- **Partner with students:** Involve ambassadors, clubs, and affinity groups in content creation
- **Center equity:** Use identity-affirming, culturally resonant storytelling and metaphors (Hwang, 2009; Garcia et al., 2022)
- **Embed safety nets:** Pair campaigns with crisis links, peer forums, and moderation protocols
- **Measure impact:** Track engagement → translate likes/shares into referrals and service use (Downs et al., 2023)

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