Adulting Is Hard:

Design and Implementation of a Social Norms Poster Campaign for Student Resilience

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Background

- Anecdotal need for some kind of resilience intervention on a campus with a high stakes/high pressure environment

- Approach: connecting resilience to well-being & academic performance

- MPH thesis project 2016-2017 Academic Year
Creating the Campaign

1. Literature Search & Stakeholder Interviews
   - Determine potential salient constructs for the poster campaign

2. Preliminary Design & Student Focus Groups
   - Obtain student feedback on messaging and design

3. Data Analysis & Dissemination
   - Make adjustments based on feedback to create final versions and disseminate to stakeholders and the rest of the campus community
Emerging Student Needs in Line with Literature

Emerging Constructs
- Locus of control
- Perfectionism / Fixed mindset
- Meaning and purpose
- Social support

Stakeholder Interview Themes

Sources of strain:
- Fast-paced quarter system
- Co-Op structure and high-stakes / high pressure campus culture
- Many students have never failed before, and often don't have coping skills
Student Focus Group Feedback

- Reassuring
- Positive
- Resonate with them as students at this institution specifically
- They felt that the posters should not be associated with the Counseling Center (i.e. with a logo)
- Social media will create more student buy-in

“I think all the posters really reassure something that we can all forget about because we’re so stressed.”

-Student Focus Group Participant
I think that as college students, especially at Drexel with everything so rigorous, we are constantly striving to be perfect, but it’s not a realistic thing. And sometimes it’s a good reminder, when you have a bad day.”

- Student Focus Group Participant
“In high school you may have been the smartest person in your class but the 10-week terms at Drexel really kick my butt and it’s hard to be in a room full of smart people, people that challenge you. So, failing or not being perfect or at the top is difficult for a lot of people and gives people a reality check, so I think that this, especially for Drexel kids, is really good.”

- Student Focus Group Participant
What we know about successful messaging

- Positively framed messages
  - “Do this” instead of “Don’t do that”

- Messages are in plain, simple language that are easy to understand

- Provide simple “call to action”
The Finished Product

Construct: Locus of control

Construct: Perfectionism / Fixed Mindset

Construct: Meaning / purpose

Construct: Social support
Positive campus-wide reception

- 100+ people reached by design & initial implementation alone
- 400 poster initial print & dissemination
- 1,000+ posters printed to date
- Images rotating through screens across campus
- Inspired more centralized resilience marketing campaign that is in progress
Limitations & Lessons Learned

Social Marketing
Should be part of a comprehensive approach (i.e. alongside programming, plan for wide saturation of messaging, dedicated staff time).

Student-Driven
This project was driven by student input to create messages that would be most relevant to them.
This also means that their needs will change. Updates should be made based on student input in the future.

Administrative Stakeholder “Buy-In” for Sustained Implementation
Having administrative stakeholders’ backing of this kind of intervention will help its long-term sustainability of this intervention and growth of new ones.
Another Social Marketing Example: Temple University

Based on PERMA™ Theory of Well-Being
Thank you!

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References


